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Contested Identities and Language Education: Inculcating Nationalist Ideologies In the Basque Region

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CONTESTED IDENTITIES AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION: INCULCATING
NATIONALIST IDEOLOGIES IN THE BASQUE REGION

by

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DEDICATION

To Harriette Carter Palmer, a woman whose dedication to so many children over the years – myself included – through the ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars has inspired me and helped me realize my passion for education.

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I want to acknowledge the dedicated support of my advisor, Dr. Caroline Nagel, who put up with me and guided me to this point over the past two years. Without her, none of my work would be worth anything. Dr. Amy Mills must be acknowledged for being a bedrock of support and advice during my time at Carolina. She should be an example to professors everywhere. Also, my committee members, Dr. Kara Brown and Dr. Kirstin Dow, for serving and providing such constructive feedback.

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ABSTRACT

Nationalist sentiment has a long history in the Basque regions of northern Spain. Culturally separate from the dominant Castilian society, separatists have for many years advocated for an independent Basque state. Following democratic reforms under the Constitution of 1978, regional cultures and languages were explicitly recognized and protected in Spain. This allowed for the current set of language laws in the Autonomous Community of País Vasco in which Castilian Spanish and the Basque language of Euskara are held in equal status and recognition. Furthermore, Euskara has been recognized as a defining characteristic of Basque identity. The regional government has instituted a three-track education system in which students choose to be taught in varying ratios of Euskara and Castilian. This work explores ideas about language education and usage as it relates to the development of national identity in young people in the city of Bilbao. It shows that the everyday choices made about language in the region are complicated and not merely reflections of nationalist ideology. There are often pragmatic choices made reflecting economic realities or simple daily convenience. These basic trends though are further complicated by normal adolescent social negotiations. The language of Euskara is still an important identifier for individuals in the region, but there are now many perceived reasons for achieving fluency in it other than to make a political or cultural statement. These results illustrate a complicated picture of nationalism in the region and raise questions about its shifting focus and importance in future generations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The idea of “Europe” today is often one of states operating together in relative harmony and setting a collective standard for the model of a socially democratic society. This image is especially fostered under the auspices of the European Union. The EU has been undergoing an integration process for more than half a century, tying states together through economic interdependence, legal directives, and open internal borders. However, the image that is presented by European leaders – that of a unified, respectful community operating in harmony and peace – glosses over many of the underlying tensions found in this system. The EU has arguably done a remarkable job at completing its original objective in preventing continental war between states through economic integration. However, this integration and lack of war has not necessarily translated into tamping down the nationalist sentiments that so readily contributed to conflict in the past. It has rather coincided with the development of multiple competing conversations about citizenship and identity in Europe today. There are conversations still about competing national identities at the state as well as the sub-state levels. In addition, there is discussion about the development and role of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, discourses of tolerance, and cultural assimilation in European societies.

These discussions about identity are often tied in with those about language policy and public usage. These are not just conversations that surround debates about immigrant

populations; rather, they often also involve “traditional” European minority groups. Even in the European Union – which has 23 official and working languages – there are a plethora of regional minority languages which are supposedly protected by EU directive. These minority languages are oftentimes perceived as being integral to regional, sub-state identities that are separate from those propounded by the state government or the EU offices in Brussels. This study seeks to examine these issues – the role and changing nature of nationalism and national identity in Europe and the impact of specific language policies – through a very specific case in the Basque region of northern Spain. Sited in the Autonomous Community of País Vasco, it considers the relationship between language education and daily language usage among young people and their developing senses of identity.

País Vasco serves as a useful site for this study because there is a long history of nationalist sentiment in the Basque regions. Culturally separate from the dominant Castilian society with their own distinct regional language, separatists have for many years advocated for an independent Basque state. Through the centuries the region has exercised varying levels of autonomy until the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 which resulted in the rise of Francisco Franco, the centralization of power in Madrid, and the attempted suppression of regional identities. Following democratic reforms under the Constitution of 1978, regional cultures and languages were explicitly recognized and protected in Spain. This allowed for the current set of language laws in the Autonomous Community of País Vasco in which Castilian Spanish and the Basque language of Euskara are held in equal status and recognition. Throughout all of this Euskara has come to be recognized as the most common marker of Basque identity. With wide-ranging

autonomy granted to it from the central government in Madrid, a nationalist dominated regional government instituted a three-track education system based on instruction in varying ratios of Euskara and Castilian. This project explores the relationship between language education and the development of national identity in Basque young people in the city of Bilbao, Spain. It also ponders the role and meaning of this identity as these young people face the continued integration and increased globalization of the EU at the same time that there is substantial financial uncertainty in the region.

This project then is centered on three main questions. First, how are multiple national political projects reflected in language policy in País Vasco? Given that nationalist governments put these policies in place and have continued to revise them over time, it is important to understand the ways in which the ideologies underpinning various political movements might be seen in the policies which govern language, particularly in a school setting. Second, why do parents (and to a lesser extent young people) make certain school and language education choices? Are these reflective of nationalist sentiments or something else? Parents are legally entitled to decide which language model school their child enters. At the most basic level this would seem to be based on which language the child is most familiar or, in the face of nationalist rhetoric, the position a parent takes on Basque nationalism. However, there may be other and possibly more complex issues to consider. Third, how are young people's daily language choices and usages informed by the various political projects operating in País Vasco? In an officially bilingual society in which language usage can have a very political meaning, we can question whether actual daily usage reflects these political connotations or has different, possibly more pragmatic, meanings.

This project is organized in order to address these questions first at the theoretical and then at the empirical level. The first chapter of this work examines academic literature organized around three central themes. It first begins with a section discussing the origins of nationalism and the theoretical development of national identity. This first section also addresses current discussions about the role of nationalism, multiculturalism, and associated theories in Europe today. Acknowledging the role that language plays in the development of nationalist movements, the second section in this chapter examines the usage and role of language policies in society in general and in language education specifically. The last section examines ideas about youth populations, spaces, and identities as well as their political agency. Throughout this chapter I examine the competing interests that come from sub-state and state-centric national projects, as well as the competing projects of the European Union.

The second chapter presents project context and explains the methodological framework in which the research fieldwork was conducted. In it I explain the process for selecting informants and provide basic demographic information about them with special attention paid to explaining the subset of young people who made up the primary informant group. There is a brief discussion about the site city of Bilbao and why understanding its context in the region is important for understanding the study. The chapter ends by describing briefly the type of analysis done, explaining the terminology used throughout this project, and underscoring researcher positionality throughout the work.

The third chapter provides information necessary to understanding the historical setting and context for the current political situation in País Vasco. This chapter has two main

sections. The first describes the historical and political development of the Basque provinces of Spain, culminating with the creation and current status of País Vasco today. In doing so, it also traces the history of Basque nationalist movements and the varying levels of autonomy from the Spanish central state that have underpinned the Basque political system for centuries. In explaining these historical developments, I provide information that allows the reader to examine project analysis in historic context than just the past few decades specifically mentioned by most informants. The second section of this chapter builds on this by explaining the development and standardization of Euskara and the structure of the Basque education system today. This allows the reader to understand the complexities that arise when discussing the language itself, as well as to understand the school choices that parents and students face when beginning a child's education.

The fourth chapter discusses the data collected and provides some analysis of it. This analysis covers several main themes: school choice and the perception of each of the school models available to students; youth spaces, social interactions, and daily language negotiations; and understandings of political projects in País Vasco. Throughout this analysis I contend that while nationalist rhetoric and feelings do sometimes play roles in school and language choices, so too do pragmatic decisions such as desirability as an employee or acclimation to a multilingual region. I also discuss the ways in which various national projects become meaningful to young people, ranging from the regional Basque nationalists to the Spanish state to civic ideals pushed by the European Union. I end with a brief discussion about what this possibly means for the future of nationalist movements in País Vasco.

The fifth and final chapter of this project is a brief summation of prior information and concluding remarks on it. In particular, I posit questions about what exactly the case of the Basque region can tell us about nationalism and the development of national identity today. It also includes suggestions for future research to future flesh out these ideas.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

This project explores the relationship between language education and the development of national identity in youth populations. Three distinct yet related literary themes which need to be explored. Throughout this project, I seek broadly to explore how different political projects are incorporated into language policies in the Basque region, how different nation-building projects become meaningful to young people in the region, and how schools and other social spaces serve as sites in which nation-building projects and language policies come together for young people. These questions recognize that there are multi-scalar national projects competing at the state, sub-state, and European levels in Spain. Basque nationalists seek to impose their national identity through conscious and unconscious means just as Spanish nationalists centered in Madrid want to subvert the regional ideologies with their own symbols. At the same time there are European ideals at work which further complicate the issue. However, this work develops the idea that the development of national identity in the Basque region today is complex and internally negotiated by individuals. Rather than being imposed by elites, a variety of personal choices and societal pressures affect the way in which young people identify.

The following analysis draws of three bodies of literature: 1) nationalism and national identity, 2) language development and language education, and 3) youth development and spaces. In this order each of the succeeding sections builds on the previous ones and constructs the framework within which this project is based.

2.1: NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

This discussion starts with the idea of nationalism and how it has developed over time. Understanding this basic concept is important because it lays the groundwork on which things like national language policies are based. Nationalist rhetoric is employed in educational policies that are enacted in schools and thus conveyed to young people. In order to understand how those messages and national projects become meaningful to young people and the role spaces such as schools play in that process, the grounding provided by this literature is essential.

The terms nation, state, and nation-state are often confused in vernacular speech, but for this project must be understood as independent concepts. “The institution of the nation-state represents an amalgam of two entities: the state as a set of political institutions and the nation, conceived of as the political and cultural community of people” (Holton 1998). The state is territorial, a structural manifestation of power that operates as the governing authority within given boundaries. The nation, in contrast, is not government but rather a community of individuals who conceive themselves and/or are conceived by others conceived to be bound together by common cultural ties – be they language, ethnicity, religion, origins, destiny or otherwise – which can then be manifested as a group identity and political will. The concept of the nation-state is one in which these two ideas are melded together to signify a state apparatus constituted by and through a single united people – the nation – within it. Nationalism represents the ideological articulation of peoplehood and sovereignty as it rises out of and often acts in concert with these ideas. However bound up the terms may be though, they are not synonymous. This has become the dominant mode of political-territorial organization in

the modern world. The assumption of congruence between nation and state and the conflation of these terms masks the fact that the structural entity of the state may not be coterminous with the “community of people” upon which it seeks to impose its will and may in fact contain several such communities that are actively engaged in the process of self-constitution. Furthermore, even these “communities” are themselves actively constructed and are never pre-existing.

Nationalism has been defined as the “modern social and political formations that draw together feelings of belonging, solidarity and identification between national citizens and the territory imagined as their collective national homeland” (Sparke 2011). Nationalism can also be described as “(1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their identity as members of that nation and (2) the actions that the members of a nation take in seeking to achieve (or sustain) some form of political sovereignty” (Miscevic 2010). Lastly, Haas concisely defines it as “the convergence of territorial and political loyalty irrespective of competing foci of affiliation” (1986). These definitions of nationalism suggest, first, the ideological practices and discourses that construct and sustain one “national” identity over another suggests some claim to group sovereignty – they are people with similar origins and common destiny. Second, nationalism is inherently political and ideological. Third, nationalism is also directly tied to the idea and claims of territorial sovereignty.

The creation of a national identity

There are competing theories describing the historical development of national identity which have different implications for understanding the role of nationalism in current societies and how nationalist movements function within the framework provided

by a global system, the European Union, and Spain itself. These theories fall into two camps, one that views nationalism purely as a product of modernity and the other that traces nationalist sentiment to more ancient processes of identity, termed here primitive theories. Primitive theories are labeled as such not because they are necessarily less developed but rather because they rely on an understanding of national identity that stretches back into ancient – or primitive – epochs of history. Modernist theories receive their designation because they understand national identity as being rooted in much more recent times and events – specifically in “modernity”, an explicit historic time period.

The idea of a primitive development of national identity is an interesting but somewhat flawed notion. Expounded particularly by Anthony Smith, this conception of nationalism sees it as a “primitive” idea, often wrapped up in the idea of ethnic origin (Smith 1993). He labels these groups *ethnos*, building on terminology coming from ancient Greece used to describe “a band or host or tribe”. Building up from this, Smith says that groups which share common cultural traits or kinship form an *ethnos*. These groups, he contends, form the ethnic core at the heart of modern state development. While he may admit that national identity is a recent development in history, Smith nonetheless feels that it grows out of this older ethnic underpinning. It is important to note here though that Smith is not to be equated with “primordial” or strict primitive views of national development. He acknowledges the modern development of national identity but sees it as rooted in the deeper past. He does not, however, adopt the extremely flawed view of nineteenth century theorizing or ultra-nationalist demagogues who hold identity to be a linear development from the proverbial mists of time. Nevertheless, even though Smith’s ideas are not hardline primordialism, they are

problematic. To argue that ancient *ethnos* formed the core of modern national development is to ignore the role of modern elites in the process.

However, Smith's work is useful in that he highlights the quasi-religious aspects of modern nationalism (see also Haas 1986). Because nationalism has the seeming ability to evoke emotions and loyalty found only else in deep-rooted "real" religion and a person's "powerful sense of the sacred" (Smith 2004, 26) it can be said to be an inheritor of pre-existing religious impulses (Smith 1993). In this way, though nationalism does not have the trappings of what we consider traditional religion; it can form a kind of secular, civil religion. Rather than temples and churches, its services are carried out in government buildings and monuments. As opposed to priests and rabbis, nationalism's prophets are the political leaders who expound its supposed truths. This conception of nationalism as a civil religion elevates national citizens to the level of "chosen people" or "the elect" who have a divine right to possess territory (Smith 2004). In this way, quasi-religious fervor drives the territorial demands of nationalist movements.

Whereas theories of development such as Smith's hold that the nationalist strains we see in modern society arise from a pre-existing *ethnos*, modernist theories situate nationalism in more recent past. Benedict Anderson describes nationalism as "imagined communities", socially constructed entities imagined by the people who perceive themselves to be a part of the group (Anderson 1991). This idea is predicated in the fact that individuals will imagine themselves bonded across time and space with members of the "community" they have not even met. "The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1991, 6). Thus the term "imagined"

is used because there is not actually widespread interaction or communication between members of the nation; rather, it is an internalized community held together in the minds of the individuals who feel themselves a part of it. Anderson contends that this development is a modern phenomenon, directly traceable even to the development of the vernacular printing press, a literate population, and the accompanying easy dissemination of the written word (Anderson 1991). Through the dissemination of printed information in the vernacular, a common discourse emerged among various locales and dialects, standardizing communication. In this way the first modern nation-states emerged in Europe around “national print-languages”.

Similarly, Hobsbawm (1992) takes a modernist approach and credits elites with fabricating the ideas behind national identities and traditions before foisting them on the lower rungs of society, aided as it were by these new methods of information sharing. Though taking a different tact than Anderson, Hobsbawm is nonetheless in sympathy with him because while he does focus on construction by elites, he still acknowledges nationalism’s less-than-natural roots. Rather than being the result of almost instinctive groupings based off ancient *ethnies*, “nations” are in fact entities created out of disparate ethno-linguistic groups and cultures, often only unified “by a lengthy process of violent conquest” (Hall et al. 1996, 616). The violence that unites disparate groups into a nation can be both physical violence, enacted through warfare, and a more ephemeral, almost psychological violence. In order for national unity to occur, the conglomerated entities must establish a new, hegemonic order at the expense of subverting many of the other, competing identities (Billig 1995; Hall et al. 1996; Hutchinson and Smith 1995; Alonso 1994). This is often done through a campaign of inculcation in which new stories of

origin and national struggle are passed down to citizens as well as through the creation of symbols that signify the new nation and become widely recognizable (Billig 1995; Hall et al. 1996). In this somewhat intangible war of ideas and symbols, violence can be metaphorical as languages, cultural forms, memories, and norms, are destroyed and replaced by others. Simultaneously, though, it can be physical as people defending each identity position struggle with each other or as individuals seek to force linguistic or cultural minorities to assimilate – or else expel or relocate them. Indeed, the hegemonic power may even seek to reach into the private realm by outlawing private maintenance or observance of identity practices. We see such subjugating of competing identities particularly in nineteenth century Europe as national movements acted as “movements for national unification or expansion” (Hobsbawm 1992). Those territories and peoples integrated into new nation-states were expected to be “nationally homogeneous” and so had to adopt a new identity in order to emphasize unification. A sense of citizenship and belonging in the newly consolidated, “liberal” states was tied to adopting this new sense of identity which subverted any of those previously held by individuals (Hobsbawm 1992).

