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**Identity Discourse in Western Liberal Democracies:
ETA During the Years 1998 - 2018**

Master's Thesis

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Year of Defence: 2023

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree with my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague, on 3.5.2023

Héctor Moncada Bravo

References

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Abstract

Terrorism was a subject of concern that loomed large in the Spanish territory for a protracted period of time. Although at an exclusively domestic level, this master's thesis investigates the evolution of ethnic identity and the evolution of the understanding of violence in ETA's discourse through a critical analysis of six key statements issued between 1998 and 2018. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis, the study examines the linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions of ETA's rhetoric in each statement with the ultimate purpose of addressing two main research questions: (RQ1) How does the notion of ethnic identity evolve over time and relate to violent conduct and ideology in the statements produced by ETA? and (RQ2) derived from RQ1, how is the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse?

The findings reveal a complex interplay between ethnic identity, violence, and political ideology in ETA's discourse, which at the same time are determined by strategic shifts in response to internal and external pressures. Likewise, the approaches of Primordialism, Instrumentalism and Constructivism provided a theoretical framework that served to identify key themes in the statements: the organization's emphasis on historical grievances, the right to self-determination, as well as the framing of violence as a necessary and legitimate means to achieve political goals in the name of the defense of an ethnic identity. Hence, this thesis provides understanding of ethnic identity, violence, and ideology by showcasing how those notions are incorporated into ETA's discourse considering the statements being analyzed. Conclusively, this thesis aims to contribute to the broader literature on ethnonationalism movements by specializing in an isolated case and the specificities found while exploring it and by, hopefully, paving the way to future and potential avenues of research in the topic of terrorism and identity.

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At the same time, I would also like to devote a special mention to my family and friends for their outstanding support throughout my experience as a master's student. This work and my efforts since I decided to join the MAIN program in 2020 are the product of their ongoing encouragement towards me. The year 2020 was not precisely easygoing for all of us but I can only look back and feel proud of what has been built in terms of genuine friendships where there always was a helpful hand whenever we needed each other the most.

Finally, I would like to thank each of the professors and academicians with whom I have had the pleasure to share my thoughts either during their seminars or on a private basis. I owe them all my entire gratitude.

List of Abbreviations Used

EGI – *Euzko Gaztedi Indarra* (Basque Youth Force)

ETA – *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Euskadi and Freedom)

ETA-m – *ETA-militar* (ETA-military)

ETA-p.m – *ETA-politico-militar* (ETA-political-military)

GAL – *Grupos Terroristas de Liberación* (Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups)

HB – *Herri Batasuna* (Popular Unity)

PNV – *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Party)

PSOE – *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers Party)

PP – *Partido Popular* (People's Party)

UCD – *Union de Centro Democrático* (Union of Democratic Centre)

Introduction

Terrorism and Spain are two words that have unfortunately shared a close relationship over the past decades, and this is because the latter has had to put up with one of the most longevous and lethal terrorist organizations in Western society: ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* – Euskadi and Freedom). Terrorism in the Spanish territory has been a subject of concern that has loomed large since the Basque terrorist threat came into existence. ETA, despite being established in 1959, that is, the period in which Spain was still immersed in Francisco Franco’s fierce dictatorship, did not carry out its first attack until the late sixties. From that moment onwards, and until the terrorists announced the cessation of armed activity in 2011, the debris left by this terrorist organization accounted for over 800 lives – ranging from politicians and police officers to civilians.¹ As observed in other attacks conducted by other terrorist organizations outside Spain, ETA’s activity is endowed with complexities stemming from actors that exercise their influence in the political arena, namely political actors and civilian population.²

In the case in question, ETA’s terrorist activity should be understood as a means to achieve political and territorial concessions; perhaps, contrary to other terrorist organizations whose activities were tainted by religious motives among some of the causes. Religion was never a part of ETA’s discourse. It appears at first glance that the discourse employed by the terrorist organization during the years the tension lasted was associated with the construction and display of its notion of identity that was linked to Basque values and nationalism. ETA’s activity has been extensive and deadly throughout the years it was operative, concluding with a statement formally announcing the end of its armed operations in October 2011 and then the total dissolution of the organization a few years later in 2018.

¹Avilés Farré, J. (2003). “El terrorismo en la España democrática”. *La transición a la democracia y el reinado de Juan Carlos I*, pp. 631-665.

²Sánchez Cuenca, I. (2009). “Análisis de la variación temporal en la letalidad de ETA”. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, Vol. 67, No. 3, pp. 609-629.

Truth be told, the original intent of this thesis was to strictly examine the potential correlation between the measures taken by the Government after an attack had occurred and the responses provided by the terrorist organization to those measures. Doing so would have granted the possibility to assess the influence of each of these actors on one another, and the consequent construction of a *national* terrorist threat. Nevertheless, while gathering the essential data that would then undergo a thorough analysis, I came to the realization that the focus of the original project was too vague and aimed at touching upon a wide array of topics instead of being concise and targeting a specific area of research. I saw this as a constraint and a shortcoming rather than a strength since it would have signified going beyond the scope of a master's thesis, as well as being *the jack of all trades and master of none*. Thus, upon agreement with my supervisor, a meditated change was made in order to focus on ETA and its notion of identity. At the same time, the original project aimed at researching every single year the terrorist organization was active during the democratic period, and the original intent was to look at the Spanish case through the lens of the securitization theory. However, I thought it would be more fascinating and pertinent to evaluate the identity and ideology issues that were intertwined with the terrorist organization's discourse in the statements it produced during the years it was active, more in particular after Francisco Franco's dictatorship came to an end. This would aid the possibility to see "the bigger picture" while at the same time indirectly help in understanding *why* the Spanish case is different and does not respond to the "traditional explanations" we see or buy into whenever the topic of terrorism is dealt with. Hence, this final piece of work differs from what was originally manifested in the project in terms of approach, the focus of the study, as well as the methodology.

Thus, I decided to switch the focus of my study given that – after thinking about it long and hard – I wished to continue with the direction I took during my time as a master's student in International Relations. Throughout my academic career at Charles University and in the different seminars I have been a part of, I resorted to the study of nationalism as well as the notion of a constructed "identity". I did so by focusing on another territory in Spanish geography: Catalonia. Accordingly, I deemed it fair to continue the exploration of the same area of research but applied to a different region in Spain's geography. I also found it to be a relevant subject of discussion provided the issue of ETA's notion of identity had not been looked at through the lens of critical discourse analysis. I have experienced how nationalism can be a

dangerous weapon if pushed beyond its limits during my time living in my home country. While living in my own country, Spain, I have witnessed at times how nationalism was used as a tool to influence the thought of the masses, and so I decided to embark on the stiff task of trying to illustrate by means of discursive practices *how* an ideology is embodied in statements. I believe that the resulting work could prove useful if further research is decided to be taken up in the shape of comparing the Basque case to other terrorist cells or also exploring more abstract aspects whenever the topic of terrorism is dealt with.

Consequently, the aim of this paper was adjusted while preserving the main area of research interest – the operation of ETA in Spanish soil. In other words, the main focus rests upon the statements produced by the terrorist organization throughout the democratic period.³ Given that the PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* - Spanish Socialist Workers Party) and the PP (*Partido Popular* – *People's Party*) have dominated the Spanish political scene after the transition to democracy was completed, statements were produced during the legislative periods of each party have been selected to undergo an analysis of the discourse employed by the terrorist in order to attempt to discern how their rhetoric is based on the grounds of “the Basque identity”. The chronology of this study intended to start in 1977 as it was the date marked in history books as “the official” beginning of the transition to democracy provided it was during that year that the first general elections took place. However, as it was found out during the data collection process – and as it is mentioned in the methodology section - the first (published) statement by ETA is not found until 1998. This, nevertheless, did not represent a hindrance given that the “bipartidism” tendency of Spanish politics allowed for the exploration of three periods (1998-1999; 2006-2007; 2011-2018) when either the PSOE or the PP held the power interchangeably.⁴ It is thus interesting to dissect the rhetoric used by ETA when releasing a statement during the different periods in which either of the parties have been in office to see whether identity concerns remain unchanged depending on “who was in office” at the time a statement was published based on the premise that context plays a role.

³In this context, a milestone would be understood as any relevant statement provided by ETA such as a truce or an explanation of the motives behind a *striking* attack.

⁴I refer to “bipartidism” as the existing trend in Spanish politics where only either the PSOE or the PP have been elected during a legislative period.

Moreover, the hiatus between the years 2011 and 2018 after ETA's armed activity came to an end will be briefly explored as well. In line with concerns regarding the extension of the paper and relevance of this research targeting the Spanish democratic period, ETA's attacks prior to the Spanish transition to democracy will not be dealt with – that is the period covering the years prior to 1977. This is not done only to meet the scope of a master's thesis but also due to the fact that, prior to the democratic period, the Basque terrorist organization operated in clandestine settings and was exposed to the repression of Franco's regime, thus, making it impossible for anyone to talk about either the existence of published statements per se.

Considering that nationalism, identity, and violence are concepts expected to be linked to one another, this thesis seeks to give an answer to the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the notion of ethnic identity evolve over time and relate to violent conduct and ideology in the statements produced by ETA?

RQ1 places its focus on the relationship between ethnic identity, violent conduct, and ideology in ETA's use of discourse. This question explores how ETA frames, promotes, and defends its ideology through the use of violence in relation to the Basque identity.

RQ2: And, derived from RQ1, how is the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse?

RQ2 then builds on RQ1 by looking at the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse. This research question focuses on the ways in which ETA frames its use of violence, and how this framing may depict its overall ideology and identity in the statements the organization produced.

Bearing in mind these research questions, this thesis operates under the assumption that ETA's discourse varies through each of the periods being studied that situate six statements over the course of three different decades, which in turn are endowed with different specificities found in a political context. Therefore, this thesis has the simple goal of exposing those variations in ETA's discourse across the different statements produced during the three periods being explored, while at the same time illustrating how those variations in discourse relate to the proposed research questions.

Lastly, before proceeding with the structure of the thesis, it is important to highlight what this paper is not. In this sense, this paper neither discusses topics related to legal frameworks or areas of study that would require a more quantitative approach such as measuring the conduct of public opinion in the face of terrorism, nor it provides a comparative analysis with broader cases dealing with terrorism. This study decided to isolate the research area to illustrate the application of theoretical framework and methodology that were deemed suitable for the Spanish case.

My research work therefore consists of five chapters that proceed as follows:

Chapter 1 presents a rich literature review based on the works of scholars that have devoted their attention to both terrorism and Basque terrorism. It starts by providing an understanding of ETA's terrorist activity where I also briefly explore the concept of terrorism. It then moves forward to present a thorough but concise review of the historical background that navigates through the relevance of the notion of Basque nationalism as a point of departure to understand ETA as a terrorist organization. Next, I deal with the inception of the terrorist organization and its *raison d'être*, the context that made possible its emergence. Finally, it briefly covers the period ending, first, in the permanent ceasefire in 2011, and then the complete dissolution of ETA as a terrorist organization in 2018.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework that feeds to the contextualization of the present case of study. Within the perspectives found in Ethnic Conflict Theories and International Relations, it came as no surprise that Constructivism was the theoretical approach that could provide a more holistic account of the factors concerned with identity and ideology. In this chapter I also explore two main Ethnic Conflict theories, namely Primordialism and Instrumentalism since they appeared to be well fitted for my study albeit they may somewhat embrace a more sociological stance. Finally, I delved into the explanations that the Constructivist school of thought could provide when it came to the shaping of an identity in a given context since this theoretical perspective's premises helped build up on the explanation that identity plays an important role in a conflict.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology chosen for this study and explains why the single case study research method and discourse analysis are relevant in terms of applicability and suitability to the case in question given the fact that I am trying to make, illustrate, and justify inferences based on the ideas extracted from a written text. The analysis of statements starts in

1998 provided that – as opposed to what was believed in the beginning before tackling this investigation in depth – there is no record of published statements before that year. This shortcoming, however, tried to be counterbalanced by providing in Chapter 1 a review of what happened during the years prior to 1998, as well as an explanation of the context found in Spain before analyzing each specific period.

Chapter 4 performs the discourse analysis of the selected statements by following Norman Fairclough’s guidance when reading and extracting information from the material selected to undergo the analyses. This chapter also seeks to integrate those guidelines in the theories selected in the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. In other words, the theories prove their applicability in terms of illustrating the specificities the focus on as per the observed in the statements.

Finally, **Chapter 5** concludes the work with final remarks that include findings (i.e., answers the research questions), the limitations of the research, as well as a proposal for potential areas of further research within the topic being studied.

Chapter 1. Literature Review

This study will be structured around the extensive works of authors who have examined terrorism and in particular the Basque case through an academic lens. The goal of this exploration is to endow the present work - and its potential outcomes - with the possibility to pave the way for a better understanding of the issue in question and justify its relevance as we move forward in the paper. I will first explore the understanding of ETA as a terrorist organization, followed by an examination of the historical backdrop and factual conditions that led to its formation.

1.1. An Understanding of ETA’s Terrorist Activity

On ETA, in general, a vast body of literature has been compiled, which incorporates diverse perspectives, contributions, and positions. The initial works, produced towards the end of the Franco administration, indicate a posture of greater adhesion to a certain stream of thought, which establishes ETA as an agency in the fight against Franco's Regime. As data became declassified and new research paths were unraveled, the interest - particularly among social scientists - in researching the Basque terrorist organization rose. In this regard, there is little doubt that the emergence of democracy in Spain exposed the terrorist nature of the organization in a transparent and comprehensive manner. In line with this, academic contributions addressing ETA's ideas, myths, and symbols began to come into existence - a noteworthy contribution is that of Robert Clark in 1984 where he explored the negotiations that took place between ETA and the Spanish Government between 1975 and 1984 and then examined the challenges and roadblocks that the peace process faced given the fact that symbolism played an important role in the conception of ETA as a terrorist organization.⁵ Similarly, we can also find works that dig deep into the historical perspectives of the organization,⁶ while other authors' works target the policies employed by the Government when attempting to respond to ETA's activities as well as dissecting their *modus operandi*.⁷ Lastly, there are also works that show some "benevolence" toward the cause of the terrorist group and, thus, closer to what may be understood as a historiographic explanation when it comes to the understanding of the motives behind the organization's actions.⁸

As a logical point of departure, it is convenient to touch upon the concept of *terrorism*. Etymologically speaking, terrorism comes from the Latin word *terror* meaning "fear".⁹ At the same time, the root of the word *terror* is found in the term *terreo*, which implies the action of

⁵Clark, R. (1984). *The Basque Insurgents: ETA, 1952-1980*. University of Wisconsin Press.

⁶Prestana Barros, C. (2003). "An Intervention Analysis of Terrorism: The Spanish ETA case". *Defence and Peace Economics*. Vol. 14, No. 6, pp. 401-412.

⁷Mahoney, C. W. (2018). "End of the Cycle: Assessing ETA's Strategies of Terrorism. Small Wars and Insurgencies". Vol 29. No. 5, pp 916-940.

⁸Douglass, W.A., & Zulaika, J. (2009). *On the Interpretation of Terrorist Violence: ETA and the Basque Political Process*. Cambridge University Press.

⁹Lamarca, C. (1985). "Sobre el uso de la expresión terrorismo". In C. *Secretaria general técnica (Ed.), Tratamiento Jurídico del Terrorismo*, Madrid: Guía de Tasaciones, pp. 31-34.

feeling physically threatened.¹⁰ Given its rising prevalence, terrorism is one of today's most distressing phenomena since it represents to date one of the main subjects of discussion among the general public in several nations. Terrorism has significantly influenced contemporary societies in different ways over the past few decades primarily due to the nuances found in what constitutes a "threat". To provide a general view of those aspects, we need to address certain features of the issue in question. As Celaya puts it, first, it is possible to infer that terrorism is a form of violence exercised by individual and/or collective actors in the quest for power.¹¹ Second, some political systems and cultural environments are more conducive to the emergence of this phenomenon (i.e., cultural or identity factors, and dissatisfaction stemming from historical circumstances).¹² And third, the political context a country goes through at a certain point in time may or may not allow for attacks to be perpetrated in a more or less brutal scale.¹³

Nonetheless, the concept of terrorism is not a novel notion. As Laqueur puts it, despite it having been latent throughout different periods in the history of mankind, the modern conception of it is relatively precocious.¹⁴ Bearing in mind the extension of the literature tackling terrorism and, for the purposes of the present research work, only the "modern period" dealing with terrorism is to be discussed. In other words, this paper will not delve into the very origins of terrorism or any deep philosophical interpretations of the concept. Likewise, the truth is Terrorism - like other negative events in recent human history - has sparked worldwide discussion in academia and politics while also somewhat causing a change of mentality in people's attitudes towards life. Consequently, this goes in line with the definition provided by the United Nations General Assembly (1994) in that it defined terrorism as "criminal acts" intentionally carried out by an individual or an organized group with a view to provoking a "state

¹⁰Rivas, P. (2012). *Terrorismo y Antiterrorismo en el Mundo Contemporáneo*. Medellín: Nomos Impresores, pp. 29-60.

¹¹Celaya, F. (2009) "The terrorist threat is being materially and normatively shaped by national and global institutions of law and order: Spain & beyond". *Athena Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 4, No 1, pp. 7-34.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Laqueur, W. (2001). *A History of Terrorism*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction.

of terror in the general public, a group of persons or a target group of persons for political purposes”.¹⁵

On this matter, it is intriguing to discuss the notion of “terrorist attack”, as this concept embodies several aspects depending on the context it is used. Accordingly, ETA does not see their acts as terrorism but as a form of expression to claim freedom for the Basque identity and establish its political project of a radical nationalist nature. Nevertheless, with a view to attaining such goals, there are collateral effects the terrorist provoke: on the one hand, individuals who bear direct physical harm and, on the other hand, third parties that are psychologically influenced by the immediate or delayed effects of such occurrences. In addition, Reinares claims that the various types of violence vary in their extent and amplitude, as well as the manner in which the physical and psychological elements are intertwined.¹⁶ The psychological impact has a substantial effect on the stability of large democratic societies, both because of the necessity to implement security measures and the inevitable unrest of citizens.

The stark effect impacting the citizens’ psyche is characterized by systematic conduct and unpredictability. In this respect, violent conduct is predominantly focused on targets that have been chosen based on their symbolic significance within an established political context. To illustrate this assertion in the case of ETA, for instance, we could mention the attack conducted against one of the high posts during the last years of Francisco Franco’s dictatorship - Luis Carrero Blanco -, and the two failed attempts of the assassination of Jose Maria Aznar during his mandates – in 1995 and 2001.¹⁷ These attacks served as a tool for conveying a message to society.¹⁸

When dealing with the treatment of the notion of terrorism in Spain, it is also preeminent to analyze the intentions of the terrorist and whether they are acting individually or collectively.

¹⁵ Resolution adopted by The General Assembly of The United Nations. “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”. 9 December 1994. Web. Accessed 10 Jan 2022, <http://www.un-documents.net/a49r60.htm>

¹⁶ Reinares, F (2001). *Terrorismo y Antiterrorismo*. Barcelona: Paidós.

¹⁷ Bustos Álvarez, D. (2021). “Tratamiento periodístico de las víctimas y la política en el contexto del terrorismo de ETA”. Trabajo de Fin de Grado. *Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Ciencias de la Información*.

¹⁸ Reinares, F., *op. cit*, 2001.

Along these lines, the media played an important role in the distribution of the statements produced by ETA during the time it operated as a terrorist group.¹⁹

Moving on with the exploration of terrorism and the message ETA aimed at conveying with their statements - and considering the topic to be discussed in this thesis -, it is important as well to bring up a nuance of the term. That is no other than “state terrorism” – or, in accordance with our case in point, also known as a “dirty war”. According to Garzón-Valdés, “dirty war” refers to the use of methods that involve secrecy, and unpredictability that a Government adopts in order to execute “coercive tactics banned by law”, thus, transforming the government into an active participant in the quest for power or, rather, an actor that seeks to balance out and seize the attempts of a dissident organization to keep manifesting its interests.²⁰ By the same token, Bonasso asserts, “state terrorism is a modern state model that is compelled to transcend the intellectual and political frames of legal repression”.²¹ In other words, state terrorism is utilized by state and local governments and, more precisely, by the institutions responsible for sustaining repression, as a way of re-establishing social order.

All things considered, it is thus possible to assert terrorism is the strategy of utilizing an act or a threat of violence against an individual or group of individuals. However, as already discussed so far, it is necessary to highlight that there is no universal definition accounting for this concept. Moreover, the activities conducted by ETA are boosted by different motives that do not respond to religious causes but ideology and identity concerns. Accordingly, in the present case, terrorism is treated as a phenomenon closely connected to politics. Thus, we can confidently assert that the goal towards which the perpetrator works is no other than provoking an alteration in the structure they feel dissatisfied with or that they do not feel they belong to.²² This assertion goes hand in hand with that of Brieguer in that he argues “terrorism in most cases essentially constitutes a political act”. Thus, its preeminent goal is to instill fear in the population

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Garzón-Valdés, E. (1989). “El Terrorismo de Estado”. *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, No. 65.

²¹ Bonasso, M. (1990). *Terrorismo de Estado*. Nafarroa: Txapalarita.

²² Feal Vázquez, J. (2002). “Terrorismo Internacional”. *Boletín de Información del Ministerio de Defensa*, No. 275, pp. 55-81.

and capture the Government's attention.²³ Furthermore, Rodríguez-Morales suggests that to attain a closer and more accurate insight into what terrorism is from a political perspective, it is rather convenient to look at it through an academic lens by means of trying to look *beyond* and understand the causes that motivate a terrorist group to act.²⁴ Essentially, what she is suggesting is that the researcher should have a critical and unbiased perspective in order to understand the intricacies found in the Spanish case.

Finally, I will touch upon the relationship between ETA's terrorist activity and language. It shall be mentioned that what makes this study transcendental is the fact that ETA and discursive matters have already been explored in the Spanish political scene but from an iconographic perspective as well as from a strategy-based standpoint – that is, newspapers' covers, and front-page highlights have been analyzed without delving into the meaning of words, sentences, and paragraphs elaborated in a given contextual period. The works of Morera Hernandez and Pouso Torres boast a detailed account of the treatment the press has made in terms of images and the representation of ETA in the covers appearing in the issues of the newspapers.^{25 26} As important as this perspective on ETA is, and while these works may serve as a reference, I believe they possess the limitation of not exploring the actual essence of the issue in question: the content and significance a body of text bears as a means to understand identity precepts.

The present work aims at being innovative in this matter. In a way, it could perhaps be seen as an extension of the works started by the latter-mentioned authors or, rather, as a different angle that would help to understand a more discursive and abstract nature of ETA through the analysis of their statements.

23 Brieger, P. (2011). *¿Qué es Al Qaeda? Terrorismo y Violencia*. Madrid: Clave intelectual.

24 Rodríguez Morales, G. (2012). "El Terrorismo y nuevas formas de terrorismo". *Espacios Públicos*, Vol. 15, No. 33, pp. 72-95.

25 Morera-Hernández, C. (2021). "La Representación de ETA en la Prensa Española: el Terrorismo en Portada (1973-1998)". *Revista General de Información y Documentación*. Vol 31, No. 2, pp. 735-755.

26 Pouso Torres, E. (2016). "El Tratamiento de la Imagen en los Atentados de ETA. Terrorismo y Fotografía en la Prensa". *Actas del I Congreso Internacional Comunicación y Pensamiento. Comunicracia y desarrollo social*, pp 755-772.

In my opinion, being dissatisfied with the treatment an ethnicity receives as well as seeing oneself as an oppressed identity is the beginning of violence. Violent conduct need not be physical necessarily in the first instance. It is of utmost importance to be able to comprehend the link between violence and language in order to perform a discourse analysis of ETA's statements. Despite the conventional belief that language is an instrument that seeks to enhance peaceful expression, it can also be the most lethal tool violence can make use of. Language fractures a community because it produces several *realities* or perspectives. Therefore, paradoxically enough, language may be the beginning of violence instead of a tool used to prevent or de-escalate conflicts.

The concept of violence encompasses the struggle found among individual and collective actors during the execution of any action that pursues a material goal.²⁷ In addition, I believe that despite there being a fine line between violence and terrorism, these two concepts should not be used interchangeably. Violence responds to a permanent, mutable struggle between actors in the quest for hegemony. It is difficult to imagine anyone surrendering their share of power or the defense of their ideology without first putting up some sort of opposition. Because of this, violence will always exist even if does not reach a physical level. Conversely, terrorism involves violence and physicality, but it aims at conveying a message, it has vindication as an end by means of force. Terrorism is always physical.²⁸

Not only do violence and terrorism yield a connection when it comes to physical attacks, but also in communication. The act of communicating can prove the best vehicle for violence to arise at any stage, from the moment a message is created until it reaches the final receptor who will then interpret it. It is for this reason that statements may be able to display the close relationship found not only between terrorism and violence but the defense of an identity and violence as a means to achieve an end. The use of rhetoric matters, and the analysis of discourse is decisive in order to understand the actual message a group wants to convey as well as noticing a potential evolution of their ideology.

²⁷Ricoeur, P. (1998) "Violence and Language". *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*. Vol. 10, No. 2.

²⁸Prestana Barros, C., *op. cit*, 2003

The bottom line of this section is that the definition of terrorism gathers several overlapping characteristics, including the use of violence, the pursuit of political concessions, the application of illegal methods, and the fear it attempts to instill in society. In addition, the understanding of terrorism and the importance of studying it goes beyond imagery and iconography since language can prove a very powerful weapon in the construction of identity. With regard to this, it is evident that terrorist organizations originate from periods or circumstances that attempted to carry out an insurrectionary process but were unable to mobilize the material, human, and symbolic resources required to precipitate more widespread violence and instead perpetuated themselves by utilizing strategies that, in most cases, did not discriminate targets given that, as Luke Johns very well concludes, “terrorism is a strategy. It is not psychology, or a mindset”.²⁹

1.2. A Literature Review of The Historical Background

As a continuation of the literature review, it is rather imperative to cover the historical background of the Basque terrorist organization by providing a review of the existing literature on the topic. In this regard, the excellent work by Stekl will serve as one of the referents for this purpose since, as extensive and entangled as the history of ETA is, he makes a concise yet detailed account of the important historical facts surrounding the existence of ETA without leaving relevant excerpts out of the equation based on relevant authors who explored the field such as Imanol Murua, Teresa Whitfield, Gaizka Fernández, among others.³⁰ The aim of providing historical context by following the authors who have academically dealt with ETA is to provide information on the material, social, and cultural aspects that impact the understanding ETA as a terrorist organization while giving the appropriate context to the reader. The significance of historical context resides in the fact that it should minimize biases, oversimplifications, and misunderstandings when evaluating the statements by the Basque

²⁹ Johns, L. (2014). “Terrorism: A Definition and Analysis”. *E-International Relations*. Web. Accessed 5 Feb 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/02/09/terrorism-a-definition-and-analysis/>

³⁰ Stekl, J. (2020). “Demise and Disintegration of Nationalist Terrorist Groups”. Master Thesis. *Security Studies*, Charles University in Prague.

terrorist organization. Thorough attention shall be placed on this section since it will be helpful in the endeavor to have an understanding of the factors underpinning the existence and longevity of ETA as a terrorist organization.

1.2.1. Nationalism in the Basque Region as a Key Concept

Attempting to comprehend what the Basque region went through during the time terrorists were active without acknowledging the role nationalism plays in that Spanish region appears to be an arduous and rather unfeasible task. First and foremost, as the root of other political disputes in Spain even in the present day (e.g., the Catalonian conflict), the notion of nationalism plays a central role in the Spanish narratives dealing with Basque terrorism.

