

# Spanish Terrorism in Theory and Practice

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*The Cases of ETA and TL*

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# ABSTRACT

Most studies about the development and continuation of terrorism tend to focus on groups in the third world. Further, the general consensus of these studies is that three variables – political economics, identity politics, and public opinion – are the most valid rationales for understanding the usage of terror. This thesis, however, by mostly looking at secondary sources but also by quoting members of each group, will look at two terrorist organizations in Spain, Euskadia ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Terra Lliure (TL), in terms of how these three variables affected their rise, development, and continuation. To be sure, both of these groups mostly operated in Spain when the country was in the first world, already making this thesis different from the literature on terrorism. Ultimately, this thesis concludes that identity politics appears to be the most convincing argument for why terrorism either continues (for ETA) or has ceased (TL), but also concludes that the political economic situation was important for each groups' development and that public opinion did not matter much for the continuation of terrorist tactics. Thus, this thesis adds to the gaps in the literature in two ways: 1) by simultaneously surveying two groups not in the first world that operated at the same time and in the same country, and 2) by taking on the main assumptions of terrorism scholars in order to show which variable is most important in the study of terror.

# INTRODUCTION

The 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain were only one year away. The Spanish authorities made no secret that they were afraid one of Spain's most prominent terrorist groups – Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) or Terra Lliure (TL) – were planning to disrupt the Games in any capacity. On May 31, 1991, those fears were realized. A city by the name of Vic, only about thirty miles north of Barcelona, Catalonia's capital, was the site of a bomb blast which occurred in a Civil Guard barrack.<sup>1</sup> ETA took immediate responsibility for the attack.<sup>2</sup> With the Games not too far away, the last thing the authorities wanted was to turn Spain into a police-state in order to ensure security. With its bomb the ETA accomplished two things: 1) it continued its struggle for independence of the Basque Country, and 2) inconvenienced Spain's Olympic Planning Committee into adding more security.<sup>3</sup> The ETA's willingness to bomb Vic also left open the possibility that it could conduct another attack in the near future or during the Games.

Making it harder for the authorities was that the region of Catalonia, where the Games were being held, was also home to TL, a terrorist movement seeking Catalonia's independence from Spain. Indeed, Olympic security was “enjoying little success,”<sup>4</sup> and the prospect of another group (in addition to ETA) that threatened the Games made their jobs all that much harder. What some security guards did not know was that around 150 of their colleagues were TL operatives who had gotten jobs as security guards in order to sabotage the Games.<sup>5</sup> And, though TL infiltrators did not kill anyone they caused many logistical problems that facilitated ETA

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<sup>1</sup> Policinski 1991, 12C.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Finkelstein and Koch 1991, C2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

planting a second bomb in the Montjuic Stadium in Barcelona (during the games?). Luckily, a non-TL officer found the bomb and got the necessary people to defuse it. Nevertheless, the combination of ETA's deadly plans and TL's sabotage made the Olympics hard to handle. Yet, as Spanish authorities well know, both of these groups have been causing trouble on the peninsula since the mid-1950s.<sup>6</sup>

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The roots of the ETA and TL can be found in the 1930s when General Francisco Franco organized a successful military coup and installed a fascist political system. Franco, a devout Catholic who was angry with his Republican Government not promoting the religion, wanted to take over the country to return Spain back to God. His actions would spark a civil war in the country that would mercilessly rage for four years as the prelude to World War II. Out of the Spanish conflict grew two terrorist organizations – Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Terra Lliure (TL) – that claim to be the legitimate representatives of the two regions in the war that got the brunt of Franco's fury: the Basque Country and Catalonia. While in distinct regions, both groups' messages were similar and clear: their particular regions should be independent from Spain.

Both groups stemmed from separate independence movements; indeed, Franco's suppression of each territory began distinct pushes for a break from Spanish authority. Today, both the Basque Country and Catalonia are autonomous regions within the framework of Spanish politics (both having achieved this status in the Constitution of 1978 that reestablished a democratic government after the war). Thus, neither ETA nor TL succeeded in their goals.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

However, despite their similarities, these two groups took different paths. TL stopped their operations in the mid-1990s and only killed one person, whereas ETA continues to operate today and has achieved a total death count of around 800 people. What is interesting here is that they are two groups with ethno-nationalist tendencies, that want independence, in the same country, at the same time, with similar economic and demographic backgrounds, and yet one group survived and one still kills today (despite having called a ceasefire). Thus, this thesis attempts to answer why TL is no longer active while ETA continues to operate. My research suggests that greater rates of regional-language knowledge in Catalonia (*Catalan*) are higher than the regional language knowledge of the Basque Country (*Euskera*). This is important because both groups were, or are, fighting for the promotion of their regional language; thus, where the language rate is low, more violence is expected. Further, with higher levels of language comprehension in Catalonia, there is less social fragmentation, therefore no longer requiring the need of a social adhesive, which TL tried to be. In the Basque Country, meanwhile, ETA still survives – barely – because Basque is minimally understood in the region.

This thesis differs from other studies on terrorism in Spain which argue that economics is what drives both the support for terrorism and terrorism itself (see, for example, Medrano 1995). Indeed, economics is a major component since it is undeniable that economic success in both areas attracted immigrants that did not speak the regional language, leading to a nationalist movement.<sup>7</sup> Nationalism alone, though, could not keep support for terrorism – and the terrorists knew this. In fact, both groups used nationalistic fervor and assuaged the public to place that radicalization into the regional language, thus easily defining a Basque or a Catalanian versus a Spaniard. In other words, nationalism planted the seeds for the independence movement; but the

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<sup>7</sup> Medrano 1995.

desire to have a place to speak the regional language without interference from the Spanish state – thus, the desire for independence – stemmed from the will of the regions to have control over their own languages.

In addition to surveying the past and present of Spanish terrorism, both groups will be used as a case study to offer a comparative look at terrorism. Indeed, studies on terrorism normally focus on just one group. The rare studies that focus on more than one terrorist organization tend to focus on groups that are in the developing world. After the events of September 11, 2001, for example, the jihadist terrorist movements have been the focus of most research. This thesis, then, looks at two groups that formed because of the same factor – immigration into their respective territories – but continued to operate well into Spain's status as a first-world country. Yet, what the region of Catalonia did – institutionalize the learning of language, the same one TL championed – is what led to its demise, whereas ETA's championing of the Basque language allows it to continue operating. In this sense, this thesis can offer a lot in terms of what a state can do to end terrorism within its borders and also see terrorism inspired not by something religious, but rather by something linguistic.

The remainder of the thesis is divided into the following distinct sections. Section I will be a literature review on the most relevant scholarship on terrorism. The fact that this thesis is unique in that it covers both groups in Spain means that there is not much written on the subject and thus receives very little attention in this section. However, I will show in this thesis where the scholarship is at this point. Most of the immense scholarship on this issue debates how economics, identity politics, and nationalism affect the genesis and the continuation of terrorism; therefore, these areas will be reviewed.

Section II covers how I conducted my study of TL and ETA. Section III will cover the history of both terrorist groups in Spain with special attention paid to how each group formed, operated, related to the public, made its claim to legitimacy, and then died out (for TL) or weakened (for ETA). Section IV will focus on my first variable—the political economy of the regions—to show how the nationalist movements formed. This would be enough to start the movements, but not enough to keep them alive. Section IV will show that identity politics – that is, identifying with one’s language – is what gave the terrorists’ legitimacy and why both groups received support for their actions. Ultimately, this section will show that what is most important when understanding why the Catalanian group failed as opposed to the Basque group was because the Catalanian government – the *Generalitat* – usurped TL’s goal and made it that of the state. Therefore, TL had nothing to fight for since, in effect, it had been given what it wanted. ETA, however, continues to fight for the ability to speak its language while members of TL have returned to normal life in Catalonia.

Section VI will demonstrate that public opinion towards the groups in terms of independence has never been that strong. To be sure, both groups wanted independence, and so did some ordinary people, but a separate state was never the people’s chief desire. Surely the terrorist groups wanted it because it was the logical way to ensure that their respective regional languages could be spoken. Nevertheless, what the people wanted was the simple ability to speak either *Catalan* or *Euskera* – and that was it. Once this was possible, public’s opinion toward ETA (and assumedly TL) went down.

Finally, it must be mentioned that as a Spanish citizen, this author has an interest in these kinds of movements in Spain. Indeed, while ETA is clearly the preeminent terrorist organization in Spain, TL was also devastating in its impact and scope. Even today, ramifications of TL’s

actions are echoing through the halls of the *Generalitat*. Because of the positive effect terrorism has for its perpetrators' goals, residents of the Spanish region Galicia have noticed an increase in activity that resembles terrorism.<sup>8</sup> For the sake of my country's sanity and safety, Spanish authorities and terrorism scholarship must reach a point that can help Spain understand the fractioning that is going on within the country despite a feeling of European unionization. After much research, this thesis will demonstrate that these regions within Spain do not feel "Spanish," and understanding this is paramount to helping quell the citizen unrest in the country. If this is understood, then perhaps future terrorist attacks and lost lives can be prevented. This thesis is merely another step toward that understanding.

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<sup>8</sup> Keeley 2011, 38.



# I. LITERATURE REVIEW

## *Terrorism Studies in General*

As a tactic, terrorism has been around for about 4000 – 6000 years. Despite the constant attention this phenomenon has received, there is an anomaly within the literature: terrorism still has no clear definition. This lack of consensus has led certain scholars (e.g. Beinín 2003) to lambast terrorism studies for its noncohesive nature. In fact, since most attempts at defining terrorism are untenable, some critics (Silke 2011; Stampnitzky 2011) claim that terrorism should not be a field of study at all.

The definitional debates are mirrored in how scholars study terrorism. Some studies focus on the overarching goals of terrorism (Abrahams 2008; Richardson 2006; Tavares 2004). Another prominent area of research is about the trajectory from psychology and ideology to violence of the terrorist group (Juergensmeyer 2003; Robison et al. 2004). Others have dissected terrorism's effects on the global institutional order (Boyle 2011; Criado 2011). Controversially, a famous thesis now explores whether terrorism is actually a moral action (Bouhana 2010). While all of these studies have their validity, the literature is so large that this section will only focus on the variables that will be covered later in this study: they are political economy, identity politics and nationalism. They will also be applied comparatively to examine two groups that rose and operated in the same country around the same time. Both ETA and TL, then, will be looked at in-depth in terms of how these variables explain (or fail to explain) the individual trajectories of the ETA and TL. When it comes to terrorism in twentieth century Spain, those categories are the most important in understanding both ETA and TL's trajectory to terrorism.

It must be mentioned, though, that while ETA is a widely-studied group, its counterpart, TL, is rarely scrutinized by Anglophone scholars. Partially, this is due to the fact that few people speak both English and Catalan, and even fewer have an interest in the group. Therefore, my survey of TL will fill that gap in the terrorism literature (at least for Anglophone scholarship). The discussion of ETA, though, will be more nuanced, since it will be compared with the rise of TL. To be sure, many studies of ETA exist, but no study in English compares it to its Catalanian contemporary. This angle distinguishes this thesis from most others on terrorism in that the scenario in Spain is fairly unique. If anything, this thesis will test mainstream notions that terrorism happens because of either economic, identity or nationalistic factors by looking at both of these concurrent groups. It will not only provide information on both of these organizations, but also on how terrorism starts and is maintained. Before those conclusions are presented, though, a review of the current scholarship on these variables is necessary.

### *Economics and Terrorism*

If there is one consensus among terrorism scholars, it is that economics, in some way, has an important role in turning an actor toward political violence. Scholars of the “economic deprivation” school (Bueno de Mesquita 2005; Kavanagh 2011; Piazza 2006, 2011), for example, believe that the poorer the person, the higher the probability that person will want to partake in terrorism. Terrorism, then, is used as an outlet for the disenfranchised minority to vent its frustrations about its low economic status. In Piazza’s words, there is a “causal link...between minority economic discrimination and domestic terrorist activity.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, studies show that higher income reduces terrorism in general, suggesting that the solution to stopping terroristic

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<sup>9</sup> Piazza 2011, 340.

violence is greater economic development (Azam and Delacroix 2006; Azam and Thelen 2008; Lai 2007). In addition, there are those that claim that terrorism is used by the poor because it is cost effective; indeed, if terrorists had more funds, then terrorist tactics would not be used (Caplan 2006; Sprinzak 2000; Sandler and Enders 2002).

However, certain scholars (Berrebi 2003; Freytag et al. 2011; Krueger and Laitin 2008; Krueger and Maleckova 2003) and this author do not find that economic development by itself would reduce the desire to participate in terrorism. Krueger and Maleckova (2003), for example, quantitatively found that support for terrorist acts were fairly similar among all socioeconomic groups in their survey of Palestinian terrorism. Thus, it could be suggested that simply analyzing the economic situation of a terrorist does not explain one's feelings toward, or willingness to use, the tactic. There must be something else within the nature of economics that explains the phenomenon.

The literature is now mainly poised in this direction: terrorists are born when they think they deserve more than their current economic situation permits. This school of thought, known as the "relative deprivation" school, was made famous by Gurr (1970) when he coined the term in his famous study, *Why Men Rebel*. Others (Frey and Luechinger 2004; Lee 2011) also believe that it is the person's perception of his or her economic standing that leads to violent feelings. Taking this school further, the notion of an "impoverished elite"<sup>10</sup> refers to those who are well educated and are in the upper echelons of economic society but who are not powerful enough to make a political difference. Indeed, these are people who feel they should have influence in the political arena but are, for whatever reason, unable to do so. In addition, these people have a

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<sup>10</sup> Lee 2011, 242.

lower opportunity cost than those elites who have power and more to lose; thus, this section of people are more likely to commit acts of violence.

It is evident, then, that the debate on how economics affects terrorism is still not concluded. Nevertheless, the success of this debate is that it has made students of terrorism realize that economics is an important factor in understanding why one turns to violence. For this reason, this thesis will explain how the political economy in the Basque Country and Catalonia had an effect on the decision to use terrorism by both ETA and TL. It will also demonstrate the limits of this variable as it relates to explaining the ETA and TL.

