Violence and Intercommunity Conflict

Kevin Brown
University of Pennsylvania
Violence and Intercommunity Conflict

Disciplines
Anthropology

This thesis or dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/anthro_seniortheses/45
VIOLENCE AND INTERCOMMUNITY CONFLICT

By

Kevin Brown

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

In

Anthropology

Submitted to the
Department of Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Brian Spooner

2003
Table of Contents

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Case Study: Spain
  - Historical Background
  - Birth of the Basque Movement for Autonomy
  - The Movement Turns Violent
  - A Temporary Peace
  - ETA Losing Ground
  - Targeting Youth
  - Summary
- Case Study: Belgium
  - Historical Background
  - The Flemish Movement Begins
  - The Birth of Modern Belgium
  - Nation or State?
  - The Flemish Movement Intensifies
  - The Flemish Movement During the First World War
  - The Twentieth Century
- Conclusion
- Endnotes
- Bibliography
Abstract

This thesis deals with tangible cultural manifestations in intercommunity conflict in Belgium and Spain. Both the Flemings in Belgium and the Basques in Spain, as well as their central governments effectively used these manifestations in their political endeavors. In Spain, the Franco government repressed such visible elements of culture as the Basque language, flag and musical instruments in order to punish the Basque people for fighting against him in the Spanish Civil War. This repression radicalized the nationalist movement and spawned the terrorist group Euskadi ta Askatasuna, which, along with the Basque nationalist parties, uses such representations in their efforts to mobilize the Basque people to attempt to gain independence for the Basque region. Flemish scholars and politicians also consciously appropriated the Flemish cultural heritage to gain popular support for their struggle for language equality in Belgium. This movement, however, did not turn violent because in Belgium, unlike Spain, the Flemings always had democratic outlets and freedom of expression to carry on their fight to gain equal footing for Flemish in Belgium.
Introduction

The twentieth century has seen many conflicts in which the most visible, discernible elements of a community’s culture have played a significant role. This thesis will examine two such cases: the Basque separatist movement in Spain and the Flemish-Walloon conflict in Belgium. The Basque separatist movement turned violent with an assassination in 1968, yet a similar conflict in Belgium has remained peaceful for over one hundred seventy years. The visible elements of culture, such as flags, songs, literature and language, which are symbols for the vast unconscious portion of culture, have played crucial roles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in both Spain and Belgium. I will examine the two in order to determine what role tangible cultural manifestations have played in these conflicts and how they have been a cause for the divergence of two conflicts which appeared so similar at their emergence.

Case Study: Spain

In the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula and the southwest corner of France lives a group of people known as the Basques. Although they predate the Roman occupation of the area, the exact origins of the Basque people are unknown and they are not traceable to any other ethnic group. They are among the oldest native ethnic groups in Europe and have lived in their current region since the earliest historical references to the Iberian Peninsula. Their language, Euskera, is the “sole surviving, anciently
established, non-Indo-European language of Europe.”

One theory as to the origins of Euskera maintains that it was the language spoken throughout the Iberian Peninsula at one time. Other scholars believe that Euskera is related to some of the Caucasian languages, such as Georgian. Although these are the most acceptable theories, linguists have not insignificant problems with both of them and the language’s true origin remains unknown. Scholars do know, however, that the Basque language is ancient; outsiders made reference to Euskera as early as the first century A.D.

**Historical Background**

The Basques originally occupied the western Pyrenees in small units, later expanding into southwestern France. Although they were nominally conquered by the Roman Empire, they continued to enjoy a large degree of local autonomy. The Roman government, did, however establish the first city in the Basque region, Pamplona, for administrative purposes. It is from the Greek historian Strabo, writing in 7 A.D., shortly after the Romans solidified their control over the Iberian Peninsula, that we have the first literary reference to the Basque people, who he refers to as the “Vasconians.” The Romans also introduced Christianity to the Basques, an important part of Basque nationalism as it developed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

After the fall of the Roman Empire came the Visigoths, but neither they nor the French from the north nor the invading Moors from the south were able to fully subjugate the Basques. The crown of Asturias did, however, gain some control over the region in the 8th century. The independent principality of Pamplona was founded in the early ninth century and became the first organized Basque state. Between 1028 and 1029 AD, the
Navarra region annexed the modern day Basque Country and for the first, and, to date, the only time, the Basques were united. The Basques enjoyed the customary *fueros*, formal recognition of certain rights and privileges by the crown in return for the loyalty of a region, for the longest time of any area in Spain. After the death of Sancho III el Mayor, the Basque region was split into three provinces, Navarra, Castilla and Aragón. Castilla and Aragón expanded southwards, isolating Navarra in provincial obscurity.  

Although the Spanish *Reconquista*, the Reconquest of the peninsula from the Moors, ended in 1492, the Basque region was not incorporated into Spain until 1512. However, it was not until the Bourbon monarchy of the early 18th century took control that the Basques were fully conquered and pacified.  

The Basques have a long history of independence and autonomy from larger peninsular governments. By the time of the birth of modern day Basque nationalism in the late 19th century, the Basque country had only been fully incorporated into a larger political unit for less than two hundred years.

**Birth of the Basque Movement for Autonomy**

In the late 19th century, the Basque province of Vizcaya, and in particular, the city of Bilbao underwent significant industrialization and quickly became the wealthiest area of Spain. This modernization brought with it large scale immigration from non-Basque regions of Spain, as well as urbanization and industry, all of which threatened to undermine Basque identity and values as well as religious and social institutions. As Stanley Payne writes in *Basque Nationalism*, “In a general way, nationalism is born of the intersection of traditionalism and modernization.” The Basques, who feel culturally
and racially separate from the Spaniards\textsuperscript{11}, began to feel that their cultural identity was being threatened, but perhaps as important, their jobs and livelihoods as well. From all of this sprang the nationalist movement.

The Basques were not fully incorporated into the Spanish state until the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century by the Bourbon monarchs. Possessing a completely different language, unrelated to any other language in the modern world, as well as other distinct cultural elements, many Basques have never felt “Spanish”. Problems arose with the Basques in this new Spanish state less than two hundred years after the Bourbon conquest when Bilbao industrialized in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. As Bilbao became the leading industrial city in Spain, many Castilians migrated to this Basque city for economic reasons. This rapid influx on non-Basques caused concern among the Basque community for their culture as well as their employment opportunities.

Basque nationalism in the modern sense was born in 1895 when a young Basque named Sabino de Arana y Goiri formed the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). Arana created the PNV as an organization to work towards Basque independence, a goal he felt necessary in the wake of increased Castilian migration to the Basque country as well as for economic reasons. This new nationalism “encapsulated a rejection of Spanish culture and positive valuation of a separate Basque identity, and as such entitled to a fully, or for a minority tendency, partially independent political system.”\textsuperscript{12} Still extant today, the PNV is a moderate, peaceful, parliamentary party seeking independence for the Basque country as a long-term goal, but working towards more autonomy within the Spanish state in the short term.\textsuperscript{13}
As we shall see, this is analogous to the Flemish situation, in which a new state and its cultural and linguistic dominance fostered a nationalistic reaction. At the turn of the 19th century the Basque people felt that their culture was being diluted and endangered, as would their Flemish counterparts thirty years later. When such easily visible cultural components as language, religion and social institutions appeared threatened, Basque nationalists felt that Basque culture as a whole was threatened and they retaliated with a nationalist movement and a political party as a means to meeting that threat. These nationalists successfully capitalized on these conscious, discernible pieces of Basque culture to reach the Basque people with their ideology.