But what is nationalism? There is a plethora of works dealing with this concept, however, Benedict Anderson is in my opinion one of the most prominent authors in the study of nationalism. According to the author, nationalism is “an imagined political community” whose members share a common ancestry and history. Anderson posits that a political community is “imagined” since its members do not know each other personally, yet they identify with one another through a shared sense of nationality and common cultural values.³¹

In the present subject of research, the Basque case, the province of Gipuzkoa was the cradle of Basque nationalism that sprung in the late nineteenth century.^{32 33} The reason for the emergence of this nationalist sentiment can be broken down into two issues looming large in the Basque panorama at that time: first, the dissolution of the “fueros” in 1876,³⁴ which was perceived as a direct attack towards the “Basque identity”. And second, the fact that the three

³¹ Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

³² Whitfield, T. “The Basque Conflict and ETA: The Difficulties of an Ending”. US Institute of Peace, 2015.

³³ Llera Ramo, F. J. (2017). “Basque polarization: Between autonomy and independence”. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*. Vol. 6, No, 3, pp, 101-120.

³⁴ The Encyclopedia Britannica defines “fuero” (deriving from Latin, *forum*) as a compilation of fundamental laws, with regional applicability, that benefitted the elites of a region. Web. Accessed 10 Nov 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fuero>

regions in the Spanish territory (Alava, Vizcaya, and Gipuzkoa) and then three other regions on French soil (Soule, Labort, and Baja Navarra) started to identify themselves as a single unit that shared a common identity in the shape of a common language and culture.³⁵

Moreover, we shall not obviate the importance of Sabino Arana. In other words, the individual who is regarded as the foremost proponent of Basque nationalism. Muro seems to agree that it was Arana the one who introduced a new perspective on Basque identity.³⁶ Arana coined the term “Basque nationalism” as an ideology going against liberal precepts where the ultimate objective of the Basque people’s struggle should be aimed at was no other than being completely separated from Spain and building their own State under the ideas that the Basques shared a common set of values and an identity.³⁷ Accounting for the relevance of the figure of Sabino Arana in the narrative dealing with Basque nationalism, we shall mention that he was the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party (*PNV – Partido Nacionalista Vasco*) in 1895.

In closing this section on Basque nationalism, I would like to mention that the strive for independence found in the nineteenth century would also be a reason why the advocates of Basque nationalism would join the Republican faction during the Civil War (1936-1939) since, had the Republican Government come out of the conflict victorious, the Basques would have been provided with a greater state of autonomy.³⁸ The vanquishment of the Republicans at the conclusion of the War proved catastrophic for the Basque peoples if we take into consideration what followed afterwards.

1.2.2. The Period After the Civil War: Francisco Franco’s Dictatorship

³⁵ Weinberg, L. *et al.* (2008). *Political Parties and Terrorist Groups*. London: Routledge.

³⁶ Muro, D. (2008). *Ethnicity and Violence. The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism*. Nueva York: Routledge.

³⁷ Sánchez Cuenca, I. (2008). “The Persistence of Nationalist Terrorism: The Case of ETA”. In Kledja Mulaj (ed). *Violent Non-State Actors in Contemporary World Politics*.

³⁸ Murua, I. (2014). “The End of ETA (2007-2011): Narratives from the Media and from the Actors”. Reno. Dissertation. University of Nevada

After Francisco Franco led his nationalist (fascist) faction to a victory that materialized in 1936, a period of repression against the provinces that did not support the military operations commenced. In the case of the Basque Country, General Francisco Franco issued a decree which revoked the economic agreement for Gipuzkoa and Vizcaya, henceforth referred to by the General as “traitors provinces”.³⁹ To put things into perspective, the economic agreement between the provinces of Alava, Gipuzkoa, Vizcaya, and the Spanish Crown granted these provinces legislative, tax, and financial competencies. In exchange, these regions provided an annual sum to the Crown, a sum which is negotiated every fifteen years even in present times.

Furthermore, during this period symbolic violence materialized. Put simply, the prosecution of symbols surrounding the public and private settings entered into force targeting the entire Basque society regardless of their position in social strata. Along these lines, Gaizka Fernández walks us through the period when all languages other than Spanish were prosecuted - especially the Basque language received most of the repression provided the Basques were “traitors” who wanted to break away from the “unity of the Spanish State” as well as abandon a “great nation”.⁴⁰ The prohibition of the Basque language planted a seed of chaos in those sectors of the population who had never been exposed to the Spanish language before – mainly the inhabitants of rural areas.⁴¹ To place things in context, the aftermath of this prohibition implanted in the past – even if abolished in the present day – still persists in present times since there are older generations who have trouble communicating with public institutions that use Basque as a language for formal and legal affairs. Now, the following subchapters will provide an account of ETA as an organization and its inception. This historical account will go from the very beginnings of the organization as well as its evolution until its dissolution.

³⁹Fernández, G. (2014) “El Simple Arte de Matar. Orígenes de la Violencia Terrorista en el País Vasco”. *Historia y Política*. No. 32, pp. 271-298.

⁴⁰Fernández, G. (2017). *The origins of ETA: between Francoism and democracy, 1958–1981*. In *ETA’s Terrorist Campaign: From violence to politics, 1968–2015*. New York: Routledge.

⁴¹Sullivan, J. L. (2015). *ETA and Basque Nationalism (RLE: Terrorism & Insurgency). The Fight for Euskadi 1890-1986*. London: Taylor & Francis.

1.2.3. The Emergence of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

Picking up with the end of the previous subchapter, it is visible that an imminent effect of the symbolic violence exercised by Franco's regime was that the Basque "identity" and culture failed to be further cultivated since utilizing the Basque language and culture was a reason for repression. Therefore, as a means of preserving the Basque identity, Ekin ("to start" in Euskera) was founded in 1952 as an organization consisting of students that, for years, held clandestine seminars on the culture and history of the Basque region.⁴²

De la Granja seems to believe Ekin felt respect towards the PNV as an actor that fiercely opposed the Regime since the latter was seen as an expression of resilience even if illegalized during the dictatorship.⁴³ And, in consequence, it was this sentiment motivated Ekin to join the PNV, namely its young division named "EGI" (*Eusko Gaztedi Indarra* – Basque Youth Force) in order to make use of its already established structure and spread their message to more sectors of the population.⁴⁴ In this regard, it is important to mention that Ekin's activity was of a rather non-belligerent nature in its origins. Nonetheless, with time, Ekin grew to feel that the PNV was manipulating them to exert complete control over their micro-organization and this why, in 1959 after a series of internal disputes, a fraction of Ekin detached from the PNV to create ETA. This newly created organization was of course not labeled as "terrorist" right away, but it was founded on the belief that the Basque region was "an occupied territory" that ought to claim its independence from the Spanish State. To convey this message, the advocators of these ideas relied on Arana's conception of Basque nationalism. ETA was formally created on July 31, 1959 – the same day as the anniversary of the creation of the PNV a few decades earlier. This was seen as a symbolic yet rebellious move suggesting that what they attempted to prove was they did not need to kneel to the party discipline and directives in order to defend the principles of Basque nationalism.⁴⁵

⁴² De la Granja Sáinz, J. L. (1995). *El Nacionalismo Vasco: Un Siglo de Historia*. Madrid: Tecnos.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Moving on to the sixties, ETA had several strategic meetings (called assemblies). These determined the policies and strategic aims of the organization. These aims took the form of an intent to achieve complete Basque independence, social freedom, and the safeguard of cultural values, which were to be attained by the armed struggle that would find support in the use of the concept “action – repression – action” which at the same time would benefit from the ongoing regime’s repressions.⁴⁶

Even though Ekin’s decision to establish an independent organization under the name ETA signified a break-up with the PNV, efforts to find a compromise solution remained since let us remember that at first Ekin had the PNV in high consideration and saw the latter as a means to spread the word on Basque nationalism and reinforce the Basque identity. This notwithstanding, ties between the two groups deteriorated significantly in the summer of 1961 as the relatively recent constituted ETA chose to target a train carrying ex-combatants of the Civil War headed to San Sebastian to celebrate the national uprising on July 18. The “fatal attack”, however, was a total fiasco. Notice how fatal attack is referred to in inverted commas since there were no casualties and it was rather an attempt of making a statement that resulted in a failure eventually. Likewise, the train’s planned derailment could be also interpreted from a different angle. That is, the attack was aimed against former Basque combatants that supported Franco’s regime, Basque combatants whom ETA labeled as “Euskadi traitors”. As Muro puts it, “their very presence was a reminder that a portion of the Basques had backed the uprising on July 18, 1936 since Alava was one of the provinces that provided a considerable number of recruits to Franco’s army” - it was a fact that needed to be deleted from history, according to ETA.⁴⁷ As expected, the Regime responded violently to these inexperienced insurgents, and the result of such repression translated into a large share of arrests and exiles of many of ETA’s members. At an organizational level, the police arrests yielded a heavy toll, prompting a few ETA members to temporarily question the viability of the “armed struggle”. Consequently, due to the evident

⁴⁵Jauregui Bereciartu, G. (1981). *Ideología y estrategia política de ETA: Análisis de su evolución entre 1959 y 1968*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno. In López Mata, T. “ETA, terrorismo y voto en España”. Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2020.

⁴⁶Stekl, J., *op. cit*, 2020

⁴⁷Muro, D., *op. cit*, 2008.

radicalization of ETA, this meant the ultimate rupture and a point of no return with the PNV. From that moment onwards, ETA would embrace an anti-PNV stance.

1.2.4. The Onset of Armed Struggle

All things considered, the first attack by ETA did not take place until 1968. The attack is often invoked as a heroic success and has been mythologized to a certain extent in ETA's memoirs in that it brought about the first martyr linked to the organization, Txabi Etxebarrieta. The latter murdered a Spanish police officer who was conducting a regular traffic stop.⁴⁸ López Mata is among the academics who seem to agree and record in their works that this murder was rather a fortuitous event since the assassination of the police officer was not planned and it is considered that Etxebarrieta simply went through a panic attack and fired his weapon when asked to exit his vehicle.⁴⁹

ETA believed that most of the anti-Regime resistance had a passive attitude, so they orchestrated their first attack and assassinated the leader of the Political-Social Brigade (BPS – *Brigada Politico-Social*) provided he had participated personally in much of the repression carried out in the Basque region. This can be considered the first *actual* attack by ETA. In line with this, it seems clear that the assassination of the leader of the Political-Social Brigade bears symbolic relevance due to the meaning ascribed to the Brigade itself as it acted as secret police responsible for carrying out the repression against any opposition movements during the Dictatorship, not only in the Basque Country but across the entire Spanish territory.⁵⁰

The Basque terrorist organization had the means to set off its armed operations and conduct large-scale attacks right from its inception. That notwithstanding, and to avoid creating a negative impression among the Basque people, the armed organization targeted its attacks on individuals who were considered an obstacle to the development of the Basque identity. And

48 Ibid.

49²López Mata, T. (2020). *ETA, Terrorismo y Voto en España*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

50 Wayne, A. (2003). *The ETA: Spain's Basque Terrorists*. The Rosen Publishing Group.

good proof of this is the above-cited example. But the murder of the BPS's leader only bought about more repression from Franco's regime and forced the exile of ETA's members to France.⁵¹ During Franco's Regime, however, the attitude of Spanish and Basque societies to the brutality of the Basque terrorist organization was rather polarized.⁵²

Nevertheless, it was not until 1973 that we are met with what is arguably the most significant and symbolic attack ETA conducted in a pre-democratic panorama: the assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco. This event happened in a context where Franco's Regime was on the wane provided the health of the dictator was severely compromised at that point in time. Carrero Blanco was the right hand of the dictator and ETA viewed him as the figure that would uphold the ferocity and repressiveness of the Regime even after Franco's death.⁵³ This attack was deemed a "strategic success" for the statement and message ETA intended to convey but at the same time led to internal divergence within the group.⁵⁴ These discrepancies were essentially due to the fact that ETA's biggest concern at that moment was the orientation the organization needed to take once the Regime would have come to an end, that is to say, the commencement of the democratic period.⁵⁵ It was in this context that the terrorist organization witnessed a split, an internal division for operational purposes and ETA was then divided into two branches: a political-military branch, ETA-p.m (*ETA politico-militar*), and the purely military branch known as ETA-m (*ETA militar*).⁵⁶ The former attempted to integrate the armed struggle while taking part in political affairs, whilst the military branch opted to firmly stick to military strategies in their course of action.⁵⁷

⁵¹Kurlansky, M. (1999). *The Basque History of the World*. New York: Walker & Company.

⁵²Barco, M. (2018). "Framing Terrorism and the Consequences of it in Counterterrorist Policy: Spain as a Case Study". Master's thesis. *Charles University and University of Glasgow*, pp. 1-105.

⁵³Kern, J. (2017). "ETA in Spain: Explaining Basque Violence". *The University of Mississippi*, pp.1-59.

⁵⁴Stekl, J., *op. cit*, 2020.

⁵⁵Murua, I. (2017). "No more bullets for ETA: the loss of internal support as a key factor in the end of the Basque group's campaign". *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Vol. 10, No.1, pp. 93-114.

⁵⁶Leonisio, R. (2019). "El Impacto del Terrorismo en el Discurso Político en España: Un Análisis de Contenido de Los Discursos de los Presidentes de Gobierno en los Debates Parlamentarios". *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*, Vol. 49, pp. 129-149.

1.2.5. The Democratic Period and The Permanent Ceasefire in 2011

The years after the events in 1973 when Carrero Blanco was assassinated until the transition to democracy was completed are primarily driven by inner tensions in the terrorist organization as well as political violence.⁵⁸ In light of this, the political-military branch was convinced that the best course of action was to wait for Franco's demise in order to be able to exert political leverage and have bigger exposure. With a view to achieving the latter, the political-military branch decided to split itself into even smaller units, thus creating the "Berezis", which were mainly responsible to carry out armed operations. On the other hand, the military branch did not welcome that initiative and manifested its rejection towards any further division of the organization and view the newly created cell as unnecessary and a hindrance to the expression of the ideas ETA wanted to convey.

At the same time, being preoccupied with "what faction oversees what" was not the only concern within the organization. A salient point of internal divergence was that ETA-military did not support the political aims the political-military branch had in mind. As its name may imply, the former faction was more radical and it advocated for violence in order to signal its discontent with the Spanish Government. Consequently, ETA-military perceived itself as a stronger particle of ETA since they were more financially stable and had no sub-factions leaving ETA-p.m as the weakling. Along these lines, I would say this is one of the main weaknesses found in ETA-p.m as it had neither expertise to participate in politics nor the resources to build a strong political apparatus and, on top of that, it kept on dividing itself into smaller factions. Ironically enough, what ETA-p.m desired was just power and to impose its will over the entire terrorist organization without having a clear know-how. It is important to highlight as well that, as Richards puts it, during this decade the terrorist group embraced a clear Marxist-Leninist stance in its political ideology since ETA firmly believed that such ideology was the right path to achieve its

⁵⁷ Murua, I. (2014). "The End of ETA (2007-2011): Narratives from the Media and from the Actors". *Reno. Dissertation. University of Nevada*. In Stekl, J. "Demise and Disintegration of Nationalist Terrorist Groups". Master Thesis. *Security Studies*, Charles University in Prague, 2020

⁵⁸ Weinberg, L. (2012). *The End of Terrorism?* New York: Routledge. In Stekl, J. (2020). "Demise and Disintegration of Nationalist Terrorist Groups". Master Thesis. *Security Studies*, Charles University in Prague

revolutionary aims.⁵⁹ The latter was also loaded with a violent component in tactics the organization decided to adopt. There is much confusion found often in scholarly works but the truth is that the terrorist organization showed a Marxist-Leninist tint pretty much since its creation but it was not openly promoting it until the Regime fell provided the prohibition and repression found at the time regarding any ideas opposing those of the Regime. ETA sought to connect their use of violence to Marxism-Leninism's tenets by means of struggle. Nevertheless, for obvious reasons, ETA brought violence to an exaggerated expression. The organization believed that a popular rebellion against the Spanish government was necessary for independence and freedom. With regard to this, the terrorist sought to persuade the Basque population that they were analogous to an oppressed working class and that an insurrection was the only means of establishing an independent socialist state.

The transition period created a feeling of restlessness for Spanish population, but it was even tougher with the Basques. Due to the high level of terrorist activity that was observed throughout the region, particularly starting in 1977, the Basque Country was experiencing a period of instability at the time. In this scenario, The UCD (*Unión de Centro Democrático* – Union of Democratic Centre) being the first party in office after the transition to democracy was completed in 1977, faced the difficult enterprise of elaborating an efficient counter-terrorist policy.⁶⁰ To this effect, the leader of UCD – Adolfo Suárez – after his second consecutive win in the 1979 general elections, promulgated a counter-terrorist program consisting of three pillars: first, The broadening and deeper examination of the archives dealing with information related to ETA attacks; second, greater involvement and collaboration of French Government in the fight against terrorism; and third, an enlargement of special security bodies in charge of mitigating attempts to conduct further terrorist attacks.⁶¹ Furthermore, the passing of the “Guernica Statute” (1979) was not satisfactory in any way for ETA-m and its interests, which exacerbated tensions within the terrorist group. While ETA-p.m did manage to participate in the process by providing a share of candidates in the election, the fact this strand of the organization was inexperienced

⁵⁹ Richards, M. (2013). *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-1945*. Cambridge University Press.

⁶⁰ This is the first time we can actually speak about counter-terrorist policy since prior to the transition to democracy the only way to counter the terrorist's actions was by means of repression.

⁶¹ López Mata, T., *op. cit.*, 2020.

and weak did not contribute to increasing the visibility of their demands for representation in the political scene. Conversely, the more radical strand of the terrorist group believed that this newly adopted statute was still not able to grant the ultimate goal they aimed at, namely the absolute independence of the region.

Eventually, - as Whitfield very well examined in her work exploring ETA's internal dynamics -, the lack of organization, weakness in terms of losing support, and outnumbering of ETA-p.m have been deemed the main reasons behind its total failure and extinction in 1986.⁶² Moving on, and during the eighties as well, two new actors came into play: Herri Batasuna (Popular Union, in Euskera) and the GAL (*Grupos Terroristas de Liberación* - Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups).⁶³ Herri Batasuna was a brand-new party that took over and worked as the political representative of ETA-m's ideas in the Spanish political scene from the moment of its creation until its dissolution.⁶⁴ On a side note, after the collapse of ETA-p.m, there no longer was a need to make a distinction between "the ETAs" as ETA-m would then just be known as ETA. Regarding the GAL, it was a paramilitary group that was responsible for the fight against ETA. As Zulaika, Rubio and Cerdan explore it in their works, the link between the GAL and the then Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez (PSOE), has never been officially confirmed by the party but evidence shows that they were in fact financially supported in their operations by the State government, a reason for which the party's image was weakened during this decade.^{65 66}

The decade of the nineties was remarkably turbulent for the terrorist group since a set of changes took place at a structural level. As mentioned earlier, the Basque terrorist organization adopted a Marxist-Leninist ideology right from its inception but it was not fully accentuated until the seventies. In the decade of the nineties we see, however, a change in this trend and an

⁶² Whitfield, T. (2014). *Endgame for ETA: Elusive Peace in the Basque Country*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶³ Muro, D. (2016). "ETA during democracy, 1975–2011". In: Leonisio, R., et al. *ETA's Terrorist Campaign: From violence to politics, 1968–2015*. New York: Routledge.

⁶⁴ Although Herri Batasuna was dissolved in 2001, this would not be the end of the political representation of ETA in politics. After Herri Batasuna, Batasuna would then become the new party operating under ETA's precepts right after Herri Batasuna was illegalized.

⁶⁵ Zulaika, J. (1997). *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament (The Basque Series)*. Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

⁶⁶ Rubio, A., & Cerdan, M. (1997). *El Origen del GAL*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy.

abandonment of that ideology. The shift was motivated by the turmoil going on at the time in the international arena, namely the crumbling of the Soviet Union and the demise of Communism as a political ideology by the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties.⁶⁷ The latter translated into ETA having to reassess its strategies and objectives and there was, therefore, a return to a Basque nationalist ideology based on the exaltation of tradition, language, and cultural values. A good example that conveys this shift was the use of rhetoric and propaganda that was mainly targeted towards the remembrance of identity. Not only this decade signified a change in ideology but the terrorist organization also witnessed additional changes in the local arena. The People's Party (PP) rose to power in 1996 after a clear period of Socialist domination by the hand of the Socialist Party (PSOE) and this transition of government meant a hardline approach by the former towards the terrorist. Overall, this decade was characterized by assassinations, kidnappings, bombings, and harder strategies by the Government to counter terrorism. In other words, the Central Government started the so-called "dirty war" whereby government officials employed crude tactics involving torture and prosecution of ETA members.⁶⁸ And, as expected, this approach was met with strong criticism by human rights organizations that led to a series of scandals. Paddy Woodworth's work makes a thorough yet concise account of the tactics and measures taken by the Government to combat ETA's activities during the period the "dirty war" lasted.⁶⁹

Finally, the beginning decade of the twenty-first century was characterized by a decline in ETA's capacity to perpetrate attacks. As Zulaika points out, this was due to the fact that during this decade the Spanish and French Governments joined forces with the aim to dismantle ETA's infrastructure by capturing its key leaders.⁷⁰ Moreover, there was a radical shift in public opinion that started to heavily condemn ETA's activities. This change of attitude was prompted

⁶⁷Bieter, M., & Bieter, J. (2003). *An Enduring Legacy: The Story Of Basques In Idaho (The Basque Series)*. Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

⁶⁸ Amnesty International. (1992). Spain: Torture, ill-treatment, and political killings. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/200000/eur410191992en.pdf>. Web. Accessed 28 Dec 2022.

⁶⁹Woodworth, P. (2003). *Dirty War, Clean Hands: ETA, the GAL and Spanish Democracy*. Yale: Yale University Press.

⁷⁰Zulaika, J. (2000). *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament (The Basque Series)*. Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

by several factors including the horror of the Madrid attacks in 2004,⁷¹ an increasing political and social integration of the Basque Country into Spanish politics which translated into a more peaceful and democratic context for Basque nationalism to be voiced at a national and European level, and the economic crisis the country was submerged into that essentially made the Spanish population shift their attention to other concerns.⁷² In terms of political context found during this decade, the Socialist Party (PSOE) came back to power under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero who advocated for dialogue and negotiations with ETA. However, this course of action proved ultimately unsuccessful since no protracted peace was achieved other than a ceasefire in 2006 that was eventually overridden by ETA in 2007 after a new attack this time at Madrid's airport. In this respect, Rodríguez Aizpeolea's work is exceptional in that he uncovers and explains how some experts argue that the PSOE's policy of promoting dialogue with ETA may have actually bolstered the organization's standing and helped them recruit new members, while others contend that the policy was necessary in order to explore all potential paths to peace, even if it ultimately failed.⁷³ Overall, Zapatero during his tenure as a Prime Minister managed to make great progress in terms of de-escalating the conflict with the Basque terrorist actually leading to the latter's permanent cessation of its armed activity in 2011.

In closing, what followed from 2011 to 2018, when there was a change of government that brought the PP back to scene, was rather a continuation of what the Socialists had started during the previous decade. The PP pursued a hardline policy against ETA making it clear that there was no room to even negotiate anything other than the dissolution of the terrorist organization. During this decade there were no significant activities by ETA (attacks).⁷⁴ In other words, and following Sánchez Cuenca's lead, the PP sought to permanently dismantle ETA's infrastructure, which at the same time aided the purpose of making the latter see that there was

71¹This attack was attributed to ETA in a first instance, but it was then associated to Al Qaeda as punishment from the latter to Spain for being involved in the war in Iraq.

72²Whitfield, T., *op. cit.*, 2014.

73³Rodríguez Aizpeolea, L. (2011). *ETA. Las claves de la paz.: Confesiones del negociador*. Madrid Aguilar.

74⁴De Pablo, S. (2011). *Breve Historia de Euskadi*. Madrid: Debate.

no point in moving forward with their organization or the ideas they defended.⁷⁵ This was achieved thanks to Mariano Rajoy's sustained enforcement of law procedure targeted to ETA members as well as a close cooperation with the French government in a joint attempt to eradicate all the remaining (hidden) trails the terrorist left. However, ultimately, Rajoy's administration did not significantly influence the end of ETA's armed activities because it was primarily driven by the work that the previous administration had started as well as internal issues within ETA that were accentuated by a decline of the support of ETA's violence.

This literature review chapter intended to navigate through the state of the art when it comes to how ETA is understood, how it came into being as a terrorist organization as well as understanding its *raison d'être* and evolution within different periods of its history. The fact that the analysis of the discourse employed by ETA begins in 1998 made it imperative for me to review the literature on ETA's historical context. It was no easy task to condense such a wide body of literature and decades of history into a few pages, but I believe the chapter will aid the reader in better grasping the key ideas behind the subject of discussion in this paper.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

Having provided a comprehensive review of the academic literature dealing with an understanding of ETA's terrorist activity as well as a thorough exploration of the historical context and background that motivated the operations of the Basque terrorist organization, this chapter aims to lay out a theoretical framework that would furnish the exploration of the phenomenon of terrorism applied to the Basque case. Consequently, this exploration would be aided by two mainstream ethnicity theories, namely Primordialism and Instrumentalism; and a solid theoretical approach in the field of International Relations, Constructivism.

2.1. Terrorism and Ethnic Identity

⁷⁵ Sánchez Cuenca, I. (2019). *The Historical Roots of Political Violence: Revolutionary Terrorism in Affluent Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As indicated in the introduction of the present work, terrorism is not a novel notion and it has loomed large in the past decades. The study of terrorism and identity in IR is a hot and contested topic since the relationship between these two concepts is rather complex. Identity-based factors such as ethnicity, nationalism and ideology shape the scope of this research field by means of an exploration on how identity shapes the motivations, strategies, and tactics the terrorist follow when “defending” their ideals.

Martha Crenshaw’s work in 2011 shows the relevance of terrorism studies in that she looks into the relationship across terrorism and identity by highlighting the significance of comprehending the social and cultural settings in which terrorist violence occurs. She contends that terrorists are frequently motivated by resentment and the desire to defend their identities.⁷⁶ In this regard, we can postulate that national, ethnic, and ideological identities are all frequently associated with terrorism’s *raison d’être*. The reason being that these identities are developed and challenged within unique historical and social contexts and are neither fixed nor essential. Moreover, this proves identities are endowed with the ability to evolve over time, resulting in shifting conflict and violence patterns.

By this token, and glancing at the impact of identity on the strategies and tactics of terrorist groups, it is possible to observe, - and it is generally believed as such -, that terrorist violence is frequently directed at other entities deemed menacing or antagonistic to the group’s identity. Furthermore, terrorist organizations’ use of violence can reinforce or accentuate group identities by fostering a sense of cohesion and commonality among group members. At the same time, let us not forget that violence and language are closely related. It is thus possible to claim that the perception terrorists have of their “ethnic identity” is associated to an unequivocal sense of belonging to a certain ethnic group that is frequently determined by the fact that its members share a historic-cultural and linguistic attributes.⁷⁷

Similar findings are advanced by Richard Jackson who in his scholarly work dealing with terrorism studies and the exploration of identity contends that identity plays a significant role in

⁷⁶Crenshaw, M. (2011). *Explaining Terrorism. Causes, Processes, and Consequences*. London: Routledge.

