

Lessons Learned: Cooperation of EU Member States in Limiting Ethnic Conflict

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Introduction

Why are some countries more successful in limiting the spread of ethnic conflict from one state to another while others are not? The success lies in the cooperative efforts of neighboring governments' to curb the violence before it becomes a regional or international problem. Over the last decade scholars have provided a variety of reasons for the spread of ethnic conflicts, including the flight of refugees from one state to another to escape the violence. Scholars have also written on the prevention of ethnic conflicts. This paper, however, focuses on limiting the spread of ethnic conflict once the violence has already broken out in any given country. To address the main question, the paper will analyze and compare the cooperation of EU member states, Spain and France, on the Basque issue to the Turkish-Syrian struggle to prevent the Kurdish conflict from spreading. The Spanish government has limited the Basque ethnic conflict to a domestic problem inside Spain because of its cooperation with the French state in keeping the insurgents from taking refuge inside France. Turkey, which is currently seeking European Union membership, has struggled to keep the Kurdish problem from spreading into neighboring Syria. Since the Kurdish problem has been one of the sticking points for EU membership, Turkey might be able to look to Spain for lessons learned in limiting ethnic conflict. From this comparison a theoretical model of cooperation will be established as a future guide for both new and old EU member states to contain the spread of domestic ethnic conflict.

The layout of the paper is as follows. First, a background will be provided on the reasons why ethnic conflicts spread from one country to another in the first place. This of course creates not only a regional problem, but also threatens the overall security of

the international community. Second, a theoretical model will be established to specify the four conditions necessary for cooperation in order to limit the spread of ethnic conflict from one state to another. Third, the study will show, that the presence of these four variables is the reason behind the success of the Franco-Spanish cooperation in limiting the Basque conflict to a domestic problem inside Spain. In the fourth section, the paper will analyze the Turkish-Syrian struggle over the Kurdish conflict and illustrate that it was in the absence of the four key variables that the situation escalated nearly to inter-state war. The paper will conclude with an assessment of Turkey's current situation, in relations with its neighbors over the Kurdish conflict, and the implications that this might have for EU membership.

Significance and Contribution

At the end of the Cold War, with the triumph of democracy over communism and the successful integration of regional economic blocs like the EU, scholars were rudely awakened by rising ethnic conflicts throughout the world. Most noticeable among these was the violent Yugoslav crisis in the heart of Europe. What was more alarming about this and other ethnic conflicts on the eve of the new millennium was that they were not always confined within national boundaries. As history has shown, ethnic strife is likely to spill over national borders and provoke international warfare. In the Balkans and the Middle East, we have already seen throughout contemporary history the escalation of ethnic disputes as people of different states have engaged in violent conflict against each other. While these conflicts have been contained to some extent, there are no guarantees that the future will be free of such inter-state war resulting from ethnic strife. The Kosovo crisis, the events in Rwanda-Burundi, and the Palestinian-Israeli clashes

throughout the 1990's and well into the 21st century demonstrate that in the post-Cold War world ethnically based conflicts can easily spread beyond their borders to threaten the overall security of the region and the international community. Therefore, finding an answer to the research question noted above is of vital importance today because of the large number of states or regions that happen to be experiencing ethnic conflicts and that have the potential to lead to interstate war. Moreover, as the EU begins the enlargement process to incorporate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, where ethnic disputes have historically been a hot issue, there is a need to understand how domestic ethnic strife can be managed. For these reasons, studies that address the escalation, the spread, as well as the prevention of ethnic conflicts to a level of interstate war, are necessary in order to maintain regional and international stability throughout Europe and the rest of the world. This paper attempts to move in that direction.

Background

A wide-range of explanations have been put forward for the reasons behind the escalation and spread of ethnic conflicts beyond national borders. Most of these studies emerged in the 1990's at the end of the Cold War. As once dormant ethnic disputes began to flare up around the world, scholars rushed to find answers as to why there was a surge in conflict. During the Cold War era there was some scholarship linking ethnic strife to international conflict (Rosenau, 1964; Suhrke and Noble, 1977). However, few explored the relationship between ethnic conflict and inter-state relations, as superpower rivals, the United States and the Soviet Union, appeared to be the root cause; at times suppressing and at times supporting communal conflicts to forward their respective ideologies. With the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and

Yugoslavia, and the ensuing ethnic wars in Chechnya, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi, scholars began to reconsider the role of ethnic conflict in international politics (Ryan, 1990; Chazan, 1991; de Silva and May, 1991b; Midlarsky, 1992; Brown, 1993, 1996; Carment, 1993; Carment and James, 1997; Lake and Rothchild, 1998; Taras and Ganguly, 1998).

According to these scholars, there are several reasons why studies need to be conducted to understand the link between ethnic conflict and inter-state relations. First, ethnic conflicts can damage the close economic ties between neighboring states and gravely impact regional interests by disrupting trade, transportation, communication, and access to raw materials.¹ Second, the international market can be negatively affected by ethnic conflicts because investors can no longer safely invest in those insecure states, which are riddled with internal turmoil and thus prone to volatility. Since investments cannot be safeguarded in insecure regions, the lack of foreign capital in turn, can then exacerbate the conflict, as citizens of these states are unable to meet their basic needs or purchase food and fuel.² Third, as ethnic conflicts trigger migration to nearby and distant places, creating new support links, which in turn exacerbate the original conflict and cause even more migration to occur this can create “an uncontrollable chain of ever-widening involvement of host communities and new interest in the conflict.”³ Fourth, ethnic conflict may have an impact on the international system through terrorism. Often ethnic groups will resort to terrorism because it is much cheaper and easier to engage in it

¹Michael E. Brown. “The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict,” in Michael E. Brown, *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996): 593.

²Karin von Hippel, “The Resurgence of Nationalism and Its International Implications,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 17:4 (Autumn 1994): 199.

³Ralph Premdas. “The Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict: Some Theoretical Explorations,” in K.M. de Silva and R.J. May, Eds., *Internationalization of Ethnic Conflict* (London, Pinter Publishers, 1991): 16.

than conventional military warfare. Finally, ethnic conflicts can have an immediate effect on the international system if a state with ethnic strife has nuclear, biological, and or chemical weapons.

Although this paper does not go into an in-depth discussion on the causes of ethnic strife it is important to briefly address why these conflicts happen in the first place. According to Ted Gurr, ethnic conflicts occur when groups define themselves using ethnic criteria and make claims on behalf of their collective interests to the state or to political actors.⁴ He argues, these groups may be minorities at risk, that is, people who are politically, economically, and culturally disadvantaged or discriminated against by the government of the country in which they live (Gurr, 1993). States with discriminatory political institutions or policies toward minority groups that promote inequality in voting rights, access to positions of political power, recruitment to military and police service, and rights to legal protection of minority groups are more likely to experience ethnic conflict.⁵ This is because as ethnic minorities are denied legitimate access to the state's resources, conflict becomes their only option for conveying grievances to the government. In addition, in states where minorities are economically discriminated against and where there are, vast differences in the standards of living, or inequitable access to such state resources as land and capital among ethnic groups, conflict is more likely.⁶ Conflict usually results because the dominant ethnic community in the country monopolizes all of the economic opportunities, leaving those in the other groups

⁴Ted Robert Gurr, "People Against States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and the Changing World System," *International Studies Quarterly*. vol. 38, no. 3, (September 1994): 348, 352.

⁵ Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities At Risk* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993).

⁶ Michael E. Brown, "The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview," in Michael E. Brown, Owen Cote, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Steven Miller, Eds., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996-97): 11.

disadvantaged. Finally, in states with cultural discrimination the potential for conflict is again much higher where the aggressive dominant ethnic group imposes exclusionary nationalist ideologies; where minority ethnic groups are not allowed to use and teach minority languages, or enjoy religious freedoms; or where groups have negative histories of each other and therefore seeing themselves as victims.⁷ Countries with cultural discrimination toward minority groups tend to be more prone toward ethnic conflict than those without because groups may demand autonomy in order to gain such rights as the use of minority languages in schools. The presence of minorities at risk raises the possibility for ethnic conflict and its potential to spread into neighboring countries and thereby escalate to interstate war.