### *Identity Politics and Terrorism*

The next two sections will be on “identity politics” (this section) and nationalism in general with brief references to their connection to terrorism (which will be explained later in this thesis). To separate identity politics from nationalism, I will be making my distinction based on the influential book by Mary Kaldor’s *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (2006). In her work, she defines identity politics as “movements that mobilize around ethnic, racial or religious identity for the purpose of claiming state power.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, where nationalism is group loyalty and identity to a political organization (e.g. the state), identity politics is the manipulation of loyalty to, and primary identity of, some group other than a state. Based on this distinction, a survey of the current literature on identity politics will be conducted.

In 1996 Samuel Huntington made famous the phrase “clash of civilizations,” and in so doing brought identity politics to the forefront of the academy. In his book, he claimed that the

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<sup>11</sup> Kaldor 2006, 80.

world was “multipolar *and* multicivilizational [italics in original],”<sup>12</sup> indicating that primordial fault lines could now be drawn not just by sovereign territorial borders, but also by one’s identity. Even though he was specifically referencing Islamic societies, the central thesis has reverberated around the world as an important indicator and/or determinant of non-state violence. Indeed, for Huntington, identity is part of the person and cannot be changed – that is, a person’s identity is best understood as quasi-biological – “in one’s bones.”

Other scholars (Brown and Boswell 1997; Byman 1998; Kaldor 2006) believe that the usage of identity is strategic. As Byman (1998) states, identity politics is used when one “seek[s] to foster communal identity in contrast to an identity proposed by the state.”<sup>13</sup> To be sure, nothing gets someone more excited and capable to take action if one truly feels separate from the “other.” In fact, Brown and Boswell (1997) empirically found that separatist identity has a positive effect on political violence.

Specifically on identity politics in Spain, studies on the Basque Country and Catalonia have revolved around regional identities as defined by language. Indeed, some accounts (e.g. Beck and Markusse 2008; Laitin 1999) claim that language is not only the easiest variable to study, but also the one that most matters when making one feel different to Spaniards. Understanding either Basque or Catalan, therefore, makes one “different” to a Spaniard; this distinction makes it easier to commit acts of terrorism against one. While this argument is the most mainstream, other studies – primarily that done by De la Calle and Miley (2008) – contest the aforementioned studies by showing that there is still a variation in feelings of identity

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<sup>12</sup> Huntington 1996, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Byman 1998, 149.

whether someone speaks the language or not. In other words, someone who does not speak Catalan may feel less Spanish than someone who does.<sup>14</sup>

In the following case studies, then, the degree to which language as a form of identity politics is connected to terrorism will be surveyed. To be sure, both ETA and TL championed their regional languages – *Euskera* and *Catalan* – as one of the main sources for why the groups wanted independence. Therefore, the main focus will be on the degree to which language is a form of identity politics and is connected to terrorism.

### *Nationalism and Terrorism*

The debate on how to define nationalism is reaching a conclusion. Indeed, the constructivist point of view that sees nationalism as “imagined communities”<sup>15</sup> is becoming the prevalent view among nationalism scholars (Anderson 2006; Deutsch 1953; Gellner 2006; Kohn 1955). One can “belong” to a nationality for whatever reason the individual chooses. Indeed, how one defines his or her nationalistic identity is what matters most. In other words, one self-selects one’s nationalistic feelings. How nationalism can be used, though, is still a matter of discussion.

Many scholars believe that nationalism is used for political reasons; and, in the words of Breuilly (1994), “politics is about power.”<sup>16</sup> Naturally, these scholars claim, wanting to either control the state or a certain territory leads to violence. Thus, nationalism is used solely for the attainment of power. Along the same lines, Posen (1993) believes that what drives nationalism is

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<sup>14</sup> De la Calle and Miley 2008, 715-718.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Breuilly 1994, 1.

interest, and as long as one group shares the interests of the individual – especially if it is defending territory – then that individual will join the group.

Others have a less Hobbesian view of nationalism. For example, certain scholars (Conversi 1999; Hechter 2000) claim that nationalism is solely for purposes of self-determination. As Conversi (1999) states, “When groups in conflict share too many elements of the same culture, difficulties in their self-definition may emerge. The leaders of the subordinated group have then to create other contexts and fabricate new options in order to emphasize group identity and define ethnic boundaries.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, nationalism rises to make one separate from an “other.” The more cultural markers there are, the easier it is to differentiate between groups.

An interesting set of scholars (e.g. Ross 1995) claim that nationalism depends on the strength and diversity of government. If nationalism exists but has a political outlet, then it will stay within the political arena; however, if there are no political outlets for the nationalistic sentiment, then it could lead to violent expression. To be sure, terrorism is a possible outcome of having no place to express one’s views in a political forum. This thesis is important for understanding the rise of terrorism in Spain, especially ETA, because the political parties did not do enough for the ethno-nationalists in order to achieve complete autonomy from Spain’s central government. This then leads us to ask: what do studies say about nationalism in Spain itself?

Laraway (2007), in an exegesis of a news story, believes that nationalism’s main goal in Spain is “to make the body disappear, so that the body-politic may take its place.”<sup>18</sup> To be clear, nationalism in Spain is to make the achievement of a group’s grand goal more important than the

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<sup>17</sup> Conversi 1999, 583.

<sup>18</sup> Laraway 2007, 363.

fate of the individual.<sup>19</sup> Like Breuilly (1994) predicted, the political goal – power – is vastly superior to the needs of a member. Yet, as Woodworth (2004) would claim, this kind of nationalism exists not because of a craving for power, but rather because Spanish society is too fragmented. Using post-Civil War state repression to make his point, he believes that singled-out groups (especially Catalonians and Basques) became more cohesive and wary of the central government. Thus, until the Spanish government succeeds in making members of its territories feel completely “Spanish” again, notions of regional allegiance – i.e. “Basqueness” and “Catalanism” – will persist.

Tejerina (2001) is of the belief that nationalism in Spain, when used by terrorists, is to mobilize society. This study argues that, depending on the situation, the mobilization strategy differs. Since the mainstream political groups that advocated for Basque and Catalanian separatism are no longer permitted in the central governmental structure, then political violence is the only recourse. The claim, though, assumes that people will stay connected to one’s nationalism even after violence is used. Connecting this belief to ETA, for example, it presumes that the same nationalists that supported the nationalistic political party PNV will be the same that support ETA. Indeed, people would be so blinded by nationalistic fervor that the usage of violence would not “turn off” some followers. My analysis, which will come later, does not support this view.

Instead, this author believes that nationalism is easily swayed within Spain and that violence must be used to get people to join in on the diverging tactic of expression. In a thesis surveying how nationalistic sentiment is flexible in Spain, Kuper (2008) tracked nationalistic

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<sup>19</sup> In Laraway’s (2007) study, a female ETA agent accidentally blew herself up when trying to make a bomb in her apartment for usage on a target. Her death was singled-out by Basque nationalists as a symbol of what it takes to achieve the goal. Indeed, she was not mourned by Basque separatists – only celebrated.



feelings based on the sporting national teams of the country (mostly “main sports” like soccer). He found that people who identified themselves as a Catalan or a Basque more so than Spanish rooted for the national team and celebrated their triumphs. This indicates that, depending on the circumstance, the path chosen to advance the nationalistic cause is supported only as long as it unconditionally works (to some extent, this is the same general argument advanced by Posen). Ho (2005), in his analysis on Spain under Prime Minister Zapatero, found that the government is creating a “New Spain” by changing cultural norms and passing legislation that reverses long-held feelings in the country (e.g. gay marriage is now accepted). Of course, Ho’s assertion of a “New Spain” assumes an “Old Spain” where Spaniards, on the whole, shared multiple values. This can only occur because the central state had been doing so well, especially after choosing to join the European Union. The terrorist groups in the Basque Country and Catalonia, though, did not share these ideas. In order to get people on board with their violent campaigns, they had to sway people’s nationalistic feelings toward their regional ones through force. As support for both of these groups has dramatically dropped since their inception, nationalistic sentiment is oscillating back from the regions to the state because the violent path has largely failed. This thesis will try to make this point more comprehensive in later pages.

## II. HISTORY OF TERRORISM IN SPAIN

The modern-day conception of “Spain” is relatively new. “The empire [of the 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries] created Spain,” explains Henry Kamen, one of the preeminent scholars on Spain and its history. “The collaboration of the peoples of the peninsula in the task of empire...gave them a common cause that brought them together and enhanced, *however imperfectly*, peninsular unity” [italics added for emphasis].<sup>20</sup> To understand the beginnings of both terrorist movements, then, is to understand the imperfections of the Spanish project. As will be demonstrated, the national histories of both the Basque Country and Catalonia predate the empirical consolidation of Spain. Most importantly, the languages of the regions – *Euskera* for the Basques and *Catalan* for the Catalonians – were used (or claimed to be used) well before the Kingdom of Castile spread throughout the peninsula and simultaneously institutionalized its own language, Castilian (known today as “Spanish”). For Spain’s central authority and its appendages, language implies “the imposition of culture, customs;” indeed, “language is power.”<sup>21</sup> It is therefore no surprise that language became important for both terrorist movements.

The following two sections will detail the beginnings of ETA and TL. Emphasis will be placed on how both groups came into being and how action against the state was justified by them. What will become apparent to the reader is that both movements visibly changed their *modus operandi* in order to justify the continuation of violent action. The implication is that, while the group may have been originally established to address a grievance, the organization’s story must be malleable enough for the people to accept it and flexible enough so that the message holds true regardless of external factors.

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<sup>20</sup> Kamen 2003, xxv.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid4.

## Basques: Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA)

### *The Original/Last Indigenous Europeans*

The Basque Country (or *Euskal Herria* in *Euskera*, the Basque language) lies in a mountainous region in northern Spain and southwestern France. The Spanish side has 86 percent of the territory and 91 percent of the roughly three million people who inhabit the region.<sup>22</sup> According to most Basques, the area has required protection against a plethora of invaders during their approximately 400,000-year occupation of the territory; these invaders include Celts, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors and Franks.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Basques can, and do, claim to be the oldest living Europeans. Or, in the words of currently prominent Basque politician Arnaldo Otegi, “we are the last indigenous people in Europe,” and “we are very deeply attached to our land.”<sup>24</sup>

While there are records of interactions with Basque people in the region during the third century BC,<sup>25</sup> it is not definitively certain whether the Basque people have lived and defended their current homeland for so long. It is important to remember, though, that truth is not as important as the veracity people attribute to a story. In other words, if many people of the Basque Country claim that they have constantly fought off waves of attacks to preserve their way of life, then the story becomes a social certainty despite a lack of a historical record to prove it.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Anderson 2003, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Woodworth 2001, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson 2003, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Woodworth 2001, 3.

## *The Basques Against the World*

As Robert Clark mentions in his book *The Basque Insurgents*, there has been a “long struggle between centralism and regionalism in Spain.”<sup>27</sup> The two Carlist Wars,<sup>28</sup> the first from 1833 – 1840 and the second from 1873 – 1876, saw the Basque Country lose its autonomy and regional independence.<sup>29</sup> After thousands of years of fighting off strangers and claiming the land as its own entity, it officially became part of Spain as a result of the region’s defeat. Carlist Sabino Arana y Goiri, who would become the ideologue behind the modern-day notion of Basque nationalism, was not ready to accept that. In 1895, he formed the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) in order to rectify what he deemed an historical blip.<sup>30</sup>

Arana’s dissent, though, was more than a mere attempt to regain the political status just lost. Instead, Arana’s aim was to institutionalize the nationalistic fervor people feel. To be sure, Basques did not feel Spanish, but that sentiment was not organized in a separatist, populist campaign. Arana felt that the only way to mobilize this separatist sentiment was to attribute it to an independence movement. He was therefore left with only one alternative – he had to create a notion of Basque independence for himself. First, Arana designed the Basque flag and even created a name for his region – *Euskadi*.<sup>31</sup> He then figured that the Basque language itself – with no other language near it in similitude – would be the perfect marker of identity separation. In other words, speaking *Euskera* automatically makes one non-Spanish. Nationalistic sentiment was subsequently made easier due to increased immigration, especially from other parts of

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<sup>27</sup> Clark 1984, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Wars in Spain between traditionalism (Catholicism) and liberalism (republicanism). The Basque Country played a big role in the first one.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Anderson 2003, 13-4.

<sup>31</sup> Woodworth 2001, 4.

Spain, because of the rapid industrialization of the region.<sup>32</sup> *Euskera* (the Basque name for the Basque language) and *Euskadi* stood out as different from what he would eventually refer to as “immoral and godless immigrant workers from other regions.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the more foreigners that occupied the area, the more Arana worried that his culture might become extinct. The only way to ensure this did not happen, he claimed, was by making the Basque Country completely independent from Spanish authority. He knew that such a conclusion was so radical that he would need an equally radical idea that would make other Basques heed his call.<sup>34</sup>

Arana, then, would use *Euskera* to make the conclusive distinction between a Basque and a Spaniard. Indeed, his “pure-blood” people were to have sole access to *Euskera*, thereby defining race within the context of language. To be sure, *Euskera* was to be purely a Basque trait, and if it were to be tainted, so would the entire concept of Basque nationalism:

“If our invaders were to learn *Euskera*, we would have to abandon it...and dedicate ourselves to speaking Russian, Norwegian or any other language...[if the Spanish government] were to [make *Euskera* the state’s official language], it would be for us the final blow of unavoidable death dealt from the most refined diplomacy.”<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, this was Arana’s way of perpetuating *Euskera* as the quintessential Basque trait. As historian John Sullivan put it, “the singularity of *Euskera* encouraged the belief that the Basques were a race apart.”<sup>36</sup> With this, both the linguistic and racial paradigms of Basque nationalism were in place. Arana had successfully spawned an ideology that was soon to clash with another more powerful and central one that would only help to solidify the power of his own.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Sullivan 1999, 34.