⁷⁷Farley, J. E. (2009). *Majority-Minority Relations*. London: Pearson.

determining the motivations and actions perpetrated by terrorists.⁷⁸ The author built his line of argumentation on the premise that terrorists undergo a process of a self-identification as part of a broader group and that their actions are fueled by a desire to safeguard the group's interests. This to say that terrorists portray themselves, for instance, as *defenders* of a particular ethnicity, or as foes of a particular government or political system, and that these ideas should be enshrined into statements or textual content produced by terrorists.

Considering the contexts put forward by Crenshaw and Jackson, it is then feasible to confidently justify the relevance of the present study since terrorist groups frequently frame their actions as a defense of a particular identity or community. This of course does not exclude the use of a common language and symbols that are appealing to members identifying with a particular identity, but they reinforce and give more meaning to the terrorists' motives. By emphasizing the significance of identity, terrorist groups can foster a sense of shared purpose and unity among their members, as well as cultivate a larger support base among sympathetic individuals.

On account of the abovementioned, reactive measures elaborated by governments against terrorism (i.e., counterterrorist policies) could be perceived by terrorists as a direct threat targeting and endangering their identity or broader community. These policies that are articulated as a reaction to the brutality of the attacks will, in most cases, do nothing but exacerbate the grievances and sense of victimization that gives meaning to terrorist violence. Therefore, this context calls for a more nuanced approach to terrorism through language and, in particular, texts. Approaching texts in a convincing manner to take into consideration the complex ways in which identity is manifested in statements produced by the terrorist, which in turn are also influenced by the broader political and social contexts in which terrorist acts take place. Effectively, a nuanced study requires the application of a methodological approach to emphasize the role of identity in texts while simultaneously underlying the dissatisfaction and perception of unfairness that drive terrorist violence.⁷⁹ The latter course of action signifies the adoption of a different analytical angle that would not be concentrating on tactical or operational concerns that

⁷⁸Jackson, R.D.W. (2005). *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counterterrorism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

⁷⁹Hoffman, B. (2017). *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

in the end would simply thwart the research from displaying “how” something comes to be or how an ideology is manifested in a text. At this point, the question to be answered is not “why” the terrorists conduct an attack since this would be an oversimplification, but the actual question to be answered is “how” their ideology is reflected and built up on in the texts they elaborate when communicating a message.

In closing this subchapter, based on my present argumentation supported by scholars in the field of terrorism studies who prove the undeniable link found between terrorism and identity concerns, it is possible to draw on three approaches and/or theories that would help shed light on the study of terrorism and ethnic identities applicable to the Spanish case. Consequently, doing so should aid the purpose of showcasing how the notion of ethnic identity is embedded into a discourse that at the same time relates to violent conduct and ideology using discourse as a tool to convey or support the terrorists’ message, while shedding light on the understanding of violence as perceived by the terrorists. Therefore, it is expected that we will obtain a better understanding of how ethnic identification impacts the ideology and behavior of ETA by analyzing the ways in which the group’s rhetoric develops and upholds Basque identity and the use of violence.

2.2. Primordialism as A Theoretical Framework Applied to Terrorism and Identity

Following Yeghiazaryan’s lead, Primordialism can be defined as an ethnic conflict theory arguing that conflicts that find their roots in ethnic concerns come derived by natural settings and remain immutable over the years.⁸⁰ That is to say that an individual, and in this case a terrorist, has a sense of belonging to a group, and this feeling is *a priori* not prone to change in time. More importantly, members of a group develop a *primordial* common consciousness that connects language, customs, and socio-cultural factors where myths and symbols are not necessarily excluded.⁸¹

⁸⁰Yeghiazaryan, L. (2018). “Which of The Three Mani Ethnic Conflict Theories Best Explains the Ethnic Violence in The Post-Soviet States of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova?”. *Undergraduate Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 46-64.

In this regard, Primordialism as a theoretical framework, therefore, proves its validity in the sense that it serves as a framework in social science stating that people's sense of identity and belonging is formed primarily by their preexisting links to a community, language, and culture. From this vantage point, these bonds are intrinsic to the human condition and reveal a fundamental part of one's identity. To this respect, Edward Shils, an early proponent of this theoretical approach, claimed that people's ethnic or cultural identities stem from a predisposition to experience collective sentiment.⁸² This is to say that established feelings of belonging constitute the foundation of group identity and unity since they are derived from a common historical past, common language, and common practices. Similarly, another prominent scholar in the study of identity, Clifford Geertz, went as far as to justify the relevance of the primordialism paradigm by arguing that cultural factors are the most important in shaping human behavior since they determine the way an individual acts, thus making ethnic and cultural identities intrinsic to a person's sense of self.⁸³

All things considered, and strictly applied to the study of terrorism and identity, Primordialism would hold that terrorists' identities are the driving force behind their actions. This is particularly true in the cases of terrorist acts since they are motivated by ethnic prejudice like in the Spanish case. Primordialism thus highlights the role that identity-related grievances, such as the perception of threats to one's deep-rooted culture and ethnic identity play in inspiring individuals to take up arms against what they perceive as a threat, as Anthony Smith (1996),⁸⁴ and Ross Hammond and Robert Axelrod (2006) suggest in their works.⁸⁵ Likewise, primordialist explanations could be extrapolated to the case in point by further arguing that people are more inclined to engage in or support terrorist activity if they feel a strong feeling of loyalty and

81 Esteban, J., et al. (2012). "Ethnicity and Conflict: An Empirical Study". *American Economic Review*. Vol. 102, No. 4, pp. 1310-1342.

82 Shils, E. (1961). "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory". *The British Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 130-145.

83 Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

84 Smith, A. (1996). "Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism". *International Affairs*. Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 445-458.

85 Hammond, R., & Axelrod, R. (2006). "The Evolution of Ethnocentrism". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 50, No. 6, pp. 926-936.

devotion to their group based on *primordial* causes, and if they consider that their identity or the identity of their group could be jeopardized. Terrorism may then be understood as a reaction from those who feel compelled to safeguard the identity of their ethnic or religious community, for instance.⁸⁶

Furthermore, Primordialism would reinforce the idea that an individual's perception of the society they live in can be shaped by identity-based elements like socialization within a particular cultural group, providing a justification for violence in pursuit of the community's objectives at a political or territorial level. In this respect, a terrorist group would perceive violence as appropriate and in order to protect or develop their identity.⁸⁷

That being said, Primordialism applied to the present case of study in this thesis can shed light on the ways in which the ethnic, cultural, and nationalist identities of the Basque people informed ETA's ideology and conduct. For instance, we may say that ETA's nationalist ideology prioritized the Basque language, culture, and autonomy since it was founded on a fundamental understanding of Basque identity as unique and apart from the Spanish state, and at the same time this identity was fixed and immutable. Against perceived dangers, such as Spanish centralization and persecution, ETA justified its terrorism as a method to safeguard and affirm this fundamental Basque identity. On top of that, Primordialism could also provide a framework for understanding ETA's mobilization strategies, which involved appealing to basic *primordial* causes. ETA's members were people who strongly identified with the Basque struggle and were willing to participate in violent activities to strengthen it by appealing to their feeling of Basque nationality and identity.

Finally, Primordialism can also help explain how ETA's rationalized and legitimized their violent tactics. The Basque terrorist organization's narrative positioned its brutality within a primordial vision of the distinctive and threatened Basque identity suggesting that violence was a justifiable response to perceived injustices against the Basque people, whilst the same approach

⁸⁶ Byman, D. (2019). "Terrorism and The Threat to Democracy". *Democracy and Disorder*, pp. 1-9.

⁸⁷ Zukaika, J., & Douglass, W. (1996). *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge.

helped ETA win over supporters and keep the loyalty of those who viewed the group's violent tactics as a justifiable expression to safeguard identity and nationalism principles.⁸⁸

In closing this section on Primordialism, I would also like to highlight a few shortcomings this theoretical approach is expected to exhibit when studying the notion of identity and terrorism. The first shortcoming would be the oversimplification of the dynamic nature of identity formation and its evolution in the sense that concepts are more complex than this theoretical approach posits and that in most cases we should expect the evolution of an idea rather than an immutable something. The second shortcoming I expect to spot is the neglect of strategic manipulation since this approach may not really explain how groups strategically use their ethnic identity to achieve specific goals. And, finally, the inevitability of ethnic conflict due to the alleged irreconcilable differences between ethnic groups, that is, adopting a more deterministic view of ethnic conflict that overlooks the possibilities for cooperation and negotiation that would ultimately lead to a peaceful conflict resolution. Therefore, while the study of ETA and the concept of identity can benefit from the insights provided by Primordialism, the theory's limitations may undermine the theory's explanatory value. It is difficult to get a whole picture of ETA's thinking and behavior when ethnic identity is oversimplified, agency and strategic manipulation are ignored, and ethnic conflict is seen as inevitable. A more thorough and accurate examination of ETA's role in Basque identity can be achieved if we are well aware of these caveats and use a more nuanced approach that serves to complement the gaps left by this theory while at the same time taking into account both the emotional and strategic components of ethnic identification.

2.3. Instrumentalism as A Theoretical Framework Applied to Terrorism and Identity

To make up for the gaps the primordialist approach leaves, we may resort to the application of the instrumentalist view. An instrumentalist perspective would help us argue that organizations (in this case terrorist) may capitalize on ethnic identities for their own ends, such as expanding

⁸⁸Boylan, B. M. (2016). "What Drives Ethnic Terrorist Campaigns? A View at the Group Level of Analysis". *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 250-272.

their control over resources, territory, or power. In this regard, Instrumentalism contrasts right off the bat with Primordialism in that the latter views ethnic identity as stable and rooted, whereas the former emphasizes the malleability of ethnic identity and the ways in which it can be used as a political and social instrument.⁸⁹

We see that a key tenet of Instrumentalism is that identity grievances are more often utilized as a pretext for violence than as the fundamental motive for terrorist action, and that individuals and groups can manipulate and instrumentalize their identities for political or strategic ends.⁹⁰ If we were to apply Instrumentalism to the relationship between terrorism and identity, we find that elements like ethnic grievances can be extrapolated to rationalize terrorist actions and rally support for terrorist organizations. In other words, the rhetoric used in the production of discourse would be an instrument through which the terrorist aim at influencing a target audience.

Along these lines, the relevance of Instrumentalism in relation to ethnic conflict has been explicated by several academics in the field of International Relations such as Donald Horowitz (1985),⁹¹ V.P. Gagnon (2004),⁹² Barry Posen (1993),⁹³ David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild (1996),⁹⁴ and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin (2000),⁹⁵ who have produced excellent works surrounding the study of ethnic identity. These authors' works helped me grasp and relate their ideas to my case study on terrorism and identity by essentially displaying how political elites and terrorist groups use ethnic identity as a weapon. However, for what concerns this thesis, we are mainly interested in the second group, the point of view of the terrorists.

⁸⁹ Yeghiazaryan, L. *op. cit.*, 2018.

⁹⁰ Ellingsen, T. (2000). "Colorful Community or Ethnic Witches Brew? Multiethnicity and Domestic Conflict During and After the Cold War". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 228-249.

⁹¹ Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁹² Gagnon, V. P. (2004). *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. New York: Cornell University Press.

⁹³ Posen, B. R. (1993). "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict". *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 27-47.

⁹⁴ Lake, D. A., & Rothchild, D. (1996). "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict". *International Security*. Vol. 21, No.2, pp. 41-75.

⁹⁵ Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2000). Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity. *International Organization*. Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 845-877.

What the arguments above comes to say is that terrorist organizations can gain support, create a sense of unity and common purpose, and justify the use of violence by appealing to a shared ethnicity. Terrorists might exploit preexisting and newly emerged resentment by casting themselves as defenders of oppressed or threatened ethnic communities, an insight made clear by Instrumentalism. In addition, Instrumentalism emphasizes the role of the terrorist as political entrepreneurs in exploiting power imbalances between ethnic groups by manipulating ethnic identity to generate divisions and instigate violence. Such meddling has the potential to sow discord, which terrorist groups might use to their advantage. In other words, there are strategic goals underlying the construction and management of ethnic boundaries and these goals are highlighted in the writings of above-cited authors such as Horowitz, Gagnon, and Posen in that they showcase the utility of Instrumentalism as an analytical tool by analyzing a range of situations and settings to examine the complex relationship between terrorism and ethnic identity.

All things considered, by applying the principles of Instrumentalism to ETA's case, we should be able to determine whether the perception of identity of the Basque terrorist organization is indeed mutable and evolves over time. As per the elements expected to be found in ETA's rhetoric, we could expect the organization to display in the texts to be analyzed conducts aiming at the mobilization of support, legitimization of their violence, framing their grievances, and exploiting the power dynamics existing at the time of its period of activity.

With a view to mobilizing resources and support, ETA's tactics relied heavily on appealing to a sense of common Basque heritage. For this reason, the Basque language (Euskera) and cultural traditions were utilized by the group in order to inspire a shared feeling of identity and solidarity among the Basque people. ETA was successful in its goals of membership recruitment, funding, and public support by playing on the commonalities between itself and the Basque people. Mindful of all these, Instrumentalism would then place its focus on three key aspects when it comes to exploring ETA and identity: first, the legitimization of the use of violent means; second, using grievances to give meaning to their cause; and third, the exploitation of power dynamics.

Regarding the legitimization of the use of violence, we would expect that by portraying the Spanish state as an oppressor out to stifle Basque culture, ETA pictures its existence and

struggle as essential for the protection and safeguard of the Basque people. Following this narrative, ETA would then be able to rationalize its violent tactics as a fundamental part of its strategy.

In terms of framing its grievances and giving meaning to ETA's struggle, one of the most important factors in ETA's success was its strategic framing of complaints along ethnic lines. ETA drew support by promoting a narrative of historical injustice that focused on the Basque people's right to self-determination despite centuries of persecution. Subsequently, the Basque terrorist organization was able to gain support for its cause and rationalize its violent activities by embracing this approach.

Next, with respect to the exploitation of the power dynamics found during the period the Basque terrorist organization was active, ETA preyed on the weaknesses of the marginalized Basque population, taking advantage of power imbalances between the Basque territory and the Spanish State. The terrorist group was able to achieve its goals of preserving the Basque identity by playing on people's fears about their shared Basque heritage in an effort to gain support and foment conflict.

Lastly, I believe it is important to highlight the shortcomings the Instrumental approach has when it comes to the study of terrorism and identity. Despite it being evident that Instrumentalism is a prominent theoretical method to the exploration of ethnic identity since it emphasized the flexibility of an identity, it possesses limitations that eventually may limit its explanatory ability.

These shortcomings the instrumentalist approach may exhibit take the shape of an underestimation of emotional attachment to ethnic identity first and foremost. This is because, when it comes to shaping identities, Instrumentalism may overlook the significance of deeply ingrained emotional connections and shared experiences in favor of strategic manipulation. Additionally, since Instrumentalism is so dependent on rational choices, it runs the risk of placing too much emphasis on logic and ignoring the role that values, ideas, and emotions play in determining political behavior. Finally, Instrumentalism runs the risk of underestimating the importance of structural variables like social, political, and economic institutions in the formation of identity and the distribution of political power because of its focus on agency and strategic action.

If these shortcomings are applied to the study of ETA and the concept of identity, we may begin by arguing on the possibility that this approach would fail to take into account the emotional motivations of ETA's members and the widespread support they enjoyed among the Basque people. Put simply, the importance of Basque identity and the impact of historical grievances on ETA's struggle may be undervalued in favor of the concentration on strategic manipulation. Second, Instrumentalism's premise of rationality may not accurately describe ETA and its supporters' complicated motivations, as it does not take into consideration the importance of emotions, beliefs, and values in molding the organization's violent activities and support from the Basque population. And, finally, the structural factors on ETA's struggle, such as the role of the Spanish state, international pressures, and regional dynamics, may be underappreciated if attention is instead focused on agency and strategic action.

2.4. Constructivism as A Theoretical Framework Applied to Terrorism and Identity

Actions that aim at modifying or having an impact on political behavior are heavily influenced by ideas, conventions, and social constructions, which is why constructivism is such a prominent theoretical paradigm in International Relations. This theoretical approach, which emphasizes the importance of common beliefs, values, and identities in driving state actions and international relations, focuses on the social creation of reality and can provide valuable insights into the motivations and actions of the organization and the ways in which it mobilizes and *constructs* identity to legitimize its struggle and subsequent violence.

Constructivism provides a helpful lens through which it is possible to examine the complex interplay among identity formation, evolutionary processes, and political violence as they are closely related to the topic of terrorism. Therefore, this theoretical approach is expected shed light on how terrorist groups like ETA construct and mobilize identities to legitimize their activities, gain support, and achieve their goals by analyzing social interactions and shared understandings.

To justify that, I believe we owe much of what we have inferred about terrorism and individuality to the work of seminal authors in the Constructivist tradition, where the relevance

of common beliefs and values in influencing state behavior is highlighted, for example, in Alexander Wendt's seminal work on the social construction of international politics.⁹⁶ Although Wendt did not intend for his concepts to be applied to the study of terrorism, they are nonetheless useful when considering the impact of social norms on terrorist groups and the formation of individual identities.

In a similar vein, in her investigation of the root causes of terrorism, Martha Crenshaw devoted special emphasis on the ways in which political and social environments shape the actions of terrorist organizations. Her thinking is consistent with the constructivist emphasis on the role of social constructions in influencing political action.⁹⁷ Likewise, constructivist ideas are also used in Stuart J. Kaufman's study of ethnic conflicts to exemplify the role that symbolic politics and identity construction play in fueling the violence that characterizes these conflicts.⁹⁸ The case of ETA and Basque identity could benefit from this standpoint on the role of myths, narratives, and symbols in forming ethnic identities and stoking conflict. Another noteworthy contribution would be Richard Jackson's in 2005, whose analysis highlights the significance of social conceptions in influencing reactions to terrorism.⁹⁹ Specifically, the author examines the discursive construction of the "War on Terrorism" and its impact on counter-terrorism policy by underscoring the role of identities in shaping and contextualizing political violence.

Hence, Constructivism's tenets applied to the present study proves its applicability in that the Basque identity is socially constructed by means of history, culture, and social processes. As a major actor in the Basque nationalist movement, ETA was instrumental in developing and mobilizing this sense of belonging. ETA built a picture of the Basque people as a unique and persecuted nation with the right to self-determination through the use of symbols, narratives, and shared experiences. Furthermore, Constructivism could help to better understand how ETA's conceptualization of Basque identity shaped its adherents' understanding of self and the desire to participate in political violence, since ETA created a narrative of victimhood and resistance that

⁹⁶Wendt, A. (1992). "Anarchy is What States Make of It". *International Organization*. Vol. 46, No. 2, pp 391-425.

⁹⁷Crenshaw, M. (1981). "The Causes of Terrorism". *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 379-399.

⁹⁸Kaufman, S. (2001). *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. New York: Cornell Studies in Security Affairs.

⁹⁹Jackson, R.D.W., *op. cit*, 2005

resonated with its supporters by highlighting the historical grievances, cultural disparities, and political oppression endured by the Basque people. After all, ETA operated under the premise that “violence for political ends is common”.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, shared norms and ideals are crucial to the success of any group, and this is something that Constructivism posits as its main principles. The Basque terrorist organization’s struggle stemmed from the conviction that the Basques were entitled to self-determination and that violent action was required to claim independence for the region. These beliefs and principles drove ETA’s conduct, but they also shaped the larger Basque nationalist movement and, in relation to this, the constructivist approach would argue that norms and discourse were critical in determining how ETA conducted its activities and developed its campaign.

Now, just as it was mentioned for the two previous approaches, I believe it is important to comment on the expected weaknesses Constructivism is expected to display when exploring the present subject of study in this paper. While constructivism does provide some useful insights into the ETA situation, an excessive focus on ideas and conventions may obscure the significance of logistical considerations and long-term goals. Measuring social constructs can also be difficult, and approaches that place emphasis on the interdependence of players and systems may fail to account for the agency of particular people. These gaps can be filled with the additional perspectives Primordialism and Instrumentalism provide regarding the Basque conflict. In this respect, Instrumentalism would emphasize the strategic manipulation of ethnic identity and the role of rational decision-making in ETA’s behavior, while Primordialism’s would focus on the emotional aspects of identity by highlighting the deeply rooted historical and cultural factors that contributed to the materialization of the organization’s actions. Accordingly, the research into the Basque struggle and its broader social and political context might benefit from an exploration of the connection between ETA, terrorism, and identity if we approach the topic from multiple theoretical standpoints.

Chapter 3. Methodology

¹⁰⁰Oberschall, A. (2004). “Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory”. *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 26-37.

So far, this thesis has presented the reader with a detailed yet concise literature review on terrorism, identity, and ETA. I then moved forward and proceeded to lay out the theoretical framework and highlighted the strengths and weaknesses they possess when looking at the issue in question through their perspectives. Now it is time to focus on the methodology to be used in the present work.

Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is to analyze the development and interaction of ethnic identity, violent behavior, and ideology within ETA's discourse enshrined in statements. This thesis endeavors to address the research questions by utilizing methodological frameworks such as Single Case Study and Discourse Analysis while at the same time illustrating the applicability of Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism when providing explanations to the discourses found in statements. The research questions are as proposed in the very beginning where **RQ1** seeks to explore how the evolution of ethnic identity relates to violent conduct and ideology through the use of language, whilst **RQ2** builds upon the preceding inquiry by trying to comprehend the manner in which the understanding of violence is ingrained in ETA's discourse. This thesis, therefore, will attempt to enhance comprehension of the intricate correlation between identity, violence, and ideology within the concept of terrorism.

This chapter outlines the research approaches and methodology I decided to pursue in this work. It starts with an overview of the study design, followed by an explanation of the rationale behind the selected research approaches. I will then comment on how the data were selected, analyzed, and why the study follows the chosen periodization. More in particular, as it will be discussed throughout the chapter, the research approaches to be employed in the quest for the answer to the research questions formulated in the beginning are the Single Case Study and Discourse Analysis (DA). Mindful of the shift in the focus of the study I indicated in the introduction, these research approaches will be used to examine predominantly textual data given that, from a methodological standpoint, it seems that the Single Case Study and Discourse Analysis would go hand in hand with one another and be the most suitable approaches for the present study. The former approach is relevant given the fact that I am exclusively focusing on the Spanish case and the latter approach will prove useful in the analysis of statements produced by the Basque terrorist organization.

3.1. Qualitative Research Method: The Single Case Study

The single case study methodology is a research strategy that entails a comprehensive examination of a singular occurrence, event, or phenomenon within a specific setting.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, Robert Yin's work on this research strategy highlights the usefulness of this approach that holds significant value in comprehending intricate social, political, or organizational quandaries, as it facilitates the generation of insights that may not be readily attainable through alternative research methodologies.¹⁰² Convincingly enough, the utilization of the case study approach is pertinent and appropriate to my research on ETA for various reasons.

In the first place, the examination of ETA as a singular case study enables an exploration of the organization's distinctive historical, social, and political context. This is essential in comprehending the development of its ethnic identity, violent behavior, and ideological discourse. The utilization of a case study methodology facilitates a comprehensive and all-encompassing comprehension of the subject matter being examined while enabling an interpretation of the complex interrelationships between ethnic identity, violence, and ideology.¹⁰³

Second, a single case study enables a comprehensive examination of the procedures, connections, and mechanisms that underlie the research issue.¹⁰⁴ Within the scope of my research on ETA, this methodology facilitates an examination of the processes by which ethnic identity, violence, and ideology are formulated and disseminated because, - according to Kathleen Eisenhardt - , single case studies have the potential to aid in the formulation of novel theories or the improvement of pre-existing ones.¹⁰⁵ The study of ETA involves the application of theoretical frameworks such as Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism to comprehend the

¹⁰¹ Simons, H. (2009). *Case Study Research in Practice*. California: SAGE Publications.

¹⁰² Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research Design and Methods*. California: SAGE Publications.

¹⁰³ Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. California: SAGE Publications.

¹⁰⁴ Given, L. M. (2008). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Vol. 1. California: SAGE Publications.

¹⁰⁵ Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). "Building Theories from Case Study Research". *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 14, No. 4, pp 532-550.

relationship between terrorism and identity. I believe the combination of these approaches may have the potential to explain the bigger picture, which is what matter after all in the case in point.

Finally, it should be noted that although a single case study may not permit extensive generalizations, the knowledge acquired from the comprehensive examination of ETA may furnish significant principles for comprehending analogous establishments and phenomena in alternative settings. Thus, the subject matter under discussion in this paper has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the wider domain of international relations and the field of terrorism and identity research.¹⁰⁶

3.2. Qualitative Research Method: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Discourse Analysis (DA) will be utilized for the analysis of the selected statements, which will be provided below. However, DA being a qualitative research method still needs a specific focus and, in accordance with this, the approach selected to take on the critical aspect of the research is therefore the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The development of “critical linguistics” studies in the seventies led to what today is formally known as critical discourse analysis.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, critical tendencies in several areas attempt to formulate new concerns from a social perspective. Provided CDA possesses an intrinsic critical angle as well, this analytical technique was chosen to evaluate the statements produced by ETA. Context is crucial to the understanding of ETA’s statements since it allows for a “justification” of much of the content: the terrorist organization’s rationale behind the attacks being conducted and its own identity and ideological preoccupations. This approach should allow to come up with an innovative perspective on ETA’s statements, where the Basque

¹⁰⁶Yin, R.K., *op. cit*, 2009.

¹⁰⁷Dunmire, P.L. (2012). “Political Discourse Analysis: Exploring the Language of Politics and the Politics of Language”. *Language and Linguistics Compass*. Vol. 6, No. 11, pp. 735–751. In Peleshenko, A. “Evolution of The Idea of the Russian Threat to The Security of the EU and NATO”. *Master Thesis. International Relations*. Charles University in Prague, 2022.

terrorist organization mainly victimizes itself since its members want to be perceived as a Basque national liberation group in charge of fighting to achieve/safeguard people's freedoms and identities that have always been under the oppression of the Spanish State.

But CDA is more than *just* an analysis of texts. Horwath *et al.* claim that to analyze a discourse means to “focus on the dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and a situation, institution, and social structure”.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the same authors add that to be able to speak about a discursive event, we should have three elements at play: there has to be a social context (a situation), objects of knowledge (an organization or group) and the social identities of individuals and a community (a social structure).¹⁰⁹ In a similar fashion, Murray Edelman asserts that politics are intrinsically endowed with a symbolic nature and this in turn brings to our attention a “linguistic turn in political science”.¹¹⁰ The same author's perspective helps us to contend that political practice and the creation of meaning are inexorably related since it leads social scientists to grasp how beliefs, events, or problems are constructed.¹¹¹

I decided to make use of the CDA in the empirical part that follows the present chapter for the simple reason that there are elements that need to be taken into consideration when tackling the analysis of statements. In this respect, I agree with Barco in that language serves to create meaning, discourse is the bigger structure where that meaning is encapsulated, and the discourse act is performed by those actors who are authorized to produce them whilst at the same time bearing in mind that the discursive act depends on history and cultural factors.¹¹²

By the same token, Norman Fairclough shall not be eluded when discussing the wonders CDA can offer in the study of discursive elements. The author's approach facilitates an examination of the interplay among language, power, and ideology.¹¹³ To top this off, Flowerdew

108^{Horwath, D. *et al.* (2009). “ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper Discourse Analysis: Varieties and Methods”, *Methods*. Vol. 14, pp. 1–41}

109^{Ibid.}

110^{Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.}

111^{Ibid.}

112^{Barco, M., *op. cit.* 2018.}

113^{Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.}

and Richardson add that discourse works indeed as a “set of meanings” that intend to convey the ideology of the individual manifesting it.¹¹⁴ Correspondingly, Larina *et al.* make sense of the aforementioned claims in that the existence of such a clash between the “Us” versus the “Them” often provided the ideal scenario for the notion of “threat” to emerge.¹¹⁵ It is, however, noteworthy to mention that the scholar strictly dealing with the dichotomy “Us” vs “Them” is Teun Van Dijk in his work.¹¹⁶ This notwithstanding, I deliberately chose Fairclough’s approach provided that, in my opinion, it still incorporates these concepts as part of its broader focus on representation and identity construction.