As nationalism seeks to subvert competing identities, it must also contend with resistance to homogenization from within the process. The logic of nationalism results in competing claims of peoplehood and sovereignty. This results in a lack of legitimacy for the central state and dominant nationalism, which can result in minority group struggles for autonomy or even secession. Thus, while nationalism is often seen as a unifying and homogenizing force (e.g. Billig 1995; Hall et al. 1996; Hobsbawm 1992) but it can also be seen as fragmenting as those subordinated in the new order begin to resist state

centralization and dominant nationalist policies. Furthermore, sub-state groups seeking recognition as a nation may transcend fixed territorial boundaries on a map and challenge sovereignty and integrity of not just a single state but multiple states through irrendentism. They present a challenge to the existing order of states with its rigidly imposed boundaries on territory by seeking defined boundaries of their own. By this token, attempting to develop a sense of national identity is both unifying and fragmentary.

Banal nationalism and everyday flagging

The modernist perspective emphasizes the everyday construction of national identity – that is the way nationalism is lived, practiced and internalized by the citizenry. Michael Billig uses the term “banal nationalism” to describe how national sentiment plays out in the everyday experience (1995). The idea of banal nationalism plays a central role in this project, which examines the role of language education and everyday language usage in youth identity formation. The idea of banal nationalism holds that minute details in everyday life reinforce a sense of national identity in an unconscious and ordinary, “taken-for-granted” manner; this applies to linguistic policies, which can subtly reinforce nationalist orientations, consciousness, and ways of thinking.

Billig defines nationalism as “the ideological means by which nation-states are reproduced”(Billig 1995, 6). This hearkens back to Hobsbawm’s and Anderson’s arguments that nationalism and nation-building projects are modern developments, often pushed by elites. Nationalism is inherently political, and banal nationalism is a means of advancing political ideology, specifically that of the elites, attempting to push a particular agenda. Billig argues that rather than waning, habits of nationalist reproduction are

indicated or “flagged” in daily life. This means that the institution of a nation-state does not end the process of nation-building. Rather, the work continuously occurs through more subtle, perhaps even unintentional means. Again, in Billig’s words, “nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (Billig 1995, 6). This endemic character is reflected in the actions, language, and symbolic displays which reinforce and naturalize national identity. Importantly, the constant reiteration of nationalism is unconscious when viewed by the citizen. Rather than obtrusive rallying cries, these elements of banal nationalism simply reflect a latent identity which is always present (Alonso 1994). In this way, Billig makes sure to differentiate between “the flag waved by Serbian ethnic cleansers and that hanging unobtrusively outside the US post office” (Billig 1995, 6). The internalized feelings of nationalism which are reinforced by Billig’s banal settings provides an opportunity to understand the “grass-roots” development of nationalism as opposed to that being promulgated by a top-down, state-centric hierarchy.

The advancement of post-national identity and a European context

As we have seen, modernist definitions of nationalism emphasize that nation-states and nationalist ideologies developed in Europe, especially in the nineteenth century. However, today we live in a world in which globalization is growing, the world is becoming more interconnected, and some argue the nation-state is decreasing in importance as transnational communication and transportation increase. These conversations about nationalism have come up against concurrent ideas of post-nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the like. These new ideas suggest new modes of identity, politics, and institutions that are not situated in or contained by nation-states and

historic senses of nationalism but rather transnational political institutions which increasingly have an impact on global affairs (Matušík 1993; Holton 1998; Smith 2010). These “post-national” trends complicate the modernist conceptualization of nationalism and the nation-state by de-centering the role of the state from conversations of identity.

In the case of País Vasco and Spain, much of this discussion takes place in the context of European integration under the auspices of the European Union. Since World War II, Europe has slowly been going through an integrative process. Initially begun as part of an effort to create economic stability among a select few states, the European project has come to encompass greater depth and breadth (Tiersky, Jones, and Genugten 2011). As part of integration in the European Union, old ways of demarcating difference between states have been slowly disappearing as political integration began in the 1990s under the Maastricht Treaty and as proposals such as the Schengen Treaty insuring free movement between signatories came into force (Deflem and Pampel 1996; Soysal 1996). In addition, because of political integration in Europe, citizens of EU member states are granted EU citizenship, which complements their national citizenship. This grants citizens of the EU the right to move freely, to seek employment, and to seek aid and protection from EU institutions throughout the entirety of the Union (Tiersky, Jones, and Genugten 2011). This means that citizens of these states enact their citizenship rights not just at a nation-state level, but on multiple scales (Nagel 2011). Individuals, some suggest, are now more able to decouple themselves from a state-centric conception of identity because they are no longer tied to their “home” nation-state in defining their relationship to other Europeans (Smith 1992). Rather, by virtue of having multi-scalar

citizenship rights and practices, European citizens are now able assume a sense of European identity at the supranational level (Becher 1996; Deflem and Pampel 1996).

Some argue that this development of a “post-national” identity is a “natural” progression in Europe. Delanty (1995) says that “one of the most striking features of European identity is that the dynamics involved in its invention are not unlike the processes by which regional identities were superseded by national identities in the nineteenth century”, echoing opinions held by Becher (1996) and Smith (1992). He says that this identity, like that of nationality, was born out of adversity. The adversity he refers to relates to the aftermath of World War II and the later the Cold War. The idea of post-national sentiment superseding national identity follows the model previously mentioned in which national identities supplant subnational ones. In order for national identity to be developed, competing visions of the nation must be suppressed by the dominant discourse (Billig 1995; Hall et al. 1996). In the same way, the development of post-national identity requires the suppression or at least pushing aside of identity tied to the nation-state, especially identities that have been historically problematic such as in the Balkans. This elevation of European identity is actively supported at the supranational level as the EU not only pushes for education on what it means to be a European citizen but as it enforces minimal standards for civil and minority rights, holding that these values are a “European” ideal (Wringe 1996; Deflem and Pampel 1996). However, it must be noted that not all commentators hold that a sense of European identity is constructed by these shared civil values. Some, such as Tony Judt (2005) in his comprehensive historical work, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, find an overarching European identity, while serving some sense of civil good, to be based in

economic terms. While wealth redistribution and economic legislation may be veiled in a curtain of civil improvement and citizenship, the very fact that this economic system exists may be seen as what ties Europeans together. Indeed, as will be discussed in later chapters, this idea of economic instrumentalism comes out in interviews with individuals in the Basque region, particularly in light of the current (2007-2013) economic crisis.

Regardless, for those arguing that a European identity exists, there is evidence to support the view that it might undercut traditional nationalisms. The European Commission goes so far as to require states seeking accession to alter laws relating to everything from labor protections to voter rights in order to meet Union-held ideals if existing laws are seen as not being of high enough standard (European Commission 1993). In order to enjoy the economic benefits of EU membership – the main reason many governments tout accession to their citizens – the EU requires acquiescence to its own views of what constitutes minimal standards of civil and minority protections (Tiersky, Jones, and Genugten 2011). For example, before the Romania and Bulgaria were allowed to accede in 2007, they had to agree to and adopt legal changes to come in line with the *acquis communautaire*, the body of European Union law composed of legislation and court decisions. Accession negotiations also included a period of monitoring by EU institutions which had to issue a final monitoring report confirming compliance in 2006 (European Commission 2002). This report not only listed written changes made to the legal code but also listed levels of implementation for problematic areas. EU directives in the *acquis* relating to issues ranging from free movement of people to the protection of languages – the latter example resulting in the adoption of Cyrillic as a third official EU alphabet as part of Bulgaria’s accession. This all illustrates

a tension in the EU that exists between the desire to elevate and respect diversity – very much an ideal out of sync with “traditional” nationalism – and creating a sense of “Europeanness”.

These many varied protections being offered as they are, the potential arises for the EU to be seen as the protector of subnational identities, language groups, and cultures, supporting them in what Urla (1988, 379) calls “the battle for cultural rights.” This is of particular importance for subnational groups such as the Basques who assert claims to national identity and effective sovereignty. It begins to be possible that regional nationalists groups who see the state hierarchy as oppressive will champion the cause of European integration and support its establishment over that of the state due to the Union’s insistence on recognizing and respecting diversity. There is an ironic tension here though because at the same time that the language of universalistic rights is being used to foster and protect regional identities in their struggle for recognition from the state, the Union also uses it to foist a program of “European” identity development on citizens. The Union pushes a program of European Citizenship Education (ECE) which can attempt to subvert more spatially circumscribed or limited senses of identity. Regardless of this fact though, nationalists may see championing the European cause as a positive action due to the insistence of European education initiatives that students learn more than one language (Wringe 1996).

Moving on from discussions of national identity

From all of this discussion we arrive at three main points. First, the idea of a national identity and sovereign national homeland is a modern phenomenon; the creation of nationhood is a political project which seeks to orient itself as the dominant narrative

in an imagined community. Nationalism is directly tied to a sense of sacredness and the need to define territory. Sub-state nationalist and non-assimilationist undercut the dominant nationalisms and act against the state's interests when they pursue their own nationalist agenda of resistance, establishing claims of autonomy, and territorial integrity. Second, once a nation-state has been established, it is constantly reified through a sense of banal nationalism as everyday experiences and articles become subconscious symbols reinforcing nationalist claims. This is a two-edged sword though because just as these things can subtly reinforce state power, they can also act in highly divided societies to undercut it. Lastly, especially in the European context, there is an ongoing debate about the development of post-national or European identities that seem to challenge the traditional form of nation-building. While the structures that are put in place to do this may weaken individual states and so be championed by sub-state nationalists, they may also be dangerous to those regional goals as the supranational seeks to smooth competing identities into a more general "European" concept.

2.2: LANGUAGE, LINGUISTIC POLICIES, AND EDUCATION

This section examines specifically the role of language in the process of nation-building and how it might complicate post-national citizenship. Building on the modernist construction of nationalism, I will briefly examine the development of language and its importance in discussions of identity. Following that, it is important to cover the continued role of elites, specifically through the implementation of language policies and how these policies are enacted in educational settings (schools) through specific language education programs. Particular attention will be paid in this latter part

to the idea of language education as a way to integrate youths into a wider national framework.

Language is one of the major defining characteristics of “national culture” (Hobsbawm 1996). In fact, it “is often considered the most powerful mark of identity” (Kolossoff 2003, 258). The rise of the modern nation-state is tied in with the rise of common vernacular languages and with the rise of printing (Anderson 1991; Billig 1995). Anderson’s “national-print languages” were vernaculars that arose out of uniform spelling and grammar that began to appear as books, pamphlets, circulars, and other printed materials began to be circulated. Prior to this, the language of the written word was Latin, which was taught and even then only to the elites (Murphy 1981; Billig 1995). The standardization of vernacular grammars and vocabularies came much later and rose as an academic discipline alongside the creation of a national literary canon during the Reformation and the development of the modern state in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. According to Foucault (1979, 206), this parallel development of structure in academia and society occurred in the context of a developing “disciplinary society” that gave rise to the modern system we know today which instituted standardized public schooling and the assimilation of regional languages. In this way, regulating language became important for elites who wished to impose some form of unified identity on a group.

Regulation of language

Anderson (as quoted in Oakes 2001, 20) states, “Language is not an instrument of exclusion: in principle, anyone can learn any language. On the contrary, it is fundamentally inclusive, limited only by the fatality of Babel: no one lives long enough

to learn all languages.” This naïve theorizing about language ignores its incredible capacity for exclusion. Vernacular languages were seen as a model for inclusion in new nation-building projects but like much else with nationalism were often a two-edged sword. The imposition of a vernacular requires the exclusion of other linguistic variations and these exclusionary practices then create divisions within societies which can have profound political consequences in a national arena.

Regulation of languages can assume many different forms and hierarchies ranging from the classification of what counts as language down to the absolute right of usage. There is great power in the ability to regulate official language and to exclude, denigrate, and/or ban corrupted dialects. It is also linked to racialized struggles and class struggles. In this way, Tuscan became the language of Italy while Piedmontese was demoted to the status of a mere dialect (Petrosino 1992). Even more drastically, the Turkish government maintains that there is no such thing as a Kurdish ethnicity of language, arguing that Kurdish people are isolated “mountain Turks” who have either forgotten their native, “Turkish” language or at best speak a corrupted version of it (Entessar 1989). Similarly drastic were bans on Timorese education following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor (Pilger 2010) and the nineteenth century bans on Welsh and Scots in the United Kingdom (Kiernan 1993). All of these are examples of the dominant group asserting linguistic dominance in the developing nation-state, giving further evidence of the constructed nature of the supposed nation through subversion of other identities and group traits. As Hobsbawm states, “Historically, the coexistence of peoples of different languages and cultures is normal; or, rather, nothing is less common than countries inhabited exclusively by people of a single uniform language and culture” (1996, 1068).

The ability to classify language in this way facilitates the exclusion of those groups who do not meet imposed standards even within the same language. Work by Vassberg (1993) and Paltridge and Giles (1984) in France showed exclusionary attitudes and practices within French conversation. Minority groups in these studies could be delineated not only by speaking ‘foreign’ languages but by speaking a ‘regional accent’. Paltridge and Giles in particular showed that there is not only a preferred accent in France but that a hierarchy of preferred-to-less-preferred accents has developed.

When looking at the right of usage in discussing languages, we must examine the totality of language rights allowed in a society. These range from the ability to conduct government business in a certain language down to the legal allowance to even speak certain languages on street corners. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, today Spain does not – at least statutorily – have an issue with multilingualism. Rather, it is enshrined in the national curriculum standards that students will learn a “foreign” language before graduation. In addition, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 guarantees the protection of regional languages and the right of all citizens to learn and speak them (Urla 1988; Urla 1993). Understanding this also illustrates the changing nature of nationalism and national identity in the European context. Rather than being a monolithic, hegemonic force, national identity can be understood today as a negotiated choice that is internalized in the individual. Instead of being imposed from above, it is a shifting ideal affected by a variety of identity layers.

Hobsbawm argues against the idea that modern nation-states instituted central language policies as a way to suppress competing “laterally bonded” identities of culture, ethnicity, or language. “The ideal of [a state] represented by an ethnically, culturally, and

linguistically homogeneous population... would have surprised the founders of the original nation-states. For them, the unity of the nation was political and not socio-anthropological. It consisted in the decision of a sovereign people to live under common laws and a common constitution, irrespective of culture, language, and ethnic composition” (1996, 1066). This statement adopts the position that – at least originally – nation-states were to be formed with a sense of civic nationalism, ideals tied to institutions or philosophies rather than demographic groupings. He builds on this idea by further stating, “The original case for a standard language was entirely democratic, not cultural. How could citizens understand, let alone take part in, the government of their country if it was conducted in an incomprehensible language... Would this not guarantee government by an elite minority?” (1996, 1069). This argument is problematic. It assumes that centralized language policies enforcing a state-wide official tongue were an idealistic attempt born out of respect for citizens and the desire to more easily communicate with others. While there may have been a desire to more easily communicate amongst various regions, it was no egalitarian movement driven by optimistic democrats. Language policies may have been cloaked in this language but it would have only been a cloak. As discussed in the last section, nationalist movements at the state level in the nineteenth century were concerned with undercutting regional or local identities for the sake of the centralized hierarchy. Furthermore, Hobsbawm seems to ignore the fact that these language policies were often imposed by elites who chose to hold their own language as the standard. Rather than implicitly creating an elite minority by not educating the populace, these policies explicitly created marginalized languages –

and thereby groups – on the periphery of the state by favoring one at the expense of others.

Language education

Language education policies are emblematic of the regulatory practices which began to be put in place by the hegemonic powers in nation-states at the start of the modern era. One of the key sites of societal regulation was the emergence of public schooling in the nineteenth century. Gellner (2009) directly ties the rise of the nation-state with this cultural transition which was itself tied to the imposition of a standardized ‘national tongue’, education of which was overseen by the central state power. This is because “the educational system and the nation-state are strictly interdependent: one cannot exist without the other” (Kolossoff 2003, 258). Standardized education and curriculum are then the markers of a centralized government. Similar to the way in which the printed word relies upon and allows for the standardization of language, centralized education systems help to standardize knowledge about state institutions and civic ideals. However, the way in which language policies have been enacted, especially in the educational arena, are not uniform. I have been discussing the way in which hegemonic powers may seek to dominate/eliminate other linguistic identities. It must be noted that this is not always the case. Especially in educational arenas, there can be a wide variance in language policies and the way they are enacted in the school.