<sup>34</sup> Sullivan 1988, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Conversi 1997, 173

<sup>36</sup> Sullivan 1988, 2.

From 1936-1939 Spain was embroiled in a civil war that would end up being a pseudo-proxy war for World War II. General Francisco Franco staged a coup on the democratic Republican government to turn Spain into a fascist paradise, one where militaristic Catholic Spaniards could rule the country. The PNV – not a friend of the central government – supported the Republican side because it figured it had a better shot at Basque independence via democratic means than with a Spanish dictator as Generalissimo. Franco was displeased that an important section of the country was against him, and he was willing to do anything to make the Basque Country fall in line.

Franco was ruthless during his campaign to rule Spain, but he was especially so toward the Basques. In April 1937 Franco's ruthlessness toward the region reached an apex. Franco, needing aid to complete his coup of the Spanish government, made a deal with Hitler's Nazi regime. Franco wanted to disrupt a Basque front in the north, but could not afford to bring his troops to the mountains. Therefore, he asked Hitler to bomb the front for him. Hitler agreed as this would allow for his *Luftwaffe* to test precision bombers. Once agreed, Hitler sent Junker-52 planes strapped with bombs and dropped them on the small Basque town of Guernica.<sup>37</sup> This solidified in the mind of the Basque that the central Spanish government "was trying to root them out as a people and turn their homeland into an industrial wasteland."<sup>38</sup>

As Franco advanced and controlled the Basque Country, he attempted to root out all semblances of Basque identity. Franco banned the PNV from political life and also ordered the "death, imprisonment or torture," of all Basque leaders that had not left with the exiled Basque government to France in 1937.<sup>39</sup> Franco continued his merciless wrath on the Basque Country as

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<sup>37</sup> Payne 2008, 36-7.

<sup>38</sup> Shepard 2002, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson 2003, 15.

his administration outlawed “any form of public display of Basque identity, including the speaking of *Euskera*.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, if any of these rules were broken, Franco would authorize military action to repress the dissent. Franco – who considered himself Spain incarnate – now controlled the region by brutal force. What Franco did not anticipate, though, was that his course of action in the territory would have the opposite effect he intended: “The combination of the bloodshed of the city of Guernica in April 1937 and the ferocious oppression of the Franco dictatorship made Basques even more aware of their ethnic heritage and bound them together more tightly as a political force.”<sup>41</sup> It would be a while before this tighter political force would emanate, and it would materialize in one of the most famous resistance movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *The Duck Rises*

While Franco was still in power in 1952, a study group at Deusto University in Bilbao (one of the Basque Country’s biggest cities) met to discuss Basque politics and how it related to the nationalist movement. They were upset with the PNV on two fronts: 1) the party had sided with the losing side during the war, leading to the harsh repression and death by Franco’s regime, and 2) that the PNV had made little to no progress in establishing an independent *Euskadi*.<sup>42</sup> To make their displeasure known, this group published an underground bulletin called *Ekin*, which

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Clark 1984, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson 2003, 15.

in Basque loosely translates to “to do” or “to act.”<sup>43</sup> The bulletin was received with acclaim in Bilbao, and soon the group was known by the name of its publication.

At the same time, members of the PNV’s youth organization, *Eusko Gaztedi* (EGI), were growing disenchanted with the PNV’s performance. Members of EGI – who were older and had more prominent contacts than those of *Ekin* – were constant readers of the bulletin and found the message inspiring. While the PNV had to take into account the political reality, *Ekin* was demonstrably more intransigent in its nationalist demands.<sup>44</sup> In 1956, the EGI reached out to the *Ekin* so that they could fuse and begin a more forceful push for liberation. *Ekin* was skeptical, especially since the members knew they would have more freedom to operate outside of the political arena. However, it was (and still is) Basque custom to respect and follow older leaders (even if only slightly older), so *Ekin* obliged and the two groups formed into one.<sup>45</sup>

The group, when they finally met as a whole, decided that Arana’s nationalist message of Basque racial superiority was not populist enough to garner support. Indeed, the group would only gain backers if the message was a just one. They knew, then, that racism would have to be eradicated from their ideology; instead, the group “reverted to the original definition [of a Basque]. A Basque is a *Euskaldun*, someone who speaks *Euskera*.”<sup>46</sup> In other words, the group wanted to promote the forbidden Basque language for general usage. Inspired by the Algerian rebellion against the French, they felt that Franz Fanon’s theory of “action/repression/action” would be the best way to garner attention for their linguistic and nationalistic cause.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the consensus was that they would be a terrorist organization. The members chose the name *ATA*

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<sup>43</sup> Barros 2003, 402.

<sup>44</sup> Clark 1984, 26-7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Kurlansky 1999, 235.

<sup>47</sup> Conversi 1997, 244.



(Homeland and Liberty) as the moniker for their group. But, they soon learned that in the Vizcayan dialect of *Euskera*, “ata” translated to the word “duck”.<sup>48</sup> To be taken seriously, the group had to change its name. Finally, they settled on *ETA* – an acronym for Basque Homeland and Freedom.

The group’s introduction to the world was not particularly successful. On July 18, 1961, Franco held a twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of his coup in San Sebastián – a major city in the Basque Country. Franco was bringing in supporters from all over Spain into the city by train to join him in revelry. ETA would use this opportunity to make a (literal) bang, but it was still too timid and unprepared to kill people. ETA’s reluctance to inflict the ultimate harm caused them to plant the bombs too far away from the train tracks and the attack failed to derail a single railcar.<sup>49</sup> Of course, the explosions were noticeable and Franco came down on the group, imprisoning and/or forcibly resettling over a hundred members of ETA and their friends and family.<sup>50</sup> After months of persecution, ETA’s exiled Executive Committee (operating from France) sent out a declaration of intent saying they were a “secret organization intent on gaining Basque independence as soon as possible through whatever means necessary, including violence.”<sup>51</sup> Despite the failure, the declaration was clear – ETA was planning to continue these kinds of acts. To be sure, ETA’s operations and terror truly began in earnest in 1968.<sup>52</sup> However, nothing compared to what they would accomplish on a calm Sunday years later.

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<sup>48</sup> Kurlansky 1999, 234.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson 2003, 18-9.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Barros et al., 2006, 97.

## *Killing the Ogre*

On December 20, 1973 the ETA launched a successful attack that brought them to prominence. As Franco was nearing death, he named Prime Minister Admiral Luís Carrero Blanco as his successor to carry on the dictatorial regime. Blanco, like Franco and many leaders in the administration, was devoutly Catholic and faithfully attended church every Sunday. His routine was like clockwork: he arrived at the church at the same time, parked in the same spot, and left at the same time every week.<sup>53</sup> ETA, looking to make amends for their failure in San Sebastian, chose to use this routine to their advantage.

Blanco was not highly regarded among the plebeians of Spain. In fact, he was commonly referred to as “the ogre.”<sup>54</sup> After stalking Blanco’s Sunday routine at the church, ETA decided that he and his timeline were predictable enough to plan a high-profile, large-scale attack. While the ogre was attending mass, ETA agents planted 165 pounds of dynamite in the street under his car.<sup>55</sup> When the prime minister returned to his vehicle, the explosion went off, effortlessly hurling the car into the air and instantly killing the admiral.<sup>56</sup> With Blanco’s killing the ETA became the state’s biggest internal enemy, and an important vehicle for potential independence.

## *Coup de Grace*

The attention the attack garnered was not what all members of the organization wanted. Some in ETA had cautioned that targeting the admiral would make all compromise with the Spanish government impossible, thereby ending any chance of a political solution for their cause.

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<sup>53</sup> Anderson 2003, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Shepard 2002, 57-8.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Sullivan 1999, 35.

The ones that carried out the attack, of course, felt that radical action was needed for something as radical as the Spanish release of the Basque Country to occur. This internal struggle eventually culminated in an organizational split. Those who believed in a joint politico-military solution formed a cell called ETA-PM (ETA-Politico-Military), whereas those that wanted to continue the relentless armed struggle established ETA-M (Military).<sup>57</sup> While they differed on the role and extent of politics in their strategy, they both agreed on one thing: terrorist activity was still required.

ETA-PM went on to sponsor a political party to fight in elections, *Euskadiko Ezkerra* (EE). Quite quickly, members of the party were elected to the Basque parliament.<sup>58</sup> EE's rapid success made ETA-M realize that progress toward the ultimate goal could be realized through politics. Some members defected from ETA-M and fused with members of EE's and formed Herri Batasuna (HB), a political group that strives for Basque independence (and that is still powerful today).<sup>59</sup> The repression in the Basque Country, then, fell heavily on ETA-PM. Their response to the violence toward them was to kill eighty-five people throughout the course of a yearlong bombing campaign in 1980, the most violent year for the group.<sup>60</sup> In addition, 1980 was the first year that the Basque parliament started working which angered ETA because it legitimized autonomy but not independence.<sup>61</sup> In response, the government formed a paramilitary group, the Basque Spanish Battalion (BE), but it proved to be unproductive and disbanded rapidly.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Woodworth 2001, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Sullivan 1999, 35.

<sup>61</sup> Clark 1984, 134.

<sup>62</sup> Sullivan 1999, 35.

ETA-PM's increase in violence in 1980 made all of Spain, especially the central government, fearful that its use of terrorist tactics would escalate. The government, then, stopped openly opposing ETA-PM to see if attacks would cease. General Tejero of the Spanish military, however, worried that the new strategy was weak and would allow ETA-PM more room to conduct attacks. With this in mind, Tejero staged a coup on the new government – but promptly failed.<sup>63</sup> Tejero, who represented the Right of the political spectrum, was so hated that he pushed the election in favor of the Left. Indeed, the Socialist Party would win the election in December 1982. Not wanting to appear soft on terrorism, the new regime set up an anti-terrorist paramilitary group, the Anti-Terror Liberation group (GAL), to combat ETA operatives wherever they might be.<sup>64</sup> From 1983-1987, the GAL was active. While GAL successfully killed 28 members of ETA,<sup>65</sup> it also killed many Basques that were in no way affiliated with the terrorist organization in Spain and France.<sup>66</sup> The violence perpetuated in the Basque Country appeared to be nothing more than gratuitous violence ordained by the central government against the Basque people.<sup>67</sup> Once again, Madrid would not endear itself to its fellow citizens in the north.

### *“Like Antibiotics”*

ETA, as a whole, has killed around 800 people, injured around 1000, and kidnapped 77 victims.<sup>68</sup> In addition, ETA has robbed, raided, bombed, and sabotaged government events. For

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Barros and Gil-Alana 2006, 99.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Anderson 2003, 34.

<sup>67</sup> Shepard 2002, 60-1.

<sup>68</sup> Anderson 2003, 47.

years, ETA has been a problem for Spain as they target politicians, law enforcement or anything that symbolizes the authority of the central state. In fact, as Anderson (2003) points out, only about nine percent of ETA's victims have been innocents.<sup>69</sup>

Over time ETA realized that terrorist activity would not grant it its wish and, “partly under the impact of the IRA ceasefire,”<sup>70</sup> ETA and the Spanish government reached a ceasefire in 1998. That one, however, failed after ETA began to kill again in 1999. The good thing to come out of that short-lived treaty was that ETA did not kill many people during this time. In fact, ETA's presence was quite benign; nevertheless, ETA would not sign another ceasefire until 2006. But once again, ETA broke the deal. On December 30, 2006, ETA bombed Madrid's Barajas airport in a clear copycat operation like that of the IRA's 1996 Canary Wharf attack in London.<sup>71</sup> The attack is clearly seen as a last-ditch effort since ETA's musings are no longer as enticing in a well-established democratic system. With this being true, ETA has – for the third time – approached the Spanish government for another ceasefire. Yet, as Woodworth (2007) warns, “ceasefires are like antibiotics, losing their power every time they are repeated.”<sup>72</sup> With this in mind, the Spanish government has refused another ceasefire. Therefore, ETA technically continues as an active organization. Indeed, members of Europe's oldest ‘nation’ continue to make up Europe's oldest active terrorist group.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Sullivan 1999, 35.

<sup>71</sup> Woodworth 2007, 65.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 72.

## Catalonians: Terra Lliure (TL)

### *“Until the General Died”*

General Francisco Franco, in his quest to homogenize Spain, tried to suppress anything that would undermine these efforts. A Spaniard, he claimed, must naturally speak Spanish and would only want to speak that language. Unfortunately for the Generalissimo, Spain’s economic powerhouse region, Catalonia, considered *Catalan* its official language. Indeed, for centuries, the Kingdom of Catalonia had prided itself on its language and culture, which it viewed as distinct from the Castilians.<sup>73</sup> When Franco won the war, he suppressed Catalanian culture in a similar fashion to how he dealt with the Basques. Overmatched, the Catalonians succumbed to Franco’s machinations.<sup>74</sup>

While unhappy with their situation, Catalonians did speak Spanish in school and in public forums, lest they be heard by the Civil Guard. However, *Catalan* was secretly spoken in homes and, more publicly, at F.C. Barcelona (“Barca”) soccer games, where a single chant among 100,000 was hard to distinguish (in fact, this sense of freedom in Barca’s stadium, the *Camp Nou*, is why most Catalonians feel that the team is a symbol of Catalan independence today).<sup>75</sup> Surely it was not that Catalonians were happy with their situation. Indeed, a future TL leader, Josep Serra, said that “we were all just waiting until the General died for us to regain our prominence.”<sup>76</sup> In 1975, the General did die, and Catalonians felt that, after suffering for nearly forty years at the hands of Spaniards, their culture could only return to full prominence if the

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<sup>73</sup> Kamen 2003, 6.

<sup>74</sup> Beevor 2006, 331.