The Movement Turns Violent

These Basque nationalists fought against Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil war of the 1930s. After the overthrow of the republican government, Franco sought to punish the Basques by outlawing the Basque language, Euskera, Basque musical instruments, Basque colors on clothing, and instituting other punitive and repressive measures on the Basques. The flames of Basque discontent were fanned during the 1960s, when Bilbao was further industrializing and even more Spaniards were moving to the Basque country. These developments, combined with the perception that the PNV was not doing enough to secure Basque independence, prompted a renewed vigor in the movement, in the form of an armed organization called Euskadi ta Askatasuna (Basque Land and Liberty), or ETA, founded in 1959 by a group of students.

In 1968, ETA carried out its first murder, of Melitón Manzanas, the chief of police of the Basque city of San Sebastian. In the thirty years since then, ETA has been
responsible for some eight hundred killings. They aim their violence at politicians, police officers, journalists, and anyone else who they believe hinders their cause, although in recent years they have begun attacking summer tourists as well. ETA may well believe that they are the most recent in a long line of Basques who have taken up arms in defense of the Basque homeland. Other such defenses include that of the Kingdom of Navarra at the turn of the 15th century, the 19th century Carlist Wars and the Basque fighters of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. “All these are essentially different from one another, but they have in common a concern for the defence of the customs and sovereignty of the Basque Country.”

The Franco government attempted to retaliate against the Basques by outlawing that which makes them different, the tangible representations of culture: their language, musical instruments and certain “Basque” colors, among others. The use of these expressions constitutes a rejection of Spanish culture in favor of an independent Basque culture, and the nationalists who support this cause use them to garner support from the Basque people. Just as the Spanish government saw these things as representing the culture of the Basque people, the destruction of which would form a homogenous Spanish nation, the Basques also saw these cultural representations as vital to their culture. The need to defend the Basques from this threat to their cultural institutions, and therefore a perceived threat to their culture as a whole, generated the terrorist organization, ETA. Both the Spanish government and the Basque nationalist movement used these visible cultural elements as a means to reaching the people; the government used them to punish the Basques and the nationalists used them to win support for their cause.
Here is where the Spanish and Belgian cases differ: this type of harsh cultural oppression and outlawing of language never happened in Belgium. Since this systematic attempt to destroy Basque culture radicalized the Basque nationalists, its absence in Belgium explains why the Flemish movement never spawned a terrorist group.

A Temporary Peace

ETA called a cease-fire in 1998 as a prerequisite to negotiations with the Spanish government. The Izquierda Unida (United Left), a coalition of leftist parties, along with the PNV, other Basque nationalist parties, Basque unions and lobbyists, reached an agreement with ETA to stop the violence and begin negotiations for a more permanent peace, in accordance with the Pacto de Lizarra. The Lizarra Declaration is a document prepared by different Basque political parties and other groups, along with the IU, for initiating and guiding peace talks with the Spanish government. Using the peace brokered in Northern Ireland as a model, the Lizarra Pact is an effort by the Basques to end the violence in their land and open talks with the national government. It stipulates the absence of violence as a condition for the opening of negotiations. The cease-fire and initiation of a dialogue of peace, many hoped, would bring ETA’s political unit, Herri Batasuna, and other radical nationalist groups, into the legitimate political sphere.¹⁵

Fourteen months after this cease-fire was declared, ETA ended it on November 29, 1999. One meeting had taken place during that time, and it appeared that Spanish Prime Minister, José María Aznar of the Popular Party, was not particularly interested in negotiating. Arrests of ETA militants continued during this time, while Herri Batasuna’s proposal for the creation of a “Basque National Constitutional Assembly” was rejected.
The proposed parliament would have governed the six Basque Provinces in Spain and the two in France in working toward independence for the Basque Provinces and the creation of a Basque nation-state that would be called *Euskal Herria*.16

ETA cited Aznar’s unwillingness to negotiate and the continued government action against ETA in their decision to end the cease-fire. This breakdown has created high tension between Aznar’s government in Madrid and the PNV, as well as political divisions within the IU. Aznar feels the PNV is ambivalent to ETA and would like to get rid of the PNV, except for the fact that it is a moderate party; if it is ousted from office, the electorate might become further radicalized, which would favor ETA. Violence resumed in January of 2000, and along with it, the government’s crackdown on ETA intensified. Since then, the national government has been able to seriously disrupt the ability of ETA to pursue armed conflict although the killing has not completely stopped. On January 28, 2001, the PNV led government of the Basque Autonomous Community suspended its alliance with *Herri Batasuna* because the PNV feels it is too closely connected to ETA.17

After the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., ETA released a communiqué stating it “would do everything possible to ensure its violent campaign does not last ‘another 20 years.’”18 ETA also said that the conflict in Spain and France could be resolved by allowing the Basque people to decide their future, and criticized Prime Minister Aznar for saying there should be no distinction between the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks and ETA members. In response, Carlos Iturgaiz, the Basque leader of hard-line Prime Minister Aznar’s Popular Party, called ETA’s statement “repugnant” and is quoted from state radio as saying, “When it says its hand is held out,
we know that its hand is loaded to continue killing. The only response to these criminals
is ... to put them behind bars in jail to pay for their crimes.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{ETA Losing Ground}

There is a feeling among many that ETA may be out of touch with the wishes of
the Basque people. During the cease-fire, \textit{Herri Batasuna} won eighteen percent of the
vote in the Basque elections. After ETA resumed its violent activity, their political wing
retained only ten percent of the Basque vote.\textsuperscript{20} Much of this loss can be accounted for by
the gains made by the PNV, which has the same political goals as ETA, but works toward
them in a peaceful, parliamentary manner. A PNV statement from December of 1997
asserts: "... the citizens of the Basque country are fed up with the arrogance and
aggressive posturing of Herri Batasuna that accompanies the murder, kidnapping and
extortion perpetrated by ETA and the urban guerrillas.\textsuperscript{21} Groups like the PNV help
support and drive Basque nationalism, creating conditions in which a small minority can
pursue armed conflict without ideological backlash. Many Basques agree with ETA's
politics, but not with its methods.

While Basque voters may not be supportive of car bombs and assassinations, the
voter support for the moderate PNV shows that many Basques still want independence
from the Spanish and French states. The PNV leader of the Basque region, Juan Jose
Ibarretxe, is currently pushing for two referenda for the Basque people: one would ask
the Basques if they want the right to vote on independence and, assuming a majority vote
for that right, the other would ask if they want independence. Prime Minister Aznar has
promised to block any efforts for independence, saying that the right to self-
determination only applies to former colonies and those people whose rights have been abused by the government. However, some politicians in Madrid, even a few from Aznar's Popular Party, argue for a referendum on independence. Polls show that the majority of Basques would vote to remain a part of the Spanish state. Presumably, then, a failed referendum on independence would stop ETA's violence by showing it that the Basque people, overall, do not want an independent state.  