Taking all of this theoretical discussion of hegemonic language imposition into account, governments have nonetheless enacted multi-layered language policies for a variety of reasons. Nationalist education policies are typically concerned with standardization efforts. However, and especially in the context of the European Union,

elements at multilingualism appear. Though the historic reason for standardized education might have been centralization of power, these new policies reflect new and somewhat shifting ideals. These shifts again show the way in which national agendas are shifting from monolithic impositions. Some changes allow for the advancement of ethnic and national languages in an attempt to have disparate groups accept the governing regime. However, others policies may admittedly still be an attempt to impose the dominant language of the elites uniformly across the state's territory, suppressing competitors. Regardless, policies regarding language and language education were and are instituted to further varying political agendas (Pavlenko 2008). In the European Union today, these policies are at least on paper the result of a desire to promote diversity and acknowledge regional differences. However, it must be noted that just because education is allowed in the non-dominant language of the state, minority languages are not necessarily any more privileged. That being said, "school-based linguistic revitalization represents a potentially powerful transformative effort" for marginalized or endangered languages (Brown 2012).

New agendas today can advance a variety of ideals – encouraging the conceptualization of multiculturalism, simply respecting minority groups' rights to speak in their mother tongue, or attempting to reinforce the dominant group's hegemony through single-language school programs (Kymlicka 1995). In other cases, language education is today being pushed in schools around the world as a method of increasing capacity of citizens to interact in a global setting (Spring 2004). In idealized discourse of the European Union, multilingual fluency is seen as a way to promote communication and common understanding across the bloc. Citizens though often have a different

perspective, attributing multilingual fluency to economic aspirations, a concept to be explored later at greater depth in the case of the Basque region. Yet, multilingualism and multilingual education is not uniformly lauded internationally. In some countries multilingualism is seen as a positive attribute while in others it elicits controversy when not speaking in the dominant or official language is portrayed as undermining a singular and insularly focused, united nation (Pavlenko 2002; Pavlenko 2003). Even in states which do not have an official language, multilingual education outside of the dominant tongue can be controversial. This is illustrated in the United States by the dissention caused by language accommodation programs advocated for by Spanish-speaking Hispanic populations (Pogue 2003).

In examining the literature on language, three things become evident. First, language can be a central part of establishing the hegemonic power of one national group within the nation-state. In doing so, not only are other linguistic groups marginalized but the dominant power formalizes its own language, imposing a structure and order that can delineate and ostracize dialects. Second, this process is further evidence of and used in the modernist construction of many national identities in Europe, an important point for this case study. Third, language policies are often enacted in educational settings and can advance a variety of civic ideals in today's world. Whatever ideal being promoted – multiculturalism, economic attractiveness, or even simple respect for cultural differences – these policies are imposed from the state and function as an expression of the state power. These educational policies target youth populations because it is the young people who are required through truancy laws to attend schools. As we consider the relationship

between nationalism and language policies, we must then focus specifically on the relationship between these issues and young people's budding sense of personal identity.

2.3 YOUTH POPULATIONS

At the core of this project an attempt to understand the relationship between young people's developing sense of national identity and language education policies in the Basque region. The modernist construction of nationalism sees national identity as constructed by elites and implemented in a top-down method. Of particular importance national political projects are education and linguistic policies. Billig's ideas of banal nationalism in which everyday practices subconsciously affect and reify national identity suggest that a sense of identity is not merely imposed from above but is a shifting internalized process. Understanding this allows for one to examine how schools or other social spaces serve as spaces in which nation-building projects and language policies come together for young people. Young people, through their daily practices and developing sense of identity, must negotiate various political projects as they shape their sense of identity while coming of age in a democratic yet partially divided society. In this way youth populations serve as a lens through which to examine these nationalist projects from the bottom-up, evaluating the active choices individuals make when internalizing national projects.

The potential for schools and educational policies to effect the development of national identity in youths is enormous. Current research indicates that "children as young as four years have nascent sense of nations and nationality, and even before entering formal education many can already identify differences between 'us' and 'them'" Hague (2001). Most of this early identification of nation and nationalities comes

from interactions with familiar and easily remembered images and stereotypes imparted by people – family, friends, schoolteachers – or media – television, film, posters. (Wiegand 1992). Wiegand (1992) refers to these items as “emblem images”, and his assertions about their role in forming early childhood conceptions of the nation reinforces the important role of national symbols as described by Billig (1995), Hall (1996), and Smith (2010). Some developmental psychologists disagree with the idea of early childhood conceptions of nationalism, saying that spatial awareness develops only slowly and with age (Piaget, Inhelder, and others 1956). Regardless of this, by the time youth reach their teenage years, it is accepted that they are well on their way to shaping their senses of identity and affiliation. As Sutton (2009) says, “even young children are able to perceive and experience” social divisions and difference and this plays a large role in forming how they perceive themselves and those around them.

However, children are not necessarily mere passive receptors of nationalist ideology and practices. During the teenage years, youth fill a grey area between childhood and adulthood. It is accepted that they have the ability to determine much of their own social interaction and yet are constitutionally still excluded from many of the privileges of citizenship (Weller 2003). This exclusion happens even in the face of developing notions in Europe of children being portrayed as “fellow citizens” (Kjørholt 2007). They are in a position of informing their sense of belonging to the group while having few political rights which they can exercise independent of supervisory control, though as Nagel (2011, 121) points out, having a sense of belonging is “necessarily political”. This sense of belonging and identity becomes more important because of the

way that “social contingencies” frame the way they “construct...and feel ownership in their construction” of their lives (Brannen and Nilsen 2002).

Because of their place in schools, language education policies are directed at young people. This is implicitly stated because they are the target of such measures by virtue of the fact that youths are the ones who actually sit in classrooms and receive instruction each day. It thus becomes important to investigate how these young people use language in their daily lives. Doing so allows us to evaluate how these young people relate to competing identity discourses and potentially internalize (or not, as the case may be) their message. Young people also serve as a new window through which the complexities of nationalism and post-nationalism can be examined due to the fact that affiliation with certain identities begins at a young age and occurs in some of the same spaces as those held by adults espousing nationalist discourse. However, children and youth experience these discourses in different ways than adults do (Leonard 2006a). Understanding how youth populations in País Vasco are navigating these discourses helps to understand the impact of language policies and the role that nationalist discourse plays in youth identity formation. This in turn helps to evaluate the effectiveness of nationalist policies in inculcating a sense of “being Basque” in future generations. The idea of inculcation – that attitudes, ideas, or values, are instilled through persistent yet not overbearing instruction – in schools again raises the specter of Billig’s banal nationalism. The question is raised in what way this persistence in language instruction subtly influences identity development or if it even does so at all?

Understanding this “effectiveness” is important because of the possibility that youth may themselves “play” with various identities or discourses to the extent that they

themselves subvert or even reject competing nationalisms. Youth agency seems to be overlooked by nationalist projects which assume that hierarchical imposition will work to instill ideals. Studying it allows us to see if there is this sense of a choice in young people and how they negotiate internally and socially through such choice. Young people are also important to study not only because they represent the future of a society but because their stories are often eclipsed by adult narratives, particularly in societies riven by sectarian or partisan divisions (Leonard 2006b). This subversion again ignores the fact children have agency in national struggles (Habashi 2011). Ignoring this process means that we ignore providing additional depth to our understanding of national projects.

In light of this literature, as well as that on language policies and the idea of post-national identity in Europe, we are faced with the fact that youth have choices. As previously stated, various policies such as language education target them, but this does not necessarily mean it impacts them the way nationalists would hope. Chapter 5 discusses this concept and what it potentially means for the cause of nationalism and national movements in Europe.

2.4 MOVING OUT OF THE LITERATURE

The youth of País Vasco are faced with a society in which there are active efforts to create and impose national projects. Language education policies play a major role in this. They must negotiate transforming their early childhood “emblem images” of nation into a coherent sense of identity while in a complex social setting that presents competing ideas on the subject to them from the earliest age. Faced with strident views from both the ardent, centralizing Spanish nationalist and the equally fervent, regional-based Basque nationalists, there is simultaneously a supranational entity in the form of the

European Union pushing for a sense of a unified European identity. From this literary and analytical foundation I will address issues of how different nation-building projects become meaningful to young people in the region and how schools or other social spaces serve as spaces in which nation-building projects and language policies come together for young people. This discussion will incorporate data collected from on-site interviews in the city of Bilbao, Spain. Before moving immediately into discussion and analysis of the empirical data, I will briefly describe in the next chapter the process of field work and the methods employed in this project.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

For this research I used a series of semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers, and secondary school students to elicit information about the ways they perceive and discuss issues of national identity, language education and daily language usage, and to ascertain the political significance of linguistic choices in País Vasco. Through these interviews I was able to elicit in-depth information from informants that provided “rich descriptions of complex phenomena” (Sofaer 1999, 1101). Rather than supplying potentially simplistic or limited responses that would come with methods such as surveying, interviews allowed me not only to receive more in-depth information immediately, but also flesh out deeper meanings and intents behind the comments made by informants. Given the complex nature of identity and associated daily choices such as language usage, the combined flexibility and depth of interviews provided a valuable data gathering tool. These interviews were supplemented by personal observation of specific areas of the city mentioned by informants as well as separate social excursions with student informants in order to provide firsthand context to gathered information. Secondary data collection of policy documents and general demographic information from EU institutions, the Spanish government, and the regional government of País Vasco also occurred. This chapter discusses the design and implementation of this fieldwork and the reasoning behind the methodology used.

3.1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND INTERVIEWS

Prior to beginning fieldwork, I made initial contact with individuals at the Centro Internacional de Español (CIDE) at the University of Deusto in Bilbao. I had previously studied at Deusto during my undergraduate career through a program administered by CIDE. Using this personal connection, I solicited contact information for teachers to serve as initial contacts in school settings. I also made contact with professors who might allow me to make brief presentations to their classes at Deusto in order to solicit student informants. Of the initial four teacher contacts I made, two declined to participate in the study following my arrival on site. Of the other two, one allowed me to conduct a personal interview while the other assisted me in “snowballing” other contacts, both teachers and parents. I also used snowball sampling to contact additional potential student informants following initial solicitation in classrooms. Snowballing was used in large part because of its ability to “make use of natural social networks” in the study population (Noy 2008, 329). This not only allowed me to more easily approach potential informants, but because of the personal introductions also allowed for less stilted conversation from the beginning. This lessening of introductory formality makes it easier for informants to both trust the researcher and open up sooner and more fully in their responses. In order to limit the potential of my snowballing method to reproduce similarities in respondents, I sought out contacts with people who did not exactly replicate the same characteristics as other informants. For example, I asked for contacts with students from different high school language models while also balancing participants’ current post-secondary enrollment across both of the major universities in Bilbao.

I received Institutional Review Board approval from the University of South Carolina prior to meeting any potential informants in person. I specifically designed my project to protect the identities and confidentiality of my informants. Confidentiality was essential because potential issues discussed included those of political or ideological nature that could be controversial in the city and region. Conversations about Basque nationalism and support for nationalists can inevitably bring up issues regarding historical oppression, longstanding resentment, and feelings of marginalization. They can also touch on issues related to banned ultranationalist movements and groups deemed terrorists by the governments of Spain, the EU, and the United States. While these issues were not the central focus of my study, I nonetheless had to take them into consideration when designing my protocol. For these reasons I assured all of my informants of confidentiality when first meeting with them. Upon sitting down with each person, I presented with an informational letter inviting them to take part in my work, explaining the aims of the research, and explaining anonymity and confidentiality. Every informant was guaranteed verbally and in writing that I would use pseudonyms and would remove potentially identifying information from transcripts and final works. I emphasized the voluntary nature of this project and that I would not reveal sensitive information or illegal activities in my commentary. The on-site fieldwork for this project occurred over a period of seven weeks in the fall semester of 2012. During this time I conducted twenty-four semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and parents, each group of which is described here in turn.

I met with nineteen students, speaking with ten individually, six of them in pairs, and one trio (see Table 2.1). For reasons relating to the sensitivities previously mentioned, as well

as to simplify the research process, I limited my contact to students who had reached the age of majority, which throughout Spain is eighteen. The students I interviewed ranged in age from 18 to 23. The majority of these students fell in the 18-20 age range, though 5 of them ranged from 21-23. I attempted to speak with University students in this younger age band so as to garner feedback from individuals as closely located to high school leaving age as possible. This had a dual advantage. First students closer to this age are likely to remember their earlier education more vividly with all of the attendant emotions and attitudes. Second, concentrating on the lower age band focused interviews on students who were most recently beginning to negotiate the rights associated with coming of age such as democratic participation and voting. This is important because this is the point at which young people are able to assert societal membership and develop a sense of political consciousness and belonging. All of the students I interviewed attended either the University of Deusto or the University of País Vasco (UPV). Deusto is a private university sited near the city center while UPV is the Vizcayan branch of the País Vasco public university system. Student interviews were semi-structured in nature and asked participants to reflect on their secondary school experiences after (generally) one to three years distance. A few main questions helped guide the course of the discussion I had with each participant, but I allowed for flexibility in the conversation so that particularly interesting points or tangents could be explored more fully as needed.

Table 2.1: Student informants

Code	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Interview Session	University	School Type
S1	Udane	22	F	IS1	Deusto	<i>Ikastola</i>
S2	June	22	F		Deusto	<i>Ikastola</i>
S3	Irati	21	F		Deusto	<i>Ikastola</i>
S4	Nahia	18	F	IS2	Deusto	D
S5	Iker	19	M		Deusto	D

S6	Oier	18	M	IS3	Deusto	D
S7	Unai	20	M		Deusto	B
S8	Markel	18	M	IS4	UPV	A
S9	Uxue	19	F		UPV	D
S10	Adere	21	F	IS5	Deusto	<i>Ikastola</i>
S11	Narrea	20	F	IS6	Deusto	D
S12	Leire	20	F	IS7	Deusto	D
S13	Jon	19	M	IS8	Deusto	B
S14	Ander	20	M	IS9	Deusto	B
S15	Mikel	23	M	IS10	UPV	A
S16	Eneko	19	M	IS11	UPV	A
S17	Paula	19	F	IS12	UPV	D
S18	Aiala	20	F	IS13	UPV	D
S19	Nora	20	F	IS14	UPV	B

Seven teachers participated in interviews with me, five of them individually and two as a pair (see Table 2.2). All together they represented five different schools in Bilbao and its surrounding environs. I was also unable to have direct access to classroom observation in schools associated with my teacher informants because of bureaucratic processes that were unresolved by the point that I was to return to the United States. However, my informants did agree to meet with me elsewhere and talk about their daily work experience. Two of these teachers came from the private *ikastola* system while the other five worked in public schools. Four of these public teachers work in D-model schools emphasizing Euskara education while the other teacher works in an A-model school. The fact that I did not interview a teacher working in a B-model school is primarily a shortcoming of the snowball strategy of informant contact as well as the limited amount of time that I was in the field. In this way my work, especially with teachers, cannot be said to be representative of all facets of Basque education but it nonetheless provides insight into the work teachers do and the attitudes they display in the classroom on a daily basis. As with students, teacher interviews were semi-structured. A few main questions

helped guide the course of the discussion I had with each participant, but flexibility abounded. Generally these questions were fairly similar to those asked of students but were approached from a slightly different perspective.

Table 2.2: Teacher informants

Code	Pseudonym	Gender	Interview Session	School Type
T1	Maialen	F	IT1	D
T2	Ainhoa	F		D
T3	Juana	F	IT2	<i>ikastola</i>
T4	Aimar	M	IT3	A
T5	Agirre	F	IT4	D
T6	Izaro	F	IT5	<i>ikastola</i>
T7	Carlos	M	IT6	D

I was also able to interview five parents (see Table 2.3). Of these, one interview was with a mother-father pair while three other mothers spoke to me individually. All but one of the parents interviewed were contacted through their children that were also research participants. I took care to interview each parent away from his/her son/daughter. This allowed me to elicit different viewpoints from each type of informant without the pressure or influence of the other being present in the room. I also interviewed one mother who had no children participating in my project. However, of her three children, one is currently in high school. Contact with this mother was made through a teacher in her child's school whom I had already interviewed. Parental interviews tended to be the shortest of all interviews and therefore had a correspondingly shorter list of questions to guide the interview.

