Orain Herria, Orain Bakea:¹
Local perspectives from Basque nationalists on a lasting peace in the Basque Country.

Student: Mar-Lisa Ras
Student number: S4518063
Supervisor: B. Bomert
Human Geography: Conflicts, Territories and Identities
Radboud University Nijmegen

Date: 25-01-2016
Words: 40,000

¹ Basque for: Now the people, now peace.
Abstract

For many years there has been a conflict in the Basque historic regions. However, a definitive ceasefire and the start of a decommissioning process announced by ETA changed perspectives and paved the way for a peaceful future. This research focuses on the perspectives of Basque nationalists about a lasting peace settlement in the Basque historic regions. Qualitative research, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation and small talk, was done in the Basque historic regions. This research shows that Basque nationalists all believe there is a political conflict which manifested itself in violence from ETA and from the Spanish state. As a consequence society is divided socially and politically and many people have suffered from human rights violations. According to Basque nationalist informants in this research, a peace settlement is needed and should include decommissioning, negotiations, condemnation of any type of human rights violations, transitional justice, reconciliation and the right to decide.
Preface

I would like to thank the people who made it possible to write this thesis.

First of all I would like to thank all the informants for their contribution, for sharing their stories and opinions with me, for making time, and for helping me to understand the situation. Without them this thesis would have been incomplete.

Many thanks also to all my family and friends, who always supported me and believed in me. My deepest gratitude goes to my dad, my hero, my role model and the man who always motivates me. And my mom, who always takes care of me and supports me in everything I do.

Thanks to Jamil, who supported me, believed in me, and motivated me to do my work. Thanks to Abdelrahman, Diewertje and Milou, who always listened to me and made sure I never gave up. Finally, thanks to Unai for having a critical look at my work.

A special thanks to all my Basque friends who always give me the feeling to be part of their family. The people who made me write this thesis and the people who always let me travel back to my second home. Especially Mikel and Arantza, the two most amazing Basque friends a person could wish for. They support me anytime I travel to the Basque Country and give me the feeling that I am a part of their family. Mila Esker!

Thanks to Iker, Isidor and Isa who shared their valuable time with me and inspired me. They are the reason that I am writing this thesis and I will dedicate it to these special people who will be in my heart forever. Ezin da hitzekin esan zenbat maite zaitudan. Faltan botatzen zaitut!

Without these people it would be impossible to write this thesis.

To all: Mila Esker!
List of Abbreviations

AAA  Alianza Apóstolica Anticomunista
ATE  Anti Terrorismo ETA
AVT  Asociación de Víctimas del Terrorismo
BVE  Batallón Vasco Español
COVITE Colectivo de Víctimas del Terrorismo
CPT  Coordinadora para la Prevención de la Tortura
CUP  Candidatura d’Unitat Popular
EA  Euskal Alkartasuna
EAJ-PNV Eusko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco
EH Bildu Euskal Herria Bildu
EPPK Euskal Preso Politikoen Kolektiboa
ETA Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
ETA-m ETA militar
ETA-pm ETA político-militar
GAE Grupos Armados Españoles
GAL Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación
HB  Herri Batasuna
IU  Izquierda Unida
MLNV Movimiento Libertad Nacional Vasco
LOPP Ley Orgánica de Partidos Políticos
PP  Partido Popular
PSE-EE Partido Socialista de Euskadi- Euskadiko Ezkerra
PSOE Partido Socialista Obrero Español
PSN Partido Socialista de Navarra
UPN Unión del Pueblo Navarra
UPV Universidad del País Vasco
Table of contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... I
Preface ................................................................................................................................................ II
List of abbreviations........................................................................................................................... III
Table of contents................................................................................................................................ IV
Table of figures and tables.................................................................................................................. VI

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Research objective ..................................................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Research questions ..................................................................................................................... 6
   1.3 Scientific and social relevance .................................................................................................... 7
   1.4 Thesis outline ............................................................................................................................. 8

2. Theoretical framework ..................................................................................................................... 10
   2.1 Peace ......................................................................................................................................... 10
   2.2 Peacebuilding .......................................................................................................................... 11
   2.3 Lasting peace ........................................................................................................................... 12
   2.3.1 Political amnesty and decommissioning of weapons ............................................................ 13
   2.3.2 Transitional justice ............................................................................................................... 14
   2.3.3 Reconciliation ....................................................................................................................... 17
   2.3.4 Shared identity and the importance of memory .................................................................... 19
   2.4 Political settlement of the conflict ............................................................................................ 20
   2.4.1 Right to self-determination .................................................................................................. 20
   2.5 The Basque case ....................................................................................................................... 22

3. Methodology ..................................................................................................................................... 24
   3.1 Semi-structured interviews......................................................................................................... 24
   3.2 Participant observation ............................................................................................................. 26
   3.3 Small talk .................................................................................................................................. 26
   3.4 Informants .................................................................................................................................. 27
   3.4.1 Sampling ............................................................................................................................... 28
   3.4.2 Location of the interviews .................................................................................................... 29
   3.5 Ethical considerations ............................................................................................................... 29

4. The historical context of the Basque conflict ................................................................................ 31
   4.1 Spanish unitary nationalism vs. Basque nationalism ................................................................. 31
   4.2 Ethno-political conflict .............................................................................................................. 32
   4.3 Historical background ............................................................................................................... 33
Table of maps, figures and tables

Maps
Map 1 – The Basque Country/Euskal Herria ................................................................. 2

Figures
Figure 1 – Opinion of Basque people about ETA, March 1999.................................. 44
Figure 2 – Opinion of Basque people about ETA, March 2011.................................. 45
Figure 3 – Map of dispersed Basque prisoners ............................................................. 49
Figure 4 – Opinion of Basque citizens regarding negotiations between the Spanish government and ETA, November 2014................................................................. 66
Figure 5 – Support of Basque people for the reintegration of Basque prisoners charged with terrorism, November 2011 ................................................................. 68
Figure 6 – Support of Basque people for the reintegration of Basque prisoners charged with terrorism, March 2015................................................................. 68
Figure 7 – Opinion of citizens of the Basque Autonomous Community on a referendum about independence, November 2014................................................................. 80

Tables
Table 1 – Election results of Basque nationalist parties in Basque Parliamentary Elections, 1980-2012.................................................................................................................... 3
Table 2 – Election results of Basque nationalist parties in the Navarrese Parliamentary Elections, 1991-2015............................................................................................................. 5
Table 3 – Victims of politically motivated violence, 1960-2013 .................................... 57
1. Introduction

On October 17, 2011, an international conference was held in the House of Peace in Donostia/San Sebastián. Various international celebrities, like former UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan, and representatives of various Basque political parties and trade unions came together to promote a resolution for the Basque conflict. The meeting was concluded with a declaration calling upon all parties involved in the conflict to take steps that would contribute towards a lasting peace in the Basque Country.

We have come to the Basque Country today because we believe it is time to end, and it is possible to end, the last armed confrontation in Europe. We believe this can now be achieved, with the support of citizens and their political representatives, as well as the support of Europe and the wider international community. We want to state clearly that we have not come here to impose anything or claim that we have the right or the authority to tell the citizens of this country, or relevant actors and political representatives, what they should do. Rather, we have come here in good faith, with the hope of offering ideas drawn from our own experiences of resolving long conflicts that afflicted our own societies and peoples, as well as others we have helped resolve.

We know from our own experience that it is never easy to end violence and conflict and secure lasting peace. It requires courage, willingness to take risks, profound commitment, generosity and statesmanship. Peace comes when the power of reconciliation outweighs the habits of hate; when the possibility of the present and future is infinitely greater than the bitterness of the past. We also know from our own experience that when a genuine opportunity for peace arises it must be seized. The growing demand of the citizens of this country and their political representatives to resolve this conflict through dialogue, democracy and complete non-violence has created this opportunity. Because of all of this, we believe it is today possible to end more than fifty years of violence and attain a just and lasting peace. (Lokarri, 2011)

ETA, the armed Basque nationalist and separatist organisation, was encouraged to make “a public declaration of the definite cessation of all its armed activities” (Lokarri, 2011); three days later ETA responded by announcing the end of its military campaign (The Guardian, 2011). The Spanish and French governments were asked to open a dialogue and start negotiations with the Basque nationalists. Both governments have neglected this request, however, and up till this day the conflict in the Basque Country has still not been solved; it can be seen as a ‘frozen conflict’.

---

2 ETA is an acronym for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, which means ‘Basque Homeland and Freedom’ (Gutierrez, 2009, p. 221).
The Basques, a group of people located mainly in Spain and France, that define themselves as ethnically distinct from other people (Heiberg, 1989), have been, and still are, in conflict with the Spanish and French states. The conflict centres around the Basque wish to create an independent Basque Country, referred to as *Euskal Herria* (see Map 1).

**MAP 1- The Basque Country/Euskal Herria**

![Euskal Herria Basque Country](http://www.basque.unr.edu/conferences/2011/languages.html)

*Euskal Herria* consists of the four provinces in the south (nowadays part of Spain) and the three provinces in the north (nowadays part of France) (Muro, 2005, pp. 581-585). In the south (also called *Hegoalde*), these provinces are: Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Araba, and Navarre, and in the north (*Iparralde*): Lapurdi, Zuberoa, and Behe Nafarroa.\(^3\) These provinces are based on former territorial units. In this thesis they will be referred to as the Basque historic regions.

*Euskal Herria* consists of three political-administrative structures, namely the Basque Autonomous Community or *Euskadi* (comprising Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, and Araba), the Autonomous Community of Navarra, and the three provinces that are part of France (*Iparralde*). Combined these territories have almost three million inhabitants, with 250,000 living in France.

---

\(^3\) These are the Basque names. The Spanish and French names are, respectively: Vizcaya, Álava, Guipúzcoa, and Navarra; and Labourd, Soule, and Basse-Navarre.
While Navarra and Euskadi are both Autonomous Communities of Spain, the Basque provinces in France are part of a greater region called Aquitaine. In France, the Basque provinces combined number ten per cent of the total population in the region. Although there have been several demands for a separate *departement* by the Basques, till today this has been refused by the French government (Markusse, 2004, p. 663).

The conflict between the Basques on the one hand, and the Spanish and French authorities on the other, has been going on for quite some years, but a number of recent events and developments make this case interesting and relevant again. A first relevant development is the official announcement of ETA that it will start to disarm (Tremlet, 2014), after already declaring a permanent ceasefire in 2011. The armed struggle for an independent Basque Country that has lasted for many decades and has taken many lives, seems to have come to an end. ETA started its campaigns more than fifty years ago, in 1959, as a revolutionary nationalist movement, opposed to the dictatorship of General Franco (Clark, 1979). By ending its armed campaign, ETA paved the way for the entrance into the political arena of a political party based on the same ideology; a party that in the past had been banned for eight years.

The second relevant event is the (electoral) success of this new political party, Sortu, that has brought the ideology of the so-called Abertzale Left movement, a broad political movement which includes ETA, after years of absence back in the political arena. During the last Basque parliamentary elections, the Basque nationalist party Eusko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco (EAJ-PNV) and the Basque nationalist left-wing coalition Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu) combined, received the best election results in history (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>151,636</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>349,102</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>157,389</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>451,178</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>199,900</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>271,201</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>186,410</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>289,701</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

4 This new political party, Sortu, is based on the ideology of the former Basque nationalist left-wing parties (HB, Euskal Herritarrok, PCTV-EHAK). Individuals that have been on the list of these parties could not be on the list of the new party, as they have been banned from politics. Sortu is part of the Euskal Herria Bildu coalition (EH Bildu).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party A</th>
<th>Party B</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>166,147</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td></td>
<td>304,346</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Euskal Herritarrok</td>
<td>PNV</td>
<td>224,001</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td></td>
<td>350,322</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Euskal Herritarrok</td>
<td>Coalición EAJ-PNV/EA</td>
<td>143,139</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Coalición EAJ-PNV/EA</td>
<td></td>
<td>604,222</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>PCTV-EHAK</td>
<td>Aralar</td>
<td>150,644</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Aralar</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,180</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Coalición EAJ-PNV/EA</td>
<td></td>
<td>468,117</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Invalid votes</td>
<td>Aralar</td>
<td>160,939</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Aralar</td>
<td></td>
<td>65,514</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td></td>
<td>399,600</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>EH Bildu</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>277,923</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td></td>
<td>384,766</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.euskadi.net/elecciones

a In 1980, the Basque Parliament consisted of 60 seats; since then the number of seats in the Basque Parliament has been raised to 75.

b In 2005, Batasuna called upon its sympathisers to vote for the Communist Party of the Basque Homelands, PCTV-EHAK.

c In 2005, Aralar, a party that had broken away from Batasuna in 2000, participated in the Basque Parliamentary elections for the first time. Aralar is nowadays part of EH Bildu.

d Euskal Alkartasuna (EA), a social-democratic Basque nationalist party, is now part of the EH Bildu coalition.

e In 2009, Batasuna called upon its sympathisers to cast invalid votes.

1.1 Research objective
Until 2009, the political party EAJ-PNV was always part of the government of the Basque Autonomous Community. Between 2009 and 2012 the Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra (PSE-EE5), or the Basque socialist party, ruled in the Basque Autonomous Community, but it had to hand over power to the EAJ-PNV again in 2012. Nowadays, almost two-thirds of the members of the Basque Parliament are Basque nationalists; 27 seats for the more moderate Christian-democratic EAJ-PNV, and 21 seats for the more radical, pro-independence Abertzale coalition of Euskal Herria Bildu, out of a total of 75 seats (see Table 1). While EAJ-PNV takes a “pragmatic strategy of gradually progressive self-rule”, in the process of which it might sacrifice Navarra, Bildu “aims to move quicker and go further” (Murua, 2014). In Navarra, support for the Basque nationalists is growing (see Table 2). In the regional elections of 2015, the two Basque nationalist parties, GeroaBai and Euskal Herria Bildu, received just over thirty per cent of the votes in Navarra. Both nationalist parties formed a coalition, joined by left-wing parties Podemos and Izquierda-Ezkerra. For the first time since 1991, the Unión del Pueblo

5 The PSE-EE is related to the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). In Navarra it is called the Partido Socialista de Navarra (PSN).
Navarra (UPN), a regional conservative party that is strongly opposed to Basque nationalism, is not part of the government. Although UPN did receive the most votes, it was not able to form a majority coalition. In the capital of Navarra, Iruña/Pamplona, the same happened: the second placed party, Euskal Herria Bildu, was able to form a coalition government, together with GeroaBai, Aranzadi (a left-wing ecologist party, supported by Podemos) and Izquierda-Ezkerra.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>30,762</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euskal Alkartasuna (EA)</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15,170</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Herri Batasuna Nafarroako Abertzaleak (NA-PNV) Euskal Alkartasuna (EA)</td>
<td>27,404</td>
<td>9.22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,041</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,568</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Euskal Herritarrok Coalición EAJ-PNV/EA</td>
<td>47,271</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16,512</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Aralar Coalición EAJ-PNV/EA</td>
<td>24,068</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22,824</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Nafarroa Bai(\text{a})</td>
<td>77,893</td>
<td>23.62</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bildu(\text{b})</td>
<td>49,916</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23,551</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>GeroaBai(\text{c}) EH Bildu</td>
<td>53,497</td>
<td>15.83</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48,166</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.historiaelectoral.com/anavarra.html](http://www.historiaelectoral.com/anavarra.html)

\(\text{a}\) Nafarroa Bai consisted of Aralar, EAJ, EAJ-PNV and Batzarre (a very small Basque nationalist left- wing party).

\(\text{b}\) Bildu consisted of EA, Alternatiba and independents from the Abertzale left; it is now renamed to EH Bildu and includes Sortu and Aralar.

\(\text{c}\) GeroaBai consists of Zabaltzen (left-wing Basque nationalist political association) and EAJ-PNV.

With the definitive ceasefire of ETA and its willingness to disarm, a period of transition commenced in the Basque Country. Basque nationalists, moderates as well as the more radical ones, agree on the idea that this transition should take a different shape than the Spanish transition in the 1970s (an issue which will be discussed later on). Nowadays a broad spectrum of societal organisations and political parties is involved in working for peace and coexistence in the Basque Country.

In 2013, the president of the Basque government, Iñigo Urkullu, set up a Ministry of Peace and Coexistence. This ministry is tasked with formulating a plan for Peace and
Coexistence for the coming years. In November 2015, the Institute of Memory, Coexistence and Human Rights was opened. It was promoted by the EAJ-PNV and the Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra. Euskal Herria Bildu abstained from voting, while the Partido Popular voted against the proposal. The institute recognises that the Basque Country has suffered four traumatic experiences, namely: the Spanish Civil War, Franco’s dictatorship, ETA, and illicit counterterrorism. The main goal of the institute is ‘to avoid rewriting history of the legitimisation of any kind of violence, terrorism, violence or violation of human rights’ (Transconflict, 2015).

While various initiatives are directed at taking steps towards a lasting peace in the Basque historic regions, this research specifically focusses on the local perspectives on the contents of a lasting peace settlement. While a majority of Basque nationalists agree there was, and in many cases still is, a conflict, the main Spanish political parties, the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra (PSE-EE), do not consider the issue to be a conflict (an issue, which will be discussed later on). Therefore, this research focusses on the perspectives and perceptions of Basque nationalists.

1.2 Research questions

The central question this thesis tries to answer is: What should, according to Basque nationalists, be the main dimensions of a lasting peace settlement for the conflict in the Basque historic regions?

In order to answer this main research question, three sub-questions will be dealt with, namely:

-What are, according to Basque nationalists, the origins of the Basque conflict?
-What are, according to Basque nationalists, the consequences of the Basque conflict?
-What is, according to Basque nationalists, needed for a lasting peace settlement?

To start with, it is important to outline how Basque nationalists perceive and interpret the conflict, its origins and consequences, since these perceptions and interpretations are related to their opinions and perceptions about the contents of a lasting peace settlement. It is just as important to address the consequences of the conflict, since these will also influence Basque nationalists’ opinions and perceptions about a lasting peace settlement. Finally, it is needed to explain what is, according to Basque nationalists, needed for a lasting peace settlement and how
such a settlement can be achieved. What are, for example, the obstacles and what do they expect from the different actors in the conflict?

1.3 Scientific and social relevance

There is a clear gap in the literature when it comes to peacebuilding in the Basque Country. Most of the literature focuses on the conflict itself, and/or issues like identity, culture, politics, nationalism, history, etc. (see Clark, 1979; Clark, 1984; Conversi, 1997; Garmendia, 1979; Heiberg, 1989; Ibarzábal, 1978; Jáuregui Bereciartu, 1981; Kurlansky, 1999; Mata, 1993; Mees, 2003; Pérez-Agote, 2006; Sullivan, 1988; Zulaika, 1988). This research, by addressing the solution to rather than the causes of the conflict, can therefore be considered as a relevant addition to the literature about the Basque conflict. The relevance is underlined by ETA’s announcement of its dissolution as an armed group, which resulted in the definitive ending of violence from the Basque side. Various (international) meetings have been held in order to discuss the future of the Basque Country and finding a solution to the conflict. However, so far the Spanish and French governments have not taken any further steps to start new negotiations with the Basques. Basque nationalists, on the other side, aim at negotiations about decommissioning and the issue of prisoners.

The Basque case is a very complex case. This makes it a scientifically relevant case to analyse. First of all, Basque society seems to be trying to initiate a peace process, while at the same time the French and Spanish states do not provide any cooperation. This makes it in a sense a unilateral peace process in which mainly Basque nationalists are making steps towards a solution. Even though international actors have been involved, for instance in peace conferences, right now only local actors play a role in the Basque peace process.

In general it is important to look at peacebuilding efforts from the perspectives of local actors, mainly from those who are involved in and/or affected by the conflict. It is important to produce a bottom-up approach for peacebuilding in which the realities and contexts of local people play a significant role. In the end they are the ones that can help to make peace a lasting peace; they understand the complex realities better than any outsider. This approach is based on the notions of Paffenholz (2013), Lederach (1997), Doyle & Sambanis (2006), and De Coning (2013), which all argue that the inclusion of local perspectives in peacebuilding is vital for a lasting peace. The Basque case is a good example of how local initiatives are trying to foster a peace process.

Partly based on numerous semi-structured interviews, this research gives an in-depth
representation of the ideas of Basque nationalists concerning a lasting peace; not just how Basque nationalists think about what a lasting peace should include, but also what in their opinion should be done in order to achieve this and what their own contribution might be. Such an analysis shows how local actors are able to engage in peacebuilding, and especially to what extent they are willing to make compromises in order to make sure a lasting peace does work.

Second, this research covers a very important and timely topic, as the Basque conflict can arguably be considered to be the last armed conflict in Europe. After the Spanish Civil War, the period of dictatorship under General Franco, and many years of violence committed by ETA, the biggest challenge for Basque society nowadays is the construction of a lasting peace. Even though violence has already ended for four years, new arrests of people of the Abertzale movement are still numerous, even during the time of my fieldwork. On top of that, there is still no solution for the Basque prisoners, an issue Amnesty International is heavily involved in. There are still people living in exile, longing for a permanent solution to the conflict so they can return home. This research can also be seen as an example of so-called ‘action research’, the purpose of which is to solve a particular problem and to produce an evaluation of the best way to deal with this problem. Knowledge in this case is contextual and might be used to solve the specific problem.

Being an anthropologist, it is my opinion that giving local people a voice and present their ideas and realities is important, so people will be able to better understand them. There is, for example, hardly any publication dealing with the question of how Basque people (or Spanish people for that matter) think about a durable solution to the conflict. This research can give insights in how Basque nationalists, important actors in this conflict, think about the origins of this particular conflict, but also about the consequences (how has it affected, and in many cases still affects, their lives). I do believe these are important questions to deal with, as a common ground and memory is needed for a lasting peace. While this research mainly focusses on the side of Basque nationalists, which is not a homogenous group in itself, it is important that other sides are also covered by a comparable research.