Recognizing these important factors, several studies have looked at the reasons behind the spread of ethnic strife from one state to another to determine how these conflicts might be contained before they escalate and become a regional or an international problem. First, scholars claim that ethnic conflicts spread beyond their borders because of refugee flows resulting from genocide or other violence, which force them into neighboring countries (Brown, 1993, 1996; Lake and Rothchild, 1998).⁸ Refugee flows often negatively impact those states, which have economic burdens and weak political structures; in other words, nations least able to take it on. A government that is already facing challenges to provide for its own people will only be further constrained as it tries to support those refugees now in extreme economic hardship within its borders. These additional burdens may be too difficult for the host country and as a result it too may fall into turmoil. Second, David Lake and Donald Rothchild argue that

⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸ David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, Eds., *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998).

ethnic conflict may spread to other states through information flows, which influence the beliefs of ethnic groups in other nations. Ethnic violence and protest may incite groups elsewhere to believe that they too may be successful in achieving their valued ends through coercion.⁹ Therefore, the ethnic conflict in neighboring countries might encourage the minorities in nearby states to make extreme demands on their own governments.¹⁰

Third, ethnic warfare may spill over into neighboring territories when combatants in one state use the territory of a second for their own purposes. The combatants can launch attacks into neighboring states and bring international attention to their cause.¹¹ Moreover, spillover can lead to the pursuit of invaders as well as direct border clashes, which may eventually spiral out of control and lead to war.¹² For example, according to Michael Brown, “hot-pursuit operations and interdiction campaigns can lead to inter-state military clashes when one government is trying to root out rebels in a neighboring state, and the neighboring state in question seeks to defend its territory and sovereignty.”¹³ Neighboring governments may either launch defensive interventions to keep the ethnic conflict from spreading, or engage in protective interventions designed to protect or assist ethnic minorities.¹⁴

Fourth, a domestic ethnic conflict may turn into a regional or international problem if the government of a neighboring state believes that its ethnic-kin in another country needs rescuing. In this case the government might make an irredentist claim, that

⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰ Lake and Rothchild, 26.

¹¹ Brown, 1996: 593.

¹² Lake and Rothchild, 30.

¹³ Brown, 1996: 595.

¹⁴ Ibid., 597.

is, take military action to rescue these minorities and the territory in which its members are concentrated. The ethnic conflict may then move beyond its national borders and escalate to interstate-war as the anti-irredentist state fights to maintain control over its territory and all of the citizens who are living inside its borders. Furthermore, if the anti-irredentist state fails to keep possession of the disputed territory, then it might make its own irredentist claims in order to save the members of its own ethnic community, who might be trapped within the newly independent country.¹⁵

All of these explanations provide sound reasons as to why ethnic conflicts spread from one state to another in the first place. The objective of this paper, however, is to understand how the ethnic conflict, once it has broken out in any given country, might be deterred from spreading to its neighbors. While many scholars have looked into the containment and management of ethnic conflicts within the domestic arena (Horowitz, 1985; Fearon and Laitin, 1996), this study focuses on prevention at the regional level. Although not mentioned here, the literature on humanitarian interventions (Lyons and Mastanduno, 1995; Brown, 1993; Brown, 1996) addresses the role of the international community in de-escalating violent ethnic conflicts. However, based on the success of EU member states, this study attempts to add to the literature linking ethnic conflict to inter-state relations by providing specific guidelines for individual countries to follow in limiting the spread of communal violence around the world.

Theoretical Model

At first consideration it might seem obvious that the key to limiting the spread of ethnic conflict is the cooperation between neighboring governments' to stem the violence

¹⁵ Myron Weiner, "The Macedonian Syndrome: An Historical Model of International Relations and Political Development." *World Politics*, vol.23, no. 24 (July 1970): 682.

before it becomes a regional problem. However, in the heat of a domestic ethnic conflict, as tensions build-up, it might not seem so clear to neighboring governments during a complex situation as this, which key policies are crucial to de-escalating the situation. The government of the country where the ethnic conflict is taking place will not be able to prevent it from spreading outside of its borders unless it has the neighboring states' support and cooperation. Therefore, the goal of this paper, based on a case-comparative analysis, is to specify the four key policies that neighboring states' must implement in order to help prevent the conflict from spreading. Neighboring governments' must work together with the state riddled by conflict in order to successfully limit the violence to a domestic problem rather than a regional or international one. The four key variables necessary for cooperation are as follows. First, neighboring states must arrest and extradite ethnic militants inside their borders who might be engaged in terrorist activity or planning to do harm to the people and government of another country. Second, a neighboring government must prevent ethnic insurgents from setting up military camps inside their borders. Third, neighboring governments must cut-off any and all existing military and financial support to ethnic militants. Fourth, neighboring governments must exchange any intelligence on ethnic militant activity inside their borders with the leadership of the state riddled with the conflict.

These variables can be attributed to those actions that neighboring states must take to cooperate with the government dealing with the conflict in order to keep the violence confined to the country where it originated. Therefore, the argument or hypothesis of this paper is:

Ethnic conflicts are less likely to spread from one state to another if neighboring governments will implement the following policies: arrest and extradite ethnic militants; prevent ethnic insurgents from setting up military camps inside their borders; cut-off all military and financial support to ethnic militants; and exchange any and all intelligence on ethnic militant activity.

This hypothesis is justified for the following reasons. First, rebel groups often establish bases of operations or sanctuaries in neighboring countries serving as a host to refugees. Insurgents or rebel groups may mingle with the refugee populations or use refugee camps as sanctuary or a base to reorganize and recruit new members. The interaction between the insurgents and the refugees can then draw the host countries into the conflict.¹⁶ Second, a neighboring country may align itself with an ethnic group in another state to weaken its rival, or to assist the group in its fight for independence.¹⁷ Predatory states within the region may consider states with domestic conflicts to be easy targets for defeat. The logic is that by keeping the state preoccupied with domestic problems, neighboring elites can weaken their rivals over time so as to gain regional dominance.¹⁸ Once their opponents have been weakened, aggressive states wishing to establish regional dominance may calculate that their prospects for challenging and easily gaining victory over their rival is more attractive.¹⁹ Third, neighboring governments might distribute arms to minority groups in order to enable them to stay on the other side of the border and to keep on fighting. The neighboring state can also support the insurgents by providing military training and financial assistance.²⁰ In response, however, the state experiencing ethnic conflict may launch an attack, or declare war on

¹⁶ Brown, 1996: 592.

¹⁷ Michael E. Brown, "The Causes and Regional Dimensions of Internal Conflict," 1996-1997: 597-599.

¹⁸ Ibid., 598.

¹⁹ Lake and Rothchild, 31.

²⁰ Ted Gurr, "The Internationalization of Protracted Communal Conflicts Since 1945: Which, Groups, Where, and How," in Manus I. Midlarsky, Ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*, (New York: Routledge, 1992).

its neighbor to put an end to its alliance with the insurgents. In order to avert these consequences and to eliminate the possibility of inter-state war, countries within the region must work together to limit the spread of ethnic conflict. Therefore, to demonstrate its willingness and commitment to cooperation, a neighboring government can arrest and extradite militants, destroy or deter the establishment of insurgents camps, cut-off all military and financial support, and share intelligence on militant activity.

Of course, one might question why these four policy variables alone or in some combination are more significant, as opposed to something else, in limiting the spread of ethnic conflict? While scholars have pointed out the many long-standing policy solutions, in the form of greater political, economic, and cultural rights to prevent ethnic conflicts from occurring in the first place, the focus here is on the more immediate policies that can be implemented to limit the spread once the violence has broken out. More importantly though, the answer has to do with the fact that based on an analysis of the cases selected for this paper these variables appear to show a positive relationship between inter-state cooperation and limiting the spread of ethnic conflict from one country to another. The four policy variables put forward in this study have been present in the successful cooperation between the Spanish and French governments to keep the Basque situation limited to a domestic problem inside Spain. While the cooperation between these two EU member states has been successful, in the 1960's, 1970's, and even the early 1980's there were very tense relations between the French and Spanish governments. During that period none of the four variables were present and it appeared as though the Basque conflict was beginning to take on an international dimension as it spread to nearby France. In fact, the French state was known for overtly providing the

Basque insurgents refuge inside its borders. Cooperation actually began in the mid-1980's when France agreed to implement the four measures necessary to combat the spread of ethnic conflict and the relations between the two countries eventually improved.

Moreover, until recently these four variables were absent in the Turkish-Syrian struggle to prevent the spread of the Kurdish conflict. The reluctance of the Syrian government throughout the 1980's and 1990's to: arrest and extradite ethnic militants; demolish the military camps; cut off military and financial support to the militants; and exchange intelligence with the Turkish state, culminated in very tense relations eventually leading to the brink of war in 1998. Turkey threatened war in order to pressure Syria to cooperate in combating the Kurdish conflict that it had been fighting for nearly fifteen years. War was averted when Syria agreed to cooperate with the Turkish state. Today these two countries have agreed to implement the four measures, adopted by Spain and France, in order to contain the Kurdish conflict inside the borders of Turkey. Thus far the agreement appears to be working and the violence seems to have declined for the time being.