Table 2.3 Parent informants

Code	Pseudonym	# of Children	Gender	Interview Session	Associated Student
P1	Xabi	2	M	IP1	S12 Leire
P2	Lucía		F		

P3	Begoña	3	F	IP2	-
P4	Itziar	2	F	IP3	S16 Eneko
P5	Ane	3	F	IP4	S18 Nora

All but three of these interviews were conducted in a majority of English with Spanish asides made as needed to clarify questions for participants or answers for the interviewer. As the interviewer, I am conversant in Spanish and comfortable speaking in the language as I studied in as part of my undergraduate program of study. Furthermore, I underwent language remediation and training during the summer prior to field work to solidify comfort with Castilian. The offer was made to all participants to conduct the interview in either English or Castilian. Those participants who spoke in English did so because they were all at least conversational in the language and stated that they felt comfortable using it. Of the interviews conducted in Spanish, one was with a student (S16 – Eneko) who admitted that his grasp of English was faulty and would be a hindrance to the process. The other two interviews were with parents (P3 – Begoña and P4 – Itziar) who knew only random phrases at best in English. Incidentally, one of these parents was also the mother of the student needing an interview in Spanish. These three interviews were assisted by a university student studying linguistics who served as needed as a translator. Recommended by professorial contacts, she was certified as being fully fluent in Castilian, Euskara, and English, as well as conversational in French. Additional information including statistical and demographic data regarding language usage, fluency, and education was collected from publicly accessible government databases. This information included the levels of fluency in Euskara and Castilian over time and the number of children enrolled in each school model. The primary source for this information was the Basque Department of Education, Language Policy, and Culture.

I also supplemented my interview data with limited participant observation and informal surveys of neighborhoods and areas mentioned to me in interviews. I was able to watch participants interact with others around them as well as explore the visual and auditory cues constantly swirling around them in the city. Observation centered on traveling through the city with informants as well as going on three separate evening social excursions with student informants. This direct observation of participants was limited by the amount of time I was able to spend in Bilbao. My informal surveys of neighborhoods and city districts consisted of walking “tours” I took each day. These personal observations were intended to both provide context to interview information as well as help me generate more nuanced questions for participants. In addition to these informal observations, I was able to attend two separate mass rallies while in Bilbao. Though these were related to rising unemployment and other economic woes in Spain, they also helped provide additional context for information that came up in several interviews. As will be discussed in a later chapter, this knowledge of the wider economic issues swirling in Spain is necessary in order to properly couch interview data in the proper temporal context.

3.2: ANALYSIS

Using a series of semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and parents, I was able to elicit information from each group with a slightly different perspective. This information covered a variety of interrelated topics such as school choice, school policies, interactions between each of the three groups, and daily usage of language and the social negotiations that accompany it. I supplemented information from interviews with personal observations in the city of Bilbao in order to provide a deeper layering of

context to the information I gathered. From all of this I was able to garner a large amount of information regarding language usage, education, and identity development in youth populations.

I transcribed each of the interview sessions upon the end of my field work. Using basic word processing software, I typed out each conversation, anonymizing each participant's information as I went. Following this, I took printed transcripts and began to code them, searching for key themes, phrases or ideas that stood out. I also took part of this time to go through my own field notes and organize observational data on the basis of date and theme. As I began to discern general trends in the information before me, I also began to compare how different groups' data compared with each other – teachers, parents, and students all against each other as well as between different school models. While developing these themes I also made note to find particularly relevant excerpts that could be quoted here to provide context and examples of the argument I make.

It needs to be noted that there are limitations to this data. The informants for this project characterize a limited subset of the people in Bilbao and País Vasco and are not empirically representative of the entire population. The students in particular come from a fairly homogeneous middle-class socio-economic background and all are in process of becoming highly educated. Furthermore, all but three of my informants were not only fluent in both Castilian and Euskara but also spoke English with a high degree of fluency. Some were even conversational in additional languages. This then presented little representation of the social and educational diversity present in Bilbao. However, this sample is nonetheless helpful in illustrating the complexities of competing identities, language usage, and the lack of a straightforward relationship between educational goals

and youth identities. Even within the relatively homogenous sample provided here, there is a wide disparity in perceptions, actions, and reasonings. It is also an interesting sample to examine because these individuals represent the highly educated, multilingual citizens that academic tracks in the Basque education system seek to mold. Rather than showing homogeneity in thought, these informants illustrate how even individuals who on paper meet similar socio-economic and educational criteria come to differing conclusions when wrestling with these issues. This status as model students is also useful when examining the issues of identity from the European level because they also represent the multilingual, well-educated European citizens that Brussels' policies seek to encourage. Because of these reasons, the apparent homogeneity of informants is not necessarily harmful to this project even though it must be acknowledged including the potential limiting aspects of it.

This data will be discussed at greater length in Chapter IV. However, before that and to place the accompanying analysis within its proper context for the reader, the next chapter will briefly discuss the history of the Basque people and nationalist movements, the development of Euskara, and the development and current status of the education system in País Vasco.

3.3 TERMINOLOGY

As is discussed repeatedly throughout this thesis, issues surrounding language can be much politicized in the Basque areas of Spain. Even the terminology used in a project like mine can relay implicit meanings, however unintentional they may be. For this reason I must be explicit that the non-English terminology I use – except where included in direct quotes from informants – is chosen for the sake of internal clarity, consistency,

and delineation. The intent on my part is not political. For example, since even the names of languages themselves can be contentious, I choose to refer to them by their regional names solely for the purpose of differentiation. In this way, “Spanish” as we know it in the United States is termed Castilian (sometimes referred to as castellano by informants) while the Basque language is termed Euskara. In the latter case this also has the easy benefit of differentiating between the Basque language and the Basque people in that the unqualified “Basque” will refer only to the people group.

Other terminology choices are slightly more capricious but tend to favor Castilian terms simply because of my own familiarity with the language. For example, the Autonomous Community in which the city of Bilbao is referred to here as País Vasco simply because that is how I was first introduced to it. I similarly use the Castilian names for cities and provinces because they are the terms most likely to be familiar to the American audience. In the case of discussing the type of school with which individuals are affiliated, I use the standard descriptors of A- and B-models. However, while the terms “D-model” and “ikastola” are oftentimes colloquially interchangeable in Bilbao, I differentiate between the two terms. D-model in the context of this project specifically refers to public schools that use the Euskara-dominant curriculum while ikastola refers to those private schools operated on D-model lines. More distinct differences between the two systems are in Chapter 3..

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

In order to discuss the identities of young people in País Vasco and the role of the education system in shaping these identities through language curricula, it is first necessary to ground this project in historical context. This chapter grounds this discussion in the history of the Basque nationalism and the relationship between the Basques and the modern Spanish state, as well as the European Union. Particular attention will be paid to the modern history of nationalist movements in the region. This historically recent development of Basque national identity and nationalist separatist movements reflects the modernist viewpoint discussed in Chapter I. The second section features a short discussion of the development of Euskara as a language and the modernization and standardization it has undergone in the last century. It also covers the formalization of the education system in País Vasco along its current three-track system in which school enrollment is predicated on placing students in one of three language models. The system of private *ikastola* schools is also discussed. Taken all together, this chapter illustrates the way in which Basque nationalism and nationalist policies have been shaped by the relationship with the Spanish state and the historic back-and-forth transitions between centralization and decentralization.

4.1: HISTORY OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE AND NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

The region inhabited by “Basque people” skirts the coastal regions of northern Spain and southern France on the edge of the Bay of Biscay (see Figure 4.1). The traditional territory forming *Euskal Herria*, roughly translated as “Basque Country”, is split into seven provinces, four in Spain and three in France (Heiberg 2007). Within Spain, four provinces are split between two Autonomous Communities, the first-level political division in that country. The first Community, País Vasco/Euskadi, is made up of the provinces of Álava/Araba, Vizcaya/Bizkaia, and Guipúzcoa/Gipuzkoa. The second Community, Navarra/Nafarroa, is a uni-provincial entity named after the historic region over which it is delineated. Located in France, the three northern provinces – Basse-Navarre/Nafarroa Beherea, Labourd/Lapurdi, and Soule/Zuberoa – form the western part of the French department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques. Though historically part of the greater region, they were gradually and formally split from their Spanish counterparts by the French-Spanish border as dynastic successions and various wars formalized that boundary throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period. These three French provinces feature prominently in nationalist-separatist imagery espousing the unification of the entire historic region as a single, independent political entity, but otherwise have little bearing on this project.

Linguistically, the Basque people are identified with Euskara, a singularly unique tongue. A language isolate, it is unrelated to any other language in the world. Theories as to its age and origins proliferate in linguistic studies. It is possibly the oldest language spoken in Europe. Origin theories posited over the last few centuries include everything from Basque people being one of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel to their being descendants

of Neanderthals. Less sensational theories have suggested that Euskara, and the Basques themselves, could be related to other semi-isolate groups in Europe such as the Finno-Ugric languages of Finnish, Hungarian, and Estonian. The most recent theory to emerge about Euskara's origins was published in early 2013 by Spanish academic Jaime Martín (Ediciones 2013) suggests that it is closely related to the Dogon tribal language of northern Mali. However, most linguists maintain that Euskara does in fact represent a language group predating the development of Indo-European languages into Western Europe, of which all other branches have been extinct for the length of recorded history (Kurlansky 2001). This uniqueness then, and the language's perceived longevity, helps make it the leading marker for Basque culture and identity.

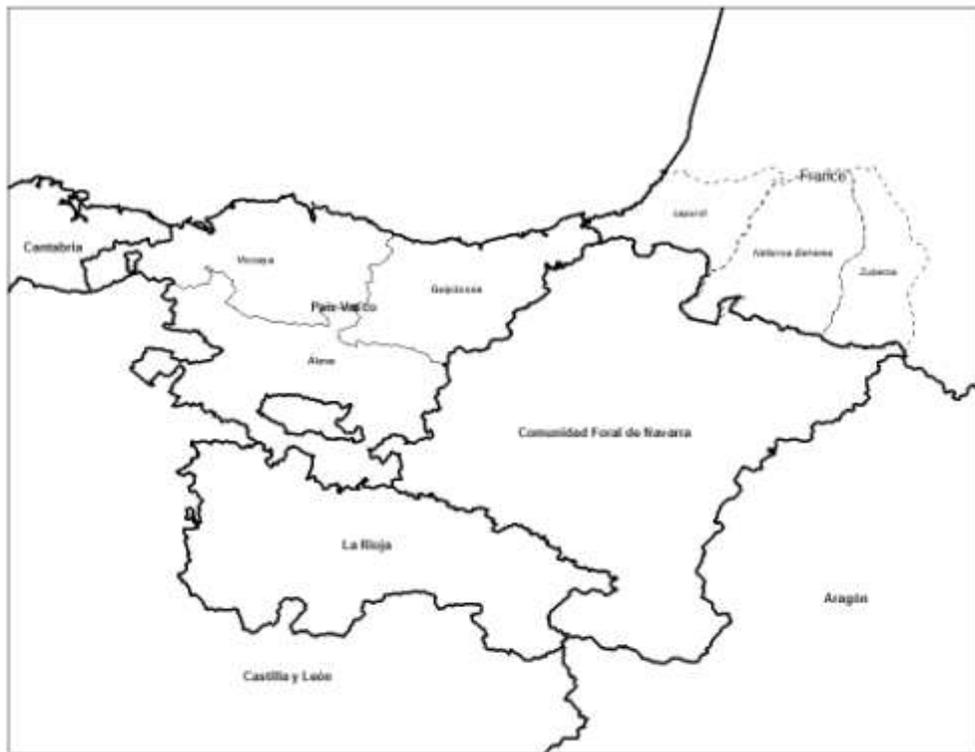


Figure 4.1: Basque provinces in Spain and France

The first written historical reference we have of the people inhabiting the Basque region is from the Roman historian Strabo who referred to them as *Vascones* (Heiberg 2007). Before this time, there was no central authority in the region, nor was there a standardized Basque language such as we consider Euskara to be today. Rather, varying tribes and villages spread throughout mountains and valleys speaking wide array of related dialects. While inland tribes were mostly small farmers and herders, settlements along the coast were well-established communities engaged in extensive maritime commerce. Archeological finds provide evidence of ocean-going vessels capable of sailing not only along the Biscayan coast but also southward around the Iberian Peninsula and into the Mediterranean and northward as far as the North Sea. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that Basque fisherman were by this time already harvesting cod off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, though records of such activity do not exist until the fifteenth century (Collins 1990). Roman armies reached the region under Pompey in the first century BCE. The Romans arranged the Basque tribes' recognition of Roman suzerainty in return for regional semi-autonomy in which free movement of troops and goods was allowed through their land. This level of relative autonomy mirrored later, similar methods of regional governance and helped create a myth of an unconquered people (Mansvelt-Beck 2005). Basque provinces were not subject to the Roman legal code but instead were able to govern using their own traditional laws (Collins 1990).

Later centuries featured the Basque provinces sitting astride the boundary of warring Visigoth and Frankish empires, conversion to Christianity, and helping to repel Moorish invasions of the Peninsula (Kurlansky 2001). The later medieval period also witnessed the emergence of history's only Basque-dominated independent state in the

form of the Kingdom of Navarra (Heiberg 2007). The year 1179 marked the annexation of the region to the medieval kingdom of Castilla (Heiberg 2007). This is historically extremely important for two reasons. First, the region that is today País Vasco was subdivided into the three provinces of Álava, Vizcaya, and Guipúzcoa (Kurlansky 2001). However, and second, the region was granted wide-ranging autonomy under Castilian rule, with the right to continue governance under the *fueros* – roughly translated as Charters or traditional laws – which the Castilian king swore to honor. This practice would continue consistently through state and dynastic changes until the mid-nineteenth century, and the abolishment of the *fueros* would be a major spark in early development of Basque nationalist movements (Kurlansky 2001; Heiberg 2007).

In 1492, Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabella of Castilla completed the *Reconquista* of Spain. Marrying in 1469, they united the crowns of the two kingdoms and so brought into being the formation of the modern Kingdom of Spain. Isabella brought with her territory the western part of the Iberian Basque region that is today País Vasco, and following her death in 1512 Ferdinand invaded the eastern half, the remnants of the Kingdom of Navarra. Fighting off Navarrese attempts from the northern side of the Pyrenees to regain their territory, the totality of what is now Spanish Basque country was united under one crown with the rest of modern Spain (Collins 1990; Heiberg 2007; Kurlansky 2001). Following the unification of Spain, the Basque regions were still granted the right to their *fueros*, but other symbols of autonomy were spasmodically granted and taken away.

Following Spanish unification, individual cities in the region became trade and transportation hubs, particularly Bilbao. This provided economic stability amidst the

inflation in Spain caused by the influx of gold from the New World (Kurlansky 2001). During the Napoleonic Wars, many in the region joined forces with the British Army as it marched north into France as part of the peninsular campaign. Following the restoration of the Spanish monarchy after the Napoleonic wars, Ferdinand VII revoked liberal reforms put in place during his exile. The resulting civil war and later Carlist Wars over succession led to a spiral of destabilization in Spain (Kurlansky 2001; Heiberg 2007). In 1873, the First Spanish Republic was proclaimed but dissolved in a little less than two years. Following this, Madrid attempted to centralize control of the country and the *fueros* were formally abolished in 1876, spawning discontent that would begin to coalesce around the burgeoning notions of Basque nationalism (Facaros and Pauls 2008; Atienza 2006). At the same time, rapid industrialization in Vizcaya fueled a demand for workers and outside groups began to immigrate to the Basque regions (Heiberg 2007). During the late nineteenth century Basque nationalists gained formal structure with the founding of the first nationalist political party, the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Heiberg 2007; Atienza 2006).