1.4 Thesis outline

In this first chapter the research objective was introduced. In Chapter 2 a theoretical framework is set out to give a theoretical background for the research. Concepts like peace, peacebuilding, and lasting peace will be discussed to get insights in the theoretical notions and views from the academic literature about these concepts. In Chapter 3 the methodologies of the research are
discussed to be able to know which methodologies are used during the fieldwork for this thesis. Chapter 4 then discusses the historical context of the Basque conflict. This in order to be able to understand the history of the Basque conflict. Chapter 5 describes the interpretation of the Basque conflict and its consequences and is based on the research that was done in order to write this thesis. Chapter 6 describes what is needed for peace according to Basque nationalists. Finally, in Chapter 7 a conclusion will sum up the work.
2. Theoretical framework

The central question this thesis tries to answer is: What should, according to Basque nationalists, be the main dimensions of a lasting peace settlement for the conflict in the Basque historic regions? In order to answer this question, a theoretical framework has to be designed. Various aspects and dimensions have to be taken into consideration.

First, this part will deal with the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘peacebuilding’. Second, the notion of ‘lasting peace’ and its dimensions of transitional justice, reconciliation and a shared identity will be explained. Finally, the concept of the ‘right to self-determination’, which according to many Basque nationalists should be part of a lasting peace, will be discussed, so as to eventually be able to confront these theoretical notions and insights from academic literature with the views and opinions of the informants.

2.1 Peace

Western definitions of peace emphasise the absence of war and violence as a key component (Anderson, 2004, p. 102). Non-Western definitions, on the other hand, focus on the presence of other factors such as harmony and balance. Ideally, a definition of peace should include both aspects and therefore Anderson (2004) came up with the following definition: “Peace is a condition in which individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or nations experience low levels of violence and engage in mutually harmonious relationships” (Anderson, 2004, p. 102).

This definition has two main dimensions, namely ‘violence’ and ‘harmony’. The dimension of (the absence of) violence can be related to the notion of ‘negative peace’ as described by Galtung (1969). In this dimension lower levels of violence relate to higher levels of peace. The mere absence of violence does not necessarily constitute peace, however, as Anderson states: “The implication is that a genuine peace cannot be established by separation, isolation, or building barriers between conflicting parties. Though this may reduce violence and establish a “cold peace,” it will not establish harmony. Without incidents and efforts to promote harmony, peace is incomplete” (Anderson, 2004, p. 112).

While the concept of violence is generally defined as physical violence, Galtung tried to broaden it by stating:

Violence is any avoidable insult to basic human needs, and, more generally, to sentient life of any kind, defined as that which is capable of suffering pain and enjoy well-being. Violence
In his definition of peace, Galtung makes a distinction between ‘negative peace’ which he sees as the absence of personal violence, and ‘positive peace’ which he sees as the absence of structural violence. He describes structural violence as “social injustice” and links positive peace to ‘cooperation’, ‘integration’ and ‘social justice’ (Galtung, 1969). Reducing structural violence should foster positive relationships within and between social groups and lead to the creation of institutions that lead to peace. In the dimension of positive peace, higher levels of cooperation, integration, and social justice indicate a higher level of peace.

Peace can be seen as a condition, but this does not mean it is a static concept. According to Anderson (2004), “peace is seen as a relationship among people based on a common agreement or understanding” (Anderson, 2004, p. 102). Peace is a process that is always fluctuating and which can be measured by objective measures and subjective evaluations alike. Since peace is experienced by people, it is important to include personal evaluations when measuring peace. Both dimensions, violence and harmony, can be measured objectively as well as subjectively. While violence can for instance be measured in terms of the number of casualties (objective), it can also be measured by individual perceptions and subjective evaluations of violence. Subjective evaluations may vary among groups and may even differ from actual statistics (Anderson, 2004, p. 112). Harmony can also be measured by indicating the amount of agreements, active communication and social integration (objectively), or by subjective evaluations of harmonious relationships and social integration (Anderson, 2004, pp. 112-113). This research mainly focuses on the personal evaluations of peace and therefore measures subjective peace.

Peace is experienced in different contexts, varying from micro to macro level. First there is personal or inner peace, followed by interpersonal peace, social/intercultural peace, local/civil peace, national/domestic peace and international/political peace (Anderson, 2004). All these different levels should be taken into account and it is important for a lasting peace that harmonious relationships and mutual respect are reached top-down as well as bottom-up.

2.2 Peacebuilding
In the context of this research peacebuilding takes a long-term focus and can be defined as “strategies designed to promote a secure and stable lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the population are met and violent conflicts do not recur” (Lambourna, 2004, p. 3).
Peacebuilding is a long-term transformation in which society is transformed from a war system into a peace system. Both negative peace (the absence of direct physical violence) and positive peace (the absence of indirect structural and cultural violence) should be included in this process (Galtung, 1969, pp. 167-169). Ideally this results in “a situation in which the probability of war is so small that it does not really enter into the calculations of any of the people involved” (Boulding, 1978, p. 13). According to Lederach (1997), “anyone who has lived in settings of protracted conflict or engaged in peacemaking activities in divided societies knows that standardized formulas do not work” (Lederach, 1997, p. 23).

An important dimension of peacebuilding is the inclusion of various and often very diverse local perspectives. It is argued that by doing so, peacebuilding is more effective and some state that higher levels of inclusivity in peacebuilding lead to a more lasting peace (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). According to Paffenholz (2013), peacebuilding “has failed to be context sensitive, oriented towards the term, inclusive or accountable for local constituencies” (Paffenholz, 2013, p. 14). External actors do not have the ability to fully understand the complex social systems. Local actors, however, know more about the specific context of the conflict and society. Lederach (1997), argued that “peacebuilding must be rooted in and responsive to the experiential and subjective realities shaping people’s perspectives and needs” (Lederach, 1997, p. 24). While Paffenholz (2013), Lederach (1997), and De Coning (2013) all support the need for local ownership in peacebuilding, others believe that locally-led peacebuilding does not have the capacity to have a significant impact (Hayman, 2010). However, I do believe local perspectives are vital in peacebuilding. This research is in line with this notion, as it focuses on the perspectives of the local people about peace.

The peacebuilding process is not just about the termination of violence, but also about transforming relations and building bridges between people. In a positive scenario this might lead to a lasting peace.

2.3 Lasting peace

Peacebuilding is directed at the implementation of a lasting peace. Richard Solomon, President of the United States Institute of Peace states:

Sustainable peace requires that long-time antagonists not merely lay down their arms but that they achieve profound reconciliation that will endure because it is sustained by a society-wide network of relationships and mechanisms that promote justice and address the root causes of enmity before they can regenerate destabilizing tensions. (Solomon, as cited in Lederach, 1997, p. ix)
At the heart of any lasting peace settlement are the conditions and the processes of transitional justice and reconciliation (Lederach, 1997). However, various dimensions have to be implemented before a process of reconciliation can start. First of all, it is important that violence ends and belligerent groups lay down their weapons. Other important issues to deal with are: prisoners, decommissioning of weapons, and negotiations. These issues are all important for the transformation of the conflict into a scenario in which a lasting peace settlement, based on transitional justice, reconciliation and political coexistence, is possible.

2.3.1 Political amnesty and decommissioning of weapons

Political amnesty is seen as an important part of conflict resolution. Gormally and McEvoy (1995) explain:

The issue of the early release of political motivated prisoners was critical to any peace process which follows a political conflict. Whatever the particular positions taken up by negotiating parties at any time, we would argue that, until the question of prisoners is agreed then nothing, that will create a final solution, is agreed. (Gormally & McEvoy, 1995, p. 43)

For instance, in the so-called Good Friday Agreement of 1998 in Northern Ireland, political amnesty played an important role. While initially there was concern in society over the release of a large number of prisoners, it did have two positive key effects. First, former militants had the opportunity to achieve their goals through legal political parties. In the late 1990s, new political parties recruited many former paramilitaries (Fitzduff, 2002, p. 10). Second, former militants have been directly involved in the peace process (Fitzduff, 2002, p.102). In the case of Northern Ireland some former militants took a leading role in processes of reconciliation and reintegration, for example the convicted IRA member Martin McGuinness (Clark, 2008, pp. 44-45). Not only the release of prisoners, but also their reintegration in society is “an indispensable prerequisite for the building of an inclusive society” (Gormally, 2001, 35).

The consequences of an early release might be severe for victims and their families, but there are two issues that have to be noted (McEvoy, 1998b, p. 1568). First, victims of violent political conflict are not just those who are injured or bereaved by the actions of armed groups, but also those who are injured or bereaved by actions of security forces and paramilitary groups related to the state. While many members of armed groups have been sentenced for their violent actions, this cannot be said about members of security forces, or people related to the violence
committed by the state. Even when they have been convicted, many were released after just serving a small part of their sentences. Second, interests of victims are diverse and their views regarding the early release of prisoners are not monolithic.

According to McEvoy (1998b), “[…] the treatment of prisoners is a mirror to the state’s view of the conflict” (McEvoy, 1998b, p. 1574). If a state would agree on the early release of prisoners, this indicates that the state acknowledges the political character of the conflict. At the same time it can be seen as a concession towards the armed group, something that society will not accept. However, there are various forms of early release that can be applied, collective or individual (McEvoy, 1998a). But “whichever modalities are chosen, they should be preceded by a clear commitment by the government that prisoners will be released as part of the process of conflict resolution” (McEvoy, 1998a, p. 54). At the same time conditions for an early release can be set, for example: commitment to negotiations, willingness to talk to victims, and decommissioning.

Decommissioning and eventually negotiations are needed to fully close the chapter of violence. It is important that armed groups hand over their weapons, as “an organisation permanently committed to democratic means would have no use for weapons” (Mac Ginty, 1998, p. 30). In that sense it is a logic extension of the commitment to peaceful methods. It would not only make the ceasefire permanent, but also “irrevocable” (Mac Ginty, 1998, p. 30). As Paddy O’Brien, IRA member, stated at an IRA conference during the period of negotiations and decommissioning in Northern Ireland: “In any final settlement, all guns and explosives must be handed up and must not remain out there to be used by future subversive or criminal groups” (as cited in Mac Ginty, 1998, p. 32). In an ideal situation a scenario to implement transitional justice and to start a process of reconciliation will be created if the issues of violence, decommissioning and prisoners are dealt with.

2.3.2 Transitional justice
According to Orentlicher (1991), there is a duty to prosecute human rights violations of former regimes as “it is the most effective insurance against future repression” (Orentlicher, 1991, p. 2542). Justice is important for present and future generations. “When we neither punish nor reproach evildoers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age, we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations”, according to the well-knows Soviet novelist, human rights activist and ‘dissident’ Solzhenitsyn (Solzhenitsyn, as cited in Orentlicher, 1991, p. 2539). It is important to respect the inherent dignity of individuals and the
rule of law, because “tyranny begins where law ends” (Orentlicher, 1991, p. 2542). Impunity erodes the rule of law, something that even opponents of prosecutions agree to. It is important that a successor government does not ignore the legacy of a former dictatorship. Past violations should be addressed in order to draw a line between the past and the present; a society can only start a process of healing when it comes to terms with its past. Therefore violations should be acknowledged officially and atrocities and abuses should be investigated. Orentlicher (1991) argues that amnesty laws may be necessary to achieve reconciliation, as long as they do not cover up heinous crimes that are required to be punished by international law (Orentlicher, 1991, p. 2550). Transitional justice is seen as a toolkit to facilitate justice and the rule of law in post-conflict societies and therefore has specific goals:

To bring about the right to “truth”, access to “justice”, victims’ right to “reparation”, and the right to recognition of their suffering and to have their dignity restored—but the goals are also social reconciliation and to secure the non-repetition of violations. (Bengoetxea, 2013, p. 32)

It is important that issues of transitional justice are dealt with, grounded within different disciplines like humanities, philosophy, history, religion, and law and legal sciences. If they all interact, transdisciplinary methodological pluralism will be achieved that will positively affect the outcomes of transitional justice processes (Bell, 2009). If transitional justice is seen as “a normative process of facing up to the past”, ignoring the events of the past means rejecting transitional justice. As long as the process has not been finished and the past is not reconciled with, there will be tensions in society (Bengoetxea, 2013).

In the ideal situation of a post-transition future, “experiences of the past are turned into a collective, inter-subjective, “memory”, but no longer determine the normative agenda” (Bengoetxea, 2013, p. 36). Categories like ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ will dilute and dissolve, while guilt, shame, blame, and responsibility are no longer relevant in a post-transition society. Enemy status should be overcome, because it is important to recognise each other as the relevant other.

An analysis of the case of the transition in Spain (1975-1980) might give relevant insights for the Basque conflict, since during the Franco dictatorship the Basques were strongly oppressed. Any sign of Basque identity was banned and many people were arrested and executed on the pretext of promoting ‘separatism’ (Conversi, 1997; Clark, 1979). The Spanish military governor of Araba, General Gil Yuste, already claimed during the time of the Civil War: “These abominable separatists do not deserve a homeland […] Basque nationalism must
be ruined, trampled underfoot, ripped out by its roots” (Clark, 1979, p. 80). When General Franco died in 1975, a period of transition started, directed at the democratisation of the country. According to Klare (1998), the Spanish authorities at the time aimed for transformative constitutionalism instead of undergoing a transitional justice process. The Constitution of 1978 was initiated to transform the entire social system without removing any official from Franco’s dictatorship. Police forces, the military and the State administration, all linked to the former regime, were allowed to carry on. Amnesty and amnesia were combined in a ‘pact of forgetting’, which was engineered by political elites and accepted by a majority of the Spanish people (Davis, 2005). A firm line was drawn between the authoritarian past and the democratic future of the country, which resulted into the coming into existence of ‘two Spains’. The Spanish transition was, in sum, “reconciliation without truth, transition without transitional justice” (Golob, 2008, p. 127).

A post-transitional justice process, fuelled by civil society, finally emerged in the 21st century as an important step for Spain. According to MacDonald and Bernardo (2006), an unreconciled past will lead to new cycles of violence and impunity:

In each new political context, those previously victimized use the past and their analysis of it to argue for their legitimacy as victims while at the same time justifying actions which do violence to others, in turn creating more victims and more deeply entrenched victim communities. (MacDonald & Bernardo, 2006, p. 174)

Transitional justice is not just about legal justice, but about social justice as well (Mani, as cited in Lambourna, 2004, p. 7). Lederach (1997) also acknowledges that the socioeconomic situation is critical to a lasting peace. People have various needs when it comes to justice and therefore more focus in research should be directed at the local needs to implement justice, which satisfies those that are affected by and involved in the conflict. This is why this research is based on semi-structured interviews with local people that are affected by and were, and are, involved in the conflict or the peace process.

---

6 Just like forgetting and not remembrance were part of Europe after World War II (Judd, 2006).
7 In 2007, the Law of Historical Memory as proposed by the Socialist government of Zapatero passed Congress, to the dismay of the Partido Popular (PP). The PP is a conservative right-wing party that in some ways is seen as the successor to the previous regime. The PP blamed the government for “re-opening the transition”, which it considered to be politics of revenge. Some left-wing parties were also not satisfied with the law, since impunity remained. Even though victims would be compensated and harm done to them would be recognised, the law did not give room to prosecute perpetrators (Golob, 2008).
2.3.3 Reconciliation

Relationships are at the basis of conflicts but, at the same time, form the basis of its long-term solutions (Lederach, 1997, p. 26). In post-conflict societies relationships are usually still based on antagonism, disrespect, distrust, hatred, and hurt. If former enemies want to manage their differences without being opposed violently, it is important to address their previous relationships and their violent past and redesign these relationships. It is substantial to “engender a minimum basis of trust so that there can be a degree of cooperation and mutual reliance between them” (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse, 2003, p. 11). A process of reconciliation is needed to reach this stage.

Reconciliation is also seen as “long-term healing” and refers to “the psychological process whereby understanding and tolerance lead to readiness to live together in a new framework of peace and well-being” (Whittaker, 1999, p. 1). Many researchers relate reconciliation to peace (Lederach, 1997; Whittaker, 1999; Mongbe & Del Picchia, 2004; Bar-On, 2007; Fischer, 2011). According to Mongbe & Del Picchia (2004), “there can be no genuine peace without reconciliation. Over the past years reconciliation has tended to become an inescapable political and legal process” (Mongbe & Del Picchia, 2004, pp. 2-3). They state:

It [reconciliation] aims not to resolve the conflict but to go beyond it. It implies that rights are recognised but all the same, goes further, for its ultimate objective is to achieve an appeased society which recognises free and equal individuals able to confront a history marred by violence, and above all, overcome that history […] Reconciliation goes hand in hand with forgiveness. (Mongbe & Del Picchia, 2004, p. 2)

In order to be effective, reconciliation needs simultaneous top-down and bottom-up processes (Bar-On, 2007), just as it is important that entire communities are involved in reorienting themselves to relationships of cooperation based on mutual respect. Civil society plays an important role in this (Kriesberg, 2007). Particularly in the case of ethno-political conflicts, reconciliation is important, as there might be a high level of polarisation, a loss of trust, and a negative interdependence. According to Fischer: “Reconciliation must be accompanied by acknowledgement of the past, the acceptance of responsibility and steps towards (re-)building trust” (Fischer, 2011, p. 411). In order to be successful, it is crucial that “the path to peace includes efforts by both sides or all constituents” (Claggett-Borne, 2013, p. 13).

As mentioned before, it is important that reconciliation applies to everyone in society. It is therefore not just a process for people who suffered directly or those who inflicted the suffering, but more generally for whole communities. It is a broad and inclusive process. This
is substantial, because definitions of the enemy usually encompass a community as a whole. In divided societies attitudes, prejudices, and negative stereotypes are developed about the enemy during violent conflict (Bloomfield et al., 2003, p. 13).

An important dimension of reconciliation is truth. While both sides of a (former) conflict will have different views of reality, it is important to develop a shared truth based on official investigations, judicial proceedings, and literary and mass media reports. Truth is mainly focused on the acknowledgement of what has happened in the past, which can be seen as a first step towards the restoration of relationships. While some people believe it is better to get away from the past, in fact “reconciliation must find ways to address the past without getting locked into a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness inherent in the past” (Lederach, 1997, p. 26). According to Lederach, “space for the acknowledgement of the past and envisioning of the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present” (Lederach, 1997, p. 27). At the same time “envisioning a common future creates new lenses for dealing with the past” (Lederach, 1997, p. 31). Lederach connects the concept of ‘truth’ with the concept of ‘mercy’ and states: “Truth is the longing for acknowledgement of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experiences, but it is coupled with Mercy, which articulates the need for acceptance, letting go, and a new beginning” (Lederach, 1997, p. 29).

There are various examples of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions that were created after periods of conflict in divided societies. Think, for example, about South Africa, Chile, El Salvador, and Sierra Leone. Again, each case implemented it in a different way and therefore all cases had different outcomes (Hayner, 2006). Overall truth is an important ingredient of reconciliation, but in itself it will not bring reconciliation.

A second important notion is that “expression of regard by members of each community towards the other entails recognising the humanity of the others and their human rights” (Fischer, 2011, p. 417). A third important dimension of reconciliation is justice for those who have suffered oppression (also discussed above). According to Lederach, “Justice represents the search for individual and group rights, for social restructuring, and for restitution” (Lederach, 1997, p.29). Again, justice is vital, but does not bring reconciliation in itself. Finally, security is an important dimension in the sense of personal and collective safety and well-being.

One of the main challenges of reconciliation is to overcome power asymmetries. As Kriesberg (2007) explains: “Often both sides have suffered injuries at the hand of the other, although not in equal measure, and reconciliatory actions often are ineffective because they fail to reflect the given symmetries and asymmetries” (Kriesberg, 2007, p. 254). Therefore it is
important that reconciliation entails significant complementary reciprocation. Victims can be suspicious of reconciliation and see it as an excuse for ignoring their suffering, but this feeling will only be present if reconciliation is not implemented as a long and inclusive process of justice, truth-telling, and punishment, but rather as a process of forgiving and forgetting (Bloomfield et al., 2003, p. 14). However, “meaningful reconciliation is a difficult, painful and complex process, but it must be grasped, because ignoring it sows the seeds of later, greater failure” (Bloomfield et al., 2003, p. 15).

There have been various examples of reconciliation processes throughout history; think for example about South Africa and El Salvador, but “as every conflict is different […] so a reconciliation process will differ from all other important respects, even as it shares many similarities with them” (Bloomfield et al., 2003, p. 16). In an ideal case “a reconciled community assimilates rather than discriminates, promulgates humane and legal rights, does its best to develop congenial relationships, and promotes a hope that material benefits will accrue as a product of peaceful transactions and independence” (Whittaker, 1999, p. 8).

2.3.4 Shared identity and the importance of memory

The final goal of reconciliation is coexistence and creating a shared future for a society that is divided by conflict. An important dimension of coexistence is a shared identity. A shared identity will create a common past and provides a platform for a different future (Schreiter, 2008, p. 7). An essential part of identity is memory. Memories and constructions of the past are very often central to conflict mobilisation and are therefore a crucial issue to deal with during the reconciliation process. According to Schreiter (2008), “for societies to be cut off from memory makes them myopic. For societies to suppress memory can make them dangerously explosive” (Schreiter, 2008, p. 9).

Memories can be seen as socially constructed understandings of situations and are shaped by discourse, beliefs, culture and learning. Social memories of all nations are constructed (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983; Renan, 1990; Anderson, 1991 [1983]). Muro (2009) explains that “the cement of […] group identity is not the past itself (what actually happened) but what members of the community tell one another in the present (what they remember). […] national history is an act of both collective remembering and collective amnesia” (Muro, 2009, p. 661). Memory plays a very important role in societies. “Precisely because of its fluidity, emotiveness and range of possible experiences and interpretations, memory can be a very powerful motivator for individual and collective behaviours” (Gilliland, 2013, p. 4). While a collective memory of the nation is constructed, there will also be counter discourses of
marginalised groups as they become aware of their origins, defeats and injustices (Muro, 2009, p. 662).

