

# **The Last Terrorist Organization in Europe: the PKK**

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All of the major terrorist groups (IRA, ETA, and PKK) are based on ethnic conflicts between the ruler parts of their countries and their minorities. However, of those conflicts unlike the common sense, are based on socio-economic reasons. It means that the state repressions, economic difficulties, sociological discriminations, and international conjecture affect these kinds of conflicts. As a result, it is not why they are Basques or Kurds to rebel against their states.

It was aimed in that paper to underline the reasons about those well-known conflicts in Europe which are Basques conflict and Kurds question. Using historical perspectives to find the socio-economic conditions will guide us to understand the origins at conflicts in Basques country in Spain and in Kurdish problem in Turkey. As it is know terrorist organization in Spain declared the permanent cease fire. As a result, if the similarities between those two conflicts are major and higher then differences, those can be a chance to make a prediction about the PKK. The title of “The last terrorist organization in Europe: The PKK” can be found as exaggerated but at the end of the story, it will be proved that those conflicts are very similar in terms of their reasons. However, in Turkish side, making a prediction about the survivability of PKK has some difficulties. The main reason of that is the Iraq War since 2003. It means that the Iraq War which was led by the US gives chances to terrorist groups to survive themselves in a field where they can make training and get chances to recruit their organizations. However, in that paper, it will be the only tension to analyze the topic according to expectations via Europe. In other words, the expectation about ending military struggle among the European societies is higher than before with the catalyzing effect of the war against terrorism; cease fires declared by IRA and ETA, European Union ideals and unification of Europe through those ideals, etc. On the other hand, the paper will not be classical ethnic conflict analysis paper which firstly tries to explain what is nation and what is ethnic group. Then it gives deeper explanation about the existed ethnic conflict with historical perspective. In that sense, the road map will follow that line for me: giving general historical and contemporary reasons of these two conflicts via socio-economic explanations (ETA and PKK) throughout their similarities and differences; finally add to feelings and trends in Europe about those conflicts. The final chapter will give us a chance to make a possible

prediction about the PKK, but as it was said before; that ultimate aim in that paper does not contain the existing or current events in Iraq and in the Middle East.

Under the spot lights of those explanations, the research question of that paper can be well understood: Can we expect any possible influence from the experiences of ETA about the survivability of the PKK within the era of anti-terrorist feelings in Europe and the war against terrorism?

Additionally, the methodology of this paper will be the qualitative analysis. It means that analyzing the question will be based on understanding the conflicts in terms of their origins. Therefore; the ultimate aim of this paper is not to find a general statement about the ethnic conflicts or struggles between the minority groups and the ruling groups in countries. However, the aim of the research design is to make a comparison between the origins of these two conflicts, which were said before, in order to find their similarities and differences.

### **Literature Review:**

In describing the conflicts; there are two main ways. Those are primordial analysis and socio-economic analysis. In terms of the primordial analysis, ethnic conflicts are based on the ethnic origins. It means that the struggle between the Basques and Hispanics in Spain is because of their cultural differences. Additionally, the ethnic conflict in Turkey between Kurds and Turks is because of their historical and ethnical differences. There has been a big debate between Turkish and Kurdish groups via their national descriptions. However, this approach can not explain why there was no big struggle between Turks and Kurds before the age of nationalism or nineteenth century. In other words, this approach is not able to explain why Basques killed most of their victims into the transition period in Spain after 1978 when a new constitution was approved.

On the other hand, there is another approach into the literature to describe the conflict throughout the socio-economic reasons. It means that the ethnic or sociological disputes are based on the socio-economic conditions.

More generally there are two different approaches to explain those conflicts via nationalism or state repression. In other words, is the main reason for establishment of ETA or PKK their ethnic or national origins or expansionist policies of the Spanish and Turkish states? We can only explain the tactics, decades, and aims of those two terrorist groups with socio-economic approach because of the reasons which were said above.

#### **1. Historical background of Basques and Kurdish Problems:**

Both of conflicts in Spain and Turkey have historical backgrounds about reasons of them. In that sense, history gives us the evidence to support our thesis about those conflicts

that they are because of state repressions. As it will explained below, both of Basques and Kurds are the native groups in their regions and in contrast to other minority groups in those countries, they have right to declare their historical sufficiency about their cultural and social rights.