In 1933, the monarchy was once again formally abolished and the Second Spanish Republic was declared (Watson 2008). Socialist-leaning Republicans adopted a strategy of regional appeasement and autonomy that granted special status to the Basque regions, as well as those of Catalonia and Galicia (Shafir 1995). After only three years, the Spanish Civil War broke out as Francisco Franco fought against the Republic. The Civil War complicated issues of Basque unity and identity expression as the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipuzkoa sided with the Republican forces while Araba and Navarra cast their lots with Franco (Kurlansky 2001). Both during the war and immediately following it, those

Basque areas which sided against Franco's Nationalist forces were subjected to political and cultural oppression from the right-wing movement. With his eventual selection as *Generalísimo* of the Nationalist armies, Franco was also able to succeed as head of state following the death of Emilio Mola in 1937 (Clark 1979). From the outset of Franco's time in power, there was a violent backlash against him. Initially this was seen in the form of the Spanish *maquis*, Republican soldiers who took to the mountains of northern Spain and waged irregular combat with Nationalist soldiers until the early 1950's. The backlash against the Francoist government coincided with the maturation of factions in the Basque nationalist movement embracing violence, even terrorism, as a legitimate form of resistance. This was particularly true those advocating for complete secession from the Spanish state (Watson 2008). Though not all Basques nationalist groups embraced calls for independence, Francoist oppression increased sympathy the secessionist movement.

Organized and armed nationalist resistance to the Franco regime in the Basque region came in the form of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, ETA) in 1952 (Watson 2008). Created initially as a student discussion group at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, the group was reconstituted as ETA in 1959 (Clark 1990). By the time of ETA's founding, many nationalists were not calling for mere autonomy but actual separation from Spain. In addition, they promoted the mutilation of "Spanish" symbols displayed in public such as the flag of *El Estado España* – the Spanish State – and the national coat of arms that had been created by Franco. Members also began to distribute and clandestinely to hang the Ikurriña, the flag of Basque nationalism, in public places and to graffiti historic Basque emblems throughout major

cities (Hualde, Lakarra, and Trask 1995). There was also a clandestine movement to preserve Euskara communication since part of Franco's "One Spain" policy was to suppress regional languages in the face of the "true" Spanish language, Castilian (Watson 2008). Direct violence against individuals began in 1968 (Clark 1990). The resulting arrests and executions of ETA members were used by hardline Basque nationalists as justification for further attacks including the 1973 bombing that claimed the life of Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's Prime Minister and presumed successor (Forest 1975). By targeting such an important and entrenched member of the regime, the goal of the attack was to induce "a spiral of violence" that would destabilize Spain and increase Franco's oppressive policies toward the Basque people. This would in turn push the average person to pursue independence as the lesser of two evils when compared with the Francoist regime (Juaristi 2000). Ultimately this did not occur, but it did ensure the accession of Juan Carlos I to the throne of Spain from which he pushed for democratic reform.

Following Franco's death in 1975, the Spanish government began a slow transition away from totalitarianism to a democratically elected representative government (Martínez-Herrera and Miley 2010). A draft Constitution was then approved by the Spanish *Cortes* in October 1978, and by the Spanish citizenry on December 6, 1978. It went into effect December 29 of that same year (Mansvelt-Beck 2005). One of the core pillars of this new document was the creation and recognition of Autonomous Communities. Section 2 of the Preliminary Title of the Constitution states, "The Constitution is based on the *indissoluble unity* of the Spanish Nation, the common and indivisible homeland of all Spaniards; it recognizes and guarantees the right to self-

government of the nationalities and regions of which it is composed and the solidarity among them all” (emphasis added). Thereafter, in Section 1 of Article 143, it reads, “In the exercise of the right to self-government recognized in Article 2 of the Constitution, bordering provinces with common historic, cultural and economic characteristics, island territories and provinces with historic regional status may accede to self-government and form Autonomous Communities in conformity with the provisions contained in this Title and in the respective Statutes.” This meant that the new Autonomous Community of País Vasco was quickly formed by its three constituent regions of Álava, Vizcaya, and Guipúzcoa. País Vasco has been able to gain the greatest deal of autonomy of any Community within the wider Spanish state (Martínez-Herrera and Miley 2010). Navarra stayed a separate Community based on an “update and improvement” of its traditional *fueros*, which had managed to survive even the machinations of the Francoist regime due to support for Nationalist forces during the Civil War (Clark 1979).

The Statute of Autonomy granted to País Vasco came quickly after the promulgation of the Constitution, partly in an effort to diffuse secessionists (Clark 1990). However, ETA attacks were actually at their highest levels in terms of casualties and the group was slowly but surely becoming more radicalized during the 1980s. Coinciding with this was the revelation that the paramilitary *Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* (GAL), had begun to kidnap, torture, and kill ETA members, as well as those possibly related to or supporting them (Woodworth 2001). GAL was responsible for 28 known murders between 1983 and 1987, with several others tied to them. The scandal that erupted in the early 1990’s when GAL was found to have state ties further radicalized ETA and bred distrust of the central government. While sympathy for the organization

began to rise, moderate nationalists still dominated the political scene. Herri Batasuna, ETA's political wing, enjoyed significant minority support in the region even though it was the only Basque political party not to sign a 1988 pact supporting the end of ETA violence (Bew, Frampton, and Gurruchaga 2009).

Nationalist parties have played a decisive role in the make-up of the regional assembly and the composition of coalition governments. So strong have they been that every government in País Vasco formed from 1980 until the 2009 election was dominated by a PNV executive. While moderate nationalists during this time came to accept the status quo of far-reaching regional autonomy, hardliners continued to maintain that the Basque people were the only people with the right to make decisions about the future of the region. They also demanded that all members past and present of ETA be granted amnesty, and called for respect "for the results of the democratic process in the Basque Country" with regards to independence referenda (Bew, Frampton, and Gurruchaga 2009).

In 2001 the *Lehendakari* (President of País Vasco) Juan José Ibarretxe offered up a plan to increase devolution of power to the Basque government, to separate the Basque judicial system from the greater Spanish one, and to strip of the central government's right to suspend the regional government's power. This plan was shot down by a 29-313-2 margin in the Spanish *Cortes*. Similarly, a 2008 referendum asking voters if they supported "that the Basque parties, without exceptions, start a process of negotiation to reach a democratic agreement about the right to decide of the Basque People", was suppressed by the Spanish Constitutional Court. Since this brief resurgence of mainline calls for greater independence, however, the politics of nationalist parties have for the

most part returned to their traditional moderate stances. Meanwhile, the Spanish Constitutional Court banned hardline parties affiliated with ETA beginning in 2002 (Martínez-Herrera and Miley 2010). Organizations that the Spanish courts have determined to merely be reconstituted forms of the original groups under new names have subsequently been banned as well. In September 2010 ETA declared a ceasefire, further stating in January 2011 that it is “permanent”, formally renouncing violence in late 2012. Though not admitted by the group, the general consensus is that the reason behind this capitulation has been the increased pressure placed on it in recent years with the continual turnaround in leadership due to arrests.

4.2: DEVELOPMENT OF EUSKARA AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION TODAY

As previously mentioned, Euskara as a language is seen as the marker which defines being Basque. Though Basque people are sometimes described as slightly shorter with a swarthy complexion and darker hair than the stereotypical image of someone from Spain, visual or physiological differences are not really what defines “being Basque”. Rather it is the shared heritage of a culture and region that is marked by a unique language. This is of particular note because while there have been historic descriptions of the “Basque tongue”, Euskara has not been a unified language until the last few decades. Historically there have been up to anywhere from six to nine historic dialects recognized and even today there are five main dialects (Zuazo 2010). These modern divisions arose in the Middle Ages due to separation of various administrative regions as previously mentioned (Elissalt 1981; Zuazo 2010). This multi-faceted language is made more complex by the fact that these can be subdivided into eleven sub-dialects which can themselves be subdivided into twenty-four minor varieties. This becomes problematic for

a nationalist movement identified by language. Though all of these sub-dialects and minor varieties are indeed in the same family, they can be mutually unintelligible.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, as the Basque national movements gained momentum, there were calls to preserve and standardize the language of Euskara (Zalbide n.d.). A language institute called the *Euskaltzaindia* was established in 1918 to oversee language development and conventions. Later given royal patronage, it is a Royal Academy on par with that for Castilian, the *Real Academia Española*. Over the next two decades, literary works – both fiction and nonfiction – in Euskara began to flourish. However, this production ceased almost completely and abruptly with the end of the Civil War (Gardner 2008). The Franco regime suppressed the language as it did not meet his ideals of a unified Spain, though this suppression was not uniformly enforced. The provinces of Vizcaya and Guipukoa were targeted more heavily than Navarra or Araba since they had fought against Franco. However, Araba and Navarra also had smaller Euskara speaking populations and so the process was not as disruptive. Indeed, even today Araba has the smallest Euskara speaking population per capita of all of the historic Basque provinces. Following the return to democracy though, suppression was halted and Euskara was given legal protection and co-official status in País Vasco. The 1979 Statute of Autonomy granted wide-ranging powers and protections to Euskara and movement towards extensive language education programs was begun (Gardner 2008). Prior to this, in 1976, the *Euskaltzaindia* had commissioned a wide-ranging report on the situation of Euskara. That report's information on the status of the language, and one chapter in particular on the preparedness of teachers to instruct in it, was extremely influential in the structuring of the education system.

Because of existence of multiple dialects throughout the region, standardization efforts begun in the early twentieth century were continued under government sponsorship in order to create an “official” dialect. This movement culminated in “Euskara Batua” or Standardized Euskara. Based heavily on Guipukoan – in large part because this province had the highest concentration of Euskara fluency – with influences from other regional dialects, this is the Euskara form used in official mediums – education, government documents, signage, etc. However, there were many emotional debates surrounding standardization. Urla (1993) chronicles these debates, especially as they concern the question of modernity. Cited by Urla, the Basque philosopher Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) had argued that Euskara was a primitive language and that it constituted “a grave obstacle to the spread of European culture in [our] country” (1993, 105). He and other academics argued that Euskara was too primitive and had too long been isolated from the languages of science, business, and culture to be relevant in the modern age. In fact, they went so far as to argue for the continued dominance of Castilian. However, preservationists ultimately won out, Batua became formalized, and the new Basque government began to construct the three-model education system we see today.

País Vasco is officially bilingual, and the education system in the region reflects this by instituting three different tracks or models of schools. A-model is a Castilian model in which Euskara language and literature is also a compulsory subject. B-model is a dual-language mixed system in which primary instruction occurs in both languages based on the classroom and subject. Finally, D-model is Euskara dominant with Castilian language and literature as a compulsory subject (Aldekoa and Gardner 2002; Gardner and

Zalbide 2005; Gardner 2002a; Gardner 2002b). Parents in the region have the absolute right to determine which school model their children enter and the primary language used in their education. “Models A and B were originally intended for children from Spanish-speaking homes, while D was for children from Basque-speaking homes. Model D, however, was from the start also popular with Spanish-speaking parents” (Gardner 2002b, 7). There is not widespread agreement in the literature as to why parents necessarily pick the school model that they do; however, this will be discussed in the following chapter in light of my research findings. Aldekoa and Gardner (2002) and Gardner (2002b) do however show that the number of children enrolled in D-model, and B-model to an extent, have increased in the last three decades while the number in A-model has shrunk. Gardner (2002b) posits that this is because as parents came to see D-model and/or bilingual instruction as “stable” with enough teachers competent in the language and immersion instruction as a valuable experience.

In addition to the public school system, there is also a variety of private schools in País Vasco. It must be noted that these schools, while private, still receive state support in the form of per-student monetary grants. However, parents do still pay fees of varying sizes for their children’s enrollment. These private schools fall into two main camps: religious schools and *ikastolas*. Religious schools are typically operated by the Roman Catholic Church. These religious schools do not feature in this project and so are mentioned here only by way of acknowledgment. *Ikastolas*, though, feature very prominently and so must be briefly explained. In the context of this project *ikastolas* are private schools which follow the D-model, but as private schools they emphasize Basque culture and Euskara language instruction more heavily than in the public setting.

Colloquially *ikastola* is often used interchangeably to describe both public and private D-model schools. In this study I make a clear distinction mainly to provide clear delineation between the public and private.¹

4.3. CONCLUSION

The Basque region has a long history of negotiating domination and autonomy vis-à-vis the Spanish state. Throughout all of this Euskara has become the identifier for what it means to “be Basque”. This became especially important in light of suppression under and resistance to the Franco regime. Following the return to democracy in 1979, Euskara was given co-official status in País Vasco. Euskara Batua was standardized and instituted as a language of government and instruction. It thereafter entered the education arena as part of a unique three-model system in which school choice and enrollment is predicated on the dominant language of instruction. Given the structure of the education system and the importance language plays in it, this project examines the way in which schools serve as social spaces in which nation-building projects and language policies come together for young people as those projects are incorporated into policy. From there it asks looks at the way in which these projects become meaningful to young people and whether various forms of identity (Basque, Spanish, some sense of pan-European) have significance for them.

The following chapter will begin with a discussion of why parents make the language and education model choices that they do. Afterward, it will move into a

¹ Much of the colloquial confusion comes out of the history of the *ikastola* system. Gardner (2002a, 2002b) states that the original *ikastolas* were formed even prior to the beginning of the Civil War but began to be clandestinely resurrected toward the end of the Franco regime. Following democratic reforms, they were given full legality but continued to operate more or less independently of central government core curriculum requirements. However, in 1992 the País Vasco Assembly passed educational reform laws requiring *ikastolas* to adopt reforms and either enter the public system or adhere to the curriculum guidelines for private schools. While many opted for the private system, some became public institutions but kept their *ikastola* names.

broader conversation about the impact of this language instruction on youth conceptions of identity, belonging, politics, and territory in Bilbao and País Vasco.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This project examines issues surrounding the relationship between language education and the development of national identity in youth populations in the Basque region of País Vasco in Spain. It addresses how young people formulate their sense of identity in the context of regional autonomy and national devolution, supranationalism, and European integration. When exploring these issues, this paper gives attention to questions about how different layers of identity become meaningful to young people as well as how they formulate their own sense of identity. Specifically, it asks three broad questions in order to examine these issues. First, how are different political projects being incorporated into language policy in País Vasco? Second, how do different nation-building projects become meaningful to young people in the region? Third, how do educational institutions (schools) function as social spaces in which nation-building projects and language policies come together for students?

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first looks at the issue of school models and the reasons for which students are placed in a particular track. While Gardner's (2002a) says that there is no overarching reason to drive particular school choices, I posit that there are four main trends that can be observed. The second section examines the everyday language usage of youth people in Bilbao. This section examines youth spaces in the city and explores the varying social pressures young people feel surrounding language usage at different developmental stages and the negotiation of

language usage in the wider social city context. The third section broadens out to examine more macro scale issues of nationalist ideologies as internalized by these young people and the way in which they consequentially view País Vasco as a territory of belonging.

5.1: LEARNING EUSKARA

Language and linguistic policies are closely tied in to nation-building projects. However, this is possibly becoming more complicated in the context of the European Union, devolution of state power in Spain, and increasingly globalization. Interviews with teachers, parents and students provide insight into the ways these complications are exhibited as they make choices about school models. The three model system of education in País Vasco is predicated on the ability of parents to choose which language – Castilian or Euskara – is the primary method of instruction and communication in the school. Under the law this choice is an absolute right. With the fact that Euskara is so important to Basque identity and in light of education regimes being pushed by nationalists and cultural preservationists, it becomes important to ask just why parents make the choice to enroll their children in particular schools. While this project is not focused on parents' direct role in language and national identity inculcation in youths, it must nonetheless be acknowledged that they have a profound role in this process. If, as I contend and will expound on later, language education does have a role in introducing young people to nationalist ideals and in subtly inculcating these ideals, interviews with parents and teachers serve as a window into parents' reasoning for introducing their students to particular institutions and language models. This must be examined as a way of understanding how nationalist ideals can potentially be passed down generationally. At

the same time, I consider that this nationalist identity may not be reproduced exactly since parents' intentions may not matter to young people. We must also consider not just the reasons emphasized for learning Euskara, but the perceived ability of each school model to engage in that education. This section will then end with a brief discussion about the different viewpoints offered about D-model schools versus *ikastola* attendance when both systems on paper offer the same language track and curriculum model.