More often than not, it seems the abovementioned dichotomy takes place on what I would call a causal or *logical* process of labeling that, in my opinion, is overused in academia. I am fully aware this is a bold and somewhat outlandish statement. In other words, a State (unit that bears the power) is often perceived as the “Us” and identifies the threat (the terrorist) as the “Them”. However, my research, in a way, intends to be less orthodox and study the terrorist as the “Us” even if they represented the minority in the Spanish political arena, and the Spanish and French States as the “Them”. I believe that CDA can prove useful and rather necessary when dissecting the discourse employed in the statements produced by the terrorist in order to understand and correctly label the rationale behind their actions. But, not to be confused, by no means is this either a defense of the terrorist as a minority being oppressed or a positive justification of their acts. This is an attempt to look at an issue from a different perspective with the final goal to try to make sense of the notion of identity and its relevance in the statements that were produced by ETA.

Introductions being made, the perspective to be used in this Critical Discourse Analysis will be that provided by Norman Fairclough with a view to exploring ETA’s discourse in the context of terrorism and identity. My goal is to highlight the linguistic and cognitive elements inherent in ETA’s discourse by incorporating the methodology of this scholar who happens to be

114 Flowerdew, J., & Richardson, J.E. (2017). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*. Routledge.

115¹ Larina, T, *et al.* (2019). “Persuasion strategies in media discourse about Russia: Linguistic ambiguity and uncertainty”. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 3-22.

116² Van Dijk, T. A. (2007). “Ideology and Discourse Analysis”. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 115–140.

one of the pioneers in CDA. This will enable us to comprehend the role those elements play in the formation of ethnic identity and the rationalization of violent actions. The subsequent procedures delineate the analytical methodology for the present case:

The analysis will be directed by two primary research questions: (**RQ1**) How does the notion of ethnic identity evolve over time and relate to violent conduct and ideology in the statements produced by ETA? And (**RQ2**), derived from *RQ1*, how is the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse?

1. The data selection process involved the gathering of the available statements produced by ETA where the organization showcases its discourse on the use of violence (ETA does not label its armed activity as terrorism) and identity.
2. Fairclough's three-dimensional approach will be utilized to showcase the correlation between language, power, and ideology in the discourse of ETA. Those dimensions are as follows:¹¹⁷
 - a. Description: the process of analyzing texts involves scrutinizing the linguistic components, including lexicon, syntax, and cohesion.
 - b. Interpretation: the interpretation stage involves the analysis of discursive practices utilized in the creation and consumption of texts, as well as encompassing the examination of the various actors involved, and the impact of contextual factors on the meaning and construction of discourse.
 - c. Explanation: the social analysis involves examining the wider social and ideological framework that influences production of a discourse and uncovering the power dynamics and ideologies that underlie the texts.

¹¹⁷Fairclough, N., *op. cit.*, 1995.

3. Finally, and in line with the last point in step 2, the explanations of the discourses will be presented. These explanations will be aided by the utilization of Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism theoretical approaches.

By incorporating the perspectives of Fairclough into Critical Discourse Analysis, we shall be able to encompass a broader spectrum of elements that are relevant when it comes to the formation of an ethnic identity and the validation of aggression within ETA's discourse. Thus, the implementation of this holistic approach can yield a more comprehensive and diverse examination that integrates multiple aspects of discourse and identity.

Hence, the period chosen for analysis starts in 1998 for a couple of reasons. First, prior to that period, - even if the terrorist organization came into existence in 1959 -, there is no record of any published statements by ETA, let alone a newspaper reporting on them. Let us bear in mind that during Francisco Franco's Regime (1939-1975), the State exercised full control over the means of communication and was not interested in promoting any activities that could damage the fierce image Franco wanted to convey to the population. A good example of this is the fact that there is not much information on Luis Carrero Blanco's assassination at the time it happened in 1973. The news articles reported on that event after the fact. The second reason is that, regrettably, there are not so many statements that can be found in full written form as opposed to my initial belief before starting this research. The challenges associated with obtaining and examining ETA's statements prior to 1998 are due to the fact that the preservation of previous statements in physical archives, such as newspapers or other print media, are difficult to access. In this regard, it should be noted that the retrieval of previous statements may be hindered by the potential unavailability or inoperability of the websites that previously hosted them. In addition, owing to ETA's classification as a terrorist organization by diverse governments and international organizations, there have been coordinated endeavors to eliminate ETA's statements from websites and social media channels.

Consequently, ETA's statements, particularly those predating 1998, have become restricted in their accessibility. And, finally, the linguistic nature of ETA's previous statements also plays a role since those statements were primarily produced in Basque language (i.e.,

Euskera), and this would therefore represent a difficulty for researchers who do not possess proficiency in that language.

The 6 statements I will be analyzing in this paper are thus grouped into periods A, B, and C:

Period A (1998 - 1999)

- The Ceasefire of 1998
- The End of the Ceasefire in 1999

Period B (2006 - 2007)

- The Ceasefire of 2006
- The End of the Ceasefire in 2007

Period C (2011 - 2018)

- The Permanent Ceasefire in 2011
- The Announcement of ETA's Dissolution in 2018

Based on the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to CDA exposed in this chapter and the exploration of the statements available, the focus on each of the dimensions will be paying attention to a specific set of considerations:¹¹⁸

In the first dimension (i.e., description), we shall be focusing on the linguistic aspects of the text, encompassing elements such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure.¹¹⁹ Through a thorough analysis of these characteristics, it would be then possible to discern recurring trends and tactics employed in the written work to communicate ideas, establish focal points, and shape communal affiliations and connections.¹²⁰

118 Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

119[□] Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press. In Köksal, B. "Critical Discourse Analysis of Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government". *Bachelor's Thesis. Liberal Arts and Humanities*. Charles University in Prague, 2018.

120[¶] Fairclough, N., *op. cit.*, 1992.

In the second dimension dealing with discursive practice, we shall be placing my attention on the scrutiny of the mechanisms involved in the production of a given text, encompassing the author's objectives, the audience's perception, and the broader framework within which the text is generated and received. The concept of discursive practice pertains to the examination (i.e., interpretation) of how written or spoken materials utilize and influence established discourses, ideologies, and power dynamics within a given society.¹²¹

Finally, in the third dimension I will be dealing with the broader social and cultural context in which a text is situated. Therefore, this analysis (i.e., explanation) considers the historical, political, and institutional context that shapes both the creation and interpretation of the text and, by extension, ideology, and identity.

Chapter 4. Analytical Part

After presenting the methodological framework to be utilized in this thesis in the preceding chapter, the subsequent step is to undertake an examination of the three periods previously mentioned, each of which comprises two statements issued by the Basque terrorist group. In order to achieve a thorough analysis, it is necessary to provide a historical context pertaining to the political climate of the Spanish region during the time period in which the statements were made. Subsequently, an examination of the periods shall be conducted utilizing the CDA framework put forth by Fairclough. Ultimately, this study will culminate with an explanation of the discourses, utilizing the three theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2 to provide a comprehensive outlook of the case study in this paper.

4.1. Period A (1998 – 1999)

¹²¹Fairclough, N., *op. cit.*, 1992.

The following analysis will cover the situational stance in Spain and the Basque region prior the announcement of the ceasefire, the conditions that made it possible as well as the reasons why ETA decided to end it in 1999.

The ceasefire announced by ETA in 1998 and its subsequent termination in 1999 warrant analysis in light of the wider historical, cultural, and political context of the Basque Country during that period. The end of the Cold War, the establishment of a supranational political and economic union (i.e., the European Union), and the emergence of global interconnectedness were instrumental in bringing about notable political and cultural transformations in Spain and the broader European context during the latter part of the 1990s. In this respect, the aforementioned context laid the grounds for the cessation of hostilities and its eventual termination in 1999; thus, determining the circumstances that facilitated them and impacting the rationales underlying ETA's decisions.¹²²

Prior to the 1998 ceasefire, there was a growing recognition of the necessity for a political resolution to the Basque conflict. The cause of this circumstance was partially attributed to the global influence imposed on ETA and the progressive character of European politics, which prioritized diplomacy and cooperation as opposed to military confrontation. In line with this, Herri Batasuna, a political party considered ETA's political arm, went through a significant transformation led by the emergence of a fresh group of leaders who adopted a more moderate and practical approach to the conflict, as observed by Gorka Espiau Idoiaga in his 2006 work. In other words, this newly moderate pragmatic approach to the conflict showed that the Basque nationalist movement was primarily driven by the unique cultural identity of the Basque people, which included a distinct language, customs, and values.¹²³ This would go in line with what was discussed in the literature review regarding motivations in that the Basque nationalist movement since its very beginnings was largely motivated by the distinctive Basque cultural identity, which encompassed a distinct language, customs, and principles.¹²⁴ These motives served as a

¹²²Whitfield, T., *op. cit.*, 2014.

¹²³Espiau Idoiaga, G. (2006). "The Basque Conflict: New Ideas and Prospects for Peace". *United States Institute of Peace*, pp. 1-12.

¹²⁴Clark, R. (1990). "Negotiating with Insurgents: Obstacles to Peace in The Basque Country". *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Vol 2, No. 4, pp. 489-507.

prominent impetus for the movement, inspiring a desire for self-governance and influencing the political objectives of ETA and other nationalist factions.

Therefore, the declaration of the 1998 ceasefire by ETA on September 18, 1998 was a reaction to the aforementioned circumstances, while at the same time worked as a reflection of the organization's aspiration to investigate alternative political pathways to attain their objectives. The cessation of hostilities was endorsed by a diverse range of political factions in the Basque region, encompassing Herri Batasuna as well as the centrist Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). In September 1998, the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement was signed by several nationalist and leftist parties. Consequently, this agreement established the foundation for the ceasefire and advocated for a diplomatic resolution to the Basque conflict.¹²⁵

Nonetheless, the temporary cessation of hostilities proved to be of brief duration, spanning a mere 14-month period, thus culminating in November of 1999 with ETA's declaration of a resume of the armed conflict. The end of the ceasefire can be ascribed to various factors, such as the Spanish government's inability to engage in substantive peace talks and a dearth of confidence among the disparate factions that were involved.¹²⁶ A good example of this is the fact that the Spanish government, at that time under the leadership of Prime Minister José María Aznar, exhibited reluctance to engage in negotiations with ETA, as it was apprehensive that any concessions made would be interpreted as a triumph for terrorism.¹²⁷ Moreover, the presence of internal schisms within ETA and the wider Basque nationalist movement posed a challenge in terms of upholding a cohesive stance and preserving the truce.¹²⁸

The examination of the ETA's declaration of ceasefire in 1998 and its subsequent termination in 1999 holds significance for multiple reasons. First, this analysis is intended to help the reader grasp the terrorist organization's dynamics as the texts shed light on this matter and the wider Basque nationalist movement. This makes it evident that there is an emphasis on the

¹²⁵Zirakzadeh, C. E. (2002). "From Revolutionary Dreams to Organizational Fragmentation: Disputes over Violence within ETA and Sendero Luminoso". *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 66-92.

¹²⁶Whitfield, T., *op. cit*, 2014.

¹²⁷Zirakzadeh, C. E., *op. cit*, 2002

¹²⁸Zirakzadeh, C. E., *op. cit*, 2002

intricate interplay between ideology, strategy, and practicality. Secondly, the analysis of this period elucidates the wider historical, cultural, and political context encircling the Basque conflict and the complexities involved in reaching negotiated settlements for ethno-nationalist conflicts. Finally, these statements highlight the significance of trust, communication, and authentic political involvement in attaining enduring peace in areas affected by conflict. These discourses would be examined through the lens of a three-dimensional approach provided by Fairclough and then there will be a subsequent explanation of the discourses by reflecting on them on a broader scale.

4.1.1. The Ceasefire in 1998

The announcement of the ceasefire by ETA in 1998 is going to be put to the test under the scope of Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis and his three-dimensional model. Specifically, the linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions of the text are examined. This analysis will focus on the concept of ethnic identity, aggressive behavior, and ideology as portrayed in ETA's statement, with a particular emphasis on how violence is integrated into ETA's rhetoric.

Right off the bat, the text exhibits a notable emphasis on the notions of ethnic identity and nationalism. The term "Euskal Herria" (Basque Country) is utilized throughout the document to underscore the unique cultural and geographical characteristics of the Basque people and their land by considering themselves a "Country" – this denomination is still used even in present times. For example, the text states that "*after two long decades, the possibility of taking a decisive step on the path to independence opens up for us in Euskal Herria once again*".¹²⁹ It seems clear in this regard that this utterance highlights the significance of the Basque Country within ETA's perspective on achieving independence. The text then makes use of figures of speech dealing with struggle and resistance, exemplified by the use of the terms "*la lucha*" (struggle) and "*resistencia*" (resistance) in that "*Euskal Herria has almost entered the 21st century guided by the passion of struggle, nourished by the hope of living*".¹³⁰

¹²⁹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³⁰Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

Furthermore, we can see how this statement is rich in deictics. In this regard, the organization speaks from the first-person plural (i.e., “we”) for the most part, while at the same time ETA uses possessive pronouns. Let us see an example:

- *“Moving forward, let us manifest we have the will, right, and authority to own our own home as well as to furnish it”.*¹³¹

This excerpt is particularly interesting in that they do not only speak from the first-person plural and uses a possessive pronoun to make the message somewhat closer (and more inclusive) in terms of reach of the audience is aimed at, but it also compares its territory to a home that needs to be furnished. Therefore, we can observe that ETA clearly intends to identify itself with the broader Basque people, appealing to a concept that is constitutive of individuals at the time of birth: family.

Moreover, the usage of verbal tenses appears to display that the majority of verbs are provided in both past and present with a view to creating a more balanced text. By contrast, the frequency of the use of the future tense seems to be comparatively lower.

Next, the analysis of the discursive aspect scrutinizes the text’s power dynamics and ideology. In this respect, ETA portrays itself as a proponent of Basque sovereignty, contending that their campaign is motivated by the aspiration for autonomy and self-governance. Henceforth, *“let us show that we have the need, the right, the will, and the ability to organize our own territory according to our will”*,¹³² thus making it clear that there is an underscoring of the significance of self-determination and the entitlement to exercise agency in determining one’s own fate.

Next, the text also uses deictics that are express temporality to refer to the moment the statement was produced in that *“there is a long way to go. It is complicated even at the present day”*¹³³. On the other hand, the statement also displays sentences referring to the past and establish a comparison by means of a conclusion manifesting that there have not been any

¹³¹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³²Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³³Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

changes compared to the past situation. The latter can be better illustrated by the following utterance: “*the disintegrating autonomism present today and in past times*”.¹³⁴

The text also uses terminology that serve to emphasize the importance of preserving Basque culture, language, and traditions in the face of external threats. It is noteworthy that the discourse of ETA confers legitimacy to the use of violence as a strategy for resistance and self-protection, as evidenced by the term “*acciones armadas*” (armed actions). Special note here how they never label their actions as “terrorism” but rather as “freedom acts” even if neither concept is ever used. The statement suggests that the progress achieved thus far owes a great deal to the unwavering commitment of the militants and civilians who have lost their lives as a result of hostile armed activities perpetrated by the adversaries in that they say, “*we would not be where we are without the dedication of the militants and citizens who have died as a result of armed actions by the enemies*”.¹³⁵ What this excerpt posits is that the employment of violent behavior is deemed as an indispensable and warranted reaction to the perceived subjugation of the Basque populace.

Going back to Fairclough’s dimensions, adding in terms of description, the text elucidates the accomplishments of the Basque nationalist movement, and this accomplishment is precisely the “*construction of a unique social initiative that acknowledges the evidence impracticality of the historical situation lived by Euskal Herria*” in the face of the “disintegrating autonomism”, which according to ETA has done nothing but show them that they ought to remain together in the struggle. Moreover, the text highlights the emergence of a novel prospect for the Basque Country amidst the evolving European scenario and the perceived depletion of the “*Política de Pactos*” (Politics of Agreements) that, in the eyes of ETA, only seeks to “*destroy the project advocating for independence since this behavior transfigures the social and political reality*”.¹³⁶

In terms of interpretation, we see that the discourse presented by ETA in this statement also places emphasis on the advancements achieved by the Basque nationalist movement and the shared knowledge gained from previous experiences. The group commends the militants and

¹³⁴Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³⁵Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³⁶Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

their efforts, as evidenced by the statement “*the work undertaken was worth it, and we have guided the struggle for freedom on the right path*”,¹³⁷ therefore, displaying acknowledgement of previous endeavors as essential in building a collective future.

Regarding the outlook of the socio-political context in which ETA operates, the statement highlights the obsolescence of previous tactics and the growing significance of fresh political partnerships. Thus, the organization acknowledges there is an evolving European landscape and that it clearly has an impact on the Basque nationalist movement, as articulated in the following statement: “*Europe is being built as a political, social, and economic space where important decisions are made*”.¹³⁸

Furthermore, there is additional elaboration on the theme of unity within the Basque nationalist movement and emphasizes the importance of peaceful resolution, building upon the previous analysis. The emphasis on the depletion of institutional frameworks and the European milieu highlights the necessity for adaptation and novel tactics to propel the Basque quest for autonomy.

At the same time, the sociocultural aspect delves into the wider historical and political framework surrounding the given statement in 1998. The announcement of the ceasefire in 1998 ensued a phase of heightened aggression and strife between ETA and the Spanish government. The Basque nationalist movement pursued increased self-governance and sovereignty, while the Spanish government, led by José María Aznar (PP), endeavored to quell the rebellion. In this respect, the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement, - a peace initiative signed 6 days before ETA’s announcement of the ceasefire -, endorsed by diverse Basque political parties and civil society groups, exerted a notable influence in fostering a favorable atmosphere for ETA’s announcement of a cessation of hostilities.

Besides that, and as extensive as the ceasefire statement is, its second half appears to deal more with ETA’s understanding of violent conduct while at the same time justifying previous violent acts on the grounds of identity concerns. Along these lines, the second half sets off by providing a definition of what they consider a “new phase” (referring to the ceasefire), which is

¹³⁷Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹³⁸Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

in turn characterized by its divergence from conventional political discourse. Additionally, ETA points at the significance of transparency in their actions in order to achieve a differentiation of its ethnic identity from the wider political contexts of Spain and France in that “*it is not correct at all that anyone be fooled by the word games of professional politicians*”.¹³⁹ The terrorist organization is therefore asserting that individuals should not be deceived by the rhetorical strategies employed by important political characters in picturing them as the bad character in this conflict.

Likewise, this second half of the statement brings into consideration the significance of adopting a fresh strategy to address the conflict, underscoring the originality of the circumstance to validate its appeal for an alternative approach and stimulate engagement from other stakeholders in the Basque political arena. In line with this, ETA notes that “*we are facing a completely new situation*”,¹⁴⁰ thus conveying the idea that the Basque ethnic identity is indeed in need of an innovative and unparalleled resolution that at the same time serves to manifest the group’s “uniqueness”.

Moreover, we also see an accentuation on the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility, indicating a readiness to cooperate and an anticipation of reciprocity from other involved parties. Specifically, ETA expresses its commitment to progress towards conformity and communicates its expectation for the implementation of comparable efforts and intentions in that “*for what concerns ETA, we want to express our total willingness to move forward on this path of agreement, and we communicate that we expect reciprocity in our intentions when it comes to political counterparts*”.¹⁴¹ Along these lines, the prioritization of collaboration represents a deviation from the aggressive behavior commonly linked to the faction, stressing, *a priori*, the significance of solidarity in attaining the objectives of the Basque cultural heritage.

ETA seems to explicitly advocate for a separation from individuals who endorse the supremacy of Spain and France over the Basque Country. This indicates that ETA perceives dissociation from those who obstruct Basque sovereignty as a pivotal measure in accomplishing

¹³⁹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁴⁰Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁴¹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

their objectives. The utterance supporting this claim reads, “*it is time to break relations and agreements with those political forces whose goal is to make Euskal Herria disappear*”.¹⁴² Therefore, this utterance accentuates the significance of the Basque ethnic identity in ETA’s ideology and their unwavering dedication to its preservation and safeguard.

In closing this subchapter, the announcement of a ceasefire by ETA can be regarded as a tangible manifestation of the group’s commitment to the acceptance of a new phase in comprehending violence in its discourse. Specifically, the statement “*this general truce will begin on September 18, 1998*”¹⁴³ served as evidence of this (temporary) commitment. Through the provision of a ceasefire, ETA endeavored to reconcile a past marked by aggressive behavior with a novel approach that prioritizes political methods in the pursuit of their goals. The statement provided by ETA that has been taken into consideration in this subchapter features the significance of adopting a fresh perspective towards the Basque conflict. It advocates for a collaborative approach, shared responsibility, and the necessity of taking tangible steps towards achieving Basque sovereignty. Likewise, the statement also aids the illustration of the fundamental role played by the Basque ethnic identity in ETA’s ideology, as well as the group’s unwavering dedication to protecting it. Furthermore, this statement also demonstrates a comprehension of the utilization of force as an *instrumental* method to achieve a goal, rather than an objective in its own right, and exemplifies ETA’s readiness to modify its strategies in reaction to evolving political conditions. In the very end of the statement, the organization employs potent slogans (in Basque language) to mobilize its adherents and fortify its fundamental principles and goals, which revolve around safeguarding and promoting the Basque ethnic identity and attaining an autonomous Basque state.

All in all, the critical discourse analysis of the present statement helps to conclude that ETA’s announcement of a ceasefire in 1998 was marked by a robust manifestation of ethnic identity in that “*our first joint effort is to start thinking as Euskal Herria. All of us. We need to start being aware of our true linguistic, cultural, and social situation*”,¹⁴⁴ while at the same time

¹⁴²Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁴³Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁴⁴Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

the text conveyed ideas inherent to nationalism concerns, alongside the depiction of violence as a justifiable and indispensable method of resistance to attain goals. Consequently, we can observe how text employs an (indirect) binary differentiation (“us” vs “them”) that accentuates the perceived tension between the Basque terrorists and the Spanish and French governments.

4.1.2. The End of the Ceasefire in 1999

Having analyzed the statement in 1998, we now reach the stage where we need to analyze the end of the ceasefire in 1999. This subchapter offers a critical discourse analysis of the statement relevant to this period, which marked the end of the ceasefire started a year earlier. By making use of Fairclough’s three-dimensional methodological framework, an analysis will again be conducted at a textual, discursive, and social levels with a view at uncovering the implications ETA’s discourse had on the rupture of the peace process and then subsequent resumption of the armed struggle. In this regard, the statement is shorter than the previous one and uses a combination of paragraphs and enunciation through bullet points to summarize ETA’s ideas.

At a textual level, in the statement in 1999 ETA expresses its evident dissatisfaction with what they consider are insufficient and poor advancements made during the ceasefire and it is very conclusive in stating its intentions to resume the armed conflict in that “*ETA has made the decision to resume the armed struggle in response to the commitment made in defense of Euskal Herria (...) provided that the mechanisms proposed by Spain and France have failed*”.¹⁴⁵ In this regard, the opening to the statement is quite clear in its intentions and denotes a noteworthy alteration and aggressivity (i.e., “the mechanisms have failed”) in ETA’s rhetoric in contrast with the statement in 1998. This does nothing but essentially signal the organization’s dissatisfaction and frustration with the impasse found in the political arena.

Another good example of this aggressive turn in language is found, for example, in an utterance shaped as a metaphor in that “*the peace process is suffering a clear deadlock and is therefore rotting away*”.¹⁴⁶ The utilization of the metaphor of decay serves to depict the perceived decline of the process, underscoring the pressing nature of the situation as perceived

¹⁴⁵Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

¹⁴⁶Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

by ETA. The utilization of the term “deadlock” connotes the presence of external forces that are deliberately impeding the advancement of a particular cause, thus fueling ETA’s rationale behind the armed conflict.

Moreover, in the 1999 statement ETA employs figures of speech to highlight the political and ideological motivations that led them to the decision of taking up arms again. To this end, the organization employs the use of repetition and capitalization to emphasize the significance of Basque sovereignty, as illustrated by the utterance “*the option of a Free Euskal Herria*”.¹⁴⁷ Through the repetition of this utterance, ETA underscores its commitment to the establishment of an autonomous Basque nation as a primary goal.

Next, ETA seems to create a juxtaposition of the ineffective approaches of the Spanish and French governments with its own proposal for a democratic course of action, asserting that “*the desire for peace based on a correct political solution was palpable in Basque society*”.¹⁴⁸ The utilization of the adjective “correct” serves to illustrate ETA’s conviction in the validity and suitability of its own proposal, in contrast to the perceived insufficiency of the current political structure.

Finally, it is also important to highlight how the statement from 1999 uses nominalizations in order to express the perception of the organization regarding the given situation. To illustrate this, for example, ETA refers to the “repressive occupation”, “attack”, and “domination” exercised by Spain and France.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, the process of nominalization converts actions into abstract entities, highlighting the perceived systemic nature of the conflict and strengthening the necessity for a resolute reaction from ETA.

In terms of Fairclough’s second dimension, let us remember that it focuses on production, distribution, and consumption of textual content within the existing social context. With regards to this, the examination of discursive practice allows us to comprehend the organization’s deliberate use of language as a means of influencing the general population’s perception of its decision to bring to an end the ceasefire started a year earlier.

¹⁴⁷Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

¹⁴⁸Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

¹⁴⁹Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

In terms of production, the present statement was formulated by the leadership of ETA, thus encapsulating the organization's unified position regarding the failure of peace negotiations and the determination to resume hostilities. It is more than possible that the formulation of the statement was shaped by internal deliberations, leading to a document that encompasses the collective convictions, demands, and objectives of the organization. Let us for example illustrate this with the utterance contending that, according to ETA, "*during the first months of the initiative (the Lizarra-Garazi agreement), there was basic change in the political situation (...) but after 4 months things started to change and the initiative entered into stagnation*"¹⁵⁰. The latter excerpt illustrates once again ETA's frustration with the failure of the Lizarra-Garazi agreement which, in their opinion, resulted in a sterile attempt to change the situation of the Basque country and was an ambitious attempt that did not reach a positive materialization.

With regards to distribution, and though as anticipated before, there are not so many trails left of statements available due to the set of reasons mentioned in the methodology chapter preceding this section, this statement was distributed through diverse channels with the sole aim of reaching not only the Basque people but also a global public. Therefore, the strategic distribution of the statement by ETA intended to shape the narrative surrounding its intentions. For instance, to illustrate the importance of this assertion, we may see that ETA said "*much has been achieved by Euskal Herria in these years in the path to freedom (...) since many political agents have received our statements (...) especially when these have fallen in the hands of bodies devoted to the protection of the citizens such as the police (...) and have also reached all sorts of means of communication and the different leaderships of existing political parties (...) however, nobody has provided us with a convincing answer to our concerns*"¹⁵¹. Along these lines, it is evident that this utterance highlights the relevance of persisting in the pursuit of support for ETA's recently resumed armed operations by making itself be seen as an organization that has posited demands that have not been taken into consideration. This message aimed to appeal both political actors and the Basque population, and this point connects with the last focal point in Fairclough's second dimension, consumption.

