Università ta' Malta/George Mason University

ETA's Difficult Dissolution: Intergroup conflict and narratives

by

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ABSTRACT

The present dissertation is a study of the nationalist group ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) and their narratives. The role of history, politic, and sociology in the Basque conflict is extensively researched in order to grasp the ins and outs of the conflict. The research then questions the expression of socio-identity theories and concepts in ingroup's narratives, and studies how identity-based factors of influence such as kinship ties, chosen trauma, grievances, salience of identity and belief in social change are expressed in the testimonies of ETA members and Basque nationalism founders. Finally, the research focuses on compassionate reasoning: its effects and its role in conflict-supporting narratives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The realization of this dissertation would not have been possible without the help of exterior forces. First of all I would like to thank my dissertation advisor Pr. Karina Korostelina for her time and energy helping me get through the process. I also thank all the professors who have taught in the conflict resolution master's program this year (2021/2022). Their encouragements and wisdom have brought me a long way. I would also like to show my gratitude to all members of the student cohort, as the solidarity and wit of my colleagues have sparked fascinating questioning and reflections in our conversations.

I am grateful for the University of Malta and the George Mason University creating this multidisciplinary international program and providing the opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds and origins to share academic knowledge and individual's perspectives and critics. Finally, I am in the debt of our cohort's advisor Zuzana Farrugia for all the hard work she has done in favor of the student body.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

I was born and raised in Biarritz, an old gentrified Basque town on the French side of the border. In my childhood, kids would define themselves as Basque, proudly defending the flag even though none of us spoke a word of Euskara (the Basque language). It felt as though we were the descendants of a myth. In our collective imaginary, the Basque people were the souls of the mountain and the ocean. We shared vague but passionate ideas of our Basque history. We stitched whispers with imagination to create a coherent narrative. To this day, most of us still firmly believe in the stories. It begins with the existence of an ancient society, strongly tied to the land and the ocean. Our ancestors, we tell ourselves, were tough hard-working people, as well as sensitive and perceptive individuals. They had leather skins, iron muscles, and tender hearts. They were known for their authority, strength, and poesy. They had access to the wisdom of the elements and the animals through deep empathetic connections. This animistic myth rocked our childhood. We also had some ideas on our most recent and dramatic history: the Basque conflict. It was a story made of conquest, violence, and freedom. It started with the Spanish and French armies conquering and dividing our land for its resources. But, as the strong sensitive Basque people were untamable, the Spanish burned the women and girls for witchcraft while the sailors were at sea. Spain tried to disappear Basqueness in repression and assimilation. The Basque people started politically organizing and fought for their autonomy. But Franco's dictatorship came into power in Spain, and the Basque Country still had not gain its independence. In the 1950s, a small group made of students decided that enough was enough. Stating that their ancestors had failed them and that time for independence was long overdue, they promised to defend their land with their lives. They called themselves Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). They fought with all their might and many people died. The Spanish sent la Guardia Civil who could torture and kill anyone. The violence came from everywhere, and no-one was safe. The Basque did not get

independence, but they were recognized as an autonomous part of Spain. The conflict slowly burned down, and peace was once more. We wouldn't completely support ETA's actions and had many discussions on the role of violence, but we were 100% anti Spanish forces. We were not even Spanish, but the fear and hatred of the Guardia Civil was very real to us. These stories and the feelings that came with it, although once a strong part of my identity, are now the reason I wish to research the Basque conflict and the role of narratives in an academic and impartial manner.

The veil between stories and reality is thin and blurry. Keep in mind that the conflict which animated our hearts and minds did not occur in our official country (France); that we all grew up in the most gentrified city of the French side of the Basque Land; that we don't speak the language - neither do our parents; and that we did not know what we were even supposed and allowed to identify to. This myth was an anchor, reassuring us that even though our socio-cultural status was unclear we were the descendants of the Basque people, and that was immutable. We needed to be *something,* so we used our foundational narratives to define ourselves in a way we preferred. Narratives were an instinctive way to find our identity because it reflected our shared moral, values, and beliefs. As we grew up, we got access to detailed history books and documentaries on the Basque conflict. Although we educated ourselves on the facts and nuances of the conflict and the Basque society at the time, our emotional attachment to the original narrative stayed strong. This indicates to me that stories do not only hold great emotional power over an individual, but they especially do over groups, when they are shared and tied to the socio-identity, values, and beliefs of this group.

If kids' tales are adults' foundational myths in the boogie city of Biarritz, I wonder how ETA members' stories and history framed their struggles. Whether it be how they narrated the Francist repression, how their counteractions were affected by their narratives, or how historical events such as the death of Franco affected their stories. More than anything, I wonder how they adapted their narratives from encouraging violent fights to promising a permanent cease-fire and disbanding the organization. In order to answer this interrogation, I aim to analyze how the group's narratives and underlying mechanisms interact with historical events and how that affected the conflict globally. What social identity mechanisms define group narratives that explain ETA's difficult dissolution?

To answer this question, the dissertation is divided in six chapters. The first one is the present introduction. It is followed by a theoretical discussion surrounding the concepts of socio-identity group and intergroup conflict. The third chapter is devoted to the case study of the Basque conflict, and the fourth one is the methodology chapter. The fifth chapter is the literature review. Finally, the sixth chapter is made of the conclusion and recommendations.

In the theoretical discussion, I have chosen to focus on intergroup conflict theory. I will begin by analyzing ingroup mechanisms and factors of influence in order to get a clean understanding of ingroup dynamics. Large group identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Horowitz 1985; Volkan 1998; Korostelina 2007, 2013) and intergroup conflict theory (Korostelina 2007; Gurr 2011) give us the concepts necessary to apprehend the behavior of a violent ethno-nationalist's group. After getting a general idea of the mechanisms of large identity groups, I will focus on conflict narratives and its subsequent characteristics. My first assumption is that these narratives contain indicators of the salience of identity of the ingroup (and so in our case of the salience of identity of ETA members), their belief in social change, their kinship ties, chosen traumas and glories, and grievances. Indeed, narratives are not only the way we talk about conflict, but also emotional worlds of comfort and fear that can trap people in stories and modulate their perception of reality. My second assumption is that an ingroup's behavior and narratives can be understood using Korostelina's 4Cs model[1]: intergroup comparison, competition, confrontation, and counteraction, and how these social dynamics have major influence over the evolution of intergroup relations. Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut construct a conflict-supporting narratives[2] theory which is also central to our research as it is the building tool of our analysis. Studying these concepts will give us a sense of the dynamics of intergroup conflict. Finally, my third assumption is that narratives and intergroup relations in a conflict are cycles, loops

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[1] Korostelina, Karina. *Social Identities and Conflict: Structure, Dynamics and Implications*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007.
[2] Bar-Tal, Daniel, Neta Oren, and Rafi Nets-Zehngut. "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives: A general framework", *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 5   (September 2014): 662-675. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24557448

of violence perpetuating violence. I suspect compassionate reasoning to play a role in the breaking of patterns of violence, as it is known to have transformative effects on violent cycles[3].

In my study of the Basque case in Chapter 3, I will use a variety of sources and data, coming from murals to historical testimonies. First, I will use quantitative datasets to frame the Basque conflict and demonstrate its effects on the Basque people's security (deaths and torture rates), as well as its effect on the Basque culture (repression and blooming). I will then use qualitative data to get a deep understanding of ETA members' perceptions of the conflict. I will start with history books which share a political and sociological approach to the conflict in order to give us a global framing and understanding. Focusing on the end of ETA through the grand scheme of its existence is in my opinion the best way to understand what happened as well as getting a clear vision of the patterns in the timeline. This is why the socio-political history of the conflict is so important to this research. I will then focus on testimonies coming from ETA members, and thus interpret it in a way that may give us clarity on their perceptions, reasoning, and emotional state. I will go on using murals to understand in depth the ethno-political aspect of the conflict. ETA did break its patterns and ended up disbanded. The most important result of this research will be understanding how ETA dealt with the clash between reality and its creation narratives. In order to do so, I will analyze all the data according to its ties with the theoretical concepts examined in Chapter 2 and draw my conclusions. This chapter answers my initial questions on the adaptative nature of foundational and conflict narratives as well as my research question on the social identity mechanisms defining group narratives in relation to the dissolution of ETA.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the methodology behind this research. I will demonstrate how the constructivist philosophy offers an open framework which can include the plurality of disciplines intersecting in conflict resolution theory and practice. I will also justify of the comparative analysis and narrative analysis methods that I combined in my research's analysis. Finally, I acknowledge the limitations of my methodology and my own biases as a researcher.

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[3] Gopin, Marc. *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world.* New York: Oxford Press University, 2002.

The fifth chapter is the literature review. It starts by drawing the state of the research, all of which has already been studied and proved concerning the Basque conflict, and the role of narratives and compassionate reasoning in the dissolution of ETA. I then proceed to critically evaluate that state of research, identifying its successes and limitations. I finish by exposing the role of my own research. Finally, Chapter 6 is the conclusion chapter where I also give recommendations according to the research's results.

As we close this introduction and embark on a journey of concepts and theories, animated by the fascinating interactions between stories and realities, I wish you all a pleasant reading.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Discussion

As stated in Chapter 1, my research question is the following: what social identity mechanisms define group narratives that explain ETA's difficult dissolution? In order to answer this question, it is first needed to understand the theories behind social identity mechanisms and group narratives. Indeed, it will be the base to frame our analysis of the Basque case and navigate through it.

In the present chapter, I will explore numerous social identity theories that give this research theoretical hindsight on violent ethno-nationalist groups such as ETA. I will start with the essential concepts behind large group identity and ethno-nationalism according to social identity theory. The first part of this theoretical discussion will explore the mechanisms of positive social identity[4], kinship ties[5], and chosen trauma[6] and question their mutual interactions. The second part of the chapter focuses on the dynamics of intergroup conflict. It begins with the role of grievances[7] and salience of identity[8]. It is followed by Korostelina's 4Cs model[9] which gives a global understanding of the dynamics leading to intergroup conflict. Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut's theory on conflict supporting narratives[10] will then make light of what is at stakes when it comes to narratives and their interactions with reality in the context of intergroup conflict. Finally, Gopin's research on compassionate

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[4] Tajfel, Turner. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *Social Identity Theory*, ed. by William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publication, 1979), 33-48.

[5] Horowitz, Donald. "A Family Resemblance." In *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, ed. by Donald Horowitz, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 55-89.

[6] Volkan, Vamick D. *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism.* (Boulder, CO: Worldview Press, 1998).

[7] Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why men rebel.* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2011).

[8] Korostelina, Karina. *Social Identities and Conflict: Structure, Dynamics and Implications*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007).

[9] Karina. *Social Identities and Conflict*, 147.

[10] Bar-Tal, Daniel, Neta Oren, and Rafi Nets-Zehngut. "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives: A general framework", *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 5 (September 2014): 662-675.

reasoning[11] and its implication for the other theories and concepts will constitute the last part of this chapter.

Large group Identity and Ethno-nationalism

Social Identity Approach and Concept

The social identity approach is made of the social identity theory and the self-categorization theory. The self-categorization theory belongs to the social-psychology discipline and pertains to the perceptions of collections of people as a group as well as the causes and consequences behind the categorization of people in such groups[12]. It is closely linked to social categories and self-stereotyping. In self-categorization theory, the use of social categories in a specific context is dependent upon the relation between the perceiver's readiness and the category-stimulus fit[13]. In other words, the perceiver's subjectivity in relation with comparative and normative fit will determine how the perceiver classes individuals, in which social category they put them in. Although this theory is fascinating and closely linked to the social identity theory, the concepts of the present research are used in direct connection to the particularities of the social identity theory and will thus be explored in this context.

Social identity theory mainly focuses on the intergroup-interpersonal continuum. Indeed, individuals tend to compromise between interpersonal and intergroup behavior depending on their social context. Depending on their cultural, political, economic, and social environment and experience, individuals may affiliate themselves more or less to a group. Depending on how they construct and nurture their social identity, they may tend more towards an interpersonal or intergroup behavior. Social identity theory then claims that an

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[11] Gopin, Marc. *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world.* (New York: Oxford Press University, 2002).

[12] Turner, John C. *Rediscovering the Social Group : Self-categorization Theory.* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1987).

[13] Turner, John C. *Rediscovering the Social Group : Self-categorization Theory.*

individual's behavior is importantly influenced by the emotional attachment and derivative knowledge in relation to a group (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Identifying social structural factors allows social identity theory to identify the influences of the group on self-identity and self-concept, as well as the characteristics of the exhibited behavior (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

Positive Social Identity

Tajfel and Turner theorize that 'individuals strive to achieve or to maintain a positive social identity'[14]. Tajfel and Turner show that this positive social identity is largely based on favorable comparisons between ingroup and outgroup: it entertains the belief that the ingroup is better than the outgroup. When the individuals' social identity becomes unsatisfactory, they will either leave their ingroup or strive to make it more positively distinct, which means in practice to use comparisons in a more competitive way in order to increase the positivity of their social identity. The major factor that will determine whether they leave the group or attempt to make it "better" is the interpersonal-intergroup continuum, with social mobility and social change at each extreme. If the individuals believe that the intergroup nature and structure are permeable, they are more likely to believe in social mobility as a way to increase their positive social identity, and thus end up identifying with a new more positive group. On the other extreme is the belief in social change, that is the preferred option when individuals believe that the intergroup relations are marked by stratification and an immutable caste system. If the belief in social change is strongly embedded in the ingroup, it will push the members of the ingroup towards an intergroup relations framework, resulting in intergroup conflict dynamics. Tajfel and Turner (1979) demonstrate that the adaptability of the ingroup depends on its perception of intergroup relations and its need for a positive social identity.

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[14] Tajfel, Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", 40.

Kinship Ties

For Horowitz, ethnicity is a form of kinship[15]. The feeling of kinship is made possible by the idea of a common ancestry as well as a family-like behaviour. Horowitz also highlights the importance of the salience of the ethno-identity, and its influence on ingroup transactions. Indeed, family-like behaviour encourages ingroup members to interact mainly with each other. As a result, political, cultural, and economic transactions tend to stay between members of the group. Finally, Horowitz (1985) demonstrates that strong protectiveness and loyalty to ingroup members increases the importance of threat perception. A (perceived) threat to an ingroup member would be the equivalent of a threat to a family member and would be handled as such, which may involve extreme and violent ways. Horowitz concludes by saying that 'Kinship ties, in short, facilitate ethnic political organization.'[16]. Indeed, the idea of common ancestry, added to a family-like behaviour, the feeling of kinship, the salience of the ethno-identity and a strong sensitivity to threat perception all creates a fertile environment to facilitate ethnic political organization. Although Horowitz informs us on an ethnic group's capacity to form a political organization, kinship ties do not explain why some ethnic groups become violent while others do not.

Collective trauma

Volkan compares large-group identity to a "basic physiological function"[17] that takes its roots in the group's history, geography, and stories about a common beginning and other shared events. Volkan more specifically makes the "Tent Analogy" to explain the multiple layers to be considered when researching group psychology. According to him, the first layer is the personal layer, that comprises the individual's identity. The second layer is the tent,

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[15] Horowitz, "A Family Resemblance", 55-89.
[16] Horowitz, "A Family Resemblance.", 64.
[17] Volkan, *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism, 25.*

embracing all the individuals under a similar identity, and the pole, which represents the leader of the group upholding the members of the group. This tent analogy is a representation of how a large-group identity functions, and it greatly demonstrates the connections between individual, group, and leader. When exploring individual psychology (or the first layer of the tent), Volkan gives special interest to the mourning concept, and he identifies a pattern: the perennial mourners. These people are mourners who are in a perpetual state of mourning, lost in limbo, incapable of reconciliating reality with death. Volkan then proceeds to apply what he learns about individual mourning to identify two situations that have a high probability of turning a group in a perennial mourner group, as it would affect the second layer of the tent analogy. The first situation he refers to is an accident, which can be natural or take the traits of a manmade disasters. The second situation, however, is one provoked by an enemy, or an entity perceived as such, that hurt the group purposefully. In both situations, the "shared calamity can leave members of a group dazed, helpless, and too afraid, humiliated and angry to complete or even initiate a mourning process."[18]. This is even more true in the second situation, for which the presence of intent and the existence of an enemy can accentuate the feelings of shame and guilt, rendering the group highly vulnerable to a PTSD-like behavior. Volkan gives special attention to this group-PTSD phenomenon and how it interacts with descendants of the group. This is how he coins the terms *transgenerational transmission*, which he defines as the 'consolidated collection of the shared feelings, perceptions, fantasies, and interpretations of the event, as well as the images of relevant characters, such as a fallen leader'[19]. According to Volkan, a large group's traumas and unresolved mourning does not stop with the survivors of the events but is transmitted to the next generations. This results in what Volkan calls a time collapse: unresolved mourning leaves traumatized groups in a state of anxiety and new perceived threats unleash a disproportionate amount of fear and reaction,

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[18] Volkan, *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism, 40.*
[19] Volkan, *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism, 45.*

as if the group was reliving said past trauma(s). Indeed, 'the interpretations, fantasies, and feelings about a past shared trauma co-mingle with those pertaining to a current situation.'[20]. It could reactivate not only the memory of the trauma but also the emotions and the sense of danger that the psychological DNA remembers. Volkan, summarizes this demonstration with the notion of chosen trauma:

> The collective memory of a calamity that once befell a group's ancestors (…) is more than a recollection, it is a shared mental representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings, and defense against unacceptable thoughts. (Volkan 1998, 48)

This is how (ancient) collective trauma can become an ethnic marker deeply embedded in the group's psychology and identity, and how it can reemerge when the context reminds the group of its past trauma(s). However, as is the case with Horowitz, chosen trauma is a phenomena shared by people who do not engage in violence.