Of course, these two cases alone are not enough to establish full cause and effect. More case-comparative studies are needed, including those, which will statistically test the four variables to determine whether there is a positive correlation and what impact each variable might have, alone or in some combination, on the outcome; limiting the spread of ethnic conflict. If a future study can show that these four independent variables indeed have a positive impact on the dependent variable, then the theoretical argument here can be generalized to other cases.

Case Selection

Before moving onto the analysis of the Franco-Spanish cooperation over the Basque issue and the Turkish-Syrian relations over the Kurdish conflict, it is important to explain why these two cases were selected. First, the two cases present contrasting examples. The former illustrates the presence of the four independent variables and successful cooperation on limiting the ethnic conflict to a domestic problem. On the other hand, the latter demonstrates the absence of the four causal variables and an ongoing struggle to prevent the ethnic violence from spreading beyond national borders. As it will be pointed out later, within each case there are also contrasting examples that support the overall argument of this paper. In both cases there are periods of time where the policy variables are absent and the dependent variable is missing, and periods of times where the four measures are implemented and ethnic conflict is successfully limited. Of course, in the Turkish-Syrian case, the second period is much shorter since the two countries only recently in 1998 began to cooperate on limiting the spread of the Kurdish conflict. However, because the time period for the Franco-Spanish cooperation on limiting the Basque conflict is much longer, spanning almost two decades, it serves as a stronger case for the theory and as a strong example for old and new EU member states to model.

Third, there are commonalities between the two cases. As it will be demonstrated below, in both cases there are minorities in conflict that straddle the borders of two or more countries, and identify with ethnic-kin in neighboring states. This increases the likelihood for the domestic ethnic strife to spread and potentially escalate to interstate war. The Basques as a minority group geographically inhabit the territories of

southwestern France and northern Spain, thereby straddling the borders of two neighboring countries. The Kurds as well are minorities who are spread out over the east and southeast portion of Turkey, north and northeast portion of Iraq, north and northwest region of Iran, and east and northeast parts of Syria. In each case if a minority group in one state is mistreated or becomes a refugee, then the pressure is likely to be felt by all those countries that have some portion of the same ethnic population within their own borders. Hence, for all the reasons given these two interesting cases have been selected for comparison.

Franco-Spanish Cooperation on the Basque Conflict

Basque History

The Basques are the only surviving pre-Aryan race in Europe and one of the oldest indigenous ethnic groups with a culture that can be traced back to 20,000 B.C.²¹ Moreover, the Basque language, Euskera, is quite distinct from any other Indo-European language.²² Throughout its history, the Basque region consisted of individual self-governing provinces with their allegiance to the Spanish Crown.²³ Beginning in the twelfth century through the late 1800s, the relationship between the various provinces and the Spanish Crown were conducted under the rules of the foral system (the fueros). Under these local statutes Basque citizens were exempted from taxation and military service. The foral system meant autonomy rather than sovereignty for the Basque

²¹ Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984): 12-13.

²² A special CNN report by CNN on Basque conflict and violence in Spain. Paul Sussman, CNN.com Europe writer, "ETA: Feared separatist group," November 13, 2001 (<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/basque/stories/background.html>).

²³ Stanley G. Payne, "Nationalism, Regionalism and Micronationalism in Spain," *Journal of Contemporary History* vol.26 (1991): 484.

region, as the statutes were written in Castilian Spanish instead of Euskera.²⁴ In order to manifest their opposition to centralism and attempts by the Spanish crown to abolish the floral system, the Basque people actively supported the Carlist movements, which resulted in two wars from 1833-1839 and 1872-1876.²⁵ However, following the Basque loss of the Carlist civil war in 1876, the Spanish state abolished the floral system and began industrializing the Basque region. Industrialization gave birth to a Basque working class and shifted the population from the rural areas to urban centers, as large numbers of immigrants arrived from other parts of Spain.²⁶ As industrialization completely altered the traditional forces of conservatism, and the old cultural order changed, leading to socialism, the Basque people turned to ethnic nationalism and to their traditional pre-industrial values.

While the people and language had been around for centuries, the Basque nation itself did not come into existence until the 1890's. Sabino de Arana y Goiri, known as the father of Basque nationalism, promoted the idea of Euskadi (the Basque Country) as a country occupied by a foreign power.²⁷ Arana believed in an exclusionary Basque culture, which was "xenophobic, ultra-Catholic, and violently anti-Liberal."²⁸ He claimed that to protect Euskera and the purity of the Basque race from possible extinction by what he felt were the "degenerate, immoral, godless, socialist immigrants" from other regions of Spain, the Basque nation needed to gain its independence.²⁹ Thus, in 1895 he

²⁴ Shlomo Ben Ami, "Basque Nationalism between Archaism and Modernity," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 26 (1991): 499.

²⁵ Luis Nunez Astrain, *The Basques: Their Struggle for Independence*, translated by Meic Stephens (Wales: Welsh Academic Press, 1997): 70-76.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ John Sullivan, "Forty Years of ETA," *History Today*, (April 1999): 34. Ben Ami, 497.

established the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacional Vasco or PNV), which aimed to win independence for the four northern Basque provinces in Spain.³⁰

Under the Franco Regime, which lasted from the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 until the death of the dictator in 1975, the Basque people lost their privilege of self-governance and experienced a great deal of oppression. Franco condemned any political and cultural diversity, which meant that the Basques not only lost their autonomous institutions but they, as well as all other ethnic minorities, were also forbidden to use their flag, national anthem, and language.³¹ The ensuing oppression of the Franco dictatorship resulted with the Basques becoming more aware of their ethnic heritage and bound them together as a tight political unit.³² In the Basque region there was the widespread belief that the area was a colonized country under an oppressive Spanish regime, thus justifying the use of any available means to gain independence from foreign occupation.

Although industrialization appeared to have greatly benefited the region, this was not entirely the case, because of the government's discriminatory economic policy. The Spanish policy of industrialization in the 20th century involved increasing production in the other areas of the country, as it had already successfully done in the Basque region. The benefits of industrial growth were then shifted toward the poorer regions of the country in the south to increase further their standards of living as well. To fulfill this goal the government also encouraged workers from the poor regions to migrate to the industrial provinces in the Basque country to take advantage of newly created jobs and to

³⁰ Michael von Tangen Page, *Prisons, Peace, and Terrorism*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998): 123.

³¹ Montserrat Guibernau, "Spain: Catalonia and the Basque Country," *Parliamentary Affairs* (January 200), vol.53, no.1:58.

³² *Ibid.*

use their earnings to reinvest in the south. This resolved the dual problem of lack of labor in the north and the restive unemployed agricultural laborers in the south.³³ However, as Basque industry was pushed towards increased production, a larger than anticipated number of Spanish workers migrated into the Basque region and competed with Basques for employment. Meanwhile, the government denied the Basque Country the resources it needed to deal with pollution, urban decay, congested transportation facilities, inadequate schools, hospitals, and many others.³⁴ In essence the government, while investing in the south, failed to reinvest in the Basque country where industrialization had generated enormous revenue.

Under Franco's regime the Basques also suffered most in the area of cultural discrimination as the dictator placed a ban on the use of any minority language outside of a person's home. The Basques could not use Euskera for conducting public business, engaging in meetings and worship, or even educating students in the classroom. Furthermore, the use of the Basque language on street signs or shops was also banned. There were also some efforts made initially, to forbid the casual use of Euskera. For example, the use of minority languages by any officials or individuals engaged in private conversation would draw police attention. The Franco regime transferred or dismissed Basque and Catalan teachers who were unwilling or unable to demonstrate political loyalty. In order to find replacements for these teachers, the fascist government favored those who were ignorant of these minority languages.³⁵

Once the dictatorship ended and Spain began to democratize, the new government lifted the ban on all minority languages. Today many schools teach exclusively in the

³³ Ibid., 18.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kenneth Medhurst, "The Basques and Catalans," *The Minority Right Group No. 9*: 4.

Basque language and Basque television station has two channels broadcasting in Basque, and Castilian Spanish. In the Basque region street signs and store shops are written in Castilian as well as the local language. In post-Franco Spain the Basque Parliament and educational system have actively promoted Basque language and culture.³⁶ Yet for the radicals, cultural discrimination under the Spanish state will not come to an end unless Euskera rather than Castilian becomes the dominant language in the Basque country.