150²Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

151²Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

In this respect, from a consumption perspective, the 1999 statement can be seen as a call for the solidarity of the Basque population in that ETA “*calls on the Basque citizens to continue the work they started by staying firm in the face of the enemy and therefore reinforcing the basic pillars of the Basque identity*”.¹⁵² On the other hand, there is the possibility that this call to action may have been interpreted as polarizing and threatening to individuals who were in opposition to ETA’s goals, thus achieving the opposite effect ETA had originally in mind.

Finally, regarding the third dimension proposed by Fairclough, the social practice analysis would look into the broader social and historical background in which the statement takes place. In this specific instance, the 1999 statement would help us grasp how the text reproduces power relations and, consequently, ideologies within the Basque panorama.

In this sense, the 1999 statement focuses on the tension between ETA and other actors by making, once again, a stark emphasis on the failed negotiations. But not only that. ETA also seems to delegitimize other actors in the conflict. For instance, ETA says “*given this situation we (ETA) offered the PNV and the governments (Spain and France) to reach a new agreement that would actually be based on a verifiable approach (...) However, we have not received a clear response yet (...) we have also perceived a lack of willingness from political actors to bring Euskal Herria towards a more democratic path embracing freedom*”¹⁵³. Although it is not explicitly said, the latter utterance denotes that ETA sees the local party and other governments involved in the conflict as incompetent and with an evident lack of commitment to deliver on promises; thus, there is a reinforcement of ETA’s idea of being the ultimate defender of Basque nationalist precepts.

In terms of ideological factors, the 1999 statement reveal some fundamental convictions upheld by ETA, including its defense of the armed conflict as a mechanism to achieve political ends in the sense that “*the key to this progress has been the struggle and the silent work*”.¹⁵⁴ This utterance essentially comes to portray the terrorists’ conviction in the efficacy of the

¹⁵²Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

¹⁵³Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

¹⁵⁴Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

methodologies they use and the armed conflict as a fundamental instrument in the pursuit of Basque sovereignty.

Lastly, the social implications of this statement come to show what effects or consequences it may have on society and its members. These implications can be positive or negative and may impact various aspects of social life, such as culture, politics, economics, and interpersonal relationships. Along these lines, the discourse utilized in ETA's statement carries notable social implications, as it plays a role in shaping the public's perception of the conflict and influencing the actions of multiple stakeholders since the framing of the situation presented in the text, coupled with its appeals for action, has the potential to galvanize the trajectory of the dispute.

For instance, the 1999 statement highlights a call for solidarity among Basque nationalists since it asserts that "*we have returned to the habit of communicating with one another, and we have to continue doing so*".¹⁵⁵ Therefore, ETA aims to promote a collective sense of purpose and unity among its supporters by placing significant emphasis on collaboration, while considering at the same time that this approach has the potential to facilitate greater mobilization and a stronger dedication to the cause.

My brief conclusion on this statement produced in 1999 is that ETA focuses on more discursive practices and provides more negative meanings in their choice for the wording they use. However, this is to be expected considering we are faced with a period of frustration based on failed negotiations among the stakeholders. The statement also appears to have more aggressive connotations based on nouns endowed with negative meanings such as "rotting", "suffering", or "stagnation" and this responds to the same feeling of overall dissatisfaction in the terrorist organization.

4.1.3. Explanation of the Discourses

¹⁵⁵Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

So far, we have conducted analyses of the 1998 ceasefire and the 1999 end of the ceasefire statements produced by ETA, thanks to which a few explanations can be drawn. This explanatory subchapter aims to interpret the primary discourses, compare their progression in the two statements, and draw conclusions regarding the implications of these discourses in light of the Basque conflict.

As we have seen, the 1998 ceasefire statement revolves around the pursuit of peace and the establishment of a new democratic process as its primary discourse. As a result, we have witnessed in this statement how ETA placed significant emphasis on fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse political entities, as demonstrated by its use of language and rhetoric in that they believed in “*an open and non-exclusive dialogue*” and a consequent “*construction of a democratic framework*”.¹⁵⁶ In other words, this discourse denotes a change in ETA’s stance, where they opted to temporarily relinquish the use of violent means and instead prioritize political dialogue as a strategy to attain their objectives.

By way of comparison, the statement from 1999 exhibits a shift towards a more aggressive and dissatisfied rhetoric, placing emphasis on the inadequacy of the peace process and the imperative need to resume the armed conflict. Accordingly, the language employed in this statement is marked by the use of expressions such as “*resume the armed struggle*” and “*repressive occupation, attack, and domination*”,¹⁵⁷ where those expressions exemplify the shift in communication in the sense that there was a feeling disappointment towards the peace negotiations and a conviction that solely resorting (back) to armed conflict can safeguard the Basque community’s interests.

Both statements in 1998 and 1999 incorporate a discourse centered on Basque nationalism and the pursuit of self-determination. This is particularly obvious in the 1998 statement where ETA says that “*after two long decades, the possibility of taking a decisive step on the road to independence opens up once again in Euskal Herria (...) We have mentioned, at the beginning of this statement, that the challenge of the political phase to which we face and its greatest quality must be that Euskal Herria in its entirety, and on all regional and state borders,*

¹⁵⁶Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁵⁷Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

achieves its sovereignty (...) Because there are not two or three Euskal Herrias”.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, the 1999 statement then emphasizes the need for a “*sovereign constitutional Parliament in a single constituency*” since “*Euskal Herria lives a situation of negligence*”,¹⁵⁹ thus signaling a desire for self-governance.

Before closing this chapter, I will deliver on my promise of illustrating the lessons learned from these two statements through the lens of Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism.

Let us begin with the primordialist approach where the analysis of the statements in this section yield an accentuation in terms of the importance of historical, ethnic, and cultural bonds that serve as the foundation for ETA’s political struggle. We have seen how the statement in 1998 invokes the concept of Euskal Herria as an ancient nation and places emphasis on the Basque language, thus attesting to the primordialist explanations. Consequently, this is achieved by emphasizing the historical and cultural continuity of the Basque people. Likewise, the statement from 1999 posits that the revival of armed conflict is a reaction to the cultural and historical subjugation experienced by Euskal Herria.

In terms of Instrumentalism, we may argue that this framework allows for an analysis of the discursive practices present in both statements, which in turn exposes ETA’s deliberate instrumental use of language as a means of garnering support and as a justification of its actions. Further, ETA defends the significance of a “democratic process” and “national consensus” for achieving peace is emphasized by ETA in their statement of 1998, with a sole aim to obtain broader support and appeal to the desire for political stability. This notwithstanding, the 1999 statement, ascribes the breakdown of the peace process to extrinsic forces and other political agents, therefore shifting accountability away from ETA and portraying the resume of armed conflict as fundamental for the safeguard of the Basque interests.

Finally, the constructivist approach proves its applicability to the case in point since it centers on the development of social and political identities. In this respect, social practices are evident in the statements made in 1998 and 1999 as these serve as a demonstration of ETA’s

¹⁵⁸Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1998. Translated by the author.

¹⁵⁹Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 1999. Translated by the author.

endeavors to influence the formation/evolution of Basque identity and the way in which the conflict is perceived overall. Interestingly enough, however, the Basque identity is established on democratic principles and aspirations for self-determination, as articulated in the 1998 statement, whereas the statement from 1999 portrays the Basque identity as continuously endangered by external factors, emphasizing the imperative of safeguarding Euskal Herria through the use of armed conflict.

In conclusion, the examination of these two statements displays a transition in discursive practices, where the emphasis on peaceful resolution and communication in 1998 was aborted in favor of a resurgence of bellicose language and militant action in 1999. This change does nothing but highlights the specificities inherent to the Basque conflict, as well as the dynamic stances adopted by ETA in response to the obstacles encountered during the peace process. Therefore, comprehending these discourses and their implications through different theoretical perspectives is imperative for attaining a more profound comprehension of the motivations and tactics of ETA and other stakeholders involved in the Basque conflict since each theoretical approach sheds light on distinct aspects of the statements, thus highlighting the interconnectedness of shared historical and cultural roots, considerations of a strategic nature, and the construction of identity in ETA's discourse.

4.2. Period B (2006 – 2007)

Mindful of the analysis conducted in the previous section, we will now tackle a totally different period. The interval spanning from the termination of ETA's ceasefire in 1999 to the declaration of a subsequent ceasefire in 2006 is characterized by intricate historical and cultural advancements in the Basque Country. Comprehending the discourses featured in the 2006 and 2007 ceasefire statements necessitates a thorough grasp of the context in which these developments occurred, as the period spanning from 1999 to 2006 was defined by a confluence of persistent violence, political upheaval, and shifting perspectives regarding the Basque conflict within the wider Spanish population.

As we have already explored, after the termination of the 1999 ceasefire, ETA resumed its armed conflict and proceeded with the execution several assaults in the initial years of the twenty-first century.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, during this period the Basque nationalist movement underwent political developments. A good example of this is given by the fact that the Spanish government banned Batasuna, ETA's political arm, in 2003 due to its ties to the terrorist organization.¹⁶¹ Following this decision, this resulted in increased hostilities between the Spanish state and Basque nationalist forces as the latter saw how their representation in political settings was decreased.

It is also important to mention the events taking place in the international arena at that time since these events had a salient impact on how people felt about terrorism and, by extension, the Basque conflict. Terrorism became a major topic in international relations as a result of the 9/11 catastrophe, and the subsequent global "war on terror".¹⁶² These happenings raised pressure on ETA to explore peaceful means of attaining its goals and further delegitimized the group's armed struggle in the eyes of the international world. Not only these events were important in the organization's "change of heart" at that time, but the truth is that ETA was facing internal disputes as well. The terrorist organization therefore saw this opportunity to regain public support by showcasing a commitment to peaceful means to achieving political goals.

This context motivated ETA to declare a new ceasefire a few years later in 2006, where they expressed their desire to communicate with political authorities. Unsurprisingly, the 2006 ceasefire statement included references to the right of the Basque people to self-determination and emphasized the significance of addressing the historical and cultural causes of the Basque conflict. Despite the Spanish government - this time under the leadership of the Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero - maintained a cautious stance towards the truce and

¹⁶⁰ Leonisio, R., et al. (2016). *ETA's Terrorist Campaign. From Violence to Politics, 1968-2015*. London: Routledge.

¹⁶¹ Arenas Jal, J. (2016). "The Ban of Batasuna: Effects on Local Government Spending". *European University Institute*, pp. 1-38.

¹⁶² Hoffman, B., & Reinares, F. (2014). "The Evolution of the Global Terrorist Threat: From 9/11 to Osama bin Laden's Death". *Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare Series*. New York: Columbia University Press.

demanded that ETA disarm before opening any lines of communication, the Socialist leader showed his willingness to engage in dialogue with ETA as long as the latter abandoned arms. However, the PP heavily criticized Rodríguez Zapatero's approach in that the former perceived that only a hardline policy was the most efficient manner to eradicate the terrorist threat¹⁶³

Eventually, ETA, - motivated by a lack of trust and dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the government in terms of negotiation and political recognition -, conducted an attack at Madrid's airport, which resulted in the deaths of two people, thus bringing the ceasefire to an end in 2007. In addition, ETA's internal dynamics also played a pivotal role in terms of resuming the armed conflict since a sector of the organization was never in favor of a peaceful negotiation. This development reflected both the complexity of the historical and cultural problems underlying the Basque struggle as well as the continued hostilities and mistrust between ETA and the Spanish state.

4.2.1. The Ceasefire in 2006

This subchapter will proceed with the discourse analysis of the announcement of ceasefire in 2006 and the three-dimensional approach provided by Fairclough will be used once again. The point of doing so will be to unveil the the linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural features of the text.

Let us at first focus on the first dimension and highlight aspects circumventing the text in terms of vocabulary choice, sentence structure, cohesion, and overall structure of the statement. In regard to the lexicon used, the statement does not make much use of words that evoke emotions. ETA resorts instead to the use of a more direct and assertive language by using modal verbs mainly denoting obligation as exemplified by the following utterances: *“we must call all the authorities for action in the resolution of the conflict”*, *“we must call all the Basque citizens to take part in this peace process”*, and *“Spain and France must acknowledge and commit to the favorable result of this peace process, and they must not provide obstacles of any kind”*.¹⁶⁴

163 Llera Ramo, F. J., & Leonisio, R. (2017). “La Estrategia del Miedo: ETA y la Espiral del Silencio en el País Vasco”. *Informe del Centro Memorial de las Víctimas del Terrorismo*. No 1, pp. 9-55.

164[®]Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

Then, in terms of deictics, we can see a relative absence of them. Therefore, we can assert that the intent was to make the message somewhat more impersonal in its nature. ETA, however, again employs the first-person plural (“we”) throughout the entire statement. In this respect, the intention is to associate itself to the large (Basque) population and this is exemplified by the following utterance: “*we, as Basque citizens need to adopt the decisions that will determine our future*”.¹⁶⁵

Regarding the structure of sentences, we see how the text uses more succinct structures to make sure the message is conveyed with accuracy, and a good example attesting to this assertion is that this announcement of the ceasefire is relatively brief and mainly uses short sentences and paragraphs. In addition, there are complex sentences to articulate intricate arguments and elucidations. For instance, the following utterance “*it is time for commitments. It is necessary to assume responsibilities, to build together the democratic solution that the Basque people need. It is time to make important decisions, moving from words to deeds.*”¹⁶⁶, employs multiple clauses to explicitly convey the notion that it was necessary to replace the “ancient” legal-political structure with a novel democratic framework where joint action is crucial to resolve the conflict. Then, shorter sentences are used to convey forceful and assertive statements, as exemplified by “*it is possible to overcome the conflict, here and now. This is the wish and will ETA wants to express*”,¹⁶⁷ where there is a clear accentuation of significant aspects which in the end allow for an enhancement in terms of clarity and understanding of the ideas being expressed.

In terms of cohesion, the text commences right away with ETA’s decision to announce a ceasefire, which serves to establish the framework for the ensuing discourse. Subsequently, the text delves into a comprehensive examination of the obstacles encountered, the underlying rationales for their choices, and the suggested remedies. The text, however, does not seem to employ a thorough structure that connects every paragraph in an organized manner – for example, the ceasefire statement in 1998 was more organized and richer in structure in that it used a more formal language with a combined style including enumeration of paragraphs to

¹⁶⁵Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

¹⁶⁶Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

¹⁶⁷Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

provide an argumentation for the reasons leading to the ceasefire. It is of course possible to understand in the present statement that the paragraphs are related to one another but there are no cohesive elements such as “in the first place”, “in this regard”, “therefore” or enumerative listings as it was the case in the previous announcement of the ceasefire in 1998. The text feels rather informative in its entirety.

Regarding Fairclough’s second dimension, let us recall that this dimension focuses on production, distribution, and consumption of the statement. When it comes to production, we find that, once again, this statement was produced by ETA’s leadership as an official announcement directed towards both the Basque population and the international community.

The text appears to be meticulously crafted to express ETA’s determination to announce a cessation of hostilities and the rationale underpinning this determination, but this time following a more assertive path. Hence, the utilization of a formal and authoritative language in the declaration, as exemplified by the phrase “*ETA has decided to announce a permanent ceasefire*”,¹⁶⁸ implies that the organization is trying to express its message from a position of influence and validity. The reason to do so is no other than preserving the group’s credibility among its adherents.

With respect to distribution, it is more than likely that this statement was broadcasted through multiple channels, including both traditional print and digital media platforms, in addition to being circulated among members of the Basque nationalist community. The extensive dissemination of the announcement is done in order to guarantee its accessibility to a diverse range of individuals, encompassing supporters, foes, and impartial audiences. Therefore, the extensive scope is a crucial factor for ETA to proficiently convey their message and uphold their impact in the Basque political arena.

Finally, when it comes to consumption, the announcement of the ETA ceasefire in 2006 was received by a heterogeneous audience, comprising the Basque population, the Spanish and French authorities, the global community, and the press. The text was elaborated with the intention of appealing to diverse audiences through various means (i.e., related to the distribution), and this may be a reason accounting for the brevity in content. By the same token,

¹⁶⁸Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

ETA's emphasis on a "democratic solution" by means of "dialogue" may have appealed to those who advocated for a peaceful resolution to the Basque conflict, while ETA's reaffirmation of its commitment to "independence and self-determination" could have helped mobilize their supporters in that ETA's aim in this text also was "*to promote a democratic process in Euskal Herria so that the Basque People can attain the political change they need*".¹⁶⁹

Ultimately, the third dimension dealing with sociocultural practice entails analyzing the wider social and cultural setting in which the text is located, along with the underlying ideologies and power dynamics that shape the discourse.

By this token, the announcement of the ceasefire in 2006 should be comprehended in the historical and political context of the Basque nationalist movement and the prolonged conflict between ETA and the Spanish and French states since this statement emerged during a prolonged period of aggressive clashes, unsuccessful negotiations for peace, and increasing global insistence for a nonviolent settlement to the dispute. Good example of this is found on how text addresses the wider context by utilizing utterances such as "*the situation created in Euskal Herria*" and "*the peace process ETA advocates for (...) on the grounds of justice*".¹⁷⁰

The text then also exhibits a Basque nationalist ideology that aims to establish a sovereign Basque state encompassing the historical territories of the Basque Country in both Spain and France. To this end, the text highlights that "*ETA wants to show its desire for this open armed conflict to come to an end, thus achieving a true democratic situation for Euskal Herria (...) at the same time ETA wants to reinstate its commitment to continue taking steps in the future in accordance with what Euskal Herria needs*".¹⁷¹ Concurrently, the text implicitly presents a critique of the ideologies of the Spanish and French states, as they have endeavored to suppress Basque nationalism and uphold the territorial integrity of their respective nations.

Referring to power dynamics between ETA, the Basque nationalist movement, and the Spanish and French states, the text tries to present ETA as a credible representative of the Basque community's desire for autonomy and sovereignty, while simultaneously recognizing the

¹⁶⁹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

¹⁷⁰Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

¹⁷¹Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

necessity of engaging in dialogue processes with the Spanish and French authorities to attain their objectives. The aforementioned sentence can be interpreted as a challenge to the political authority of the Spanish and French states when it comes to determining the future of the Basque Country. This is due to the assertion that the decision-making power ultimately needs to reside in the Basque citizens' hands in that "*this decision solely corresponds to the Basque people*".¹⁷²

In closing, the text demonstrates a reflection of wider social and cultural values within the Basque nationalist stream, which emphasizes the significance of safeguarding and preserving Basque language, culture, and identity. The utilization of the Basque language within the text when constantly referring to "Euskal Herria" as the Basque Country serves to strengthen the uniqueness of the Basque identity.

Overall, the analysis of the text produced in 2006 has revealed that ETA has employed a deliberate language strategy to communicate their dedication to achieving a nonviolent resolution, while simultaneously affirming the validity of their campaign for the independence of the Basque region. The analysis of the discursive dimension has shed light on how the text shapes and situates the primary players and topics involved in the persistent dispute involving ETA, the Basque nationalist movement, and the Spanish and French governments. Additionally, the sociocultural examination has yielded revelations regarding the wider historical, political, and cultural milieu of the Basque dispute, as well as the ideologies, power dynamics, and principles as enshrined in the body of the statement. The text, nonetheless, is very different from the previous announcement of a ceasefire in 1998.

4.2.2. The End of the Ceasefire in 2007

In a similar manner to what was done before, we are now presented with the task of analyzing the announcement related to the end of the ceasefire produced and released by ETA in 2007. Once again, Fairclough's three-dimensional approach is applicable in order to discern the specificities the present text is endowed with.

¹⁷²Announcement of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2006. Translated by the author.

From the very beginning, we see how the statement is much longer than the announcement of a ceasefire a year earlier. From a textual standpoint, the present statement utilizes formal and politically oriented terminology to emphasize the ideological “mission” and goals the organization has. There are expressions such as “national liberation”, “recognition of rights”, and “right to self-determination” that essentially prove their value in terms of underscoring the objectives of the organization with regard to the Basque territory. The language employed in the text is emotive in nature and serves to criticize the Spanish Government and, particularly, the PSOE, in that ETA uses terms such as “deadlock” and “oppression” to underline the perceived adverse actions of the government. But ETA goes further by asking a rhetorical question that is also intended towards the PSOE as a receptor in that the former formulates the following “¿Do they (PSOE) intend to make the process fail and rot away?¹⁷³ and “it is certainly clear that this situation is neither moving forward nor backward” in relation to the deadlock being experienced. Moreover, the tone and choice of words by ETA appears to be rather threatening since “the political oppression will only serve to worsen the conflict and therefore lead to new confrontations” and “it seems that, so far, the Spanish Government insists on this perspective”.¹⁷⁴

The predominant sentence structure employed in the present statement is rather complex, featuring multiple clauses and conjunctions that enable ETA to present a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the peace process. For example, the statement “the Spanish Government and, especially the PSOE, are responsible for the current severe situation that is obstructing the democratic process” presents the organization’s point of view on the root causes that have led to this new impasse.

Further, this time the text returns to a strong use of a cohesive structure, as it presents a compelling argument that commences with an overview of the contemporary political situation. Subsequently, it assigns responsibility for the deadlock and evaluates the roles of other political actors, culminating in ETA’s reiteration of their previous commitment to a ceasefire. Thus, these cohesive elements include deictics (e.g., “esa situación” – that situation), conjunctions (e.g., “por el contrario” - indicating a contrasting idea), and repetition of ideas (e.g., “proceso

¹⁷³Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

¹⁷⁴Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

democrático” - denoting the need for a democratic process expressed in previous statements).¹⁷⁵ Overall, these serve to enhance the coherence of the written discourse and reinforces its persuasive tone.

Moving onto the second dimension, we can identify elements appealing to intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and discursive strategies. Regarding intertextuality, we can see how there are a few examples accounting for this element. Thus, in the present statement there is mention to the previous statement made by ETA, namely the announcement of the ceasefire in 2006. A Good example here would be the following utterance “*ETA, Basque revolutionary organization for national liberation wants to convey to citizens the reading of the situation we make after 9 long months since we announced the ceasefire*”.¹⁷⁶ This reference situates the statement within a broader discursive context, emphasizing the continuity of ETA’s discourse and the ongoing nature of the conflict.

But not only intertextuality matters. Interdiscursivity also plays a role since it helps delineate the ways in which a text draws on multiple discourses to construct a broader meaning. The present statement demonstrates interdiscursivity by combining discourses of national liberation, political conflict, and peace negotiations. For instance, the statement employs the discourse of national liberation when discussing the “*Euskal Herria’s national rights*” and the “*overcoming the territorial division*”. At the same time, the statement constantly engages with the discourse of political conflict by criticizing the Spanish Government’s shortcomings and the PSOE’s role in contributing to the sustainability of the deadlock.

Next, the statement employs various discursive strategies that help ETA present its perspective on the situation and how the organization intend to achieve its aims. One such strategy is the use of contrasting utterances, which serve to emphasize the differences between ETA’s goals and the actions of the Spanish Government. For example, the statement presents a comparison between ETA’s previous efforts to advance the peace process in that “*ETA has made considerable steps for the peace process to advance*” against the Spanish Government’s perceived lack of progress in terms of delivering on its promises since “*the Spanish Government*

¹⁷⁵Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

¹⁷⁶Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

has still not shown any advancement in the commitments it made at the time ETA announced the ceasefire".¹⁷⁷ Finally, but not least important in terms of discursive strategies, we may refer to the construction of collective identity which makes itself evident in the repeated use of "Euskal Herria" and the references to the Basque people; thus, aiming at the establishment of a perception of cohesion and collective endeavor, strengthening the notion that ETA's actions are solely executed in the benefit of the Basque people.

Ultimately, in terms of the third dimension encompassing socio-cultural context, the present statement shows that its foundations are overall rooted in the endeavor for Basque autonomy and emancipation from the Spanish State. The text expresses a resolute dedication to the pursuit of Basque autonomy, underscoring the significance of acknowledging the national entitlements of Euskal Herria and instituting a fresh political structure grounded on the tenets of self-governance and geographical unity. The emphasis placed on these fundamental principles in the 2007 statement is indicative of the overarching ideological stance held by both the ETA and its supporters.

The third dimension of discourse analysis also allowed for the examination of power relations, which are evident in the opposing positions adopted by the authors of statements towards different political actors. In this regard, the Spanish government and the PSOE are depicted as the primary adversaries, alleged to have impeded the peace process and enforced repressive policies against the Basque populace. On the other hand, the statement shows agreement with the wider left-wing nationalist campaign in the Basque region, affirming its support for the endeavor towards autonomy and sovereignty.

The statement overall involves a variety of political entities as social actors, each with distinct interests and agendas. Along these lines, the actors involved in this scenario comprise the Spanish government, the PSOE political party, the PNV political party, the wider left-wing nationalist movement, and the Basque citizens. The text therefore establishes affiliations and contrasts among the entities involved, clarifying the intricate political environment in which the statement plays a role by emphasizing the significance of cooperation among groups advocating for independence.

¹⁷⁷Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

In closing, the significance and influence of the statement can only be comprehended by taking into account its historical background. The statement is presented against the backdrop of the ETA's protracted armed struggle for Basque independence, as well as its previous ceasefire and indirectly refers to failed agreements or negotiations. Through the contextualization of the text within its historical framework, we can gain a deeper understanding of its importance and the wider ramifications of the ETA's position on the armed conflict.

4.2.3. Explanation of the Discourses

The two statements analyzed in the preceding pages not only do show significance due to the fact that they elaborate or, rather, illustrate the ideas being discussed in this thesis in terms of nationalism precepts, defense of an ethnic identity, violence as an instrument but they also display the discursive strategies followed by ETA when articulating its discourse. Thus, they need to be examined here jointly since the same practice will be followed in the following period and, by extension, the conclusion chapter.

Thus, in the first place, we may say that the 2006 ceasefire declaration made by ETA was marked by a more or less optimistic demeanor and a focus on the possibility of achieving peace and advancement. The language employed in the statement conveys an inclination towards achieving harmony and also steadfast dedication to a system of governance characterized by popular participation. Moreover, the statement declares that ETA has decided to initiate a "permanent" ceasefire with the aim of discontinuing armed actions and promoting peace. What is not so clear, though, is why the term "permanent" is used. We may want to give them (the terrorist) the benefit of the doubt in that they perhaps thought a resumption of hostilities was not actually going to be needed again. Therefore, they (ETA) assumed it was permanent even if it eventually was not. To draw a vague analogy, let us say, for example, that when the First World War broke out, the contemporaries who experienced it at that time did not label it as the "First" War. They did not foresee something worse was coming in the following decades. With ETA we could assume the same in this case in terms of use of language.

Also regarding language, the selection of vocabulary is noteworthy, given that the usage of terms such as "democratic process" and "overcoming of the conflict" reflects a positive outlook and an emphasis on a desire for a diplomatic settlement. Furthermore, the coherence of

the statement's structure is notable, as it features a distinct opening, main section, and closing remarks, underscoring the organization's commitment to the pursuit of peace by a lineal albeit brief argumentation.

In contrast, the announcement of the end of the ceasefire in 2007 displays a discourse that is more confrontational and disillusioned. The tone of this statement is critical and clearly accusatory, as ETA attributes responsibility for the unsuccessful peace process to the PSOE in that *“we attribute the dire nature of the situation to the Spanish government, the PSOE, who have consistently hampered the democratic process”*.¹⁷⁸ This statement also denotes a change in ETA's position, as it attributes the absence of advancement to external factors instead of conveying optimism for a nonviolent settlement.

The lexical selection utilized in the statement of 2007 is characterized by a heightened level of assertiveness and emotional intensity, as evidenced by the inclusion of words such as “deadlock,” “oppression”, and “repression”, which serve to depict a scenario of persistent strife and affliction. The coherence of the statement, however, appears to be at times comparatively weaker than the 2006 statement, which may be attributed to the unstable circumstances and the ambiguous nature of the ongoing peace negotiations.