One of the most prominent types of memory is war memory. To maintain existing communal identity, mechanisms to promote it have to be established. According to Anderson (1991 [1983]), “war commemoration is a vital moment in [the] process of interpellation” (Anderson, 1991 [1983], pp. 9-10). Not only soldiers and fighters, but also victims play a role in commemorations.

2.4 Political settlement of the conflict
Conflicts between a sovereign state and an ethno-political group which is trying to establish independent rule are very hard to settle. These are not just clashes between identity groups, but touch upon the territorial foundations of a state. As Pokalova (2015) states: “Such conflicts represent a clash between two internationally recognized principles of statehood: self-determination (claimed by separatists) and preservation of territorial integrity (claimed by parent states)” (Pokalova, 2015, p. 70). Separatist conflicts can have different outcomes: power sharing, partition, or military victory. However, negotiated settlements in separatist conflicts are scarce and therefore these conflicts often end up as frozen conflicts, like in the Basque case.

2.4.1 Right to self-determination
In the age of globalisation and European integration, established nation-states are forced to rethink their territorial model as regional small nations are demanding their own place (Calzada, 2014). States like Canada and the United Kingdom allowed Quebec and Scotland to organise a referendum to decide about its political future, but “Spain still stands out as remaining normatively inflexible without, so far, even contemplating any nation-state re-scaling process” (Brenner, 2004). While Spain is determined to remain a centralised nation-state based on its unitary Constitution, independentism is continuing to gather advocates, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

The international legal interpretation of the right to self-determination is that “all peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development” (United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966). However, according to the United Nations, separatist claims are subordinate to the principle of territorial integrity (Philpott, 1995, p. 353).
According to Zabalo, Soto & Mateos (2012) there are four theoretical paradigms dealing with the right to self-determination: choice theories, just-cause theories, national self-determination theories and conflict resolution theories. Choice theories analyse the right to decide as a right that is consolidated in liberal democracy. Theorists adhering to this paradigm refer to political entities instead of nations. As Philpott describes, “it [the right to self-determination] promotes democracy for a group whose members first claim to share an identity for political purposes, and second seek a separate government, as opposed to a larger portion of representatives in their current state’s government” (Philpott, 1995, p. 358). They state that people have the right to be governed democratically and so the right to self-determination derives from the wishes of a majority (Philpott, 1995; Copp, 1997; Webb, 2006).

In just-cause theories the right to self-determination is merely a remedial right, which is only granted when a group has suffered certain injustices and it is the last resort. This can be seen as a supplement to Locke’s theory of revolution, as “Locke’s point is that if the government acts in ways that are not within the scope of the authority granted to it by the people’s consent, then governmental authority ceases to exist” (Buchanan, 1997b, p. 35). It also grants the right of self-determination when prior agreements on regional development are broken or when previously sovereign territory was unjustly taken by the state (Brilmayer, 1991; Buchanan, 1997a, 1997b).

National self-determination theories defend the equal recognition of different national identities, arguing that a territorial concept of self-determination is invalid (Moore, 1997). In this perception self-determination does not necessarily take the form of independent statehood, as “[...] giving equal recognition to different national identities cannot be achieved by the partition of different communities in cases where national groups are thoroughly mixed” (Moore, 1997, p. 911), because “the self-determination of one national group may threaten to compromise the self-determination of another national group” (Moore, 1997, p. 910). According to Moore (1997), national self-determination is also a prerequisite for conflict resolution. She states that “it is through the equal recognition of the distinct national identities that nationally divided communities have the best hope of achieving lasting peace” (Moore, 1997, p. 912).

Conflict resolution theorists state that the majority of political conflicts are related to national disputes. Self-determination in this paradigm is seen as “an instrument that reinforces

---

8 For example, discriminatory redistribution, threats to cultural preservation, threats of genocide or the systematic breach of human rights (Brilmayer, 1991; Buchanan, 1997a; Buchanan, 1997b).
or legitimizes the demands of a given minority” (Zabalo et al., 2012, p. 321). There is comprehensive scientific literature claiming that the right to self-determination can contribute to conflict resolution (Hannum, 1996; Hannum & Babbitt, 2006; Babbitt, 2006). Weller (2005), on the other hand, sees self-determination as a curse and states “it appears to offer a promise of independence to populations. However, governments have ensured that this promise is a hollow one. Naturally, the system has been rigged to ensure that central governments will prevail in self-determination conflicts” (Weller, 2005, p. 27). He also states that “the rule of self-determination has generated a dynamic that sustains conflict” (Weller, 2005, p. 4). Conflicts in which self-determination claims are expressed with violence often become intractable, which is also the case with the Basque conflict. One of the reasons is that “groups claiming self-determination often perceive it not only as a right per se, but also as a right to secession protected by the international human rights covenants […] in fact, self-determination as secession is not a legal right” (Babbitt, 2006, p. 188).

The recognition of the right to self-determination played an important role in various processes of conflict resolution. Think for example about the split up of former Yugoslavia, the independence of Kosovo, and the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. As former Prime Minister of Ireland Bertie Ahern (1998) described:

The key trust of these changes is to reinforce the principle that in Ireland, North and South, it is the people who are sovereign. There is no longer any question of an absolute or territorial British claim to sovereignty, without reference to the wishes of the people. (Ahern, 1998, p. 1196)

This means that only by the consent of Irish people alone, a united Ireland can be put in place. Over the past years a number of referenda about independence have been put in place around the world; think for example about the cases of Montenegro in 2006, South Sudan in 2011, and Scotland in 2014. Catalonia also held a referendum on independence in 2014, but the Spanish government declared it unconstitutional and illegal. Basque nationalists have been following these developments closely, while waiting for their turn.

2.5 The Basque case
This chapter summarised various dimensions of a lasting peace which are covered in the literature, namely: the end of violence, decommissioning of weapons, negotiations about for example prisoners, transitional justice, reconciliation, and the right to self-determination. These
dimensions are needed for a lasting peace settlement, according to academicians, and many of them have been implemented in peace settlements in, for example, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and El Salvador. This research deals with the conflict in the Basque Country, a conflict in which violence has stopped for several years but the peace process is frozen. The research will shed light on how the various dimensions of a lasting peace can be implemented in this case. In this thesis the perspectives of local actors, in this case Basque nationalists, about a lasting peace and what they think is needed for a lasting peace in the Basque Country will be set out.

The analysis of this thesis is based on qualitative research methods, as I do believe it is important to focus on subjective evaluations of the dimensions of lasting peace in order to implement a lasting peace settlement. For example, what are, according to Basque nationalists, the obstacles for a lasting peace in the Basque Country and do they believe a lasting peace is possible in the Basque case? What is, according to Basque nationalists, needed for justice and reconciliation and how does it relate to a lasting peace in the Basque Country? What do people, for example, expect from justice and reconciliation?
3. Methodology

In order to be able to answer the research questions of this thesis, anthropological fieldwork has been conducted in the Basque historic regions in the period between March 17 and July 8, 2015. Previous fieldwork, conducted in June 2013 in the same area, has also been taken into account.

The academic discipline of Anthropology, and its approach to (field) research, is based on three important research principles: direct observation, contextuality, and triangulation. Direct observation takes place in participant observation, where the researcher gathers relevant data during field research. The researcher is in direct contact with the research field (Cohen, 2000). Anthropological research therefore yields in-depth ideographic descriptions (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Bernard, 2011; Spradley, 1980), which makes the internal validity of this method very high.

This research focuses on a specific case and its context. A case study gives the researcher the opportunity to rely on different sources and methods and use a wide variety of data, which is referred to as triangulation. This gives the opportunity to verify information (Denscombe, 2003). In this particular case study three specific methods have been used in order to collect information in the field: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and small talk.

3.1 Semi-structured interviews

During the period of fieldwork in 2015, thirty-two semi-structured interviews with various relevant people were conducted in the Basque historic regions (see Appendix 1 for more information). Among them are politicians from all the major political parties active in the Basque historic regions: Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra (PSE-EE), Partido Socialista Navarra (PSN), Partido Popular (PP), Unión del Pueblo Navarra (UPN), Podemos, Sortu, Aralar, EAJ-PNV, and GeroaBai; a representative of Aralar, who is a councillor in Madrid for the Abertzale Left coalition Amaiur; former (ETA) prisoners and their family members; journalists; academicians, like the sociologist Javier Elzo, who published several books on ETA and reconciliation, and who had to be protected by bodyguards for more than ten years because of threats from ETA; (youth) activists; a representative of the Euskal Memoria Foundation (an organisation active in the field of Basque historical memory); people working for Baketik (an organisation involved in ethical transformation of society); people working for Sare (a citizens’ network for the rights of Basque prisoners, exiles and deportees); people who worked for Lokarri (a citizens’ network to promote peace, dialogue and
reconciliation, and organised three peace conferences); the present Minister of Peace of the Basque government and former director of Baketik, Jonan Fernandez; and, finally, the former president of the Basque government, Juan José Ibarretxe (EAJ-PNV).

Face-to-face interviews are an appropriate tool when the depth of meanings is important and the focus is on gaining insight and understanding (Gillham, 2000, p. 11). It is useful and relevant to learn “what is important in the mind of informants: their meanings, perspectives, and definitions; how they view, categorize, and experience the world” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 88). For this research semi-structured interviews have been used, which focus on open responses in the participants’ own words. In this method a list of predetermined questions is prepared, but it also leaves room to explore other issues that are important to the participants (Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010, Chapter 8). Jones (1985) describes the value of semi-structured interviews:

> In order to understand other persons’ constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them […] in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of the meanings (rather than through isolated segments squeezed into a few lines of paper). (Jones, 1985, p. 46)

By conducting face-to-face interviews, the researcher gives the respondents the possibility to formulate their own responses (Bailey, 1987), while at the same time the researcher can also observe non-verbal indicators; something which is very useful when discussing sensitive issues (Gordon, 1975).

In the case of the Basque conflict, the discussion of sensitive issues related to the conflict turned out to be very useful. Quite often social cues like voice, intonation, body language and facial expressions added to the verbal answers of the informants; therefore notes of social cues have been included in the transcriptions.

During all of the interviews specific questions, like ‘how would you describe the Basque conflict’, ‘how would you describe a lasting peace’, and ‘what is needed for a lasting peace in the Basque Country’, were asked, so the answers could be compared in the analysis. Other questions were, for example, related to the work of the informant or the political party he/she was affiliated with. The majority of the interviews was recorded and later transcribed; information derived from the interviews that were not recorded was added to the informal talks. Part of the interviews were held in English, but the majority was conducted in Spanish and translated into English later on.
After transcribing and translating, all the interviews were reviewed in order to identify common, recurrent, or emergent themes. Responses were then coded based on different themes. In the end the patterns were analysed and compared with the outcomes of the other methods being used in this research, in line with the basics of qualitative data analysis (Babbie, 2010, Chapter 13). The final outcomes are presented in Chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis.

3.2 Participant observation

Another method that has been used for this research is participant observation, which took place during various meetings and demonstrations from Etxerat (a prisoners’ relatives association), Sare and the Izquierda Abertzale; a political youth camp of the Izquierda Abertzale (Gazte Martxa); an ‘Ongi Etorri’ or homecoming party for a prisoner who had been released; a demonstration and the forming of a human wall to protect three young Basque nationalists from being arrested (Resist Gasteiz); as well as several electoral campaign activities from various political parties. Participant observation gave me the opportunity to meet new people and experience how people were dealing with conflict-related issues like, for example, prisoners and arrests. It was also a way to connect with new informants whom I was able to interview later on. During my presence at the political camp I had, for example, the possibility to talk to youth from Galicia, Aragon, Castilla and Catalonia, who support independence in their respective regions. These people consider their struggles as similar and it was therefore interesting to hear their experiences and views on the situation as well. A detailed report of all the participant observations was made and later coded and analysed so it could be compared to the outcomes of the other methods used during this research.

This method is distinctive, since respondents are approached in their own environment rather than having to come to the researcher. A researcher tries to learn what it would be like to be an ‘insider’, while remaining an ‘outsider’. Participant observation has been claimed “to represent a uniquely humanistic, interpretive approach, as opposed to supposedly “scientific” and “positivist” positions” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 249). Put in other words, it is not possible to study the social world without being part of it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

3.3 Small talk

Small talk was used to provide insightful data, to build up a network of informants, and to build trust between informants and the researcher. It helps a researcher to better understand the
context and the situation and is therefore an important method in qualitative research (O’Reilly, 2005).

By visiting the social and political bars of the Izquierda Abertzale, the so-called *Herriko Tabernas*, and the social and political bars of the EAJ-PNV, the so-called *Batzokis*, I conducted informal conversations with people visiting these bars. Based on my own experience, I know people feel freer to express their political opinions when they are in these bars, surrounded by other people that share their ideas. In other public places they do not always feel safe to do so. Informal talks in these settings were also a way to gain the trust of informants. When I entered a *Herriko Taberna* for the first time, everybody noticed that a stranger had entered their place, but by going there more often and talking to people I finally ended up being a regular visitor instead of a stranger. People were also more open about sensitive issues in the end and some explained why they would not trust any stranger who enters their bars, as they had been arrested before or had been living in exile in the French Basque Country to avoid an arrest.

Informal talks also took place in the streets, by for example asking people their opinions about the Basque conflict or perceptions of a lasting peace. Since regional elections were held during the period of my fieldwork, it was interesting to talk about politics and political aims for a solution to the conflict. I talked to various politicians who were campaigning in the streets during the period leading up to the elections. It was insightful to see which parties focused on conflict related issues in their campaigns, and also which parties did not. Small talk was also conducted during meetings, demonstrations, and a political youth camp. Notes of these informal talks were made, analysed, and used to compare with the outcomes of the other methods of this research.

3.4 Informants

First of all, this research does not only include Basque nationalist informants, but also various people who have particular experience related to the conflict and peacebuilding issues (for example the respondents from Lokarri and Baketik, the Minister of Peace, and sociologist Javier Elzo). Even though these people might vote for Basque nationalist parties, their role is not directly linked to a specific political party (for example, for coordinator of Lokarri, Paul Rios, and Minister of Peace, Jonan Fernandez, having no political party affiliation was a requirement to hold on to their position).

Second, I also chose to include informants from other political parties (i.e. Podemos, PP, PSE-EE, PSN, and UPN) in order to compare their views with the views of Basque
nationalists and to see if the views that Basque nationalists have about them can be confirmed. Interviewing these politicians in 2013 and 2015 also gave me more insight in the Basque political arena and its actors. Partido Popular politicians have been interviewed in 2013 in Iruña/Pamplona (Navarra) and Donostia/San Sebastián (Gipuzkoa) and in 2015 again in Iruña/Pamplona. The same PSE-EE politician has been interview in 2013 and 2015 in Donostia/San Sebastián, while another one from the Partido Socialista de Navarra has been interviewed in 2013 in Iruña/Pamplona. From the UPN, María Caballero, daughter of politician Tomás Caballero who has been assassinated by ETA in 1998, was interviewed in 2013 in Iruña/Pamplona. The politician from Podemos Euskadi who has been interviewed in 2015 in Donostia/San Sebastian claimed to be a Basque nationalist, even though Podemos itself is not necessarily a Basque nationalist party; it did get quite some votes from Basque nationalists, however, as explained by Asier Blas Mendoza, a professor in social and political sciences.

3.4.1. Sampling

Some of the informants have been chosen based on their experience related to the research topic; this is referred to as “purposive sampling” (Clifford, et al., 2010, Chapter 8). I especially wanted to interview Lokarri coordinator Paul Rios, former Basque president Ibarretxe, and the current president Iñigo Urkullu (who in the end I could not speak to, but who made sure I was able to speak to the Minister of Peace, Jonan Fernandez). I also selected and contacted a number of organisations (Sare, Etxerat, Lokarri, the Abertzale student organisation Ikasle Abertzaleak, Baketik, Euskal Memoria, and the Abertzale youth movement Ernai).

Other informants were reached by a process of “snowballing” (Clifford, et al., 2010, Chapter 8), in which informants helped me to get into contact with new informants. This was for example the case with politicians who put me in contact with politicians from their party in other locations, and people from Sare and Lokarri who did the same. Informants from Sare were also able to get me in contact with families of (former) prisoners and former prisoners themselves.

Finally, some of the informants were reached by participant observation. I came in contact with the representative from Podemos when attending a political meeting of this party in Donostia/San Sebastián. During a demonstration for prisoners I recognised the president of Sortu, Hassier Arraiç, in the crowd and I approached him to arrange an interview.
3.4.2 Location of the interviews

During this research I gave my informants the opportunity to choose where the interview would take place. I decided to do so based on my previous experience with interviewing in the Basque Country. I realised that not everybody feels comfortable to discuss sensitive issues relating to politics and/or the Basque conflict in public spaces. The politicians were interviewed in the council houses where they work, in the Basque Parliament, or the offices of their political party. Other people mainly chose cafés where people with the same political opinion hang out: Herriko Tabernas, the political bars of the Abertzale Left, or Batzokis, political bars of the EAJ-PNV. I also went to the Universidad del País Vasco (UPV), for interviews with two professors, to the Universidad de Deusto to interview a professor who also works for Baketik, to the presidential building to interview the Minister of Peace, while I also visited some informants at their private homes. In all these cases I was alone with the informant(s) so there was no outside intervention during the interviews.

3.5 Ethical considerations

During the fieldwork in the Basque Country, I always took into consideration that this research is dealing with sensitive issues. It took me a while to gain the trust of the informants, even though I already had a network before I went to the field. Without having good contacts with people who are related to, for example, activists, former prisoners, and families and relatives of prisoners, it is very hard to reach these people, let alone, to interview them. I was travelling around in different provinces, so every time I moved to a new place it took some time to reach informants.

Before every interview I discussed with the informants whether or not they would give permission to record the interview and whether or not they would give permission to use their name. I always gave the informant the freedom to stop the interview or stop the voice recorder any time they felt they wanted to. Sometimes an informant stopped the voice recorder, said something off the record, and then started the recorder again. What was said off record is not used in this research. In the case of Sare I decided it was better to keep the informants anonymous, since the organisation is under investigation by Spanish authorities. Activists, former prisoners, and family members and relatives of prisoners are also anonymous. During the period of my fieldwork a number of people, among them activists, journalists, lawyers, and psychologists, were arrested or imprisoned for ‘supporting terrorism’, which made me realise again how important it is to give informants the opportunity to stay anonymous so as to protect
them. I support the notion by Clark (2012), that informants “should not be seen simply as sources of information. How interviewees perceive the research process, how they are affected by our questions and approaches, and what they feel might be improved or done differently are important areas to explore” (Clark, 2012, p. 826).
4. The historical context of the Basque conflict

This chapter will deal with the context of the Basque conflict and its historical background. It is included in this research, so as to give a proper background of the case. First, it will explain the conflict between Spanish nationalism and Basque nationalism. Second, it will discuss the Basque conflict as an ethno-political conflict. Finally, the historical background of the most important events and developments regarding the Basque case is described.

4.1 Spanish unitary nationalism vs. Basque nationalism

Basque ethnic nationalism collides with Spanish civic nationalism. While Spain as a state tries to include all people that inhabit the Spanish territory into one Spanish nation, Basque nationalists feel they do not belong to this nation and should not be part of it. They do not feel Spanish, even though nationalism ‘forced’ them to do. As Pérez-Agote describes: “The present [Basque] conflict is about the definition of “we” – between a “we” that is objectified and promulgated by the state and a “we” that emerges from the Basque Country itself” (Pérez-Agote, 2006, p. xix). Basque ethnic nationalism therefore emerged because “the “we” conflict necessarily retains a form of political expression because politics is a necessary referent for social synthesis” (Balandier, 1967, p. 58). A significant part of the Basques have never felt represented as a nation within the borders of the Spanish nation-state, which finally resulted in the creation of radical Basque nationalism and a struggle for an independent Basque state. According to Smith (1981):

Nationalism is likened to an evolutionary and self-propelling growth, feeding on unsatisfied ethnic aspirations, and the present surge of ethno nationalism among Basques […] reflects a quite natural and perhaps even predictable stage in a process that has been underway for approximately two centuries. (Smith, 1981, p. 59)

Conversi (1997) adds that an ethnic group cannot feel fully protected without the formation of its own nation-state. Only when this group has a very strong sufficient identity and at the same time is comfortable about its future survival in the existing nation-state, demands for self-determination and independence may become irrelevant (Conversi, 1997, p. 6). It is therefore the duty of a state to protect all different cultures and nationalities in the nation-state, in order to retain exclusive power and stability in a peaceful state. If nationalists feel that their culture is threatened by the state, they will form an opposition towards this state (Conversi, 1997, p. 7).
If a movement demands self-determination, this is referred to as separatism. Separatism is a challenge for the unity of a state, as it challenges its territorial integrity, undermines its central authority, and questions its legitimacy (Pokalova, 2010, p. 430). According to Blagojevic (2007):

The motivation behind the effort to establish a separate ethnic territory lies in the group’s desire to secure access to political, economic, and social rights and resources. Existing separately from the other ethnic group(s) is seen as a solution to the group’s problems, and other ethnic groups are perceived as obstacles to peace and development. (Blagojevic, 2007, p. 555)

The call for separatism can eventually evolve into an ethno-political conflict.

4.2 Ethno-political conflict

Gurr describes a situation in which an ethnic group opposes the central state as an ethno-political conflict. According to Gurr, ethno-political groups are “identity groups whose ethnicity has political consequences, resulting in either differential treatment of group members or in political action on behalf of group interests” (Gurr, 2000, p. 5). Ethno-political groups share the “belief that the traits that set them apart from others justifies their separate treatment and status” (Gurr, 2000, p. 8); they feel they have to compete with other groups in the state. In reaction the groups will turn to collective action through protests, rebellions, demonstrations or even acts of violence to declare their nationalist demands. This is how an ethno-political conflict starts (Gurr, 2000, p. 65).