The small percentage of votes for Herri Batasuna, combined with the fact that ETA membership has been estimated at as low as twenty trained killers operating in small cells of about four people, reinforce the notion that while its ideas may have popular support, ETA's violent tactics do not. Almost every ETA attack is followed by large protests in the Basque Provinces against the killing. A London newspaper, *The Independent* reports on July 16, 2001, two days after the murder of Basque town councilor Jose Javier Mugica Astibia:

As part of the grim routine that follows every killing, crowds gathered in silent protest in towns across Navarre, including several hundred people who stood in the rain in the central plaza of the regional capital of Pamplona. Demonstrations were also held in parts of the Basque country and in the northern Spanish city of Zaragoza.

In April of 2001, Basque demonstrators even marched through Vitoria wearing yellow Stars of David, and demanding an end to the "extermination" of Basques by ETA.

There is also evidence that in recent years, the public has become increasingly disillusioned with the other nationalist parties as well. Until 1991, the nationalist parties always won at least fifty percent of the vote, but since then, the nationalists have lost
votes and the Madrid-based parties have gained support. ETA and *Herri Batasuna* refuse to participate in the parliament of the Basque Autonomous Community, further undermining the nationalist cause.\(^{25}\)

How ETA continues to exist with an extremely small membership and slipping support in the polls may be explained by the fact that the ETA of today is different from what it was at its inception. ETA was originally formed by a group of intellectuals as an idealist separatist movement. U.S. correspondent for the Spanish newspaper *La Vanguardia*, Xavier Mas De Xaxas says:

ETA is supported mainly now by very young people. People who have been raised in democracy, people who have lived all their lives in a country who is a member of the European Union, who enjoys almost any advantages you can find in any industrial country. So why are they finding the way to separate?

Why? Because I think they are angry. They are angry (at) Spain and they are angry because they can't find a way in order to live their nationalism without confrontation, constant confrontation toward Spain.\(^{26}\)

Also, the ten percent of Basques voted for *Herri Batasuna* in the last Basque parliamentary election is not a small number. It suggests that one out of every ten votes, which works out to 200,000 people, in the Basque Autonomous Community go to support violence as a means for independence. In addition, ETA still has ideological support from a large portion of the Basques; up to forty percent of the population favors independence. It is not as though there are twenty people fighting for something no one wants, many Basques do want independence; it is the violence with which they do not agree. The forty percent of Basques that favor independence foster an environment of
approval in which a small group can operate violently, even if the larger population opposes ETA’s methods.27

While the numbers of young people who join ETA constitute a small minority of Basque youth, again, ETA only requires a very small number of people to operate. A recent study conducted by the Basque autonomous government shows that only 9.6 percent advocate the use of violence toward political ends. (Other studies put that figure at up to one-third of Basque youths) That seems a small number, indeed, until it is compared with the size of ETA. If ETA is a small organization estimated at between twenty and several hundred members, 9.6 percent of all youths is a sizeable recruiting pool.28

Statistics show that the average age of an etarra at the time of his first arrest is about twenty-five years old, and that the average length of membership in the organization is three years or less. Many etarras are killed by the police, arrested, or accidentally killed while carrying out their attacks. Those who are arrested often do not rejoin the organization after their release from jail, and others who do not spend time in jail simply retire and return to normal life. Etarras often leave the group after a short time because the thrill dies down, they watch their friends get killed or arrested, they spend large amounts of time on duty and, “Perhaps, most of all, they were growing restive at the thought that they were losing some of their most precious years in a struggle that might in the end be regarded as futile and even a bit silly.”29 It would seem that ETA is unable to attract older Basques, and unable to retain those it does manage to recruit. ETA is an organization with a high turnover, which makes recruitment of new members from the ranks of the Basque youth a necessity. This is not a difficult task, given the
population's nationalist leanings, something that can be attributed to action taken by the PNV, ETA and other Basque organizations. In this way, ETA is able to draw the radical elements from the segment of the population nationalized by the work of mainstream groups; the work of such groups as the PNV actually helps ETA.

During ETA's formative years, many young Basques were radicalized not by the PNV or other nationalist groups, but by the harsh measures taken against them by the Franco regime. The outlawing of specific, easily identifiable cultural manifestations such as the right to speak their language in public, wear the Basque flag, or engage in other Basque-specific cultural rituals and events created a deep bitterness in the Basque youth of the Franco era. These young people, many of them university students, became radical nationalists willing to fight for their culture via these manifestations. The existing nationalist parties, notably as the PNV, had been pacified and did not seem to be doing enough to further the cause of Basque independence. ETA grew out of the perceived need for a young, aggressive, militant organization dedicated to the creation of a sovereign Basque homeland. Now, however, with the lifting of these repressive measures, the reason for ETA's existence seems to have disappeared as well. The next section will examine how ETA has survived by using cultural elements to embed itself in the cultural activities of Basque youth.

Targeting Youth

With the death of Francisco Franco in 1975 these repressive measures no longer existed. Basques could now speak their language, sing their songs and wear what they pleased. The Basque Country today has more autonomy than ever before, with its own
autonomous government. Why then, has ETA not disappeared? Part of the reason is that ETA and the other Basque nationalist parties have created an intensified Basque culture, containing a radical, self-perpetuating subculture of violence. By ingraining the minds of young Basques with super-nationalistic ideas and reinforcing that the police and soldiers are “bad”, ETA and other nationalistic groups foment a large pool from which to draw recruits.\textsuperscript{31}

Basque nationalists not only support political causes, but cultural ones as well. By supporting schools teaching Euskera and sponsoring Basque cultural events, these groups have successfully created a feeling of Basque nationalism in much of the population. Within the context of these cultural events and language schools, the nationalist parties are able to radicalize the Basque youth. Posters in Basque schools show demonstrations, people dropping flowerpots on policemen and the vilification of police officers and soldiers. The nationalists frame every political event as if it were a conflict between two nation-states: ETA is the “popular army”, to build a nuclear power plant in the Basque country would be “genocide”, politicians unfriendly to the nationalist cause are “traitors”, and so on.\textsuperscript{32}

By aiming this propaganda at the Basque youth, groups like ETA are able to radicalize young people at an early age. A recent study at the University of Bilbao states, “They come from middle- and lower-middle-class backgrounds and are strongly influenced by the separatist ideology preached by the moderate nationalist parties. They believe that violence is the only answer to the real oppression, exercised by an occupying force. As a result, they feel they have to do certain things.”\textsuperscript{33} ETA recruits young people and starts them with low-level street violence, such as throwing rocks and Molotov
cocktails, and then moves them up to setting off car bombs and carrying out shootings. ETA builds its “popular army” one step at a time. These Basque radicals are often university educated, but are susceptible to ETA propaganda because of high unemployment in the Basque Provinces, up to forty percent in some places.