<sup>75</sup> Foer 2005, 173.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Viladot 1982.

region were independent of central authority.<sup>77</sup> How, though, would this be achieved? Josep Serra answered this question simply with a pamphlet he circulated around his small village of Fontpedrosa: *The Necessity of Armed Force*.<sup>78</sup>

### *The Martyrs*

With Franco gone, democracy began its growing pangs in Spanish politics. As with most European countries, the array of political ideologies is vast, including liberalism, Fascism and Marxism among others. During Franco's reign, all but Fascism was suppressed. The transition to a new government, though, brought all these ideas back into the discussion of how to form the new Spanish government. Despite these differences, the one idea that was talked about – and that most people agreed with – in the pubs and in homes which resonated with most people was that Catalonia deserved to be independent.<sup>79</sup> For this reason multiple groups started to appear after democracy was installed in Catalonia which was formed to help Catalonia free itself from Spain: the Popular Catalan Army (EPOCA), the Catalan Liberation Front (FAC), and the Socialist Party of National Liberation (PSAN).<sup>80</sup> These groups would later morph into a more militant coalition of groups that came to be known as TL. This process was spearheaded by two men who would become martyrs for the Catalan cause—Martí Marco and Felix Goñi.

Both Marco and Goñi were adamant Catalan nationalist and would end up embodying the proverbial “last straw.” On January 30, 1979, Marco was acting abusively toward law enforcement at a political rally for the PSAN. He was seen chanting slogans for

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<sup>77</sup> Bassa 2007, 32.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Anonymous 1985.

<sup>80</sup> Busquets 1988.

independence and stirred the scene into a more robust frenzy. The details of what happened next are unclear. The official story is that an officer saw Marco with a bomb hidden under his jacket and promptly shot him dead.<sup>81</sup> People at the scene believe he was not armed with explosives, but this will never be known because his body was quickly removed from the scene by officials. Yet, as previously stated, the facts are not as important as a widely believed story; and what Catalan nationalists believe is that he was shot down by Spanish law enforcement for relaying his belief in an independent Catalonia.<sup>82</sup> Marco's funeral would end up being well attended by many supporters. His family, who believed he'd been shot without proper cause, wrapped his corpse with the Catalan independence flag. The movement now had a martyr; more importantly, a symbol wrapped within a symbol.

Goñi's story is much less dramatic but equally as powerful. Goñi had read Serra's words and found them inspiring. In order to carry out armed struggle, he created a bomb in his home to use against civil guards.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately for Goñi, he miscalculated in making the bomb and it detonated en route to its location, instantly killing him. His death could have easily been set aside as a fluke and never thought of again, but the incident sparked a chord with Blanca Serra (Josep's sister), who founded the Committee of Solidarity for Catalan Patriots (CSPC) to show support for any militant who was willing to die for the cause of independence.<sup>84</sup> The CSPC rallied around the Goñi mishap and him into a martyr for the cause of Catalan independence. The movement for independence now had its martyrs – symbols – and it inspired a movement willing to carry out Goñi-esque operations. This movement would be known as *Terra Lliure* (TL) – Free Land.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Viladot 1982.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Bassa 2007, 52.



## *“A Catalan ETA”*

The members of TL came out of the PSAN in order to follow the example of Marco and Goñi.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, the PSAN, with the exceptions of Goñi and Marco, was content to take the issue of independence up with government, but was unwilling to do anything to coerce it to listen. In January 1980 – essentially a year after the Marco incident – Josep Serra, Josep de Calasanz aka “Cala,” Carles Castellanos, Jaume Fernandez i Calvet, and sisters Blanca and Eva Serra chose to form an organization designed to achieve Catalanian independence via armed struggle.<sup>86</sup> Seven months later, the idea proved a reality.

TL first burst onto the scene by attacking FESCA. FESCA was a company owned by the Spanish government and received a contract to build multiple nuclear power plants in Catalonia for more efficient electricity distribution.<sup>87</sup> The news of the contract immediately caused a stir when it was discovered that no Catalanian companies were considered for the contract. The appointment of FESCA was viewed as a way for the central government to control the daily lives of Catalonians all over again. With displeasure aimed at the company palpable, TL thought that attacking the building would be a foolproof plan. On July 25, 1980, the theory was tested. “Cala” and Calvet constructed a bomb and planted it inside FESCA’s Barcelona office. The bomb detonated a few minutes later, causing immense damage to the building.<sup>88</sup> As was intended, no one was killed since the building itself was still being erected. TL took credit for the attack, and TVE, Spain’s government-owned television channel, claimed that they must be “a Catalan ETA.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ribas 1988.

<sup>86</sup> Viladot 1982.

<sup>87</sup> Anonymous 1985.

<sup>88</sup> Viladot 1982.

<sup>89</sup> Anonymous 1985.

In 1981, TL secured its status as the premier freedom fighter for Catalonians. Fresh off of trying to kill the former mayor of Barcelona who was a member of the Franco regime,<sup>90</sup> TL learned that the University of Barcelona had still not switched over to teaching in *Catalan* because they were apprehensive about changing what had been institutionalized for approximately forty years. TL, vociferously advocating for the usage of *Catalan* in the name of cultural and linguistic rights,<sup>91</sup> bombed the university. When TL explained the reason for the attack, “a symbol of our anti-fascist stance,”<sup>92</sup> it was so positively received that the citizens – not TL – organized a rally so they could meet their heroes.<sup>93</sup>

The rally was to be held at one of the most sacred places for any Catalanian, the *Camp Nou*, where the region’s pride, Barca, play their home games. The stadium can hold up to 100,000 people, and four-fifths of the seats were filled with anxious followers waiting to catch a glimpse of TL militants. It was there that the members proudly proclaimed “We Are a Nation,”<sup>94</sup> a sentiment that is still held in the hearts and minds of many Catalanians. Of course, there was still more to be done, and TL was sure set on doing it.

### *Creating Rubble*

Josep Serra was frank when he was interviewed in 1984 by TV3, Catalonia’s state-owned network: “We need to make a bunch of scenes. Some against nuclear power, others against the

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<sup>90</sup> Bassa 2007, 65.

<sup>91</sup> Ruis 1993.

<sup>92</sup> Calvet 1986, 76.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Bassa 2007, 77.

state. We need scenes so people can see Spaniards picking up the rubble we created.”<sup>95</sup>

Following Serra’s interview, TL made good on his promise. . 1984 saw forty attacks in Catalonia, leading Barcelona police to chase after many TL members. In fact, police found four hiding spots used by TL to stash arms, ammunition and explosives.<sup>96</sup> What got the most publicity, though, was the *Statement of Principles* also found in the hideout.<sup>97</sup> In it were maxims about what TL aimed to accomplish. When the document was made public, it gave TL a boost in public opinion.

However, the raid proved something else: that law enforcement was catching on to TL. From 1985-1986, Spanish police and the Spanish secret service arrested around one hundred militants.<sup>98</sup> TL was severely weakened. ETA, interested in the plight of other nationalists against the state, attacked Hipercor (an industrial company) in Barcelona to show solidarity in 1987.<sup>99</sup> Soon after the attack, Calvet and other spoke out against the attack, claiming that the armed struggle was solely to be a Catalanian fight. ETA never attacked in Catalonia again, but the public was wondering if the fight could even continue, especially if other terrorist groups had to complete the mission for TL. Ironically, this sentiment grew stronger as a TL attack meant to show Catalonians that they were back to full strength accidentally killed a woman as a loose wall fell on top of her.<sup>100</sup>

Police had gotten so good at arresting TL militants that it was nearly decimated again in 1988. TL, the police realized, was nothing more than small cells spread around the Catalonia with no real central authority. Indeed, they were more like franchises – the members of each cell

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Ibid, 101.

<sup>96</sup> Marchena 1987.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Bassa 2007, 95.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>100</sup> Anonymous 1988.

knew each other, but did not know anybody else in the organization.<sup>101</sup> In fact, there was no central organization holding them together to lay out a unified strategy. As a police report would indicate, police procedures had cause TL to have “low numbers, [be] poorly organized, and [be] barely armed.”<sup>102</sup> By 1990, TL was losing public support and ranks as its operations were severely decimated and had not come close to achieving its goal. In a last-gasp effort, TL planted several bombs on February 9, 1990 in another FESCA office in Barcelona that was meant to kill people. While the attack injured many, there were no casualties. Despite their murderous intentions, TL’s *modus operandi* was, and had always been, to use medium-grade bombs that would not kill a person if he were not very near the device.<sup>103</sup> The attack, while meant to garner the support the group once had, did not do much toward that effort. Even worse, the planning of the attack was heavily protested within the organization, and the execution of it would split it (this will be mentioned later in this thesis).<sup>104</sup>

### *Another Solution*

A group arose out of frustration with the ineffectiveness of TL: Catalunya Lliure (CL). Its mission was simple: get what TL wanted, but via political means. Some in TL became enamored with the message, but not the organization. Thus, in 1989, TL would split into two groups. TL-IV would do the exact same thing as CL – achieve independence using the political process – and TL III Assemblea would continue what TL had been doing since its founding.<sup>105</sup> TL-III,

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<sup>101</sup> Anonymous 1985.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Bassa 2007, 146.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 147.

feeling that the notion of armed struggle was fading, took to the media to explain its reasoning for staying the course.

A political party, partly inspired by CL, emerged in the *Generalitat*, the Catalanian autonomous parliament. The *Esquerra Republica de Catalunya* (ERC), or Republic Left of Catalonia, became a legal party that formed to fight for independence within the halls of parliament. In essence, the ERC was similar to the PNV in the Basque Country and Madrid. It had gained support so rapidly that in 1991, the same year as the party's founding, members of TL IV joined the ranks.<sup>106</sup> The most important of these new members was Pere Bascompte, who was a prominent TL leader for two years.<sup>107</sup> He claimed that this was the best and only way to achieve the stated goals of TL. Fighting, he claimed, was no longer an option.

TL III, however, was not yet done. In the same year that Bascompte joined the ERC, the still-surviving TL III committed six small-scale attacks. One of them was somewhat substantial, as INEM, as national Spanish company, was attacked in a well-to-do neighborhood of Barcelona.<sup>108</sup> This led many to fear that TL III would attack during the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, which were meant to demonstrate the progress Spain had made only seventeen years after living under a dictatorship. Security was so tight that the Olympic torch was escorted by civil guards throughout its entire trip around the country.<sup>109</sup> TL would still have its presence felt before the games when King Juan Carlos was jeered and booed as he inaugurated the Montjuic

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>107</sup> Ruis 1993.

<sup>108</sup> Bassa 2007, 156.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 158.

Stadium a month before the games.<sup>110</sup> The vociferous dissent, of course, came from TL supporters.<sup>111</sup>

During the games TL successfully completed two attacks: one in Girona (Catalonia's second largest city) and Barcelona.<sup>112</sup> Embarrassed, the *Generalitat* ordered that any measure necessary be taken to defeat TL III once and for all. A fifteen-day raid ensued that led to the arrest of over fifty independence fighters.<sup>113</sup> With militant numbers already low, the raid ended TL's reign of terror.

On April 3, 1995, the twenty-five TL militants still in prison were all called to trial. They were still serving their sentences, but because TL had vowed to end all violence – and there had not been since the bombings during the Olympic Games – the judge would allow them all to be released on the condition that they promised to stop all violent acts. Without hesitation, the twenty-five agreed to the condition.<sup>114</sup> The militants were released with the Catalanian independence flags in hand.<sup>115</sup> At that moment, on September 11, 1995, TL III dissolved. The armed struggle for Catalanian independence had ended. Today, that mantle is carried within the halls of the *Generalitat*. Sixteen years later, Catalonia is still a part of Spain, although it remains autonomous.

## Conclusion

Even though ETA proceeds with violent action, it is interesting to see how both groups

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Amat 2004, 102.

<sup>112</sup> Ruis 1993.

<sup>113</sup> Bassa 2007, 160.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 162-5.

<sup>115</sup> Amat 2004, 113.

ultimately migrated toward a political solution. Indeed, terrorism arose out of violent repression during and after the Spanish Civil War, but died down years later. This is completely true for TL but only marginally true for the Basque Country since (as will be discussed) the inability of Basques to speak their language keeps ETA functional.

Yet, this paper aims to show describe the rise and maintenance of these groups via the prisms of economics, identity politics and public opinion. While the final conclusion is that identity politics is the most convincing argument for both of the groups, all variables should be considered before making this judgment. The discussion of the variables follows, with a particular focus on how these variables will be researched and subsequently surveyed. It is to the methodology that we now turn.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### Case Study

There are three reasons why I feel compelled to write this thesis. One reason is that most studies focusing on terrorism and economics are about terrorist in the Third World. While Spain under Franco was not an affluent country, both ETA and TL operated even as Spain became economically stronger during and after the transition to democracy. The second reason is that most studies on terrorism and identity politics focus on religion. However, both of these groups defined themselves in terms of their regional and linguistic ties. In other words, religion was never a rationale for terroristic action by these two groups. Finally, most studies claim that groups can only survive if public opinion for the group is high. This, however, was not the case for these two groups. Thus, this thesis is unique in that it differs from most studies in these ways. In the end, all this data will be synthesized to give a clear picture of the divergent paths these groups took, and ultimately see why TL died, and why ETA has remained on the battlefield. In this section I discuss my data collection and analysis techniques.

#### Data Collection

Terrorism is a field that has produced a plethora of studies. In fact, a fair number of these have ETA as a subject; further, some compare ETA and TL. Yet, the studies that do the latter tend to come from Spanish-speaking sources. This author is aware of these sources, but does not have access to them. Indeed, the only material this thesis has access to comes from the English-speaking world. Luckily, since ETA's presence is great, this section of the field covers it; TL, on



the other hand, has little to no coverage. For this reason, I must heavily rely on secondhand sources from Anglophone writers for both groups but that, at best, barely mention TL. This will lead to more complete information in regard to ETA and a seemingly scarcer survey of TL. This scarcity has somewhat constrained my choice of variables, as some others could not be considered due to a lack of information.