### **1.1 Historical origins of Basque Conflict:**

From the very early periods of the history it is known that Basques have lived in Biscay Gulf, the northern part of Iberian Peninsula, the area where today France and Spain share. There are some arguments about their origins. They named themselves as Euskera but when we look at the knowledge about Basques, it is definitely known that their language isn't welded from Hindu-European or Latin. Basque people's unique characteristics of ethnicity and language are the most important bases of their nationality. They claimed that Basque constitute "the purest" European race. There are four provinces in Spain; Alva, Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, Navarre and three provinces in France; Labourd, Basse Navarre, Soule. Now the only autonomous region of Basque is the area that exists in Spain and the most important cities are Bilbao, San Sebastian and Vitoria.

Basque depended on a system called *Fueros*. It is to protect the integrity of the customs and their ways of lives (charters of medieval origins protecting local customs and autonomy).<sup>1</sup> They were free in terms of land, law, legislation, government, taxation, military and customs.

Being an overseas empire these areas became the most dynamic places for trade and commerce open to foreign influences and exchanges.<sup>2</sup> They had a wealthy land and the industry was based on metal, steel and ship-building. They went through an industrial modernization. These developments definitely led Basque bourgeoisie to occur and this caused a separation. Due to this separation there had been two civil wars in 1833-40 and 1873-76. In these wars bourgeoisie was on the nationalist's side and the community was on the king's side. By the victory of nationalists in 1876 Basque region lost its autonomy.

Losing autonomy, industrialization, modernization, leading to migration of non-Basques to find a job and socio-economic factors prepared a ground for the increasing of Basque nationalism. First nationalist formation showed itself in worker movements due to the painful working and living conditions of workers. Also the social complains of Basque people and the widened gap between Basque - Catalana (industrialized parts) and the rest of the country

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<sup>1</sup> Luis Moreno, "Glossary," *The Federalization of Spain*, (London: Portland, 2000), p.XIII

<sup>2</sup> Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, "Introduction," *Twentieth century Spain: politics and society, 1898-1998* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p.2.

contributed nationalist parties to establish.<sup>3</sup> Basque nationalism held a violent racialist and separatist position. In 1895 PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) was founded by Sabino de Arana Goiri. They warned that the “purity “and superiority of Basque race was threatened by the growing number of immigrants attracted by the success of Basque industry.<sup>4</sup> Arana told about democratic ways to establish Basque Autonomous State. By making speeches including modernist nationalism and anti-capitalism bases also working class started to support PNV. Soon it became the most powerful party.

By the starting of Riviera dictatorship in 1923 PNV began to pursue a soft policy and until the end of this period it had to stay like this-1930. In this period Basque nationalism was leaded by racial groups.

In 1931, 2nd Republic was established in Spain. With this both PNV and Basque nationalism revived. Spain gave autonomy to Catalans but not to Basques. This negative situation it enabled their efforts to increase for gaining autonomy much more then before. In 1932 they made a referendum and 82% of people voted for acceptance in Basque region. 1932-36 Spain Parliament accepted to give autonomy but before getting it Civil War (1936-39) occurred and they couldn't take it. In this war Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa were on the republicans' front, Navarre and Alaba were on Franco's. PNV was also on the republicans' side that had the commitment of taking autonomy. During the war Franco attacked Basque regions with the association of German military-air forces and caused massacres. The 2nd republic period was ended and Franco' long dictatorship began. Some of Basques left their lands and went to France, other European countries and the USA.

In this period PNV focused on strengthening Basque culture again by following a passive policy. In addition the party also cooperated with the groups that were against Franco. They saw that they could reach independence and believed that democracy was the crucial point.

In 1952, group that didn't accept this policy of PNV left the party and composed a group called *Ekin*. Ekin argued that Basque didn't fight against Franco regime, Basque was against Spain that's why Ekin criticized PNV because of making cooperations with Spanish republicans and leftists.

In 1959 a more radical group in Ekin left and started armed struggle for national independence called ETA (Euzkadi ta Askatasuna- Homeland and Freedom). ETA is a leftist group which struggled for building an independent Basque state in both north Spain and

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<sup>3</sup> Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, “The Liberal Monarchy,” p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.22.

southwest France. It was formed by a young activist group that reacted to Franco's dictatorship, because he implemented pressure on their language and culture. They all continued their actions both in Spain and France.