For some young Basques, ETA is a crucial end-point in their lives, the factor that gives meaning and purpose to an otherwise disorderly frustration. For many others, however, it is only a way station, a phase through which a youth must pass if he is to move on to other more complex and more conventional forms of struggle.34

In Basque society, there is a social unit called the cuadrilla, a small group of boys who spend most of their free time together, often engaging in mischief like children from many cultures do. However, while in America, boys may throw rocks at windows or paint graffiti on walls, their Basque counterparts may be throwing rocks at Civil Guard cars. Because of the political sentiments in the Basque Country, these acts are socially acceptable. These cuadrillas become very cohesive as the boys grow into adolescence and fit in well with ETA’s organization. Since ETA operates in small terror cells of sometimes only four people, one cuadrilla could become an ETA cell quite easily. Chances are these young men share the same political views, for they are closer to each other than their own families in many cases and are used to keeping each other’s secrets and shunning strangers.35

ETA is also making effective use of its radical youth organization, Haika. Haika was formed in the year 2000 when the Basque youth group Jarrai merged with its French counterpart, Gazteraik. The group currently claims 4,000 members, aged fifteen to twenty-five and draws crowds of up to 20,000 people. Members engage in vandalism,
street violence and murder; the group was banned by a Spanish judge in May of 2001.

Two Haika members were jailed in April for the murder of a police officer.

On April 23rd, 2001, Haika sponsored a rock concert, which 12,000 young Basques attended. During the evening, Spanish and French flags were burned by hooded figures, a tape recorded statement were played by an imprisoned Haika member, pro-ETA slogans such as “ETA, the people are with you”, “We are with ETA, ETA with us” and “Long live ETA” were chanted. Reports claim that ETA is able to recruit new members easily from its youth wing.36

Today, ETA “…and its violence, serve important ritual functions for the Basque state and that membership in the ETA and participation in violence constitute a rite of passage for much of Basque youth.”37 Interestingly, in his book, The Basque Insurgents, Robert Clark asserts:

In the long run, ETA’s major contribution to Basque and Spanish politics may turn out to be its service as a crucial link bringing young Basques through their adolescence, radicalizing and training them, and then sending them back to attack the sources of their grievances through the institutions of conventional politics.38

While Clark writes from an admittedly pro-ETA stance39, his point is no less valid: ETA is a young person’s movement in which Basques participate for a few years until they are either killed, arrested or leave for more legitimate pursuits, whether in national politics or not.

Now that the repression of Basque cultural institutions has ended, ETA continues its violent campaign through the use of the same cultural institutions that were once outlawed. Schools, youth groups and other cultural events provide
excellent opportunities for propaganda. ETA and other nationalist organizations have co-opted Basque cultural manifestations such as schools and social events in order to use them as political tools to win support from the Basque people. As ETA imbeds itself in the culture of young Basques through these cultural elements, it is able to perpetuate itself and generate a sizeable pool from which to draw new etarras.

Summary

After the end of dictator Francisco Franco’s regime in Spain, the country became a modern, democratic republic. As the repression placed on Basque cultural expressions disappeared in the 1970s and 1980s, so did ETA’s popular support. Perceiving the outlawing of such expressions as the forbiddance to speak one’s native language or play one’s cultural songs as threats to Basque culture as a whole, many people had supported violent measures to counter this repression. However, when the forced Castilian hegemony was removed and the Basques achieved a large degree of regional autonomy, the majority of Basques began to feel the time for extremism and violence had passed and it was time to look to peaceful, democratic methods to work towards independence. ETA is able to survive because public opinion still supports separatist politics and so ETA is able to claim some legitimacy. This shows how a very small violent group can survive in a hostile environment, given a political climate favorable to its goals and its ability to ingrain itself in the culture of the area. In the Basque case, the violent group has ingrained itself in youth culture through cultural institutions and events, and an agreeable
political climate has been created not only by the violent group, but its enemies in mainstream politics.

Simply removing the source of the problem has not stopped ETA; the Basque region has more regional autonomy in Spain than any other and a majority of Basques are content with this situation, but the violence continues. One cannot underestimate the consequences of Francisco Franco’s treatment of the Basque people or of culture as a force in intercommunity relations, as well as a political weapon. Culture was the impetus to the radicalization of the Basque nationalist movement and today culture preserves those ideas whose time has passed. Had Franco not retaliated against the Basque nationalists, had he not attempted to dismantle all manifestations of Basque culture, ETA may not have been born. Franco, however, does not bear all the blame: the gains the Basque people have achieved have not been the result of assassinations and bombings, but of successful lobbying and democratic struggle. It seems that the Basques could have achieved their goals without the hundreds of murders perpetrated by ETA.

With its popular support largely gone, *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* survives as a youth movement. Appropriating traditional Basque songs, symbols and language for use as political tools to gain public favor, ETA and other Basque nationalists are able to create intense patriotism in young Basques and form a basis from which to recruit. In the years since the end of Spain’s Franco era, ETA has gone from a popularly supported group viewed as freedom fighters to an organization through which some young Basques pass through on their way to more legitimate political methodology.
Case Study: Belgium

The Kingdom of Belgium, formed in 1830, is composed of three nationalities: the French-speaking Walloons living in a part of the country known as Wallonia, the Dutch-speaking Flemish who live in Flanders, and a small German-speaking minority. The problems surrounding the issue of administering this multi-lingual, multi-national state arose before there even was a Kingdom of Belgium. The Spanish, the Austrians and the Dutch have all experienced the Flemish movement, a push for linguistic and cultural equality in Belgium, and the complications that come with it. Like the Basques, the Flemish have argued passionately and vociferously in favor of their cause, but unlike their counterparts in Spain, never turned to terrorism or organized violence to achieve their aims.

Historical Background

In the year 1543, Charles V of the House of Burgundy united the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, which now constitute the Netherlands, Belgium and part of France, in the Burgundian Circle. This began a period of prosperity for the area as cities like Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels became major trading ports and centers for manufacture of luxury goods. Twelve years later Charles V passed control over the Seventeen Provinces from himself to his son, Phillip II of Spain. The new ruler attempted to exercise a tighter grip on the area by stripping the towns of the privileges and liberties they had gained during the previous centuries such as the Joyeuse Entrée, granted to Brabant by Duke John III in 1354, which declared that the Dukes of Brabant were not to “wage war, make treaties, or impose taxes without the consent of their subjects, as represented by the municipalities.”

40
This attempt to strip the Seventeen Provinces of their centuries old liberties was not well received in a part of Europe where serfdom had already begun to disappear by the thirteenth century. In 1567 an eighty year period of war began with a revolt and ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Under this treaty Spain retained control over Flanders and Brabant, while agreeing to recognize the independence of a new Dutch Republic in the north. This separation effectively isolated the people of Flanders and Brabant from their cultural and linguistic counterparts in the Dutch Republic.  