Discussion

Researching the theories and concepts of Tajfel and Turner (1979), Horowitz (1985), and Volkan (1998) gives us precious insights on the mechanisms behind large group identity. Tajfel and Turner (1979) focus on variables such as satisfactoriness of the large group identity, belief in stratification of society and immutable casts, and belief in social change. Their theory helps understand how an ingroup develops an intergroup relations framework and how it makes positively distinct comparisons with outgroups in order to regain a positive social identity. According to Horowitz (1985), the kinship ties between ingroup members facilitate the formation of an ethno-political organization. Indeed, kinship ties are rooted in deep emotional, cultural, social, and political experiences. Although positive social identity and kinship ties are big elements of the process of creation of an ethno-political group, a

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[20] Volkan, *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism, 35.*

question remains: what triggers the formation of such groups? What about their potential surge of violence?

According to Volkan's theory (1998), transgenerational trauma is shared across time when it is un-mourned, and it could be activated in the psychological DNA of the ingroup members if they were to perceive a serious threat to their safety. Following Volkan's logic, this could trigger counteractions such as the founding of an ethno-political group, or even acts of violence such as bombings or assassinations. This discussion raises a new question: Are intergroup conflict and violence a response to trauma? What are the mechanisms at play in the context of intergroup conflict? To answer these questions further, the next part will focus on intergroup conflict: causal factors and intergroup dynamics.

Intergroup-conflict Mechanisms

Grievances

For Gurr, relative depravation is a major concept to understand and analyze in order to trace back the roots and causality of a conflict[21]. Gurr defines relative depravation as a 'perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities.'[22]. Gurr understands "value expectations" as what people believe to be entitled to and "value capabilities" as what they are able to get and keep. Gurr identifies three sets of values. The first ones are the welfare values, which refer to physical well-being and self-realization capacity. The second ones are the power values, which are linked to the ability to vote, participate in political activism, and enjoy security from political violence and oppression. The third set of values are the interpersonal ones which he refers to as the 'psychological satisfactions we seek in non-authoritative interactions with other individuals and groups.'[23].

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[21] Gurr, *Why men rebel*.
[22] Gurr, *Why men rebel*, 24.
[23] Gurr, *Why men rebel*, 26.

An imbalance between these values expectations and capabilities may encourage a people's frustration, reclamations, and even rebellion.

Gurr proceeds to identify three patterns of relative depravation that result from the gap between the values expectations and capabilities. The first one is decremental deprivation: it is a reversal of fortunes. The value expectations have remained constant, but the value capabilities have declined (or are perceived to have declined). This is the pattern that contains the highest probability for revolt, indeed: 'Men are likely to be more intensely angered when they lose what they have than when they lose hope of attaining what they do not yet have.'[24]. The second pattern is the aspirational deprivation, where values capabilities remain constant, but the expectations increase. And the third pattern is the progressive deprivation: while expectations increase, capabilities decrease. For Gurr, the mobilization of the group hinges on its frustration and not having any opportunity to remove that frustration. The extent of that frustration partly depends on the type of pattern of relative depravation. However, Gurr's relative depravation's theory faces a limit: all frustrated people with grievances do not systematically lead identity groups to form and take violent actions to defend themselves.

Salience of Identity

Korostelina researches extensively the impact of salience of identity on conflict dynamics[25]. Salience of identity can be defined as the intensity of one's identity, or "how much" a member of a group identifies with the group's history, values, goals, and overall perspective of the world. It matters in the context of intergroup relation as it influences the perception of ingroup members on outgroups. Salience of identity is also connected to the primacy of the ingroup, which means that the ingroup goals are predominant over personal ingroup members' goals. If the ingroup is under threat, the members are not only ready to

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[24] Gurr, *Why men rebel*, 50.
[25] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*.

forget all internal conflicts, but they are also ready to unite against outgroups. A high level of ingroup primacy indicates a high willingness to follow the behavior suggested by the ingroup rather than defend personal goals and values.

Furthering her research on conflict dynamics, Korostelina identifies major factors of influence on intergroup conflict. The first one is intergroup prejudices. Negative beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes between groups is usually a result of desire for high social status, a way to boost ingroup members' self-esteem and/or a way to obtain realistic ingroup interests. It consequently increases the salience and stability of the corresponding identity: 'The more developed the system of positive autostereotypes (about the ingroup), negative heterostereotypes (about the outgroup) and stable attitudes, the more salient and stable the corresponding identity will be.'[26] The second factor is readiness for conflict. It is highly dependent on ingroup primacy, salience of identity and intergroup prejudices. The third factor is relative depravation: if a group feels that it is being deprived of something while another group has access to it, it will create frustration and feelings of injustice that may result in acts of violence. Relative depravation and social identity are connected through salience of identity and comparisons. The fourth factor is the majority-minority position and conflict intentions. A minority group will tend to have a stronger sense of identification because of its insecure position. This influences the salience of identity of minority groups which will tend to be more important than for majority groups. Consequently, the minority group will tend to entertain stronger prejudices against the majority group, especially if it has a lower socio-economic status. Minority groups are also more socially mobile and open to social change, they are more involved in the support of ingroup goals and the opposition of outgroups than majority groups.

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[26] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*, 131.

The next factor is intergroup boundaries: the permeability between groups influences the social mobility of the minority group. The minority group may attempt to make the social border more permeable to prevent being assimilated. The majority group may also want to make the border more permeable to avoid associating with the minority group. However, if the majority group believes that too many people from minority groups are joining the majority, then the majority group members tend to protect the boundary between them, creating more exclusive and discriminating policies. Perceive outgroup threat is another important factor as it always affects the behavior of the group. It increases or decreases readiness for conflict depending on the feelings of danger perceived by the ingroup in relation to outgroups' behavior. Intergroup relations are also influenced by the security dilemma: although groups are uncertain about each other's goals and values, although they are suspicious of each other, they will be in need of cooperation at some point. The social relations framed by the security dilemma are tainted by uncertainty and suspicion, which may incite violent behavior from either or both groups. The absence of intergroup trust also encourages a zero-sum game perception of the conflict. Finally, ingroup support is an important factor of intergroup conflict. It is made from the shared goals of the ingroup members, their collective perception of outgroups and their shared desire to challenge the ingroup's social situation.

All these factors influence intergroup conflict by molding the ingroup's behavior. Intergroup prejudice, readiness for conflict, relative depravation, majority-minority position, intergroup boundaries, perceive outgroup threat, security dilemma, and ingroup support are not only important factors of influence in intergroup relations but also phenomena that are closely related to salience of identity. These factors also seem intimately related to narratives. Indeed, Korostelina acknowledges the influence of salience of identity on stories:

> salient identity influenced the construction and content of stories about other ethnic groups. Stories of people with salient ethnic identity were characterized by high similarity, generalizations, and negative attitudes. People

> with salient ethnic identity perceived the outgroup as an absolutely strange and significantly different group, while keeping minimal interaction with it. (Korostelina 2007, 111)

Korostelina argues that salience of identity influences the way the ingroup frames and defines outgroups. In a way, the more a member of the ingroup identify as "ingroup member", as opposed to identifying as an independent individual, the less this person identifies to outgroup members. Salience of identity is thus somewhat of an interpersonal-intergroup continuum regulator.

4 Cs model

Korostelina proposes a model in order to illustrate the four stages leading to an intergroup identity-based conflict. Korostelina argues that even though diverse communities can coexist in peace, the process of socio-identification functions through the reproduction of the ingroup's identity[27]. Through phenomena such as socialization, people entertain a positive image of their ingroup and a negative (or at least less positive) one for outgroups. If the ingroup feels seriously under threat while it is entertaining a competitive relation with outgroups, the negative evaluation of outgroups will strengthen and the ingroup will project negative goals and traits onto them, such as the desire to dominate, rage, or brutality. As the depiction of outgroups becomes more and more villainous, the suspicion and distrust of the ingroup increases. In sum, Intergroup comparison facilitates competition, which facilitates confrontation which itself encourages counteraction[28]. This progressive escalation of the conflict gives ingroups the impression that they have to defend themselves and their loved ones from the "villain" their stories have constructed:

> In a politicized field of intergroup relations, the ingroups position themselves positively as they define outgroups as opponents or enemies and attribute aggressive intentions to them. Fighting with outgroups is viewed as necessary for ingroup survival. … For ingroup members with a high level of social identity salience, the readiness to fight is influenced by ethnic and religious identities. (Korostelina 2007, 180)

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[27] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*, 179.
[28] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict* 145-180.

With her 4Cs model, Korostelina not only draws a visual of intergroup identity-based

conflicts but also highlights the importance of salience of identity and narratives in the

process.

Comparison

(We-They perception and favorable intergroup comparison)

Competition

(Instrumental conflicts of interest among counterpoised interactive com- munities)

Confrontation

(The ideologization of social identities; transformation of conflicts of inter- est into moral confrontations

between the virtuous Us and the demonized Other)

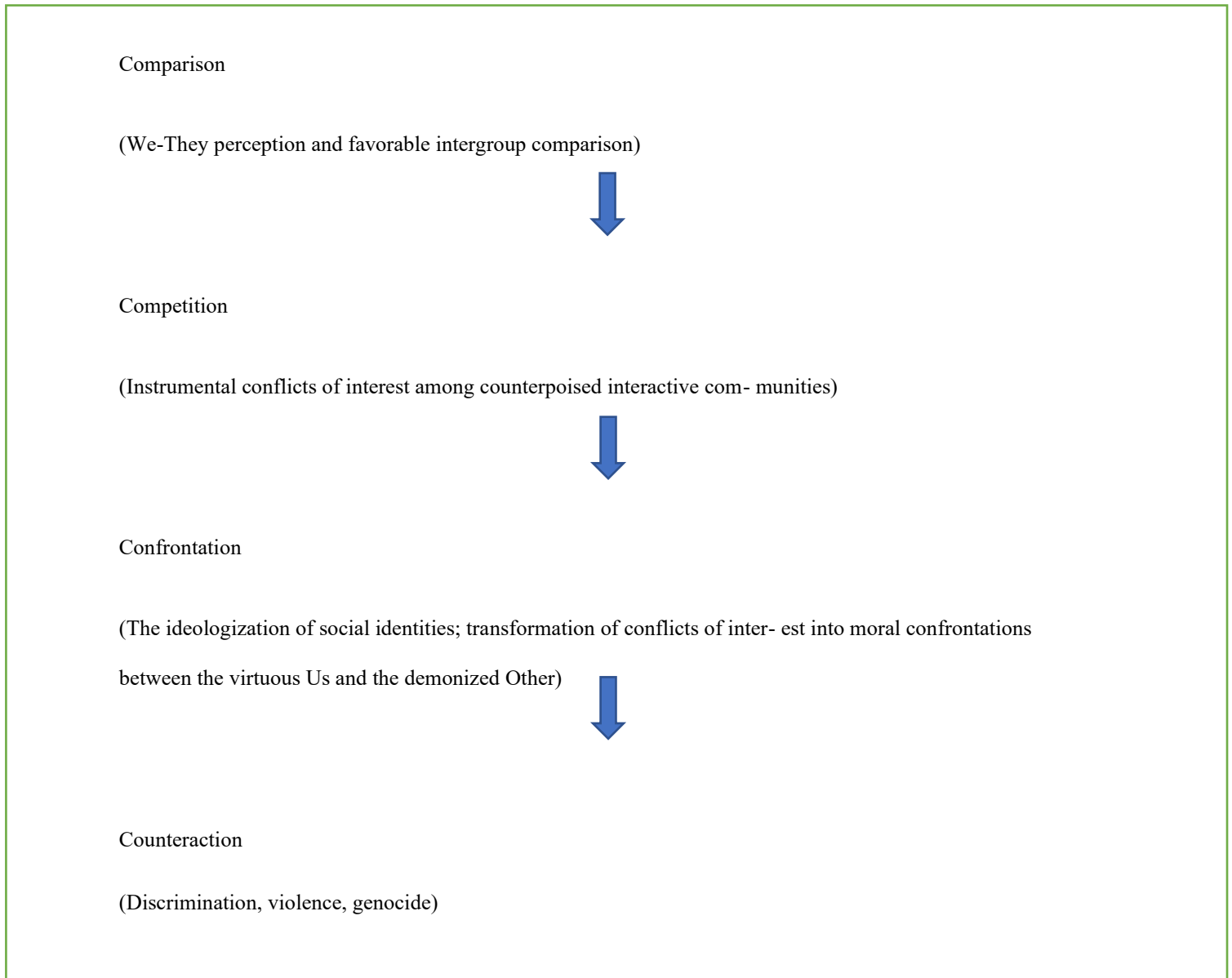Counteraction

(Discrimination, violence, genocide)

Figure.1 4Cs Model (From Korostelina 2007, 147)

The Domination of Conflict Supporting Narratives

When trying to determine what the nature of narratives are in times of conflict, Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut identify different types of narratives in the context of intergroup conflict[29]. The first one is the general master narrative. It focuses on the collective self-representation, the causes and nature of the conflict, the representation of the rival(s), and the conditions needed to win. Bar Tal identifies two kinds of narratives within the general master one. The first sub-narrative is collective memory. It is the narrative about the conflict's eruption and continuation, which gives meaning to the past. The second one revolves around the ethics of the conflict. It narrates the behavior of society. It gives meaning to the present, while also setting objectives for the future. Apart from the general master narrative, there also are specific narratives. They are specific to major events and focus mainly on wars. Finally, the mini narratives bring attention to the battles and personalities involved. Although they answer different narrative's needs, they are coherent and follow the general master narrative's story line.

After decorticating how to frame different types of narratives, Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut focus on the main recurring themes of conflict narratives[30]. They find a few of them, all serving the ingroup's legitimacy and mobilization in the conflict:
-the justification of both the involvement of the group and the development of the conflict. It usually discredits the other side's objectives and legitimates the ingroup's behavior.
-the dangers: physical existence of the group, its values, its identity, and its territory.
-the delegitimization and the dehumanization of the other side. It decreases the ingroup's empathy with the outgroup(s) but also gives unformal permission to harm them.
-the glorification of the image of the in-group.

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[29] Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives: A general framework", 662-675.
[30] Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives" 665.

-the presentation of the in-group as the sole victim.

-the emphasis on patriotism, and consequently encouragement to mobilize.

-the importance of unity, for example by ignoring inner disagreements which would only

harm the cause.

-the desire to live in peace.

After exposing all recurring themes of the conflict narratives, Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut explore its main functions[31]. They identify five of them. The conflict narratives help the individuals and the collective to adapt to the hard conditions of the conflict; they also help make sense of a stressful, uncertain and unpredictable situation; they justify negative actions of the in-group towards their adversary (notably the violence and destruction); they prepare the in-group for the violence and the destruction coming from the other side while also preparing for the hard conditions of living resulting from conflict; and finally, they prepare for a lasting conflict and help individuals and groups become numb to negative experiences. Overall, these narratives provide motivation for unity, solidarity, mobilization, and even sacrifice for the in-group, which especially matters for groups that lack formal mobilization institutions.

Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut then identify the methods necessary to construct and maintain dominance of the general master narrative[32]. It begins with a simple method: the master narrative relies on supportive and coherent sources. This is an easy way to avoid amplifying the voices of critics as well as giving them credibility. The second method identified is to marginalize contradictory information. Indeed, by discrediting this type of information or making it hard to access, the main narrative is less subject to critics and/or transformation. Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets Zehngut also indicate that the master narrative magnifies supportive themes. It can, for example, give lot of importance to details or specific

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[31] Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives" 665-666.
[32] Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives" 667-669.

aspects of said themes while ignoring others that do not serve the narrative. A fourth method would be to fabricate supportive content. It would allow the control of variables such as: the targeted audience, the public's opinion, and even the economy. The fifth method is to omits contradictory events. It would keep alternative narratives at bay and prevent it from gaining power. Finally, using framing language can reinforce the link people share with their master narrative, emotionally and psychologically. This method can be applied by using language that triggers emotions, memory, cognition, and motivation connected to past events. Through these methods, the conflict narratives become conflict-supporting narratives, and do not leave moral space for pacifist or conflict resolution alternatives.

Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut further their research and identify the different practices that come into account for the struggle over dominance of conflict-supporting narrative. They identify two levels of practice. The first one is the intra-societal struggle. To maintain dominance over the master conflict-supportive narrative involves practices such as control of access to information, censorship, closing archives, monitoring public information, discrediting counter-information, punishment, and rewards. The second level of practices is the international struggle to impose the ingroup's conflict-supportive narrative on a global scale. It begins with the construction of the narrative, which is based on similar methods to how it is done for the in-group. This narrative is then protected and spread via practices such as the control over access to information in violent zones, the dissemination of information through use of websites, movies etc., and the political use of diaspora and lobbying groups. The content of this narrative has three goals. First, it demonstrates the justness of the in-group and its goals. Second, it creates a relatable content which makes the international community empathize with the ingroup. Finally, it demonstrates the victimization of the ingroup by their oppressor. These conflict-supporting narratives serve both the eruption and the persistence of the conflict: 'they become epistemic ideological foundations that serve as a prism through

which society members process information and thus support continuation of the conflict'[33].

They also entertain positive perception on the individual and collective levels, which gives a

sense of superiority, a positive self-presentation and victimhood on the international stage.

The work of Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut gives us precious hindsight on the mechanisms

of narratives in a conflict, on the nature of conflict-supporting narratives, and on the struggle

over their dominance as master narratives.

Compassionate Reasoning

Gopin coins the term compassionate reasoning in the context of conflict resolution

theory and practice[34]. Gopin argues that intergroup violence in a conflict is usually due to

feelings of danger, fear, and hatred. According to Gopin, compassionate reasoning is not only

a mechanism that can defuse such situations but also a practice that consolidates peace. In

order to properly understand the concept of compassionate reasoning, it is essential to define

the terms compassion and reason. In order to do so, Gopin emphasizes the difference between

compassion and empathy, and the connection between compassion and logic:

> Compassion needs reason, for compassion as an emotion is too easily confused with a narrow empathy and excessive love for a limited number of people. Compassion needs reason for the logical extension of prosocial emotions to all people, all sentient beings, even to the earth itself. Reason helps to bring out the logic and rational self-interest of principles of compassion applied to all. (Gopin 2002, 62-63)

Gopin shows that the practice of compassion needs to be closely linked to reason in order to

be ethical, principled and "applicable to all". The ethics of compassionate reasoning is the

basis of Gopin's theory and practice of ethics and conflict resolution. It works hand in hand

with Gopin's analysis of intergroup conflict. Indeed, Gopin also explores the close relation

between narratives and neural pathways in the context of intergroup conflict. Gopin argues

that:

> Repetition of stimulation of such narratives hardens neural pathways in whichever direction they are stimulated, through expressions of love and empathy but also by constant lies in the context of fear, insults, bullying, and

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[33] Bar-Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives", 663.
[34] Gopin, *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world.*

intimidation. Stories can take you in either direction, and often both: villainy is designated for the chosen scapegoat, and love is used to create a yearning for the absolute idealized self or heroic symbol embodied in the demagogue. (Gopin, 2002, 94)

Through his argument, Gopin demonstrates that villainy and love are behavioral characteristics deeply influenced by narratives. In the first case, the brain stem and the amygdala are strengthened by neural pathways stimulated by fear, insults, intimidations…etc. In the second case, the neural pathways are stimulated by love and empathy, which could be used for example in a narrative which idealizes a demagogue or in a narrative which encourages the practice of compassionate reasoning. Either way, these neural pathways develop depending on the nature of the stimuli and may have destructive consequences:

The neural pathways stimulated by the bully, by ingroup/outgroup designations, fear, and paranoia strengthen the brain stem and the amygdala. This further readies people for mass obedience and mass hatreds, scapegoating, and ultimately violence or passive acquiescence to violence. (Gopin 2002, 94)

So, Gopin not only demonstrates the essential compatibility between compassion and reason, but also shows that the repetition of narratives has a major impact on neural pathways, and ultimately on ingroup behavior. Gopin argues that the natural opposite to compassionate reasoning is mass obedience[35], which his research connects to stimulation of the brain stem and the amygdala through fear. Through the habituation and practice of compassionate reasoning, Gopin proposes a new paradigm of ethics as well as a sustainable way to construct intergroup relations.

Discussion

The first part of this theoretical discussion has explored several theories in order to define an ethno-nationalist group and understand the probable causes of its formation and behavior. Horowitz argues that the kinship ties between ingroup members facilitates the formation of an ethno-political organization. Tajfel and Turner's theory on intergroup relations framework highlights the importance of a positive social identity for the ingroup, as

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[35] Gopin, *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world*, 93

well as the implications of the ingroup's beliefs on its behavior. Finally, the triggering effect that can result from chosen trauma and overall transgenerational transmission could have an important influence on the ingroup's perception of danger and consequent behavior. These concepts' interaction raises the question of influence. Indeed, how do kinship ties, positiveness of the social identity, and chosen trauma influence each other as they influence the ingroup members' behavior?

In the second part of this discussion, Gurr's theory of relative deprivation on grievances offers the perspective of a more materialistic prism as well as being enriched by a socio-psychological approach. Gurr reveals the potentiality of intergroup conflict surrounding the political and socio-economic climate via the concept of relative depravation. Korostelina highlights the importance of salience of identity in connection to ethno-identity and intergroup conflict. Indeed, salience of identity is closely related to ingroup primacy and intergroup prejudices, all of which tend to encourage intergroup conflict. To have a clear picture in mind of the dynamics surrounding intergroup conflict, Korostelina theorizes the 4Cs model. This model explains how comparison encourages competition, which itself can lead to confrontation, and ultimately, counteraction, and how all the steps between this escalation are influenced by internal factors, such as salience of identity. Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut extensively study narratives in conflictual settings and give clear explanations when it comes to conflict-supporting narratives and their dominance over alternative narratives. Whether it be Korostelina's 4CS model or the conflict-supporting narratives' theory, it seems as though these are both cycles perpetuating violence. The 4Cs model is the cycle of escalation leading to intergroup conflict, where conflict-supporting narratives aim at the conflict's justification, legitimization, and the mobilization of ingroup members. The repetition, normalization, and amplification of conflictual behavior can only strengthen violence. In the context of conflict resolution, the ingroup needs to break away from these

cycles. However, the perspective necessary to identify and transform these violent cycles is rarely available to ingroup members as they feel pain, suffering, or fear. What could influence the ingroup to evolve away from conflict-supporting narratives and the 4Cs model's dynamics?

Conclusion

The present chapter has explored the basic concepts of large identity group, intergroup conflict dynamics, conflict-supporting narratives, and compassionate reasoning. Through this theoretical discussion, we have identified major factors of influence when it comes to intergroup identity-based conflict: belief in social change, kinship ties, chosen trauma, grievances, and salience of identity. Belief in social change is an essential variable to figure out where on the interpersonal-intergroup continuum an individual is likely to fall[36]. The presence of kinship ties increases the probability that people sharing the same ethno-identity form an ethno-political organization[37]. Chosen trauma is transmitted through generations and shared by members of the same group[38]. Any political, social, or economic event which echoes from their shared history of past trauma may trigger a disproportionate reaction from the group, as it is remembered of its past trauma and tries to defend itself. Grievances encourage a group to protect its welfare, power, and interpersonal values, even to the point of using violence[39]. Finally, salience of identity conditions intergroup relations as well as intergroup conflict[40]. These variables allow us to identify an identity-based group as well as its intergroup framework.

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[36] Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict."
[37] Horowitz, "A Family Resemblance".
[38] Volkan, *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism*.
[39] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*.
[40] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*.

Building on this, the 4Cs model[41] illustrates the dangerousness of an intergroup relations when a group needs to reassure itself on its positive distinctness. Indeed, comparison easily leads to competition, leading to confrontation, and counteraction. The escalation of antagonism can propel groups in violent and intractable conflicts. When it comes to conflict-supporting narratives, Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut demonstrate not only how its content justifies and encourages the conflict, but also how its dominance is maintained through a series of methods which prevent alternative narratives to challenge or just modify the master narrative[42]. The ingroups engaging in these dynamics of intergroup conflict are stuck in a cycle of violence and fear. On the opposite, compassionate reasoning is the process of behaving with rational, universal compassion. It is our hypothesis that compassionate reasoning could be a way to break out of those cycles and take the path of conflict resolution. We will test our hypothesis in the next chapter as we analyze the case of the Basque conflict. Our first objective when it comes to the result is to identify what factors of intergroup conflict are presented in ETA's conflict-supporting narratives. We will search specifically for belief in social change, kinship ties, chosen trauma, grievances, and salience of identity. Our second and main objective is to find out what the phenomena which convinced ETA to announce a permanent cease-fire and disband is. We will search for the answers throughout the testimonies of history, ETA members, and murals.

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[41] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*.

[42] Bar Tal, Oren, and Nets-Zehngut, "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives".

Chapter 3 - Analysis: The Basque case

As we finished our theoretical discussion and enter the chapter dedicated to the case study of the Basque conflict, we deepen our understanding of narratives in conflictual settings. Through the use of theories and concepts from Chapter 2, our research is anchored in social identity theory. Now, the case study of the Basque conflict is the opportunity to project our theory on data and test its validity. The Basque conflict is an intractable conflict that went on for five decades. It knew many transformation and evolution through its experiences. In order to grasp the ETA group and identify its patterns, our analysis is divided in three parts. The first one provides context and definitions to clarify the research. The second part is focused on data collection: quantitative data, academic's perspectives on the socio-political events which took place in the conflict, second-hand testimonies, and murals. The third part is dedicated to the analysis of our data. It aims at: identifying the major factors of influence of ETA's behavior, identifying the conflict patterns in the group's narratives, and looking at the presence and potential influence of compassionate reasoning on the master's narrative.

I. The Conflict and Definitions: Providing Context

Quick summary of the Basque Conflict

In the Basque Country, in the beginning of the 1950s, the separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) was created[43]. It aimed to create a sovereign nation in Euskadi (Basque

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[43] Mees, Ludger. *The Basque Contention: Ethnicity, Politics, Violence*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2020); Fernández, Gaizka. "The origins of ETA: between Francoism and Democracy, 1958-1981". *In ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro.

Homeland). In order to demonstrate the Basque people's right to the Land, ETA argued that

the Basque people had been living in Euskadi since the Roman times; that their unique

language, Euskara, was the only non-Indo-European vernacular still used on the European

continent; and that their specific appearance was a testimony of their long existence on the

land[44]. From the late 1950s to 2011, ETA was an active terrorist group that used means of

violence such as bombings and targeted political assassinations to further their nationalist

agenda. ETA is responsible for more than 800 assassinations[45]. Considering the geopolitical

context at the time, the organization's most important victim is arguably Carrero Blanco,

General Franco's prime minister and his most probable successor. The group perceived itself

as the last line of defence of the Basque culture, heritage, and identity. After Franco's death

Spain became a democracy once more, but the violence in the Basque country only increased.

The nationalist organization started slowing down its activity in 1992 after the police arrested

several of its leaders. ETA declared a permanent cease-fire in 2011 and disbanded in 2018[46].

Definitions

     We will now justify the semantic choices which were made for this research and

deepen our analysis of some key concepts. First of all, the definition of the Basque Country,

which we also refer to as the Basque provinces or the Basque Land. The Basque Country is

composed of seven provinces, three in France (Labourd, Soule, Lower Navarre) and four in

Spain (Gipuzkoa, Biscay, Álava, and Navarre).[47] These provinces share the same language,

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(London, New York: Routledge, 2017); Ciment, James. *World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era.* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe Reference 2013, 749).

[44] Sullivan, John. ETA and Basque Nationalism: the fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986. (London, New York: Routledge 2015, 1-2).

[45] Fernández, "The origins of ETA: between Francoism and Democracy".

[46] Mees, *The Basque Contention*.

[47] Mees, *The Basque Contention*, 9.

Euskara, and a sense of ethnic particularism but they are divided between two countries, and thus two different administrations and autonomy levels [48].

In order to stay neutral in the debate over the nature of ETA[49] (political or military), ETA is considered in this research as an organization and a nationalist ethnic ingroup. It is qualified as ethnic and nationalist because of the two founding principles of the organization. ETA is an ethnic group because it formed due to the belief in Basque ethnic particularism. The organization claims that Basque people and their culture are oppressed and threatened to disappear by being assimilated to France and Spain. Therefore, they have no other goal than the liberation of the Basque Country, which could only be attained through sovereignty in the form of independence. It is in this second principle that resides the nationalist essence of ETA.

II. Data collection

Retracing the facts: numbers and history

Numbers: Quantitative data on ETA

o   Lethality of the Conflict

The following quantitative data on the Basque conflict will give a solid structure to our historical qualitative data. It will anchor our study of narratives in reality and allow us to find patterns and factors of influence in our comparative analysis between ETA's narratives and history's testimony.

During the Basque conflict, there was a total of 1 197 victims killed. ETA is responsible for 829 of those. 343 of ETA's victims were civilians and 486 were members of security forces. Of the security forces, they killed mainly members of the Guardia Civil, Spanish National Police and Spanish Army. There is a figure illustrating the number of victims of the different perpetrators:

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[48] Mees, *The Basque Contention*, 9.
[49] The Basque conflict has animated a tumultuous academic debate surrounding the definition of ETA as a terrorist group on one side, and a political organization on the other. Mees, *The Basque Contention*, 166.

Perpetrator	Number of victims
Euskadi Ta Askatasuna	829
Spanish armed forces	169
Far-right/Paramilitary	72
Other Parties	127
Total	1197

Table 1. Death rates per responsible parties[50]

According to the Spanish Ministry of Interior Database[51], ETA killed irregularly with large gaps between some years. The organization kills for the first time in 1968, and until 1972 it stays very punctual, with a total of four between these years. In 1973 it suddenly increases, as they make six victims. In 1974 they become even more lethal and kill nineteen people. They will fluctuate around that number with sixteen deaths in 1975, seventeen in 1976, and eleven in 1977. It appears to stabilize and slowly decrease until in 1978 there is a huge increase in mortality. ETA marks a new record with sixty-seven deaths that year. It keeps going up in 1979 with seventy-nine deaths and in 1980 with ninety-two deaths. However, in 1981 it decreases a lot, with thirty victims. It stabilizes between 1982 and 1985 with around thirty-five victims a year. In 1986 it goes up to forty-one victims, and fifty-two in 1987. In 1988 and 1989 it decreases suddenly and there are under twenty victims a year, but between 1989 and 1991 the number of victims increases and goes up to forty-six in 1991. There are twenty-six victims of ETA in 1992, fourteen in 1993, thirteen in 1994, fifteen in 1995, five in 1996, thirteen in 1997, six in 1998, none in 1999 and twenty-three in 2000. These fluctuations could be due to a variety of phenomena such as changes of the ingroup's structure, (perceived) threats to the ingroup, intent to prevent outgroups from attaining their goals, economic interests…etc.

o   The Evolution of Euskara

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[50] Statistics taken from "Últimas Víctimas mortales de ETA: Cuadros estadísticos". *Ministerio del Interior*; "Datos significativos del conflicto vasco, 1968-2003". *Eusko News* 2003.
[51] "Últimas Víctimas mortales de ETA: Cuadros estadísticos". *Ministerio del Interior*

Figure 3 provides us with information on the evolution of teachings of the Basque Country between 1983 and 1996:
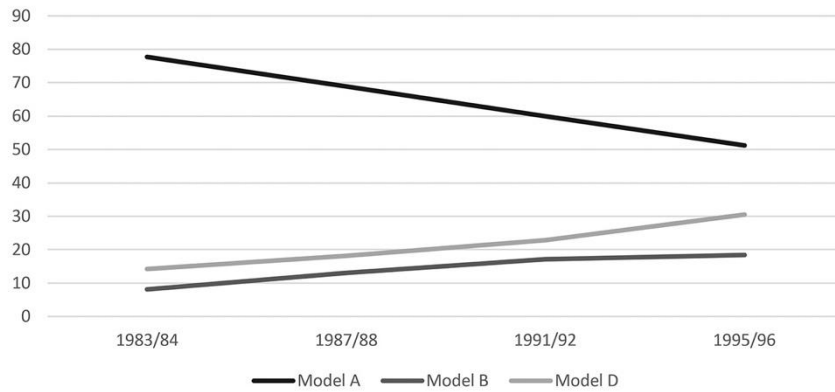

Figure 2. School education and language models in the Basque Autonomous Community[52]

Model A represents the evolution of the frequentation of schools where teachings are in Spanish and Euskara is a subject study unit. For model B, the teachings are both in Spanish and Euskara. The two languages are taught equally. Finally, model D presents schools that teach in Euskara as a main language and where Spanish is a subject study unit. Note that there is no model C as the letter C does not exist in Euskara. As shown by Fig.3, model A decreases between 1983 and 1996, while model B and D increase. This shows a clear tendency to teach more children Euskara from 1983 to 1996.