The two statements exhibit intertextuality by referencing events and advancements in the wider political landscape. This demonstrates how discourse is actively influenced by and reacts to external factors. The 2006 announcement pertains to a wider aspiration for peace within the Basque community, whereas the 2007 statement highlights particular occurrences of oppression and alleged inequality, including the case of Iñaki de Juana. This individual was a member of ETA who was originally sentenced to more than 3000 years (yes, 3000) for the atrocities that were attributed to him. Of course, as expected, ETA viewed him as a martyr, while the Spanish government, and the vast majority of Spanish citizens, believed he had to be severely punished for his crimes. The government was mainly concerned that any concessions or softer policies may just have ended up in further acts of terrorism. Overall, Iñaki de Juana's case serves as an illustration of the intricate and strained relationships that were present among the Spanish government, ETA, and the wider Basque separatist movement in that *“it was an act of cruelty*

¹⁷⁸Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

shown by Spain that has only showed ruthlessness and has not ceased its strategy of repression at any point in time".¹⁷⁹ Finally, the 2007 statement also serves as a paradigm of the underlying and entrenched problems that necessitated resolution in order to attain enduring peace.

Finally, let us run the statements in 2006 and 2007 through the lenses of the three theoretical approaches that have led the discussion of the present paper since they are suitable to the case we are studying. The 2006 statement highlights the presence of Primordialism's tenets in ETA's focus on Euskal Herria, the Basque Country, and its historical pursuit of autonomy. This assertion underscores the protracted strife and the imperative to surmount it via a novel political structure that acknowledges the rights of Euskal Herria as an independent entity. Along with that, Primordialism helps understand why the 2007 statement displays ETA's commitment and loyalty to the Basque cause (a deep-rooted and immutable cause), despite the resumption of hostilities.

Next, Instrumentalism would help us argue that ETA's decision to declare a ceasefire in 2006 was a calculated maneuver aimed at enhancing its political bargaining power and consolidating its position vis-à-vis the Spanish authorities. Moreover, the termination of the ceasefire in 2007 can be interpreted as a response to the perceived absence of advancement in the peace negotiations, therefore motivating ETA to recommence its militant campaign in order to sustain its sway and authority within the Basque territory.

Finally, the Constructivist approach would argue that the 2006 statement exhibits the portrayal of the peace process as a mechanism to override the longstanding conflict and establish a novel political structure for the Basque citizens. Thus, this theoretical approach would emphasize the significance of discourse and democratic mechanisms in molding the forthcoming trajectory of the Basque Country. By the same token, the 2007 statement reflects the constructivist perspective as evidenced by ETA's persistent dedication to its political goals, notwithstanding the cessation of the ceasefire. The statement also affirms that the pursuit of Basque independence is integral to the Basque identity and historical account.

¹⁷⁹Announcement of the End of the Ceasefire by ETA in 2007. Translated by the author.

4.3. Period C (2011 – 2018)

Up until now, we have gone through two different periods pertaining to two different decades. This last period to be explored is determined by a permanent ceasefire in 2011 and then the announcement of the dissolution of the terrorist organization in 2018. Thus, what we should expect to extract from the statements is an explanation or rhetoric evidencing the demise of the organization. However, we should also expect a continuation in the defense of the ideas ETA propounded. Having said so, let us at first put things into context.

The time frame spanning from the termination of ETA's ceasefire in 2007 to the declaration of a permanent ceasefire in 2011 was characterized by a sequence of noteworthy historical, cultural, and political occurrences within the Basque Country and Spain. The purpose of this brief contextualization is to provide an overview of the prevailing context during the specified period. To achieve this objective, the study draws upon the works of several authors to gain a better understanding of the circumstances that culminated in the eventual establishment of a permanent ceasefire in 2011.

During this period, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero enforced a policy that targeted the dismantling of the terrorist organization. Although the government's stance during Zapatero's term cannot be fully classified as hardline, there was a discernible change in tactics following the conclusion of the 2007 ceasefire provided that the governmental authorities strengthened their law enforcement and counter-terrorism endeavors, which in turn resulted in the apprehension of several ETA members and the weakening of the group's operational potential.¹⁸⁰ The period spanning from 2007 to 2011 was at the same time influenced by the wider Spanish and European contexts.¹⁸¹ Further, Spain's economy was significantly impacted by the global financial crisis of 2008, which in turn resulted in extensive unemployment, social turmoil, and a realignment of political objectives.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰Muro, D., *op. cit.*, 2016

¹⁸¹Rodríguez Aizpeolea, L., *op. cit.*, 2011

¹⁸²Whitfield, T., *op. cit.*, 2014.

In cultural terms, during this period, there was a transformation in the Basque society. This cultural transformation was determined by the fact that there was a decline in support for the ETA's violent tactics among the Basque population can be attributed to a generational shift and heightened exposure to global perspectives (e.g., the internet and social media). Put simply, a better connection to the world helped people have a better understanding of the negative impacts violence has on societies, and how important it is to seek a peaceful alternative instead. In this regard, we shall not obviate that the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence in the Basque Country was significantly facilitated by civil society initiatives, including the "Gesto por la Paz" (Gesture for Peace) movement.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the announcement of a permanent ceasefire in 2011 was also facilitated by notable individuals, including international mediators such as Brian Currin, a South African lawyer, and Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, who with their efforts sought to foster dialogue between the ETA and the Spanish government.¹⁸⁴ In line with this, the resolution of the Basque conflict was facilitated by the "Aiete Declaration",¹⁸⁵ which was supported by prominent international figures such as Kofi Annan and Desmond Tutu.¹⁸⁶

Following the permanent ceasefire announced in 2011, the Basque Country transitioned into a new phase characterized by the cessation of violent conduct and the pursuit of a peaceful resolution to the protracted conflict between ETA, the Spanish State and France. Thus, the dissolution of ETA in 2018 was the fruitful outcome of a multifaceted interplay of historical, cultural, and political factors during this particular period.

First, the establishment of the ceasefire in 2011 constituted a pivotal moment in the Basque political panorama. The Spanish government, led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, expressed a cautious reception of the ceasefire, while still maintaining a firm position on ETA.

¹⁸³ Moreno Bibiloni, I. (2015). "Movilizaciones Pacifistas en el País Vasco: Los Inicios de Gesto por la Paz". *Revista de Paz y Conflictos*. Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 227-242.

¹⁸⁴ Alonso Pascual, R. (2014). "Estudio Comparativo de los Procesos de Cese de la Violencia en El País Vasco (ETA) e Irlanda del Norte (IRA)". *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, pp. 1-29.

¹⁸⁵ The Aiete Declaration is a term used to refer to the International Conference to Promote the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque Country. In Spain, it traditionally receives the former name which is ascribed to the place where it was produced – The Palace of Aiete.

¹⁸⁶ Whitfield, T., *op. cit.*, 2014

And in this regard, the government emphasized the necessity of accomplishing a full and verifiable disarmament of the terrorist and its subsequent dissolution. In the end of 2011, but effective from January 2012, Mariano Rajoy (PP) assumed the position of Prime Minister of Spain and maintained a firm (hardline) stance, prioritizing the dismantling of ETA and declining to participate in direct dialogues.¹⁸⁷

In this particular period, the Basque nationalist movement underwent a transition in its strategy defined by a redirection in its attention towards peaceful political methods as a means of promoting its objectives. In this fashion, the political party known as Sortu was established in 2011, following the dissolution of Batasuna in 2013, a group that – as we have seen previously - had already been illegalized in 2003 due to its association with ETA.¹⁸⁸ The recently formed political party overtly renounced the use of force and endeavored to participate in the democratic system as a means of advancing the Basque nationalist program.

The year 2017 marked a significant milestone in the dissolution process of ETA as the terrorist organization announced its disarmament via a broadcast on television. This was made possible through the participation of diverse global mediators, including the International Verification Commission (IVC), who supervised the disarmament procedure and verified that ETA had indeed surrendered its armaments.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, this was perceived as a noteworthy advancement towards the establishment of a standard political state in the Basque territory. Finally, in May 2018, ETA declared its dissolution, which translated into a long-awaited end of a period of gruesome violence in the annals of the Basque region.¹⁹⁰ This gigantic achievement was the result of a prolonged period of fluctuating political, cultural, and historical elements that contributed to the waning of endorsement for aggressive methodologies and the acknowledgement that a nonviolent, diplomatic resolution was the most efficacious approach to tackle the Basque conflict.

¹⁸⁷ De Pablo, S., *op. cit.*, 2011.

¹⁸⁸ Asociación Víctimas del Terrorismo on Sortu's legalization as a political party. *Libertad Digital*. Web. Accessed 23 Mar 2023, <https://s.libertaddigital.com/doc/comunicado-de-la-avt-sobre-sortu-41912648.pdf>

¹⁸⁹ Digital Version of the newspaper reflecting on ETA's disarmament. *El País*, Web. Accessed 27 Mar 2023, <https://srv00.epimg.net/pdf/elpais/1aPagina/2017/04/ep-20170409.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ Alonso Pascual, R. (2018). *La derrota del vencedor: El final del terrorismo de ETA*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

All in all, this decade represented for Spain a transformation in its political context, characterized by the emergence of new political forces such as Podemos that at the time of its inception was defined by a nearly extreme-leftist ideology. This party adopted a conciliatory approach towards the Basque conflict and advocated for dialogue as a means of resolving outstanding issues. This at the same time was met with harsh criticism from the most conservative parties, but this remains another subject of discussion.

4.3.1. The Permanent Ceasefire in 2011

In this statement, ETA declares a “general and permanent ceasefire” which is “subject to verification by the international community”. Overall, the text underscores the necessity of a democratic mechanism to address the protracted political strife, as well as the organization’s dedication to terminating armed hostilities once and for all. In order to conduct a comprehensive examination utilizing Fairclough’s three-dimensional methodology for discourse analysis, the dimensions of description, interpretation, and explanation will be the primary focus.

In terms of description, we shall focus on the linguistic feature of the present text in that we see the vocabulary chosen for this statement is formal and aims at conveying a sense of urgency and conciliation. We can clearly perceive the use of deictic elements (i.e., “this”, “that”) enshrined in the following utterances: “*that is the desire of the vast Basque peoples*”, “ETA with this historical announcement”, and “*in particular, for them (the government) to take part in this process seeking for a solution*”.¹⁹¹ In these examples, we can extract that in the first two instances the demonstrative pronouns makes a direct reference within the discourse itself and the last utterance refers to the peace process that needs to take place. Further, we can also observe how the text uses deictic elements that denote temporality in utterances such as “*the International Conference recently occurred*”, or “*moving forward, the path is not going to be an easy one*”, where these refer to past events that have influenced the decision to announce a permanent ceasefire. Overall, in terms of tenses, the sentences are mainly produced in present with a few examples in the past and future tenses. Regarding the former, the text also includes some

¹⁹¹ Announcement of a permanent ceasefire by ETA in 2011. Translated by the author.

sentences in the present tense referring to the exact moment the statement was being produced in instances such as:

- *“We are now living a new political change. Therefore, we have a historic opportunity before us”.*
- *“It is time to glance at the future with a sense of hope but this also signifies that there need to be responsible and brave efforts”.*

Moreover, the text also exhibits the use of the possessive in the third person as denoted in the following utterance: *“our recognition and respect go to all of them”*, thus signaling a collective sense when expressing an idea. Ultimately, it appears that with a view to attaining a more “harmless” perception by the receptors the statement is aimed at, ETA speaks from an emotive point of view in most parts of the text using nouns loaded with sentimental connotations such as “recognition”, “hope”, “effort” or, “will”.

In general, at a descriptive level (i.e., first dimension) ETA recognizes the historical importance of this determination and expresses gratitude towards its supporters who have born hardships in the pursuit of Basque autonomy. Furthermore, the text underscores the significance of engaging in dialogue to reach a consensus. Expression attesting to these assertions are some of the already cited “historic opportunity” or the need for “responsible and brave efforts”.

In terms of discursive practice (i.e., interpretation), the text targets the Spanish and French Governments, the International Community, and the Basque population.

Let us illustrate the above with tangible examples:

ETA addresses the government of Spain and France by means of the following utterance: *“ETA calls on the governments of Spain and France to open a process of direct dialogue with the sole goal of resolving the consequences of the conflict that would lead to an overturn in the armed confrontation”*.¹⁹² With this argumentation, ETA is addressing the actions the parties involved with need to take up on in order to address the dispute and here the organization addresses the Basque population in that *“every step, every milestone will also be a result of the Basque peoples’ efforts”*.

¹⁹²Announcement of a permanent ceasefire by ETA in 2011. Translated by the author.

In terms of the International Community, ETA addresses it by considering that *“the International Conference held recently in Euskal Herria is an initiative of great political significance. The agreed resolution brings together the ingredients for a comprehensive solution to the conflict and has the support of broad sectors of Basque society and the international community”*.¹⁹³

Finally, in terms of direct appellation at the Basque population, the organization says that *“ETA would also like to call on Basque society to get involved in this process of solutions until a scenario of peace and freedom is built”*.¹⁹⁴

In terms of discursive practices, the statement emphasizes the significance of ETA as a conscientious participant striving for an equitable and democratic resolution to the issue at hand, and the organization achieves this purpose since it upholds a sense of identity and solidarity by recognizing the sacrifices made by its members.

Now, to conclude the exploration of the dimensions, the social practice (i.e., explanation) dimension would help us interpret the decision of permanently ceasing armed activities as a reaction to multiple factors that led to a changing environment in the Basque region. In this regard, a pivotal factor would be the declining endorsement of aggressive methodologies among the supporters of Basque nationalism. This was mainly determined by the fact that the Basque society underwent a generational transition and encountered heightened exposure to global perspectives, thus making the use of violence less tolerable as a mechanism to attain political objectives.

Another crucial element was the impact of global pressure since it ultimately influenced ETA’s decision-making process. Over time, the global community had increasingly expressed disapproval of ETA’s use of violence and had called upon the organization to pursue a nonviolent resolution to the Basque conflict. Hence, the statement should, in a way, be perceived as an endeavor to conform to the standards set by the global community. Overall, the statement also unveils the presence of power dynamics through ETA’s style of addressing the addressees in

¹⁹³Announcement of a permanent ceasefire by ETA in 2011. Translated by the author.

¹⁹⁴Announcement of a permanent ceasefire by ETA in 2011. Translated by the author.

the statement since ETA somewhat tried to depict itself as an equal participant in the peace process by advocating for the importance of respecting the will of the Basque population.

4.3.2. The Announcement of ETA's Dissolution in 2018

We have now reached the final stage of this analyses of statement. The text produced in 2018 represents the last ever written manifestation of the Basque terrorist organization's ideas and engagement with the different actors it was involved with throughout the different stages of the armed conflict. Thus, the text outlines ETA's decision to disband its organizational framework and terminate all political endeavors. Let us remember that we can no longer speak about armed endeavors since the organization announced the permanent cessation of armed activity about 7 years prior to this last statement.

Having a glance at the first dimension of analysis, we can see that the vocabulary used accentuates the group's historical trajectory and their tactical decision to generate novel prospects for the Basque conflict. These fundamental principles of ETA's identity are reflected in key terms such as "Euskal Herria" (i.e., Basque Country), "independent", "non-patriarchal, and "continued struggle".

The text is characterized by a preponderance of declarative sentences that serve to highlight the organization's point of view and decisions regarding the political landscape it was faced with at that time. The recurrent utilizations of the causative verb "to make" (e.g., "*ETA has made this historical decision*") underscores the assertive stance that ETA attributes to itself in influencing political events. Furthermore, the text utilizes the future tense to forecast its perspective on the Basque conflict after dissolution, indicating a distinct deviation from its prior undertakings "*ETA will not be anymore an actor manifesting political perspectives*".¹⁹⁵

The text then exhibits a cohesive narrative structure, commencing with an introspection of ETA's past, advancing towards its resolution to disband, and culminating in a forward-looking perspective for the times ahead (e.g., *ETA was born in a period when Euskal Herria was under*

¹⁹⁵Announcement of ETA's dissolution in 2018. Translated by the author.

the tyranny of Francisco Franco's Regime).¹⁹⁶ This utterance serves the functions to contextualize the decision of the organization to dissolve within the wider historical trajectory of the Basque movement for self-determination. The initial dimension of the critical discourse analysis elucidates how the linguistic characteristics of the text convey ETA's determination to disband, while concurrently underscoring the organization's past significance and forthcoming ambitions within the Basque separatist movement.

Regarding the second dimension dealing with discursive practice, we may of course mention that text was produced by ETA and its intended audience includes the people of the Basque Country, as well as the governments of Spain and France, and the International Community. The statement implies that ETA aims to convey its resolution to disband and terminate its political endeavors not solely to its adherents, but also to its adversaries and external actors. ETA seeks to underscore the importance of its resolution by catering to diverse audiences, while also endeavoring to influence the public discourse pertaining to the Basque conflict.

The presence of intertextuality is discernible within the text via allusions to antecedent events and statements, such as ETA's announcement in 2011 to terminate their use of armed conflict (e.g., *"this is our decision after we announced the cessation of armed activity"*).¹⁹⁷ At the same time, the statement aims to provide a contextual framework for the present decision in light of the organization's perception of a new political approach. Additionally, the text utilizes specialized vocabulary and concepts that align with a wider dialogue surrounding movements for autonomy and governmental conflicts, thus contextualizing ETA's endeavors within a more comprehensive account of sovereignty and self-determination. A good example is the use of expressions such as "a novel historical period", "amassing of resources", and "entitlement to determine" conjure up the persistent endeavor for self-governance and validation that serves as the foundation of the Basque dispute since its inception.

The text exhibits implicit intertextual connections to the historical and political circumstances surrounding the Basque conflict. The reference to "the consequences of the

¹⁹⁶Announcement of ETA's dissolution in 2018. Translated by the author.

¹⁹⁷Announcement of ETA's dissolution in 2018. Translated by the author.

conflict” implies the enduring effects of ETA’s use of force on Basque society, including the significant number of casualties (over 800 casualties) and the unresolved matter of convicted political dissidents. Through its recognition of these repercussions, ETA exhibits a level of introspection and accountability for its prior conduct, while concurrently underscoring the imperative for a holistic resolution of the strife that effectively redresses these enduring concerns.

The utilization of expressions such as “accumulation of forces”, “enhancement of popular power”, and “agreements among different actors” elicits a language of opposition and solidarity, that links up the Basque movement to other worldwide endeavors for independence and self-determination. Along these lines, it shall not be ignored that the International Conference to Promote the Resolution of The Conflict in the Basque Country seven years prior to ETA’s final statement, had a noteworthy influence on the overall demise of the organization since this international collaborative strategy prioritized harmony and consensus among heterogeneous stakeholders.

Finally, with regards to the third dimension (i.e., explanation), ETA’s announcement of its disintegration should be understood as the final shift towards a non-violent resolution. The statement overall indicates the Basque territory was experiencing a wider transformation, where the use of violent tactics no longer had credit, and this was motivated also by the aforementioned cooperation of stakeholders in the international arena. Overall, the statement showcases the presence of power dynamics once again since ETA acknowledges the involvement of multiple parties as something necessary towards a positive solution. Therefore, ETA is ultimately renouncing to belligerent nature and stepping aside the political panorama.

Last but not least, the statement acknowledges the ongoing struggle for self-determination and national identity of social actors, including ex-militants of ETA and citizens of Euskal Herria by pointing at the hardships endured by individuals affected by the conflict, such as those who have passed away, been convicted, or forced to leave their homes (i.e., exile).

4.3.3. Explanation of the Discourses

In the two preceding sections, we have dissected the discourse employed by ETA when producing their two final statements. It is worth noting that this time, we have rather appreciated a discourse based on the evident decay of the organization and the texts overall lack the aggressivity the previous statements were endowed with.

On the one hand, the 2011 statement places significant emphasis on the discourse of peace and political dialogue, as ETA declares a permanent ceasefire and advocates for direct negotiations with the governments of Spain and France. The discourse used in this statement denotes a noteworthy deviation from the organization's prior dependence on armed conflict, thus indicating a tactical transition towards peaceful political involvement. Likewise, this statement conveys a discourse centered on accountability and historical consciousness by recognizing the imperative to confront the underlying factors of the dispute and honor the desires of the Basque populace in determining their destiny.

On the other hand, the 2018 statement reveals a discourse centered on closure and transformation, as ETA declares its dissolution and cessation of political endeavors. This statement indicates that the organization acknowledges the impracticality of armed conflict and instead advocates for the pursuit of its objectives through democratic means and cooperation with a variety of stakeholders. The statement at the same time conveys a discourse centered on unity and persistence, underscoring the perpetual endeavor for autonomy and cultural distinctiveness that surpasses the confines of the group in question. Finally, this statement establishes a connection between the dissolution of ETA and the wider Basque cause in that the former believes that, even if armed activity is over, the conflict will persist in diverse forms and circumstances but that they will not be involved anymore in any political activity and "rely" on the relevant political actors to take on the appropriate measures that were not addressed in an effective manner throughout the entire time ETA was operative.

Upon comparison of the two statements, it is evident that the discourse surrounding peace, dialogue, and democratic engagement gained significant prominence in ETA's rhetoric. This transition comes determined by the evolving political outlook in the Basque region, where the employment of violent tactics had lost its legitimacy, and discussions between different stakeholders have emerged as the favored approach to resolving conflicts (e.g., the Aiete Declaration).

In closing this final section of analysis, we shall not forget about the three theoretical perspectives we deemed useful for the illustration of the intricacies perceived in this case study on Spain. Thus, the comprehension of the ideologies and incentives that influenced ETA's discourse and conduct in the statements produced by ETA in 2011 and 2018 can be better labelled or looked at through the application of Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism theoretical frameworks.

The primordialist perspective is evident in ETA's statements, as the organization places great emphasis on the historical and cultural dimensions of the Basque struggle. This highlights the enduring nature of the Basque identity and the necessity for self-determination. For example, the 2018 statement alludes to a "secular conflict" and expresses the aspiration for a "reunified, independent, and *Euskaldun* (i.e., Basque language/Euskera speaking) Euskal Herria". Thus, this is a great example on a primordialist interpretation of the Basque conflict, which posits that it is fundamentally entrenched in historical, linguistic, and cultural factors.

In contrast, the perspective of instrumentalism would argue that the declarations made by ETA can be perceived as tactical (i.e., instrumental) maneuvers aimed at accommodating the evolving political landscape and preserving the organization's significance. The 2011 statement's advocacy for a lasting cessation of hostilities and political dialogue may be interpreted as a *instrumentalist* attempt to acquire recognition and leverage in talks with the Spanish and French authorities. Conversely, in the 2018 statement we see a focus on prioritization of the dismantling of ETA's structures and transition towards a new political phase. And this can be interpreted as a strategic reaction to the declining support for armed conflict and the increasing significance of nonviolent, democratic involvement.

Lastly, the constructivist perspective would place its focus on the group's endeavors to influence the Basque identity and movement via its discourse. The conflict is presented differently in the 2011 and 2018 statements. The former suggests that democratic processes and dialogue can lead to a resolution, while the latter highlights the importance of solidarity and unity among diverse actors in achieving a common goal for the Basque Country. Through the utilization of such discourses, ETA contributed to the continuous formation of the Basque identity and its corresponding political ambitions.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This thesis focused on the analyses of discourses enshrined in the statements produced by ETA over three different decades. In order to facilitate a broader understanding of the issue of terrorism and ETA, this thesis started with a literature review navigating the understanding of ETA's terrorist activity as explored by academics in the field. Then, it provided a literature review on the historical background of the organization with a view to setting the foundations of key concepts surrounding the study of ETA's terrorism. Next, the three theoretical approaches that sprung to mind when coming up with this topic of study were explained in terms of their limitations and how they could prove useful in terms of aiding the process of labelling intricacies that had to stand out when reading statements based on the selected methodology. In terms of the latter, this thesis decided to employ a systematic yet malleable methodology as Norman Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis is since it proved quite illustrative and relatively organized in its application.

At the same time, there were two clearly defined research questions that now need an answer. Those research questions were, on the one hand (*RQ1*) how does the notion of ethnic identity evolve over time and relate to violent conduct and ideology in the statements produced by ETA? And, on the other hand, (*RQ2*) derived from *RQ1*, how is the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse? At a first glance, these two questions seem to have an obvious answer now that the study is concluded. But the point of the study was never to argue whether identity and ideology are relevant in terms of violent conduct. The actual purpose of the study was to illustrate how or in which instances the resort to those concepts could justify the inferences made from statements, while at the same time supporting those inferences with practical illustrations (i.e., quotes) from the different texts. Let us remember that discourse analysis is more of an interpretive approach than it is a set of pre-conceptions written on stone. In line with this, this qualitative method proved useful when dissecting specific content from the different statements when it came to illustrating an idea, and at the same time those statements were expected to exhibit some differences among one another.

First and foremost, these 6 statements were significantly shaped by the prevailing historical, political, and cultural contexts reproduced throughout each specific period. This way

we can put forward the argument that the ceasefires were influenced by external factors like the Irish peace process and external pressure, but the end to those ceasefires was due to ETA's internal disagreements and the deep-rooted idea the organization had that the political actors' efforts to offer a satisfactory to the conflict was always sterile. Likewise, changes (or rather evolution) of sentiments within Basque community and persistent counterterrorism measures by the Spanish and French governments, regardless of the parties in office, had a stark impact on the permanent ceasefire and subsequent disintegration of the terrorist organization.

The organization's discourse was supported by various emphasis on ethnic identity, political strategy, and the social construction of reality, according to what Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Constructivism theories posited. Primordialism was evident in the fervent and long-lasting connection to Basque identity and historical grievances, while instrumentalism was evident in the deliberate use of violence and ceasefires as bargaining tools. Regarding Constructivism, it proved its applicability in showcasing the evolving narratives and the organization's adaptation to the shifting societal norms and global perspectives.

Furthermore, it is clear from these statements that the terrorists placed a relevant emphasis on the ongoing struggle for authority and power dynamics by means of the fight they contended with the Spanish and French governments. The ceasefires and their subsequent terminations frequently aimed to impose demands, exercise control, or set preconditions on the grounds that all the political efforts made by important stakeholders were never enough to satisfy ETA's demands. The permanent ceasefire statement in 2011 and the statement regarding the organization's dissolution in 2018, however, denoted a positive turn in favor of dialogue, the building of a consensual solution, and the acknowledgement of the Basque people's agency in deciding their own future.

In that same line of argumentation, the discourse and outcomes of the last two statements were significantly shaped by the influence of international events and initiatives. The International Conference to Promote the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque Country, and various mediators facilitated communication and offered frameworks for conflict resolution, which ultimately led ETA's to make the decision to end its armed struggle and dissolve as a revolutionary (terrorist) organization.

Now, in order to adequately and systematically address the research questions, it is imperative to refer to the evolution of ethnic identity in the statements elaborated by ETA, which after all determined the organization's use of rhetoric.

Thus, the answer to **RQ1** is that initial statements exhibited a significant focus on a primordialist perspective, featuring allusions to past injustices, the uniqueness of Basque customs and language, and the incessant necessity for autonomy. The linguistic expressions employed, and the way utterances were formulated frequently aimed at depicting the Basque population as a cohesive unit confronting protracted oppression and exclusion, therefore justifying the utilization of force as a strategy of resistance and self-defense.