## Variables

### *Political Economy*

How the political economic landscape effected nationalism must be looked at in detail; indeed, neither terrorist movement would have gained traction if it were not for the Industrial Revolution in the country. The survey of political economy will help to establish that both groups started in a similar fashion: in opposition to immigrants. In terms of the research question, though, this section will demonstrate that the economic situation in each region explains why each group formed, but not necessarily what happened later. In other words, economics was the genesis, but does not explain the divergence of both groups in the future.

Analyzing economic data and reading accounts from the era will help illuminate this topic. Because this author does not have the capability of calculating the numbers based on primary sources, already-collected data will be accumulated by this author and presented in an original way. In other words, this author will essentially do a summary of the findings on the political economy of the regions. No regressions will be conducted. To be sure, this section is

heavily reliant on the work of other scholars who have been fastidious in accumulating economic data

### *Identity Politics*

After nationalistic fervor mobilized the masses, the notion of being one people with one language became a badge of identity. Understanding how this came to be – and why it is important – is what this variable will allow me to assess. To do this, the thesis will look at the ability to speak the language in each region. In addition, this thesis will look at what specific regions are doing to promote the languages. Data from secondary sources will be looked at and used to show the language comprehension levels in the respective areas. There will be tables to show how language levels increased or dropped over time. Then, this thesis will use that data to make the case that where language comprehension was high (Catalonia), the need for terrorism diminished. Where language comprehension levels were low (Basque Country), the need for a social adhesive – terrorism – was high. While this would only demonstrate a correlation, testimony from the terrorist groups will be used to supplement the correlation as the defining characteristic for group divergence. In other words, the terrorists themselves will say that language changed the fate of their group. Indeed, language had an important effect on the divergence of these two groups. Again, because of the lack of resources to collect primary data, reading other accounts on this subject and using the pertinent data from them will be the main source of information for the section.

## *Public Opinion*

Since terrorism is meant to communicate a message to, or fight for, people, then what the people believe matters. Thus, it is vital to get a sense of what people think of the movement's goals and of the groups themselves. What the data shows is that neither group was liked; in other words, public opinion – while important to mention – does not help explain the groups' divergence. Since this author does not have the resources to conduct personal surveys, this thesis will rely on surveys done by others, primarily scholars in the field and reports by regional agencies. Polls from both the time of terrorist operations and current times will be looked at to see the change in popularity for regional independence versus autonomy versus federalism, as well as attitudes toward ETA (there are no available polls of public perception toward TL).

## IV. POLITICAL ECONOMY

One of the classic ways to explain terrorism is the economic situation in the area where the group started. This normally occurs because most terrorism studies focus on poor locales; thus, the thought is that poverty breeds terrorism (see literature review section on economics and terrorism). However, ETA and TL operated during the era when Spain was a First World country. Thus, both groups, as well shall see, started in a similar economic situation but went on different paths. While economics did not make the groups diverge, it is important to cover because it shows how both groups came to prominence. Thus, in this section, this thesis will test this usual explanation for terrorism using both the ETA and TL case studies.

### *During the Growth*

Under Franco Spain was an economic success story. Using a certain time period as a case thesis, historian of Spanish politics Robert Clark shows that

During the decade from 1951 to 1960, Spain's GNP grew from 722 billion pesetas (in 1969 terms) [approximately \$6.2 billion USD] to 1,052 billion pesetas [approximately \$8 billion USD], while population increased only slightly, from 28 million to about 30.4 million. As a result, the per capita GNP of the country grew from 25,600 pesetas to 34,600, an increase of about 35 percent in ten years, or an average annual increase of 3.5 percent. At that rate, per capita GNP would double in about a generation, a not unimpressive performance.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Clark 1979, 208.

In other words, even during the reign of a dictator, Spain was doing remarkably well in terms of economics. In fact, during the 1970s, Spain was the fastest economy in Europe and only second to Japan among OECD countries.<sup>117</sup>

This impressive growth materialized after Franco loosened his grip during the 1960s on his autarchic power. He did this in order to “stave off the popular economic discontent that was threatening the Franco regime, but one effect was to rescue Catalonia from its post-Civil War stagnation.”<sup>118</sup> No other time could have been better since the Marshall Plan had turned most European countries into viable trading partners. In addition, because Spain had more liberalized economic policies, it was admitted into the GATT, OECD and the IMF.<sup>119</sup>

These policies benefitted Catalonia and the Basque Country more than any other regions in Spain. Indeed, Catalonia had substantially grown as an economy during Franco’s first twenty years in power; therefore, liberalization allowed it to compete and further prosper.<sup>120</sup> The Basque Country was also prepared for economic liberalization since it was a powerhouse in multiple areas. Once again, Robert Clark explains:

The Basque region contain[ed] between ten and fifteen percent of the nation’s energy capability (in oil refining and nuclear energy), between one quarter and one third of its weapons manufacturing capacity, 17 percent of the nation’s bank assets, about one-third of its shipyards and shipping lines, and two-thirds of its integrated steel mill capacity.<sup>121</sup>

Since the Basque Country was so important to Spanish economic vitality, some of the best-paying jobs were in that part of the country. In fact, the year 1969 saw the Basque provinces of

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> McRoberts 2001, 91.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>120</sup> McRoberts 2001, 91.

<sup>121</sup> Clark 1979, 219.

Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Álava be the first, second, and third provinces, respectively, in terms of per capita income in Spain.<sup>122</sup>

When immigrants – mostly Spanish citizens – heard of the success in Catalonia and the Basque Country, they flocked to those regions to claim some of the benefits. The internal migrants caused a strain on both regions. However, the Basques certainly had a greater problem with them than the Catalonians. This period of in-migration would set a course for both regions in terms of how they viewed “others.” For the Basques, it would turn out to be negative. For the Catalonians, it can be categorized as positive under certain conditions. Understanding how both regions reached these conclusions, though, is vital to understanding the changing paths both terrorist movements took. The rest of this section is devoted to this understanding.

### *The Immigrants Arrive*

**Figure 1. Net in-migration rates (per thousand)**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Catalonia</i>	<i>Basque Country</i>
1901-1910	30.1	22.7
1911-1920	69.4	44.5
1921-1930	128.3	31.1
1931-1940	38.8	12.2
1941-1950	83.5	25.6
1951-1960	123.3	174.0
1961-1970	157.6	159.6
1971-1981	51.3	21.0
TOTAL		

Sources: Medrano 1995, 120.

Because Catalonia and the Basque Country had the most jobs due to their economic superiority, both regions attracted many immigrants, most of them from Spain. Figure 1 shows

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

the amount of immigrants that arrived in Catalonia and the Basque Country during the century of economic growth. The table demonstrates that both areas were highly saturated with immigrants. Also, the years that Franco initiated his economic liberalization plan – essentially the 1951-1970 time period – saw the highest numbers of immigrants. Clearly, liberalization worked in terms of job creation and competitiveness.

These high immigration numbers also led to a higher population density in the industrialized region. Spain's economic growth positively affected four Basque provinces (Álava, Guipúzcoa, Navarre and Vizcaya) as well four Catalan provinces (Barcelona, Tarragona, Gerona and Lérida); indeed, these provinces were highly industrialized before Franco allowed for economic liberalization.<sup>123</sup> The population density of these provinces was higher than the national average. For example, in 1970 these eight provinces combined for a population density of 150 people per square kilometer. By comparison, the rest of Spain (excluding Madrid, which had a population density of 474 people per square kilometer), had only 67 people per square kilometer.<sup>124</sup>

The influx of immigrants changed both regions. The reactions to the immigrants, though, were different. For the Basques, it made them despise “the other” in the way Arana did; for the Catalonians, their positive economic positioning allowed them to maximize their relationships with foreigners which enabled them to accept different peoples. The reason for the differing views on immigrants is explainable in part by the fact that the main writers in the Basque Country were members of the catholic clergy that despised all non-Catholics. The clergy, as Figure 2 shows, were the most prolific writers in *Euskera*. This means, then that the most widely

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

distributed and read writings were from anti-immigrant writers.<sup>125</sup> This constant stream of anti-immigrant writing did not occur in Catalonia. In other words, the immigrant influx caused the Basques to look inward at themselves while the Catalonians, because there was no systemic anti-immigrant movement, were able to look outward.

**Figure 2. Writers in *Euskera***

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Lay Writers</b>	<b>Religious Writers</b>
1934-35	12	41.6%	58.4%
1962-63	20	25%	75%
1972-73	65	46.9%	63.1%

Source: Pérez-Agote 2006, 105.

### *The Basque Experience with Immigrants and Industrialization*

Nature is important to many Basques. This is no surprise since the Basque Country is a mountainous region with breathtaking panoramas and mystical forests. When industrialization erupted in the region, though, the ability to appreciate nature declined. To be sure, major cities like Bilbao in the Basque Country had to devote more space to accommodate people leaving less space for outdoor recreation and enjoyment.<sup>126</sup> This led to multiple social consequences: “mothers and children no longer meet in neighborhood parks to play and exchange local news; children must play in unhealthy and dangerous settings; and the tensions of urban family living are compressed into a confined residential area, with little opportunity for the relief of an outdoors stroll or weekend picnic.”<sup>127</sup> The decline in parks and other natural outlets was clearly related to the increase in industrialization in the Basque region.

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<sup>125</sup> Clark 1979, 243.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



It is not surprising to know that industry contained the highest percentage of workers during the economic growth period. Figure 2 unequivocally shows this:

**Figure 3. Distribution by employment sector of the active population in the Basque Country, by percentage**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1969</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1981</i>
Farming	16.9	16.0	13.4	11.2	8.4	6.7
Industry	42.5	44.6	45.7	46.0	45.5	42.9
Construction	8.3	8.2	8.6	8.2	8.8	8.0
Service	32.3	31.2	32.3	34.7	37.2	42.4

Source: Medrano 1995, p. 125

Industry is what attracted most immigrants to the Basque Country as the jobs offered required low-skill laborers.<sup>128</sup> The province of Vizcaya, for example, saw technological changes made to its metal industries at the start of the twentieth century which allowed for these migrants to come to that region. It is no surprise, then, that in Figure 3 we see Vizcaya receiving more immigrants than the other three provinces.

**Figure 4. Midcensus Migratory Balances, 1901-1970**

<b>Decades</b>	<b>Álava</b>	<b>Gipúzcoa</b>	<b>Navarre</b>	<b>Vizcaya</b>
1901-1910	-9,203	6,157	-25,957	-2,959
1911-1920	-7,239	8,174	-12,486	18,997
1921-1930	-5,210	12,729	-21,185	18,290
1931-1940	2,650	9,964	-2,305	-1,344
1941-1950	-3,797	10,568	-19,833	18,987
1951-1960	7,703	48,754	-20,499	96,399
1961-1970	42,547	64,845	18,127	148,804

Source: Pérez-Agote 2001, p. 70.

<sup>128</sup> Silvestre 2005, 239-40.

Even though the Basque Country expected many immigrants, the government of the region had made no plan to accommodate the high number of incomers. Indeed, no action was taken to ensure that the immigrants could be seamlessly integrated into the society. Thus:

the Basque working class has felt the full brunt of a rampant industrialization process. Air and water pollution, scarce and expensive housing, inadequate schools and hospitals, too many cars and not enough parks or other means of recreation: these are just some of the tangible disadvantages that have been experienced by Basque workers since the early 1950s.<sup>129</sup>

Indeed, the immigrant situation was starting to ruin the Basque way of life. Basque society was soon to erupt to counteract this problem.

Basques originally allowed the lack of natural outlets because industrialization brought employment. Indeed, jobs trumped picnics. When jobs became scarce, the industrial workers took to the street to protest. Indeed, “with about ten percent of the nation’s industrial labor force, the Basque provinces have customarily accounted for more than thirty percent of all labor conflicts in the country, and nearly one-third of all man-hours lost due to strikes and other work stoppages.”<sup>130</sup> Most importantly, only about nine percent of these strikes were initiated to improve workers’ salaries; instead, the majority of the protests – 39 percent – were launched “to protest political or social problems or questions, especially the immigrant question.”<sup>131</sup>

The strikes led to widespread labor unrest in the Basque Country. All the strikes and lock-outs led to violence that required the Civil Guard’s involvement.<sup>132</sup> From 1963 to 1974, all four Basque provinces combined accounted for 37 percent of Spain’s labor conflicts; the year 1969 saw the Basque Country account for more than half of them.<sup>133</sup> Clearly, the “shakeup” in

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<sup>129</sup> Clark 1979, 238.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 256.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 256.

the immigrant situation caused a violent one in the region.<sup>134</sup> It is no wonder, then, that an ETA considered an *Euskaldun* someone “who speaks the real language of the people: *Euskera*.”<sup>135</sup> Basque, being a hard language to learn, essentially singled-out an immigrant (granted, many Basques also did not speak Basque, but immigrants were certainly not expected to know the language). Immigrants were “dirty” and “caused all our problems with the language of fascism [Spanish]. When they leave, we can have our peace back.”<sup>136</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that Basques look inward – that is, the problem was seen as internal and the situation in terms of Basque politics was the problem. In other words, once the immigrant problem was solved – indeed, once the immigrants no longer ‘caused’ problems in the Basque Country – things would be better.

The Catalanian experience was somewhat similar in that it had a great influx of immigrants, too. The differences, though, are very important, mainly toward the treatment of “the other.” It is to the Catalanian experience that we now turn.

### *The Catalanian Experience with Immigrants and Industrialization*

From 1950 to 1975 – the year of Franco’s death – Catalonia saw many immigrants move inside its borders. Indeed, in 1950 Catalonia had around 3.2 million citizens; by 1965 it contained 5.7 million residents. This sharp increase in population is mostly due to the 1.4 million immigrants that came to Catalonia during that time period.<sup>137</sup> These immigrants, in the words of Montserrat Guibernau, a Catalan scholar, “were mainly young Castilian-speaking people,

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<sup>134</sup> McRoberts 2001, 105.

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in Clark 1979, 256.

<sup>136</sup> Quoted in Clark 1984, 51.