Collective disadvantages are at the heart of this conflict. If a group believes it is discriminated against in comparison to other groups within the state, this will increase the incentives for ethno-political conflict (Weaver, 2002, p. 11). In the context of the Basque conflict there are two forms of discrimination the Basques have to face. The first one is political discrimination; the systematic denial of political rights. In the case of the Basques this includes the banning of political parties and youth movements, denying the people the right of freedom of political expression. Not just political parties have been banned, but also Herriko Tabernas, bars where Basque nationalists gather, have been closed and different media outlets have been shut down. As long as the Spanish state is in constant opposition to the Abertzale Left while claiming it is protecting democracy, it violates the basic political rights of the Basques (Van Engeland & Rudolph, 2008, p. 80).

The second form of discrimination involves cultural discrimination; the denial of
cultural expressions and cultural behaviours (Van Engeland & Rudolph, 2008, p. 12). In Navarra, for example, until 2015 flying the Basque flag was not always allowed. Another issue deals with the linguistic policies that do not favour the use of the Basque language. Any repression, like the Basques had to deal with during the Franco regime, will strengthen the ethno-political protests and at the same time elongate it (Gurr, 2000, pp. 106-107). On the other hand, if justice is being served for past discrimination, this might minimise the ethno-political conflict potential (Gurr, 2000, p. 164).

4.3 Historical background
The Basques have been referred to as a “nation without a state” (Eriksen, 2002, p. 15). According to Gutierrez (2009), “in the past and even in the prehistory, the Basques formed a nation with its own language, customs and culture, which successfully fought and defeated all invaders” (Gutierrez, 2009, p. 224). Historians claim that the roots of Basque identity formation can be found in the fifteenth century, the beginning of Spanish state-building (Mees, 2001; De Pablo, Mees & Rodríguez Ranz, 1999). During the seventeenth and eighteenth century the Basques had a deal with the Spanish monarch, in which they swore loyalty to the crown, but kept their traditional self-rule, stipulated in agreements called fueros.

For a long period of time this Basque traditional self-rule functioned without any major conflicts (Watson, 1996, pp. 18-19), but as a consequence of the various Carlist Wars that took place in Spain during the nineteenth century this situation changed. By the end of the last Carlist war, in 1876, the self-government of the Basque provinces was completely abolished and the fueros were no longer in place.

The Basques were disappointed, since they felt that their autonomy and rights had been taken away. During this period of time, notions of regionalism were little by little transformed into nationalism (Letamendía, 1995, p. 180). Basque nationalists tried to restore the Basque fueros in support of the Basque national consciousness (Mees, 2003, p. 7). According to Mees (2001), around this time the ‘national awakening’ of the Basque nation started.

At the end of the nineteenth century Sabino Arana took over the ideas of fuerismo and propagated radical Basque nationalism. His Basque nationalism was mainly focused on a heroic past and he assembled myths and historical narratives; by doing so he claimed the right to independence, based on historic victories in the past (Watson, 1996, p. 20). Basque nationalist movements used history to create an ideal, but also to unite the people and to increase national identity (Eriksen, 2002, p. 17). Arana claimed the focus of the Basques should be on reaffirming
their own history, culture and race, as well as restoring the ancient self-rule and the notion of *fueros* (Mees 2003, p. 10). His primary focus was on race and religion, and he referred to the Basques as a “chosen people” (Conversi, 1997, p. 54). In 1895 Arana founded the political party Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea (EAJ), in Spanish known as Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV).

The process of industrialisation during the nineteenth and early twentieth century led to in mass immigration from Spanish workers to the Basque historic regions. Lower classes considered themselves to be victims of this modernisation process and felt that, as a consequence of these migration flows, the Basque culture came under attack (Mees, 2003, p. 9). Therefore it has been claimed that Basque nationalism emerged as a radical response to an attack on Basque ethnic values, culture, and identity (Conversi, 1997, p. 78).

When in 1917 Basque nationalists finally received a majority in the provincial elections in Bizkaia, the nationalist movement transformed into a mass movement. From that moment on Basque nationalism became a powerful political force, a cross-class social movement (Mees, 2001, p. 806). In 1936, during the Spanish Republic, the Basque Country as well as Catalonia did enjoy extensive autonomy, to the dismay of many Spaniards. Basque and Catalan regional nationalism collided with Spanish unitary nationalism; this collision can be regarded as one of the causes of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

After Franco won the Civil War in 1939, he established his regime of “state terror with no parallel in its history” (Conversi, 1997, p. 81). General Franco focused on Spanish nationalism and the unity of the Spanish nation, so there was no space for the Basque culture. The centralised regime exercised a cruel repression against any form of Basque culture and thousands of Basques were sent into exile, killed, or tortured systematically on the pretext of promoting separatism. During the Franco period the regime committed all kinds of human rights violations that were inherent to a totalitarian regime (Preston, 2012). In the Basque region these violations were politically motivated (Landa, 2013, p. 9). Around 150,000 Basques fled the country and a Basque Diaspora spread to Latin America, France and other Western countries (Legarreta, 1984).

---

9 Sabino Arana used the term ‘Basque race’ in order to make a distinction between the Basques and the Spanish; in contemporary terms it would be better to make a distinction between (two) ethnicities or nations.

10 This party refers to itself as EAJ-PNV, and therefore this abbreviation is used in this thesis.

11 During the Second Spanish Republic, in 1936, EAJ-PNV managed to get an autonomous government installed in the Basque region, led by *lehendakari* (Basque for president) José Antonio de Aguirre (Mees, 2003, p. 19). This autonomy did not last for long, however, because of the Civil War. In June 1937 Franco’s nationalist troops captured Bilbo/Bilbao, which resulted in the abolishment of the autonomy and oppression of all political parties (Conversi, 1997, p. 77). Aguirre fled to France, where he led a government-in-exile until 1960.
During the 1940s, the political party EAJ-PNV formed the Resistance Committee in order to coordinate anti-Franco activities. During the Second World War this committee worked closely together with the Allies fighting Nazi-Germany. Information about the Germans gathered from France was delivered to the American consulate in Bilbao. The Resistance Committee was not strong enough to strike boldly against Madrid, but the Basques hoped the Allies would turn on Franco and defeat him once the Second World War was won. The scenario changed, however, when the Cold War started (Clark, 1979, pp. 86-87). The fear that continued pressure on Franco would lead to disorder and violence, while the Soviet Union supported the Spanish Communists, made the United States to restore its relations with Franco Spain (Clark, 1979, p. 98). As a result of this, Western powers withdrew their support for the Basque government-in-exile; many Basque nationalists faced desperate isolation and lost all hope.

The failure of the Western democracies to isolate and exert pressure on Franco’s regime “led the Basques to conclude that they could not depend on outside assistance” (Clark, 1979, p. 80), and they “began to realize very uneasily that their long night in exile might prove to be longer than they had ever imagined” (Clark, 1979, p. 106).

Economic support from the United States helped Franco in restoring order in his country in the 1950s. Many Basque nationalists now blamed the EAJ-PNV for its weakness; although it had close ties with the United States, this did not produce any favourable results for Basque nationalism (Clark, 1979, p. 101). Since the region prospered economically, the EAJ-PNV and its supporters appeared to be less interested in Basque nationalism than ever before. In particular young Basques blamed the EAJ-PNV for being too passive and began organising their own (political) groups. This finally resulted in the founding of ETA on July 31, 1959 (Clark, 1984, p. 27; Conversi 1997, p. 90). By the time of its creation, the leaders of ETA described it as a “patriotic, democratic and nonconfessional movement” (Clark, 1979, p. 157).

A new Basque nationalist movement was born and the EAJ-PNV ceased to be the only legitimate representative of Basque nationalism. The founding of ETA has been described as a revival of Arana’s ideas (Jáuregui Bereciartu, 1981), but at the same time ETA rejected the two main concepts of Arana’s ideology: race and religion. ETA’s leadership chose to focus more on history, culture and language, and it was the revival of the Basque language and culture in the 1960s that provided a fertile soil. The Basque language, Euskera, is an ancient language with no relation to any other languages (Hualde, Lakarra & Trask, 1996). ETA gained a lot of

---

12 ETA took over the leadership of leftists positions within Basque nationalism from the first pro-independence left-wing Basque nationalist party Acción Nacionalista Vasca (ANV), which had been founded in 1930 (Blas, 2011, p. 154).
support and “had become a symbol of popular resistance to the Franco regime for nationalists and non-nationalists alike [...] Open criticism of ETA was judged as open support for the regime” (Heiberg, 1989, p. 107).

Various assemblies and political meetings during the 1960s led to continuous changes in the ideology of ETA. ETA was finally transformed into a “revolutionary Basque movement for national liberation” (Garmendia 1979, p. 19), “created in a patriotic resistance” (Clark 1984, p. 37). ETA was inspired by Vasconia, a book by writer-politician Krutwig (1963). Krutwig introduced the concept of revolutionary war and stated: “If the Basques will keep on acting as a docile people, the world will never take them seriously” (Krutwig, as cited in Conversi, 1997, p. 93). Krutwig himself was inspired by other revolutions and struggles against Western European and American neo-colonialism in the 1960s. In his perception the Basque Country was (and nowadays still is) seen as a colony, occupied by Spain. Only by directly targeting the occupying power in a revolutionary national war of liberation, the Basques could be liberated (Clark, 1984, p. 33).

In the 1970s, ETA founded the Movimiento Libertad Nacional Vasco (MLNV), a broad movement consisting of various organisations like political parties, a student organisation, a feminist organisation, an ecologist organisation and so on. The MLNV has always been characterised by a Marxist-Leninist ideology and its main goal is to create an independent and socialist Basque Country (Mata, 1993). The movement is also called the Izquierda Abertzale13 or Abertzale Left. From the start ETA has been the main pillar that has dominated the MLNV, but over the years ETA had to yield more influence to the political coalitions Herri Batasuna (HB)/Euskal Herritarrok /Batasuna which since 1978 represented the Izquierda Abertzales in the political arena.

When Franco died, on November 20, 1975, Spain started a period of transition from dictatorship to democracy. The ideal of the unity of the Spanish nation remained intact, however. In October 1978, the Cortes Generales, the Spanish Parliament, adopted a new constitution. In a referendum the Spanish people were given an opportunity to vote for or against this new constitution. Basque nationalists were very critical towards the Constitution, in particular towards Art. 2:

The Constitution is based on the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation, the common and indivisible country of all Spaniards; it recognises and guarantees the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed, and the solidarity amongst them all. (Spanish Constitution, 1978)

---

13 Abertzale refers to the Basque word for ‘patriot’ and mainly refers to left-wing Basque nationalists.
The concepts of ‘indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation’ and ‘indivisible country of all Spaniards’ were unacceptable for the Basque nationalists. As a result, a large number of Basque people abstained from taking part in the referendum or voted ‘no’ (51.2%). Nevertheless, since a majority of the Spanish people (sixty per cent) voted in favour, the new Constitution came into force (Clark, 1979, pp. 361-365). Basque nationalist parties, however, have never recognised the Constitution.

In 1978, a coalition of various communist, Maoist, Marxist-Leninist, socialist and revolutionary parties joined forces and founded Herri Batasuna (HB), which means People’s Unity. At the leftist political front Herri Batasuna had to compete with the electoral alliance Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE), that had also adopted a Marxist and pro-independence ideology, while at the same time distancing itself from the ETA violence (Conversi, 1997, p. 149). For HB the situation was a bit different; according to Conversi: “The plethora of groups forming the HB coalition had a vested interest in the continuation of ETA, on which some of them had been accused of being directly dependent” (Conversi, 1997, p. 150). HB has been described as the “political front of ETA […] emerged from the terrorist group […] subordinate to the terrorist organisation […] umbellically [sic] linked to the terrorist group [through the] cross or dual membership that exists between them” (Richards, 2001, p. 73).

Herri Batasuna was a political party well-known for its activism. According to the Abertzale Left, “a true Basque can only be a Basque nationalist” (Heiberg, 1979, p. 187). In order to show this nationalism, it was important to be an activist. The mainstream Basque nationalist party, EAJ-PNV, was blamed for being too passive while Herri Batasuna was very activist, for example by occupying public buildings, organising hunger strikes, and protest marches, or initiating acts of civil disobedience (Sullivan, 1988, p. 227). Herri Batasuna can be seen as one of the most unconventional and unorthodox political parties in modern Europe and this made them popular among the youth. Herri Batasuna has been described as an anti-system party and its members have often participated in demonstrations organised by the broad social movement of which it is part of. While other political parties are mainly seen as ‘satellites that

---

14 In the 1980s, an attempt to exclude HB from the political arena failed. The judiciary overruled the government which had tried to deny HB’s registration as a political party (Esparza, 2004, p. 145). As a result, HB became legal in June 1986, against the wishes of many (Conversi, 1997, p. 151).

15 Especially during the 1980s the close cooperation between these ETA and Herri Batasuna was quite visible. Sullivan (1988) described: “when ETA members were killed in clashes with the police, their funerals would be the occasion for angry demonstrations and subversive speeches by Herri Batasuna spokesmen, which would in turn result in criminal charges against them” (Sullivan, 1988, pp. 227-228).
circle above society’, Herri Batasuna has always been part of society. Electoral support for Herri Batasuna did not only come from the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarra, but in other regions (young) people also voted for the revolutionary party to express anti-state and anti-system feelings (Conversi, 1997, pp. 150-151).

In 1979 a majority of the people of the Spanish Basque provinces of Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Araba voted in favour of the so-called Gernika Statute of Autonomy; as a result the three provinces were united in the Basque Autonomous Community. The Gernika Statute provides this Basque Autonomous Community with an autonomous government, the Basque language as an official language next to Spanish, an autonomous Basque police force (Ertzaintza), fiscal autonomy, separate radio and television stations, as well as autonomous education and health systems. In addition, the flag and the anthem as designed by Arana, the founder of Basque nationalism, became the official symbols of this Basque Autonomous Community (Mees, 2001, p. 808). However, the Abertzale left has always interpreted the Autonomy Statute in a negative way. According to them it is ultimately an obstacle to self-determination and the unification of all Basque territories (Mees, 2001, p. 809). In their opinion the Autonomy Statute is based on an anti-Basque Constitution and they have always been, and still are, disappointed that Navarra has not been included in the Basque Autonomous Community, but remained a separate autonomous community instead.

In 2003 the Spanish Supreme Court banned the political Abertzale coalitions. Although the various political parties and other institutions were banned, negotiations between the Abertzale left, ETA, and other political actors continued behind the scenes (Aiartza & Zabalo, 2010). During various peace processes attempts were made to end the armed struggle of ETA, which finally resulted in a declaration of a permanent ceasefire by the organisation in 2011, followed by the start of a disarmament process in 2014.

For the Abertzale left a new chapter started with the founding of a new political party, Sortu, in February 2011. Sortu, which means ‘create’ in Basque, was supposed to be the political wing of the Abertzale left movement, but within a month after its founding it was banned by the Supreme Court, for the same reasons as Herri Batasuna, Euskal Herritarrok, and

---

16 In June 2002 Spain adopted the so-called Ley Orgánica de Partidos Políticos (LOPP) which sets out various grounds for banning political parties. This law permitted courts to illegalise or dissolve parties which “violated democratic principles in a repeated and grave form, or aimed to undermine or destroy the regime of liberties, or injure or eliminate the democratic system” (art. 9.2). In March 2003 the Spanish government succeeded in banning Batasuna, Euskal Herritarrok and Herri Batasuna from all political activities. The verdict was that Herri Batasuna, Euskal Herritarrok and Batasuna were subject to ETA’s strategy (Tajadura & Virgala, 2008, pp. 66-74) and should therefore be banned.
Batasuna had been banned before. In response to the banning of Sortu in March 2011, the Abertzale left initiated a new political coalition in April of that same year. This new political coalition, named Bildu, consists of the existing political parties Eusko Alkartasuna, a Basque nationalist and social-democratic party in existence since 1986, and Alternatiba, a Basque socialist political party founded in 2009, as well as independents. The Supreme Court banned Bildu as well, just like it had banned Sortu, since Bildu was seen as a successor to the previously banned political party Batasuna. After protests all around the Basque Country, the Constitutional Court lifted the ban on Bildu and the coalition was able to run for local elections later that month. Sortu, which is a legal party by now, joined the broad coalition and it is now called Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu).
5. The interpretation of the Basque conflict and its consequences

The perceptions of Basque nationalists about a lasting peace in the Basque historic regions are related to their perceptions of the conflict and its consequences nowadays. Therefore this chapter deals with the perceptions of the origins of the conflict and the suffering it has produced (and is still producing). A government report on human rights violations, provided by the Minister of Peace, is also taken into account. First, it will deal with the interpretation of the origins of the conflict, according to Basque nationalists. Second, it will describe the consequences of the conflict, including the violence of ETA, the violence of the State, the prisoners issue, the political divisions and the distrust among people. Finally, it will cover the different victims.

5.1 Origins of the conflict

While Spanish political parties like the Partido Popular, the Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra, the Partido Socialista de Navarra, and Navarra’s largest party, the Unión del Pueblo Navarra, have always denied the existence of a conflict, Basque nationalists almost unanimously agree there has been, and still is, a conflict. Those who support the idea that there is no conflict state that a conflict needs two sides, while in their opinion in the Basque case there is only one terrorist group (ETA) that has used violence. In this perception the Izquierda Abertzale is directly linked with the violence, and sometimes even all Basque nationalists are claimed to be supporters of ETA violence. Especially outside the Basque Country people link Basque nationalism directly with the violence of ETA. According to Paul Rios, in the Spanish public opinion the Basque Country is divided in three groups: ETA, Basque nationalists who support the violence of ETA, and the victims of ETA (the rest). This is a wrong perception and the various opinions about the relationship between ETA violence and the Basque conflict will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Among Basque nationalists the Basque conflict is defined as a political conflict that has its origins many years ago. As former Basque president Ibarretxe described: 'The Basque historical conflict is a democratic conflict about the relation of the Basque territories with those who were once the Kings of Castilla and Aragon, later ‘las hispanas’ and after that the kingdom of Spain’. It is also important to note that Basque nationalists believe the conflict is still there, and therefore is not directly linked to the violence of ETA. As Ibarretxe declared: 'Before the existence of ETA, the political and democratic conflict existed, when ETA was active the
political and democratic conflict existed. Nowadays ETA is disappearing and still the political and democratic conflict exists. A former ETA prisoner declared: ‘ETA has 50 years of history, but ETA in itself is not the problem. The conflict is a political one’.

Basque nationalists believe they have the democratic right to decide about self-determination, a right that is denied them by the Spanish and French states, which leads to a long lasting conflict. A Basque journalist, related to the Abertzale Left, explained: ‘I think the Basque conflict is something that has been there since lots of generations. Every time it had different characteristics, but also some things were kept in common, which were that the Basque Country as a country didn’t have its political rights respected, like the right to decide what to do politically’ (Journalist).

The same informant noted that the new generation living in the Basque country is the first generation that is growing up without violence, as previous generations have always lived during periods of violence (be it the Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, or the ETA vs. state violence). Basque nationalist informants, however, believe that the conflict centred around the denial of the right the decide is still present even if the violence of ETA has already stopped for more than four years.

5.2 Consequences

There are various consequences of the violence used by various actors during the conflict. It did not only result in the death of hundreds of people, and the wounding of many more, but it also divided Basque society socially and politically. This division is still very clear nowadays, more than four years after the permanent ceasefire of ETA. Informants agreed that the division is a big obstacle for the peace process. In the following paragraphs the consequences of the conflict, according to the informants, will be explained.

5.2.1 ETA violence and state violence

Even though Basque nationalist parties and its voters mainly agree on the origins of the conflict and the argument that it is a political conflict, their opinions about the relationship between the conflict and the violence of ETA, and its continuation after Spain’s transition to a democracy, differ. The Basque Minister of Peace explained: ‘There is no agreement about the relation between the Basque conflict and the violence here. So there are two problems; there is a political problem in the Basque society lacking agreement about the degree of self-government that this society should have. Interpretations of this differ from those who think that total independence is the way, up to those who prefer more like what we have now, because they feel
more linked to Spain. This is the political conflict. The problems with the Spanish government, 
the Spanish state, is the political conflict. Then there is another problem that has to do with the 
rejection of violence, or using violence to solve the political conflict. So, there is no agreement 
in the Basque government on how these two things come together’ (Johan Fernandez).

Even though in the Spanish public opinion the violence of ETA is directly linked to 
Basque nationalism, many supporters of the EAJ-PNV have long been strongly opposed to this 
violence. Ibarretxe called it a ‘barbarity’. He also declared that it is unjust to ‘attach the 
vioence to the Basque people because we are not a violent people. The violence of ETA should 
not be linked to the existence of the Basque people, nor to its democratic claims’ (Ibarretxe).
The Izquierda Abertzale and its voters explain the violence of ETA as a consequence of the 
conflict, which started as a direct reaction to the oppression during the Franco dictatorship. A 
former detainee also stated: ‘Nobody wants to kill’ (Former ETA prisoner). The president of 
Sortu, Hasier Arraiz, explained: ‘We say that there is a historical conflict which is politically 
motivated. The armed confrontation that existed [ETA] is a consequence of the political 
conflict’.

Initially ETA had quite some support from the local community and throughout Spain, 
as it was fighting a dictatorial regime (Elzo, 2014, p. 21). ETA adopted a so-called action-
repression-action strategy, in which it tried to force the Spanish government to an overreaction 
in response to its attacks. The strategy worked and many Basques were affected by this, which 
deepened the hatred of the Franco regime (Muro, 2013, p. 127).

In 1974, ETA split up in ETA politico-militar (ETAp) and ETA militar (ETAm). 
While a minority of ETAp merged into the political party Euskal Iraultzaroko Alderdia (EIA) 
in 1974, which later became Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE), a majority joined ETAm which became 
ETA as it is known nowadays. The members that joined Euskadio Ezkerra, or in some cases 
other political parties, opted for peaceful political action and abandoned the armed struggle in 
1982 (Soldevilla, 2010).