After the death of the dictator in 1975, Spain began a transition to democracy. This was made possible under the auspices of the charismatic monarch, King Juan Carlos, who had been reinstated to the crown in 1947. In 1969 when Franco appointed King Juan Carlos I as his successor he did so not realizing that the King would play an important role in dismantling the dictatorship and helping Spain make the transition toward democracy. A majority of the middle class supported democracy because for most of the second half of Franco's regime they had fought to achieve liberty, equality and justice, which never seemed to be fully obtainable since the dictator appeared always to be putting forward limitations and restrictions. Between 1978-1979, the Spanish government worked to ratify a constitution, and proclaimed Spain as a parliamentary democracy to the rest of the world. With the adoption of the Spanish Constitution, minorities living inside Spain were granted greater autonomy.

Today approximately three million Basques inhabit the territory between northern Spain and southwestern France.³⁷ This territory, often referred to as the "Basque Country," consists of approximately 20,000 kilometers in area and includes seven

³⁶ von Tangen Page, *Prisons, Peace, and Terrorism*, 123.

³⁷ The population estimate is according to a special CNN report by CNN Madrid Bureau Chief on Basque conflict and violence in Spain. Al Goodman, "Basque question: Spain's pressing problem." November 13, 2001 (<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/stories/overview.html>).

provinces.³⁸ Three of the provinces (Labourd, Basse-Navarre, and Soule) are under the jurisdiction of France. The other four, in the south (Viscaya, Guipuzcoa, Alava, and Navarra), are under the jurisdiction of Spain. The Basques of the north constitute 0.4% of the French population, while those in the four southern provinces account for 7.5% of those provinces. According to both the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which recognizes only ‘the Spanish people’ and its ‘indissoluble unity’, and the French Constitution of 1958, which recognizes only ‘the French people’, the Basque people exists in reality but not according to the Constitutions that govern on their territories.³⁹ While the Preamble to the Spanish Constitution recognizes the state’s duty to protect all the peoples of Spain in terms of culture, languages, institutions, and human rights, Clause 8 outlaws the right to self-determination by any national minority. This clause states explicitly that, “the mission of the armed forces is to guarantee the sovereignty and independence of Spain, to protect its territorial integrity and to oversee the implementation of the Constitution,” which deems self-determination legally subordinate to the Spanish Army.⁴⁰

The Basque Conflict

During the Franco regime, a group known as Ekin, which later became ETA, was born in Bilbao in 1951.⁴¹ This group, made up of mostly youth, split off from the PNV, which was opposed to a more violent agenda. While the PNV defended Basque nationhood, it did so peacefully and never outright claimed that this should entail full-fledged independence and a national state.⁴² In 1959 Ekin transformed itself into ETA or Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (“Basque Homeland and Freedom”), which was a merger

³⁸ Astrain, 2.

³⁹ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Astrain, 78.

⁴² Ben Ami, 498.

between two groups of radical middle class students who grew impatient with PNV inactivity and decided to breakaway from the established nationalist party. ETA was very distinct from PNV in that it rejected the racist philosophy of Arana and all his followers and adopted an active defense of the Basque language. Furthermore, in opposition to the Christian Democratic ideology of the PNV, ETA committed itself to a secular agenda in fighting for the cause of the Basque working-class.⁴³ Hence, while ETA started out as a nationalist-conservative offspring of the Basque Youth of Catholic Action, it later on adopted a Marxist-Leninist line, committed to armed struggle.⁴⁴

The militant organization is made up of unconnected local groups of a few individuals acting autonomously on orders from a single contact from above. Most ETA activists are young, single males who, as students, workers, or agriculturists, are activated on a part-time basis when needed.⁴⁵ ETA finances the organization through kidnapping, bank robbery, and extortion of Basque businesses.⁴⁶ Beginning in 1968, ETA started killing those that opposed its main objective of creating an independent Basque state. In a more than thirty-year span, ETA's violence has led to eight hundred deaths including mostly members of the Civil Guard, the national police force, and both local and national politicians opposed to separatism.⁴⁷ In the mid-1970's, along with the Italian Red Brigades and the Irish Republican Army, ETA was ranked as one of the gravest dangers to the stability of Western European governments.⁴⁸

⁴³ Astrain, 33.

⁴⁴ Ben Ami, 504.

⁴⁵ William A. Douglass and Joseba Zulaika, "On the Interpretation of Terrorist Violence: ETA and the Basque Political Process," *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* (1990): 245.

⁴⁶ Paul Sussman, "ETA: Feared Separatist Group."

⁴⁷ BBC News, "ETA's bloody record," by Spanish Affairs specialist Jo Episcopo, December 2, 1999 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/547130.stm>).

⁴⁸ Clark, 4.

Once the fascist dictatorship ended and the Basques were granted regional autonomy, the Spanish government and the public expected that the kind of insurgent or separatist violence seen during the Franco era would decline and maybe even disappear. However, the exact opposite occurred, as violence intensified under democratic Spain.⁴⁹ The new democratic state, instead of simply recognizing minority regions, like Catalonia, Galicia, and Basque Country as nations within Spain, created a system of seventeen autonomous communities. Some of these provinces were historically and culturally distinct, but others like Madrid and La Rioja, were artificially created, without any sense of territorial identity.⁵⁰ Each autonomous community was given a regional legislative assembly with a single chamber; deputies were to be elected on the basis of proportional representation; and the leader of the majority party or the coalition would become the provincial president. In addition, each autonomous government was required to provide public services like education, health, culture, housing, local transport, agriculture; and was required to maintain its own police force to coexist with the Spanish national Police and Civil Guard. The regional governments were to finance their activities through regional taxes, and a budget to be granted by the central government in Madrid. In contrast, the central government would have exclusive jurisdictions over defense, administration of justice, international relations, and general economic planning.⁵¹

While these regions were granted autonomy, the Spanish government did not concede to the principle of self-determination.⁵² The Basques demand that they receive a significantly different degree of autonomy reflecting their nationalist claims, than the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 105.

⁵⁰ Guibernau, 61-62.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² von Tangen Page, 133.

artificially created regions in Spain.⁵³ Since the government is unlikely to alter the constitution, “which acknowledges the existence of a unique Spanish nation,” these historical nationalities are merely recognized as autonomous nations as opposed to free states.⁵⁴ In response, Herri Batasuna or HB (‘Unity of the People’), recently renamed Batasuna (“unity” in Basque) has demanded Basque independence from the Spanish state.⁵⁵ Recently in 2002 the Spanish judiciary and parliament have moved to outlaw the radical party Batasuna based on evidence linking the party to ETA.⁵⁶

The Spanish government takes the position that they will not negotiate with ETA unless the violent terrorist acts stop. On the other hand, ETA sees the violence as a tool that they can use to motivate the Spanish government to do what they demand. From their perspective, in Spain there exists a monarchic and parliamentary dictatorship and their ability to turn the violence on and off is the only thing they can use when they come to the bargaining table. But if they have already played that card before the talks even begin, then the assumption is that the Spanish government will have no incentive to negotiate. In order to put an end to violence, ETA demands the following: amnesty for all Basque political prisoners; legalization of all political parties; withdrawal of the Spanish Civil Guard from the Basque Country; adoption of measures to improve the conditions of the working class; the acknowledgement of Navarra as part of the Basque country; and recognition of the right of the Basque people to self-determination.⁵⁷

⁵³ Guibernau, 63.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ BBC News, “Profile: Batasuna,” 27 August, 2002, (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2211696.stm>).

⁵⁶ CNN Special Report, “ETA threatens political mainstream,” September 29, 2002, (<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/09/29/spain.threat/index.html>).

⁵⁷ According to Douglass and Joseba Zulaika, 247.

In terms of individual rights, the Spanish justice system has treated ETA members much more harshly than other political and economic dissidents. For example, someone convicted of illegal trade-union activity may be incarcerated for a few months, while a member of ETA may be sentenced for several years. Moreover, police have frequently tortured members of ETA while seldom doing likewise to other lawbreakers.⁵⁸ The prison conditions for Basques are deplorable in that the standard of hygiene is low; the quality of food is very poor; there is a shortage of medical attention; and family visits are rare.⁵⁹ In the new millennium, approximately 500 prisoners are incarcerated in prisons throughout Spain, usually located hundreds of miles away from their families.⁶⁰ The government believes that spreading Basque prisoners across Spain prevents them from collaborating with one another behind bars.⁶¹

Since 1996, when Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar's Popular Party took office, the central government has taken a hard-line stance against terrorism.⁶² ETA views the Popular Party as fascist and heir to Franco's Dictatorship.⁶³ In September 1998, encouraged by the Good Friday peace accord in Northern Ireland, ETA called a unilateral and indefinite cease-fire. But fourteen months later ETA announced an end to the ceasefire in a Basque newspaper, blaming lack of progress in talks with the Spanish government.⁶⁴ Following the World Trade Center attacks in New York on September

⁵⁸ Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, *A Rebellious People: Basques, Protests, and Politics*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 196.