The division of the Low Countries resulted in the economic decline of Flanders and Brabant because the Scheldt River, which fed the busy trading and commercial center in Antwerp, was under Dutch control. In addition, the feeling of oppression arising from Catholic rule stimulated many Protestant, Flemish speaking families to emigrate from the Low Countries to the New World as well as to other states in Europe. This drain of skilled artisans and craftsmen also contributed to the downward slide of the Flemish economy.

Furthermore, this caused a schism of the common language; in the north Dutch developed as a standardized language of government, while in the south Flemish stagnated in a “system of regional dialects called Flemish, which became more and more the patois of the subject, oppressed poor.” As the Platt German of Flanders and Brabant developed into Flemish, the Walloon language developed into a dialect of French and was used for governmental purposes under both the Burgundians and the Spanish.

The Flemish Movement Begins
In 1713 the Spain signed its possessions in the Low Countries over to Austria as part of the Treaty of Utrecht. Emperor Joseph II began instituting such reforms as freedom of religion and the division of the territory into nine provinces for administration. He also nullified the almost sacred *Joyeuse Entrée* on the grounds that it served only to protect the privileges of the aristocracy. It was at this time that the Flemish-speaking inhabitants of the Austrian Netherlands began to rally against the sinking position of Flemish in their society. In 1786 an English expatriate, James Shaw, noted that:

> Not only in conversation, but also in writing, the language of France, softer and more elegant, but less nervous than that of the Flemings, has entered here into general use. In another century, it is likely that no other language than the French will be spoken in this country, and that the Flemish tongue will maintain itself only in the Province of Holland, where it has long subsisted in greater purity than in the Austrian Netherlands.\(^4^4\)

J.B.C. Verlooy agreed, in his secretly and anonymously published *Treatise on the Neglect of the Mother-Tongue in the Low Countries* of 1788:

> I do not mean to say, that our Walloon countrymen must give up their French. No; let them speak it as much...but let us also honour our own tongue. Let us therefore most gladly abandon that foreign speech which is so injurious to us, and embrace our own. In doing so let us at last follow the example of almost all the people of Europe: France, England, Italy, Spain, Germany...Provided then, that my compatriots are not stifled by extreme stupidity, we shall abandon French and restore to the Dutch language its honour and respect.\(^4^5\)

As we shall see, the passing of control over the Austrian Netherlands from Austria to France in 1794 served to magnify this fear of the extinction of Flemish.

As part of an effort by the Belgians to unify themselves against the reformist Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, expatriates living in Holland formed a military during 1789
for the purpose of liberating the Austrian-controlled section of the Low Countries.

Representatives from the provinces also convened and created the United States of Belgium in January of 1790. This was the first use of the word Belgium in the context of a possible modern political state. Joseph II died during this revolt and was therefore unable to complete his reforms; the much less conciliatory Leopold II succeeded him as the Austrian monarch and crushed the Belgian revolt, although he did lift the much hated reforms imposed by his brother.\(^{46}\)

Again in 1794 the Belgian provinces changed hands, this time to Napoleon’s France. The French used force to institute reforms of the type Joseph II had advocated. A unified legal code, a new system of nine administrative regions, and free navigation on the Scheldt River (the blockade of which had previously strangled Antwerp) all came into existence during occupation by the French.\(^{47}\)

The Flemings did not fail to notice a new French hegemony; P.A. Vanderbrook observes the condition of Flemish in his homeland shortly after the end of twenty years of French rule in his 1817 writing, *The Harmful Effects of the Indifference of Flemings and Brabanters to their Native Tongue, and Why they must Cultivate it*:

Meanwhile, the consequences of our neglect of our mother tongue have been lamentable. The decline of the arts and sciences, the slackening of social ties, the weakening of patriotic feeling – these are its fruit. The arts and sciences will prosper only where the language is esteemed and diligently cultivated…\(^{48}\)

Vanderbrook asserts that artists and scientists working in a foreign language will never reach their potential, and that doing so causes a decline in the Flemish arts and sciences. Mr. Vanderbrook is proposing in this work that the new country (the Belgian provinces were united with the Kingdom of Holland in 1815) teach its children in their native
language, noting that teaching Flemish and Walloon school children in solely French
gives the native French-speaking Walloons an advantage in education and discourages
the Flemish children.

Twenty years later Belgium was transferred for the last time, along with
Luxemburg, to King William I of Holland at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This was
partially the design of the other European powers who wanted a buffer between
themselves and the recently subdued French. King William saw through the reforms
started by the Austrians and the French; the agriculture and emerging industry of the
south combined with the trading centers of the north to economically benefit both
sections. King William’s reign also saw the foundation of the Universities of Ghent and
Liége in December 1816. ⁴⁹

By the turn of the eighteenth century some Flemings had begun to notice the same
sort of dilution of language that Sabino de Arana y Goiri noticed at the turn of the
nineteenth century. The Flemish movement would not gain spced until the later part of
the nineteenth century, but the threat to the Flemish language, and therefore Flemish
culture indirectly, had been identified by scholars well before Belgium gained its
independence.

The Birth of Modern Belgium

The Belgians did not find everything about their new situation so agreeable.
Within Belgium, there was “no more consciousness of ‘national’ unity than there had
been during the revolutionary fiasco of 1789.” ⁵⁰ Government positions and seats in the
Estates-General were not divided equally between the Belgians and the Dutch. Along
with King William’s institution of Dutch as the official language of his kingdom, his hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church alienated both Belgian Catholics and the French-speaking upper classes of both Holland and Belgium. The majority of Flemings and Walloons are Catholic, while the Dutch are mainly Protestant. The Austrian Netherlands experienced in 1815 a change from French rule, a Catholic majority, and a French speaking government to Dutch rule, a government hostile to Catholicism, and a Dutch speaking government. French rule incensed the Flemish because it systematically eroded their language and therefore their culture. Now under Dutch control, upper class French-speaking Flemings and the Catholic majority of the south felt alienated.

These new developments led to a unification of purpose between the Belgian Catholics and the Liberals, what they termed a “union of opposition”. The Liberals were mainly the bourgeoisie of Flanders and Wallonia; both groups spoke primarily French and admired French culture. Opposition to Dutch rule served as an adhesive that bound together the different Belgian social groups as “they asserted themselves to be a nation.” This led directly to the revolution that would liberate Belgium from Holland. The Belgian Revolution of 1830 was short; by December 20th, 1830, the major European powers had recognized its independence.

On the eve of independence, the disadvantage at which expressions of Walloon and French culture, as well as the Catholic religion were put enraged certain groups of Belgians. The endangerment of the tangible representations of the Walloon culture led directly to the breaking away of Belgium from Holland.

Nation or State?
Now Belgium was an independent state, but was it a nation as well? Ernest Gellner gives this definition of a nation in his book *Nations and Nationalism*:

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.  