Many people wonder why ETA still used violence for such a long period of time, even 
after Spain became a democracy. One informant explained there is a relation between the 
Franco regime and post-Franco Spain, a view that is quite common among abertzales: ‘So

---

17 In 1991 EE entered a coalition with EAJ-PNV and EA and in 1993 the party finally joined the Partido Socialista 
de Euskadi (PSE) which is now known as PSE-EE.
18 Other ETA militants called them pro-Spanish. ETA-pm leader Pertur, who was a strong supporter of a 
negotiated settlement and an end to the armed struggle, was killed in 1976. It is still unclear who killed him. 
Some blame people from ETA, but in January 1982 the Alianza Apóstolica Anticomunista (AAA), a Spanish 
right-wing counterterror organisation, claimed responsibility for his death and twenty other Basques (Clark, 
1990, pp. 76-77).
Franco passed away, but the structure of his regime was never really touched, the real powers so to speak: the military, the police and the judiciary. And this does not only imply to the Basque conflict but also to how the Civil War has been sort of there in people’s lives or in people’s consciousness and memories’ (Sare).

High levels of political violence and social mobilisation in the Basque Country during the transition period made the Basque transition ‘peculiar’, according to Aguilar (1998). The high number of ETA victims during this period proves the theory that democratisation and escalation of violence are interrelated (Gurr, 1993; Snyder, 1999). The government of Adolfo Suárez was unable to deal with the Basque issue and the violence of ETA, which resulted into indiscriminate violence from police forces during demonstrations (Muro, 2013, pp. 121-122).

The killing of five Basque workers and the injuring of one hundred others in Vitoria-Gasteiz, on March 3, 1976, is still a vivid part of Basque nationalist memory. During the electoral campaign in May 2015, the leader of EH Bildu in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Miren Larrion, said: ‘We are the children of the workers you couldn’t kill’ (EH Bildu main electoral event, 2015). According to William Douglass, the violence of ETA during that period heavily influenced later events: “There wouldn’t be a Spain of the autonomies without ETA. During the negotiations [post-Franco transition], ETA was the teeth of the barking dog. ETA was always present […] during the negotiations, even without having a representative in the room” (as cited in Bieter, 2013).

When in 1982 a Socialist government came to power in Spain, people believed ETA would stop its violent campaign. The opposite happened, however, since the Spanish government led by Felípe Gonzalez illegally created death squads, 19 also known as Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL) 20 for carrying out military actions against ETA in Spain and France between 1983 and 1987. This period is refered to as the ‘guerra sucia’ or ‘dirty war’ (Woodworth, 2001). Even though the actions were meant to eliminate leading ETA figures, several victims were not related to ETA at all and the activities of GAL had “the further effect of galvanizing the ETA, giving it a new impetus and justification for its terrorist activities. The ETA redoubled those activities on the Spanish side of the border” (Shepard, 2002, p. 61).

---

19 Gonzalez has never been charged, but various subordinate police and military officials were. In 1997 Gonzalez said in an interview: “People don’t want to understand that we inherited a state apparatus in its entirety from the dictatorship […] that terrorist aggression was continually inciting the forces of counterrevolution” (Whitney, 1997).

20 Before GAL various other (mainly far-right) groups, with alleged links to Spanish security forces, were fighting against ETA, namely Batallón Vasco Español (BVE), Anti Terrorismo ETA (ATE), Guerrilleros de Cristo Rey, Primera Línea de Fuerza Nuevo, Grupos Armados Españoles (GAE), and Alianza Apóstolica Anticomunista (AAA) (Woodworth, 2001).
According to Paul Rios and Asier Blas Mendoza, the majority of the population in the Basque Country and even the victims of ETA at that time saw the first period as a low-intensity war between two sides.

When ETA decided to ‘socialise the sufferings’ by attacking (local) journalists, professors, and politicians, and started its campaign of street violence (kale borroka) in the 1990s, its support decreased. According to Paul Rios, as a consequence support for ETA decreased from about fifteen per cent in the 1980s to just five percent in the 1990s. Various informants referred to this ‘socialisation of suffering’ as the biggest mistake of ETA. While in 1999 35% of the population was completely opposed to ETA, in 2011, the year ETA announced its definitive ceasefire, this percentage had risen to 64% (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). While the people who stated they totally support ETA (2% in 1999, only 1% in 2011) or who claimed to justify ETA’s activities, albeit in a critical way (9% in 1999, 3% in 2011) are all from the Izquierda Abertzale, the people who stated they used to support ETA, but did not do that anymore (20% in 1999, 11% in 2011), come from other political parties as well.

**FIGURE 1 – Opinion of Basque people about ETA, March 1999.**

Many people are surprised that ETA as an armed organisation has survived for so long; in explanation several scholars have compared it to a ‘political religion’. According to Basque anthropologist Joseba Zulaika, in analysing ETA’s campaign of violence it is important to understand the process of ‘desacramentalisation’ of religion and ‘resacramentalisation’ of society. In the case of ETA, the Basque nation is like a new ‘God’ for its supporters, they dedicate their lives to fight for the nation (Zulaika, 1988). Therefore, “peace can only be obtained if the community of believers can be convinced of the virtues of compromise and peaceful coexistence with non-believers” (Mansvelt Beck, 1999, p. 120). Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez stated: ‘The biggest mistake of ETA has been that it has extended its end’.

5.2.2 Todo es ETA

In the 1990s the Spanish state started to implement its strategy of ‘Todo es ETA’ (everything is ETA). In 1998 the newspaper EGIN was closed; eventually, in 2007, ten of its employees were sentenced. Political parties of the Izquierda Abertzale have been banned in 2003, an act which is against the democratic right of citizens to vote for the political party they want. As Ibarretxe declared: ‘Seriously, it is a stupidity to condemn an organisation. An organisation is not an offender, offenders are people. Therefore basically when they illegalised [parties from the Izquierda Abertzale], they were actually prohibiting people to vote for those they wanted.'
This was a barbarity, incredible!.

The indictment for the banning was that Herri Batasuna, Euskal Herritarrok and Batasuna “had explicitly or tacitly supported, excused or minimized the significance of terrorist actions; tried to neutralize and isolate opponents of terrorism; used terrorist symbols; collaborated with organizations supporting terrorism; and promoted or participated in acts of homage to terrorists” (Bourne, 2012, p. 11). The political parties were seen as part of “a terrorist strategy of tactical separation […] three organisations having substantially the same ideology […] and, moreover, tightly controlled by that terrorist organisation” (European Court of Human Rights, 2009, p. 9). The court concluded that in reality there existed a “single entity, namely, the terrorist organisation ETA, hidden behind an apparent plurality of legal entities created at different times according to an ‘operational succession’ devised in advance by that organisation” (European Court of Human Rights, 2009, p. 9).

The Basque government appealed and blamed Spain for “establishing a model of militant democracy imposing restrictions on political parties, in particular by imposing on them an obligation, not provided for in the Constitution, to accept a given political regime or system” (European Court of Human Rights, 2009, p. 4). But, according to the court, it was “plainly impossible to speak of a violation of the right to freedom of expression” (European Court of Human Rights, 2009, p. 6). Ibarretxe, President of the Basque Country at that time, was later blamed for speaking to members of Batasuna. He explained: ‘In the case of the Spanish president talking to ETA it is interpreted as something that could be a success or a political mistake, but when the lehendakari talks to Batasuna he is committing a crime. It is incredible! A Batasuna that, by the way, was suspended in Spain and legal in France’.

Several other organisations were banned as well and people from many organisations related to the Izquierda Abertzale were arrested and charged with supporting terrorism. The number of prisoners therefore rapidly increased. During my stay many people were arrested, among them seven young Basques from the banned organisation SEGI, the youth wing of the Abertzale Left. During a demonstration (Resist Gasteiz) against the arrests, thousands of people gathered in Vitoria-Gasteiz and formed a so-called ‘human wall’ in order to protect three of the youth activists who managed to escape from previous arrests. One of the demonstrators explained: ‘If they are terrorists, I am a terrorist too. And you are a terrorist as well’ (demonstrator at Resist Gasteiz). Later I heard that the same person was arrested, together with the three activists and nineteen others. People also reported that seventy people got injured and had to go to the hospital as a result of the police violence that was used in arresting the three young Basques. Finally, in November and December 2015, the seven young Basques were
released, because there was not enough evidence to support their sentences. Out of the forty young Basque arrested related to the SEGI trial in 2011, nineteen claim to be tortured but their cases have never been investigated.

5.2.3 Prisoners

There are three different narratives on the issue of prisoners in Basque society. First, there is a perception in which all Basque prisoners are seen as terrorists or supporting terrorism. This is the perception of the main Spanish political parties, the PP, PSE-EE, PSN, the largest political party in Navarra, UPN, and its electorate. The second paradigm differentiates between two types of prisoners, namely those that have committed criminal offenses and those that are in prison for reasons not directly related to violence. This is supported by the EAJ-PNV and its supporters. In some cases they refer to them as political prisoners, as stated by Ibarretxe: ‘So I think you have to make these differences and I know that in real life for the citizens and the media things are black and white, but in an investigation like yours not and therefore you will have no doubt that there are political prisoners and prisoners who committed horrible crimes. I cannot understand anyone saying that he kills another person who thinks differently to defend my country. This is a barbarity and that does not make someone a political prisoner’. Ibarretxe referred to Arnaldo Otegi, one of the best known Basque prisoners, and declared: ‘I don’t know anybody who can tell me why Arnaldo Otegi is in prison, because he has not committed any crime. He is a political prisoner’.

However, the concept of ‘political prisoner’ is not widely accepted within society, the Minister of Peace states that not all prisoners committed crimes but: ‘Politics and the society do not accept the concept of political prisoner because the concept of political prisoner is linked to prisoners who are in prison to defend liberty in a situation of dictatorship or lack of democracy and this is not the situation here’ (Jonan Fernandez).

The last narrative talks about political prisoners only, and this is supported by the Abertzale left and its supporters. They explain that all prisoners are in prison as a consequence of a political conflict. Most of the prisoners are part of a prisoners’ collective, the Euskal Preso Politikoen Kolektiboa (EPPK). The majority of the informants related to the Abertzale Left claimed that all prisoners in the EPPK have the same status of a political prisoner. A former ETA prisoner declared: ‘And if they said ‘you are not a political prisoner’, I always asked them: ‘But why we have a different prison regime then?’.

In 1989 Spain and France imposed a policy of dispersion on the Basque prisoners, which means prisoners became systematically scattered throughout Spanish and French prisons. It was
explained as: ‘[they said] We are going to separate them because if they are all in the same prison the hard minds [leaders], the hawks, impose themselves on the doves; if we scatter them around, ETA won’t be able to decide on his or her account’ (Sare). But off the record the informant was given another explanation: ‘They were trying to punish the families and they were trying to harshen conditions for prisoners to a maximum degree. They were in fact looking for a confrontation between social and political prisoners, the guy who was telling me said all this’ (Sare).

In 2014 a citizen network for the rights of Basque prisoners, exiles and deportees (Sare), was founded. Its main focus nowadays is to stop the dispersion, as it is seen by many Basque people as a violation of the rights of the prisoners and their families. An informant said: ‘It’s uprooting the prisoners from their nearest environment and it’s punishing the families with a very heavy economic cost, psychological cost and not to speak of children […]’ (Sare). The Minister of Peace added: ‘The prisoners are dispersed in many different prisons far from Euskadi and in this sense this seems to be an unjust situation. We believe that the prisoners should stay in prisons close to where they live’ (Jonan Fernandez). According to Sare, there are more then four hundred prisoners scattered around seventy different prisons; almost forty per cent of them are imprisoned around 400 to 550 kilometres from their home towns, which means their families have to travel 800 up to 1,100 kilometres every week in order to visit them (see Figure 3). People believe that Spain and France are to blame for this situation:

All that general suffering is not strange to any of us. Every person gets to know it sooner or later. That’s life. But all those concrete example of suffering are consequences of the Spanish and French States’ penitentary policy. The heads of those governments make the cruel prison penalties for the Basque political prisoners all the more cruel, tightening the sorrow of their friends to ruthless limits. (Igor Elortza Aranoa, as cited in booklet of the dispersion, 2014, p. 88)
FIGURE 3 – Map of dispersed Basque prisoners

Source: http://stopdispersion.org/

Not only are prisoners scattered all over Spain and France, the prison conditions are very harsh. Former prisoners have stated that many Basque prisoners are kept in isolation for more than 42 days without any clear reasons; prison cells are very hot during Summer, while very cold in the Winter; prisoners are transferred to different prisons all the time. Several prisoners suffer from diseases. According to Spanish law, these people should be conditionally released so they can serve their sentences under conditions of house arrest or by staying in a hospital close to their homes, but this does not happen. As an informant declared: ‘Even though there are medical certificates and evidence that they are very seriously ill, it is another way of turning the screws on people. I think it is sort of revenge: ‘You have killed people so now we are taking it out on you’ (Sare).

Some informants in this research are former prisoners or family members or relatives of (former) prisoners. There is a clear difference when someone talks about torture or harsh prison conditions when a person has directly experienced these circumstances. Their body language and facial expressions during the interviews hinted at the sensitivity of this issue and the suffering it has caused, and is still causing, to those related to the prisoners issue.
5.2.4 Political division

The Basque political scene can be seen as a complex and pluralist system with, in addition to the left-right division, two other main fronts: the nationalist front and the non-nationalist front (Llera Ramo, 1993; Mata, 1998; Blas, 2011). On the nationalist front it is a competition between the EAJ-PNV and EH Bildu (before Herri Batasuna, Batasuna and Euskal Herritarrok), although relationships between those two parties changed over time.

During the 1980s the distance between moderate nationalists (EAJ-PNV) and radical nationalists (Herri Batasuna) increased when the violence of ETA and its street guerilla gangs radicalised more and more. This resulted in the signing of the ‘Agreement for the Pacification and Normalization of Euskadi’, in 1988, by all Basque parties, excluding Herri Batasuna (Mees, 2001, pp. 810-811). The pact rejected all political violence and called for an end to the violence of ETA; violence which Herri Batasuna until that time had never condemned. At the same time various peace movements spread over the country, isolating the Abertzales from the rest of Basque society.

In the 1990s, new political opportunities emerged influenced by the Northern Irish example. A connection between Irish and Basque nationalism has been in existence since the nineteenth century when Basque nationalism emerged (Núñez Seixas, 1992; Ugalde Zubiri, 1996). In their interviews, many informants from the Abertzale Left related the Basque case to the case of Northern Ireland. Based on the Northern Irish case, the Basque nationalists believed that a pro-nationalist coalition would be a first step towards peace. In September 1998, Herri Batasuna signed the so-called Lizarra declaration, together with the main Basque nationalist parties, trade unions, and the communist party Izquierda Unida (IU) (Alonso, 2004, pp. 696-697).

A couple of days after the signing of the Lizarra declaration, ETA announced a ceasefire (Domínguez 1998; Orella 1998). It reached a pact with the EAJ-PNV to “abandon all the agreements with the forces whose objective is the destruction of Euskal Herria and the building of Spain (PP and PSOE)”, directed at cooperation between all organisations favourable to the construction of Euskal Herria. By agreeing on this, the EAJ-PNV let go of the so-called Antiterrorist Pact of Ajuria Enea they had signed in 1988, together with other political parties, and chose for a pan-nationalist front together with Herri Batasuna. The EAJ-PNV chose this

---

21 According to Sydney Tarrow (1994), modern social movements adapt a transnational character. In this way they focus on experiences from other social movements elsewhere or historical movements which preceded them. Tarrow calls it the “cumulative power” of a movement. He states that movements “not only repeat many of the themes of their predecessors [...], but build on the practices and institutions of the past” (Tarrow, 1994, p. 191).
path because it had come to the conclusion that the socialists (PSE-EE and PSN) and conservatives (PP) were not willing to negotiate about peaceful opportunities for the conflict in the Basque Country.

The pact of Herri Batasuna, ETA, EAJ-PNV and other organisations deepened the political polarisation between the nationalists and non-nationalists in the Basque Country (Domínguez, 2006, pp. 410-411; Mees, 2003, pp. 107-108). With the signing of this pact both Herri Batasuna and EAJ-PNV backed ETA in the hard period after the arrest of its leadership in 1992, and the brutal killing of Partido Popular councillor Miguel Ángel Blanco in July 1997; this killing led to massive protests against ETA’s violence throughout the whole of Spain. Even though the parties declared that they were willing to help ETA in ending its violence, some nationalists close to both parties expressed different opinions. Txema Montero, a former member of Herri Batasuna, declared in 1998 that “ETA’s military defeat would have negative political consequences for the Basque people” (as cited in Domínguez, 1998, p. 174) and a member of EAJ-PNV declared that many activists feared a dissolution of ETA would make the party ‘insignificant’. In a way it was important for the nationalist parties to keep ETA alive; from that moment on the Spanish political elite realised it was not realistic to think that the radical nationalists could integrate through the electoral process. For Spain it was also important to keep ETA alive, since the Spanish government needed an enemy to keep other regions together and prevent fragmentation (Kurlansky, 1999, p. 303). Javier Elzo also wrote, and explained in the interview, that the Partido Popular needed, and still needs, ETA for its political objectives (Elzo, 2014, p. 212). Other informants have the same opinion.

In November 1999, fourteen months after the signing of the agreement, ETA broke the truce. ETA blamed the EAJ-PNV and Euskal Alkartasuna for not implementing what they had agreed upon the Summer of 1998. The EAJ-PNV, in its turn, realised it was only following the roadmap set out by radical nationalists. This was not supported by its political supporters, which became evident by a decreasing number of votes. For the moderate nationalists this resulted into a great crisis and they were not only criticised by Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok and ETA, but also by the socialists and conservatives who had formed a front against all nationalists (Mees, 2001, p. 814). Political scientist Antonio Elorza emphasised that the EAJ-PNV had “to join the democrats” and at the same time break of all contact with Herri Batasuna, since otherwise they would be labelled “one of those ‘willing executioners’” (as cited in Mees, 2001, p. 823). Prime Minister Aznar declared that “the PNV and its leaders are a fundamental and grave part of the Basque problem” and that nationalism is “the seed of terrorism” (as cited in Mees, 2001, p. 823).
The breaking of the truce by ETA and the collapse of the Lizarra agreement resulted in a decreasing number of votes for the Abertzale coalition Euskal Herritarrok in the 2001 elections. The coalition lost half of its seats compared to the previous elections in 1998, which took place just after ETA’s ceasefire. People lost all hope for a peaceful solution and within the party disagreement arose. Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez explained the big mistake of ETA to continue its armed struggle: ‘The big problem of ETA is that they dismissed a lot of ‘trains’ that could lead to a solution that would have probably been better than the current one. [...] the 1990s was the the time of the greatest peace processes in the world; Ireland, South Africa, El Salvador, and international powers were in favour of boosting these types of processes, but they [ETA] dismissed this opportunity’. The break of ETA’s truce finally led to the founding of a new party, Aralar, a party that was opposed to the violent campaign of ETA. However, many people from the Abertzale Left saw the leaders of this new party as traitors who broke with the Abertzale Left and its struggle, as explained before.

During the interviews informants had always something to say about other political parties, but the most problematic relations seem to be between the Abertzale Left and the other parties. A Partido Popular councillor in Gipuzkoa stated: ‘They [EH Bildu] are not thinking about the people, but only about their people and their world. They apply and implement their ideology and nothing else. This is not politics; politics is for everybody. When you are governing you are governing for everybody and not just for your world. This is an error in any country’ (Ramón Gómez Ugalde, 2013). Also informants from the EAJ-PNV were critical towards EH Bildu and its politics in their interviews. People from the Abertzale Left, on the other hand, blamed the EAJ-PNV for being too passive in the struggle for independence.

Among the victims of ETA are people attached to all political parties, except to the Abertzale Left. This naturally has created a distance between the political party of the Abertzale Left and the other parties, because the Abertzale Left has never condemned the violence of ETA. According to a Partido Popular councillor: ‘There is a part of Bildu that is a part of ETA. What hurts me the most is that the mayor of San Sebastián never condemned the ETA killings. He says we have to look at the future. Yes, I want to look at the future as well, but I will always remember what happened before. They killed 102 persons in San Sebastián alone, we cannot just forget that’ (Ramón Gómez Ugalde, 2013).  

---

22 From 2011 to 2015 the mayor of Donostia/San Sebastián was from Bildu (which is now EH Bildu). In May 2015 the EAJ-PNV won the elections and its candidate Eneko Goia, an informant of this research, became the new mayor.
5.2.5. Social division

Professor Blas Mendoza explained how Basque society is divided in different closed communities, a situation that is generated by the conflict. Each community focuses on the injustices it suffers from, while turning a blind eye on the sufferings of others in society. Within the Abertzale Left, for example, the focus is mainly on prisoners. During the main electoral event from EH Bildu a former prisoner from newspaper EGIN was welcomed with a loud applause and tears in a conference hall in Vitoria-Gasteiz. The Partido Popular, on the other hand, held a commemoration for victims of ETA violence in the run-up to the elections in May 2015.

Community control makes it very hard to be (self-)critical about one’s own community, although this is needed to overcome the conflict. Even today, when the violence of ETA has ended for more than four years, the Partido Popular and Euskal Herria Bildu do not talk to each other in the Basque Parliament. As Lokarri director Paul Rios explained: ‘You know, it is more problematic to deal with your former enemy than to fight him or politically fight him. [...] So they are fighting each other in parliament, fighting as during the years of the violence and that’s because it is very hard for them to change the strategies and the way to do things and the way to do politics’.

Each community has its own bars, its own youth movements, its own labour movements and its own associations. Informants related to the EAJ-PNV state that it are primarily the people from the Abertzale Left that are ‘living on their own island’ (Eneko Goia). The Abertzale Left is also the community that has to deal with arrests and trials of its sympathisers. This is a reason why they distrust people from other parties as well. Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez referred to ‘the pain of the society, which has to deal with tensions and division’. He declared: ‘The situation is hard for all those who have lived here’.