With the passing of time, however, the discourse of the organization underwent a transformation towards a more constructivist perspective, recognizing the plurality of opinions present within Basque society and the dynamic nature of the global context. The evolution of ETA's stance is palpable in the 2011 permanent ceasefire and the 2018 dissolution declarations, where the group placed significant emphasis on the value of dialogue, consensus-building, and the Basque people's agency in being the masters of their own fate. The evolution from a strictly primordial standpoint to a more intricate comprehension of identity enabled the entity to partake in a wider array of tactics, encompassing peaceful approaches to attaining its goals.

Also, in terms of RQ1 and the understanding of ethnic identity related to violent conduct and ideology, it is necessary to mention that, for example the ceasefire of 1998 devoted so much of its extension to being descriptive - in terms of historical and cultural context - and didactic in the sense of explaining why they used violence as a means to defend an ideology. This is most likely so since this was the first (indefinite) ceasefire ETA announced and their probable belief that so much contextualization and thoroughness needed to be provided in order for the message – and the reasons behind it - to be “understood”. On the contrary, both ceasefires in 2006 and 2011 are more concise in content and assertive, provided we should understand that ETA already provided its view on the armed conflict in the statement concerning the first ceasefire in 1998.

Throughout the 6 statements that were analyzed, we can perceive how ETA at all times refers to a common vocabulary and concepts targeting the same collective of people: Basque population, thus forging a sense of unity in terms of identity and ideology. Violent conduct, however, does not always seem to be evidently relatable to the other two notions in the ceasefire

statements. Why is it so? Well, we may argue that in the ceasefires it is normal that the tone is more conciliatory overall rather than promoting aggressive means. The latter, however, are more latent when it comes to the statements dealing with the end of the ceasefires that had been previously declared. But this is expected since those statements that provide a resumption or armed conflict are heavily loaded with emotive components in vocabulary denoting frustration, resentment, and discontent with the situation.

Since **RQ2** deals with the manner in which a multifaceted understanding of violence is embedded in ETA's discourse, we can assert that this understanding is closely intertwined with the organization's evolving ethnic identity and ideological underpinnings. At the outset, for example, the employment of violence was presented as a valid and indispensable reaction to the oppression endured by the Basque people, strengthening the notion of an inherent and fundamental understanding of identity and the imperative need to safeguard it. This strategy was employed to rationalize the actions of the organization and garner support from its adherents. Thus, ETA victimizes itself and often refers to the "heroic actions" of everyone who has defended the cause during the time the armed conflict lasted. This is visible in that ETA uses nouns such as "violence", "oppression", and "repression" in the statements analyzed but perceiving itself as the victims. It is as well important to mention that ETA never mentions the victims it killed.

Nevertheless, as the discourse moved towards a constructivist perspective, the organization acknowledged the significance of dialogue and consensus-building, leading to a transformation in the understanding of violence. Subsequent statements, - namely the permanent ceasefire of 2011 and the dissolution of the organization of 2018 -, thus recognized that the employment and defense of armed conflict was no longer a feasible or permissible approach to achieving Basque self-determination provided that the context was not appropriate anymore. Paradoxically, the shift in the understanding of violence also signified that the utilization of violent means had become rather obstructive to the premises the group defended since its inception and therefore hindered the wider ambitions of the Basque population. Consequently, this comes to say that ETA stopped promoting itself as an actor responsible to attain the independence for the Basque Country but that moving forward it would delegate these responsibilities to other political actors.

All in all, this thesis fulfills its goal in terms of being pragmatic and illustrative in the assertions made as well as implementing the chosen methodology for analysis of the statements that were available for consultation. The statements that have been put to analysis in the present work displayed an evolution in terms of the conceptualization of ethnic identity. Hence, evolving from a primordialist stance to a more constructivist one, while also showcasing some instrumentalist considerations. The shift from a primarily aggressive discursive practice to a more conciliatory one based on mutual cooperation is indicative that wider sociopolitical transformations are salient when it comes to shaping the resolution of a conflict. However, until an illustrative analysis as the one conducted in this paper is performed, everything remains nothing but vague assumptions.

5.1. Limitations of the Work and Future Areas of Research

Despite this thesis delivers on what it promises to do, and as ambitious as the original intent was, it is certainly important to be academically critic and provide oneself with self-criticism in the form of identified shortcomings and limitations to the research that could pave the way for complementary studies on the same topic.

The first limitation is rather self-explanatory. This work had to be only articulated around the written statements that were available for consultation. Overall, during its period of activity, ETA produced content that was released through different means of communication i.e., newspapers, television, leaflets, etc; however, those have unfortunately not been able to be retrieved due to the difficulty in terms of access and availability. I searched every database and made use of the few contacts I still keep across different national newspapers and means of communication back home in hopes to find a full account of the statements produced by ETA during the time it was operative, but I was unsuccessful. Could we speak about censorship in this case, perhaps? Whichever the answer is, this more likely is a different topic of discussion and, maybe, potential subject of research.

Another criticism I expect to be met with is the lack of comparative analysis since I decided to isolate my research solely to the Spanish case. More than a hindrance, nonetheless, I

see it as a potential opportunity future researchers could use since this is a pragmatic attempt to apply theoretical approaches and methodology to a targeted geographical area. In line with the present self-criticism, scope matters since, had I had more access to sources, the nuances found would perhaps have been richer. Consequently, if research is decided to be taken up on based on the present paper, it may be necessary for the future researcher to revisit and reinterpret my inferences.

Finally, in terms of future avenues of research, I would propose a comparative analysis of broader discourses found in ethnonationalist movements in the international arena, and the subsequent construction of the notion of “Other” in International Relations. A researcher interested in terrorism could also explore post-conflict, peacebuilding methods and strategy. If the researcher decides to further explore the topic of ETA, I would recommend looking for quantitative data from official research institutes that could already provide the researcher with available datasets. Lastly, I believe that, on the same quantitative fashion, it would be interesting to explore the public opinion’s attitude towards terrorism both at a domestic and international levels and the quantifiable efficacy of the adopted legal framework adopted in reaction to terrorism (i.e., counter-terrorist policy).

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Annex 1. List of Statements

Statement	Format and availability	Date	Language	Party in office
The Ceasefire in 1998	Online. Web. Accessed 20 Jan 2023, https://www.filosofia.org/his/h1998eta.htm	September 18, 1998	Spanish	<i>Partido Popular</i> – People’s Party
The End of the Ceasefire in 1999	Online. Web. Accessed 31 Jan 2023, https://elpais.com/diario/1999/11/29/espana/943830004_850215.html	November 28, 1999	Spanish	<i>Partido Popular</i> – People’s Party
The Ceasefire in 2006	Online. Web. Accessed 12 Feb 2023, https://www.hoy.es/pg060325/actualidad/espana/200603/23/RC-eta2.html?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fev.turnitin.com%2F	March 22, 2006	Spanish	<i>PSOE</i> – Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party

Statement	Format and availability	Date	Language	Party in office
The End of the Ceasefire in 2007	Online. Web. Accessed 16 Feb 2023, https://cadenaser.com/ser/2007/01/10/espana/1168390216_850215.html?int=masinfo	June 6, 2007	Spanish	<i>PSOE</i> – Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party
The Permanent Ceasefire in 2011	Online. Web. Accessed 24 Feb 2023, https://www.larazon.es/historico/891-texto-integro-del-comunicado-de-eta-del-cese-definitivo-de-su-actividad-armada-SLLA_RAZON_405892/	October 10, 2011	Spanish	<i>PSOE</i> – Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party
The Announcement of ETA’s dissolution in 2018	Online. Web. Accessed 6 Apr 2023, https://elpais.com/politica/2018/05/03/actualidad/1525349964_905287.html	May 3, 2018	Spanish	<i>Partido Popular</i> – People’s Party

Annex 2. Statements

The Ceasefire of 1998

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, a través de este comunicado, quiere hacer llegar a la sociedad vasca la lectura que hace de la situación y el momento histórico que vive nuestro pueblo, y la decisión que en consecuencia ha tomado.

Después de dos largas décadas se nos abre en Euskal Herria, otra vez, la posibilidad de dar un paso decisivo en el camino de la independencia. Creemos que nos encontramos ante una posibilidad parecida a aquellos complicados años vividos hace veinte, en aquellos tiempos de la «transición». Pero esta vez debemos conseguir que la fase política ante la que nos encontramos sea la de la soberanía, haciendo realidad ahora la oportunidad perdida en aquella época.

ETA comienza con esperanza esta nueva fase política. Llenos de esperanza, sobre todo, porque creemos que los errores efectuados en aquella época serán una buena enseñanza; y llenos de esperanza también porque creemos que el trabajo, la experiencia y las fuerzas acumuladas desde entonces nos dan el suficiente apoyo para que esta nueva fase política sea fructífera.

Sin embargo, el tener una nueva posibilidad y enfrentarnos a esa posibilidad llenos de esperanza no nos debe cegar. No debemos cerrar los ojos ante la situación que sufre Euskal Herria. Porque se vea donde se vea la situación que vive nuestro pueblo es grave. Los vascos estamos bajo la dominación de dos Estados poderosos. Esos dos Estados han estado utilizando toda su maquinaria, armada, política, económica y cultural, en deshacer los instrumentos que Euskal Herria disponía para en el futuro ser un pueblo libre. Por lo tanto, esa tozuda actitud de España y Francia ha dejado graves heridas. Y no será fácil obtener nuestra libertad. Porque tampoco se manifiesta la mínima señal de voluntad de respetar de modo pacífico la palabra de Euskal Herria por parte de los Estados, aún siendo vecinos, nos toman por enemigos y como sociedad a dominar.

Por encima de todos los ataques y dificultades, Euskal Herria ha llegado a las puertas del siglo XXI guiado por la pasión de la lucha, nutrida por la esperanza de vivir. No como un pueblo libre, pero sí teniendo abiertas todas las posibilidades de ser un pueblo libre. Hasta ahora, hemos enseñado al mundo que somos capaces de mantener lo nuestro. En adelante, por lo tanto, demostrémosle que tenemos la necesidad, el derecho, la voluntad y la habilidad suficiente para organizar nuestra propia casa según nuestra elección.

Antes de seguir adelante creemos muy importante detenernos en dos preguntas y responderlas. Por una parte, ¿cómo ha llegado Euskal Herria a las puertas del año 2000 teniendo abierta la posibilidad de ser un pueblo libre?; y por otro, ¿por qué a las puertas del año 2000 Euskal Herria no es todavía libre?

La primera pregunta tiene una respuesta rápida. Rápida y llena de orgullo. Sin olvidar ni despreciar para nada el esfuerzo de los ciudadanos vascos de la historia anterior, en lo que respecta a los últimos veinte años, estamos ante una nueva expectativa de lograr nuestra libertad gracias a la generosa dedicación de miles y miles de valientes hombres y mujeres vascas.

Esta afirmación tiene una intensa presencia en los corazones y las mentes de los militantes de Euskadi Ta Askatasuna. No estaríamos donde estamos sin la dedicación de los militantes y ciudadanos muertos a consecuencia de acciones armadas de los enemigos; sin el sufrimiento de los militantes y ciudadanos que han soportado la cruel tortura y la continuada humillación en los cuarteles y comisarías; sin el esfuerzo de los militantes y ciudadanos que han trabajado y trabajan a favor de nuestra cultura, lengua, entramado económico y tradiciones sociales, en el trabajo callado, peligroso y comprometido de todos los días, haciendo caso omiso a las leyes extranjeras en vigor, tanto españolas como francesas, y huyendo de las garras de la rutina; sin la capacidad de resistencia de militantes y humildes ciudadanos que con total dignidad han clarificado y clarifican el camino de la libertad de Euskal Herria desde las mazmorras de las cárceles teniendo a sus espaldas la carga de condenas de cárcel de miles y miles de años.

A todos esos ciudadanos se dirige en estos momentos nuestro honroso recuerdo, ya que estamos de nuevo ante un momento esperanzador e histórico porque se dedicaron sin cesar a abrir los numerosos cerrojos de la gigantesca puerta que cerraba el camino a un futuro libre. ¡Porque si todos ellos no hubiesen tomado ese fundamental compromiso, Euskal Herria habría llegado a su fin!

Sin embargo, la segunda pregunta necesita una respuesta amarga. Porque, en momentos tan importantes como los que ahora vivimos, exige analizar lo que cada cual ha hecho. Tomar en cuenta no sólo lo que hemos adelantado en todos estos años, sino también lo que hubiéramos podido adelantar. El camino propuesto por la izquierda abertzale hace veinte años, es decir, avanzar en la democracia vasca, no logró el consenso. Y en consecuencia, el mundo abertzale se dividió en dos vías: una que partía de aceptar «de facto» la legislación impuesta por España; y la otra la vía que promovía la ruptura con España, aceptando como legítimos todos los instrumentos que posee un pueblo para defenderse, para hacer frente a esa imposición.

La primera vía, la del autonomismo constitucional, supuso el agravamiento de la división interna de Euskal Herria, que estaba a punto de salir de la dictadura de Franco. Si antes estábamos bajo dos estados, después se nos ha añadido la división autonómica. Y todos los logros lo han sido como consecuencia de las luchas o como cebo para aplacar las luchas. Ese primer paso ha llevado a Euskal Herria cada vez más hacia España y Francia, condenándolo a vivir mirando a Madrid y París. En vez de decidir nosotros mismos, nos ha obligado a solicitar el consentimiento de los extranjeros, y a los españoles que entre nosotros estaban retraídos a enorgullecerse. A fortalecer las nuevas fronteras interiores en la misma Euskal Herria, distanciándose los ciudadanos vascos entre ellos, y algunos, por citar el caso de los cipayos, aceptando y protegiendo la legislación española, a actuar contra otros ciudadanos.

Los que avanzamos por la segunda vía, por encima de todas nuestras deficiencias y errores, hemos mantenido vivo el proyecto de una Euskal Herria unida, libre y euskaldun, confiando en la capacidad de los ciudadanos para el trabajo y la creación. Hemos trabajado a favor de superar la división institucional y entre estados, para traer a nuestro pueblo la paz basada en la justicia y los derechos democráticos. Así, la apuesta por crear un proyecto social propio en Euskal Herria ha dado sus frutos. Uno, que queremos citar

ahora, el de enseñar la esterilidad y la ceguera de ese autonomismo disgregador. Y no es poco, teniendo en cuenta el gigantesco esfuerzo que ha hecho España para que el autonomismo fuese la tumba de Euskal Herria.

Los que con entusiasmo y buena voluntad avanzaron en el camino del autonomismo disgregador se acaban de dar cuenta que, además de quedarse ni arriba ni abajo en la escalera que hay que subir peldaño a peldaño, esa escalera no lleva a la libertad de Euskal Herria. Por nuestra parte, los que hicimos la apuesta decidida por Euskal Herria estamos dispuestos a superar ese cercano pasado y avanzar juntos en un nuevo proyecto lleno de ilusión.

¿Por qué estamos ante una nueva oportunidad?

Aquí tenemos nuevamente a Euskal Herria en las puertas de su futuro. Pero no es quizás mera voluntad pensar que estamos a las puertas de una nueva situación? ETA, después de sopesar debidamente las perspectivas que se destilan de la nueva situación, ofrece en las próximas líneas el resultado de la decisión:

Por un lado, gracias a la lucha de estos años, los nuevos estratos de la sociedad se han acercado a la opción de la independencia. Mayoritariamente creemos que hay que resaltar el desarrollo vivido en los últimos seis años. Pues hemos pasado de una situación de resistencia a una de construcción. Queremos destacar que la «mejor situación» que vivimos es fruto de la buena intención de muchos militantes de la izquierda abertzale y de la lucha organizada que reside en un sector de la sociedad. A la hora de alcanzar los últimos objetivos de nuestra lucha, lo hecho en los últimos años no ha sido sino un pequeño paso de lo que queda por hacer. Que nadie piense que los quehaceres, los métodos de trabajo, etc, no han de mejorarse. Pero de vez en cuando y aunque la Izquierda abertzale no es amiga de alabanzas y halagos, ayuda el ratificar que la labor acometida merecía la pena y que hemos encaminado por buena senda la lucha por la libertad.

Por otro lado y en esta situación de cambio tiene mucho que decir la socialización de la «Alternatiba Demokratika», que ha sustituido a la ya obsoleta «Alternatiba KAS». Mediante esta nueva propuesta de paz se ha afianzado un nuevo concepto dinamizante

y básico en los últimos tres años, la necesidad de dar la palabra al pueblo, de que recupere la palabra y de respetar esa palabra. Hemos sido capaces una vez más de transmitir que el conflicto que Euskal Herria mantiene con España y Francia es básicamente político. Además de poner en un brete la legitimidad «democrática» de los mandatarios franceses y españoles, hemos labrado un concepto positivo en nuestra parcela, el de la democracia vasca. Los mínimos democráticos que cualquier demócrata ha de defender para superar el conflicto (Autodeterminación y Territorialidad) se han establecido ya después de hacernos con una situación democrática, abriendo así las condiciones más apropiadas para desarrollar cada cual su proyecto. Y la izquierda abertzale ha desbrozado el camino para desarrollar su propio proyecto político y social.

El siguiente cambio que denotamos en esta nueva situación es el derrumbe de las estructuras institucionales divisoras impuestas por los dos Estados que nos oprimen como traba en el camino de la libertad. El marco institucional que sigue vigente en Euskal Herria se ha agotado. Las fuerzas imperialistas francesas y españolas se han convertido en únicos defensores acérrimos del «status quo» institucional. El Estatuto de la Moncloa, las mejoras del Fuero Navarro y el desconocimiento de los territorios vascos dependientes de Francia no tienen suficiente efectividad como para responder a los deseos y necesidades de los ciudadanos vascos. Ahora, los que han defendido la potencialidad de esas estructuras institucionales aceptan que por esa vía no es posible llegar a la independencia, coincidiendo en eso con el análisis que sólo ha defendido la izquierda abertzale. Y por eso, hemos abierto las puertas por primera vez para poner en camino un sólo proceso para la solución de Euskal Herria.

Al lado del agotamiento institucional tenemos el agotamiento de la «Política de Pactos» impuesta durante los últimos diez años por los españoles para destruir el proyecto a favor de la independencia y desfigurar la realidad política y social. Esta política de pactos, en vez de dar algo, sólo traerá el alargamiento del sufrimiento a Euskal Herria.

Los que apostaron a favor del autonomismo que estamos citando (en los partidos abertzales EA y PNV, el sindicato ELA y muchos sinceros abertzales) se han dado cuenta de la esterilidad de esa vía. Esta vez, han mostrado su voluntad de avanzar por una nueva

vía. Huyendo de la encrucijada con respecto a España y avanzando en el interior del camino de Euskal Herria, a favor de Euskal Herria valientemente, y rompiendo de una vez las dependencias y ataduras con España. España/Francia o Euskal Herria es la elección. Y por lo menos de palabra, se muestra la clara voluntad a favor de Euskal Herria. En esta nueva encrucijada todos debemos jugar con la valentía y coherencia que exige este momento histórico.

Los poderes fácticos de España y Francia no tienen alternativas políticas intermedias para Euskal Herria. No por lo menos sin la nueva colaboración de partidos como EA y PNV. Entre el «autonomismo disgregador» de ayer y hoy y la Soberanía basada en la Autodeterminación y la Territorialidad de mañana, no hay espacio nuevo, si no es durante otros veinte años, por ejemplo, inventando una nueva falsa y estéril oferta que evitaría un verdadero arreglo. Pero como hemos dicho, eso exige la necesaria colaboración de EA y PNV.

«Europa» se está construyendo como espacio político, social y económico, centro de decisión de los temas importantes, sobrepasando Madrid y París va alejándose de las estructuras estatales de donde dependemos directamente. Y sin un proyecto efectivo de independencia, la dependencia y desestructuración que vive Euskal Herria será cada vez más grave. Más todavía, si estamos sin alternativas ni instrumentalización frente a los gigantescos proyectos de «unidad» cultural y económica a nivel mundial.

Por último, se ha convertido en opinión mayoritaria que la voluntad de paz, que es mayoría en Euskal Herria, vendrá asociado a un arreglo político razonable. La voluntad de paz, la necesidad de arreglo, el diálogo, la negociación, son comentarios de todos los días, con acciones de ETA o sin ellas. ¡Qué diferencia con aquella «voluntad aséptica de paz» de hace algunos años! En la sociedad vasca ha prevalecido el hambre y la sed de un acuerdo de paz que debe dar soluciones políticas y prácticas. Esa necesidad no sólo la ha creado el no «acabar» con ETA; sobre todo es principal consecuencia de mostrar día a día la razón de ser política del conflicto, de resurgir distintas luchas y de poner un «¡stop!» firme y digno al ataque que sufre Euskal Herria, por parte de la sociedad vasca.

Resumiendo, en pocas palabras la situación diríamos lo siguiente: En Euskal Herria destacan dos proyectos, uno que cree en el proceso de construcción de Euskal Herria, que dice que es posible una sociedad más justa y más enraizada, y que hay que luchar por ella; por el contrario la otra, la que quiere dar continuidad al proceso de integración, desaparición y desculturización empezado hace largos siglos en nombre de España y Francia, que ve Euskal Herria como parte del mundo sin personalidad. En Euskal Herria hay un conflicto lingüístico y educativo, una manera de entender la vida, la voluntad de construir un modelo socioeconómico distinto a través de las relaciones laborales. Ese conflicto es el conflicto de siempre, lo que ha cambiado es la posibilidad de dar pasos nuevos en ese conflicto, la situación nueva que viene de un cambio en la correlación de fuerzas.

Y ese es el reto en este momento histórico, cómo poner en marcha entre todos el proyecto de Euskal Herria. Si hay voluntad y claridad entre los que se han puesto en la dirección política de este pueblo, en la sociedad vasca hay suficiente fuerza y entendimiento para avanzar.

¿Hacia dónde se dirigirán las fuerzas?

Aquí tenemos de nuevo a Euskal Herria a las puertas de su futuro. Llenos de esperanza, vemos este momento histórico que estamos viviendo, siendo conscientes de la grave situación que vive Euskal Herria y con gran preocupación. Porque el eje central del futuro depende del sí o el no como respuesta a una gran pregunta.

¿Hacia dónde se dirigirán las fuerzas abertzales esta vez? El hecho de ser sabedor de nuestra cercana historia nos lleva a pausarnos en preguntas y preocupaciones. Consecuentemente, o desgraciadamente, hace veinte años las posturas de los partidos se arrodillaron frente al Estado español. En nombre del miedo del «sonido de las espadas», como se nos ha ido diciendo, en la Moncloa y en la Zarzuela decidieron dividir aún más Euskal Herria, seguir negando a través de las armas el derecho de autodeterminación que propiamente tenía, y un largo etcétera. Desde entonces la Izquierda Abertzale ha defendido la soberanía de Euskal Herria con coherencia dejándose la piel, mientras las demás fuerzas caían cada vez más inmersas en la red que las relacionaba con España.

En ese sentido también, miramos con optimismo hacia el futuro. Porque la podredumbre y escasez de los frutos recogidos en los últimos veinte años no son comparables al esplendor de los que podemos recoger en el camino hacia la soberanía. Han sido años largos, pero es satisfactorio ver que al final también los demás se den cuenta de cuáles son los pasos que se deben seguir hacia la independencia. La libertad del futuro siempre será mejor que dependencia actual.

Eso no quiere decir que el proceso que tenemos en frente no vaya a ser difícil y peligroso. El reto al que nos enfrentamos nos exige responder con total sinceridad y honor a todos los abertzales, izquierdistas y demócratas; más aun si somos conscientes de la postura ciega e intransigente de España y Francia.

Es nuestro profundo deseo, por tanto, que la Izquierda Abertzale no vuelva a quedarse sólo en esa labor que es de todos. Pero, aunque fuera así, nosotros seguiremos hacia delante con la alegría y las mismas ganas que hasta ahora, siguiendo al camino mostrado por miles de vascos y gudarís.

El reto al cual nos enfrentamos:

Hemos citado, al comienzo de este comunicado, que el reto de la fase política a la cual nos enfrentamos y su mayor cualidad debe ser que Euskal Herria en su totalidad, y sobre toda frontera autonómica y estatal, logre su soberanía. Implantar la base. Porque no nos encontramos en el mismo sitio que antes, no sólo vamos a «recuperar» la oportunidad perdida hace veinte años, sino a dar un paso de mayor importancia, debemos poner las columnas de ésta Euskal Herria del futuro, el reto que nos corresponde es situar claramente el lugar en el cual debe ser construido nuestro hogar. Porque no existen dos o tres Euskal Herrias. Es única, con sus distintas cualidades y realidades, lingüísticas, sociales, económicas, mucho más las tradicionales. ¡Porque eso es un pueblo!

Tomando en cuenta todas esas distintas realidades entre todos los progresistas, demócratas y abertzales, nos toca hacer un trabajo sin antecedentes en la construcción de un nuevo marco político que abarque dentro de sí a toda Euskal Herria. Y en ese oficio emprendedor todas las sociedades efectivas de toda Euskal Herria tienen lugar, palabra y labor.

El logro de la soberanía no es compatible con la política interesada y partidista que acarrearán la fortaleza de España y Francia. Sin dudarlo, ha de llegar a su fin cualquier tratado o punto de colaboración con España, los acuerdos ocultos que hacen que nuestro pueblo siga siendo económicamente dependiente.

Nuestra primera labor ha de ser comenzar a «pensar» como Euskal Herria. Entre todos. E interiorizar cual es nuestra verdadera situación económica, lingüística, cultural y social. Y después, apoyar proyectos comunes que tomen en cuenta a toda Euskal Herria, tanto en lo que a derechos lingüísticos se refiere, como a la organización territorial, como asimismo, en lo que a desarrollo económico y derechos sociales se refiere. Las fuerzas partidarias de la soberanía de Euskal Herria deben alcanzar un mínimo de convenios.

Y en la misma proporción, será trabajo de todos hacer frente a quienes son y seguirán siendo enemigos de este proyecto. Es la hora de la persecución social que los que se han mostrado contra las armas tanto han citado. Al principio decíamos que no podemos cerrar los ojos ante la situación que vive Euskal Herria. En Euskal Herria, una gran parte de la sociedad vive un «estado de excepción», con el pretexto de ir en contra de una opción política determinada que está condicionando el futuro de Euskal Herria. Un proyecto acordado como el que estamos apoyando, nos traerá consigo las contrariedades de los estados español y francés. Sin duda alguna. Necesitaremos valor para ello. Necesitaremos valor para desde decir que en nuestro pueblo sobran las armas que se nos hacen extranjeras, a afrontar y llevar adelante todos los trabajos mayores o menores necesarios para expulsarlas. Ya es hora, por tanto, de lo que se haga, bien o mal, de darnos cuenta desde la crítica de lo que no se hace, y sumergirnos en esa labor.

Qué no es este paso de ETA:

Antes de citar nuestro llamamiento y decisión, por la confusión que han podido producir las especulaciones, expectativas y declaraciones de los últimos días, nos es imprescindible definir qué no es esta fase política frente a la cual nos encontramos. Porque no es para nada correcto que nadie se engañe con los juegos de palabras de los políticos profesionales.

El fin no es la españolización que ha dirigido en esta década Ardanza dentro de su plan parcial de «pacificación», y mucho menos dar a esa «pacificación» imagen política, para la «conciencia tranquilizante» y el autoengaño de la Izquierda Abertzale. En este momento es necesario ser aún más valiente. Porque nos encontramos frente a una situación totalmente nueva.