This quantitative data gives us concrete facts and phenomena connected to violence and culture which have evolved during the conflict. In order to understand their causes and the potential consequences for our research question, this data will be analyzed in connection to the following historical data on Basque nationalism and ETA at "III Data Analysis". It will be useful in its objective and factual aspect, which will anchor our research and help us make a distinction between conflict-supporting narratives and conflict analysis.

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[52] Statistics taken from Eusko Jaurlaritza and Gobierno vasco, V mapa socio-linguístico. 2011 (Vitoria: Gasteiz, 2014), 25–30

History of Basque Nationalism and ETA

The history behind the conflict as analyzed through the prisms of political science and sociology will give us a clear idea of the global context surrounding the intergroup conflict as well as highlight the factors of influence. The clearer our intimate understanding of the conflict, the more precise our comparative analysis with ETA's testimonies will be. We have divided the history of the Basque conflict in three parts. The first one predates the birth of ETA and retraces the history of Basque nationalism. The second one focuses on the birth and life of ETA until 1992, and the last one explores the decline of ETA until its disbandment in 2018.

o   Before ETA, the birth of Basque Nationalism (1876-1950)

Basque nationalism was first triggered by the abolition of the *fueros* in 1876[53]. The *fueros* were political and economic privileges granted to the Basque people:

the *Fueros* conferred substantial privileges on the Basques and were popular among most of the population. They stipulated that the Basques were not to be conscripted into the Spanish army, although the local authorities had the duty of raising a militia force. Such an arrangement had obvious advantages for the Spanish Crown in facilitating the defense of a frontier region. The other main provision of the *Fueros,* the exemption from customs duty, was also popular among the mass of the population, and resentment at its abolition was one of the factors which encouraged the growth of nationalism in the late nineteenth century. (Sullivan 2015, 3-4)

The abolition of the *fueros* took place in a difficult political context, as it followed the civil war that had lasted from 1872 to 1876. After a majority of the rural Basques lost the war with the Carlist side, Spanish liberal troops implemented a military occupation of the Basque provinces under martial law[54]. The military occupation lasted until 1878. On the same year was implemented the Basque Economic Agreement between the Spanish government and Basque political leaders. This agreement brought great economic development through the profiting industrialization of the Basque provinces. The sudden capacity for employment brought the first big migratory movement to the Basque country. As Spanish migrant workers come in waves to answer the call of industrialization, the Basques feel like their land is being invaded and their culture put at risk[55]. The Basques start painting

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[53] Sullivan, John. *ETA and Basque Nationalism: the fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986.* (London, New York: Routledge 2015).
[54] Mees, *The Basque Contention.*
[55] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism.*

migrants as dishonest, immoral, and violent and call them "Maketos". This encourages further the

Basques to dissociate themselves from non-Basqueness, and the nationalist movement gains in

popularity. In 1894, Sabino Arana invents the ikurriña (the Basque flag) and coins the word "Euskadi"

to name the Basque country. In 1895, he founds the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV). According to

Sabina Arana the Euskadi/Spain relationship is comparable to a master/slave relationship. Arana

argues that in this situation, hatred is legitimate, even moral:

The cordial hatred that we profess for Spain is grounded in an equally deep love for Euskeria, our fatherland. We do not really care whether Spain is great or small, strong or weak, rich or poor. She is enslaving our fatherland, and that is reason enough for us to hate her with all our soul whether at the height of her greatness or near the edge of her ruin. If we were to see this Latin nation torn into pieces by an internal conflagration or an international war, we would celebrate this with delight and real enthusiasm. It would also weigh on us the greatest of all misfortunes … if Spain prospered and became great. Sabino Arana, *Bizkaitarra*, January 29, 1894 (Mees 2020, 54)

For Sabina Arana, the Basque/Spanish relationship is based on a zero-sum game. Therefore,

his major political objective is to liberate the Basque provinces from Spain. Basque nationalism is

deeply tied to ethnic and cultural roots. Mees identifies salient identity markers in the context of his

research on salience of racial singularity:

Euskadi had been independent, the Basque race was unique and different to all others, and the language was the most salient marker of racial singularity as well as a vital tool to protect Basque racial purity against any kind of pernicious external influence. (Mees 2020, 55)

According to Mees (2020), Basqueness, from the end of the XIXth century, was strongly tide

to the idea of and belief in a distinct racial identity, protected by the Euskara language. The goal of the

PNV and of Basque nationalism in general was the recovery of the historical independence of the

Basque Country as well as the re-establishment of the freedom they enjoyed during the *fueros*. Due to

their growing popularity, Basque nationalist organizations bloomed and had consequent impacts on

the Basque culture and society:

Basque nationalism created a huge organizational web that included groups for nationalist youth, women, peasant and worker unions, language activists, dance and theater courses, groups for mountain hiking, as well as party-owned locales, cafés and bars. Frequently, these groups and initiatives matched pre-existing cultural patterns with deep roots in Basque society. (Mees 2020, 56-57)

Basqueness slowly starts thriving. From 1930 to 1936, the PNV and its allies try to get

political autonomy for the Basque country. From 1936 to 1939, the Spanish Civil War is

fought between the Popular front (Republicans) and the military (Nationalists) whose leader

quickly became the General Francisco Franco. The Vatican pressures the PNV to be on the

Nationalists' side, but they end up choosing the Popular front, conscient that they have better

chances to be granted independence/autonomy under a democratic regime:

Once the problem was outlined, our position was very clear: In this fight of democracy against fascism, Basque
nationalism had, as always in its history, to take a stand with democracy … We are against imperialism and
fascism due to our Christian spirit … Until the defeat of fascism, Basque patriotism, Basque nationalism, will
remain firm in its place." José Antonio Aguirre, Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes, October 1, 1936. (Mees 2020,
77)

On that same day, the government statute in favor of the *Estatuto de Prieto*, the Statute

of Autonomy of the Basque Country of 1936, which reinstates the Basque government in the

region and shows a slow decentralization of power. In 1937, General Franco orders the

bombing of Guernica, a Basque village, and kills more than 1600 villagers. In 1939, the

military junta wins the war and General Franco is put in power. The Basque language is

marginalized, and any hopes of political autonomy are crushed by the repression. Dozens of

priests are tortured and assassinated due to suspicions over their political activity[56]. As the

Second World War begins, the PNV becomes an informant for British Intelligence. WWII is

perceived as the continuation of the fight against Franco and the Basque government in exile

joins forces with the Allied. However, as the Allied forces win WWII, Franco remains in

power and the high hopes for Basque liberation come crashing down:

The prospects for Basque nationalism appeared bleak as neither reliance on the United States, alliance with the
Spanish Republic, nor a retreat into cultural nationalism offered any prospect of advance. (Sullivan 2015, 23)

The nationalist disillusion experienced by the youth and attributed to the passivity of the PNV

encourages a small group of students to form their own political group in the 1950s. It would later call

itself Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), meaning "Basque Country and Freedom".

o   Formation and Life of ETA (1951-1992)

ETA under Francoism (51-75)

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[56] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.

In the 1950s, the Basque country starts to slowly recover from the economic and political consequences of the Civil War and isolation. After the victory of the Allied at the end of the second world war in 1945, Franco's regime was left fragile due to its isolation. After the defeat of the German and Italian forces, Basque nationalists hoped to count on the Allied to restore democracy in Spain[57]. However, they made no such attempt. Actually, the United States started to improve their relationship with Franco's regime due to the intensification of the Cold War. Spanish isolation ended in 1953 as the government signed a pact with the United States to grant them military bases on their soil in exchange for economic aid[58]. Franco's regime also signed a Concordat with the Vatican and was admitted to the United Nations just two years later. In 1960, the president of the PNV, Aguirre, dies, and is replaced by Leizaola, another member of the party. However, Leizaola gives the government-in-exile a token-like function, and the young nationalists criticize their leader's apathy[59]. From the 1960s to the 1970s, the second industrial revolution animates the Basque country. It generates an accelerated economic growth and transforms the traditional Basque socio-economic structures:

The massive influx of non-Basque migrants, the growing pressure on Basque culture and language, the emergence of new urban ghettos riven by problems of criminality, the destruction of the ecological environment through unhindered urban growth and pollution and the crisis brought upon the traditional small- scale agricultural unit of the *baserriak* (family-owned or rented farmsteads) through the exodus of a young generation to the industrial areas: these were the most outstanding phenomena of a process of deep social, cultural and economic change in the Basque territories throughout the 1960s and 1970s. If we add to this the increasing threats to the traditional channels and agencies of socialization (family, Catholic Church) caused by growing secularization and the dissemination of new values and patterns of cultural behavior through the media and tourism, the picture of an acute social and mental crisis unfolds. (Mees 2020, 97)

As demonstrated by Mees (2020), the transformation of society puts great pressure on the Basque ingroup and on all aspects of their lives. Not only were the Basques going through a socio-cultural crisis, but they also had to suffer the state's violence. Between 1960 and 1975, the Spanish police killed fifty-nine people, and of those, more than fifty percent were Basque[60]. The regime's policies opened the door to the uncontrolled violence of the police on civilians. Spanish police used violent practices to install order in the Basque provinces, such as abusive detentions or torture. For

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[57] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[58] Fernández, Gaizka, "The origins of ETA: between Francoism and Democracy, 1958-1981", *In ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017).
[59] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".
[60] Mees, *The Basque Contention*.

Mees, 'This means that at a minimum the population of the two Basque coastal provinces had to live for about four and a half years in a situation of permanent stress under the threat of arbitrary and excessive police action.' (Mees 2020, 96). The Francoist regime consolidated itself by maintaining its centralism and preventing dissidence through legislations such as the prohibition of nationalist symbols[61]. Although Euskara was not officially forbidden, its marginalization was encouraged: 'Francoist coercion in the Basque Country was not only political, it was also cultural and directed against the use of the Basque language.' (Mees 2020, 96). Nationalism had been transmitted in the Basque Country throughout generations. Ideas on Basque nationalism were shared through political media such as clandestine press or propaganda; products of Basque culture like music and literature; associative life, sports, and social events; and through religion and the Church. The socio-cultural context, the economic transformations, overall repression of the Francoist regime, and perceived apathy of the PNV pushed young Basques to find comforts in the nationalist narrative as told by Sabino Arana, the founder of the PNV and Basque nationalism. Arana's narrative revolves around the ethnic aspect of the conflict with the Spanish state and is fueled by racism, irredentism, hatred for Spanish-ness, and the belief that social and national liberations come with independence[62].

In 1952, a small group of Basque nationalist founded the magazine *Ekin* (To Do). They were university students with previous experience as militants in the student organizations of the PNV. In 1956, *Ekin* is integrated into *Eusko Gaztedi Indarra* (EGI, Basque Youth Force) the main student organization led by the PNV. However, due to the lack of trust between the two groups and the mutual suspicions, militants from Ekin break with the PNV in 1958[63]. The newly formed group is then named ETA. It made itself publicly known through a manifesto in 1959 in which they claim to be a patriotic, secular, democratic and apolitical organization defending its people's right to self-determination[64]. ETA adopted the most radicalized version of Basque nationalism, although they did change two major points of Arana's political principles. First, ETA is a secular organization, whereas the PNV had close ties to the Catholic Church and the Vatican. And second, ETA's nationalism distanced itself from

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[61] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".
[62] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".
[63] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".
[64] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".

Arana's racism. Although it did not abandon xenophobia, Basqueness was no longer inherited from ethnic heritage but from the nationalist attachment to the Basque country (Fernandèz and López 2012, 54-73). The workers' strike of May 1962 leaves a strong impression on ETA members who start considering socialism from a new angle. In 1963, ETA decides to take part in the workers' movement. In 1964, being inspired by Mao Zedong and the Third World national liberation movements, ETA considers starting a guerilla war to defeat the Spanish armed forces and seize power[65]. The leaders of ETA are expelled from France where they were in exile. In 1965, ETA's internal structure and ideology are restructured in order to be able to support a revolutionary war. The group bases its strategy on the action-reaction-action spiral: if the organization's nationalist violence provokes the police's repression on Basque citizens, the oppressed people will join ETA in their fight against the State[66]. In 1967, after expelling the worker's faction, ETA is mainly driven by the Third Worldist tendencies and divided into four poles: economic, military, cultural, and political. In the organization's journal, they present:

the new subject of the ETA narrative: the 'Basque proletariat with national class consciousness', which suffered from a double oppression (as a working class exploited by the bourgeoisie and as a nation occupied by Spain) and was to be liberated by means of 'armed struggle' (*Zutik* 44, 01/1967). (Fernandèz 2017, p. 25)

On 7 June 1968, ETA kills their first victim, a Guardia Civil agent who had stopped them for a routine traffic check. Etxebarrieta shots him under the influence of amphetamines. The shooter dies a few moments later in an exchange of fire with la Guardia Civil. As distrust between the government and the Basque population runs high, ETA's narrative of the event is adopted. Etxebarrieta becomes 'the First Martyr of the Revolution' (Hordago 1979, 484–488). Masses were told in his honor, and his death was seen as cold-blooded murder[67]. The death of Che Guevara the previous year only intensified the glorification of Etxebarrieta, who was an active defender of the armed struggle and was painted as a revolutionary hero. From then on, the violence escalates from all sides, as ETA members plant a bomb in a police vehicle and the Guardia Civil engages in brutal torture and overall repression of the Basque society[68]. This global violence creates a wave of protest. The civil society goes on strikes and

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[65] Fernández, "The origins of ETA", 23.
[66] Fernández, "The origins of ETA"; Mees, *The Basque Contention*.
[67] Sullivan*, ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[68] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.

at demonstrations, five hundred Basque priests ask for the termination of the State of Emergency installed by the Spanish government[69]. In the first days of December 1970 begun the Burgos Trial, where sixteen members of ETA were to be judged by a military court for their campaign of armed struggle. The popular support for the ETA members was huge, and marked by strikes, demonstrations and even occupations of churches (two of the accused were priests)[70]. Towards the end of the month, Franco commuted the death penalties to lifelong imprisonment. ETA celebrated the decision as the result of the union and support between the armed organization and the Basque society. In 1973, ETA assassinates the Admiral Carrero Blanco, the future heir of Franco's regime. The car bombed detonates in the context of the dictator's health declining progressively, and ETA members entertain the euphoric idea of the impediment of the dictatorship[71]. However, the organization is under the pressure of divisive debates and decides in October 1974 to split between ETA politico-militar (ETA-pm) and ETA-militar (ETA-m). In the wake of Franco's death in 1975, ETA-pm opts for a focus on legal leftist party politics, while ETA-m preferred to continue its armed struggle. As Franco's regime ends and a transition towards democracy is initiated, how will ETA-pm and ETA-m adapt their behavior to the new political arena?

Transition Towards Democracy (75-81)

After Franco's death on November 1975, Juan I ascends to the throne. The President of the government, Adolfo Suárez, works towards the recovering of a parliamentary democracy. Suárez's party wins the first elections in 1977. The First Parliament, in response to a request from opposing parties, needs to deal with the question of "political prisoners":

The Amnesty Law was approved on 15 October 1977 in order to deactivate terrorism and achieve a definitive reconciliation between the 'two Spains', which is why the 'legal forgetting' covered both the crimes committed by ETA and other groups (66 murders) and those responsible for the Francoist repression. ETA's last prisoner, Francisco Aldanondo, left jail on 9 December (Fernández 2013, 125–128). (Fernández 2017, 30)

After offering amnesty to all sides of the historical political violence, the Parliament approves the Spanish Constitution in 1978. The government considers giving the Basque

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[69] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism.*
[70] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism.*
[71] Mees, The Basque Contention.

provinces an autonomous community status within the Spanish democracy, which ETA-m is passionately against. In 1979, the government statutes in favor of the Guernica Statute and the Basque provinces gain autonomy. ETA-m considers the democracy to be a 'disguised dictatorship' (Fernandez 2017, p. 30) and after accepting the defeat of their military struggle against the transition, they began the 'war of attrition'[72]. It consisted of killing the greatest number of police and armed forces' members in order to pressure the government into accepting their demands. In 1981, ETA-pm declares an indefinite truce. Part of the group reintegrates the civil society with the help of the government as the others rejoin ETA-m or other violent nationalist organizations. From 1976 to 1981, in the beginning of their war of attrition, ETA killed 302 people. During the war of attrition, ETA-m used of a diversity of violent actions:

its actions included kidnapping for ransom; assassination of businessmen who refused to pay the 'revolutionary tax'; killing of political opponents, alleged police informers and retired army officers; bank robberies, the planting of bombs in public buildings, and the machine-gunning of bars and police barracks. (Sullivan 2015, 243).