<sup>137</sup> Guibernau 2004, 67.

generally not very well educated, from different areas of Spain and ignorant of the national, cultural and linguistic diversity of a Spain presented by the regime as homogenous.”<sup>138</sup> Franco, despite his hatred of Catalonia and its culture, liked that immigrants were going to that region because he knew that the economy would get a labor boost and he hoped that an increase of people without any conception of Catalan tradition would erode most Catalan institutions. And, naturally, some of these Spaniards felt a kinship to Franco and Francoism.<sup>139</sup>

Catalonia, especially Barcelona, was a main attraction for immigrants because the quality of life and ability to get a better wage than the places they came from. For example, in 1967 the Barcelona per capita income was 62,615 pesetas (\$519 USD). By comparison, that same year saw a per capita income of the richest city in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia – Seville – around 33,841 pesetas (\$281 USD) and a per capita income of 23,000 pesetas in the Spanish city of Jaén (\$191 USD), the second-richest Andalusian city.<sup>140</sup>

Yet, the great economy of Catalonia is not solely dependent on immigrants filling in the holes of the economy. Indeed, Franco promoted tourism in Catalonia so that foreign countries could see it was strong enough as a trading partner.<sup>141</sup> In fact, from 1954 – 1965, Catalonia’s hotel capacity “grew from 20 percent of Spain’s total capacity to almost 31 percent. This in turn was the basis of foreign investment.”<sup>142</sup> Thus, Catalanians learned to rely on “the other” for revenue and also became accustomed to the presence of many foreigners on a consistent basis. Tourism – in other words, the service sector – got so big that it eventually overtook the industrial

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>141</sup> McRoberts 2001, 93.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

sector, which was the main reason why immigrants came to Catalonia in the first place. Figure 4 clearly demonstrates this trend:

**Figure 4. Distribution by employment sector of the active population of Catalonia, by percentage**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>1955</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1969</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1981</i>
Farming	19.6	16.4	12.8	11.1	8.0	6.3
Industry	38.4	40.3	41.8	42.1	42.8	39.9
Construction	6.7	7.3	8.7	9.6	11.6	10.0
Service	35.4	36.0	36.8	37.2	37.6	43.7

Source: Medrano 1995, p. 125.

What makes Catalonia a tourist haven is its location . For example, the long stretch of beach along the eastern coast that hugs the Mediterranean known as the *Costa Brava* attracts thousands of tourists a year. However, Catalonia’s location also made it a great trading partner.<sup>143</sup> Catalonia has long been a trading nation since the height of the Roman Empire,<sup>144</sup> which has brought Catalonian people in contact with Europeans for centuries. Barcelona, Catalonia’s capital, also has a world-class port that allows for a plethora of cargo to be imported or exported. In other words, Catalonia is Spain’s economic powerhouse.<sup>145</sup>

Catalonia’s comfort with foreigners via tourism and trade, then, has made the immigrant situation not as hostile as it could have been. McRoberts (2001), in an interview with a Catalonian shopkeeper, got the subject to say that “as long as they [tourists] keep bringing in the money, I am happy.”<sup>146</sup> In addition, another interview conducted by McRoberts showed a Catalonian saying that there is no difference between Catalonians and “others” because “we all speak the language of money.”<sup>147</sup> What is most shocking about this, though, is that the economy

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<sup>143</sup> Keating 2001, 221.

<sup>144</sup> Keating 1997, 702.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> McRoberts 2001, 101.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 94.

of Catalonia did not substantially grow like the Basque Country. In fact, the period from 1973 to 1985 saw Catalonia's GDP grow at only 1.7%(?) per year, which was lower than Spain's at 2 percent.<sup>148</sup> So why was there no mass outrage toward the immigrants as they could easily have been scapegoated. The reason for this is language; indeed, 94 percent of the population – including immigrants – could speak Catalan, meaning that integration into society was made easier (more on this in the section on “Identity Politics”). Thus, it could be said that Catalonians can look outward – that is, they can accept others and realize that its survival depends on non-Catalonians.

## *Conclusion*

In this section we have seen that both regions prospered during the same time period both terrorist groups and ideologies were forming. In ETA's case, the Basque economy was doing well in terms of numbers as it was operating. Yet, the Basque Country erupted in unrest while Catalonia was stable enough to allow multiple tourists within its borders. In essence, the economic boom caused the geneses of both of these movements. Indeed, the boom caused both regions to deal with immigrants – the “other.” How both regions dealt with immigrants, though, was different. To be sure Basques became more inward looking – they felt that their main preoccupation was internal – whereas the author claims Catalonians are outward looking – they realize that “others” are not a detriment to their society. This helps explains why the ETA movement emphasized “Basqueness” when TL only pushed for a Catalonian state so it could be run on its own.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 95.

While literature on terrorism claims that economic factors play a part in the development of terrorism, there is no real evidence that economics played a part in the divergence of the two groups. If anything, it somewhat homogenized how both groups started. In fact, divergence really began with both group's relation to their respective languages – identity politics. To be sure, *Euskera* and *Catalan* are important to both respective movements. Yet, was the importance of these languages manipulated to gain support for terrorist acts? It is in the next section that identity politics will be discussed in terms of language for both movements. Specifically, how language changed the paths of both groups.

## V. IDENTITY POLITICS

Identity politics – that is, the manipulation of loyalty to, and primary identity of, some group other than a state – is a popular method to understand why a terrorist operates or how it came to be. Usually, these studies are conducted because of a terrorist group’s connection to a religious ideology. This thesis, however, will refer to ETA and TL’s connection to their respective languages – *Euskera* (ETA) and *Catalan* (TL). Indeed, it will look at how each group’s ties to its language took the groups on different paths. Recall: ETA remains to this day; TL is gone. At some level, identity politics had something to do with it.

### *The Alternatives*

Since Franco’s regime, the *modus operandi* of the Spanish state has been to promote Castilian (now globally referred to as “Spanish”) as the sole official language of Spain. This program has been met with opposition. Indeed, since the days of the kingdoms fighting over peninsular control, multilingualism has been present within the confines of today’s modern-day Spain. Alternative languages – primarily *Euskera* and *Catalan* – challenge Castilian’s linguistic hegemony.<sup>149</sup> What Spain has seen, then, are the people that speak these other languages end up in often perpetual conflict with Madrid’s central authority. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that both groups have amassed terrorist groups that try to defy the Spanish government while speaking their regional, alternative parlance.

To be consistent with the question of this thesis, though, why was ETA so much more powerful and deadly than TL? Both of these groups emanate from regions that are proud of their

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<sup>149</sup> Lecours 2007, 142-3.



heritage and distinct language. In fact, both groups unabashedly champion their speech as a symbol of national pride – that is, their nationalistic identity is tied to their usage of *Catalan* (for TL) and *Euskera* (for ETA). The answer comes down to two tenable conclusions: 1) *Catalan* is a much easier language to learn than *Euskera*, and 2) language is used as a social cohesive, meaning that the Catalonians are a tighter group than the Basques because a smaller proportion of Basques speak *Euskera* than the proportion of Catalonians that speak *Catalan*. Therefore, the Basques needed violence – enter ETA – to unite a pro-Basque movement.

### *The Right and Wrong Strategy*

As 1975 brought the death of Franco, it also brought the chance for both nationalist movements to make a firm push for their respective causes. ETA moved away from Arana's primordialist definition of a Basque as someone who was racially Basque. Instead, they began arguing that anyone who spoke *Euskera* was unequivocally Basque; indeed, you had to speak, in the words of an ETA operative, the "language of the free."<sup>150</sup> In other words, ETA explicitly labeled language as the defining feature of whom ETA was fighting for and who could fight alongside the cadres. TL also made the Catalan language central to its cause. Indeed, all of Josep Serra's writings were in *Catalan* and they used the language as the separation point between "us" (Catalonians) and "them" (Spaniards). In Serra's words, "to speak Castilian is to side with Franco. To speak Catalan is to be free."<sup>151</sup> Clearly, then, language was to be the tool to identify a true Basque and a true Catalan – at least in the minds of these two terrorist groups.

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<sup>150</sup> Quoted in Clark 1984, 237.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Guibernau 2004, 83.

**Figure 1. Use of Basque Language in the Basque Country, 1975 (percent); N = 350**

<i>Response</i>	<b>Understand</b>		<b>Speak</b>		<b>Write</b>	
	<i>Native-Born</i>	<i>Gen'l Pop'n</i>	<i>Native-Born</i>	<i>Gen' Pop'n</i>	<i>Native-Born</i>	<i>Gen'l Pop'n</i>
Yes	39.3	26.2	30.4	19.1	8.9	5.8
Yes, with difficulty	12.4	12.2	13.3	-	12.9	7.9
Nothing	45.6	54.3	53.7	61.3	62.4	-
No answer	2.7	-	2.7	-	9.3	-

Source: Clark 1979, p. 143.

Yet, in 1975 both regions experienced different levels of linguistic knowledge. Figure 1 shows, for example, that most Basques – native and immigrants (labeled general population in the table) – had low comprehension levels in 1975. *Catalan*, by contrast, had higher comprehension levels in 1975 (see Figure 2) that only grew stronger once Catalonia instituted its language program (this will soon be discussed).

**Figure 2. Language Ability in *Catalan* in Catalonia from 1975-2001 (percent)**

	<b>1975</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Understand</b>	74.3	80.98	90.61	93.76	96	94.97	97.3
<b>Speak</b>	53.1	-	64.08	68.34	73.7	75.30	78.4
<b>Don't Understand</b>	-	19.02	9.4	6.2	-	5.03	2.6

Source: Roller 2002, p. 279.

The data shows that in 1975 only 39.3 percent of native Basques could understand *Euskera* without difficulty whereas 74.3 percent of Catalonians could understand *Catalan*. In terms of speaking, 53.1 percent of Catalonians could speak their language compared to 30.4 percent of native Basques that could speak theirs without difficulty in 1975. It is important to note, though, that for TL speaking the language was more important than understanding. In the words of Serra: “our country must allow the beautiful language [*Catalan*] to be heard from the

*Costa Brava* to the Pyrenees.”<sup>152</sup> He further exclaimed to a crowd during a rally in 1986, “Speak, my brothers and sisters! Speak!”<sup>153</sup> Therefore, despite many Catalonians’ ability to understand the language, the lower levels of speaking proficiency angered the TL leader. But because on all levels Basques did not understand their language, it suggests why armed violence started there before it did in Catalonia. Only later, because of poor speaking ability, would violence be justified in Catalonia.

### “Our Job is Done”: A Catalanian Success Story

As Figure 2 shows, Catalonians began to speak and understand their language better over time. Perhaps more importantly, the rate of not understanding *Catalan* dropped from 19.02 percent of the population in 1981 to 5.03 percent in 1996 (one year after TL disbanded). In fact, when the group stopped in 1995, an anonymous writer to the pro-independence website wrote “the people know the language. Our job is done.”<sup>154</sup> This rise in linguistic capabilities is no doubt due to the language promotion program that the *Generalitat* – Catalonia’s autonomous government – has put in place. Indeed, the *Generalitat* has aimed to make *Catalan* the region’s *llengua pròpia*, its “own language.”<sup>155</sup> In fact, since 1980, the premier Catalanian nationalist party, the *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), has been in power of the *Generalitat*, and has made learning the Catalanian language and culture its main priority. While surely nationalistic reasons were used for the promotion of this policy, it was also enacted to “assimilate the substantial

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<sup>152</sup> Quoted in Calvet 1986, 134.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Racocatalla 1995.

<sup>155</sup> Roller 2002, 274.

Spanish immigrant population residing into Catalonia and [its] society to avoid social or political polarization between native and immigrants *Catalans*.”<sup>156</sup>

On April 6, 1983, then, the Act of Linguistic Normalization was put in place that declared in the preamble that “the Catalan language [as] the fundamental element of the Catalan entity.”<sup>157</sup> Article 1 of the document declared its objectives to be:<sup>158</sup>

- 1) To support and encourage the use of Catalan by all citizens.
- 2) To bring about the official use of Catalan.
- 3) To normalize the use of Catalan in all means of social communication.
- 4) To extend the knowledge of Catalan.

Thus, the promotion of *Catalan* was clearly the objective. Yet, this was only the starting point; indeed, now that a plan was in place to normalize the language, Catalonia felt another step needed to be taken to make *Catalan* the law of the land.

In 1997, the *Generalitat* passed the *Llei del Català* (the *Catalan* language law) which turned *Catalan* into Catalonia’s official language.<sup>159</sup> At first glance, this seems in contrast with the 1978 democratic Spanish Constitution which states in Article 3 that Spanish is “the official language of the State” and that “all citizens have the duty to know and the right to use it.”<sup>160</sup> However, the *Generalitat* did not demote Spanish in place of *Catalan*; instead, *Catalan* was added as an official language along with Castilian.<sup>161</sup> The backlash from Spaniards was great, leading the prominent Spanish daily news *El País* to publish the headline “Like Franco but the other way around,” in 1993, essentially claiming that the *Generalitat*’s insistence that Catalanian

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 276-7.

<sup>157</sup> McRoberts 2001, 143.

<sup>158</sup> All of this quoted in Ibid., 144.

<sup>159</sup> Roller 2002, 273.

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in Costa 2003, 415.

<sup>161</sup> Roller 2002, 280.

citizens learn *Catalan* was comparable to Franco's persistence that everyone on the peninsula employ Castilian as their mother tongue.<sup>162</sup>

Instead of being an exclusionary law, though, it has been able to simultaneously promote both languages, allowing for all citizens who speak both to not see the "other" as the enemy.<sup>163</sup> While the 1997 law (which actually did not pass until 1998, but is still referred to as the 1997 law) did not happen until two years after TL disbanded, the fact that the political climate was strong enough for this to be possible – especially with the CiU in power – suggests that the political climate was not favorable for TL.<sup>164</sup> As Jordi Pujol, the president of the *Generalitat* said in 1993, "we are beating them [TL] at their own game."<sup>165</sup>

What must be remembered, though, is that terrorism relies on representing the excluded. Surely, some members of TL fought because the link between the Spanish state and Franco was too close (in an interview, TL soldier Pere Bascompte said "I joined TL...after being lied to by *franquistas* in Franco's government and the ones that remain in Madrid today").<sup>166</sup> In this vain, TL claimed it was representing the excluded Catalanian people from the discourse of independence. And, of course, a Catalanian is someone who speaks *Catalan*. Yet, with 96% of regional citizens understanding Catalanian in 1993 – two years before TL disarmed – the language was no longer a representation of the underrepresented: the language was for everyone. This was bad news for Bascompte once again who claimed that to fight alongside TL meant that "you were different from the Spaniard. Our language made us different... We fought for this

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<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Costa 2003, 428.