Overall the interviews showed that the Basque political scene is very complex, and that the various political identities are conflicting. Some informants even stated that they could not say what their national and political identity is, as they claim to be confused about it. Sending your child to a Basque school makes you a Basque nationalist in the eyes of others, while sending your child to a Spanish school makes you a Spanish nationalist. There is a persistent conflict between different identities in every choice that someone has to make, to the dissatisfaction of many people. A young sympathiser of the Abertzale Left said: ‘Everything is politics and politics is everywhere’ (Ernai, 2013).

Other informants were very clear about their national identity, whether it was Spanish or Basque. However, not everybody believed they were free to chose their identity, as one
informant declared: ‘They want me to be Spanish, but I am not and that is the problem. They force me to be something I am not’ (Anonymous).

5.2.6. War memory

One of the most prominent types of memory is war memory. It is the war memory of radical Basque nationalists that provides insights for understanding the use of political violence. Both EAJ-PNV and ETA see the Spanish Civil War as a bloody war which did not concern the Basques, but from which they unjustly suffered. After the war their land was occupied by a dictatorial regime for forty years (Aguilar, 1998). This is in line with the ideas of Sabino Arana about the Spanish occupation of Basque lands. In reality, “the same cleavages that cut across Spain cut across the Basque lands” (Muro, 2009, p. 667). Navarra and Araba sided with Franco and its rebels, while Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa sided with the Republicans. By ignoring the civil character of the conflict in the Basque region, “the politics of war memory in radical Basque nationalism is a clear attempt to domesticate the past by ‘remembering’ some facts and ‘forgetting’ others” (Muro, 2009, p. 669).

In the case of ETA, the symbol of fallen soldiers played an important role. Any ETA member who is arrested or killed in action is a hero of the nation as he/she fought for the national cause of historical opposition to the Spanish state. These deaths are not seen as the end, but rather a new beginning of the war as it shows there is a problem. Fighting then has to continue in honour of the fallen ETA members or etarras, who have paid the price of resistance with their lives. A Basque nationalist politician declared: “If we lose, the martyrs of ETA will be terrorists, but if we win, they will be heroes” (as cited in Muro, 2009, p. 675).

Being in prison is also seen as part of the struggle, and Basque prisoners are at the centre of nationalist imaginary (Muro, 2009, p. 673). Images of Basque prisoners can be found in Herriko Tabernas. When a prisoner is released, an ‘Ongi Etorri’ or a homecoming party is organised where he/she takes his/her own image from the wall. There will also be Basque traditional music and dance to celebrate the release. During fieldwork for this research a homecoming party to celebrate the release of a Basque prisoner was attended. Many former prisoners and family of prisoners were present at the party and told their stories about life in prison and the impact of the dispersal policy on the families of prisoners. For some this was very emotional.

Another event in which Basque prisoners are at the centre of imaginary is during protests for the release of the prisoners and protests demanding the return of Basque prisoners to the Basque Country. Special flags with a black map of the Basque territory and two red arrows
pointing to this map with the sentence *Euskal Presoak Etxera* (Basque prisoners to [their] home) can be found in the streets and during protests. Images of prisoners are also carried by relatives in these demonstrations.

On the other side, victims of ETA are also being used in commemorations. Political parties like Partido Popular always hold commemorations when elections are coming, for example, to emphasise again the consequences of the violence that has been present in Basque society for many years. This is in line with its opinion that the Spanish government should not negotiate with ETA, and that the Izquierda Abertzale has to say sorry for ETA’s violence.

5.3 Victims and sufferings

According to the Plan of Peace and Coexistence from the EAJ-PNV government, “Many people have suffered enormously in the past and continue to do so” (p. 12). I was asked many times by people why I was in the Basque Country. When I explained I was doing research on the Basque conflict, many people responded: ‘*There is so much pain, so many people got hurt*’. Almost every person had a story related to the conflict. One young man from Bilbo/Bilbao told me: ‘*My friend’s father was a police officer. When ETA was active he had to check his car every day, for car bombs you know. One day he forgot to check and... well then he died*.’ Some girls from Iruña/Pamplona and Madrid told me: ‘*I remember that day when this politician was killed, it was all over the news and the streets were blocked; It had a big impact on me, I will never forget that day. A lot of people went to the streets to protest against ETA, there were many riots. Until now I wonder why ETA used this violence, how can you kill people?*’.

There are many stories like this. Stories about killings, arrests, car bombs, fear, distrust, torture, riots. Some stories are known and widely covered by the media, while others are hidden realities.

5.3.1 Victims of politically-motivated violence

After the ceasefire declared by ETA in 2011, Basque political parties started to focus on human rights issues. This resulted in a base report on human rights violations in the Basque Country covering the years between 196023 and 2013 (Carmena, et al., 2013). This document is part of the Plan for Peace and Coexistence as proposed by the EAJ-PNV government. The summary,

---

23 The document gives two reasons for taking 1960 as a starting point. First, it was very difficult to access data prior to 1960. Second, policies relative to the victims of terrorism take this year as a reference point as it is the start of ETA.
including the number of victims from the various human rights violations, can be found in Table 3. The Table is divided in four periods. The first period, from 1960 to 1975, marks the last years of Franco’s dictatorship and the rise of ETA’s violence. It ends with the death of Franco in 1975. The second period covers the beginning of the political transition of Spain, from 1976 to 1978. The third period, from 1979 to 1982, covers the bloodiest years of ETA violence. The last period starts with the appearance of the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL) in 1983 and continues until 2013, when the research was finished. Even though the report only takes into consideration politically-motivated human rights violations, it might serve as a starting point of mapping the victims of the conflict.

The victims are divided into three groups, as they are dealt with in different ways by the Spanish state. To start with, the victims of ETA terrorism. Second, the victims of political violence from the Spanish state from the 1960s onwards. Third, the victims of the Civil War and the repression during the Franco dictatorship.24 It is important to highlight these three different categories and show how they are dealt with differently, as “the principles of equality and non-discrimination are at stake because it is not the course of action, but rather the perpetrator that has been determinative for a higher, lower, or even an almost nonexistent standard of legal protection” (Landa, 2013, p. 18). All victims have the right to obtain the same level of legal and public protection. No type of human rights violations can in this case be denied or justified. As the report claims:

No idea, no political report, no patriotic spirit, no ‘raison d’état’ can be given priority over the intangible centre point of human rights: life, physical and mental integrity and moral dignity of the human being. Murder, mutilation, torture, abduction, debasement or corruption of a human being has no moral justification under any circumstances. (Plan for Peace and Coexistence, 2013, p. 4)

---

24 Even though many of these victims are related to human rights violations from before 1960, they did not get any recognition until many years after Franco died.
TABLE 3 – Victims of politically motivated violence, 1960-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By ETA and affiliated groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terrorist attacks</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abductions and deaths</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Still missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bodies discovered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- By kale borroka (street violence)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Injured people</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,365-2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terrorist attacks</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>1597</td>
<td>2179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abductions and shot(s) in leg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abductions and then released</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abductions and released by Security Forces</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abducted to steal vehicle</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- By Kale borroka (street violence)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number of terrorist attacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Around 3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Economic extortion committed to people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People using bodyguards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500 to 2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number of acts of kale borroka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approx. 4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By Security Forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Whilst in police custody</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In police controls or similar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confusion, mistakes, abuse or other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disputes with off duty police officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In demonstrations and mobilisations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Due to the death penalty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Injured people</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In police controls</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Confusion, mistakes, abuse or other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disputes with off duty police officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Serious injuries at demonstrations</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2 Victims of ETA terrorism

Of the three groups considered, the victims of ETA terrorism are given the highest level of protection. This is anchored in the Act on Solidarity with Victims of Terrorism (Act 32/1999, October 8, 1999), repealed by the Act on Victims of Terrorism (Act 29/2011, September 29, 2011), which grants them economic compensation, social security, medical care, education grants and many other compensations. Police and judiciary are very proactive in these cases, which leads to an effective investigation and efficient support during the legal process. Besides this, there is a very powerful symbolic reparation expressed in political and public support for the victims and their relatives, which manifests itself in media reactions and demonstrations. Another important issue is the high sensitivity of public authorities towards this type of victims, as they are protected by law: “Disdain or humiliation of the victims of terrorist offences or their relatives shall be punished with a sentence of imprisonment from one to two years” (Landa, 2013, p. 25).

In Table 3 the victims of ETA terrorism represent the largest number, namely 837 deaths and between 2,365 and 2,600 injured people. In addition, between 1,500 and 2,000 people have been using bodyguards, because of threats from ETA. Many people have been threatened, suffered from extortion, or were maligned by ETA. This had, and in many cases still has, an
impact on their lives and the lives of their families and relatives. People sometimes easily forget how many people have lived with fear for over many years. In sum, it can be stated that the whole Basque society has suffered from ETA.

A group of victims of ETA has organised themselves in the Asociación de Víctimas del Terrorismo (AVT), an association created in 1981. In the Basque Country there is an association called Colectivo de Víctimas del Terrorismo (COVITE). AVT and COVITE are strongly opposed to negotiations and held various campaigns against Basque nationalist organisations. Even thought these two associations are well-known and play an important role in politics, they definitely do not represent all victims.

The majority of the informants claim that the victims’ associations of ETA terrorism dictate politics, which they think is wrong. According to Paul Rios, for example, political parties use the victims of ETA as a tool, while sociologist Javier Elzo also spoke about the lobby of victims’ associations and their influence. Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez explained that the politicisation of victims’ organisations has not done any good to the cause of victims. Overall, ‘the associations of victims are very highly politicised and manipulated and they have been given carte blanche. So they now have a say in everything [...] being a victim does not give you the right to sort of dictate laws, but that’s what in fact is happening’ (Sare).

However, there are also victims of ETA that support dialogue and reconciliation. According to Paul Rios, those people hardly have any space in the Spanish public opinion and if their opinion is covered at all, they are accused of supporting the other side. Like in the case of Rosa Rodero, the widow of Joseba Goikoetxea who was murdered by ETA in 1993, who is accused of having the so-called Stockholm syndrome because she is working with various organisations related to the peace process. She also supports Sare in its fight against the dispersal policy and stated that people have to learn to live together, also when prisoners will be back in the streets again. Rodero claimed: “A big mistake is that we talk about winners and losers. Here nobody wins and nobody loses. Or we all lose, or we all win. If they will return to killing, we have all lost. But if we get to move forward now, we all win” (as cited in Albin, 2015).

5.3.3 Victims of state violence

While victims of ETA terrorism are protected and covered by a legal framework, the same cannot be said about victims of the state. In many cases these victims are not recognised as victims of terrorism and are therefore left out of the legal field and many times their cases have not even been investigated sufficiently. This results in the exclusion of truth and public
recognition for people who were killed or injured by state sponsored or paramilitary forces (Landa, 2013, pp. 18-19). The data on political violence committed by state forces are hard to investigate, as in many cases the truth is denied and reality is hidden by authorities (Woodworth, 2001). Therefore only tentative figures can be given. Euskal Memoria counted 475 victims of state repression, including extrajudicial killings, deaths caused by police abuse, deaths from traffic accidents related to the dispersal of prisoners, and death from illness in exile (Agirre, 2012, p. 124). However, as Whitfield claims, “this sense of victimisation fuelled a tendency to confuse violations of human rights with suffering” (Whitfield, 2014, p. 283).

While victims of the state are denied recognition by the Spanish state and the mainstream Spanish political parties, Basque nationalists are clear in stating that ETA violence cannot be stopped with a violent reaction from the state. Former Basque president Ibarretxe declared: ‘It is true that part of Basque society only looks at the rights of certain groups and it is true that the Spanish government is absolutely alien to recognising any type of victim which is not a victim of ETA’. Over the years around 40,000 people have been arrested, but only less than 10,000 were accused of having a relationship with ETA (Plan for Peace and Coexistence, 2013, p. 14).

Additionally, there is a significant case regarding the systematic use of torture. There are many complaints of people who claim to have been victims of torture or physical abuse by Spanish state forces, which until now is categorically denied by the Spanish authorities. Judges have not been willing to investigate cases of torture and therefore data are not available (Landa, 2013, pp. 13-14). However, according to investigations of official and non-official human rights organisations, torture has been used systematically until the 1980s and sporadically from the 1990s onwards (Landa, 2012). Carmena et al. (2013) include 5,500 public complaints of torture without sufficient data in their summary of human rights violations (see Table 3). Euskal Memoria claims the number of alleged torture incidents is even higher, around 10,000 (Agirre, 2012, p. 124).

The right of freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is an absolute right and therefore it can never be justified to torture someone (Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights). Several informants claimed to have been tortured or know of people who have been subjected to torture. One of the family members of a prisoner said: ‘So they [detainees] have five days without communication, they are tortured during these days and after that the police can accuse them of whatever they want. So for all the crimes that are not solved yet, they can accuse them [the detainees] and they know that they will admit, even if they didn’t do it’ (Mother of a prisoner). And she added: ‘The worst time is when we
have no communication for a couple of days, because you know they will torture him’. Other family members of prisoners said the same, when I discussed the prison conditions of their relatives.

Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on Torture, Theo Van Boven, claims that torture in Spain was “more than sporadic and incidental” (Van Boven, 2004, p. 19). In particular the incommunicado detention, a period (of up to thirteen days) in which a detainee is completely cut off from the outside world, “creates conditions that facilitate the perpetration of torture and can in itself constitute a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or even torture” (Van Boven, 2004, p. 20). The Special Rapporteur on Torture therefore concluded that incommunicado detention should be abrogated. Amnesty International has also been very critical about the incommunicado detention and the use of torture by the Spanish state and urged Spain to end this type of detention (Amnesty International, 2004; Amnesty International 2009).

At the same time there are still many people who claim torture has not been used systematically, but only sporadically by rogue officers who have been punished for their behaviour afterwards. They are convinced that the claims of Basque detainees about torture are a strategy of ETA (Terwindt, 2011, p. 8). Informants from the Partido Popular, Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra, Partido Socialista de Navarra, and Unión del Pueblo Navarra agreed with this perception and all denied the existence of (systematic) torture in the Spanish state.

5.3.4 Victims of the Civil War and subsequent repression

It was not until 2007 that legislation for victims of the Civil War and the subsequent repression was approved by the Spanish state. The Act on Historical Memory gives the victims recognition, even though this is just symbolically. The act includes economic reparation, the removal of symbols and monuments related to the justification of the Franco regime and reorganising official archives about the Civil War and the dictatorship so as to make them more accessible (Landa, 2013, p. 15). Overall, the possibility to establish the truth and bring justice is denied, as the Act on Amnesty (Act 46/1977, October 15, 1977) is still in force, even though the United Nations Human Rights Committee has demanded its abolition. As Landa (2013) states:

25 For more information about incommunicado detention, see Amnesty International (2009).
26 It should be noted here that torture is not only used in cases of Basque detainees, but also against many other detainees all over Spain (Coordinadora para la Prevencion de la Tortura (CPT), 2008).
27 For a broader discussion about whether or not systematic torture exists according to the citizens, see Terwindt (2011).
When victims do not receive both individual and collective reparation – instead of a purely personal one – and when an unavoidable strong public discourse supporting their memory and truth is lacking, awarding just economic compensation could be counterproductive. In fact, having granted only limited recognition of their suffering to their victims may have contributed to create a feeling of discrimination towards the victims of terrorism who instead enjoy […] a much higher level of protection. (Landa, 2013, p. 16)

The Partido Popular has long been opposed to removing symbols of the Franco era as they saw this as an “unnecessary reopening of wounds” (Hadzelek, 2012, p. 160). Other people state that the wounds have always been open, however. In Spain it is a well-known fact that there are people in the Partido Popular who used to be members of the Franco regime, so in a way the party is directly linked to Franquism. As a Basque politician explained: ‘The founder of the Popular Party was a minister of Franco, Fraga; he died two years ago and until the last day he was honouring and promoting Franquism. He said: ‘OK, I am democrat, but in that time it was the best thing to do’ (Inarittu). It is therefore no big surprise that in 2015 the government, with an absolute majority for the Partido Popular, was not keen on implementing the Act on Historical Memory and many Franco symbols remain in place until today (Minder, 2015).

5.4 Conclusion
Basque nationalists agree on the origins of the Basque conflict, which they interpret as a political conflict. They believe they are denied the right to decide by the Spanish and French states. This conflict had many consequences, which resulted in violence from ETA and the Spanish state, a social and political division of Basque society, an increasing number of arrests and prisoners, and a high number of victims of human rights violations. These victims are divided in different groups, as they are dealt with in a different way. The interpretation of the conflict by Basque nationalists is related to their perception on what is needed for a lasting peace settlement. This will be discussed in the following chapter.
6. What is needed for peace according to Basque nationalists?

After discussing the perceptions of Basque nationalists about the origins and the consequences of the conflict, this chapter will deal with local perspectives of the informants about the solution of the conflict. It covers the issues that, according to the informants, should be part of a lasting peace settlement.

6.1 The end of ETA’s violence

A key dimension of a lasting peace, according to all informants, is the absence of violence. Those informants who stated there is peace now, described the absence of ETA violence as the main reason. These informants refer to a negative peace, which is the absence of personal violence, according to the notions of Galtung (1969) and Anderson (2004). Basque nationalists, however, stated that violence is still present in Basque society, referring to violent arrests and human rights violations. According to Anderson (2004), subjective evaluations of violence vary among groups, as different groups experience different types of violence. While people from the Abertzale Left had, and in some cases still have, to deal with arrests and in some cases torture, people not related to the Abertzale Left were merely talking about the violence of ETA. Socialist politician Enrique Ramos in Donostia/San Sebastián explained that his daughter would grow up in peace now, as there is no violence of ETA anymore. He also believed the generation of his daughter would be able to live together, because it would not experience violence in society anymore. But, as Ibarretxe declared, ‘We cannot pretend that nothing has happened – right?’

The majority of informants, however, declared that various elements are needed to foster a peace process and reach a lasting peace in the Basque Country, and the absence of violence is just one of them. ETA’s definitive ceasefire was therefore an important step towards a lasting peace settlement in the Basque Country. Basque society has been an important player in ending ETA’s violence, since social movements played a crucial role in creating the social conditions to empower the peace process to go forward. ETA’s decision to put an end to the arm struggle was a response to a peace conference in 2011.

There have been many other peace processes before, in which negotiations were held between the Spanish state and ETA. When the last negotiations failed, in 2006, many Basques, including Abertzale Left sympathisers, were very disappointed. According to informants,
previous peace processes failed because ETA was heading the Abertzale Left movement, instead of a political party. Negotiations therefore took place between the state and an armed group, locked in a conflict of mutual destruction. After the failure of the peace process many people related to the Abertzale Left started to speak up against ETA and declared that there was no place for violence in society anymore. Among them were, for example, former ETA leaders and the current Secretary General of Sortu, Arnaldo Otegi, who is imprisoned for trying to re-organise the banned political party Batasuna. He was one of the leading figures in the strategy change of the Abertzale Left, where the politicians finally took over the power from ETA in 2009/2010. From that moment on armed struggle was incompatible with the strategy of the Abertzale Left.

Many people agree that there is no space for violence in Basque society anymore, but not everybody is ready to condemn the violence of ETA. One informant declared: ‘ETA is still in my heart’ (Anonymous). Another informant explained: ‘When I was younger my parents always told me when they [ETA] killed someone that they were bad people [the people that were killed by ETA]’ (Anonymous). At the same time there are people that believe several groups opposed to Basque nationalism would be interested in a return of violence in Basque society. Someone argued: ‘They can plant the seed [to generate violence] now, but there is no soil to grow’ (Anonymous). As Paul Rios also explained: ‘I am sure that some people think that violence could be a good means, but you know one thing is to think that and another thing is to do that. That is the difference’.

The end of the armed struggle of ETA also resulted into legalising the political party Sortu. The Abertzale Left is represented in the political arena again, and its political party plays a vital role in the peace process. There are still many steps that have to be taken by ETA before its definitive end; for example decommissioning and negotiations. Some people also demand a condemnation of the violence by the Abertzale Left.

6.1.1 Decommissioning and negotiations
Decommissioning is one of the four dimensions in the roadmap to peace from the Abertzale Left. While ETA announced its willingness for decommissioning, the Spanish state is not willing to commit itself to this process. On February 21, 2014, the BBC released a video in which two ETA militants hand over weapons, supervised by members of the International Verification Commission (IVC) (BBC, 2014). A Partido Popular member accused the IVC later for on “working for ETA and not for Spain” (as cited in Whitfield, 2014, p. 293). All the steps towards the eventual end of ETA have been taken unilaterally, but the Spanish government has
to be involved in the decommissioning and disarmament of ETA as well. Whitfield explained: “Decommissioning and disarmament need a recognised recipient – an institution or entity with the authority to certify that weapons and munitions have been put beyond use, and the capacity to receive any that might be handed over for destruction” (Whitfield, 2014, p. 294).

Jonan Fernandez explained why the Spanish State does not want to commit itself to the process ETA has started: ‘The concept that they [the Spanish authorities] are defending is the concept of a total defeat of the ‘world’ of ETA and the Izquierda Abertzale. We, on the other hand, are talking about an arranged end of ETA. We promote an arranged end. So the Spanish government does not want to talk about disarming, does not want to talk about prisoners, and in our opinion this is provoking a disordered end of the violence of ETA’.

Paul Rios, on the other hand, explained that it would be better if the Spanish and French authorities commit themselves to the process, because when they started the decommissioning process with ETA-pm after its permanent ceasefire, they found out the weapons were already sold to ETA-m. It is not in the interest of both states that weapons of ETA will end up in the hands of other groups. Rios also stated that Basque society needs the disarmament to eliminate any kind of threat. According to informants disarmament would show a full commitment of ETA to the peace process, and a non-violent continuation of its struggle for independence. In sum, decommissioning is a logic extension to peaceful methods and it makes the ceasefire permanent (Mac Ginty, 1998). Therefore it is a necessary dimension of a lasting peace, according to Basque nationalist informants.