Nationalist rhetoric says that school choice and placement in Euskara language model schools is important for preserving a sense of Basque identity unique from any other group in Spain. Bureaucratic discussions more dryly espouse the preservation of regional cultural and heritage in conjunction with learning Castilian as part of being a Spanish citizen. Even the names of the ministerial departments are wrapped up in this discussion. The language policies discussed here are overseen by the “Departamento de Educación, Política Lingüística y Cultura” which translates in English to the “Department of Education, Language policy, and Culture”. Education, language policy, and the vaguely defined “culture” are all considered closely related enough that they can fall under the purview of one minister. Outside the halls of government though, education choices have more subtleties than bureaucratic labels would suggest. Since all students must learn Euskara by law and different models teach it based on varying levels of immersion, the importance that parents place on learning Euskara can play a direct role in which model their child enters. I discuss a range of responses given to me by parents and students as to why Euskara instruction may be important to different individuals. Of course not all people hold it to be of equal importance and that is reflected in their perception of the different language models and child placement in them. Whereas

nationalist rhetoric and bureaucratic hierarchy promote Euskara education for certain reasons, we see on the ground, at the family level, that these reasons are only part of the picture. Parents select schools with particular language policies for a variety of reason, some ideological but others more pragmatic. While not necessarily representative of all viewpoints across País Vasco, the subtleties that come out in these interviews suggests that there are complicated reasons for choosing various schools. These complications in turn help highlight the varied ways in which young people negotiate national identity and how traditional understandings of nationalism are complicated when viewed at the personal level.

Because Euskara is the primary identifier of Basque identity and because País Vasco is widely seen as a hyper-politicized region overrun with nationalists and separatists, the perception outside the region is that choosing to place children in an Euskara dominant school is an explicit, politically motivated statement. According to my informants this was certainly the case upon the initial institution of the three-model system. However, the perception today – at least within País Vasco itself – is that this is no longer the case. Rather, this choice can also be based on depoliticized national culture/heritage reasons that will be discussed shortly. Of course, this is not to say that political motivation is still not one of the main causes. For those informants for whom politicized sentiment was the driving factor though, it was very quickly evident. Adere, in speaking about why she attended an ikastola, said very bluntly:

Yes, I am a nationalist. That is who I am. I went to [the ikastola] because it had the best program. All of the classes are in Euskara, and Castilian only comes when you have to take those classes. We actually got into trouble if we spoke Castilian, and that is good because it taught people better the language. If you are Basque, you need to know your language.

This last sentence – “If you are Basque, you need to know your language” – is what separates the politicized nationalist reasons for entering an Euskara-dominant school from the depoliticized cultural/heritage reasons to be discussed in a moment. It has very explicit connotations tied to it about what it means to be Basque, and it is said with a hardline attitude. Argument is not acceptable. Granted, said in the context of someone also explicitly stating that she is a nationalist, the political connotations cannot be avoided. It is also important to note that Adere spoke so plainly and positively about punishment for speaking Castilian. For those entering the school for politically motivated, nationalist reasons, speaking Castilian is not just a rejection of national identity, but speaking it in the classroom corrupts the students’ ability to learn Euskara, the thing needed to fully assume the mantle of being Basque. It is thus important to note that such reasons are present, even if they are not the main driving force in school choice for all – or even a majority – of families.

The second reason that a particular school model is chosen is a vaguer sense of culture or heritage. This is what language preservationists who are not ardent nationalist-separatists proclaim. The idea of learning Euskara in order to preserve a sense of regional culture and heritage need not be political as hardline nationalists would have one believe. This illustrates the way in which national identity can encompass a range of emotions and perceptions, some stronger, some weaker. Rather than being a monolithic, political ideology, individuals may express national sentiment across a broad spectrum reflecting varying degrees of hardline or strong nationalism to softer emotional responses. In this way, informants spoke of the need to learn the language because it provides a sense of shared history. This presents what I call a depoliticized form of identity. Whereas

nationalists use Euskara to present overtly political messages and meanings, individuals who advocate for education in that language for cultural reasons consider themselves to have done so apolitically. One teacher, Juana, spoke of this when she told the story of one of her students in the ikastola where she works:

I have a student whose father is [an elected official] in PP². He puts his children in an ikastola because his wife is from the rural area in Bizkaia and they want all of the children to be able to speak with their grandparents in Euskara. The mother's parents. He says that because it is their family history, their heritage, the children need to know where they come from...politically he is very opposed to the nationalists. He admits that he does not want to see País Vasco move away from Madrid.

What Juana describes here is not just any random parent but a politically elected official who belongs to a party that stands against everything nationalist-separatists desire.

Partido Popular is widely seen, for better or for worse, as the political descendants of the Francoist movement. The party is widely opposed, as Juana stated, to any attempt by nationalists to assert any form of independence or more autonomy from Madrid. Rather, this is the party that more than any other espouses the need for centralizing and assimilative practices in Spain. And yet, we see the father of one of her students who publicly stands for all of these things sending his children to an ikastola because he wants his children, who do not speak Euskara at home, to be able to learn the first tongue of their maternal grandparents so that they can feel connection with their wider family.

Other cultural reasons that came up in interviews were less sentimental but no less important. One of the ones that stood out most clearly in multiple interviews was the fact that learning Euskara allows individuals understand and more easily relate to the region's history. Whereas things like connections with family members are emotional and tied to relationships, ideas like historical connections are more intangible. Multiple informants

² PP is the common abbreviation for Partido Popular, the leading center-right party in Spanish politics

spoke about the way in which in today's world Euskara is a minority language with little use outside the region. However, by learning it they say, students are able to stay connected to their homeland and regional history by being able to explore that history in the language it was spoken and written. Unai, a university student specializing in History, took a particularly pragmatic view of this:

“If I want to read about the history of northern Spain around cities like Bilbao, I need to read the papers and things that it was written on in original. The writers of documents in 1600 wrote in the language they used every day and in many places in the Basque Country that was in Euskara. If I cannot read those documents, how can I be a historian?”

For Unai, knowing Euskara is necessary for his ability to be a historian and researcher. However, even informants who were not academics attempting to decipher centuries old tomes still spoke about how knowing the language helped concretize historical understanding. Words like “heritage” and phrases like “knowing where you come from” peppered these conversations. Euskara knowledge was not seen as a political statement but rather a way of grounding oneself (or one's child) in the region from which he or she descends. Again, this reflects a negotiation of a broad spectrum of nationalist attitudes and positions that defy the idea of a single nationalist ideal or indoctrination. In this way, we see both government bureaucratic rhetoric tying language to a general sense of culture or history and hardline political ideologies like those promoted by groups such as ETA cropping up in conversations. No one single viewpoint dominates the internalized negotiations that are occurring but rather multiple viewpoints act as competing foci.

A third reason that came up for enrolling children in Euskara model schools was acclimatization to the region, the practical realization that speaking Euskara makes life easier and allows for wider social circles. It must be noted from the beginning that this was not a huge factor for many of my informants because they and their parents all grew

up in fairly localized contexts around the city of Bilbao or in other parts of País Vasco close by it. However, given that emphasis was placed on it by multiple informants, it does need to be briefly discussed. Jon, a student who moved to País Vasco while in primary school, spoke about his parents' decision to place him in a school that taught Euskara as more than just a single subject:

“Yes, I was in a B-model school. My parents thought that it would be good for me, if I am going to grow up in Bilbao, to be able to speak with everyone. Most people speak Spanish but some people don't. Sometimes there are signs on buildings or the streets that are in [Euskara] and if you can't read them, how can you know what they say?”

Jon, as well as Paula both spoke about the need to speak Euskara in order to be able to speak or read comfortably throughout the city. However, both stressed that this desire to acclimate did not come out of a feeling of exclusion. Rather, they felt that it was so that they could be more fully included. They made it clear that speaking only Spanish was not cause for exclusion throughout most of the city because, in the words of Paula, “everyone speaks [Castilian]”. They described speaking Euskara versus not speaking it as a situation that is layered, not as one that created a strict social dichotomy. This does of course raise issues about the situations in which each language is used and how to negotiate those practices socially, and that topic will be discussed in a later chapter. Here though it should be noted that learning Euskara can be seen not as necessity for fitting into Basque society but rather adding depth to the experience. Again, Paula states:

“If someone in a group does not know Euskara that is OK. We can speak Castilian. But if everyone can speak Euskara and is comfortable with it, we can do that since some people are most comfortable in that language.”

Her statement raises questions about whether or not it is proper to defer to individuals who are fluent in one language or the other in a group that is fluent in both tongues, but I see the power dynamics at play here being more a facet of the individuals who are not in

the group of friends rather than a widespread practice of marginalizing Castilian speech. Paula, who was born to parents who do not speak Euskara, sees her fluency learned in school as a way for her to interact more robustly with those around her.

The last of the four reasons for which parents might pursue an Euskara dominated education model for their children is that it offers economic mobility in País Vasco. Repeatedly informants – including those who also voiced any of the other three reasons previously mentioned – repeatedly stated that if a parent wants their child to get a good job, he or she needs to know Euskara. Even if parents are not fully committed to the nationalist project, they still recognize that one of its key aspects – Euskara fluency – is highly desirable in the region. This reiterates yet again the complex ways in which people negotiate identities and nationalist policies. Maialena and Ainhoa, teachers at a D-model school near the heart of Bilbao, spoke together about the importance of not only having knowledge but fluency in Euskara:

Maialena: Why study Euskara? Because if you do not know it, you don't get a good job. It's that simple. If you want simple work like being a cleaning lady, speaking Castilian only is fine. But if you want a good paying job for which you can get promoted – like in a bank or as a lawyer or getting a good government job – for those kinds of things you need to know both languages.

Ainhoa: Yes. When a student graduates he needs to have that, how do you say it, the certificate, the license from the government...that says you have the grade and are fluent.

Maialena: It's very true. If an employer asks you to prove your fluency and you don't have the certificate, you won't get the job. Especially in the economy today, you have to be fluent.

This issue of the current economic situation in Spain came up repeatedly in conversations as talk turned to the need of bilingual fluency for even entry-level positions. At the time of my fieldwork, Spain's overall unemployment rate hovered at just over twenty-five percent and the rate for under-30s was even more dismal, ranging from forty-five to fifty percent. While informants spoke about how País Vasco was

slightly better off than the rest of Spain due to the regional government's fiscal autonomy from Madrid, they all nonetheless spoke about how bleak the job market was. Because of this bleakness, bilingual fluency in both Castilian and Euskara is often seen as the most basic of marketable skills one can offer an employer. Said Nahia:

Even if you want a job working in a shop selling shirts and clothes, you need to be able to tell the boss that you can speak [both languages]. That way he knows that if a customer comes in you can make them feel comfortable by speaking to them how they want.

It seems very clear that the largest factor for many parents in placing their children in Euskara schools seems to be pragmatic in nature. They want their children to succeed and to have viable careers as they become independent and leave home. Knowledge of Euskara is seen as an important factor in ensuring this. Euskara is not officially required for most jobs; however, knowledge of the language is seen as giving an advantage, even if only a slight one, to job seekers. Not every parent saw it as the ultimate means to an end though. While I heard fairly consistently that it is beneficial, some also admitted that it is really only the case if individuals stay in the relatively small geographic areas in which Euskara is widely spoken. This was summed up best in a statement made by Begoña, a mother of three who has one child living and living outside País Vasco, one relatively close to Bilbao, and a third not yet out of high school. She said

“It's a good thing to know if you are going to work here in País Vasco, maybe in Navarra, but other than [those places], it's not as useful. My son [the oldest child] lives in Madrid and works for a travel company organizing tours for people from other countries. He doesn't use Euskara and has forgotten a lot of it. My daughter [the middle child] lives in a small town south of Bilbao though and speaks it all the time with her boyfriend and in the streets. When [my youngest daughter] graduates and then finishes training to be a nurse like she wants to be, she will need it if she is going to work in País Vasco. It's good to know if you want to work here. If you are like [my son] though and want to work in Madrid or a foreign country, it's not so important for work. But it's good for the option.”

While arguing that learning Euskara is not necessary to achieve a good position, Begonia nonetheless backs up the statements made by other individuals in that learning Euskara allows for flexibility in the work force. Learning the language opens doors that monolingualism does not necessarily provide. Fairly uniformly all of my informants praised government efforts to also teach foreign languages in schools in order to make for a more competitive work force. However, even while acknowledging the importance of foreign language knowledge, bilingual fluency in Castilian and Euskara is seen as the minimum effective attributes a young person can bring to a job. For this reason, the largest driving factor in wanting to learn Euskara in schools is to prepare students for the work force. Nationalist agendas, cultural heritage, and even regional acclimatization may all play a role as well, but economic viability sits at the forefront of many people's minds. The current state of affairs in Spain and the wider European Union market only exacerbate this. Schools are seen as important learning institutions, but they are not necessarily perceived as places in which young people come to internalize national projects. Rather, the spaces and ways in which national projects are negotiated and internalized by young people are layered and complicated, negating the idea of a single, solid nationalist agenda on the ground.

As previously discussed, there are several reasons that parents consider when choosing which language model school in which to place their children. These models are organized around the amount of instruction that occurs in each language – Castilian and Euskara. Since the stated goal of government policy is the bilingual fluency in each language of all students who pass through the Basque education system, the question arises as to whether each model actually achieves that goal. For interest in this project,

the question is even more nuanced – how do parents, teachers, and young people perceive the effectiveness of each model? The answer to that question is fairly straightforward – those affiliated with D-model and *ikastolas* consider the other two models to impart inferior language lessons, though they give some leniency to B-model schools. There is also a perception of difference between public D-model schools and *ikastolas*, but it will be briefly discussed in the following section. The prevailing attitude among individuals associated with the Euskara dominant models is succinctly seen in the following statement from Udane, a student who has native fluency in Euskara and Castilian both but has spent extensive time studying in the United States and is certified with a native fluency in English as well:

“The people who are not in the D-model, the *ikastola* systems - they don't learn Euskara if they don't speak it at home. It's that simple. B-model schools are not as bad, but because the students don't speak Euskara all the time, because they don't use it at home, because it's OK in the classroom to switch to [Castilian], it doesn't stick. Students in the A-model though, they get nothing. They learn Euskara the same way Americans learn Spanish – they study for a test and then when it's done, they forget it all. Those students are good for saying hello and counting to ten. Maybe saying a few colors.”

Those students in B-model schools see A-model schools as rather incapable of imparting Euskara while acknowledging their own middle ground status as the preferred method for children from a Castilian-speaking home as well. The B-model is perceived by these people to be a solution for those students who enter the system from households not speaking Euskara because it allows the students to acclimate to the new language of Euskara without being overwhelmed by a full immersion. Jon, as previously mentioned, moved to País Vasco with his family while he was in primary school. Part of the reason they chose a B-model school was for the acclimatization reasons discussed earlier, but they felt full immersion would overwhelm their son:

“I went to a school that mixed the languages because I never spoke [Euskara] before. In Andalucía everyone speaks [Castilian] and so I didn’t know anything else. When I went to a school where [Euskara] was used to teach more than a language class meant that I picked it up more sooner than in [an A-model school] but I could still speak the language I grew up speaking.”

Those parents and students who choose A-model schools were all almost completely monolingual in Castilian and felt that Euskara language classes provided enough context and instruction. The perception of these schools among the other model groups also tends to be that A-model schools are for those individuals who either are not native to the Basque regions (i.e. emigrants from other parts of Spain or foreign immigrants), care little for Basque heritage, or who are politically opposed to Basque nationalism and identity politics. As has been discussed, this may not actually be the case all the time though because there are people who fall into these categories that nonetheless use B- or D-model schools or *ikastolas*. The perception nonetheless remains. Regardless, those in these A-model schools feel that the amount of language instruction is adequate for what is needed. Statements on the matter tend to be fairly short but focus around the fact that because Castilian is co-official with Euskara, it is what is used by the vast majority of Spain, and “everyone already speaks it anyway” (as stated by Eneko). While the views on nationalist politics and identity discussions among this group did tend to be ambivalent at the most accommodating end of the spectrum, none of the individuals I spoke with were vehemently opposed to nationalists. More importantly in my mind, no one, even members of the A-model affiliation group, were opposed to Euskara education or usage. These individuals simply either did not see the need for full immersion or said that it would be too confusing for a child from a non-native Euskara-speaking home to be thrown into a system in which subjects other than those directly instructing Euskara literacy and fluency were taught.

All of this together shows that not only are the reasons for which people choose certain models complicated, but so too are the perceptions of the models themselves. Each group of individuals has a slightly nuanced version of the school system with which the others are affiliated. These different perceptions also play into the school system choice made by parents. Which language model choice a parent makes is an extremely nuanced decision with varying perceptions of the level of fluency to be gained. Nationalist policies and by extension the nationalist movements behind them then are approached with the idea of choice in mind. This choice can have the emotional connection of nationalist rhetoric behind it for some but for others it can be one of pragmatism, indicating an idea of identity as flexible and one choice among many others to be made as part of other decisions.