<sup>163</sup> Guibernau 2004, 146.

<sup>164</sup> Dominguez 2005, 136.

<sup>165</sup> Hill 1996, 183.

<sup>166</sup> Racocatala 1992.

difference.”<sup>167</sup> With everyone speaking the same language, society was able to connect and did not need violence to fill any social gap. Also, as Figure 3 will show, nationalistic sentiment had not gone away. In fact, a higher number of people feel “more Catalanian” than before. This seems to suggest that nationalism is linked with language. Yet, since the *Generalitat* did what Serra said TL would do – that is, return “the language to the people,”<sup>168</sup> – the nationalistic fervor was institutionalized and taken away from TL. In other words, the passion for the language still exists, but the best way to learn the language, as one citizen said, “is by taking my kids to school.”<sup>169</sup> Indeed, the *Generalitat* usurped the message from TL. TL lost its legitimacy. Bascompte summarized this feeling well: “We got what we wanted... We were not that made it happen.”<sup>170</sup>

**Figure 3. Subjective National Identity in Catalonia, in percentages (1979-2005)**

Year	Only Catalan	+ Catalanian	Cat. = Spanish	+ Spanish	Only Spanish	N
1979	14.9	11.7	35.4	6.7	31.3	1079
1982	9.3	11.7	41.2	8.7	23.1	1176
1984	7.1	22.4	46.2	8.8	12.5	4872
1988	11.1	28.2	40.4	8.4	9.1	2896
1992	15.6	23.4	35.7	8.3	14.9	2489
1995	13.4	23.1	41.0	7.0	13.8	1593
1996	11.0	25.7	36.5	11.5	12.9	784
1999	14.0	21.8	43.1	6.1	11.5	1368
2001	15.4	25.8	35.9	6.2	14.7	2778
2002	16.2	24.3	37.3	7.7	12.4	922
2003	13.9	24.7	43.2	6.7	9.8	3571

Source: Argelaguet 2006, 437.

This can be explained, then, as a phenomenon this author terms the “institutionalization of nationalization.” To be sure, the Catalanian state took what TL cherished and gave it to

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Dominguez 2005, 144.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Roller 2002, 266.

<sup>170</sup> Racocatala 1992.

everyone. Thus, what TL wanted to give to the region was already given, making the need for violence a moot point. Granted, TL wanted independence from Spain and it wanted Catalonia to be its own state; and there are many in the region who will not be satisfied until this goal is achieved. Yet Figure 3 shows that the association of “Spanishness” with “Catalaness” is growing with this sentiment hovering around 43.2 percent of respondents in 2003. What this indicates is that due to the language program, said one unidentified TL member, “the education, promotion and regulation”<sup>171</sup> of *Catalan* alongside Castilian has started to erode the sense of the Catalanian identity as separate from the Spanish one. The Basques, though, have hard time doing what the Catalonians have done, which is surely why ETA was so much more prominent than TL.

### *Basque is Hard for Basques*

The Basque Country today has around 3 million people,<sup>172</sup> and yet Basque (*Euskera*) speakers in the region number only 660,000 to 750,000.<sup>173</sup> This is shocking despite the fact that the Basque government is mandating Basque proficiency of employees, of Basque government officials, etc. Indeed, Basque is being taught in elementary and secondary schools in order to “create a link between Basque language and identity.”<sup>174</sup> As seen in Figure 1, though, 1975 levels of Basque proficiency were low. Unfortunately, despite the insistence by Basque authorities that the regional language be promoted, it has not yielded great results. Figure 4 shows this in a survey conducted by Eustat, a statistics firm based in the Basque Country. It

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>172</sup> Cenoz 2008, 2.

<sup>173</sup> Echeverria 2010, 198.

<sup>174</sup> Echeverria 2005, 250.

shows that even today Basque proficiency levels in the region are nowhere near the *Catalan* proficiency levels in Catalonia.

**Figure 4. Percentage of *Euskera* Understanding in the Basque Country**

	Understand	Somewhat Understand	Do Not Understand
<b>1996</b>	30.5%	20%	49.5%
<b>2001</b>	32%	23%	45%
<b>2006</b>	37%	22.5%	40.5%

Source: Eustat 2008.

What can be derived from this, then, is that the Basque government and ETA's insistence on knowing Basque has not come to fruition. This is partly due to the fact that about only 14 percent of Basques actually want to use the language in public.<sup>175</sup> Basques still carry the language as a mark of identity, but most Basques now have a territorial definition of what it means to be Basque.<sup>176</sup> Indeed, ever since Spain centralized authority in the eighteenth century, the historically separate Basque provinces had to take on a new identity. The easiest to accept – and the one that remains prevalent today – is the people that speak Basque within a certain boundary. In essence, the people that live within that zone and speak *Euskera* are in opposition to Spanish authority. Thus, there is identity politics toward the language, as well as nationalism for the region in opposition to Spain.<sup>177</sup> With low levels of Basque comprehension, it is no wonder that violence has had to fill the role for language in terms of identity politics.

ETA, of course, believes that a Basque must speak the language. As has been shown, though, the levels of *Euskera* comprehension remain low. Thus, while ETA has decreased operations, operations can continue because as long as Basques do not speak Basque, terrorism can be justified. In fact, an interview with an ETA operative claimed the Basque Country is not

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<sup>175</sup> Echeverria 2010, 199.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Lecours 2007, 62.



yet “an independent country” and “people do not speak it [*Euskera*] anymore...they do not have a connection to *Euskadi* anymore. It is our job to provide that connection.”<sup>178</sup> In other words, Basque identity and the independence movement are all linked to *Euskera*.

The other reason the population cannot learn it is because Basque is really difficult to learn. In contrast to *Catalan*, which is similar to Castilian and can be easily picked up by an immigrant Spaniard via osmosis, *Euskera* has no relation to any Indo-European language, making it a completely new language to learn from scratch for immigrants.<sup>179</sup> Since most immigrants speak Spanish anyway, children that grow up in the Basque Country actually end up preferring to speak Spanish because they are familiar with it earlier in life and *Euskera* takes the person a longer time to master.<sup>180</sup> This truth is worsened if the person trying to learn Basque is a non-Spanish immigrant to the region; that person prefers to learn Spanish since it is most useful around the peninsula.<sup>181</sup> In other words, no matter how much time is spent trying to teach Basque to children (including in bilingual schools for *Euskera* and Castilian learning) or adults, Basque language proficiency levels will likely remain low, meaning something else had to fill the social cohesion gap.

It is a shame that the Basque Country – even if it follows the Catalanian model of language learning enforcement – would probably be unsuccessful at helping Basque citizens learn *Euskera*. The language is so difficult that younger citizens would have to speak *Euskera* – to the exclusion of Spanish – just to be able to have a command of it. Hence, it cannot be expected that the same system the Catalonians did to delegitimize TL would work against ETA.

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<sup>178</sup> Gara 2005.

<sup>179</sup> Cenoz 2008, 1.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Echeverria 2005, 251.

## Conclusion

Both Catalonia and the Basque Country have highlighted language as important to them. Thus, both terrorist groups, claiming to be the real movement of the people, used the regional languages as an identity indicator and symbol of national pride. Ultimately, *Euskera* was too hard for a multitude of people to learn, so ETA stepped in to unite people in the push for independence. Catalonia, on the other hand, institutionalized the language and made it necessary to being a true citizen of the state, taking away the language identity from a non-state nationalistic movement; indeed, the *Generalitat* institutionalized that notion. Thus, ETA remained powerful because it espoused a notion – violence – that united people more so than *Euskera*.<sup>182</sup> TL, even though it championed violence, could not get its message to resonate as much because the vast knowledge of *Catalan* among Catalonian citizens was all the cohesion necessary to, on the whole, reject a violent movement. Both groups have still not achieved independence, but it can be said that the Catalonians have done a much better job of making themselves feel separate via the promotion of the language alongside Spanish. The Basques, on the other hand, are still looking for something other than language or violence than can help their independence cause.

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<sup>182</sup> Clark 1984, 28-119.

## VI. PUBLIC OPINION

Since terrorism has to “terrorize,” people are certainly factored into the equation as to the success of a group. The same is true for both ETA and TL. Since this thesis seeks to understand why both groups with similar backgrounds diverged, perhaps how the people perceived the groups differed. As the reader will see, though, both groups were not that well-liked by the people the groups claimed to represent. Despite the similarity in low public approval, why did the groups go on different paths? This section aims to answer that question in the context of the research question.

### *Introduction*

While there are multiple definitions of terrorism, it is understood that terrorism is directed at someone. In other words, terrorists commit an attack for an audience – it is a violent form of communication.<sup>183</sup> Thus, what the audience thinks about the group matters. For this reason, this thesis now turns to public opinion about the terrorist groups. It must be noted that there are no polls as to TL’s popularity, although Watson’s (1990) account says that TL support was “low” among the public, but no numbers are offered.<sup>184</sup> This section, then, will deal only with the Basque Country, the Basque people’s feeling toward ETA, and as a proxy for TL, the Catalanian people feeling toward independence. The best place to start, though was with ETA’s biggest media event: the kidnapping of one low-level, regional government official – Miguel Ángel Blanco.

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<sup>183</sup> Weimann and Winn 1994, 36.

<sup>184</sup> Watson 1990, 111.

## *ETA's Public Demise: The Case of Miguel Ángel Blanco*

If you ask any Spaniard or Basque which kidnapping had the biggest impact on the country, the vast majority will say the tragic case of the assassinated Miguel Ángel Blanco.<sup>185</sup> Blanco was a small-town, local Basque politician of the very conservative Popular Party (PP) – the party that ETA most despises. He was kidnapped by ETA operatives and the organization gave the Spanish authorities an impossible deadline of forty-eight hours to release five hundred ETA prisoners in jails throughout the country.<sup>186</sup> The authorities leaked the information to the press and the event caused an outpour of emotion in the country. Indeed, “Blanco’s assassination sent six million Spaniards, a fifth of the country’s population, into the streets in protest.”<sup>187</sup> It even led the Basque Country’s interior minister to claim that “ETA is stronger than ever” due to the skill they displayed by causing a national scene with the kidnapping of one local, unknown government budget councilor.<sup>188</sup>

The reaction to the event was not one of just street marches, though. “In the Basque Country, where it mattered most, protest turned to violence.”<sup>189</sup> Indeed, the offices of ETA’s political wing, Herri Batasuna, were attacked by angry citizens. In addition, relatives of ETA members came forward to the press to display their displeasure and shock at what was happening. Some even went as far as castigating themselves publicly in the streets for being related to members of an organization “that could do something so cruel.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Economist* 1997, 46.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Lamb 1997, 15.

<sup>188</sup> Usher and Walker 2000, 48.

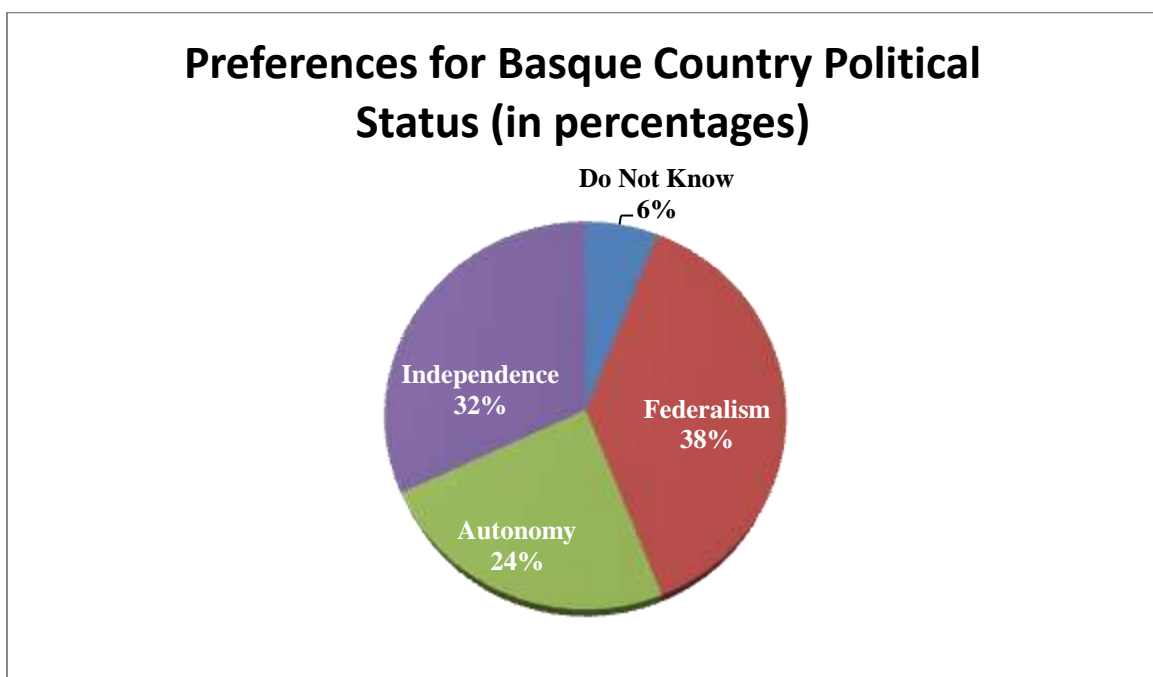
<sup>189</sup> *Economist* 1997, 46.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

Ultimately, Spanish authorities were not willing to make the trade of one low-level politician for around five hundred convicted criminals. Blanco was thusly shot twice in the head and then laid out on the street for others to eventually find his body.<sup>191</sup> Of course, Blanco did not have enough sway in Spanish politics or power to give the Basques their demands (independent Basque Country, etc.). What it did, though, was stir a national fervor that brought out so many Spaniards to the streets and caused forty-eight hours of mayhem in Spain. This began the chain reaction that would lead ETA to have low approval ratings.