Stabilization (82-92)

ETA-m's violence was met with similar counteractions from the Spanish armed forces. In 1982, the national elections are won by the PSOE, a historically republican party. Although some thought that having at the head of the government a party from the losing side of the Civil War would appease the conflict, ETA-m launched several attacks on the days following the elections[73]. By 1983, the PSOE had lost its political support in the Basque Country where graffities protesting the government were flourishing[74]. As the demands of ETA-m remained unmet, the organization continue to kidnap rich businessmen. On the French side of the border, Basque refugees start to slowly disappear. It is part of the "dirty war" initiated by the GAL against ETA. GAL is a far-right terrorist group that committed acts of violence against Basque nationalists in vengeance of ETA's actions. The

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[72] Fernández, "The origins of ETA".
[73] Mees, *The Basque Contention*.
[74] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.

Basque society suspected at the time that it be mandated by the Spanish government to hunt ETA after the refusal of the French government to help[75]. The war between ETA-m and the GAL continue for a few years, and is suspected, with other far-right organizations, to be sponsored by the Spanish government: "Between 1983 and 1987, mercenaries of the GAL, paid with money coming from the secret funds of the Spanish government, committed thirty-eight attacks and killed twenty-seven people, most of them Basque militants in French territory" (Murua 2014, 100). In 1986, the GAL slowly fades away as ETA-m has killed its most important leaders and the Spanish government is taking actions against them, after being pressured by the French government to do so[76] (Sullivan, 2015). The same year, twenty-six leaders and members of ETA are arrested by the police as a result of an operation to free a kidnap victim. Although it could be assumed that ETA-m would be less lethal in a democracy, the organization is actually responsible for a major upsurge of violence during the first part of the 1980s. Towards the end of the 1980s, the Spanish government under the international pressure engages in discussions with ETA:

After some secret conversations, in January 1989, ETA announced a unilateral fifteen-day ceasefire, followed by a bilateral two-month ceasefire agreed on with the Spanish government in order to enable further talks. By that time, the Spanish government had secured the support of most of the Spanish and Basque political parties for their dialogue with ETA (Murua 2014, 105)

Although the Basque society has strong hopes for the end of the conflict, on April 4, 1989, ETA declares its decision to resume armed struggle. The organization feels does not trust the government and feels that the political nature of ETA is being dismissed, only to enhance the terrorist narrative. However, as the Spanish government needs a resolution, ETA waits for the ideal context for negotiations:

Despite the failure of the Algiers attempt, ETA did not abandon the negotiation strategy. With the Barcelona Olympic Games and the Seville World Exposition in 1992 on the horizon, the Spanish state would be under the scope of the whole world, and the Basque group had the confidence to put enough pressure on the government to force a negotiation. (Murua 2014, 109)

ETA's decision to pursue negotiations marks a change of strategy: it is the slow end of the war of attrition, and the beginning of the conflict resolution process.

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[75] Murua, Imanol, "The End of ETA (2007-2001): Narratives from the Media and from the Actors".
[76] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism.*

o   Decline and End of ETA (1992-2018)

It could be argued that 1992 was the year that ETA officially lost the Basque conflict:

All in all, ETA resumed and intensified its campaign. After killing eighteen people in 1989 and twenty-five in 1990, ETA carried out 137 armed attacks and killed forty- four people in 1991 in a renewed offensive to force talks. However, things did not develop as planned. The arrests of three top leaders of ETA in Bidart (Lapurdi) in March 1992, along with other subsequent important police operations, neutralized the whole strategy of the Basque group. The arrests at Bidart are a milestone and a symbol in ETA's history. The organization needed years to reorganize and establish a relatively stable leadership. ETA would never be the same although it would recover part of its capacity."(Murua 2014, 110)

The police operation resulted in the capture of top leaders of ETA-m, as well as an indirect

loss of international momentum and loss of support in the Basque society and for other Basque

nationalists (although it had already substantially decreased since its creation)[77]. In 2004, ETA is

falsely accused by the Spanish government to be responsible for the Madrid terrorist attack.

Evidence cumulates to the point that the Spanish public's opinion shows little trust for the

government's version. The presidential elections come a few days after the Islamic terrorist attack and

Zapatero is elected. Zapatero is decided to put an end to the conflict, and in March 2005, the

parliamentary approves engaging in a dialogue with ETA. After years of talks, negotiations and

broken dialogue, the organization starts to show signs of fatigue. In 2010, six Nobel Peace Prize

winners put their names on the Brussels Declaration, asking for ETA to declare a permanent cease-

fire. In October 2011, ETA announces a permanent cease-fire and lay down their arms. ETA engages

in a slow decommission process. In 2018, the armed group announces its disbandment. ETA sends this

letter as the last words of the organization:

In the Basque Country, on April 16th, 2018
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through this communication, we want to inform you of the decision that Euskadi Ta Askatasuna has just taken. ETA has decided to terminate its historical cycle and its function, ending its journey. Therefore, ETA has completely dissolved all its structures and has terminated its political initiative.[78]

The dissolution of the nationalist group was only possible due to the implication of the conflict's

resolution international community. It marks the end of five decades of violence.

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[77] Whitfield, Teresa, "The Basque Conflict and ETA: the difficulties of an ending", United States Institute of Peace Official Report, (December 2015). www.usip.org
[78] Translated from *France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine*. ETA on « Paroles d'exilés du Pays Basque », 19h20 : Le Magazine du Pays Basque. A. Boutin, F. Cordier, B. Sandeaux. Chief of Redaction : Ttottle Darguy.

ETA's narratives

ETA's Testimonies

When researching data pertaining to ETA's narratives, I mainly found second-hand testimonies, quotes from founders of the movement and translations of ETA's internal bulletin, *Zutabe*. These testimonies give us indications on the causes behind ETA's creation, its goals, and its perception of the conflict and of itself. The data has been collected and color-codded according to the category assigned. Testimonies pertaining to the belief in social change are marked in blue, what describes its kinship ties is codded in red, ETA's testimonies of chosen trauma are codded in green. Anything related to grievances is codded in purple. In orange is the ingroup members' salience of identity. The emotional aspect and expressions of compassionate reasoning are colored in pink. The testimonies will be classified according to three historical periods. First will be the birth of Basque nationalism (1876-1950), then will come the birth and life of ETA (1951-1991), and finally the decline and end of the organization (1992-2018).

1876-1950: Birth of Basque nationalism

When it comes to the popularization of Basque nationalism, it is greatly due to the fervent activism of Sabino Arana. The founder of Basque nationalism describes the relationship between Spain and the Basque Country in these words:

The cordial hatred that we profess for Spain is grounded in an equally deep love for Euskeria, our fatherland. We do not really care whether Spain is great or small, strong or weak, rich or poor. She is enslaving our fatherland, and that is reason enough for us to hate her with all our soul whether at the height of her greatness or near the edge of her ruin. If we were to see this Latin nation torn into pieces by an internal conflagration or an international war, we would celebrate this with delight and real enthusiasm. It would also weigh on us the greatest of all misfortunes … if Spain prospered and became great.
Sabino Arana, *Bizkaitarra*, January 29, 1894 (Mees 2020, 54)

When the Civil War comes, the Basque nationalist movement needs to decide what its political values and interests are. A PNV member testifies of the party's finale decisionto join the Republicans' side:

Once the problem was outlined, our position was very clear: In this fight of democracy against fascism, Basque nationalism had, as always in its history, to take a stand with democracy … We are against imperialism and fascism due to our Christian spirit … Until the defeat of fascism, Basque patriotism, Basque nationalism, will remain firm in its place.

José Antonio Aguirre, *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes*, October 1, 1936. (Mees 2020, 77)

1951-1991: Birth and life of ETA

Tired to wait for the PNV to accomplish their goal, ETA forms in the 1950s. When asked about the driving force behind the movement, one of the founders, Txillardegi, said:

with no doubt patriotism, i.e. the living consciousness of national oppression, the fervent interest for everything Basque, the absolute discredit of Spanish politics, the ethnic idea of the Basque Country," and "non-conformity and opposition to the passive policy of our elders; don't wait but act.

Txillardegi, 1955 (Nuñez 1993, 23)

In 1968, Joxe Azurmendi, a member of ETA, writes a poem on the suffering of the Basque people:

Our people does not have a history.
It is poor.
It does not have anything other than a couple of little pirates, Some long-suffering workers,
Many senseless borders,
And thousands of misfortunes.
This is no small matter.
A curtain of rain envelops our calendar.
So do not search for any empire of ours
In the great books of world history.

(Mees 2020, 2)

Txillardegi describes ETA members as 'soldiers and that organization, which did not even have a name, saw itself as the continuation of the Basque Army' Txillardegi, 1977 (Fernández 2017, 21). The next year, in 1978, Argala, a prominent leader of ETA, said:

[N]one of us like violence. Armed struggle is unpleasant, it's tough, and because of it one goes to jail, goes into exile, or is tortured. Because of it one can die, one feels obliged to kill, it hardens people, it causes them harm but armed struggle is essential to move forward.   Argala, 1978 (Fernández 2017, 103)

1992-2018: Decline and end of ETA

In *The Basque Contention*, Ludger Mees relates an interview of one of ETA's members from 2001:

When the journalist asked if he would have refused the order to kill Baglietto if he had been aware of the story, the former ETA activist answered 'It had to be so. The decision came from above':

JOURNALIST: How did you become a murderer?
AZPIAZU: I am not a murderer. Nor a hero. I am normal.
JOURNALIST: You have killed.
AZPIAZU: Out of historical necessity ... out of responsibility for the Basque people, which is a great people, bearer of a great culture, speakers of one of the oldest languages in the world. It has never been subdued, neither by the Romans, nor the Visigoths, or the Arabs. A people that is so completely different from the Spaniards.

(Mees 2020, 168)[79]

In 2011, an anonymous ex-member of ETA shares his perspective on the organization's

current goals and values:

Is my friend Arnaldo Otegi Batasuna, or is he ETA? He is ETA. Now, I do think that ETA has changed. It changed strategy. Now they believe that they can achieve their objectives without killings.

ETA, 2011 (Murual, 2014, 351)

The last testimonies related by the magazine *Zutabe* (2011) convert on two main reasons why

ETA was created, national and social liberation: "national liberation and social liberation were

regarded the two sides of the same coin,"[80]. As to their goals, it was to "confront the extreme

repression and negation of the post-war dictatorship."[81].

One of the founders simply stated: 'Something had to be done!' (Murual, 2014, 61) .

From the 2000s, Basque nationalists in exile start to come back to their natal villages. Xabier

Arin Baztarrika, an ancient ETA member shares his experience of coming back to the Basque Country

from exile:

In Ataun, I first visited my family, because of how much they supported me. They gave us everything: so much love and solidarity… We were three brothers in exile! Those forty years have been very hard on my parents… The first thing I did was to flourish their graves and tell them thank you.[82]

Xabier Arin Baztarrika, 2014

An ancient ETA member in exile, Jon Irazola, comes back to the Basque Country for the first time in

decades:

It feels like a rebirth. A chapter closes and another one opens, filled with hope! I can meet again with the friends I have had since forever. Some have known jail. I wish all can live a day like today !

Jon Irazola, 2014[83]

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[79] Extract of an interview with a member of ETA, Azpiazu, in the German journal *Der Spiegel*, 2001, 32.
[80] ETA, *Zutabe 113*, April 2011, 5.
[81] ETA, *Zutabe 113*, April 2011, 4.
[82] Translated from France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine, « Paroles d'exilés du Pays Basque », 19h20 : Le Magazine du Pays Basque. Reportage par A. Boutin, F. Cordier, B. Sandeaux. Chief of Redaction : Ttottle Darguy

[83] Translated from France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine, « Paroles d'exilés du Pays Basque », 19h20 : Le Magazine du Pays Basque. Reportage par A. Boutin, F. Cordier, B. Sandeaux. Chief of Redaction : Ttottle Darguy

Jon Irazola is interviewed on his perspective of the conflict upon his return to the Basque Country:

No one feels happy about having killed anyone. I know it, even though I have never been in such a situation. A person who goes through this has to carry it on their conscience. And it's the same thing for the ones who were in front of us. It forced us to think and act differently.

Jon Irazola, 2014[84]

Jon Irazola also pronounces a public discourse in the name of more than eighty Basques in exile who decided to come back to their land: 'We have left our land to become free, and we are coming back to remain free and participate in the conflict's resolution. Our Country is our breath!'.

On their finale narratives:

In the report containing the conclusion of ETA's internal debate in 2012, the armed group also summarizes the specific achievements of the armed activity, along with the more general political achievements of the "liberation movement" stressed in the bulletin Zutabe. The armed struggle, contends the conclusions' report, has put into evidence the existence of a conflict and its dimension; it has enabled the implication of the international actors in the resolution process because it has spread the severity of the conflict worldwide; it has fueled the revolutionary and combative values; it has reinforced the eagerness to fight of subsequent generations; it has prevented the assimilation of the revolutionary and combatant feature of the liberation movement.

(Murual, 2014, 348)

These testimonies reflect upon the historical pain of an entire ethnic group. They also reveal a fervent determination to gain independence and attain national and social liberation from the oppression of the Spanish State.

Basque Murals: a raw narrative of the conflict

Basque murals are a big part of both the culture and the political mobilization. In the words of Rolston and Berastegi:

Murals are often dismissed by journalists, politicians and academics as indicative of 'urban decay' (Gibbons 2004) or as narrow-minded 'territorial markers' (Matusitz 2014, pp. 120–121). Taking murals seriously in relation to political mobilization by social movements begins by recognizing that political mural painting gets established and survives because it works for the social movement—as a way of breaking out of marginalization and censorship, building solidarity and collective pride, mobilizing support from others beyond the immediate group and standing as a popular, non- elitist and eye-catching symbol of the group and its aspirations.

(Rolston, and Berastegi 2015, 37)

Basque Murals are important visuals to the abertzale-left (the broad left-wing nationalist movement). Indeed, murals are a strong means of political communication, creating long-lasting and

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[84] Translated from France 3 Nouvelle-Aquitaine, « Paroles d'exilés du Pays Basque », 19h20 : Le Magazine du Pays Basque. Reportage par A. Boutin, F. Cordier, B. Sandeaux. Chief of Redaction : Ttottle Darguy

emotionally striking messages, which can be simply understandable[85]. Not only do they convey political messages, but their presence and the fact that they occupy public space is in itself an act of resistance: the marginalized groups claim their existence and refuse disappearing. Murals also hold power in the fact that they can't be sold, they belong to the people, and no money may hide it from the public eye. Murals are then raw narratives of the conflict.

Already in the 1960s, when ETA was a newborn political organization, they made themselves publicly known, not only through waving the ikurriña (Basque flag) from churches and bombing Francoist monuments, but also through painting graffiti. They did so in a dangerous public climate, when the Guardia Civil used to shoot on sight (Rolston and Berastegi 2015). Indeed, graffiti has the power to 'mobilize support, an essential element in the growth of a social movement. In effect, it says to the not-yet converted: this is our position on justice, freedom, rights; if you agree, join in the struggle with us.' (Rolston and Berastegi 2015, 36). Through the occupation of the Basque public space, ETA wished to mobilize the Basque people and gain the public's support for their cause. Through their actions, ETA also participated in a re-definition of the Basque culture and people: 'The underlying spirit in all these activities was a commitment to the Basque language and culture. Even youths who were not ethnically Basque became Basque. Basqueness was formed in practice.' (Rolston and Berastegi 2015, 39). Basque murals in the 1960s were a turning point in the Basque culture, as they participated in the transformation of definition when it came to who belongs in the Basque community. The boundaries shifted from being contingent to an indigenous blood link to the idea of an inclusive commonality related to cultural and political activities. Being Basque then meant doing Basque things, and not just having Basque relatives. After Franco's death in 1975, there was a booming of the Basque street-art. The murals' claims ranged from independence, amnesty for political prisoners, promotion of the Basque language, feminist claims such as abortion rights, environmentalism and opposition to nuclear power, opposition to American foreign policies, opposition to capitalism, support to Third World countries…etc. and most of these claims still stand to this day:

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[85] Bill Rolston and Amaia Alvarez Berastegi, "Taking Murals seriously: Basque Murals and Mobilization", *International Journal of politics, culture, and society* no. 1 (August 2015): 33-56

Image 1. San Sebastian, 1981. Mural denouncing the torture of Basque prisoners and asking for amnesty.