For the last part of this section, I want to briefly discuss the perceived differences between enrolling students in the public D-model schools and a private *ikastola* system that follows the same basic curriculum but generally has small fees associated with them. Very quickly it becomes evident in conversation that while both D-model and *ikastola* systems are generally chosen because of their ability to teach Euskara lessons, the *ikastola* schools are seen as being slightly better at it. The reason for this perception comes from the fact that *ikastolas* are seen as being more stringent in their teaching methods and less willing to let students use Castilian outside of Castilian language and literature classrooms. Izaro, a teacher at an *ikastola*, went so far as to say that students were not even supposed to speak in Castilian on the playground because “that means they aren’t practicing all the time like they are supposed to do at school”.

In addition, *ikastolas* have history on their side in encouraging the idea that they are better at imparting Euskara knowledge. As discussed in Chapter III, the modern history of the *ikastola* system began with clandestine structures set up in the later part of the Franco years. Even in areas where these schools were not suppressed, they were not encouraged and sometimes operated more as extracurricular activities than as full-fledged schools. This history lends the idea of the *ikastola* an aura of fervency and authenticity. With the imposition of co-official status and a bilingual system, the perception among many in the population was that there were not enough teachers fluent in Euskara to effectively teach it. *Ikastolas* by their very definition were private institutions that emphasized and even reveled in their Euskara usage and knowledge. This perception still surfaces some today in conversation. However, it also comes alongside some political tensions associated with that history. Because *ikastolas* were originally clandestine, they were seen as the bastions of ardent nationalists clamoring for separatism. According to informants though, while this perception may still persist outside País Vasco in other parts of Spain, it is not a widely held view within the region itself. In the words of Juana, a teacher:

“When I was a student in the 80s, [*ikastola*] attendance was very much political. My parents were nationalists and I was one too. ... Today, that is not so. Today *ikastolas* are more about being the best way to learn Euskara. You know if your child goes to an *ikastola* that she is going to get teachers who really know the language and will always teach in it like they are supposed to do.”

Since placement in a particular school model is a legal right of parents in País Vasco and these decisions are centered around the dominant language of instruction, perceptions about identity, language, and the need to emphasize education in one language or the other are significant factors in making that choice. The reasons parents choose one model or another vary from family to family and hinge on a variety of factors

such as the importance parents place on Euskara instruction and why they feel it is important or not. Furthermore, perceptions of the effectiveness of each model type at Euskara instruction can affect the choice. Parents who stress the need for the best fluency possible, for whatever reason, look towards D-model and ikastola schools. Those who see it as not as important or who themselves do not speak the language and feel their children would be overwhelmed in an Euskara-dominant school look to A- and B-models to varying degrees. The efficacy of each model as well as the perceptions of the schools is important to consider as we move into the next two sections of this chapter. Everyday language use and the role of the school in that are directly tied into how students are instructed and help form their opinions are language spaces and negotiations in the city of Bilbao. These will be important topics discussed in the next section before finally moving into the last portion of this chapter where political ideologies, regional identities, and implications of Euskara language education are discussed.

5.2: EVERYDAY LANGUAGE USAGE

While the previous section discussed the ways in which school model choice are made by parents, this section moves into an examination of the ways in which young people actually use language on a daily basis in Bilbao. As has been covered, one of the primary goals of the education system in País Vasco is to create a bilingual population. While the state rhetoric is that each model type provides adequate instruction for this to occur, perceptions in the population differ as to the truth of this ideal. Different school models and methods of instruction are perceived to convey different levels of fluency in Euskara. Just as there are many nuanced reasons for which people value Euskara education and for why they choose to enroll their children in a particular model, so too is

actual daily usage of the language varied on the ground. Even in youth populations that have fluency in Euskara, the actual usage of it varies from place to place and time to time. While language preservationists argue that language instruction and fluency is the key to saving Euskara from the danger of extinction, knowledge does not guarantee usage. It is actual language usage that preserves a language and its richness. Therefore, it becomes important to examine the ways in which young people actually do speak and use Euskara and how it serves or doesn't serve particular nation-building projects. In order to explore this topic, this section considers three main issues. First, what social spaces do young people inhabit in the city? The school setting may serve as the center of language instruction, but is it seen as a primary space for young people? How do they function socially outside of school? How does their daily language usage reflect what they learn in school? Second, I will briefly discuss the dynamics of language usage at different stages in young people's development. Important questions include whether young people's language usage and emphasis shifts as they mature and how this is impacted by their growing sense of personal and group identity as they move towards the age of majority. The third and last part of this section explores how young people negotiate language usage throughout the city of Bilbao. Outside of youth spaces, how do young people decide what language to use at any given time? What are the cues that determine which language is proper in a given situation? Are these language negotiations necessarily exclusionary or are they a layered phenomenon?

If you are going to talk about both language education and daily language usage in young people, the role of the school as a space in which young people interact must be considered. While most of the population that inhabits school spaces on a daily basis is

composed of young people, do they consider it one of “their” spaces? This is an important question to ask and attempt to answer. If young people feel that the school functions as one of their primary interactive spaces, the requirements placed on them – be they about language usage or otherwise – do not necessarily feel imposed. If, however, and as I argue, the school is seen not as a youth space but as one belonging to the state, reaction against school strictures can also be seen as subtle subversion of the state.

The idea that schools function as youth spaces comes from the fact that they are in fact occupied throughout the day mostly by young people. However, rather than being perceived by those youths as a space in which they interact and operate socially, schools are seen as state impositions. While admitting that social interaction does occur in these places, youth informants generally see this as limited and not as meaningful as what goes on outside the school. This feeling is not unique to students of any one school model or structure in Bilbao. Whereas perceptions of each other’s schools themselves may have varied from informant to informant, they are all acknowledged as places belonging to someone other than the youth population. The school as an institution is seen as a space imposed on young people by adults – the state – in an effort to regulate behavior and learning. While this regulation is not seen as a regulation that unduly restricts young people, it is regulation nonetheless. Similar statements on the subject came from young people throughout the study regardless of school model or current university setting. School is seen as a learning environment, not a social one for interaction with friends and acquaintances. In the words of Irati:

“Schools are just a place where you go in high school because you have to.”

And again from Mikel:

“Youth space? No. Schools are not that. We only go to school for class and for learning. We hang out with friends [in other places].”

And last from Nora:

“You don’t go to school to make friends or meet people. You go to learn. I may meet some of my friends there but I know them because I hang out with them in other places.”

These sentiments then beg the question – if the school is not seen as a social space for young people in which they can interact freely with peers, what then are youth spaces in Bilbao? And within these spaces, outside the strictures placed on language usage in the schools, how do young people use Euskara and/or Castilian when in groups with their friends? The answer to both of these questions is both simple and yet no so at the same time. When examining the idea of youth spaces in Bilbao, asking what areas young people feel are their own, both students and adults interviewed revealed that the city does not really have spaces that can be considered as just belonging to youths. Rather, youth spaces are fleeting and form in general areas only when young people are present. These spaces are not spaces which are universally acknowledged as belonging solely to young people. Instead they are said to belong only at certain times. At other times these spaces are seen as belonging to other groups specifically or the general public more broadly. This is because the spaces seen as belonging to youths in Bilbao are formed in places shared by multiple age groups. When asked about the concept of youth spaces, even adults were momentarily confused by the idea that there might be concretized locations rather than simple group congregations. Juana, when asked if her students saw school as a youth space, explained that they did not and went on to describe what does constitute such an area in Bilbao:

“If you are going to say that there is a [space] for young people, it is going to be out on the streets. Especially on weekends. Teenagers go out and stand on the

sidewalk and in the street and in parks – places like that – and they talk and play and drink. Those are the places for young people. Adults do not go there.”

These sentiments are echoed by young people. They say that there is no real space in Bilbao for them to go all the time. Rather, one simply hangs out with friends in whatever public space is available and it only becomes a youth space when vacated by other groups or when enough young people have arrived to crowd out others.

Interestingly, the one informant who did speak about moves to create spaces for young people to go, to socialize, and to congregate other than public areas was Adere. In her words, the groups attempting to create these spaces, rather than being government or civic organizations, are political parties seeking to mobilize young people into youth wings of their organizations. However, when pressed on these institutions, she, as well as later informants questioned about them, admitted that they are limited in scope and not well attended except by individuals who are already politically active. Otherwise young people continue to simply occupy public areas and inhabit youth spaces that are ephemeral at best as they form and dissipate only when the young people themselves do so.

Regardless of where young people congregate and what they see as their own space, we must still consider how they use language in these areas. Just as with defining what are youth spaces is both simple and layered, so too is language usage. The spaces are simple because they are readily acknowledged to exist but complicated because discerning what makes them is contingent on subjective ideas of youth social practices. Similarly, language usage in these spaces is fairly straightforward because everyone readily admits that both Castilian and Euskara are used. However, the nuances of doing so are much more finely focused. Some informants, especially those not as fluent in

Euskara or who use it primarily in the school setting, talk of using only Castilian in public. Those fluent in Euskara, who use it at home, and who consider it their mother tongue speak about the way in which they switch between languages based on who is present in a group or at what locale they are. This is further complicated by the fact that Euskara is such a complex language family with a standardized form that is taught in schools. As mentioned in Chapter III, there are several dialects, sub-dialects, and regional variations within Euskara. On top of this is layered Batua. Udane explained the added complexities this causes by saying:

“I feel more comfortable speaking Euskara than I do Castilian, and a lot of my friends are the same way. But, not everyone speaks it the same. [My friend] only learned to speak Euskara in school and so she only knows the Standard form. I grew up speaking Biscayan, but I also know Standard and understand some other dialects. [My other friend] is from [a small town] where they speak another dialect that doesn’t sound like Standard, so when we all talk together, we have to use Standard or Castilian so that [my first friend] doesn’t have a hard time understanding.”

This specific example in a group that are all in theory fluent in the same language and comfortable speaking it shows just how layered and complex Euskara usage can be for young people. Young people face an extremely complex language landscape because not only do they have to negotiate whether to use Castilian or Euskara, but they also have to deal with the fact that Euskara itself with a layered language experience with sometimes complex differences between dialects. Batua may address some of these issues by introducing a standardized form that everyone is nominally fluent in having learned it in school, but even then its unintelligibility with some of the sub-dialects and regional variations may cause confusion for individuals who grew up speaking one of the latter in the home. Rather than serving as a national identifier then, Euskara usage and negotiation again reflects choices to be made.

Outside the social spaces created by congregating youths and reflecting the complexities that come with deciding when to use Euskara or Castilian with peers, young people must also daily decide when to use language in the wider landscape of the city. País Vasco is officially bilingual. According to the law, either language may be used in any setting in the region. On paper this means that everything from interactions with government officials to window shopping may be conducted in the language of choice for the individual citizen. Speaking to individuals on the ground though, the actual daily decisions about language usage are not so simple. In many settings around the city, one language or the other is given preference over the other. This can be gleaned both from interviews with informants and through observation methods as you walk through the city. Such navigation is part of the everyday experience for residents in the city. What drives the choice is sometimes overt clues, sometimes mere pragmatism. The young people interviewed referred to the latter when they discussed the use of Castilian in the main areas of the city. Citing the fact that these are the most highly trafficked areas with the possibility of interacting with people who are not from País Vasco, including hordes of tourists, Castilian is used to converse in places like stores and cafes. However, when in smaller, areal context such as peripheral neighborhoods or localized establishments, implicit clues, aside from auditory indications, are used. Calling to mind Billig's description of banal flagging, informants talked about how they subconsciously slipped from one language to another. Leire said:

“When I go into a bar I just know what language to use. Sometimes it is Euskara, sometimes it is Castilian. ...No, [it isn't prompted].”

However, just because there is this negotiation does not mean that there are repercussions for speaking the “other” language than is used in a certain setting. To hold the idea that language usage in this context is exclusionary would be misguided. While informants did talk about the way in which picking and insisting on one language can be a way to make a statement, they also talked about the way in which an individual can slip between tongues without worry in public settings. In fact, in unfamiliar settings or in those highly trafficked areas just mentioned, using Castilian as a safety measure is normal. To be very clear, “safety” in this context does not mean that individuals fear for their actual physical well-being but rather they wish to avoid any misunderstanding. While many informants said the same individually, interview sessions with multiple people were particularly enlightening in this regard as people discussed among themselves the way in which they approach this issue. Udane, June, and Irati and Oier and Unai talked extensively about the way one approaches things like café counters or cash registers, speaking Castilian out of politeness in case someone does not know Euskara. However, there was consensus that, if the individual used Euskara, the conversation could switch to that language with no problem, or vice versa as needed. In this way, young people spoke of daily negotiations in the public sphere not as a political statement but as a matter of practicality and social niceties. Hardline political ideologues on either side of the issue may maintain usage of either Castilian or of Euskara as making a statement about identity or beliefs, but to many young people, everyday usage in the city is much simpler. It does not have to have deeper meaning other than speaking comfortably with friends or ensuring a coffee order is placed correctly. Language usage does not even have to be “pure” with every informant acknowledging uniformly that pidgin forms are used constantly as vocabulary from one

language or the other constantly bleeds over into conversations held in the other tongue. Even though Euskara is considered a defining characteristic of the region and the Basque people group, individuals acknowledge that usage can be varied on a personal level.

Markel, who admits to speaking only the most basic amounts of Euskara, had this to say:

“It’s not bad if you don’t speak Euskara. I don’t feel uncomfortable if I’m in a neighborhood [in Bilbao] or in [a little town] in the countryside where everyone speaks Euskara. It’s OK because everyone knows that not everyone speaks it.”

One other issue to briefly examine is the way in which language usage shifts in young people as they mature. This conversation primarily concerns the usage among children who are enrolled in Euskara-dominant schools. What language do they use as they move through the school system given a choice? Does it shift through time? If so, what is the reason for this shift? Even though, as previously discussed, these young people do not on a daily basis see language usage in public settings as a political statement and more as a matter of convenience or practicality, it must also be remembered that the young people interviewed have reached the age of majority. These are individuals who are already finished with their primary and secondary education and so are beyond the requirements that they have to use both Euskara and Castilian both in formal settings each day. For the children still under these strictures though, maturation is coupled with the desire to act against these imposed guidelines in the proverbial teenaged rebellion. Whereas those who are of age and have graduated have the right to make their own language choices, students in school do not have this freedom. Their behavior is regulated by the state in the form of language usage. However, while they may act against these rules, they do not necessarily see it as an act of state subversion but rather as a form of social negotiation and maturation. Juana, in describing her students, talks about

the way in which her *ikastola* prohibits the use of Castilian outside of specific classes as a way of encouraging full immersion.

“When [the students] are in the primary classes, they only talk in Euskara like they are supposed to do. When they get a little older though, in the [middle school] grades they start to have conversations in Castilian when they are talking to themselves or on the playground. They aren’t supposed to do it but they think it makes them look cool. That’s because, you know, all the movie stars and football players and people like that speak Castilian and that’s just part of being cool.”

This attitude illustrates the complex issues surrounding both language instruction and the way in which Euskara education efforts battle the hegemonic forces of Castilian language society and media. In order to preserve the language, Basque governments instituted Euskara education models. However, because the region is still situated within the wider Spanish media system in which nationally produced programs are made in Castilian, these efforts are complicated by constant bombardment of Castilian programming. This again goes back to Billig’s arguments about the ways in which everyday experiences subtly reinforce or complicate nationalizing projects, even language education. However, it also illuminates the complicated negotiations in which young people make daily. While older youths speak of language usage in terms of being comfortable or issues of practicality in daily interactions, they also talk about the way in which minors see language as an issue of social standing. Media figures do not use Euskara; old people and politicians do. However, as they reach the age of maturity, juvenile notions of language as “cool” begin to shift as people enter the wider society as citizens. Instead of seeing the language as a way to affiliate themselves with glitz, it assumes more mundane meanings that arise as they order their morning coffee.