An issue related to decommissioning is negotiating. The majority of citizens in the Basque Autonomous Community supports negotiations between the Spanish Government and ETA. While fifty per cent of the people support negotiations without any conditions, one third supports negotiations if ETA disarms. Only thirteen per cent is completely against negotiations (See Figure 4). The Basque government is willing to talk to ETA, but the Spanish government is not. According to political scientist Blas Mendoza, this is because Spain thinks: ‘OK, we won the ‘war’ and we don’t need to do anything’. He also states that Spain knows the conflict is not over, as he explained: ‘So the Spanish government knows perfectly that they won a military war, but not a political war. So, that is why there is not any kind of peacebuilding, because they know this war will continue’ (Blas Mendoza).
6.1.2. Condemnation of ETA violence

Various informants agree that ETA ended its armed struggle for pragmatic reasons, and not for ethical reasons. The violence was working against the nationalist movement, so it had no other option than to end it. This is a problematic issue. Among the Abertzale Left movement there are different opinions about the armed struggle. In 2000, a new Basque nationalist left-wing party was founded, Aralar, a party that was openly opposed to the violent struggle of ETA. One of the founders of this new political party was Julen Madariaga who is also considered to be one of the co-founders of ETA. He left Herri Batasuna in 1995, when the party refused to condemn the violence of ETA. Even though Aralar joined the EH Bildu coalition, some informants state they feel that Aralar betrayed the Abertzale Left. Others just state Aralar is not part of the Abertzale Left, as Hasier Arraiz declared. Overall the link between the violence of ETA and the Abertzale Left is complex, especially since the 1990s, when more and more prominent members started to distance themselves from the armed struggle.

Spanish political parties, like the Partido Popular, demand a condemnation by the Abertzale Left of the violence committed by ETA. They also demand repentance from the movement for the harm caused. Basque nationalist informants stated that it is unreasonable to
demand any repentance, because it is a religious concept, and not a legal one. Therefore this is, according to them, out of the question. Informants from the EAJ-PNV argued that it might be better for the peace process if the Abertzale Left speaks out more directly about the violent past of ETA, but at the same time they said they will not formulate any conditions like these for the peace process. Sociologist Elzo and professor in Social Work professor Iker Uson, who also works for Baketik (an organisation involved in ethical transformation of society), explained the importance of the recognition from the Abertzale Left that the violence of ETA was ethically unjustifiable, as well as the recognition of the harm caused by this violence. This is an important step towards a future reconciliation process, in their opinion. However, there are still people who believe the violence of ETA has been legitimate. As one young informant explained, ETA was: ‘an armed organisation that was completely legitimate for the movement’ (Ernai, 2013).

At the same time all informants agreed that all parties should express their commitment to the peace process in rejecting the violation of human rights in the future.

6.2 Prisoners
An urgent issue, according to many Basque nationalist informants, is the situation of Basque prisoners. An informant who works for Sare declared: ‘[…] the government is creating very difficult conditions for families, for people who have been arrested, for the prisoners themselves […] the prisoners issue would be the most urgent, because it deals with suffering and human rights right now’. The issue of Basque prisoners has received international attention as well. The campaign ‘Free Otegi, free them all’ is supported by various people from all over the world, including Desmond Tutu and various members from the European parliament.28

Many informants explained that the majority of Basque citizens want the Basque prisoners to be transferred to prisons in the Basque Country, while half of the people supports a reintegrat

---

28 For more information on the campaign see: http://freeotegi.com/
FIGURE 5 – Support of Basque people for the reintegration of Basque prisoners charged with terrorism, November 2011.


FIGURE 6 – Support of Basque people for the reintegration of Basque prisoners charged with terrorism, March 2015

Demonstrations for Basque prisoners are held every Friday, and every year on the second Saturday of January there is a large demonstration demanding the end of the dispersal policy and bringing the Basque prisoner ‘home’. This brings tens of thousands of people to the streets in Bilbao; in 2016 also for the first time in Baiona (iparralde). Newspapers reported 63,000 demonstrators in Bilbao and 8,000 in Baiona in 2016 (Naiz, 2016). Among them were Rosa Rodero, the widow of Joseba Goikoetxea who was murdered by ETA, former councillor of the Basque socialist party Gemma Zabaleta, and representatives from the pro-independence Catalan party Candidatura d’Unitat Popular (CUP). The demonstration was organised by Sare and EH Bildu. In 2014, when the EAJ-PNV publicly supported the demonstration and had representatives walking prominently in the front lines, it brought more than 100,000 people to the streets in Bilbao (Gastaca, 2014).

However, until now these mass demonstrations did not have any effect on penitentiary policies. An informant explained that even if the demonstration brings so many people to the streets, the Spanish authorities ignore it. He said: ‘Demonstrations like this are not important at all for the Spanish government. They just think: I don’t give a shit what you say; I know I am not going to do this and I don’t mind what the people say’ (Journalist).

While victims’ organisations based in Spain are usually against a reintegration of prisoners, various Basque-based victims, on the other hand, are involved in movements that promote peace and reconciliation (McEvoy, 1998b, p. 1569). According to McEvoy (1998a), Spanish victims’ organisations agreed that not just the victims, but society as a whole has to decide about any early release of prisoners. A son of one of ETA’s victims explained: “I insist that victims should not be forgotten or marginalized, that they should be listened to and involved in the peace process. But they should not be the guiding force, nor the condition for a peace process” (Iñaki Garcia Arrizabalaga, as cited in McEvoy, 1998a, p. 48).

If only the Spanish law was applied, various prisoners would be released either because they finished three quarters of their sentences or because they are seriously ill. The dispersal policy that is implemented is also not in accordance with international law. Special Rapporteur Van Boven declared: “If a detained or imprisoned person so requests, he shall if possible be kept in a place of detention or imprisonment reasonably near his usual place of residence”29 (Van Boven, 2004, p. 16).

Basque nationalist generally agree on the argument that something has to be done to

---

change the situation of the prisoners, but there are different opinions regarding the contents of such a solution. Therefore Sare adopts a general approach on this, as an informant said: ‘We have to look at the issue of prisoners and their families as a question of rights, of human rights and legal rights, and until we look at it like that, it’s always going to be sort of criss-crossed by political interests’ (Sare). This is not only in the interest of, for example, EAJ-PNV, but also the newly founded left-wing party Podemos agrees with this approach. Podemos is the first nation-wide party which has spoken up about the dispersal policy even though this is not easy for Spanish politicians, because ‘the politically correct in Spain is that you always have to support what victims say and if you say that the dispersal policy is something inhuman, then you are supporting ETA’ (Journalist). After Pablo Iglesias, the president of Podemos, talked about the dispersal policy as a violation of human rights, he was criticised by the other main parties and newspapers (Lázaro, 2014).

Some Basque nationalists, mainly those related to the Izquierda Abertzale, support amnesty for all prisoners, although they understand that this will probably take some time. They refer to a political amnesty, as has been implemented in the case of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998. Gormally and McEvoy (1995) support the notion that political amnesty is an important part of conflict resolution. However, not everybody in Basque society considers Basque prisoners as political prisoners which makes it a difficult issue. If Spain would release Basque prisoners, it also acknowledges the political character of the conflict. However, as a way of conflict resolution different forms of early release, collective or individual, can be implemented in which conditions for a release can be set (McEvoy, 1998a).

All the informants agree on the idea that the Spanish state is the key in changing the situation of the prisoners, but some also say that the Basque government is not doing enough to put pressure on the Spanish state to act. Paul Rios explained: ‘So the Spanish government can be in this situation forever, you know; no problem with that, because the prisoners are in prison and ETA stopped’. He also explained that there is a possibility for Spain to deal with this issue, while avoiding a lot of critical reactions from the public opinion in Spain. He referred to the situation of the so-called Parot Doctrine, when Spain had to release several ETA prisoners. The Parot Doctrine, named after ETA prisoner Henri Parot, affirms that remission for work done in prison would be deducted from the total sentence instead of from the thirty-year prison limit set by Spain in 1973 (Rodriguez-Ferrand, 2014). However, the Parot Doctrine was

30 For more information about the Parot Doctrine, see Rodriguez-Ferrand (2014) and Papademetriou (2014).
31 There is no sentence limit in Spain, so many ETA prisoners are sentenced for more than 1000 years.
32 The limit is now forty years for crimes related to terrorism.
challenged before the European Court of Human Rights and it was considered a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. This meant Spain had to release many prisoners in the following years. In the beginning, when the first prisoners were released, there were tumultuous reactions in Spanish society about the releases, but this changed eventually as Spain spread the releases over a certain period of time. According to Rios, the same will happen when Spain implements this scenario again.

Finally, not everybody believes that the prisoners’ issue is going to be settled; as an informant said: ‘So this is the most difficult thing here nowadays and quite a lot of people think that [...] it’s sad to say, but maybe the prisoners will pay for the whole political process that someday will begin’ (Journalist). When I asked the mother of a prisoner whether or not she believed that conditions were going to change in the future, she said: ‘We have to be realistic, they don’t like us’. A sentence I have heard many times from Basque nationalists.

6.3 Transitional justice and reconciliation

6.3.1 Normalisation

According to the majority of the informants, an important step in the peace process has been the legalisation of the political party Sortu and its electoral coalition EH Bildu. However, not everybody supports the legalisation. Unión del Pueblo Navarra, for example, was very critical about the legalisation and the informant of this political party, whose father was killed by ETA, declared: ‘They only changed the name, but Bildu is the same as Batasuna. The same people and the same ideas and I don’t believe they should be a legal party because of this’ (Maria Caballero).

According to many informants a lasting peace can only be reached if all political opinions can find their place within the political arena. In addition, nobody should be afraid to express his/her political opinion publicly. It is therefore important that the direct association of Basque nationalism with the violence of ETA has to be revised. Not all Basque nationalists support, or have supported, the violence of ETA. In fact, it has always been a minority that supported it. However, various organisations are banned or put under investigation by the Spanish institutions. This makes it hard for them to work. As an informant explained: ‘You always have in your head the fact that maybe one day they will come and arrest us again and that makes it difficult’ (Sare). Basque nationalists do not understand why the Spanish state is continuing their ‘Todo es ETA’ strategy. As a Podemos politician said: ‘Now there is no ETA, so what is your excuse Spain?’ (Iosu del Moral).
It is important that the notions of the other side as ‘the enemy’ are transformed into a framework in which each other’s differences are respected. As one informant answered when I asked to describe lasting peace: ‘I think it would be nice if nobody would be afraid. Not to be afraid of being stigmatised, not being afraid of being arrested for your ideas. Not being prosecuted for your ideas. I think not being afraid would be very nice’ (Former prisoner). Another informant explained it as: ‘To be free to be Basque’ (Iosu del Moral). Iker Uson, from Baketik (an organisation involved in ethical transformation of society), also emphasised the importance of breaking down existing stereotypes from all groups in society. This is important to build up new relationships between people in society, based on mutual respect and acceptance of each other’s different opinions.

6.3.2 Recognition of all victims and the right to truth

For all parties to come together, it is important that all parties recognise the harm they have done. Basque nationalists demand the recognition and reparation for all victims of the conflict, including for example for those who have suffered from torture. In this context one can think of economic reparation, institutional recognition, and psychological support. This is part of the notion of justice for those who have been harmed by the conflict. While Orentlicher (1991) states there is a duty to prosecute, Basque nationalist informants are not seeking prosecution but rather recognition. Informants from the Abertzale Left explained they demand recognition by the Spanish authorities of the harm they have caused with the state terror and the systematic use of torture. At the same time they said they are not looking for justice through trials or prison sentences for those who have been involved in these human rights violations, but merely for recognition and reparation. This is all in line with the specific goals of transitional justice as described by Bengoetxea (2013), namely: right to truth, right to reparation, and the right to recognition of sufferings and restoring the dignity of victims (p. 32). In the Plan for Peace and Coexistence (2013) it is said:

All people who have suffered serious human rights violations must enjoy their rights to truth, justice and reparation, which are specified in the victim’s right to: a) equal and effective access to justice; b) suitable, effective and fast reparation for the damage suffered, as restoration, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition; c) access to the relevant information about the violations and the reparation mechanisms. (p. 4)

Part of justice for the victims is the right to know the truth. Lederach (1997) describes truth as an important dimension of reconciliation, which is needed for a lasting peace. Various Basque nationalist informants proposed a truth commission to reveal the stories of victims and listen to
each other’s stories. A meeting with victims from state violence and victims from ETA violence was proposed by several parties to be held in Madrid, but the Partido Popular and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español voted against the initiative. In Errenteria a meeting between victims of all sides has been arranged. The mayor explained the importance of local initiatives like this: ‘It is easier for people in local settings like this to come together and talk. In the end they are all neighbours’ (Julen Mendoza).

All victims have the right to know what happened to their loved ones, and who has been responsible for the crimes. Not only crimes of state violence are not investigated yet, but many crimes of ETA have not been resolved either. It is therefore important that former ETA members and members of security forces take part in a truth commission, as well as victims that have the right to tell their stories. All cases have to be investigated, as all victims have the right to know the truth. It is also important that all people come together to listen to each other’s stories to create understanding among all sides. Enemy status should be overcome so all actors can respect each other as relevant others. An informant explained: ‘For many years each one has struck to ‘my truth’ and we haven’t been able to see other people’s truths and that’s important as well’ (Sare).

While former ETA members explained they would be willing to participate in a truth commission, informants also believed the Spanish state is not willing to recognise the use of systematic torture. Informants from Spanish parties all denied the existence of systematic torture in the interviews, while Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez declared that people related to the Ministry of Peace were investigating the cases of torture as part of the Peace plan. It is evident that various actors of the conflict have different views of reality, and it is therefore important that a shared truth is based on official investigations. The outcomes of these official investigations should be accepted by both sides and perpetrators should take responsibility for their acts if these are proven.

The truth is not only important for knowing what happened and why, but it can also help in avoiding similar violations in the future. As Lederach (1997) declared, acknowledging what has happened in the past can be seen as the first step towards reconciliation. Acknowledgement of the past, leads to acceptance of responsibility which should eventually lead to rebuilding trust between different actors in the conflict (Fischer, 2011). All informants agreed that there is a lot of distrust in Basque society, deepened by the social and political division that many years of violence created. Violence has been present in Basque society for more than a century. It is important that all different periods of violence are part of the collective memory of Basque
society, something that the Institute for Memory of the Basque Country is working on at the moment.

6.3.3 Memory
To define the truth about the past, a collective memory is needed (Bengoetxea, 2013). Paul Rios explained that there is a competition between dominant narratives of the past and the present in Basque society. There are people that only look to the past and the violence and the victims, but there are also people that believe the past should be forgotten. These people focus on a future for everybody, but forget about what happened in the past. According to Rios, the focus on the future was dominant during the Spanish transition, which was problematic. Therefore it is important to find a balance between both past and future. It is important not to forget but rather to preserve a memory of all human rights violations, in order not to repeat what has happened before. A shared memory of the past includes different interpretations of what has happened that have to be respected by all sides.

6.3.4 Reconciliation
As has been claimed, peacebuilding is not only about the end of violence, but also about transforming relations and building bridges between people, or reconciliation (Galtung, 1969; Anderson, 2004; Lederach, 1997; Whittaker, 1999; Mongbe & Del Picchia, 2004; Bar On, 2007; Fischer, 2011). Various informants agreed that Basque society knows a lot of hurt, hatred, distrust, and division that is generated by the long lasting conflict and many years of violence in Basque society. In order to overcome these negative relationships and bring people together again, they propose a process of reconciliation.

According to the informants, the transitional period the Basque Country is experiencing right now is vital for the future of a society that has been divided by violence for many years. The new mayor of Donostia/San Sebastián explained: ‘Many people think there is peace now, but this is an error’ (Eneko Goia). Another informant declared: ‘I do believe the people want to have a solution’ (Lokarri). If peace in the Basque case is interpreted as a negative peace, many people would agree that Basque society knows peace nowadays, as ETA violence has stopped for over four years. However, this perception does not take into account the notion of justice, something that is vital for lasting peace. As Ibarretxe explained: ‘A peace understood in terms of the absence of violence is wrong. Therefore it has to be based on freedom and justice, which means that the road to reconciliation cannot be based on forgetting. Reconciliation is not amnesia for the past without a critical reading about it’.
Reconciliation should include (self) criticism of all parties in the conflict. As explained earlier, it is important to recognise the harm that has been caused to the victims of violence and society in general. By being critical about the past, parties can define a new future in which they commit themselves to peaceful coexistence. However, according to informants, (self) criticism should come from the parties themselves and cannot be demanded by other parties.

According to professor Blas Mendoza, a peacebuilding process is needed for the parties to move forward and for the Abertzale Left, for example, to clearly condemn the violence of ETA. He explained that the Abertzale Left is avoiding this argument now to keep the community integrated, as there are different opinions about that within the movement.

Informants believe that reconciliation can work in the Basque case. They explained that even within families people have different political opinions and different opinions about the conflict. Division is not just related to ethnicity or other identity markers, for example, like in many other divided societies (think for example of Northern Ireland). Many ETA members, for example, came from families where nobody had voted for the Abertzale Left before. Families were then introduced to a new reality of the conflict and the suffering that goes with it, when their sons and daughters were arrested or imprisoned.

Bloomfield et al. (2003) claim that reconciliation applies to everyone in society, as negative stereotypes about the enemy are developed during a violent conflict and encompass the whole community. However, the term reconciliation is not accepted by all people in Basque society and therefore sometimes people refer to coexistence. Whatever word is used, it is important to restore relations in Basque society in order to be able to transform from a divided society into a society where coexistence is possible. In the end, all people are living in the same region and this is not going to change. A former prisoner explained how her family had different political ideas than she, but at the same time thought her imprisonment was unfair. She explained: ‘We have been able to put family love above political difference and that’s what we should try to do here in a way’ (former prisoner).

Reconciliation, however, is not only necessary in Basque society. Spain has internal conflicts that cannot be resolved without reconciling the violent past of Spain and “it is in the interest of Spain’s peaceful future to address its past legacies of violence” (MacDonald & Bernardo, 2006, p. 175).

6.3.5 Political coexistence and common ground

Minister of Peace Jonan Fernandez believes that more agreements between political parties are needed in order to improve coexistence and to overcome the conflict. This is, until now, very
hard to accomplish as Basque society is very plural and there is no agreement about the origins of the conflict nor about its consequences. According to the informants, Basque society has always been very plural, something that is not going to change in the future. This is one of the issues the Plan for Peace and Coexistence (2013) is dealing with. It states that “the basic ideas of the political parties are still too far apart” (p. 6), and therefore one of the objectives of the plan is “for today’s diverging views to come together when the plan reaches the end of its effective life” (p. 6). PSE-EE, PP and smaller political parties did not agree to the plan and proposed a reformulation, but EH Bildu accepted the plan as proposed by the EAJ-PNV government, while stating it does not like the plan but prefers it over the reformulation of the other parties.

At the beginning of October 2015, it seemed as if the Partido Popular would unblock the peace process in the Basque Country, when Arantza Quiroga, leader of the Partido Popular in the Basque Country, proposed a motion for new talks to create a framework for peaceful coexistence. Quiroga stated that EH Bildu should reject violence, but she did not demand a clear condemnation of ETA from the Abertzale Left. The leader of the Basque PP was criticised for her ideas from within her own party and from victims’ associations. EH Bildu welcomed her stand and proposed new talks. However, a week after her motion, Quiroga resigned after strong pressure from the national Partido Popular. In her final speech she declared: “The Basque PP has been a leading force in the fight against ETA terrorism, and now we should be the leading force in the search for coexistence in peace and the de-legitimisation of terrorism” (as cited in Omarzabal, 2015). She also stated she would propose the same motion again, and explained she believed it was an obligation to present it. As she said: “I want this society to be able to live together in peace and freedom” (as cited in Omarzabal, 2015).

The main obstacle for political parties to come together and reach agreements are distrust and political calculations. As Jonan Fernandez explained: ‘One part is distrusting one another because we have lived many years of violence and division which generated a lot of distrust. And it is not easy to overcome this distrust. Another part is electoral political calculations. If I will sit together with you how will others interpret this?’ This makes it very hard for the main Spanish parties to move forward in the peace process, as is illustrated by the case of Quiroga. Local leaders from political parties always have to keep in mind the reaction of people in the rest of Spain as their parties are nationwide and not just regional like EH Bildu and EAJ-PNV.

Political parties did not manage to reach any agreement on the conflict and many people believe real change will only come from society, not from political parties themselves. As one
informant declared: ‘The real change comes from society. When the people realise they want a change and they mobilise as a front we can make a statement. The political party then will take over our demands and bring them into the political arena’ (Ernai, 2013). Other people in the streets declared: ‘The people want peace, but the political parties don’t want to’.

6.4 Demilitarisation

Next to the recognition of all victims, an inclusive memory of all narratives, a solution for Basque prisoners, and the decommissioning of weapons of ETA, the Abertzale Left also proposed demilitarisation in its roadmap for peace. Abertzale Left politicians explained in their interviews that the Basque Country is the region with the highest number of security forces in the streets, while having one of the lowest crime rates of Europe. The Abertzale Left therefore proposed to remove the Guardia Civil, or the Spanish civil guard, from the Basque regions. In their opinion the Basque police force, or the Ertzaintza, will be able to take over the work. Of course this is in line with the wish from the Abertzale Left to have an independent country and it is therefore not very likely to happen as long as the Basque Country is part of Spain.

The Guardia Civil has the power to work independently and has been responsible for many arrests and many alleged torture cases. The informants from the Abertzale Left therefore believe it will be very hard to restore trust between Basque citizens and the Guardia Civil. Guardia Civil members, for example, infiltrated in youth groups and went undercover to Herriko Tabernas. Young Abertzale Left members go a step further and refer to the Guardia Civil as ‘occupiers’ and ‘the enemy’ (Ernai, 2013). In informal conversations many people referred to the number of security people in the streets. They declared security personnel were not afraid of ETA anymore and therefore they were with so many in the streets. However, people believed this is not necessary as there are not many incidents in the region.