⁵⁹ Astrain, 94-100.

⁶⁰ BBC News, "Basques on both sides of the border," by Arlene Gregorius, 27 October 2000 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/crossing_continents/988994.stm).

⁶¹ Goodman, "Basque Question: Spain's Pressing Problem."

⁶² Goodman, "Basque Question Spain's Pressing Problem."

⁶³ BBC News, "ETA: Key Events," 22 November 2000, (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/545452.stm>).

⁶⁴ BBC News, "ETA: Key Events," 22 November 2000, (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/545452.stm>).

11, 2001, the Popular Party began clamping down on all terrorist activity inside Spain. Aznar claimed that for Spain there was no higher priority other than defeating terrorism, and that Spanish society would not “be drawn into any crisis by the defiance of a few fanatics.”⁶⁵

Cooperation to Limit Conflict: Presence of Causal Variables

Militant Basques first took refuge inside France in July of 1961.⁶⁶ By 1984 there were approximately eight hundred Basque refugees seeking refuge inside France. According to French police, it was estimated that one out of every three of these refugees was an active member of ETA, and only one in every five was employed, contributing ten percent of his or her salary to the terrorist organization.⁶⁷ During the Franco era the French state had an agreement with ETA that as long as Basque violence was not transplanted into France then the government would look the other way.⁶⁸ The implied agreement was that the French government would provide a safe zone for ETA refugees as long as they neither practiced violence within its borders nor encouraged it among the French Basque movement.⁶⁹ However, going all the way back to the early 1960’s ETA had integrated the French Basques into the organization at various levels of responsibility.⁷⁰ Scholars speculate that the reason France provided sanctuary for the Basques was because Spain happened to be an authoritarian state. As Clark points out, “there was little love lost in this era between the French government and the Spanish

⁶⁵ Reuters, “Spain rules out Basque referendum,” September 30, 2002, (<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/09/30/basque.aznar.reut/index.html>).

⁶⁶ James E. Jacob, *Hills of Conflict*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994), 284.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

government of Franco.”⁷¹ Another factor contributing to the French anti-Spanish attitude had to do with Spain allowing members of the pro-Nazi Vichy government to take refuge inside its borders following World War II. Hence, for the French the Basque refugees were not terrorists but rather individuals without any political rights inside an authoritarian state.⁷²

Beginning in early 1975, the Basque refugee community in France became the target of a series of attacks by various anti-ETA groups. These attacks were carried out by mercenaries and contract killers operating under a number of different names. Throughout the years 1983-1987 an anti-terrorist Liberation Group, known as GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberacion), killed suspected ETA members.⁷³ GAL killed a total of twenty-seven ETA members on French soil. One French newspaper reported it was “one of the most beautiful operations ever mounted by the secret services of a European country against a neighboring country, since the end of the Second World War.”⁷⁴ It appeared as though the Spanish state had sponsored the use of violence in France as leverage to get the French government to back off its decision to supply ETA’s northern sanctuary.⁷⁵ Eventually, GAL’s attacks inside France began to exert a serious pressure on the French government to come to some diplomatic settlement with Spain in order to end the escalation of violence.⁷⁶ Already by 1978 there were clear signs that the purpose of the Spanish state-sponsored violence to bring pressure on the French government was succeeding. The first sign of French cooperation came when President

⁷¹ Ibid., 286.

⁷² Interview with Dr. Fernando de Meer, Professor of Contemporary Spanish and Basque History. University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain. September 25, 2002.

⁷³ Sussman, “ETA: Feared Separatist Group.”

⁷⁴ Quoted in Jacob, *Hills of Conflict*, 296.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 326.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 297.

Valery Giscard d'Estaing announced that the Basques would no longer be eligible for refugee status inside France. The new policy took effect after a meeting of French and Spanish ministers in January 1979, followed by a French government policy of detention and forced relocation of refugees.⁷⁷ Hence, by removing the refugees, France, put an end to Basque insurgent camps inside its borders and implemented one of the four policy variables illustrated in the model.

Moreover, over time the French government realized that ETA had been the active force behind the rise of Basque nationalism in France since its members first sought refuge in the French Basque Country. In 1973 a French Basque militant group, Iparretarrak or IK for short, arose as a result of ETA's presence inside France. Some observers believed that ETA had violated the explicit conditions of its safe haven by encouraging a violent Basque movement among the French Basques.⁷⁸ By the mid-1980s there was acceleration in the cycle of violence between the French government and IK. Spanish Basque refugees, and more importantly ETA, blamed the loss of their northern sanctuary on IK violence, which prompted the French government to take action against all separatist violence.

However, the French refused to change their traditional extradition policy even after the election of Socialist president Francois Mitterand in 1981. During the Franco regime, France refused to extradite any political refugees to Spain because of the practice of police torture of dissidents. While there was no proof, the leaders of democratic Spain, however, claimed that its new Constitution prohibited the use of police torture.⁷⁹ The refusal of the Socialist government to extradite militant refugees to Spain exacerbated the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 291.

⁷⁸ Jacob, *Hills of Conflict*, 326.

⁷⁹ Astrain, 101-102.

already tense relations between the two governments and was the reason behind the ongoing use of anti-ETA violence in France.⁸⁰ France stuck to its extradition policy even after Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist Worker's Party won the Spanish parliamentary election thereby offering "enough fraternal Socialist leverage on Mitterand to convince him to abandon the historic practice of asylum."⁸¹ In January 1984, a few weeks after a meeting between Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez and French President Mitterrand, the French ceased granting political refugee status and began to capture ETA militants.⁸² It seemed that at the time French police were alarmed by an emerging pattern of random assassinations on the part of GAL, which was no longer targeting ETA, but accidentally killing French citizens and Spanish Basque refugees.⁸³ Some argue that because of the escalation of violence on French soil and because of the perception that there was a link between ETA and IK, France began to rethink its long-standing policy of extradition and begin to extradite ETA militants to Spain in the mid-1980s.⁸⁴

From the start the cooperation between the French and Spanish governments in combating ETA violence was not very smooth because extraditions were slow and so were the judicial processes involving the exchange of government documents.⁸⁵ Eventually the election of a conservative parliamentary majority in 1986 resulted in the adoption of a new "absolute urgency" expulsion process, which gave the government the means to quickly expel the refugees from French territory, either to Spain or to a third country.⁸⁶ Expulsions, unlike extraditions, do not involve tribunals and can take the

⁸⁰ Jacob., 303.

⁸¹ Ibid, 293-294.

⁸² Ibid, 298.

⁸³ Ibid, 301.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 283.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 316.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 316.

simple form of “handing over of refugees by the French police to the Spanish, without any other formalities and without any judicial involvement.”⁸⁷ Having succeeded in forcing the expulsion of refugees, and in forcing French action against ETA’s northern sanctuary, GAL’s purpose was fulfilled and it simply disappeared.⁸⁸

Therefore, it is not difficult to conclude that the GAL, or the anti-ETA violence, had a lot to do with pressuring France to cut-off its support of the Basque insurgents, thereby forcing the French government to adopt all of the measures outlined in the model. Although Spain did not threaten war against France, as Turkey has done against Syria to force it to turn over Kurdish militants, the support of groups like GAL demonstrates a commitment on the part of the Spanish government to support armed attacks to break down the French-Basque alliance. One might ask why Spain did not mobilize its troops against France in order to enforce more immediate cooperation, as Turkey had done with Syria in 1998? While relations were always tense, France never denied the existence of Basque refugee camps inside its borders, as Syria has done with the Kurdish camps.

Of course, the question also remains as to why the French did not respond militarily against the armed attacks inside its borders and instead opted for cooperation? There are probably four reasons for this. First, while there were speculations that the attacks on the Basque refugees inside France were backed by Spain, there was no overt support linking the Spanish government to groups like GAL. Second, although the attacks were launched within the borders of France, they were not intentionally committed against the French state or its citizens but rather against the Spanish Basque militants. Third, France probably chose to work with rather than against the Spanish state

⁸⁷ Astrain, 103.