Image 2. Bayonne, 1993. Mural representing the Basque Country surrounded by Spanish and French forces.

Inside the Basque Country are the symbols of feminism, environmentalism, amnesty for political prisoners,

revolution, Basque language, and international squatters. This shows a persisting feeling and desire for the Basque's historical political requests.

Image 3. Arbizu, n.d. symbol of ETA painted on a wall.

Rolston and Berastegi explain the potentiality in the use of murals:

Murals help create, confirm and support a collective identity for the social movement. For marginalized group in particular, they are a form of pride. As such, they speak in the first, often main and sometimes only instance to members of the in-group.
(Rolston and Berastegi 2015, 35).

Murals are then a way to communicate alternative narratives for marginalized ingroups (or those who perceive themselves as such). Since 1975, the murals' messages have stayed on a similar course. Whether it be in the 80s, the 90s, or in the present decade, Basque murals' main themes have remained the same: nationalism, feminism, environmentalism, anticapitalism.

These murals communicate various messages. Through the denunciation of torture and the request for amnesty in Image 1., and through the critic of Spanish and French polices' scrutiny (represented as the lens in Image 2.) and violence (represented by the armors, arms and the belligerent body language of the police characters on Image 2.), the authors of the murals denounce a feeling of oppression. Through the symbols of Image 2, the Basque people is represented as equipped to counter the oppression: with the use of their values (feminism, environmentalism, anticapitalism…etc.). In

Image 3, the Basque people are presented as menacing and dangerous, as the contrast between the white paint and the black symbols catches the eye. Image 1 feels like a scream, Image 2 looks like an assessment, and Image 3 carries a threat. Although they all have different approaches, they all incarnate a high desire for freedom and a coherent narrative in regard to Basque socio-political claims.

III. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

After collecting and classifying our data, we obtain three tables presenting the testimonies of ETA members/PNV founders according to the historical atmosphere of the time and classified under factors of intergroup conflict. The analysis of the data will be done in two steps. The first part of the analysis will be to analyze the testimonies in connections to the historical perspective and factors of influence. This will allow our testimonies to reveal how the intergroup conflict's variables affect the narratives. The second part of our analysis will be focused on the cycles of violence which narratives may depict.

1876-1950	Emotional State and Compassionate Reasoning	Belief in social change	Kinship ties	Chosen trauma	Grievances	Salience of identity
Arana – 1894 Birth of Basque Nationalism	"cordial hatred that we profess for Spain" "deep love for Euskeria" "hate her with all our soul" "delight and real enthusiasm" at the idea of Spain struggling "greatest of all misfortunes … if Spain prospered		"Maketos" "Spaniards"	"enslaving our fatherland"	"enslaving our fatherland"	"Maketos" "Spaniards"

	and became great"					
PNV member – 1936 Civil War		"Until the defeat of fascism, Basque patriotism, Basque nationalism, will remain firm in its place"				55

Table 2. Factors of influence in the Basque nationalist narrative: 1876-1950.

1951-1991	Emotional State and Compassionate Reasoning	Belief in social change	Kinship ties	Chosen trauma	Grievances	Salience of identity
Txillardegi (founder of ETA) – 1955 End of WWII Francoist regime		"opposition to the passive policy of our elders"	"ethnic idea of the Basque Country" "fervent interest for everything Basque" "absolute discredit of Spanish politics" "non-conformity"	"living consciousness of national oppression" "don't wait but act"	"living consciousness of national oppression" "don't wait but act"	"ethnic idea of the Basque Country" "fervent interest for everything Basque" "absolute discredit of Spanish politics" "non-conformity"
Joxe Azurmendi (ETA) – 1968 Poem on the Basque struggle Francoism				"Our people does not have a history." "It is poor." "does not have anything other than a couple of little pirates" "Some long-suffering workers" "senseless borders" "thousands of misfortunes" "A curtain of rain envelops our calendar."	"Our people does not have a history." "It is poor." "does not have anything other than a couple of little pirates" "Some long-suffering workers" "senseless borders" "thousands of misfortunes" "A curtain of rain envelops our calendar."	
Txillardegi (founder of ETA) - 1977						"Soldiers" "the continuation of the Basque Army"
Argala (ETA leader) – 1978 Armed Struggle				"Armed struggle is unpleasant" "one goes to jail, goes into exile, or is	"Armed struggle is unpleasant" "one goes to jail, goes into exile, or is	

				tortured" because of armed struggle	tortured" because of armed struggle	
San Sebastian Mural - 1981				Denounces the use of torture by the authorities Demands that political prisoners be given amnesty	Denounces the use of torture by the authorities Demands that political prisoners be given amnesty	

Table 3. Factors of influence in ETA's narrative: 1951-1991.

1992-2018	Emotional State and Compassionate Reasoning	Belief in social change	Kinship ties	Chosen trauma	Grievances	Salience of identity
Bayonne Mural – 1993 Decline of ETA	Symbol of Solidarity	Symbol of Environmentalism Symbol of Anticapitalism Symbol of Feminism	Symbol of Euskara	Police Scrutiny Police Violence	Police Scrutiny Police Violence	Symbol of Euskara
Azpiazu (ETA) – 2001			"great people, bearer of a great culture, speakers of one of the oldest languages in the world" "responsibility for the Basque people" "so completely different from the Spaniards"	"historical necessity"	"historical necessity"	"great people, bearer of a great culture, speakers of one of the oldest languages in the world" "responsibility for the Basque people" "so completely different from the Spaniards"
ETA member (anonymous) - 2007						"Is my friend Arnaldo Otegi Batasuna, or is he ETA? He is ETA"

ETA (Zutabe 113) – 2011 On the causes of the creation of ETA		"national liberation and social liberation"		"extreme repression" "negation of the post-war dictatorship"	"extreme repression" "negation of the post-war dictatorship"	58
ETA member – 2014 On the causes of the creation of ETA				"Something had to be done"	"Something had to be done"	
Arin Baztarrika (ETA) – 2014 Reflecting on the conflict			"how much they supported me" "They gave us everything: so much love and solidarity"	"Those forty years have been very hard on my parents"	"Those forty years have been very hard on my parents"	
Irazola (ETA) – 2014 On his return in the Basque Country	"It feels like a rebirth." "A chapter closes and another one opens, filled with hope!" "A person who goes through this has to carry it on their conscience." "same thing for the ones who were in front of us." "It forced us to think and act differently."		"Our Country is our breath"			

Table 4. Factors of influence in ETA's narrative: 1992-2018.

Intergroup conflict: factors of influence narrated by ETA

1876-1950: Basque nationalism

Before the birth of ETA, Basque nationalism constructs a narrative surrounding the identity of the Basque people, their values, and their purpose. Arana's emotional state and rationale stand far from compassionate reasoning. On the opposite, it shows signs of empathetic distress[86]: not only are strong negative emotions professed towards Spain, but the happiness of the Basque people is presented as depending on the unhappiness of the Spanish people. Indeed, Arana presents the conflict as a zero-sum game[87]: either Spain has what it wants or Euskeria does. The testimony of Arana also shows the entanglement of kinship ties and salience of identity; and chosen trauma and grievances. Sabino Arana uses the positive distinction process to compare the group with the "Spaniards" and "Maketos", pejorative words referring Spanish people and migrants. This is an attempt to make the Basque group more positively distinct in times when the Basque identity had become threatened[88]. In the testimony of the founder of Basque nationalism, the pejorative nicknames used to designate the Spanish people and the immigrants indicate both the existence of strong kinship ties which connect the ingroup members and the intense salience of identity which animates them. Indeed, intergroup prejudice is used by large identity groups to reaffirm the strong bonds which unite the members and highlight the supremacy of the ingroup[89]. When it comes to chosen trauma and grievances, Arana denounces the enslavement of the Basque Land. The historical power asymmetry between the Spanish government and the Basque provinces[90] is at the root of their transgenerational trauma, which echoes as a grievance in Arana's present. Arana's testimony is overall a precious source of information when it comes to the origin's narrative of the Basque people and the Basque nationalist movement. When comes the civil war, a PNV member testifies of the political decision of the organization to join the side of the Republicans. As the Basque identity is threatened by the Civil War, the ingroup's belief in social change pushes them to consider an intergroup relations framework of the conflict instead of an interpersonal one[91]. The perspective according to which the Basque people have better chances to gain

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[86] Gopin, *Compassionate Reasoning*.
[87] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[88] Mees, *The Basque Contention*.
[89] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*.
[90] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[91] Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict".

independence if Spain is a democracy[92] is in direct contradiction with Arana's zero-sum game aspect of the conflict. The Basque nationalist narratives from 1894 to 1950 show an evolution when it comes to the zero-sum game perspective due to the evolution of the geopolitical context. At the end of the XIXth century, Arana is filled with empathetic distress and is stuck in a polarizing vision of the conflict. But by 1936, when the war comes, the security dilemma[93] faced by the PNV forces the party to modify its perspective on the Spanish. By choosing to believe in social change, the PNV party moves towards the intergroup extremity of the interpersonal-intergroup continuum[94].

1951-1991: Formation and Life of ETA

Table 3 gives us the opportunity to dive in ETA's narratives from the creation of the organization to its progressive decline. As in Table 2, it seems as though salience of identity and kinship ties are blending when it comes to the conflict's narratives. The same phenomenon is observed for the concepts of chosen trauma and grievances. This indicates to me that at least in the narrative and maybe in reality, chosen trauma is the main grievance; and kinship ties are determinant in the salience of the Basque identity.

Upon the formation of the ETA group, Txillardegi (one of the founders of ETA) expresses a nationalist narrative that is closely related to Arana's: a zero-sum game perspective of the conflict, a strong expression of kinship ties/salience of identity, the desire to free the Basque people from its oppression, and the intent to succeed where the passivity of Basque nationalist elders failed them. Txillardegi's testimony is characterized by its political determination. Indeed, in the midst of Francoism, the Basque nationalists need to increase the positiveness of their social-identity, and thus hardens once again the boundary between Basques and Spanish. The poem of Joxe Azurmendi (member of ETA) in 1968 further defines the source of Basque suffering: the poet uses a semantic that revolves around pain and history and relates the sad and somber Basque history. In 1977, Txillardegi defines ETA members as "soldiers" and ETA as the "continuation of the Basque Army", this confirms

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[92] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[93] Korostelina, *Social Identities and Conflict*.
[94] Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative Theory of intergroup Conflict."

the close relation between Arana's narrative and Txillardegi's and shows the belligerent, military-like behavior of ETA. In 1978, Argala, another one of ETA's leaders testifies of the difficulty and necessity of armed struggle: it is presented as a moral and necessary behavior, but also as a painful and violent process. In Argala's testimony, the ingroup master's narrative meets the reality of armed conflict. It is both echoing the origin's narrative of Basque nationalism and the difficult reality of decades of violence and trauma[95]. Finally, the San Sebastian's mural from 1981 demands the end of the violence, indicating that the Basque society is overwhelmed by the intergroup conflict. ETA has shown unambiguously that the group is ready for conflict and violence. This can be explained as ETA requires a high ingroup primacy from its members, has a strong sense of Basqueness, and entertains prejudices on outgroups.

1992-2018: Decline and End of ETA

As major leaders of ETA are arrested in 1992, the organization and its strategy crumble. However, due to the intensity of the war of attrition and the extremes to which all actors were willing to go to win, the global fatigue is not enough for the conflict to die down. Looking at the 1993 mural in Bayonne provides us with relevant elements of context. First, the mural is by the nature of the drawing nationalist. Euskeria is shown as a land of many values. The representation of the lens and the police represent chosen trauma and grievances: it shows police scrutiny and violence, and the feeling that there is no escape. This mural also provides hope through the symbolism drawn inside of the Basque Country. Symbols associated to feminism, anticapitalism, the Basque language, amnesty, solidarity, and environmentalism are represented as the tools and values which may be yielded by the Basque people. Although this mural testifies of the feeling of oppression, it also carries hope for a better future through the idea of Basque shared national values. In 2001, a prominent leader of ETA, Azpiazu, testifies on the motivations behind his actions. Azpiazu answers that it was out of "historical necessity", which resonates with Arana's origin's narrative. Azpiazu expresses the extent of his love and loyalty to the ingroup by highlighting its main qualities: its culture and language. Through the

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[95] Sullivan, ETA and Basque Nationalism.

demonstration of the salience of his identity and the strength of his kinship ties, Azpiazu's narrative is deeply revealing of the ingroup's primacy and Arana's narrative's influence. Between 2007 and 2014, the testimonies from ETA members deal with their reflection on the events from the last decades. In 2011, the organization announces its permanent cease-fire and the slow process of decommission[96]. In 2011, in the last edition of *Zutabe*, ETA's journal, the group justifies its violent past by demonstrating the legitimacy of their actions. They present themselves as freedom fighters and victims of oppression who did what was needed to defend their people. The testimony is carried by notions of kinship ties, salience of identity, as well as the constant belief in social change. The last testimony we found of ETA is dated from 2014. Irazola, an ex-member of the organization, returns to the Basque Country after years of political exile and comments his perspective of the future. His answer seems to indicate the presence of compassionate reasoning in his narrative. Indeed, he speaks with hope and compassion for its people, all while acknowledging the struggles of the Spanish outgroup, and the terrible consequences of violence on the consciences of everyone who was involved: Spanish armed forces just as Basque nationalists armed groups. Irazola finishes by explaining that the heavy consequences they paid for their violence "forced us to think and act differently". Although he reveals attribute of compassionate reasoning, it does not compromise Irazola's patriotism: "our country is our breath".

Discussion

The analysis of the testimonies have revealed some interesting results. First, it seems as though chosen trauma and grievances and kinship ties and salience of identity are co-dependent variables with similar if not identical impacts on narratives. Secondly, it has also shown through the case of the Civil War that zero-sum game perceptions evolve with the geopolitical context. Although the PNV had been professing a sacred hatred for anything Spanish, it did end up fighting by the sides of Republicans for democracy.

This analysis explores how narratives interact with reality, and vice versa. ETA's narratives are highly influenced by the geopolitical context: when the group feels under attack or threatened,

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[96] Murua, 2014.

their frustration and violence increases exponentially. It seems that the consequent empathetic distress pushes the ingroup to withdraw into itself, isolate from outgroups, entertain a conflict-supporting narrative, and dehumanize non-ingroup members. This can then result in the drawing of harder boundaries between the ingroup and the outgroups, harder intergroup prejudices, and a desensitized explosion of violence.

Cycles of violence and hints of peace hidden in narratives

The 4Cs in narratives

In the Basque case, ETA describes itself as an "army" of freedom fighters who use violence to liberate themselves and their entire people. The armed struggle is presented not as a choice but as a duty (cf. "historical necessity" and "armed struggle is unpleasant"). The framing of ETA's values and moral make it sound as though they are brave countrymen sacrificing themselves for their "fatherland". It is not untrue in the sense that it is what ETA believes about itself. But it glamourizes violence (under the forms of torture, public bombing, assassination…etc.) and implies that it is the tool of the brave patriot. Through narratives, some aspects of reality are deformed: some facts are glorified until there are no facts no more, and some others are hidden in the shadows[97]. The malleable aspect of narratives can be dangerous in conflictual settings. If we look for evidence of the 4Cs model in ETA's narratives, it becomes quite obvious that narratives are an easy amplification of violence in intergroup conflicts. When it comes to the first C, the data shows that Arana, and Txillardegi at the start of ETA, do a lot of comparisons between Spain and Euskeria. However, the comparisons serve a clear purpose: illustrate all that is sacred (Basqueness) , and all that is vile (Spanish-ness). The narratives highlight the comparison, competition, confrontation, and counteraction dynamics of the conflict but the present data does not illustrate a clear evolution of the model. Indeed, it starts immediately with very polarizing language. In fact, the global evolution of the narratives tend to show a de-escalation of the violence.

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[97] Bar Tal, Oren, et al.