Negotiating language choices on a daily basis is a multi-layered event for young people in Bilbao. Within the spaces that youth populations consider their own, there are

complicated internal decisions to be made in social settings as they choose between speaking Euskara, Castilian, or some hybridized form of the two. This is complicated even further by the fact that Euskara Batua – Standard Basque – is the official form of the language but not necessarily what is spoken in the home or in every pocketed region of País Vasco. The spaces that young people inhabit only further blur this picture as so-called “youth spaces” in Bilbao are ephemeral at best, mirroring as it were the constantly shifting language usage in them. Instead, young people are seen to interact mostly within public spaces, only gaining their own areas when there are large crowds of them present and the premises are vacated by other groups. Outside of these instances though, young people in the city still have complicated decisions about language usage to make as they perform everyday activities. However, rather than making this decision based on overt statements about identity, young people talk about choosing languages in public settings based on comfort and practicality, acknowledging that even if the person in question takes a hardline view of Basque identity and language preservation one way or the other, the region is still nonetheless multilingual. Finally, in addition to making these social negotiations, young people have strong internal decisions to make as they mature. Living as they do in a minority-language region, they are bombarded on a daily basis by media in the dominant language group. The process of deciding which language to use in social situations becomes complicated as they attempt to decipher which language brings more social prestige. This becomes more complex as they come closer to the age of majority and economic issues begin to surface as language fluency and usage becomes a matter of employment pragmatism. In summation, the daily choices made by young people about young people in their spaces and in public spaces are complicated and must sometimes be

tenderly negotiated, but the reasoning behind their decisions often boil down to mundane, banal experiences rather than political or national ideology.

5.3: NATIONALIST IDEOLOGIES AND TERRITORIALITY

The last section of this chapter will explore two issues related to the manifestation of nationalist ideologies in young people. The first thing that must be discussed is the affiliation that young people profess politically. Euskara is so often that marker used to define being Basque and it is defended and promoted with religious fervor by hardline nationalists. Because of this, they promote Euskara education programs and large portions of the population, especially young people, now speak the language. However, the question arises as to whether these same young people who are being educated because of this preservationist and nationalist agenda also affiliate with nationalist parties. If there is a lack of sympathy for nationalist sympathy, the question begins to arise as to why these policies are pursued. Following that conversation, we must turn to the idea of País Vasco's territoriality. As discussed in Chapter I, nationalism is directly tied to the concept of territorial integrity. A group of people cannot make a national claim unless they also have a territorial homeland, real or imagined, to claim as their own. Basque nationalists not only have a well-defined homeland but also wield large amounts of effective power in it, receiving large concessions of autonomy from the central government for the Spanish portions of it. This makes it important to examine how young people, as the future generations inheriting this territory, conceive of País Vasco and of its relationship with Spain, as well as the supranational influence of the European Union.

País Vasco is seen by many people in the region as an area separated from the rest of Spain not just by its separatist political beliefs but also by a perceived predominant

left-of-center stance that differentiates it from other regions in the country. The young people I spoke to talked about how, especially amid the current financial crisis, País Vasco stood slightly above the rest of the country on the basis its fiscal autonomy and protected social safety net. While much of the rest of Spain is forced to undergo stringent fiscal austerity measures in order to receive the funds it needs to remain solvent, País Vasco is able to mitigate some of the more painful such measures within its own borders. For young people who express nationalist viewpoints, this is only a further example of the corrosive influence of Madrid that retaining autonomy has helped avoid. Udane, speaking bluntly, said:

“These other regions, they are having huge problems right now because the Spanish government is able to tell them what to do all the time and they don’t have control over their own money. Here, that is not the case. Our government is able to control its own spending and so we are able to protect things that matter to us like the health care system.”

These views mirrored those of other young people who stated that País Vasco is better off than other places in Spain or even in Europe because of the way the nationalists were able to garner enough power from the central government that they have fiscal autonomy. This bodes well for the largest nationalist party in País Vasco, the moderate center-left Partido Nacionalista Vasco. PNV has in recent years rejected calls for outright secession, touting as they do the security that comes with staying in the larger state entity that is Spain. However, though, they do not advocate and in fact actively resist any calls for surrendering some of their autonomy back to Madrid. Young people, even proclaimed nationalists such as Udane, admit that while they like the idea of an independent País Vasco, they can also see given the current economic landscape how devastating independence would be. Similarly though, those students who are verbally reject nationalist sentiments still give credit to those political parties for the stability that comes

to the region from their influence. Merkel, describing himself as “probably more conservative than anything else” said:

“I’m not political. I don’t think we should leave Spain. But [the nationalists] have made [this] one of the best places to live in Spain. Our banks haven’t had to be bailed out and there are fewer unemployed people here so I’m OK with them if they are in power.”

The last issue raised here by Merkel of the nationalists being in power is also an important point to consider. The last Basque government was a coalition of the conservative Partido Popular and the socialist Partido Socialista Obrero Español designed specifically to unseat the PNV after almost 30 uninterrupted control as the majority or dominant coalition partner in government. While PNV received the largest portion of the votes in that election, they won only a plurality in the regional assembly. Because of this, a coalition of erstwhile opponents formed and kept them from power, only to then be saddled with the blame for the downturn that did occur in País Vasco. While it was still not as bad as the rest of Spain, the blame for hardship was transferred to the coalition parties that were widely seen as having betrayed their principles for the sake of petty politics and their own political ill-will towards nationalists. The anger at these coalition partners manifested itself not just in concerns about the economy, though. Many of the young people I spoke with saw PP, descendant of the ruling conservative party under Franco, in particular as having been especially politically devious because of the longstanding antipathy they had towards PSOE. Reflecting the way in which politics in País Vasco is indeed more complex than just arguments about regional autonomy and language issues, some informants mentioned in particular how País Vasco is a more socially liberal region than others in Spain and that they were afraid PP would attempt – at the national and the regional level – to cut services like healthcare and public transit,

limit reproductive rights, and roll back social initiatives such as gay marriage that had been introduced in the previous decade. All of this though still took place within wider conversations about the role of the economy and the European experience.

When asked how individuals felt about the European Union and whether there was any affiliation to it, informants of all groups laughed. To these individuals Europe is simply an economic project. Attempts to spur considerations of social or civic programs were met with confusion while questions about Europe's directives on regional language protections were met with blank stares at best and denial that such things exist at worst. Indeed, the idea that there might be some sense of European identity in youth populations was laughable. While expressing appreciation for things like open borders or educational opportunities that came with wider integration, these were still discussed in economic terms. And, given the time period in which this field work was conducted, much of that conversation centered on the perception that foreign countries, Germany in particular, were imposing their will on countries like Spain. Oier went so far as to reiterate the joke that Germany had finally found through the European Union the way to conquer Europe without engaging in open warfare.

In the end, the political beliefs to which young people in País Vasco ascribe are complex. Even individuals who do not agree with nationalist viewpoints accept that they have done good things for the region. Other political parties, in particular the conservative PP, are blamed for current economic hardships felt throughout the region and the wider country. The idea that young people could have a wider sense of European identity or affiliation outside of economic interests was ludicrous to many and puzzling to others. However, these conversations must still be taken in context of the wider economic

crisis that was paralyzing the continent at this time. Regardless, the fact that individuals hold these views is only beneficial to nationalist parties at this time, even if not to be cause of nationalism. They are seen as the antithesis of the system that caused financial meltdown and the guarantors of the current structural regime that mitigated the crisis on País Vasco by ensuring fiscal autonomy. This in turn helps foster a sense of moderated nationalism even among individuals who are not themselves ardent Basque nationalists. Rather than seeing parties such as PNV as wild-eyed separatists, they are seen as a party which acts to safeguard the region from wider potential ruin by financial manipulation. While this trend of moderate nationalism must be viewed through the lens of the current situation in Europe, it nonetheless in the short term speaks volumes for the cause of nationalism. Rather than advancing nation-building projects, nationalism seem to have fallen by the wayside in this context.

In addition to how young people identify politically, I want to end by discussing the idea of País Vasco as a space and how this can be influenced, however subtly, by language. To begin, the idea of a Basque homeland is tied into the language itself. Mark Kurlansky writes that the Euskara term for the greater Basque Country made up of all seven historic provinces is “Euskal Herria”. Rather than translating literally as “Basque Country”, it roughly translates as “Land of the Euskara speakers”. Similarly, the Euskara term for someone of Basque descent, “Euskaldun” translates roughly to “Euskara speaker”. These words, internalized every time they are spoken, help inculcate the idea that someone is Basque by speaking Euskara and that those people and that language are tied directly to the ground on which they stand. Embedded in the language itself is the necessary territorial claim needed for nationalism. This is not always so overtly stated,

but sometimes references to the territorial distinctions do come up in conversation with young people.

One of the simplest questions I asked my informants during their interviews was where they tell people they are from if they are (or imagined they would be) traveling outside of País Vasco, particularly in a foreign country. The responses were surprising. While one would expect the vocally nationalist students to proclaim their loyalty to País Vasco, it came out that most everyone began by saying that they would say they are from “the city of Bilbao in País Vasco”. While a few informants hedged the bluntness of this statement by immediately qualifying it as being in Spain, one informant, Udane, was incredibly blunt and also interesting given her widespread travels in both Europe and the United States, the latter of which included two separate yearlong living experiences:

“Where am I from? I tell [people] I am from the city of Bilbao in País Vasco, the Basque Country.”

William: What if they don't know where that is? Do you...

“I say País Vasco is an area on the coast between France and Spain, and if they ask more or are curious, I explain that well technically we are inside Spain but that our part is different. That we have our own laws and government and, and that we're different from the rest of Spain.”

Very few of my informants were so blunt as to say that País Vasco is a territory *between* France and Spain with clarification only if prompted. However, the idea that the region is viewed as unique comes out often in conversation, sometimes also with qualifying statements such as, “Not that the rest of Spain would agree with me, of course.” This uniqueness is embedded in the language itself, important again because of the mandatory language education all children undergo. Whether a child is placed in an A-model, Castilian dominant school or a strict *ikastola* that punishes children for speaking anything aside from Euskara outside language and literature classrooms, the fact that they must all learn at least the basics of the language helps internalize this idea of

language, people, and land being all tied together. In this way, language education, while preserving the language and culture of the Basque people, also subtly inculcates nationalist ideas in children. While most likely not envisioned that way by the first proto-Basque speaker, this notion means that so long as the language is spoken, it has potential to exacerbate any efforts to centralize País Vasco with Spain or any other power that seeks to limit its autonomy. This bodes well for those attempting to pursue nationalist agendas and speaks volumes as to why individuals such as Francisco Franco wanted to stamp out this ancient language.

5.4: CONCLUSIONS

Language education policies in País Vasco have been put in place so that parents can choose what school their child attends based on the various levels of immersion in Euskara and Castilian in which their child is taught. While nationalists and many outside the region see choosing Euskara dominant education as a statement of national identity, many people – parents, teachers, and students – today view it somewhat differently. Nationalist political leanings do have an impact in some cases, but other pragmatic ideals also come into play. Whether it is an attempt to make a child more appealing to a potential employer or an attempt to acclimate to society in a new region, there are other competing reasons for emphasizing language fluency. There are also a variety of positions on the type of school model that meets the needs of these various goals. At the same time, young people are constantly negotiating the linguistic landscape and choosing to speak in one language or the other. The shifting youth landscape of the city mirrors this shifting linguistic usage.

The development of youth identity in País Vasco is affected by a myriad number of factors. Rather than adopting a singular national project as their own, young people position themselves through negotiation of these competing interests. This has profound implications for the future of nationalist movements in the region because youths are not adopting wholesale the monolithic or singular ideals pronounced by either Spanish or Basque national projects. Rather, nationalist policies and politics are again viewed through a pragmatic lens as they are seen to have counter-balanced centralizing policies from Madrid that helped contribute to the current state of economic deprivation in the country. This has a moderating effect on nationalist politics which become less separatist but at the same time prolong them as the parties promoting nationalist viewpoints are seen as the vanguard of regional autonomy and fiscal stability.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Nationalism is concept of identity tied to place and group sovereignty. It suggests that the group making a national claim has a shared origin and common destiny, it is inherently political, and it is directly tied to the idea of a group homeland. While some theorists tie the development of nationalist sentiment to ancient roots, this project adopts the modernist viewpoint that nationalist projects are much more recent endeavors that have been constructed for political or ideological purposes. Advocated for and imposed on a populace by political elites, these national projects are homogenizing forces that seek to suppress competing identities. Part of this includes the establishment of vernacular languages and the suppression of regional variants in order to impose a more common sense of uniformity. Part of this struggle includes the standardization of the education system and linguistic teaching practices. However, in today's increasingly interconnected world, national projects are challenged by globalizing or supranational forces. In the European Union we see efforts made to preserve regional languages and identities as part of the EU's mantra of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism. This creates a large series of tensions between the substate, state, and EU levels as different national projects simultaneously act alongside and against each other. In this middle of all of this we see young people growing up and having to negotiate the various meanings and identities associated with each political project as they are pronounced in public and educational spheres.

This is particularly the case in the Basque region of northern Spain. It has a long history of nationalist and separatist movements. The Basque people have inhabited their land since before recorded history, and they speak a unique language – Euskara – that has become the marker by which people most identify with being part of this group. Over the course of modern history, there have been attempts made to both preserve and to suppress this regional language in the face of the dominant Castilian tongue in Spain. The homogenizing national forces of the central government’s policies were particularly profound in the middle nineteenth century under the auspices of the Franco regime. Today the situation stands so that País Vasco, one of Spain’s seventeen Autonomous Communities comprised of the historic Basque provinces of Bizkaia, Araba, and Gipuzkoa – places the two languages in co-official status with each other. This means that both Castilian and Euskara may be used in any public setting, official or informal, with full legal rights. As part of this umbrella policy, education policies have been put in place that allow for curriculum instruction in varying levels of immersion in each language with the proviso that language instruction courses must be offered in both languages no matter the school model. Basque nationalists trumpet this policy as a way to preserve Basque heritage and identity in the face of Madrid’s hegemonic power and influence. It is also held up as an example of how País Vasco is able to govern itself given widespread autonomy from Spain. Meanwhile the Spanish government marks it as an example of how the state recognizes differences in regions that yet still fall under the idea of Spanish identity.

Because language is key to Basque nationalist rhetoric, its usage and education can become very political. It is therefore important to study the ways in which these

education policies play out in daily circumstances and the way in which individuals affected actually perceive and react to them. Young people, being those most directly impacted by these policies, are therefore the ideal focus of such study. This work draws on a series of interviews with parents, teachers and students as they were asked about education policies, language usage, perceptions of the Basque education system, and the ways in which they see themselves and País Vasco situated in the world of Spain and the wider European context. The information gathered is intriguing. Instead of adhering to rigid senses of identity as propounded by national elites, it appears that young people in particular negotiate competing identities on a daily basis through a series of choices surrounding political opinions, language usage, and social interaction. Rather than displaying overt tendencies toward one national project or the other, they describe the way in which País Vasco is separate and yet integral to Spain and vice versa. Traditional hardline nationalists are undercut as these individuals discuss not the need for independence from Spain but how the status quo of regional autonomy has helped blunt the impacts of financial depression rampant throughout the rest of the country. At the same time though, there seems to be little attachment to Europe other than the fact that it offers economic opportunities. Just as school model choice seems to be viewed pragmatically in many cases, so too does the idea of European interconnectedness with little attachment to the idea of European civic ideals.

Traditional understandings of nationalism then are becoming troubled in País Vasco. Negotiated identities that are affected by daily practices do not fit within the understanding of nationalism as constructed and imposed by elites. In its place individuals, and particularly young people, sort through competing rhetorics and tensions

to adopt practices that nationalists may claim as their own – such as language usage – with an eye for pragmatic decision-making. However, in adopting these practices and identities, young people simultaneously give a nod to nationalist movements by acknowledging their role in society around them. In the Basque region in particular, this plays out so that young people may not express the secessionist views of hardline separatists but they nonetheless acknowledge the perceived ways in which nationalist governments have benefited their region. Language usage and education play a role in inculcating nationalist identities and sentiments, but this inculcation does not necessarily have the profound impact for which nationalists might hope. They receive continued support, but it is a moderate support that views these identities as part of a series of practical choices.

These results have implications for the study of nationalism and national, especially in Europe. Complicated though the current state of affairs is by the pressures of extreme economic turmoil, we must begin to ask what the future of nationalism is. Is nationalism dead? I would argue not, but the way in which it is viewed, internalized, and acted out is shifting. Further work is needed to explore this idea, and a more wide-ranging study in the País Vasco and the city of Bilbao might yet yield further nuances to this idea. Nationalism is still an important force in the region, but the ways we see its practices being enacted are shifting. The language of Euskara is still an important identifier for individuals in the region, but there are now many perceived reasons for achieving fluency in it other than to make a political or cultural statement.

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