⁸⁸ Jacob, 326.

in response to the growing French Basque movement. Since France suspected that its own French Basque insurgency was the result of having ETA refugees inside its borders, it probably felt that the best way to deal with the problem was to put an end to all Basque militancy. By turning over Spanish Basque refugees and cutting the link between ETA and IK, the French government was able to send a message to the French Basque militants that they were willing to work with the Spanish government to combat the problem. Finally, it may be that France chose cooperation instead of war because the authoritarian Spanish government of the 1960's and 1970's had transformed itself into a stable democracy fit for collaboration by the 1980's and 1990's.⁸⁹ Since Spain had also joined NATO and become a member of the EU, like France, the two states had become formal allies.⁹⁰ A war between two allies would not only have been unpopular among other European neighbors, but it also would have been counterproductive. After the United States, France has been the second largest foreign investor in Spain.⁹¹

Thus, the French and Spanish governments by agreeing to work with rather than against each other have successfully limited the Basque conflict to a domestic problem inside Spain. The September 11, 2001 tragedy in the United States has motivated the Spanish and French governments to work even harder to combat ETA or Basque separatist violence.⁹² As recently as September 2002, the successful cooperative efforts of the Spanish and French governments to limit the Basque conflict to a domestic problem continues as officials in France arrested two suspected senior members of ETA

⁸⁹ Interview with Dr. Claude Journes, Professor of Political Science, University of Lyon. Lyon, France. November 4, 2002.

⁹⁰ Interview with Dr. Claude Journes, November 4, 2002. Interview with Jesus Loza Aguirre and Isabel Celaa Dieguez, Basque Parliament, Vitoria, Spain. September 30, 2002.

⁹¹ Jacob, 306.

⁹² Interview with Jesus Loza Aguirre and Isabel Celaa Dieguez, September 30, 2002.

in charge of the commandos who carry out attacks on Spain.⁹³ The road ahead may still be a long one as it is unlikely that the Spanish government would be willing to grant the Basque people a right to self-determination, for fear it may destroy the democratic unity of Spain. However, it is unlikely that the radical Basque groups like ETA would be willing to back down from the violence short of achieving independence for Euskadi. While the future may be uncertain, the Franco-Spanish cooperation demonstrates, the Basque case is likely to remain a domestic problem inside Spain, instead of spreading outside its borders to become an international ethnic conflict involving other European countries as witnessed in the Balkans throughout much of the 1990's.

Turkish-Syrian Relations on the Kurdish Conflict

Kurdish History

The Kurds have inhabited the territories under control of the contemporary countries of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria since the time of Persian and Ottoman Empires. At the end of World War I with the signing of the Sèvres Treaty at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1920, the European allies promised the Kurds their own state for the first time in the region east of the Euphrates and north of the border frontier between Turkey and Syria.⁹⁴ However, this all changed under the Treaty of Lausanne following Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's (the founder of modern Turkey) fight against the European powers to create an independent Turkey.⁹⁵ The establishment of modern Turkey in 1923 ended Kurdish hopes for an independent state. In order to disassociate the new republic from its

⁹³ CNN report, "ETA promises fight in 'new era'," September 26, 2002, (<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/09/26/spain.eta/index.html>).

⁹⁴ Graham E. Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 2, (1993): 109. Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997): 68.

⁹⁵ Fuller, "Turkey's Restive Kurds: The Challenge of Multiethnicity." In Leonard Binder, Ed. *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics in the Middle East*. Florida: University Press of Florida, 1999.: 226.

predecessor, the Islamic Ottoman Empire, and to transform the state from a traditional society into a modern one, civic-nationalism became the basis for nation building.⁹⁶ At first the Turkish government tried to incorporate all ethnic groups under a civic and territorially determined national identity using aggressive assimilationist policies including a ban on the use of Kurdish language in schools, on radio and television, and even social contexts.⁹⁷ Moreover, Kurdish books, music, children's names, as well as Kurdish names for certain geographical locations were also forbidden, with violations carrying a punishment of up to five years in jail.⁹⁸ For those whose native language happens to be Kurdish, there has been pressure to learn Turkish in order to be educated and become a part of the greater society. Of course, for the many Kurds who have not gained proficiency in Turkish, these socio-economic opportunities have been limited, thereby further exacerbating the disadvantages they have felt under the Turkish state.⁹⁹

The eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey have had the highest unemployment (well above the national average), high illiteracy, significant lack of hospitals and educational facilities; and electricity, water, and roads are almost do not exist.¹⁰⁰ Kurds are able to move up socio-economically and rise to positions of power only if they deny their Kurdish heritage and accept Turkish identity.¹⁰¹ . In Iraq Kurds had greater cultural rights because they were allowed to use their Kurdish language.

⁹⁶ Kirisci and Winrow, 94.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁹⁸ Ahmet Icduygu,, and David Romano, and Ibrahim Sirkeci. "The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. vol. 22, no. 6 (November 1999): 1003. David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: the Kurds." *The World Today*. vol. 47, no. 5, (May 1991): 78-80.

⁹⁹ Icduygu, et al., 997, 1003.

¹⁰⁰ Gunter points out that according to CIA reports the eastern region received only 10 percent of state industrial investment and two percent of commercial investment (Michael E. Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey: A Political Dilemma*. Westview Press: San Francisco, 1990.): 125.

¹⁰¹ Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds": 111.

While the Turkish Kurds, had full rights only if they denied their Kurdish identity.¹⁰² Some Kurds have taken on a Turkish identity to overcome political discrimination. In fact, one-third of Turkey's national parliament is made up of Kurds. However, while there have been many pro-Kurdish parties in Turkey, each has either been banned, had their members imprisoned, or at a minimum have been publicly criticized for advocating separatism. The Kurds, in response to the suppression of their own religious, traditional, and ethnic identity, attempted several unsuccessful revolts in 1925, 1930, and 1937-1938. To deal with these uprisings, the Turkish government used military repression, which was somewhat successful as there were no other revolts until 1980 with the emergence of the PKK.¹⁰³

The Kurdish Conflict

The violent Kurdish separatist movement in Turkey began with the formation of the PKK, a Marxist Worker's Party, created by its leader Abudullah Ocalan (also known as "Apo"). The PKK grew out of the Kurdish nationalist movement and the Marxist movement that formed in the 1960s. The PKK operates like a communist party: a chairman; leadership council, equivalent to a politburo; a central executive committee; and various bureaus under the central executive committee. Also, the PKK is said to finance its operations from donations, protection money, taxation, small business investments, kidnapping, extortion, arms trafficking, robberies and narcotics.¹⁰⁴

According to an U.S. Department of State Report in 1995, there were approximately

¹⁰² Fuller, "Turkey's Restive Kurds: The Challenge of Mutiethnicity": 227

¹⁰³ Aram Nigogosian. "Turkey's Kurdish Problem: Recent Trends," in Robert Olson, Ed., *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996): 39. Robert Olson. "Turkish and Syrian Relations since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem" in Ferhard Ibrahim and Gulistan Gurbey, Ed., *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 120.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 54-57.

ten to fifteen thousand full-time PKK guerrillas with five to six thousand within Turkey.¹⁰⁵

Since 1983 the PKK has launched guerilla attacks in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. The PKK has also threatened to launch suicide attacks in cities where the Turkish government generates most of its support in its ongoing war against the Kurdish insurgents.¹⁰⁶ The PKK also uses European territory to recruit militants. There are over 400,000 Kurds now living in West Germany, 60,000 in France, 10,000 in Sweden, and more in Belgium, Britain, Netherlands, and Italy.¹⁰⁷ Most Kurds do not support the PKK's militant activities, though they may sympathize with its cause.¹⁰⁸ The PKK had once before been crushed by the Turkish military back in 1980 when it had first come into power; however, under the leadership of Ocalan with its headquarters in Damascus, it made a comeback.¹⁰⁹ Unlike the Iraqi Kurdish movements, such as KDP (Democratic Party of Kurdistan) and PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), which advocate autonomy, the PKK wants complete independence for the Kurds in Turkey. In Iraq, the PUK of Jalal Talabani, and the KDP of Masud Barzani have also led the Kurdish movement there, engaging in guerrilla warfare against Saddam Hussein's regime. Part of the reason that they strive for complete separation as opposed to autonomy within Turkey

¹⁰⁵ Philip Robins. "More Apparent Than real? The Impact of the Kurdish Issue on Euro-Turkish Relations" in Robert Olson, Ed., *The Kurdish nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996): 116.