By uniting to free themselves from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Flemings and Walloon people satisfied part two of Gellner's definition: they recognized "certain rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership". However, the new state of Belgium was not a nation according to Gellner's definition because it did not satisfy the first part: the Flemings and Walloons did not share the same culture. Walloons speak French and feel culturally tied to France, while the Flemings speak Dutch and feel more closely linked with the culture of the Netherlands. The Belgian state came about because the Catholics, Walloons and upper class Flemings allied with each other to fight against the anti-French, anti-Catholic rule of King William I. This was not a fusion of elements into a culturally homogeneous nation, but an alliance against a perceived external threat.

The birth of Belgium was therefore much different from the formation of other states during the 19th century. Both Italy and Germany unified during that century; Otto Von Bismarck united a number of smaller states and principalities all of which shared the
same language and cultural traditions, and Giuseppe Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II liberated Italy from the Austrian Habsburgs and united the fragmented peninsula. In both cases, the territory in question was culturally homogenous, so upon unification the resulting entities were not merely states, like Belgium, but nation-states.

In his work, *Containing Nationalism*, Michael Hechter of the University of Washington defines “State-building nationalism” as:

...the attempt to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories in a given state. It is the result of the conscious efforts of central rulers to make a multicultural population culturally homogeneous. Thus, beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the twentieth, the rulers of England and France attempted fitfully perhaps, and with more or less success-to foster homogeneity in their realms by inducing culturally distinctive populations in each country's Celtic regions to assimilate to their own culture. Since the rationale for state-building nationalism is often geopolitical - to secure borders from real or potential rivals - this kind of nationalism tends to be culturally inclusive...

The revolution was led by the upper bourgeoisie of both Flanders and Wallonia; they spoke French and felt more closely connected to French culture than Dutch culture. Accordingly, in their attempt to build a unified state, culturally homogeneous state, they made French the official language of the government:

The Provisional Government,

...Considering, on the other hand, that the Flemish and German languages, in use among the inhabitants of certain places, differ from one province to another, and sometimes from one district to another, rendering it impossible to publish an official text of laws and decrees in Flemish and German;

Decrees:
Art. 1. The official bulletin of laws and acts of government is to be published in French.

Art. 2. In those provinces where the Flemish or German language is in use among the inhabitants the provincial governors will publish in their administrative memorials a Flemish or German translation of the laws and acts of government which apply to the whole of Belgium, and of the special acts which concern only their province.

... 

Art. 5. In their dealings with the administrative services the citizens are entitled to use French, Flemish or German, without distinction.

Art. 6. This will also be the case in their dealings with tribunals or with officers of the court, provided that the language they wish to use be understood by the judges and counsel, in civil cases, and, in penal cases, by the judges, the Public Prosecutor and counsel for the defense.

...

Brussels, the 16th of November 1830.

The Members of the Central Committee

Count Félix de Mérode.

Ch. Rogier.

A. Gendebien

This document clearly shows the government’s preference for French in the new Belgian state; Charles Rogier of the Central Committee confirmed this in a letter of 1832:

The first principle of good administration rests on the exclusive use of one language, and it is obvious that in Belgium this language must be French...so that the Flemish...will be obliged to learn French. In this way, the Germanic element in Belgium will gradually be destroyed.

In the final constitution included article 23, which reads, “The use of languages in Belgium is optional. The matter may be regulated only by law and only for acts of public authority and judicial proceedings.” However, as Mr. Clough points out, this article
does not provide for equality of language, but allows government employees to choose whichever language they please. French was the dominant language in the courts, the army and the administration from the earliest days of the state. French was also the most widely used language in secondary education, even in Flanders, and the Belgian universities at Ghent, Liège, and Louvain used French exclusively. Mr. Veerloy, quoted above, makes clear the dangers of teaching children in a foreign tongue.59

By 1830, the Belgians had been living for nearly three hundred years under French-speaking administrations. Like the Basques at the turn of the century, they felt that their language and culture were in jeopardy, and therefore their culture as a whole was endangered as well. The Belgian government had been attempting to use language as a political tool; if the people all speak French, then they would also become closer culturally and eventually form a nation-state, which was the desired state of affairs in the mid 19th century. To counter this Francophonic hegemony, Flemish scholars, politicians, clergy and ardent nationalists began to adopt the tangible elements of Flemish culture for use as a political tool to oppose the incorporation of their people into a nation dominated by the French language and French culture. They began to educate and inform the Flemings of their rich cultural legacy in the hope of awakening a dormant nationalism.

The Flemish Movement Intensifies

The temporary union with the Netherlands was enough to reawaken interest in Dutch and Netherlandish culture, so by the middle of the 1830s the Flemish movement was beginning in Belgium. Jans Frans Willems was one of the most ardent supporters of the Flemish cause during this period: “I have always said this – who speaks French is a
Frenchman. The Netherlandish nation is a Dutch nation..." Another leading Flamingant (a Fleming who is proud of Flanders and his culture) was Jan David, a Catholic priest and scholar. The two studied, wrote local histories, and published medieval romances. They also created the “Society for the Propagation of the Netherlandish Language and Literature” in 1836, which was an academic society of scholars interested in Netherlandish literature and history that had branches around the country. This group was selected in 1837 to create a standard orthography and a uniform Flemish spelling, which were adopted by the government in 1844.61

This invigoration of academic interest in things Netherlandish was accompanied by the popular novels and poetry of the Flemish Romantics. Theodore Van Rijswijck’s Antigoon (1841) is an allegorical novel based on contemporary Flemish history that portrays Napoleon as the antagonist and King William I as the Netherlandish hero of the story. Hendrik Conscience wrote Lion of Flanders in 1839, a novel that depicted the struggle of the Flemish against the French in the 14th century. He remarks in the preface:

There are twice as many Flemings as there are Walloons. We pay twice as much in taxes as they do. And they want to make Walloons out of us, to sacrifice us, our old race, our language, our splendid history, and all that we have inherited from our forefathers. No, there is too much Flemish blood in the world to allow that, regardless of the measures which the Walloons take.62

This should be evidence of the strong feelings Flemings had at this time toward their own culture and toward the perceived attempts to eradicate it. These scholars and politicians consciously appropriated the Flemish cultural legacy for use as a tool in Belgian politics. It was at this time that Flamingants began to use the Flemish lion as the symbol for their
movement and they adopted H. Van Peene and Karel Miry’s *The Flemish Lion* as the Flemish national anthem.\(^{63}\)

The year 1856 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of King Leopold I to the throne, and Theodore Van Rijswijck’s brother, Jan Van Rijswijck wrote an inflammatory, pro-Flemish letter to the government in place of an entry for a cantata to be sung at the celebration. This letter sparked popular unrest and more people became interested in the Flemish movement. The government was pressured into commissioning an investigation of the demands of the Flamingants and of the Flemish question. The document produced as a result of this commission was the most important document in the history of the Flemish movement. It laid out the grievances of the Flamingants, including how French was used by everything within the government’s reach; the courts, police, the army, administrations at all levels and education were all conducted in French. The report also argued against the idea that a common language was necessary for Belgian unity. The commission, also known as the Grievance Commission, proposed reforms in education and the military. It also proposed that all official state documents be translated into Flemish, that communication between the Flemish provinces and the state be in Flemish, and that all judges and lawyers know Flemish as well as French. This document was the general program of the Flemish movement until World War I.\(^{64}\)

Despite Grievance Commission report neither of the two main parties, the Liberals and the Catholics, took up the Flemish cause. However, a proponent of the Flemish cause, Mr. De Laet, was assigned to study the Flemish petitions addressed to the government. In 1866, he:

\[
\text{…condemned the policy which had been practiced since 1830 of obliterating Flemish, for, he claimed, it had made the two social classes in}\]

30
Flanders hostile to each other, it had threatened the union of the country, and it had made Belgium the intellectual parasite of France.\textsuperscript{65} This issue of language and its cultural ramifications were seen by Flamingants as most important because they felt that the Belgian state, controlled by Francophones, was attempting to destroy their culture through eradication of their language.