Compassionate Reasoning in narratives

Before 1992, the narratives correspond to conflict-supporting narratives: they justify the involvement of the ingroup ("living consciousness of national oppression"), legitimize the use of violence ("don't wait but act"), denounces the repression perpetuated by the outgroups (San Sebastian Mural, 1981), accentuates intergroup differences ("Spaniards" and "Maketos)…Etc. After 1992, and even more so after 2011, it seems as though the Basque group has found some sort of appeasement. ETA members speak about past actions in a way that dissociate them from it, as if it belonged to the past and was not so true for the present: they justify their past actions ("Something had to be done!") but also acknowledge the wrongdoing that was done ("Those forty years have been very hard on my parents") and carry a message of hope ("A chapter closes and another one opens, filled with hope!"). Furthermore, Irazola even testifies of his compassion for the other side: "same thing for the ones who were in front of us". Compassionate Reasoning in conflict narratives seems to take the ingroup away from empathetic distress and accentuate the similarity and the shared humanity between groups' members. It also conveys a message of self-compassion which itself encourages forgiveness. Compassionate reasoning can also improve the sense of safety of the ingroup: if outgroups are perceived as less menacing and more similar to the ingroup, then they will be considered less scary, aggressive, and irrational and the intergroup relations could immensely improve. Finally, compassionate reasoning gives the ingroup an opportunity to redefine its narratives. Indeed, through the amelioration of the perception of outgroups and intergroup relations, and through the practice of self-compassion, compassionate reasoning gives powerful tools to alter conflict-supportive narratives.

Discussion

This analysis has shown different aspects of conflict-supporting narratives. First, we have found that the 4Cs model is not represented in the testimonies we have collected. This may be due to lack of data. Indeed, we have found traces of comparative and competitive intergroup dynamics, but none directly connected to confrontation or counteraction. Then, we have analyzed the potential role of compassionate reasoning in conflict resolution. As Irazola

presents strong indicators of compassionate reasoning, his narrative is hopeful, positive, and anchored in complicated and nuanced realities. It does seem that compassionate reasoning has guided Irazola's narratives towards a peace-oriented narratives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis has exposed major characteristics of the ETA group during the Basque conflict and explored fascinating aspects of narratives in conflict settings. By color-codding testimonies and contextualizing them with historical events, we were able to identify narrative mechanisms responding to historical events. These narrative patterns are influenced by the ingroup's identity factors such as salience of identity, kinship ties, and chosen trauma. The use of murals has exposed raw visions of the Basque country and the conflict. Overall, ETA has demonstrated through its history and testimonies the mechanisms at play when it comes to intergroup identity-based conflict. The group's narratives also encourages us to take a closer look at the role of compassionate reasoning in the process of disbandment of the organization.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

'What social identity mechanisms influence narratives that explain ETA's difficult end?' is the question that has been asked all along this dissertation. One important aspect of the answer is the methodology. My research aims at identifying how ingroup conflict cycles can be broken through narratives, and what the role of compassionate reasoning is in the process. It englobes a plurality of levels of analysis. It encompasses a meta level through the use of concepts of intergroup conflict and large identity group. It also incorporates a meso level of analysis through the perspectives of narratives, which communicate the perspectives of the ingroup. Finally, it also analyzes the data at a micro-level as we look for words or symbols suggesting that an individual has shifted their perception from a fear based one to a compassion based one. This diverse range of approaches allows our research to cover a global view of the conflict, but it is also a methodological challenge which this chapter will explore. The chapter is structured in two parts. In the first part, I'll focus on the research design. It starts with the research's global philosophy and understanding of knowledge, followed by the research's strategy and rationale behind it. I then go on to data collection and data analysis methods. The second part focuses on the methodological limitations of the research.

Research Design

Research Philosophy

My research is based on the social constructivist philosophy. In other words, it is built upon the idea that knowledge is a construction, and not just a mere sum of information. Experiencing the world, reality, and other humans; reflecting upon it; and incorporating new information onto pre-existing knowledge is how we frame our understanding of the world. Human interactions are considered to be at the root of social phenomena. According to social constructivism, what is

commonly accepted as a logical, natural, or factual truth may in fact be constructed through human interactions and schemas. In this context and considering that the nature of the group greatly influences the interactions that may occur between members, the social constructivist philosophy complements our research's problem. Indeed, narratives are in nature both a conduct for information and knowledge, and a subjective experience. And socio-identity factors of influence on intergroup conflict greatly depends on social interactions. Constructivism is then the proper philosophy for our research, in order to understand ETA's behavior in the context of the Basque conflict and analyze the narrative surrounding their disbandment.

Research Strategy and Rationale

This research is exploratory: it starts with theory and is confirmed with data. It is conducted in two essential parts to answer what the social identity mechanisms which influence narratives can explain ETA's difficult end. The first one is the theoretical discussion. At this stage, I gather knowledge on large identity group, intergroup conflict, narratives, and compassionate reasoning. I form a global mental image of the interactions between concepts and of the factors of influence of different phenomena. After reviewing theories and ideas, I formulate a hypothesis to answer my research's question. My hypothesis is that compassionate reasoning was used by ETA members to transform their master narrative from a conflict-supporting narrative to a peaceful narrative. In order to test this hypothesis, I then proceed to collect data from my case study and apply the theoretical discussion to the Basque conflict. I start by collecting quantitative data surrounding the lethality of the conflict and the evolution of the teaching of Euskara during the conflict. I then proceed to retrace the history of Basque nationalism, the birth and life of ETA, and its decline and end. Through these two datasets I collect data which provide a macro understanding of the conflict. I then proceed to collect testimonies from (ex)members of ETA and founders of Basque nationalism. I further my research in Basque nationalism and ETA's perspective by collecting data on Basque murals and their roles during the conflict. Testimonies in the forms of words and symbols give us a double level of understanding: first, on narratives, on what is said and how; and secondly on patterns, on how the central notions of the narratives interact. After collecting data, I analyze it. There are three stages of the analysis. The

first one is to compare ETA's narrative on central notions of intergroup conflict. The second one is to compare the testimonies to the historical and quantitative data in order to identify the connections between the two. Finally, I will search for the role of compassionate reasoning: what it means for narratives, history, and their interactions.

Data Collection

Due to limited time and resources, I have only been using secondary data. In order to palliate the absence of firsthand data collection, I have used both quantitative and qualitative data. Indeed, existing datasets of quantitative data allowed me to analyze the factual phenomena evolving during the Basque conflict. First of all, these datasets objectively acknowledge the number of casualties depending on the timeline and sides of the conflict, which gives us a clear idea of the scale of violence on human lives that resulted from the conflict. Secondly, these datasets show the evolution of the Euskara language from the beginning to after the end of the conflict. Euskara being the heart of Basque culture, it gives us an idea of the evolution of the Basque culture in relation to the conflict. This data is collected to construct the structure of our analysis.

The qualitative data I then used are divided in three categories. I begin with academic articles and books of conflict studies, political science and international relations approaching the conflict with a global historical perspective. I classify this data to draw the major lines of the conflict. It gives us a global and complete understanding of the timeline, which is central to properly analyze and understand the context behind the difficult dissolution of ETA as well as the frame that inspired ETA's narratives. I then proceeded to find as many second-hand interviews and testimonies from ETA members as I could. Using a variety of sources, from history books to scientific articles, documentaries, second-hand reports of ETA's internal bulletin *Zutabe*, and newspaper articles, I managed to collect a number of twelve testimonies. These testimonies and interviews offer access to ETA's narratives, perceptions and emotions connected to the conflict as well as their global sociological, economic, cultural, political, and even military points of view. The testimonies were selected according to a list of criteria:

- The quote must originally come from ETA members or founders of Basque nationalism.

- The quote's theme(s) must include: belief in social change and/or kinship ties, chosen trauma, salience of identity, expression of compassionate reasoning and global emotional state.

Although these written testimonies give us precious insights, they are mainly coming from founders and leaders of the group. The voices of the prominent figures of the movement are essential to understand the group, but it doesn't give us access to the everyday anonymous ETA member and their point of view. In order to find access to these anonymous members, I have used murals. Indeed, the use of murals was a simple, anonymous, and thus relatively safe way for ETA members to express their convictions, emotions, and revendications[98]. They painted their narratives on public walls, giving us a precious opportunity to understand and analyze the raw beliefs behind the movement. Globally, the use of quantitative data and the academic's narrative of the Basque conflict allow us to frame the situation and track the behavior of ETA during the conflict, and the use of testimonies and murals allow us to explore the perspectives of ETA members and the ingroup's subjective mechanisms at play with its narratives. The interactions between the datasets is analyzed next.

Data Analysis Methods

After the challenge of data collection comes the one of data analysis. I use a comparative analysis method to interpret the quantitative and qualitative methods. Concerning the quantitative data and historical data and considering that their purpose is to frame the research, I use comparisons between charts, numbers, and events, and analyze the results according to the timeline. This simple method allows to build a clear base for the rest of the research. When it comes to testimonies, I have decided to use a narrative analysis. In other words, whether it be second-hand testimonies, interviews, or murals, I analyze both the meaning of the stories told and the ways they are told. I focus on how

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[98] Bill Rolston and Amaia Alvarez Berastegi, "Taking Murals seriously: Basque Murals and Mobilization", *International Journal of politics, culture, and society* no. 1 (August 2015): 33-56

and why something being expressed is important, paying attention to the stories people tell. To determine how to interpret the testimonies, I have color-coded central notions. I have categorized the testimonies' subjects according to five essential notions of intergroup conflict dynamics and large group identity. The coding goes as follow:

- belief in social change[99]

- kinship ties[100]

- chosen trauma[101]

- grievances[102]

- salience of identity[103]

- expression of compassionate reasoning and global emotional state[104]

I classify words or expressions with three methods: depending on their strict definition; with the perspective of a global context gained from the other data (quantitative data and academic's narrative of the conflict); and using the contextual clues provided by the other testimonies.

For example, in an interview given to the journal Der Spiegel in 2001 by Azpiazu (one of ETA's military leader), he answers the question about how he started killing:

Out of historical necessity ... out of responsibility for the Basque people, which is a great people, bearer of a great culture, speakers of one of the oldest languages in the world. It has never been subdued, neither by the Romans, nor the Visigoths, or the Arabs. A people that is so completely different from the Spaniards. (Mees 2020, 168)

The expression "Historical necessity" refers to ETA's first narratives: the ingroup considers to be the Basque people to be victims of the "enslavement"[105] of Spain and their culture to be under the threat of

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[99] Tajfel, Turner. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *Social Identity Theory*, ed. by William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publication, 1979), 33-48.
[100] Horowitz, Donald. "A Family Resemblance." In *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, ed. by Donald Horowitz, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 55-89.
[101] Volkan, Vamick D. *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism*. (Boulder, CO: Worldview Press, 1998).
[102] Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why men rebel*. (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2011).
[103] Korostelina, Karina. *Social Identities and Conflict: Structure, Dynamics and Implications*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007).
[104] Gopin, Marc. *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world*. (New York: Oxford Press University, 2002).
[105] Original quote: "she is enslaving our fatherland" by Sabino Arana in 1894. Mees, *The Basque Contention*, 54.

assimilation[106]. ETA formed to break free from what they perceived to be the apathy of their elders facing these events[107]. According to the definition of the expression, and its meaning in the context of the conflict and other testimonies, "historical necessity" is classified under "chosen trauma". This method informs us on ETA's worldviews, perceptions and experiences and keeps track of their narrative's evolution throughout history. This method is simple and efficient, which is especially rewarding in an analysis made of a micro, a meso, and a global perspective.

I then proceed to do a comparative analysis between ETA's narrative history and the official history of the Basque conflict in order to identify patterns and factors of influence. Through the use of systematic coding to analyze data and identify patterns, I construct a logical research on narratives. Comparing it to the socio-historical context of the time provides us with enough information to understand the mechanisms at play in the relation between stories and reality. Thanks to these methods, I can test my hypothesis and the relations between conflict, narratives, and compassionate reasoning.

Methodological Limitations

The present methodology, although promising interesting results, does present significant limitations.

Firstly, the absence of primary testimonies can be an issue. Time, money, political, legal, and safety constraints do not allow me to conduct interviews with (ex) ETA members. Indeed, the general timeline means that most ETA members are either dead, in jail, or hiding from government forces, making it extremely difficult to find them, let alone share a conversation. On top of this, I do not speak Euskara and lack the resources to hire a Euskara translator to conduct interviews by my side. This prevents me from asking specific questions linked to the research and forces me to limit myself to the exclusive analysis of secondary data.

Secondly, there is a limited number of secondary testimonies available. Indeed, Spanish law condemns public support to criminal organizations, so anyone one expressing a favorable opinion of ETA can be prosecuted. This highly complicates the process of finding available interviews and

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[106] Mees, *The Basque Contention*, 96.
[107] Mees, *The Basque Contention*.

testimonies related to the ETA narratives. There is also an overall secrecy over the Basque conflict in the Basque Land because of the trauma it represents for many people. It teared apart families, villages, friendships…etc. and the consequences on the social fabric are still vividly felt by the Basque people. It thus impacts the state of the research. Finally, I do not speak Euskara, and only have a basic understanding of Spanish, so secondary sources in these languages are not easily available (although I have used friends to translate documents in some instances).

The last limitation that this methodology presents is the fact that the author of the research is a Basque person. Indeed, I identify as Basque and have a strong attachment to our land, ocean, culture, and history. I am also strongly attached to Basque ancestral spirituality and ancient beliefs. All of which frames my understanding of Basqueness very specifically. However, I am equally attached to truth and independence of mind (which I believe to work hand in hand with my Basqueness). My subjectivity could influence me to give overly positive characteristics to anything related to Basqueness and bias my research, although I believe my desire to "get to the bottom of it" and find a conclusive answer to my research question will keep me on the path to truth. In other words, it is my emotional engagement to this research which I find to keep me objective.

Conclusion

Our research's methodology is the backbone of our entire analysis. It is responsible for structuring the decisions surrounding the collection and interpretation of data, as well as testing our hypothesis. In the research design, we expose the importance of the constructivist philosophy for our research, justify our research's strategy, and explain how our data was collected and then analyzed. Indeed, the research design reflects our understanding of knowledge and carries the methodology all along the research. We then go to the methodological limitations that we face with this research: the absence of primary testimonies, the limited number of second-hand testimony, and the potential bias of the author.

Chapter 5 - Literature Review

The present dissertation aims at identifying how narratives' mechanisms interact with a conflict and its resolution, as well as the role of compassionate reasoning in the process. Indeed, how can a conflict-supporting narratives lead the ingroup to the conflict's resolution? This research problem is examined through the case of ETA in the Basque conflict, and the evolution of the member's narratives until the organization's dissolution in 2018[108]. Chapter 2's theoretical discussion as well as Chapter 3's analysis of the Basque conflict depend on the state of the research, not only to theorize our research problem and hypothesis, but also to collect data and have access to the tools necessary to analyze it. As such, the state of knowledge of all aspects of the research problem deeply affects the result. In order to grasp the extent of academic advancement on the question at hand, the first part of this chapter is dedicated to the study of the state of the research. It will be divided in two. It will begin with the state of knowledge on the theories and conceptual aspects which have carried our research: large identity group, intergroup conflict, narratives, and compassionate reasoning are the main themes. Will then come the state of research regarding the history of the Basque conflict and its major aspects: Basque history, nationalism, and ethnic particularism. In the second part of this literature review will be made a critical evaluation of the state of the research, regarding its successes, gaps, and limitations. Finally, the third part of the chapter is dedicated to the role of our own research and the justification of its purpose.

State of the Research

Conflict Theories

When it comes to theories and abstract concepts in regard to conflict analysis and conflict resolution, there is more academic knowledge accessible than one could read in their life. Our research is driven by the themes of large group identity, intergroup conflict, narratives, and compassionate

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[108] Mees, Ludger. *The Basque Contention: Ethnicity, Politics, Violence.* (London, New York: Routledge, 2020, 257.

reasoning. My use of previous theories and concepts is therefore focused in these areas and is explored in detail in the theoretical discussion on Chapter 2. Because of the ethnic aspect of ETA and of its major influence on the Basque conflict, the dynamics of intergroup conflicts are studied under the lens of social identity theory[109]. Using social identity theory gives us the opportunity to understand the conflict through ETA's intimacy, aka its Basqueness. When it comes to the role of narratives in a conflict, understanding the mechanisms of conflict-supporting narratives[110] is at the foundation of the research's analysis. Sara Cobb in *Speaking of Violence: the Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution* (2013) researches extensively the role of narratives in conflicts. Cobb (2013) not only shows the narratives' influence on the perpetuation of the conflict but also demonstrates the potential to use narratives for conflict resolution. Cobb argues that interest-based resolution theory is limited: indeed, people cannot create new meaning for mutual gain if their frameworks for meaning is reproducing the conflict.   However, focusing on narratives would encourage an ethics of practice. Indeed, encouraging stories that convey moral agency and fight marginalization would not only appease conflict but also allow parties to dialogue and speak of each other without resorting to narrative violence:

> What all the conflict resolution processes have in common is that they all are enacted in conversations in which stories are launched, elaborated, destabilized, and otherwise unfolded. Elaborating a theory of conflict and its resolution from a narrative lens will provide not only a foundational theory for the analysis of conflicts, but will also enable practitioners to assess the evolution of narratives on the basis of a narrative ethics that denounces narrative violence and calls for the reduction of marginalization, story by story, conversation by conversation. (Cobb 2013, 16)

Sara Cobb defends the idea that having a narratives approach to conflict resolution can have an important influence on guaranteeing a conflict's resolution as well as on building long-lasting peace. In their article Ulug, Lickel, Leidner and Hirschberger[111] also explore the role of

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[109] Tajfel, Turner. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *Social Identity Theory*, ed. by William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publication, 1979), 33-48; Horowitz, Donald. "A Family Resemblance." In *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, ed. by Donald Horowitz, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 55-89; Korostelina, Karina. *Social Identities and Conflict: Structure, Dynamics and Implications*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2007); Volkan, Vamick D. *Bloodlines: from ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism*. (Boulder, CO: Worldview Press, 1998).