¹⁰⁶ Michael E. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 1997: 53.

¹⁰⁷ Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey: A Political Dilemma* *The Kurds in Turkey: A Political Dilemma* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990): 103.

¹⁰⁸ Fuller, "Turkey's Restive Kurds: The Challenge of Multiethnicity": 228.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

has to do with the PKK's vision of uniting all Kurds, including those in Iran, Iraq, and Syria under a greater Kurdistan.¹¹⁰

The Turkish state is opposed to Kurdish independence and autonomy, as well as other Kurdish-related freedoms within Turkey. The fear is that if cultural and social freedoms are allowed, then the PKK will demand autonomy or federation, and eventually an independent Kurdish state.¹¹¹ Along these lines the military has been engaged in a struggle to crush the Kurdish separatist movement in the southeast region of Turkey.¹¹²

The Iraqi Kurdish insurgent groups are not united with the PKK or other Turkish Kurdish guerrilla organizations. There have been occasions where both Talabani and Barzani signed agreements with Ocalan to work together for the Kurdish cause, but these accords did not last very long. The PUK and the KDP object to the PKK's use of violence against women and children.¹¹³ The KDP and PUK have formed alliances creating the Iraqi Kurdistan Front (IKF) seeking the aid and protection of Turkey and Western powers in their fight against Saddam Hussein.¹¹⁴ In fact, the Turkish government has worked along with the Iraqi Kurdish authorities to stop the infiltration of the Turkish Kurdish guerrilla groups into Turkey. The Turks promised to defend the Iraqi Kurds against Saddam Hussein in return for allowing the Turkish military to destroy the PKK infrastructure and personnel in that area.¹¹⁵ Turkey has encouraged a

¹¹⁰ Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds": 115.

¹¹¹ Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*: 80.

¹¹² Fuller, 115.

¹¹³ Michael Gunter. "Kurdish Infighting: The PKK-KDP Conflict" in Robert Olson, Ed., *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East* (Kentucky: The University press of Kentucky, 1996): 50-51.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹¹⁵ Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds": 113, 116.

compromise between Barzani and Talabani in order to establish a “temporary administrative mechanism that would effectively deny the PKK a stronghold.”¹¹⁶

The Kurdish issue did not gain international attention until 1991 during the Gulf War, when over half a million Iraqi Kurds crossed the border into Turkey to escape Saddam Hussein’s persecution. After the war the Western powers created Operation Provide Comfort, composed of U.S., French, and British aircraft as well as Turkish ground troops, to provide Kurdish refugees with food and shelter.¹¹⁷ The influx of Iraqi refugees into Turkey further complicated the already tense situation there. Some Turkish leaders fear that Operation Provide Comfort has been making it possible for the Kurds to establish a Kurdish state.¹¹⁸ The international community, responding to Hussein’s massacre of Iraqi Kurds, has pressured Turkey to find a solution in dealing with the plight of the Kurdish people inside its own borders. Since the end of the Gulf War, Turkey has spent approximately six to eight billion dollars (U.S.) a year in its fight against the Kurdish insurgency.¹¹⁹ In a 15- year (1983-1998) period of fighting between the PKK and the Turkish military approximately 40,000 people were killed in Turkey.¹²⁰

The 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis: Absence of Causal Variables

Until recently Syria has been the staunchest ally of the Kurdish insurgents in Turkey, supporting the PKK with arms, military training and sanctuary.¹²¹ Syria has also

¹¹⁶ Aykan, Mahmut Bali. “The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View” *Middle East Policy*. vol. 6, no. 4, (June 1999): 179.

¹¹⁷ Fuller, “Turkey’s Restive Kurds: The Challenge of Multiethnicity”: 230.

¹¹⁸ Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, 161.

¹¹⁹ Robert Olson, “Turkish and Syrian Relations since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem” In Ferhard Ibrahim and Gulistan Gurbey, Eds. *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*. St. Martin’s Press: New York, 2000: 134.

¹²⁰ Kevin McKiernan. “Turkey’s War on the Kurds,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (March/April 1999): 26, 29.

¹²¹ Bradshaw, “After the Gulf War: the Kurds”: 79. Gunter, “The Kurds in Turkey: A Political Dilemma”: 98.

allowed the PKK leader to take haven inside its borders. Moreover, Syrian intelligence has provided money and other materials to the PKK. Syria has allowed the PKK to hold its meetings, conferences, and five of its congresses at various times inside its borders.¹²² In addition, the Syrian government has permitted the PKK to set up its military camps and training centers in the Bekaa Valley, as well as providing the organization with full access to its arsenal near the Turkish border.¹²³

Syria's decision to align with the PKK can be boiled down to three factors: the dispute resulting from the annexation of Hatay (Alexandretta), the South Anatolia Project, and the Turkish-Israeli military alliance. First, Syria has been unsettled by Turkey's annexation of a northeastern province Hatay since 1939 and refuses to recognize it as a part of the Turkish Republic. The Hatay province used to be a part of Syria and its sovereignty still remains a "contentious issue between Turkey and Syria and one for the sore spots in their relationship."¹²⁴ Hatay is dominated by the Sunni and Turkish populations, which have economically marginalized the Alawite Arabs (the same ethnic group as the former Syrian President Asad).¹²⁵ The Syrian government has used its support of the PKK to gain leverage in its dispute with Turkey regarding Hatay.¹²⁶

The second factor, the South Anatolia Project, otherwise known as GAP (Güney Anadolu Projesi), refers to the construction of 21 dams and 19 hydroelectric power plants along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. The dams and hydroelectric power plants with 1,000 kilometers of irrigation channels is likely to change the socioeconomic status of the

¹²² Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*: 93.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹²⁴ Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy Toward Syria, Iran, Russia and Iraq Since the Gulf War," In Robert Olson, Ed. *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996): 90.

¹²⁵ Robert Olson. *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia, 1991-2000*. (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publisher's Inc., 2001): 106.

¹²⁶ Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: the Kurds": 79.

nine underdeveloped Kurdish provinces in Turkey's eastern and southeastern regions.¹²⁷ The Turkish government controls the water from the Euphrates and Tigris, which contributes to the development of southeast Turkey, and areas of Syria and Iraq.¹²⁸ The GAP is to provide Turkey with approximately 80 percent more power generation, thereby meeting the country's growing energy needs.¹²⁹ However, the concern is that the lack of industry in the eastern and southeastern regions might cause much of the generated electricity to be channeled toward the more industrialized and western parts of the country.¹³⁰ Once completed, the project is also likely to reduce an estimated 50 percent of the water flow causing shortages for Syria as well as Iraq in the coming years. Both Iraq and Syria have pressured the Turkish government to sign an international agreement to secure a steady flow of water from these rivers.¹³¹ Turkey perceives Iraqi and Syrian demands as an effort to impede Turkish sovereignty over the use of a natural resource that is to satisfy the needs of all those living along the banks of the river.¹³² For as long as Turkey has resisted an international water sharing arrangement with the other two countries, Syria and Iraq have continually supported the Kurdish insurgents in an attempt to disrupt the success of the project.

Third, Syria also objects to the Turkish-Israeli "Military Training and Cooperation Agreement," which was signed between February and August 1996. The alliance includes joint air and naval exercises, access to ports, opportunities for Israeli forces to train in the Anatolian plateau as well as cooperation in the fight against

¹²⁷ Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000): 137.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Henri J. Barkey, and Graham E. Fuller. *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998): 189.

¹³¹ Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of 1998: A Turkish View": 175.

¹³² Kramer, 138.

terrorism.¹³³ The agreement also calls for the exchange of Turkish and Israeli aircraft and military personnel.¹³⁴ This military alliance places Syria in a strenuous position, as it must deal with Israel in the Golan Heights and south Lebanon in the ongoing fight for Palestinian statehood, as well as Turkey in the north to combat the PKK.¹³⁵

In fall 1998 Ankara and Damascus eventually reached an agreement in which Syria identified the PKK as a terrorist organization. For years Turkey wanted the Syrian government to adopt measures identical to the ones outlined in this paper. The Turkish government demanded that Syria: expel Ocalan from Syria; remove the PKK camps and arrest all active militants in Syria; stop arming and providing financial and logistical support to the PKK; prevent the PKK from using Syrian territory for commercial or propaganda purposes; and cooperate with Turkey to combat the PKK.¹³⁶ However, in 1998 the Turkish government gave Syria an ultimatum indicating that it would gradually escalate the crisis between the two countries until Damascus implemented Ankara's policy measures. Turkey mobilized massive troops along its Syrian border to put pressure on Syria to cease its support of the PKK. Syria responded by moving its troops to the border and announced that it would be willing to negotiate if Turkey broke its alliance with Israel.¹³⁷ On October 20 Ocalan was expelled from Damascus, and in November 1998, he was arrested in Rome. However, since he was facing the death penalty in Turkey for the killings of tens of thousands of innocent Turks and Kurds, Italy

¹³³ Alain Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Relations and Their Impact on the Middle East," *Middle East* vol. 52, no. 2, (Spring 1998): 190.