After sixty years of agitation by the Flemish movement, the Walloons began to use their cultural heritage as a weapon of opposition to the Flemish movement. The Walloons formed their own organizations of opposition. The \textit{Société de Propagande Wallonne} was formed in 1888 and followed in 1897 by \textit{La Ligue Wallonne de Liège}. The latter actually proposed the idea of a division of the country based on linguistic geography. These were followed by the \textit{Assemblée Wallonne}, a markedly anti-Flemish group in Wallonia that claimed to be for the "study and defense of Walloon interests." Like the Flamingants, the Walloon nationalists also adopted a song, \textit{Le Chant de la Wallonie}, and a flag. In 1912, a socialist, pro-Walloon government deputy, Jules Destrée declared to the king, "No, Sire, there is no such thing as a Belgian soul. The fusion of Flemings and Walloons is not to be desired and, if one were to desire it, one would have to admit that it is not possible."\textsuperscript{66} Indeed, the Walloon Assembly declared that the only way Belgium could survive was as, "a union based on reciprocal independence and made possible by a legal and cordial entente."\textsuperscript{67} In effect, the Walloon Assembly was declaring that there was no Belgian nation, only a state made possible by a political compromise between two separate nationalities.

From 1870 through 1900, Flamingants successfully lobbied to improve the position of Flemish in the Belgian court system, in public education, in the army, and for its increased use in government and official communications. A great victory occurred
for the Flemish movement on April 15, 1898 when the Belgian Senate voted, under popular pressure, to make Flemish an official language of the state, on an equal footing with French.68

In the 19th century the Flamingants successfully combated a perceived, and perhaps real, threat to their culture by bolstering it through educating the Flemings, lobbying, writing, and campaigning. Adopting the rich Flemish and Walloon cultural heritages, scholars and politicians tapped into the public’s sense of the need to protect its culture in order to make political gains, in this case the equality of language. Since the Belgian government had been attacking Flemish culture by attacking the Flemish language, as Mr. Rogier’s statement above confirms, the Flamingants responded with amplified cultural manifestations. These were options the Basques did not have under Franco; the freedoms the Belgians had were not available to act as a safety valve to relieve the boiling resentment that Franco had fostered in northeast Spain.

**The Flemish Movement During the First World War**

With the German invasion of Belgium in the autumn of 1914, the Flemish movement took a more radical turn. Flamingants divided themselves into two groups: the Activists felt that they should use the occupying German government to effect reforms favorable to the Flemish movement, while the Passivists believed that no aid should be given to the invading Germans and no help should be accepted from them in their struggle for reform. Activist societies began to crop up; some of their demands were the use of Flemish in the schools and universities of Flanders, the independence of Flanders, the union of Flanders and Holland, administrative division of Belgium, and a dual
Walloon and Flemish monarchy. It is important to note, however, that the vast majority of Flamingants and Flemish leaders were Passivists, and refused to ally themselves with groups making these demands.  

The Germans sought the input from Belgians on domestic matters during the occupation, and on the Flemish issue, only the Activists would speak with them. The minority Activists group was therefore able to exercise a disproportionate influence over the occupying government. The Germans enforced with more zeal existing linguistic laws aimed at achieving equality of language in education and administrative affairs. They also converted the University of Ghent to a Flemish university.

A group of Activist Flamingants known as the Council of Flanders was able to secure the following decree from military governor-general von Bissing:

Two administrative regions are formed in Belgium. One comprises the provinces of Antwerp, Limburg, East Flanders, West Flanders, and the arrondissements of Brussels and Louvain (of the province of Brabant). The other includes the provinces of Hainault, Liège, Luxemburg, Namur, and the arrondissement of Nivelles (of the province of Brabant). The administration of the first of these regions will be directed from Brussels, that of the second from Namur.  

This was the first step in an overall scheme for Flemish independence. The Council of Flanders declared such independence at the end of December, 1917, but the Germans refused to permit it. This action was met with fury by Passivists, including senators and deputies of the Belgian government. They were outraged that the Germans were enlisting the help of the Council of Flanders, a group without a “public mandate”. The Activist movement came to an end with the peace at the close of the war. They were excluded from the peace process, and Belgium was restored by the provisions of the Armistice.
King Albert of Belgium declared in his address to the legislature on November 22, 1918:

The necessity of a fecund union demands the sincere cooperation of all the children of a single nation without distinction as to origin or language. In the domain of languages the strictest equality and the most absolute justice will characterize bills which the Government will submit to the national representatives ... A reciprocal respect of interests of the Flemings and the Walloons ought to exist in the administration in order to give each one the certainty of being understood in his language and to assure him his full intellectual development especially in higher education. [Hear, hear.] That the functionary, the magistrate, the officer, ought to know the language of those whom they serve is a rule of elementary equity. It is even to the interests of the country that each of our two populations be able to develop fully in its own language its personality and its originality, its intellectual talents, and its faculties of art...  

Additionally, the King declared that the Activists should be punished because they “aimed to effect [Belgium’s] ruin” when “the existence and the future of the country were in question”.

The Twentieth Century

After World War I, the Flemish movement took a more radical stand, and Belgians began to realize that the Flamingant demands required attention. In 1921, a law was passed that provided for “the principle of territoriality and therefore the exclusive use of Flemish in Flanders was established.” Further legislation from 1930 through 1937 legally established a language frontier between Flanders and Wallonia, except Brussels which is treated as a separate case, and the University of Ghent became fully Flemish-speaking. These new laws meant that in Flanders, all administrations, courts, schools and
other public institutions were to use Flemish only, and in Wallonia the reverse became true.