Engañarán a la sociedad, aquellos que tras este gran paso de Euskadi Ta Askatasuna busquen dentro del marco actual la «normalización» y la falsa paz. Eso será tan mentira como que el problema de Euskal Herria es que ETA hace frente con armas al adversario. No habrá paz si no se basa en los derechos de Euskal Herria. Porque ésa es la razón de ser del conflicto que vivimos: El hecho de que a Euskal Herria se le nieguen sus derechos, de que ni siquiera seamos dueños de nuestras decisiones a la hora de organizar la sociedad como queremos.

ETA ha dado su gran paso, ahora corresponde a los demás ir hacia delante en ese espacio que se ha creado, y valientemente además. Hace poco lo hemos dicho, no es indefinición, ni un cálculo egoísta, ni un tiempo partidista: Es Euskal Herria lo que tenemos en juego.

Comunicado:

Teniendo todo esto en cuenta, ETA, formación socialista revolucionaria para la liberación de la nación, hace público este comunicado ante la sociedad vasca, y en general, lo notifica ante la opinión pública internacional:

1. Que aun siendo imprescindible el trabajo y el esfuerzo de todos los ciudadanos en la creación de Euskal Herria, hasta ahora solamente la Izquierda Abertzale ha atendido a ese aspecto, con una postura clara y profunda. Hasta hoy hemos tenido que andar un

camino duro, largo y complicado, a cambio de implicarnos en esa labor, soportando represión y todo tipo de ataques. Pero gracias al trabajo hecho hoy en día tenemos una oportunidad incomparable de a partir de ahora compartir la responsabilidad y los esfuerzos, para la creación de conformidad en las colaboraciones y nuevos lugares de encuentro en el camino de la independencia de Euskal Herria. ETA, por su parte, quiere dar a conocer su total voluntad para seguir hacia delante en ese camino de conformidad, y comunica que espera la ejecución de los esfuerzos y voluntades similares.

2. En ese sentido, ETA hace un llamamiento público a partidos políticos, sindicatos, puntos de unión culturales, organizaciones sociales y en general, a todos los ciudadanos vascos, para que la fase política que tenemos delante sea la de soberanía y se tomen para ello los debidos pasos y compromisos.

3. Entre todos los pasos el de mayor importancia hoy en día es poner en camino de superación las divisiones institucionales y estatales; dando desde hoy pasos efectivos para la creación de una institución soberana y de única consistencia que acoja dentro de sí a Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Lapurdi, Zuberoa y Nafarroa.

4. Tras la unión de distintas fuerzas políticas y sociales que tengan el mismo fin, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna toma el compromiso público de promover y proteger, en el proceso de creación de esa suprema institución estructural, y aplaudir toda aquella acción que pretenda superar las actuales divisiones institucionales y estatales. Y por tanto, pedimos el mismo esfuerzo, intento y compromiso, a quienes hasta ahora se han mostrado hostiles y reacios a la hora de acercarse, o simplemente lejos de esa labor.

5. Las fuerzas que apoyan la creación y los derechos democráticos de Euskal Herria, deben hacer dinámicas y lograr convenios sobre las necesidades de lo fundamental y minoritario.

6. El proyecto popular de Euskal Herria choca de frente con los de España o Francia. El conflicto de tantos siglos nos ha demostrado claramente a los vascos que no existe lugar intermedio para nosotros. Seguir adelante como vasco o desaparecer como pueblo al

servicio de España y Francia. Por tanto, consideramos imprescindible que quienes muestren conformidad con los anteriores puntos, rompan sus convenios y relaciones con quienes apoyan y defienden las intenciones dominantes de España y Francia. Es hora de apostar total y claramente a favor de la soberanía. Es hora de romper las relaciones y los convenios con aquellas fuerzas políticas cuyo fin sea hacer desaparecer Euskal Herria. Por tanto, es hora de dejar para siempre cualquier convenio que exista con partidos o estructuras institucionales y de represión que tengan como fin la destrucción de Euskal Herria y la creación de Francia y España.

7. Teniendo en cuenta la situación de Euskal Herria, las posibilidades existentes y el deseo de dirigirnos hacia la soberanía, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna anuncia por su parte, la intención de dar comienzo a una paralización general e indefinida de sus acciones armadas, reduciendo sus quehaceres a los comunes trabajos de abastecimiento, mantenimiento estructural y al derecho únicamente defensivo en los posibles enfrentamientos. Esta tregua general comenzará el 18 de Setiembre de 1998.

8. Siendo el fin de todos que se respeten las decisiones tomadas en libertad, los derechos y la realidad de Euskal Herria, y siendo fin y deseo de Euskadi Ta Askatasuna que la sociedad vasca acoja sobre sí misma la responsabilidad de conseguir la independencia, con la total esperanza de que la respuesta que recibamos sea de la misma medida que el paso que hemos dado, anunciamos que los acontecimientos y pasos que desde este momento en adelante se den marcarán la continuidad de esa tregua.

GORA EUSKADI ASKATUTA!

GORA EUSKADI SOZIALISTA!

JO TA KE INDEPENDENTZIA LORTU ARTE!

Euskal Herrian, 1998ko irailean

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna.

The End of the Ceasefire in 1999

ETA quiere dar a conocer su análisis y decisión a la sociedad vasca. Debido a la gravedad de la decisión, intentaremos socializar las razones del proceso político lo más concisa y claramente posible.

En septiembre del año pasado Euskal Herria estaba a las puertas de una nueva situación, porque los mecanismos que pusieron España y Francia como obstáculos fracasaron:

- El Estatuto de La Moncloa y el Amejoramiento Navarro no saciaban la sed de libertad de los vascos; al mismo tiempo, en Lapurdi, Baja Navarra y Zuberoa el deseo de un reconocimiento institucional era palpable.

- La estrategia de aplastamiento fracasó: la Izquierda Abertzale independentista ha mantenido la opción de una Euskal Herria Libre, por encima del más despiadado castigo que se ha hecho contra una fuerza política: las mesas político-militares de Madrid, Ajuria Enea e Iruña no planteaban alternativas a la Alternativa Democrática de la Izquierda Abertzale.

- El deseo de paz basado en una solución política correcta era palpable en la sociedad vasca.

- Y, finalmente, las diferentes fuerzas políticas (PNV, EA, ELA), que en 20 años se conformaban y colaboraban con lo poco acordado por España y Francia, empezaron a mostrar el deseo de cambiar la situación.

En una palabra, opinamos que la opción de cambiar el viejo marco jurídico-político que ha estado en vigor 20 largos años, que venía de la reforma de la dictadura, y de dar pasos consistentes en favor de un marco jurídico-político basado en la democracia de Euskal Herria, había madurado.

Ese contexto conllevó a que ETA propusiera un acuerdo a PNV y EA hacia el verano de 1998.

Según ese acuerdo, los firmantes adoptaron el compromiso de dar pasos fructíferos en favor de una institución única y soberana que tendría en su seno a toda Euskal Herria. En ese sentido, tomaron el compromiso de lograr un acuerdo mínimo en favor de los derechos e intereses de Euskal Herria y de las necesidades e intereses básicos de los ciudadanos vascos.

Por otro lado, PNV y EA adoptaron el compromiso de romper completamente las relaciones con las fuerzas españolas que se mostraban como enemigos de Euskal Herria; y ETA anunciaría la interrupción sin límites de las acciones. Ese acuerdo fue secreto y, según él, se fijaba una fase de observación de cuatro meses.

El PNV y EA aceptaron y firmaron el acuerdo. Y, tomando como base esa firma, ETA encauzó la iniciativa que ha estado en vigor durante este año. Las máximas virtudes de la Iniciativa han sido:

- La ilusión y el empuje nuevos que han surgido en la sociedad vasca.*
- El Acuerdo firmado en Lizarra el 12 de septiembre por fuerzas políticas, sociales y sindicales, identificando la raíz política del conflicto que hay entre Euskal Herria y España/Francia y proponiendo una metodología totalmente democrática para su solución.*
- La creación de la primera institución nacional de los tiempos modernos que acoge a toda Euskal Herria.*

En una palabra, manifestar la naturaleza política del conflicto y diseñar la solución del mismo, activando las diferentes fuerzas de la sociedad vasca.

En los primeros meses de la Iniciativa se dio un cambio básico en la situación política. Pero, tras cuatro meses, las cosas empezaron a cambiar, la Iniciativa entró en un impasse. En nuestra opinión, las razones de ese cambio son las siguientes:

- El terremoto político que surgió de los buenos resultados de la Izquierda Abertzale en las elecciones de octubre y que la primera reunión de Udalbiltza subrayara la viabilidad de la Iniciativa encendieron la luz roja de los Gobiernos español y francés y, en consecuencia, la reacción represiva, detenciones y torturas y el asesinato del burukide Ttotto.

- La estrategia marcada por los intereses partidistas del PNV y EA con vistas a las elecciones de junio.

La presión ejercida por España y Francia a PNV y EA trajo consigo el intento de cambiar la naturaleza de la propia Iniciativa: intentando cambiar, que de ser un proceso de construcción nacional pasara a ser un proceso de paz sin contenido, intentando ahogar a la izquierda abertzale en la "normalidad" política y con la intención obstinada y maligna de que la interrupción "provisional" de las acciones de ETA pasara a ser "definitiva" e irreversible.

Durante el pasado verano ha sido notable la paralización y el olor a podredumbre del proceso.

ETA tenía, y tiene, la firme intención de llevar hasta el final el proceso cuando encaminó la Iniciativa el año pasado. Por eso procedimos a identificar las dificultades y los problemas de la Iniciativa:

- Por un lado, la naturaleza secreta del propio acuerdo, que provocaba confusión con el contenido y la función del Acuerdo de Lizarra-Garazi y, al mismo tiempo, traía consigo una identificación perjudicial.

- Como ya se ha dicho, el intentar desfigurar el contenido de lo firmado por PNV y EA e intentar vender frente a la sociedad el proceso que tendría que ser para la construcción nacional como un "proceso de paz" y como un proceso para la desactivación de los mecanismos de lucha para la defensa de la Izquierda Abertzale.

Al fin y al cabo, en opinión de ETA, se manifestaba en los que caminaban en el proceso la falta de voluntad para llevar a la masa crítica que hay en Euskal Herria a una situación democrática y para activar del todo las fuerzas.

Al analizar el punto en el que estaba el proceso y al ver que no se cumplía lo firmado el pasado verano (ni en los pasos eficaces ni en la total ruptura respecto a las fuerzas españolas), deliberamos dejar "en el aire" la interrupción de las acciones que propusimos en septiembre del 98 y así se lo hicimos saber a PNV y EA en el verano del 99, hace ya cuatro meses largos.

Quedó claro que la situación estaba en un impasse, pero no se proponía ninguna propuesta política efectiva. PNV y EA daban importancia a la gestión habitual, adhiriéndose al marco estatutario de La Moncloa, y no a las iniciativas encaminadas a poner en marcha el nuevo marco jurídico-político.

Al ver que no aparecía ninguna propuesta política ni estrategia concreta en ese momento en el que se jugaba el futuro de Euskal Herria, ETA subrayaba la necesidad de nuevas propuestas políticas y puso la suya sobre la mesa.

En pocas palabras, ésta es la propuesta política que ETA da por buena: que los ciudadanos de Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Lapurdi, Nafarroa y Zuberoa elijan libre y democráticamente un Parlamento constitucional soberano en una circunscripción única. Esto es, que el voto de cada ciudadano vasco valga lo mismo en toda Euskal Herria.

En ese contexto, y en el de la firmeza y estabilidad de las diferentes instituciones que se pondrán en vigor desde ese proceso constitucional, la resolución de ETA sería la de dejar la lucha armada, utilizada en la defensa de los derechos de Euskal Herria.

Muchos agentes políticos, sociales y sindicales de Euskal Herria han tenido noticia de esa propuesta. Aún más cuando los textos de debate de ETA han caído en manos de la Policía y han llegado a medios de comunicación y direcciones de los partidos. Así las cosas,

ETA propuso a PNV y EA llegar a un nuevo acuerdo que se basaba en ese planteamiento democrático. Ni PNV ni EA han dado respuesta concreta todavía.

Es mucho lo que Euskal Herria ha avanzado en estos años en el camino de la libertad. Como siempre, las claves de ese avance han sido la lucha y el trabajo silencioso, el hacer frente con todos los medios de los que disponemos a esa opresión que tenemos encima.

En cambio, en este último año, hemos recuperado la costumbre de hablar y trabajar entre los abertzales y tenemos que seguir en ello, pero, mientras tanto, España y Francia siguen con su ocupación, ataque y dominio represivos; y las fuerzas que hay en Euskal Herria no están suficientemente activadas para hacer frente a ese ataque y seguir en el camino de la construcción.

Así las cosas, el proceso que comenzó el año pasado está sufriendo un claro bloqueo y se está pudriendo. Y, en ese contexto, ETA ha tomado la decisión de reactivar la lucha armada respondiendo al compromiso tomado en defensa de Euskal Herria.

Habrá que hacer más iniciativas concretas y más fuerza que este año para llevar a cabo el proceso iniciado el año pasado, y hacemos un llamamiento a todos los ciudadanos vascos para que sigan en el trabajo de la construcción, haciendo frente al enemigo y reforzando pilares básicos de nuestro pueblo.

La interrupción de las actividades que estaba en vigor desde el 18 de septiembre de 1998 ya ha acabado. A partir del 3 de diciembre de 1999 está en manos de ETA transmitir a los grupos operativos cuándo empezar a hacer las actividades".

The Ceasefire of 2006

ETA, organización socialista revolucionaria vasca de liberación nacional, desea mediante esta Declaración dar a conocer la siguiente decisión:

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ha decidido declarar un alto el fuego permanente a partir de las 00:00 horas del 24 de marzo de 2006.

Reflexión de ETA:

El objetivo de esta decisión es impulsar un proceso democrático en Euskal Herria para que, mediante el diálogo, la negociación y el acuerdo, el Pueblo Vasco pueda realizar el cambio político que necesita.

Superando el actual marco de negación, partición e imposición hay que construir un marco democrático para Euskal Herria, reconociendo los derechos que como pueblo le corresponden y asegurando de cara al futuro la posibilidad de desarrollo de todas las opciones políticas.

Al final de ese proceso los ciudadanos y ciudadanas vascas deben tener la palabra y la decisión sobre su futuro, dando así una solución democrática al conflicto.

ETA considera que corresponde a todos los agentes vascos desarrollar ese proceso y adoptar los acuerdos correspondientes al futuro de Euskal Herria, teniendo en cuenta su pluralidad y totalidad.

Los Estados español y francés deben reconocer los resultados de dicho proceso democrático, sin ningún tipo de injerencias ni limitaciones. La decisión que los ciudadanos y ciudadanas vascas adoptemos sobre nuestro futuro deberá ser respetada.

Llamamiento de ETA

Hacemos un llamamiento a todos los agentes para que actúen con responsabilidad y sean consecuentes ante el paso dado por ETA.

Es tiempo de compromisos. Todos debemos asumir responsabilidades, para construir entre todos la solución democrática que el Pueblo vasco necesita. Es el momento de tomar decisiones de calado, pasando de las palabras a los hechos.

ETA hace un llamamiento a las autoridades de España y Francia para que respondan de manera positiva a esta nueva situación y para que no pongan obstáculos al proceso democrático, dejando de lado la represión y mostrando la voluntad de dar una salida negociada al conflicto.

Finalmente, hacemos un llamamiento a los ciudadanos y ciudadanas vascas en general y a los militantes de la Izquierda Abertzale en particular, para que se impliquen en este proceso y luchen por los derechos que como Pueblo nos corresponden.

Compromiso de ETA

ETA muestra su deseo y voluntad de que el proceso abierto llegue hasta el final, y así conseguir una verdadera situación democrática para Euskal Herria, superando el conflicto de largos años y construyendo una paz basada en la justicia. Nos reafirmamos en el compromiso de seguir dando pasos en el futuro acordes a esa voluntad y de seguir luchando hasta lograr los derechos de Euskal Herria.

La superación del conflicto, aquí y ahora, es posible. Ese es el deseo y la voluntad de ETA. -

En Euskal Herria, marzo de 2006

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

E.T.A.

The End of the Ceasefire in 2007

ETA, organización vasca socialista revolucionaria para la liberación nacional quiere comunicar a los ciudadanos vascos la lectura que realiza sobre la situación política, cuando han pasado nueve largos meses desde que dimos a conocer el alto el fuego de acciones amadas.

¿Es que acaso tienen intención de que se pudra el proceso? En la reflexión que comunicamos a la sociedad en agosto, nos hacíamos esta misma pregunta. Por desgracia, el proceso que tiene que traer la superación del conflicto de largos años está en situación de bloqueo, en una situación grave que no avanza ni para adelante, ni para atrás.

Esa situación de bloqueo tiene responsables directos. El Gobierno de España y el PSOE son quienes han generado la actual grave situación poniendo obstáculos al proceso democrático de forma permanente. En lugar de acordar las bases de un nuevo marco político que traiga la superación del conflicto y que reconozca los derechos de Euskal Herria, han establecido como tope del proceso los límites de la Constitución española y de la legalidad.

Los dirigentes del Gobierno español deberían saber que no podrán construir un proceso de paz manteniendo los límites políticos que han generado el conflicto. Por el contrario, la reivindicación de esos límites políticos que garantizan la opresión política, militar y económica de Euskal Herria, no servirá sino para alimentar el conflicto y extender tiempos nuevos de enfrentamiento. Hasta ahora el Gobierno de España y los responsables del PSOE se han empeñado en esa postura.

Junto con esas prácticas políticas que justifican la opresión de Euskal Herria, el Gobierno de España no ha dado pasos todavía para anular sus mecanismos de guerra y de represión. El Gobierno de España continúa sin cumplir sus compromisos de alto el fuego.

ETA durante este último año, ha dado pasos firmes para que el proceso avance. A comienzos de 2006 vimos morir a los militantes Roberto e Igor en las cárceles de exterminio de España; ETA, sin embargo, en la consideración de que se daban condiciones políticas suficientes en Euskal Herria, generó un terremoto político al poner en marcha el alto el fuego de sus acciones. A cambio, sin embargo, el Gobierno de España se puso a la verificación del cese de las acciones. Se limita a publicar filtraciones sobre el proceso y las conversaciones. La presencia y la presión policial se extienden. Sigue vigente la Ley de Partidos, en contra de los principios jurídicos. Continúan siendo permanentes los ataques contra la actividad de la izquierda abertzale. La actividad política, la actividad de los agentes populares es imposible en Euskal herria. Han sido prohibidas más de cien actos, acompañados de multas, detenciones y palizas. La tortura, más de cien detenciones de manos de distintas fuerzas policiales, desde que ETA comunicó la detención de sus acciones. El mantenimiento de las medidas de excepción contra el Colectivo de Presos Políticos Vascos, la creación de la doctrina Parot, el secuestro de 185 presos políticos vascos y los que son recondenados para toda la vida. O la crueldad sin límites mostrada por el fiscal en el juicio contra Iñaki de Juana, al que han condenado a morir con la intención de utilizarlo como moneda de cambio. Esta es la crónica cruel de una estrategia de represión que no ha parado en ningún momento a lo largo de estos nueve meses. Por si fuera poco, el Gobierno español, encabezado por el ministro del Interior y el Fiscal Jefe, se muestra arrogante al contar estos sucesos.

Al mismo tiempo, también queremos denunciar la postura mostrada por el PNV de Imaz en los últimos meses, pues se ha dedicado a alimentar la línea del Gobierno de España contra la izquierda abertzale. PSOE y PNV han actuado con la misma perspectiva sobre el proceso y en la misma estrategia, siendo los presupuestos que han firmado y los proyectos económicos gigantescos el hilo fundamental que los une en tal camino.

Asimismo, a los agentes o líderes que se dedican a repetir críticas en torno al "tutelaje" de ETA o realizando denuncias oportunistas ante las expresiones populares mejor tendrían si se revolvieran ante el sistema de represión no democrático contra Euskal Herria y

los movimientos populares. Los invitamos a dejar de lado el flujo de palabras que no nos llevan a ninguna parte y a trabajar en el camino que nos llevará con determinación a la verdadera democracia.

Realizamos un llamamiento a los agentes políticos que pueden tener la tentación de recuperar las fórmulas policiales y políticas sin salida y que han fracasado. Las fuerzas democráticas deberían dejar a un lado al PP-UPN y a la derecha fascista del Estado español y atreverse a realizar la segunda reforma del Estado Español. Han pasado muchos años desde que se dedicaron a utilizar la vía represiva contra Euskal Herria y no ha traído más que sufrimiento para Euskal Herria y para el Estado Español.

Ante esta situación, la solución al conflicto está en la propuesta política que ha repetido sin cesar la izquierda abertzale y que se ha hecho mayoritaria en la sociedad vasca: el reconocimiento de los derechos nacionales de Euskal Herria, respetar lo que decidan los ciudadanos vascos y superar la división territorial que se impone actualmente. Para ello, es preciso acordar y construir para Euskal Herria un nuevo marco jurídico-político fundamentado en el derecho de autodeterminación y en la territorialidad.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna ve por ese lado la posibilidad de desarrollar el proceso democrático, mediante un acuerdo político que reúna los derechos y los mínimos democráticos que se le deben a Euskal Herria. Esto es lo que los partidos políticos y los agentes sociales deberían conformar y trabajar. Eso podría cambiar la situación actual abriendo paso a paso la oportunidad de abrir un nuevo camino hacia la solución del conflicto.

Estos son hoy en día las oportunidades que están abiertas en Euskal Herria. Hasta ahora el PSOE ha intentado cerrar en falso estas opciones, dejando que el proceso se vaya pudriendo y llevándolo a un camino sin salida. Está en la mano de los vascos y de los agentes hacer presión popular para no permitir que la oportunidad abierta por los responsables políticos se pierdan según sus cálculos e intereses, peleando por las oportunidades por encima de los peligros. El PSOE para ello tiene que atender el fundamento político en el que está arraigado el conflicto antes de que se haga tarde.

Las decisiones y las respuestas de ETA dependerán del comportamiento del Gobierno de España. Queremos mostrar claramente nuestra voluntad a favor del proceso, de fortalecerlo e impulsarlo; pero mientras se mantenga la situación actual de ataque contra Euskal Herria, tal y como dimos a conocer en el comunicado de agosto, ETA tendrá toda la determinación para responder.

ETA reivindica la acción con una bomba que produjo grandes daños ocurrida el 30 de diciembre de 2006 en el aeropuerto de Barajas de Madrid. Aparte de querer expresar firmemente que el objetivo de la acción armada no era causar víctima alguna, queremos denunciar que no se desalojase o vaciase el parking en el largo plazo de una hora, tras tres llamadas explicando el lugar exacto de la colocación del explosivo. Así pues, queremos hacer llegar nuestro más sincero pésame a las dos personas, Carlos Alonso Palate y Diego Armado Estacio, que perdieron la vida en esta acción, así como a sus familias, amigos y al pueblo de Ecuador.

Por otro lado, nos reafirmamos ante los vascos en los objetivos que presentamos en el comunicado del día 22 de marzo. Por ese camino y mediante pasos firmes se le abrirán nuevas puertas al futuro de Euskal Herria.

Finalmente, ETA quiere decir que todavía sigue en pie el alto el fuego permanente que comenzó el 24 de marzo a las cero horas.

Gora Euskal Herria Askatasuna! Gora Euskal Herria Socialista!

Euskal Herria, enero de 2007 Euskadi Ta Askatasuna E.T.A

The Permanent Ceasefire in 2011

ETA considera que la Conferencia Internacional celebrada recientemente en Euskal Herria es una iniciativa de gran trascendencia política. La resolución acordada reúne los ingredientes para una solución integral del conflicto y cuenta con el apoyo de amplios sectores de la sociedad vasca y de la comunidad internacional.

En Euskal Herria se está abriendo un nuevo tiempo político. Estamos ante una oportunidad histórica para dar una solución justa y democrática al secular conflicto político. Frente a la violencia y la represión, el diálogo y el acuerdo deben caracterizar el nuevo ciclo. El reconocimiento de Euskal Herria y el respeto a la voluntad popular deben prevalecer sobre la imposición. Ese es el deseo de la mayoría de la ciudadanía vasca.

La lucha de largos años ha creado esta oportunidad. No ha sido un camino fácil. La crudeza de la lucha se ha llevado a muchas compañeras y compañeros para siempre. Otros están sufriendo la cárcel o el exilio. Para ellos y ellas nuestro reconocimiento y más sentido homenaje.

En adelante, el camino tampoco será fácil. Ante la imposición que aún perdura, cada paso, cada logro, será fruto del esfuerzo y de la lucha de la ciudadanía vasca. A lo largo de estos años Euskal Herria ha acumulado la experiencia y fuerza necesaria para afrontar este camino y tiene también la determinación para hacerlo.

Es tiempo de mirar al futuro con esperanza. Es tiempo también de actuar con responsabilidad y valentía.

Por todo ello, ETA ha decidido el cese definitivo de su actividad armada. ETA hace un llamamiento a los gobiernos de España y Francia para abrir un proceso de diálogo directo que tenga por objetivo la resolución de las consecuencias del conflicto y, así, la superación de la confrontación armada. ETA con esta declaración histórica muestra su compromiso claro, firme y definitivo.

ETA, por último, hace un llamamiento a la sociedad vasca para que se implique en este proceso de soluciones hasta construir un escenario de paz y libertad.

The Announcement of ETA's dissolution in 2018

ETA, organización socialista revolucionaria vasca de liberación nacional, quiere informar al Pueblo Vasco del final de su trayectoria, después de que su militancia haya ratificado la propuesta de dar por concluidos el ciclo histórico y la función de la Organización. Como consecuencia de esta decisión:

- ETA ha desmantelado totalmente el conjunto de sus estructuras.*
- ETA da por concluida toda su actividad política. No será más un agente que manifieste posiciones políticas, promueva iniciativas o interpele a otros actores.*
- Los y las exmilitantes de ETA continuarán con la lucha por una Euskal Herria reunificada, independiente, socialista, euskaldun y no patriarcal en otros ámbitos, cada cual donde lo considere más oportuno, con la responsabilidad y honestidad de siempre.*

ETA nació cuando Euskal Herria agonizaba, ahogada por las garras del franquismo y asimilada por el Estado jacobino, y ahora, 60 años después, existe un pueblo vivo que quiere ser dueño de su futuro, gracias al trabajo realizado en distintos ámbitos y la lucha de diferentes generaciones.

ETA desea cerrar un ciclo en el conflicto que enfrenta a Euskal Herria con los estados, el caracterizado por la utilización de la violencia política. Pese a ello, los estados se obstinan en perpetuar dicho ciclo, conscientes de su debilidad en la confrontación estrictamente política y temerosos de la situación que provocaría una resolución integral del conflicto. Por contra, ETA no tiene miedo alguno a ese escenario democrático, y por eso ha tomado esta decisión histórica, para que el proceso en favor de la libertad y la paz continúe por otro camino. Es la secuencia lógica tras la decisión adoptada en 2011 de abandonar definitivamente la lucha armada.

En adelante, el principal reto será construir un proceso como pueblo que tenga como ejes la acumulación de fuerzas, la activación popular y los acuerdos entre diferentes, tanto para abordar las consecuencias del conflicto como para abordar su raíz política e histórica. Materializar el derecho a decidir para lograr el reconocimiento nacional será clave. El independentismo de izquierdas trabajará para que ello conduzca a la constitución del Estado Vasco.

Esta última decisión la adoptamos para favorecer una nueva fase histórica. ETA surgió de este pueblo y ahora se disuelve en él.

GORA EUSKAL HERRIA ASKATUTA! GORA EUSKAL HERRIA SOZIALISTA!

JO TA KE INDEPENDENTZIA ETA SOZIALISMOA LORTU ARTE!