¹³⁴ Robert Olson, "Turkish and Syrian Relations since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem" In Ferhard Ibrahim and Gulistan Gurbey, Eds. *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 2000: 134.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹³⁶ Aykan, 174.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

declined to extradite him.¹³⁸ After he was released from Italian custody, the Turkish special operations forces finally captured Ocalan on February 13, 1998 in Nairobi, Kenya.¹³⁹

Scholars speculate there are several reasons why Turkey and Syria did not engage in war and eventually signed an agreement of cooperation. In 1998 when the two countries came very close to the brink it is possible that Turkey did not strike Syria because the Turkish government knew the attack would have had a negative impact on its relations with the rest of the Arab world. Iraq, Lebanon, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan (to some extent) all promised to support their, Arab ally, Syria, if Turkey were to attack.¹⁴⁰ Turkey may also have been reluctant to act as a result of the growing political influence of the KPE (Kurdish Parliament in Exile) in Europe. Many European citizens have championed the Kurdish cause and have used it as a leverage against Turkey's desire for admission to the European Union. The 1998 tensions did not culminate in war because Syria gave up Ocalan and opted for cooperation in order not to have another war, this time on its northern border. However, the future of war between Turkey and its neighbors over the Kurdish issue remains uncertain as long as these countries continue to provide support for the insurgents in their fight against the Turkish government. The Turkish state strives to settle the Kurdish problem so that its neighboring rivals like Syria, Iran, and Iraq cannot use the PKK card in regional politics.¹⁴¹ Turkey must implement and enforce the four policies of cooperation in order to hold neighboring governments accountable for aligning with the Kurdish insurgents attempting to terrorize and do harm

¹³⁸ McKiernan "Turkey's War on the Kurds," 36.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Olson, *Turkey's Relations With Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000*: 112.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 120.

on the Turkish state as well as the rest of the region. If the Turkish government wants to guarantee its future entrance into the EU, then it will have to follow the lessons learned by member states like Spain and France in limiting the spread of ethnic conflict.

However, prior Turkish threats of retaliation against any regional state supporting the Kurdish insurgents, raises the potential for interstate war as the PKK continues to seek the support of Iran, Iraq, and Syria against Turkey. All four of the countries, which share the Kurdish population, have had hostile relations with one another in a region that already has a reputation for being volatile. A complete separation of the Kurdish region does not appear to be the best solution for the region as a whole. This is primarily because the creation of a Kurdish state would create new problems for Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.¹⁴² Witnessing the independence of the Kurds in any one country, the Kurdish minorities in each of the other three would attempt to secede as well. The other possibility is that the new Kurdish state might try to unite the Kurds and their territories located inside the other three countries. This would divide the region, result in renewed violence and possibly lead to interstate war.¹⁴³

In order for the Kurdish issue to be resolved, all four states—Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria—will have to work together to deal with the problem. The cooperation of all the countries, that is an alliance between the four states as opposed to an alliance between the insurgents and the states, is required for avoiding the redrawing of borders and for there to be regional peace. This appears to be the most viable solution based on the successful cooperation of the Spanish and French governments in keeping the Basque conflict limited to a domestic problem inside Spain. Thus, in the case of the Kurds, if

¹⁴² Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*: 205.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq stop the Kurdish insurgents in neighboring countries from launching cross-border attacks into each others' territories they may successfully avert a future conflict between any of these four countries as well as in the rest of the region.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of two contrasting cases, this paper has attempted to present a specific argument on how states can cooperate to limit the spread of ethnic conflict. The nearly twenty-year cooperation between the French and Spanish governments to successfully limit the Basque conflict to a domestic problem inside Spain gives credibility to the four policy measures and the argument. In addition, the escalation of the Kurdish conflict to the brink of Turkish-Syrian war in the absence of the causal variables further strengthens the theory. Of course, some might argue that a theory built on two cases alone is not sufficient enough to generalize to other cases. The goal of this paper has not been to generate theory that can be passed on as absolute truth. Rather the objective here has only been to utilize case analysis to develop a model that can be tested in future studies and used as a guide for future EU member states.

For some it might seem difficult to imagine that a long-standing solid institution like the EU could ever let a domestic conflict escalate to a level involving inter-state tensions or even war. All EU member states are industrialized democracies highly unlikely to engage in hostile relations with one another. All have stable institutions in place to address any ethnic disparities and to deal with tensions when they arise. However, a few states like the United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Greece still face communal tensions within and outside their borders. Moreover, beginning in 2004 ten new countries—Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta,

Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia—are expected to join the EU once they have met the European Council’s 1993 Copenhagen criteria for accession.¹⁴⁴ Each state is expected to demonstrate the stability of its institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.¹⁴⁵ By 2007 Bulgaria and Romania are also expected to be ready for membership. Most of these countries are relatively new democracies, which have struggled with ethnic issues in the past. Hence, it seems timely to have a model of cooperation for these new countries, which might still be forced to deal with ethnic disputes.

In the case of Turkish membership to the EU, the model becomes even more relevant because as of December 2002, the regional bloc has only formally approved a 2004 review date for Turkey’s candidacy.¹⁴⁶ The European Union has indicated that, “accession negotiations with Turkey cannot begin before it fulfills the political criteria for EU membership concerning democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.”¹⁴⁷ In August 2002, the Turkish government, anticipating a 2004 EU invitation for negotiations, adopted a series of democratic reforms. These measures included abolishing the death penalty, except in cases of war, and easing a ban on Kurdish language use in education and media. In an effort to lobby the international organization for a date at which talks on membership could begin, a few days before the Copenhagen summit of the EU in December 2002, the recently elected Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party lifted the 15 year-old state of emergency in the Kurdish

¹⁴⁴ Source www.europa.edu.int/comm/enlargement/faq/.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ CNN report, Gaven Morris, “Summit Row Over EU Turkey Rebuff,” December 13, 2002 (<http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/12/13/eu.summit.edu/index.html>).

¹⁴⁷ Source www.europa.edu.int/comm/enlargement/faq/faq2.htm.

region.¹⁴⁸ Since the December 2002 Copenhagen summit ended with only a 2004 review date for Turkish membership, it appears as though Turkey must do more to convince the EU that it is ready to begin negotiations on accession.

One of the ways Turkey can do this is to work together with its neighbors to continue to contain the Kurdish conflict. Thus far the efforts of the Turkish and Syrian governments to de-escalate the Kurdish conflict appears to be on the right track, as relations between the two countries have been relatively smooth compared to previous years. While Turkey continues to work with the Syrian government, it must also adopt similar cooperative measures with the Iranian and Iraqi states, which not only share the Kurdish population but have been known to harbor PKK militants. Of course with the threat of a US war on Iraq looming this goal might not be easy to achieve. Turkey has been an important ally to the United States, as it sits strategically between the Balkans, the former Soviet republics, and the Middle East. The United States uses the Incirlik military base in the southern part of Turkey to carry out intelligence operations and monitoring flights over northern Iraq to patrol violators of the “no fly” zone by Saddam Hussein’s air force.¹⁴⁹ If a war breaks out, the Kurdish conflict inside Turkey may begin to flare up as refugees from northern Iraq once again cross into Turkish territory to escape the violence. The Turkish government has indicated that in the case of war if the Kurds in northern Iraq gain independence with Saddam Hussein’s removal, then they will resort to military force in order to prevent the creation of greater Kurdistan. The outcome is difficult to predict since at the writing of this paper the ongoing tensions over Iraqi

¹⁴⁸ Amberin Zaman, “Turkey Lifts 15-Year-Old Emergency Rule in Kurdish Region,” *Palestine Chronicle*, December 1, 2002, (<http://palestinechronicle.com>). BBC News, Nick Thorpe, “Kurds Unmoved by Turkish Pledge,” 22 November, 2002, (<http://bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2501395.stm>).

¹⁴⁹ McKiernan, “Turkey’s War on the Kurds”: 34.

disarmament have not been resolved. Therefore, now more than ever there is an urgent need to conduct studies on preventing the spread of ethnic conflict so that they do not lead to regional instability and eventually become an international problem.

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