The regional and community issues were mostly dormant for the war years and the 1950s, but were reawakened during the 1960s. After gaining seats in the parliament during the 1960s and bringing the issue to the forefront, the Eyskens government ventured to amend the constitution. The following amendments were approved in late 1970:

1. Article 59 *bis* established two (Flemish and Francophone) Cultural Councils and a council for the German-speaking Community, with law-making powers in cultural matters;
2. Article 109 *quater* established regional councils for Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels with important powers in the socio-economic field;
3. A ‘Sonne de’alarme’ (alarm bell) system (Article 38 and 38 *bis*) giving two-thirds of a linguistic group the right temporarily to suspend the adoption of certain language laws.
4. It was required that laws implementing articles 69 *bis* and 107 *quarter* be approved by two-thirds majority and a majority in each linguistic group in Parliament.75

Further reforms in 1988 and 1993 brought Belgium to its current form. It is a completely federal state, with a large proportion of government power vested in the Regional Councils and the Cultural Councils responsible for the different geographic regions and linguistic groups, respectively.76

**Conclusion**

At the turn of the 20th century in Spain, large numbers of non-Basque Spaniards were migrating to the Basque Provinces and especially the city of Bilbao. Fearful for the
survival of their language, religion, and ultimately their culture, a group of young people formed the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) in order to promote Basque independence through parliamentary means. After the PNV fought against Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War, he punished the Basque people by banning their language and all manifestations of Basque culture. This harsh oppression radicalized a new generation of Basques in the 1950s, who created the terrorist group *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* to continue the struggle for Basque independence through violence and terror. Today ETA has lost its popular support and survives by successfully imbedding itself into the youth culture of some social circles of Basque nationalists. In Spain the violence perpetrated by ETA was provoked by an attack on Basque cultural manifestations by the Franco government; this same violence is perpetuated by cultural institutions, as ETA and its political wing imbed their violent beliefs into young Basques through youth groups and activities. Both the Franco government and the Basque nationalists used cultural expressions as a political tool, instilling the belief in the public that the eradication of their language, religion and social institutions would mean an eradication of Basque culture as a whole. The situation in Belgium, which began in a similar manner, has developed in a markedly different way.

After enduring administration in French under a number of European powers, Belgium passed to the Netherlands in 1815 where the area was administered for the first time in the Flemish native tongue, Dutch. This union with their cultural counterparts did not last long however, by 1830 the Flemish bourgeoisie and the Belgian Catholic population had successfully fought for and won independence. The new Belgian government attempted to create an entirely French-speaking state, but to many Flemings, to speak French meant to become French, a distasteful proposition for the proud Flemish
people. The temporary union with the Netherlands intensified the Flemish movement in Belgium and over the next seventy years, Flamingants drew on the past glory of Flanders and its proud cultural tradition to revisit the Flemings with their culture. Paintings, poems, music, and politics were all effective political tools in the Flamingant struggle. Since these are the most conscious representations of culture, the feeling that they may be destroyed led the Flemings to support the movement for equality of language in Belgium. Here, as in Spain, the feeling that a group’s culture was in danger precipitated the rise of a nationalist movement. The Flamingants capitalized on the perceived endangerment of cultural expressions, which caused the conflict in Belgium and the Flemings retaliated consciously with their own amplified cultural expressions, not brutality as some Basques did.

The Flemish, through peaceful means entirely, gained equality of language and local autonomy from the Belgian government. Using the tangible elements of culture as political tools to gain support, they transformed Belgium from a unitary state into a federal system which safeguards the cultural institutions and manifestations of the all the people, and meets the needs of the Flemings, Walloons and German-speakers. The Basques have also attained autonomy for their provinces within the Spanish government through peaceful, political means which invalidate the bloodshed generated by ETA.

The Belgian situation diverges from the Spanish in that the means of dismantling Basque cultural symbols and manifestations were harsh, legal, and systematic, while in Belgium the French-speaking government merely attempted to foster a culturally homogenous nation by creating a monolingual state. Believing the survival of their language vital to the survival of their culture, Flemings retaliated through such cultural
displays as music, literature, painting and politics. Democratic recourse was always available to the Flamingants, but not to the Basques living under a dictatorial regime. Comparing the two cases, one notices the power that such everyday cultural expressions such as a flag or a song have when used as political tools and how a government’s attitude towards them can produce radical, violent opposition groups or peaceful, democratic ones.
Endnotes

1 For Basque words, there are discrepancies in the literature with respect to the spelling. I used the “s” and the “c”, as in “Euskera”, as opposed to “Euskara” or “Euskeran”. In addition, Spanish spellings are used for place names.


Larry Trask, “FAQs about Basque and the Basques”. *Larry Trask’s Basque Page*.
(http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/larryt/basque.html)

Collins, 9


4 Payne, 10 - 28

5 Collins, 31

6 Collins, 58 - 56

7 Payne, 10 - 28

8 Payne, 10 - 28

9 Payne, 61 - 82

10 Payne, 64

11 There are no distinct biological differences between the Basques and other Spaniards.


13 Payne, 61 – 82

14 Astrain, 26

15 Vicky Short, “ETA’s decision to end cease-fire provokes political crisis in Spain” *World Socialist Website* (http://wsws.org, December 17, 1999)

16 Short, 12/17/1999


17 “Spain’s ETA crackdown continues” *CNN.com* (http://www.cnn.com, October 19, 2001)

“Once more for the nationalists?” *Economist* (May 12, 2001, U.S. ed.)


19 CNN.com, 10/28/2001

20 CNN.com, 10/28/2001

21 Barbara Loyer, “Basque nationalism undermined by ETA”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*

22 Giles Tremlett, “Spain vows to block Basque referendum” *Guardian* (http://www.guardian.co.uk, July 31, 2001)

23 Matt Spetalnick, “Protests Over ETA Killings as Basque President Sworn In” *Independent* (London, July 16, 2000), 10

24 Alberto Letona, “Basques wear Holocaust symbols in rally against violence” *Associated Press* (April 21, 2001)

25 Loyer, 2/1999


29 Carlos Sanchez, “Basque youths: not all fanatics” *New Statesman* (January 29, 2001)


31 Clark, 144, 165

32 Clark, 141 - 155

Rop Zoutberg, “One day ETA asks … and if they want you, you go”; Rop Zoutberg asks why so many of Spain’s young Basques are prepared to kill and risk their lives for an ancient ideal.” *New Statesman* (January 15, 2001)

Clark, 165

Clark, 162


Isambard Wilkinson, “Rebellious young are ETA’s new recruits” *Daily Telegraph* (March 15, 2001)


Clark, 165

Clark, xv


Huggett, 3 - 7

Huggett, 8

Huggett, 8 - 10


Huggett, 12 - 14

Huggett, 14 - 16


Huggett, 16 - 17

Huggett, 16

Huggett, 16 - 17

Huggett, 18


Provisional Government of Belgium, 72

Clough, 50

Clough, 50 – 51

Clough, 59

Clough, 58 – 65

Clough, 71

Clough, 67 – 74

Clough, 84 – 91

Clough, 100

Clough, 128

Clough, 128

40
68 Clough, 130 – 174
69 Clough, 175 – 191
70 Clough, 203
71 Clough, 200 – 205; 217
72 Clough, 219 – 220
73 Clough, 220
75 Fitzmaurice, 51

“Background Note: Belgium” *United States Department of State Website* (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2874.htm, July 2002)
Bibliography


Zoutberg, Rop. “One day ETA asks . . . and if they want you, you go; Rop Zoutberg asks why so many of Spain’s young Basques are prepared to kill and risk their lives for an ancient ideal.”. *New Statesman*. January 15, 2001.