6.5 Right to decide

The Basque nationalists believe the right to decide, which stems from the right to self-determination, is the final solution to the conflict (Zabalo, Soto, & Mateos, 2012). The right to decide is a neologism for the right to self-determination, which started to be used recently by Basque nationalists. The right to decide is explained as a radical democratic principle of being able to decide on anything. This does not refer to nations, but to citizens. While the right to self-determination is usually interpreted as a path to independence, the right to decide is not (López, 2011) and therefore it is preferred by Basque nationalists nowadays. Even though Basque nationalism is mainly described as ethnic nationalism all Basque nationalists support the right
to decide, which can be seen as a civic concept.

The right to decide as a democratic principle is identified as the key to resolving the conflict by all the Basque nationalist parties, and even ETA did already mention it in its Democratic Alternative in 1995 (Zabalo, Soto, & Mateos, 2012). In 2004 the Ibarretxe Plan, which explicitly refers to the right of self-determination, was approved by the Basque Autonomous Community Parliament. The plan starts with the three provinces of the Autonomous Basque Community of Euskadi, but also mentions that the people of the Autonomous Community of Navarra and Iparralde would be able to join by their own decision (Keating & Bray, 2006, p. 354). It was not approved by the Spanish State and, however, and therefore never implemented.

All Basque nationalists in this research agree that the Basque people should have the political right to decide. The Basque conflict is, according to Basque nationalists centred around the denial of the right to decide. As Eneko Goia (EAJ-PNV) explained: ‘So they don’t recognise we are a political entity with the right to decide. I think that is the main component of the Basque conflict’. At the same time Basque nationalists do believe the same right is part of the solution. This is in line with theorists who link the right to self-determination to conflict resolution (Hannum, 1996; Hannum & Babbitt, 2006; Babbitt, 2006). The right to decide is implemented in several conflicts as part of conflict resolution, think for example about Yugoslavia, Kosovo and Northern Ireland. Basque nationalists demand the same right.

Basque nationalists argue that Spain is denying the Basque people the right to decide. According to Ibarretxe, Spain directly links the right to decide with the violence of ETA on the one hand, and independence on the other hand. This is a misunderstanding, according to the former Basque President, who claims the right to decide is a democratic principle. He explained: ‘The right to self-determination is for you and me. Each one of us decides about living together or living separate [from Spain] [...] so you can defend the unity of Spain and I can defend the independence of Euskadi’ (Ibarretxe). He supports the concept of a referendum to let the people decide about the political future of the Basque Country. While all the political parties in the Basque regions have clear ideas on whether or not they support an independent Basque Country, Ibarretxe believes it should be asked to all local people. He declared: ‘It is better to build a house from the bottom, so it is better to ask the people from down’ (Ibarretxe).

While some young Basque nationalists answered that independence is part of a lasting peace, the majority of the Basque nationalist informants declared that the right to decide should be part of a lasting peace. They agreed that the outcome of a referendum should be respected,
whatever the final decision of the Basque people. Informants related to the Abertzale Left explained that their final goal is to create an independent socialist Basque Country, and their struggle continues until they reach this goal. At the same time they understand that any outcome of a referendum should be respected. A politician from Aralar stated: ‘If we obtain independence it will be only because it is the best way and the way of the majority of the society that would like to arrive to this status’ (Inarritu). However, young activists believed socialism is needed for peace. As an informant explained: ‘There will only be peace if the whole world is a socialist world’ (Ernai).

Not only EH Bildu and EAJ-PNV, but also Podemos supports the idea of the right to decide. Iosu del Moral explained: ‘We are going to fight for the right to decide, but after that we are not going to say to the people you have to vote yes or no. You are free’. This statement made Podemos a popular party in the Basque Autonomous Community and in Catalonia, where it became the largest party in the elections on December 20, 2015. Some people from the Abertzale Left explained that part of the Abertzale Left chose to vote for Podemos in the national elections, because it is a nationwide party and has more changes of making a real difference by obtaining seats in the Spanish parliament.

According to a recent opinion poll, the majority of the citizens in the Basque Autonomous Community is in favour of a referendum. While 62% of the people would agree with a referendum, only 26% would disagree (See Figure 7). While 88% of the nationalist claim to be in favour of a referendum, 42% of the non-nationalists also claims to be in favour of a referendum. At the same time, 90% of those who vote for Partido Popular are not in favour of a referendum, while among the electorate of the Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra this number is 63%.


All Basque nationalist informants realised that there are three different administrative regions, namely the Basque Autonomous Community, the Autonomous Community of Navarra, and Iparralde, in which the people have to decide by themselves whether they want to be a part of an independent Basque Country or not. An independent Basque Country without Iparralde is an option for many people, but an independent Basque Country without Navarra is unthinkable for most of the informants, as Navarra is the mother region of the Basque Country.

In November 2015, EH Bildu proposed a bill on Citizen Empowerment for the citizens in the Basque Autonomous Community. This bill would allow asking citizens about the political, economic and social future they want for the Basque Country. This should finally lead to a referendum on independence. Ideally debates on the bill will start in February 2016, so it can be accepted before the new Basque elections in the autumn of 2016. However, the EAJ-PNV is critical towards the idea and its representatives declared it is too early to pass such a bill, as several dilemmas about the content of a referendum have to be agreed on first. EH Bildu relies on the votes of EAJ-PNV. Together the parties have 48 seats in the Basque parliament, which contains of 75 seats (Gorospe, 2015).
6.6 Conclusion
This chapter has shown the results of the research about the perceptions of Basque nationalists of a lasting peace settlement. According to Basque nationalist informants, several dimensions are needed for a lasting peace settlement, namely: decommissioning and negotiations, condemnation of all types of human rights violations by all different actors, a solution to the issue of prisoners, transitional justice and reconciliation (including normalisation, the right to truth, the recognition of all victims and a collective memory), demilitarisation, and the right to decide. All these dimensions should finally lead to a future of peaceful political coexistence and common ground among all different actors in Basque society.
7. Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to explore the concept of a lasting peace in the case of the Basque conflict. The Basque conflict is a complex case with its own specific context. After many years of violence, ETA finally agreed to end its armed campaign in 2011, and a statement on decommissioning followed in 2014. Although the Spanish state does not want to commit itself to the peace process, Basque society is looking for a solution to the long lasting conflict. Basque citizens believe they are living in a vital period of transition, in which a future of peace and coexistence can be defined.

In order to move forward, the two main Basque nationalist parties EH Bildu and EAJ-PNV proposed roadmaps for peace, in which they both discuss various elements that are needed for a lasting peace in the Basque Country. This makes that Basque nationalists are at the forefront of the peace process, and therefore the central question this thesis sought to answer is: What should, according to Basque nationalists, be the main dimensions of a lasting peace settlement for the conflict in the Basque historic regions?

First of all, this final chapter will answer the three sub-questions: What are, according to Basque nationalists, the origins of the Basque conflict?, What are, according to Basque nationalists, the consequences of the Basque conflict?, and What is, according to Basque nationalists, needed for a lasting peace settlement? Second, the limitations of this research will be outlined. Finally, recommendations and suggestions for further research will be elaborated.

7.1 The origins and consequences of the Basque conflict

There are different ideas about the origins of the conflict in Basque society. While Spanish oriented parties like the Partido Popular, Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra, Partido Socialista de Navarra, and Navarra’s largest party, the Unión del Pueblo Navarra, and its sympathisers state there is no conflict, Basque nationalists all agree that there is a political conflict centred around the right to decide. The conflict dates back to the nineteenth century, when nationalism emerged in Europe. Sabina Arana ‘invented’ Basque nationalism at the time and claimed that the Basque people have the right to self-determination. Basques believe this claim has always been at the centre of the political conflict in the Basque historic regions.

For a long period of time the conflict has been characterised by the use of violence in different forms, mainly the violence committed by ETA and the violence of the Spanish state. Even though Basque nationalists agree on the origins of the conflict, they do not agree on the
justification of the violence of ETA. The radical nationalist Abertzale Left calls it a direct consequence of the conflict, while the more moderate nationalist EAJ-PNV states it is clearly wrong and should not be linked to the political conflict. The social and political division of society, deepened by the violence of ETA, is seen as a difficulty for the current peace process. There is not just a division between the nationalist front and the non-nationalist front, but also one within the nationalist front; the more radical left-wing coalition EH Bildu and the moderate Christian-democratic EAJ-PNV are many times opposed to each other. Among the victims of ETA are also people related to the EAJ-PNV just like people related to all the other political parties. This has deepened the mutual distrust, hate, and fear among people within Basque society.

Another consequence is the suffering that the conflict has caused. There are many victims and people related to victims who still face the consequences of the violence every day. ETA has killed more than 800 people and injured many more. Many people have been threatened, faced extortion, or were maligned by ETA. This not only had an impact on them, but also on their families and relatives. Many people lived with fear for many years, something that people sometimes forget nowadays when talking about a solution to the conflict. In most of the cases victims of ETA received economic reparation and the ETA members were convicted for their crimes. On the other hand, the Spanish state used counterterrorism measures to fight against ETA. This resulted in many deaths and injuries as well, while there is hardly any recognition for the victims of these actions and hardly anyone is convicted for these crimes. The different treatment of victims and the fact that not all victims are recognised in the same way, and some sufferings are not even recognised at all is, according to Basque nationalists, a problematic thing.

7.2 What is needed for a lasting peace settlement?

All Basque nationalist informants believed various elements are needed to reach a future of peace and coexistence, or a lasting peace, in the Basque Country. The perspectives of local informants are in line with the notions discussed earlier in the theoretical framework. Informants highlighted more or less the same elements of lasting peace as Galtung (1969), Anderson (2004), Lederach (1999), Whittaker (1999), and Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse (2003).

To start with, the end of violence of ETA and the decommissioning of weapons of the organisation. Without the decommissioning of weapons, the ceasefire of ETA cannot be considered as a permanent one and therefore it is a very important element, as Mac Ginty (1998)
also claimed. The process of decommissioning should eventually lead to negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government. Some informants also believed it would help if the Abertzale Left would condemn the violence of ETA and recognised the harm caused. The Abertzale Left, however, believes that it has done so already.

Second, a solution for the Basque prisoners is needed as part of conflict resolution. Basque nationalist informants did not agree on a final solution of this issue, but they all stated that the prisoners should at least be transferred to prisons in the Basque Country. The majority of people from the Abertzale Left demand a general amnesty for all prisoners, while the majority of people from the EAJ-PNV state there are different types of prisoners and therefore their cases should be dealt with separately. They differentiate between people imprisoned for political reasons, who should be released, and people imprisoned for committing crimes. According to Gormally & McEvoy (1995), Fitzduff (2002), Gormally (2001), and McEvoy (1998a; 1998b), early release and the reintegration of political motivated prisoners is part of conflict resolution and is therefore needed for a lasting peace. The issue of Basque prisoners is a well-known topic in Basque society. Demonstrations to demand an end to the dispersal policy brings tens of thousands of people to the streets. An international campaign for the release of Basque prisoners has various endorsers from all over the world. However, up till now the Spanish government does not want to negotiate about the prisoners and the conditions in prison remain the same. Basque nationalists blame the Spanish state for not taking any steps in the peace process, even though ETA announced a permanent ceasefire already in 2011.

Third, Basque nationalists state that transitional justice is a necessary dimension of lasting peace. According to them, this includes recognition for all victims and sufferings. This should be based on equality of all sufferings, as each person’s rights should be respected. It is important that any form of human rights violations will be rejected by society as whole. Bengoetxea (2013), Golob (2008), MacDonald & Bernardo (2006), and Lederach (1997) state that transitional justice is a vital element of a lasting peace. Lederach (1997) also underlined that people have various needs when it comes to justice and therefore subjective evaluations of local people are needed to define the local needs to implement justice.

According to Basque nationalist informants, part of justice is truth. Victims have the right to know the truth about what has happened, which also means that victims of torture have the right to demand a declaration of the Spanish institutions for this behaviour. Informants do not demand justice in the form of punishment, as Orentlicher (1991) described, but rather in the form of reparation and recognition. In this case Basque nationalist informants believed that the
largest obstacle in the process of transitional justice is the Spanish state, which is unwilling to recognise the harm caused by counterterrorism and the use of torture. The truth should be documented in a collective memory, which includes all different ideas about the conflict from Basque society. The Institute for Memory in the Basque Country is working on this at the moment. Different evaluations of the truth have to be respected by all parties, but it is also important that a collective memory is based on official investigations about what has happened in the past. Outcomes of these investigations have to be respected by all actors.

A fourth element of a lasting peace, according to Basque nationalists, is reconciliation. Reconciliation is a long process that is focused on the improvement of relations within society, and according to Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse (2003), Whittaker (1999), Mogbe & Del Picchia (2004), Lederach (1997), Bar-On 2007), and Fischer (2011), it is a vital element of lasting peace. First of all, normalisation is an important aspect of reconciliation. Perceptions of the other side as the enemy should be transformed into a framework in which relations are based on the acceptance of differences. Informants agreed that relations between citizens in society should be based on mutual respect and acceptance. This also means that it is important that every political opinion deserves a space within the political arena. The legalisation of the political party Sortu and its coalition EH Bildu was therefore an important step in the peace process. All informants agreed that Basque society is, and will always be, very plural. However, the violence of ETA has divided the society socially as well as politically. Relationships have to be rebuild in order to build on a better future of peace and coexistence. Informants believe that distrust and electoral calculations distance political parties from each other at the moment. In the Basque parliament different parties do not talk to each other about topics related to the conflict. Reconciliation is a long process and informants realised that it will not be easy, but they believed that the society as a whole should be part of the process to improve coexistence in Basque society. This is in line with the notion of Bloomfield et al. (2003), who state reconciliation applies to everyone in society, as it is a broad and inclusive process.

The fifth element of a lasting peace, according to Basque nationalists, is the right to decide. Informants agreed to the idea that the right to decide is part of the solution of the Basque conflict. Most of them stated that the right to decide and peace come together. Hannum (1996), Hannum & Babbitt (2006) and Babbitt (2006), believe the right to self-determination can contribute to conflict resolution. So, the right to decide can play an important role in a lasting peace settlement in the Basque conflict, as it also played an important role in the Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland. The majority of Basque citizens is in favour of a referendum,
and all Basque nationalists agree that any outcome of a possible referendum has to be accepted. People related to the Abertzale Left, however, believed that the final goal of their struggle is to create a socialist independent Basque Country. If the Basque Country will become independent with a government of EAJ-PNV leading the country, their goal will not be reached and their struggle continues. In this case this will be a social and political struggle, as violence is no longer an option. All Basque nationalists prefer an independent Basque Country including Navarra and Iparralde, but they also agreed that this is only possible if the citizens of these regions vote in favour for this solution in a referendum. If the people from these regions will vote against being part of an independent Basque Country this has to be accepted, according to the informants.

7.3 Limitations of the research
This research focused on the perceptions of Basque nationalists and as a researcher I tried to be as objective as possible. However, I do believe it is impossible for a researcher to be completely objective. During the last seven years I visited the Basque Country many times and I studied a semester at the Deusto University in Bilbao. During those visits I have made many friends and I learned about all their stories on the conflict. This gave me a good insight in the complexity of the Basque conflict and its plural political arena, but it also makes that I am not a completely neutral researcher anymore. I think, however, in this case it helped me more than it can be seen as a burden for the research, as it would have been impossible to reach all my informants without any close contacts. My contacts have different political backgrounds and each one of them has had different experiences regarding the conflict, also because they have different ages. I tried to be critical as a scientist, but at the same I want to present the perceptions of my informants, as I do believe their ideas about a lasting peace are the most important regarding a solution to the long lasting conflict in the Basque historic regions.

The second limitation is that there are no recorded interviews of informants from the French Basque Country, as the youth activists who were interviewed in Iparralde did not wish to be recorded. It was hard to reach informants from the French Basque Country, also because many of them do not speak Spanish or English. The same can be said about informants of Etxerat, an association of family members of people who have been imprisoned or exiled. I spoke to people related to the organisation off the record, but was not able to interview official representatives. During my stay several people from Etxerat, including a spokesperson, were arrested. I did attend some of their demonstrations, however, and I was able to speak to a
number of family members of prisoners and exiles out of the context of Etxerat. Unfortunately I have not been able to interview prisoners, due to prison regulations, or people living in exile. Thankfully I was able to speak to family members and people related to prisoners and exiles, and former prisoners which, in my opinion, gave a sufficient view of their situation.

The last limitation is that the Basque case is a timely topic. This does not only mean that arrests, demonstrations, and trials are events that still occur regularly, but also that even today not everybody feels free to speak out. On the other hand, this showed the importance of a solution to the conflict. It also made it possible for me to attend demonstrations and talk with the participants about their experiences with the conflict and the reason why they were demonstrating. This was, for example, a good way to meet families and relatives of prisoners, who demonstrated for the release of their loved ones. It also showed that the conflict is still present in the lives of many Basque nationalists. I do believe this research is different as well, since it is analysing a timely topic, which is evolving day by day. A research like this, maybe on a larger scale, can contribute to the local peace process in the Basque Country. By presenting local perspectives on the conflict, it emphasises the need for a peace process that will eventually lead to a lasting peace in Basque society.

7.4 Recommendations

In general I believe it is important to take into account subjective evaluations of a conflict and its consequences from various actors to better understand the impact on society. It is also important to focus on local evaluations of a lasting peace, what is needed for a lasting peace according to local actors, before defining a lasting peace settlement. Therefore I do believe it is important that the various elements of a lasting peace as proposed by Basque nationalists should be implemented in order to reach a future of peace and coexistence in the Basque Country. However, agreements between all political parties and organisations have to be made first. It is also important that the Spanish and French states contribute to the peace process to improve the relations between the Basque Country and the Spanish and French states and to close the chapter of violence. Especially for Spain it is important to deal with its history in which violence has been present for many years. Looking at the Spanish transition after the Franco dictatorship shows that many people are dissatisfied and people are still demanding justice nowadays. Up till today archaeologists are still digging up the corpses of victims of this violent period.

The opinions of non-nationalists should not be ignored and therefore I believe further research should also include this group of people. This might be more complicated, however,
as they generally state there is no conflict but only a terrorist group. Their ideas about peace therefore include mainly dimensions related to the violence of ETA, as informants in this research explained. I suggest an inclusive agreement in which justice for all that have been victims of the conflict in one way or another will be reached.

Overall, I do think there are some general rules for an agreement in the Basque Country, which can be applied to other cases as well. First of all, it cannot be based on forgetting the past. Second, there can be no inequality in the treatment of suffering. Third, it should be based on the inclusion of all social and political sectors of society. Fourth, it should be based on consensus as shared initiatives are at the basis of coexistence. Fifth, human rights violations can never be justified, whoever committed them. Sixth, no group can impose its version of the conflict to another group. Everyone has the right to have its (political) opinion and there should be a space for all those different opinions. An agreement should be based on mutual respect and acceptance. Seventh, it should not be based on humiliation or revenge. Finally, a peace process needs time – so patience is required.
References


López, J. (2011). From the right to self-determination to the right to decide: A possible paradigm shift in the struggle for the right of stateless nations. Quaders de Recerca, 4, Barcelona: UNESCO CAT.


Orella, J.L. (1998). De la mesa de Ajuria Enea al Pacto de Lizarra. [From the table of Ajuria Enea to the pact of Lizarra]. San Sebastián: Tartalo


---

**APPENDIX A: INFORMANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Job/related to</th>
<th>Year of interview</th>
<th>Place of interview</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location/Institution</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Jose Ibarretxe</td>
<td>Former Basque president (EAJ-PNV)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Leioa, campus Universidad de País Vasco</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Rios</td>
<td>Lokarri</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Getxo</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javier Elzo</td>
<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eneko Goia</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>2013 and 2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Inarritu</td>
<td>Amaiur (Aralar)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Sare</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Sare</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous &amp; anonymous</td>
<td>Sare</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Lokarri</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Sare &amp; mother of prisoner</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Getxo</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Former ETA prisoner</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasier Arraiz</td>
<td>President of Sortu</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Basque Parliament, Vitoria-Gasteiz</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonan Fernandez</td>
<td>Basque Minister of Peace and Coexistence</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Basque presidency, Vitoria-Gasteiz</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Activist Abertzale Left</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Iskale Abertzaleak</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Partner of a prisoner</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Errenteria</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julen Mendoza</td>
<td>Mayor Errenteria, Sortu</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Errenteria</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aitor Lakasta</td>
<td>GeroaBai</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javier Garcia</td>
<td>PPN</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iosu del Moral</td>
<td>Podemos Euskadi</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Sortu</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aritz Romeo Ruiz</td>
<td>Aralar</td>
<td>2013 and 2015</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asier Blas Mendoza</td>
<td>Professor UPV</td>
<td>2013 and 2015</td>
<td>Leioa, campus UPV</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrique Ramos</td>
<td>PSE-EE</td>
<td>2013 and 2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iker Uson</td>
<td>Baketik</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián, Duesto campus</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario Zubiaga</td>
<td>Professor UPV</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Leioa, campus UPV</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urtzi Urrutikoetxea &amp; Laura Mintegi</td>
<td>Writers, PEN</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Leioa, campus UPV</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaia Arregi</td>
<td>EAJ-PNV</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Euskal Memoria</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous &amp; anonymous</td>
<td>Youth activists</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Hendaya</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Basque linguistics scholar, Sortu member</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Vitoria-Gasteiz</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Ernai</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Ikasle Abertzaleak</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Bilbo/Bilbao</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramón</td>
<td>Partido Popular</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gómez Ugalde</td>
<td>Unión del Pueblo Navarra</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Caballero</td>
<td>EH Bildu</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Donostia/San Sebastián</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>PSN</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Vall</td>
<td>PPN</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Iruña/Pamplona</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Cruz Pérez</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>