### *ETA's Low Approval Ratings*

**Figure 1.**



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<sup>191</sup> Usher and Walker 2000, 48.

The desires of the Basque public and ETA are now dramatically disparate.<sup>192</sup> Recall that what ETA wants is an independent and separate Basque Country from Spain. Yet, as Figure 1 shows, there are now many preferences for what political form the Basque Country should take:<sup>193</sup> What this shows, then, is that the notion of federalism – what Spain essentially has now – is the preferred option. Independence comes in a close second, but the third option – autonomy – is also a fairly popular option with about one-fourth of the Basque population wanting what the region already has. Thus, it is clear that ETA's goals are not so comparable to that of the Basque people.

To be fair, Figure 1 shows data from a poll taken in 2007. They were taken after the perils of terrorism were internationally made known by the events of September 11, 2001 and the train bombings at Madrid, Spain's capital, in 2003. Thus, one could say that it is unsurprising that the public disagrees with what the terrorist group wants; however, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, as Figure 2 shows, the support for independence has been low in the Basque Country even at the peak of ETA's power (the late 1970s and early 1980s).<sup>194</sup> Most interestingly, it shows that support for independence has actually *grown* in more recent times when ETA is weak. How can this be the case? A possible conclusion is that people miss a champion for their language. In essence, a weak ETA makes people miss the organization more. As scholar Richard Clark noticed, a common Basque remark is "I don't agree with ETA's methods, but at least they force Madrid to deal with moderate Basque leaders to give us our language back."<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Lecours 2007, 172.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Medrano 1995, 176.

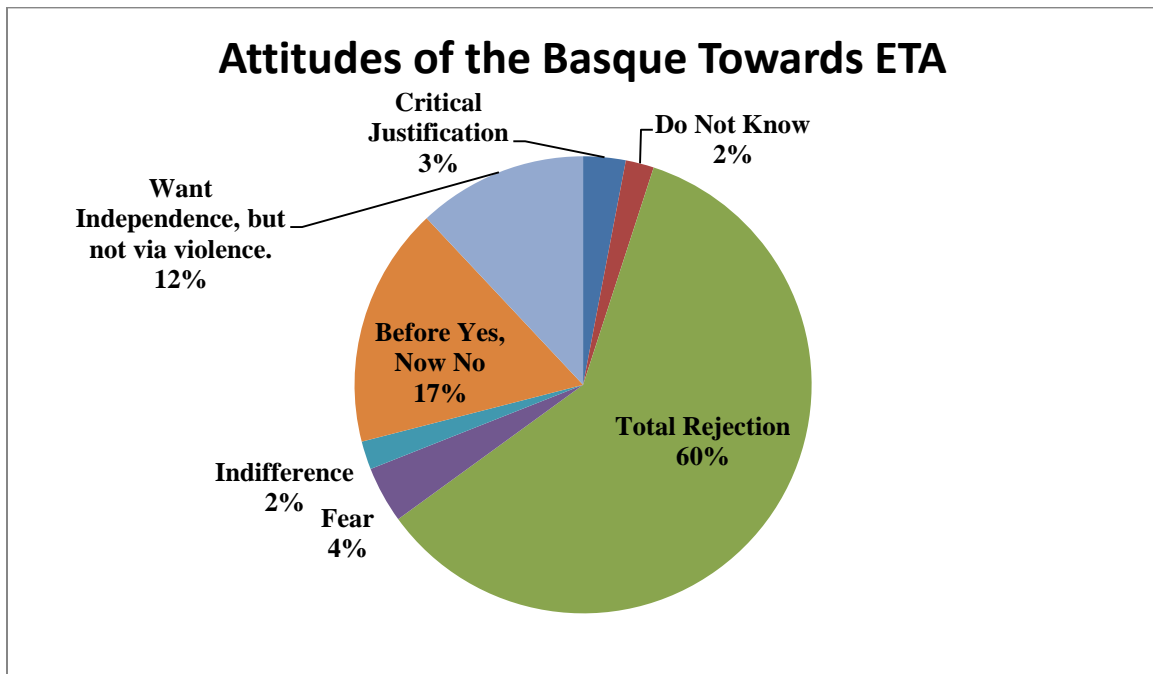
<sup>195</sup> Clark 1984, 173.

**Figure 2. Support for Independence in the Basque Country**

Year	1976	1979	1982	1988	1991
Percentage	9	25	25	20	15

Despite how common that phrase is, the vast majority of Basques – three-fifths – outright reject ETA (see Figure 3).<sup>196</sup> Indeed, as the Figure 3 shows, there is a vast disparity of people's attitudes toward ETA – for example, “ends yes, means no” or “before yes, now no” – but the anti-ETA camp seems the most cohesive.

**Figure 3.**



In other words, the majority of naysayers far outweigh those that are unsure of their feelings toward the group. This suggests that these numbers were to go up if the Basque Country became more monolingual toward the Basque language. As shown earlier, the political reality does not

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<sup>196</sup> Lecours 2007, 110.

matter much (Figure 1), so the above quote seems the most indicative – the Basque people hoped that ETA could make the Basque Country an area for people to speak Basque. Unequivocally, ETA failed.

### *The Catalanian Public*

The support for independence in Catalonia has notoriously been fluctuating for many years. During the height of ETA's prowess, the independence movement in Catalonia was much weaker than that of the Basque Country (see Figure 4). By 1991, Catalonia's desire to be a separate state had just barely beaten out that of the Basques by the slim margin of one percent.<sup>197</sup>

**Figure 4. Support for Independence in Catalonia**

Year	1976	1979	1982	1988	1991
Percentage	0	11	8	12	16

In 2011, though, the desire for a Catalanian independent state is lower than the desire in the Basque Country. In fact, the majority of Catalonians want the region to be “a federal Spanish state” (see Figure 5 on next page).<sup>198</sup> Recall that the Basque people also favor a federal state. What this data infers – combined with the data on the Basque Country – that the public in these autonomous regions want just that, autonomy. It seems like the independence movement is fading out in both the Basque Country and Catalonia.

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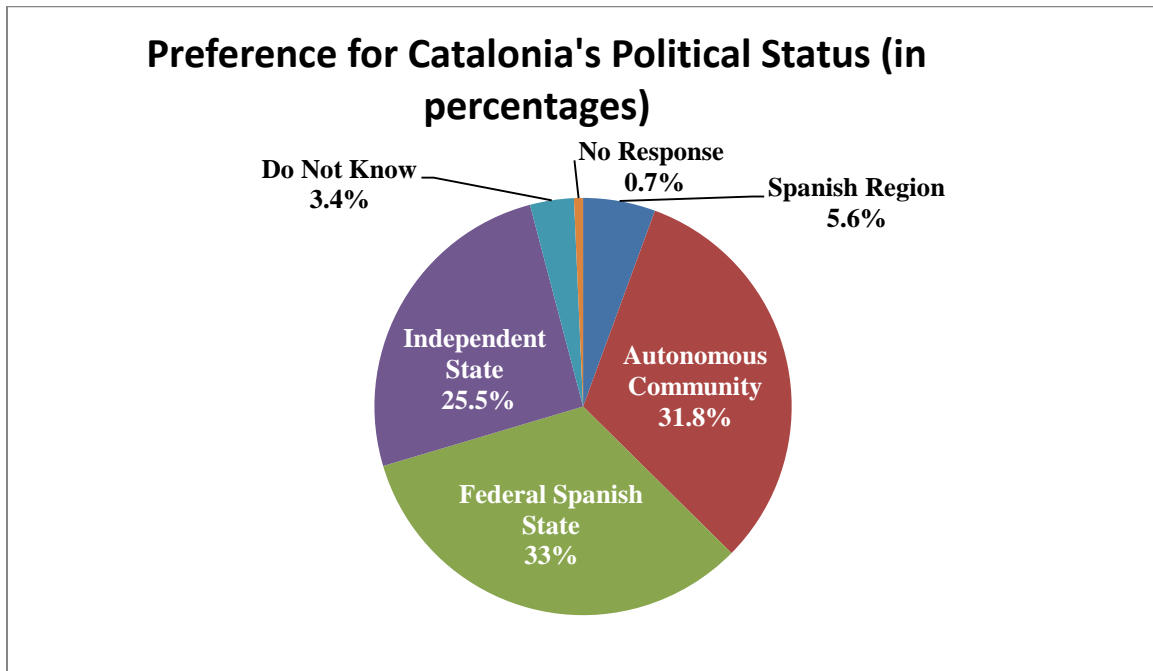
<sup>197</sup> Medrano 1995, 176.

<sup>198</sup> Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió 2011, 28.



In other words, it is no wonder that the terrorist groups were, or are, having problems with their messages of independence. The only thing that could galvanize the public would be language, which is why we saw both groups lean toward that notion of linguistic identity politics. In the end, since Catalonia is more homo-linguistic, the need for a terrorist group is no longer there. As for the Basques, since the language is still so hard to learn and many people still do not speak it, there are still some who are willing to support ETA and independence in greater numbers than in Catalonia.

**Figure 5.**



# CONCLUSION

In the large literature on terrorism, three variables are normally used to explain why a terrorist operates, how it came to be, or to predict where it is going (the former and the latter were the foci of this thesis). These variables are: economics, identity politics, and public opinion. In this thesis, then, these variables were surveyed in terms of the existence of ETA and TL. In terms of economics, both ETA and TL started in a similar situation: in-migration of Spaniards jumpstarted the feelings of regional and linguistic identity. Because the economic boom in the Basque Country and in Catalonia attracted so many non-locals, the data suggests that notions of “us” versus “them” took place. Granted, the data suggest that those notions were stronger in the Basque Country than in Catalonia.

The identity politics section showed that both groups attributed their respective identities to their regional languages – *Euskera* for the Basques and *Catalan* for the Catalonians. In fact, as the data suggested, nationalistic fervor was tied to the regional language. Both groups’ experience with their language, though, differed. For the Basques, *Euskera* is very hard to learn and comprehension levels remain low. Thus, ETA can still be a champion for the learning of the language. In Catalonia, however, the level *Catalan* comprehension is high because of the program started by the *Generalitat*. In this case, the *Generalitat* “stole” the project that TL had made their own. After this, TL had nothing to fight for and then faded out. Granted, this is only a correlation, but the testimony by TL – including the leader – seem to suggest that this is the case. Thus, of the three variables, identity politics seems to be the most convincing factor for why these two groups had divergent paths: leading to TL’s demise and ETA’s current weakness, but past prominence.

Finally, for these two groups public opinion was always low. In fact, what the terrorists wanted was never really in line with what their public wanted. The data in the public opinion sections seems to suggest this. Since this is the case for both groups, nothing in this data suggests that it was a causal variable for their terrorist paths. With this being true, it seems like the only variable – the aforementioned identity politics – gives the best explanation for why two similar groups took such different paths and had such different fates.

In terms of these three variables, then, terrorism studies should focus on identity politics as the source for continued terroristic fervor. As the economic section showed, terrorism does not need to happen in a poor place to occur and be deadly. The public opinion section showed that large support for the acts of a terrorist group are not required. Yet, two groups with the same circumstances both defined their movements in terms of their identity – their language. Surely, the legacy of Franco (as discussed) has something to do with this. Yet, as an anonymous TL operative claimed, “our language is everything. We live or die by it.”<sup>199</sup> In the case of TL, then, when language was given to them, it died out. Because of political and linguistic difficulties, the Basques still do not have their language to the level of desired comprehension. This allows ETA to continue. In fact, an unnamed ETA terrorist said this revelatory statement: “If the schools cannot teach the language to our kids, then we will have to give the education.”<sup>200</sup>

So what does this thesis mean for Spain? On one hand, it shows that the shockwaves sent out by the Spanish Civil War are still reverberating. Indeed, because of the restrictions Franco put on one’s ability to speak a non-Castilian language, people identified with their outlawed language as a way to oppose the dictator. In this sense, no policy already not in place can change

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<sup>199</sup> Quoted in Dominguez 2005, 172.

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Clark 1984, 267.

this – that is a wound only time can heal. On the other hand, it shows the ingenuity of the *Generalitat* to identify the true will of the Catalonians and give them what they wanted – a place to speak their language and for others to speak it, too. To be fair, *Catalan* is easier to learn and therefore it makes it much easier for immigrants to learn the language. Even with *Euskera* being harder to learn, the Basque Country has not taken as many steps to achieve the same level of homolinguistic fluency that there is in Catalonia. Therefore, it shows that a government, if wise, can essentially corrupt a terrorist organization’s mission and make it futile. Indeed, the government gained more legitimacy in this case than TL. This is a strategy the Basque Country’s government must enact.

Despite ETA calling for a “definitive cessation of armed activity” in October 2011,<sup>201</sup> it was the fourth ceasefire in ETA history. The last time they called a ceasefire, they bombed part of Madrid’s airport in 2006 – the busiest transportation hub in the country. Thus, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that ETA will break the truce and fight again. Indeed, as the data seems to suggest, it cannot stop until more people in their region learn Basque. Perhaps their efforts would be better served if they put down their guns and picked up a piece of chalk to help other learn the language. Until the members of the group make that realization, violence in Spain will no doubt continue. And, unfortunately, Galicia is a new trouble spot. Spain must be wary that with so many languages spoken on the small peninsula, there is a strong possibility of more movements to happen (especially in the uncertain economic times in which Spain itself). The hope is that terrorism in Spain is done for good; but unless more Basques can speak *Euskera* in the near future, the only thing that will do the talking is terrorism.

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<sup>201</sup> Anonymous 2011.

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