[110] Bar-Tal, Daniel, Neta Oren, and Rafi Nets-Zehngut. "Sociopsychological analysis of conflict-supporting narratives: A general framework", *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 5 (September 2014): 662-675.

[111] Ulug, Özden Melis, Brian Lickel, Bernhard Leidner, and Gilad Hirschberger, "How do conflict narratives shape conflict- and peace-related outcomes among majority group members? The role of competitive victimhood in intractable conflicts", *Group processes and intergroup relations*, no. 5 (MONTH 2021): 797-814.

narratives in the ethics of the practice of conflict resolution. In this regard, the authors give special attention to the dominant/alternative narratives' dynamics:

> due to their potential to increase openness to compromise and perhaps even pave the way for conflict resolution, alternative narratives may be as impactful for the course of the conflict as dominant narratives, and therefore equally important. We believe majority group members tend to endorse these alternative narratives less, as they are more likely to worry that these narratives will pose a threat to national continuity to being endorsed more by minority group members or "radical" majority members.(Ulug, Lickel, et al. 2021, 798)

According to the authors, alternative narratives hold value in their capacity to adapt to the dominant one. In addition to the importance of alternative narratives, the authors also highlight the role of competitive victimhood, which affects people's attitude towards forgiveness, reconciliation, and empathy both during a violent conflict and after its official end[112]. The close academic's link between the ethos of conflict and the narratives' approach to conflict resolution is the reason why conflict narratives and compassionate reasoning are intricately connected in this research. Indeed, Gopin considers compassionate reasoning to be at the root of all principal Schools of Ethics. Whether it be for moral sense theory, consequentialism, virtue ethics, natural law theory, or Kantian ethics, compassionate reasoning incarnates the Do No Harm rule[113]. According to Gopin, this is what makes it such a good tool for the practice of conflict resolution.

Basque Conflict

Regarding the Basque conflict, it has been researched extensively in the fields of social sciences. Whether it be in political and international relations studies[114] or in conflict resolution[115], the conflict has attracted the attention of academia. Many adopt a historical perspective in their

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[112] Ulug, Lickel, et al. "How do conflict narratives shape conflict- and peace-related outcomes among majority group members? The role of competitive victimhood in intractable conflicts".

[113] Gopin, Marc. *Compassionate Reasoning, change the mind to change the world.* (New York: Oxford Press University, 2002): 54-59.

[114] *ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017).

[115] Madina, Irene G., Galo Bilbao, and Angela Bermudez, "Recognizing Victims of Political Violence: Basque Literacy Narratives as an Ethical Tool", Studies in conflict and terrorism no. 6 (2020): 548-564.

approach[116], highlighting the importance of the history of Basque nationalism in the conflict[117], as well as the determining role of the Basque identity for the narratives of ETA[118].

In *The Basque Contention: Ethnicity, Politics, Violence*, Ludger Mees (2020) explores the Basque history and its consequences on the Basque conflict. Through the lens of politics and social movement studies, Mees draws a convincing portrait of ETA. By analyzing the interactions between actors as well as the role of ethnic particularism, Mees aims at going: "beyond the headlines of ETA and grasp the complexity of its relationship with Spain, France and indeed itself "[119]. On a similar note, Sullivan's book *ETA and Basque nationalism: the fight for Euskadi 1890-1986* (2015) explores the direct consequences of Spanish and French politics throughout history on the formation and behavior of the ETA group. Sullivan also tells the story of ETA's internal politics and the progressive transformation of the organization. In *ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, the authors touch all sorts of aspects of the conflict: the role of collective memory[120], the similarities between the Irish and Basque conflict[121], and even the Basque violence in academy[122]. There is an entire pan of research on the Basque conflict dedicated to narratives[123]. In "Epic, memory and the making of uncivil community", Casquete (2017) explores how heroism facilitated the formation of ETA's identity, and how the glorification in political spheres during Francoism encouraged the organization to stay active and violent after the

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[116] Mees, Ludger. *The Basque Contention: Ethnicity, Politics, Violence*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2020); Fernández, Gaizka, "The origins of ETA: between Francoism and Democracy, 1958-1981", *In ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017); Ciment, James *World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era*. (Armonk, New York: Sharpe Reference 2013); Sullivan, John. *ETA and Basque Nationalism: the fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986*. (London, New York: Routledge 2015).
[117] Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism*.
[118] Madina, Irene G., Galo Bilbao, and Angela Bermudez, "Recognizing Victims of Political Violence", 548-564.
[119] Mees, *The Basque Contention*, I.
[120] Casquete, Jesus, « Epic, memory and the making of an uncivil community", In *ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017): 87-102.
[121] Argomaniz, Javier, "The impact of ethno-nationalist violence: comparing the experiences of victims of ETA and paramilitaries in Northern Ireland" *In ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017): 125-142.
[122] Caspistegui, Francisco J., "Basque violence in the international academy" In *ETA's Terrorist Campaign: from violence to politics, 1968-2015*, ed. by Rafael Leonisio, Fernando Molina, and Diego Muro. (London, New York: Routledge, 2017): 201-217.
[123] Madina, Irene G., Galo Bilbao, and Angela Bermudez, "Recognizing Victims of Political Violence"; Casquete, Jesus, « Epic, memory and the making of an uncivil community"; Tellidis, Ioannis, "Peacebuilding beyond Terrorism? Revisiting the Narratives of the Basque Conflict", *Studies in conflict and terrorism* no. 6 (2020): 529:597

democratization of Spain. In "Peacebuilding beyond Terrorism? Revisiting the narratives of the Basque Conflict", Tellidis (2020) studies the consequences of the Spanish government's narrative on Basque politics and the unfolding of events during the Basque conflict.

According to Tellidis, criminalizing Basqueness and Basque nationalism in the State's narratives instead of focusing on dialoguing with antiviolent independentist was the biggest mistake of the Spanish government. For Tellidis, in cases of a separatist conflict, the state's willingness to discuss the legitimacy of the claims of nonviolent nationalists encourages the marginalization of extremism in the political arena[124]. When it comes to the role of narratives and conflict resolution in the Basque Country, research has been done on the use of Basque literacy as an ethical tool to heal political violence[125]. Madina, Bilbao, and Bermudez focus on the perspectives of victims of political violence, who are still difficultly acknowledged. This phenomena is conceptualized under the idea of pathologies of recognition. Through narrative imagination, Madina, Bilbao, and Bermudez find results of increased humanizing and educational values and highlight the transformative potential of narratives. To the extent of my knowledge, the role of Compassionate Reasoning in the Basque conflict has not been studied before, therefore there is no research to learn from on this specific aspect.

Critical Evaluation

The state of the research shows academia's successes and current gaps and limitations in the subject of identity conflict as well as on the case of the Basque conflict.

When it comes to successes, it can be said that social identity theory has extensively exposed essential dynamics and major factors of large identity group and intergroup conflict. The increase of academics' interest in the role of narratives in conflictual settings is also an important advancement

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[124] Tellidis, Ioannis, "Peacebuilding beyond Terrorism", 529:597.
[125] Madina, Irene G., Galo Bilbao, and Angela Bermudez, "Recognizing Victims of Political Violence".

and has allowed a new understanding of narratives, not just as a medium to convey ideas but as a driving force of its own. Finally, the role of empathy, compassion and reason and the question of balance between these concepts is slowly developing towards the disciplines surrounding politics, international relations, sociology, and conflict resolution.

Regarding the Basque conflict, it has largely been studied under the prism of political science, sociology, and history. Whether it be ETA's relations with the French, Spanish, American and British governments, the internal politics and debates of the organization, or the socio-cultural experience of the conflict, the Basque conflict has been extensively researched. Even the narratives of the conflict have interested academics. However, this research does not focus on ETA members narratives as much as it is concerned by the influence of the socio-cultural narratives or the dominant narrative of the Spanish government. As demonstrated by Ulug, Lickel et al. (2021), alternative narratives contain precious insights on the events of the conflict and the behavior of the ingroup. However, access to testimonies of alternative narratives remains difficult. As worded by Sara Cobb:

> Although research has expanded our understanding of the process of reconciliation, it has yet to document the evolution of the stories parties tell, on the ground, about the conflict, about themselves, and their relation to others. (Cobb 2013, 14)

This issue highlights the incredible importance of archives and accessibility. On the subject of compassionate reasoning, although it is slowly being conceptualize and used as a reliable variable, its use in research remains still punctual.

Role of our own Research

Our own research is made of multiple facets. It explores social identity theory, conflict-supporting narratives, and compassionate reasoning, all theoretically and through the case of the Basque conflict. This interaction of information makes for knowledge which can be applicable to diverse situations. First of all, this research is a small part in the large academic building and collecting of knowledge. A constructivist dissertation is in essence a proposition to further knowledge by sharing research and experiences. The enthusiastic

focus given on compassionate reasoning through the research is due to my adoration for the influence of emotions and compassion on reasoning. It follows a logic of ethics and furthers the research on the subject. When it comes to the Basque conflict, and in particular the collecting of ETA's testimonies, this research follows a collective academic effort of preservation of (alternative) narratives, specifically in conflictual settings and contexts of violence. These narratives are precious academic resources necessary to grasp the ethno-nationalist group ETA. Finally, this research joins efforts with the conflict resolution fields and Basque peace-activist groups which keep finding new ways to build bridges between hostile communities and work towards the existence of a sustainable reconciliation and long-lasting peace.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present literature review has explored three important aspects of the research. First is the state of the research. It gives us an idea of the current advancement of our research problem. When it comes to social identity theory, the state of the research has demonstrated that the subject has been extensively researched and that the necessary tools to analyze a large identity group conflict are at our disposal. Concerning conflict narratives, the research is exponentially growing and slowly demonstrates the major importance of narratives in conflict analysis and resolution practices. Finally, when it comes to conflict resolution and compassionate reasoning, the research is not quite there yet but all the necessary ideas to pursue it are. When it comes to the case of the Basque conflict, it has been researched in quantity in the fields of political science, history and sociology, usually in connection to nationalism. There has also been some research linked to narratives. However, to the extent of my knowledge there has been no research done on the Basque conflict in connection to compassionate reasoning or the adaptability of ETA's narratives. Although there is an issue regarding the documentation of data available to conduct a conflict narrative's analysis, the present research is conducted thanks to the testimonies of ETA members hidden in piles of history books, newspaper articles, interviews, and documentaries. This research aims at filling the

gaps when it comes to ETA's perspective on the Basque conflict as well as the relationship between ETA's narratives and behavior. On a larger scale, it aims at participating in the large research of the role of narratives and compassionate reasoning in conflict resolution. It also studies the connection between narratives and compassionate reasoning. Indeed, compassionate narratives may encourage the ingroup to adapt its master narratives, abandon its zero-sum game perception of the conflict and nuance its discourse regarding outgroups as well as intergroup relations. The result of our research will further the current knowledge on conflict resolution and offer recommendations regarding the use of narratives as a peace-building tool.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this research has been poking around the relationship between stories and reality. Through the experience and lessons taught by the Basque people, we have learned about the importance of narratives in our lives. We are deeply influenced by the stories we tell ourselves about our origins. Not just as individuals, but also as groups and communities. Our identities being tied to these stories, we share deep emotional and psychological bonds with them. In the context of intergroup conflict, this phenomenon may prevent ingroups from having empathy for outgroups and make peace-oriented decisions.

In our theoretical discussion (Chapter 2), we have lay down basic factors of influence for large group identities as well as explore different dynamics at play in cases of intergroup conflict. From this picture of concept dynamics, we understand two important things. First, we learn that ingroups feed on positively distinct comparison to improve their self-image and collective self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner; Korostelina). However, if there are asymmetrical power relationships, a history of conflict, or grievances between the group, this process encourages them to engage in a dynamic of intergroup competition (Korostelina; Gurr; Horowitz). In a case of perceived danger this may lead to a security dilemma and result in a confrontation and ultimately a violent intergroup conflict (Korostelina). Secondly, we learn that the ingroup also feeds on conflict-supporting narratives (Bar Tal) for the solidarity, mobilization, feeling of unity, and sense of sacrifice it provides the ingroup members. It has the virtue of cementing relationships between ingroup members and creates deep bonds between ingroup members and their narratives. However, it may well cost them their lives as they engage in a cycle of intergroup violence and conflict in order to irrationally force their narratives into reality. The 4Cs model being supportive of conflict-supporting narratives and vice-versa creates a powerful stream, steering ingroups in intractable violence. In a conflict-resolution perspective, our research's

objective is to find a strong enough factor to first and foremost disrupt this violent stream, and ideally transform it into a peace and conflict-resolution oriented dynamic. Our main hypothesis is that compassionate reasoning (Gopin) is that factor.

We finally proceeded with our analysis of the Basque case (Chapter 3). Through the analysis of ETA members' testimonies, the global Basque history, and the murals of the Basque Country, we have put into evidence an alternative narratives of the Basque conflict: ETA's. Thanks to our narratives analysis, we have found that socio-historical suffering, fear, and political disillusion were at the forefront of justifications for ETA's violent behavior. We also discovered that their narratives transformed as they steered away from the conflict. ETA's decision to declare a permanent cease-fire and eventually disband is marked by their narrative's adaptation to the peace context. Slowly, ETA members' discourse becomes more compassionate towards their enemies and their perception of the conflict as a zero-sum game evolves into a more complex description of the issue. Compassionate reasoning is indeed a strong enough factor to pierce a way out of the stream formed by conflict-supportive narratives and the 4Cs model. Compassionate reasoning first helps ingroup members grounding themselves in the present, giving them the opportunity to escape their group PTSD-like behavior. It also gives them permission to evaluate and reassess their actions and narratives by providing them the necessary feeling of safety. Finally, it leaves them space to redefine their narratives and identities in a peace-oriented way.

In our methodology chapter (Chapter 4), we proceeded to explain and justify the way we conduct our research. With a constructivist philosophy, we conduct our research with a specific philosophy in mind: knowledge is a construction influenced by subjective experiences. We use both quantitative data, to frame the socio-political and cultural context and qualitative data to understand the subjective mechanisms at play. More precisely, our narrative analysis informs us on the perceptions of ETA members and the patterns they exhibit accordingly. Although our methodology is limited by the absence of primary testimony and the small number of second-hand testimonies available, it gives us both a global and a specific understanding of the cycles ETA members found themselves in, and how they found a way out.

Finally, our literature review (Chapter 5) allowed us to explore the state of the research, as well as its successes, and limitations. It first revealed the growing importance that narratives are given in contemporary research in direct connection to conflict resolution. showed us that Compassionate reasoning has not gained that much attention in academia or society, as it suggests something far from traditional conflict resolution practices. Compassionate reasoning is for now a shy nuance more than a vibrant color in the painting of social academic variables.

My final recommendations are divided in two aspects of the research. When it comes to the Basque conflict, this research has interrogated history jointly with testimonies in order to understand ETA's behavior. ETA's narrative of the conflict is an alternative one, and the Spanish State's narrative is the master one. As demonstrated by the attribution of Madrid's 2004 terrorist attacks to ETA by the Spanish government (although they rapidly discovered that ETA had nothing to do with it), the dominant narrative can use its power to attempt to destroy minority outgroups. In this sense, I recommend to further encourage the archiving and studying of alternative narratives in academics. Being able to analyze stories is a beautiful way to learn about humans. But more than anything, I recommend the use of compassionate reasoning. Whether it be for theoretical research or the practice of conflict resolution, compassionate reasoning is a fascinating and promising phenomenon and peace-building tool. When it comes to future research, I recommend continuing the work on narratives' analysis. When it comes to conflict, academics are easily stuck in theoretical worlds and theorize unpractical conflict resolution design. Narrative's analysis provides intrinsic value to the subjective experience of humans going through conflict.

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