## **1.2 Historical origins of Kurdish Question:**

Kurds have been the largest ethnic group after the Arabs, Persians, and Turks in the Middle East. For at least five hundred years, they were divided between Persian and Ottoman Empires; however, in the past seventy years they have been yet further divided among the states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. During the time of Ottoman Empire, the Kurds along with other Muslims were part of a broader Sunni Muslims cone within a multiethnic empire.

However, by the nineteenth century, new factors induced gradual political change in the relationship between the Kurds and the Ottoman administration. Until that time, the Ottoman state preferred to be in a bargaining with the landlords (aghas) of the region to control the boundaries, collecting taxes, and recruiting the army. This was the origin of Ottoman Land System which was called "Timar". However, after the age of nationalism and economic defeats into the empire, the situation started to change. So many revolts occurred, but as Henry Barkey explains; those revolts were not nationalistic in character and their suppression led to the strengthening of sheikhs and tariqats leaders. In other words, the traditional feudal Kurdish lords in the areas, the aghas, perceived themselves "as Sunni Muslim subjects of a fundamentally Islamic Empire and had no interest in an unpredictable Kurdish entity in which their own status may change for the worse."<sup>5</sup>

In other words, until the nineteenth century, the exchange between the Sultan and the land lords kept the system alive. Kurdish tribes and clans were aware of their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. But there was also an important tool for defining themselves in the Ottoman Empire. At the local level, they identified with various religious orders and tribal groupings. The linkage between those groups was the caliphate.

With the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, two contradictory events appeared. On the one hand, the emphasis on Islam was undermined with secularism and constitutionalism. This was one of the crucial events for the Kurdish society in the Ottoman State. It means that this was the beginning of unpleasant story in terms of their fights to the rest of the society. Another event after the 1908 revolution was the nationalist movement. In terms of constitutional reforms, the Kurdish elites found themselves into a nationalist revolt, because of the Young Turks tried to consolidate its power with a pan-Turkism movement. Other

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<sup>5</sup> Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Origins of the Problem," *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), p.7.

outcome of all those events was the anti-regime reaction among the sheikhs and religious orders.<sup>6</sup>

After the defeat of Ottoman Empire in WWI, Atatürk revolted against the Sultan and the occupying Western powers. In the process of this rebellion, he was successful in enlisting the support of the Kurds in his quest. In the beginning of the War of Independence, Atatürk often addressed the equality of Kurds and Turks, the commonality of the struggle and the brotherhood of two peoples.

When the Turkish Republic was founded after the War of Independence the aim of the new regime was to build a Western type secular nation-state based on Turkish national, linguistic, and cultural identity. Therefore; the aim of the new regime was two fold: dissociate the state from religious principles and to teach religion in Turkish who had been practicing Islam without understanding of it for centuries.<sup>7</sup>

As Cornell argues that the most related principle of new state to Kurdish question is nationalism. When T.C was created in 1923, there were recent immigrants of Slavic, Albanian, Greek Cyprus, Abkhaz, and Chechen origins. Therefore; it was a big issue to build a nation in Anatolia. Out of the one community, the nation building project of Atatürk, which was based on the Turkish identity, was successful. It was the only group that escaped from this process has been the Kurds. There are several reasons for that:

- a) Demography: Kurds are by far the largest non-Turkish speaking group,
- b) Geography: The area was distinct from the administrative center,
- c) Kurds are different from other large groups, they are indigenous groups and not comparatively migrants,
- d) The Kurds, unlike others, were organized according to tribal and feudal social factors.<sup>8</sup>

The Kurds are not homogenous group in religion, language, and ways of life. There is also lack of political unity among them. They are organized tribal and feudal types. As a result, there are two basic ways to control the tribal areas: a) break down the tribal structure and integrate the population; b) co-opt with tribal leaders and use them as instruments of power.

Because of the risks of breaking down, Turkey chose to co-opt with tribal leaders in the Southeastern Anatolia. In that context, as in Basque country, the young generation started to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>7</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics," *Orbis*, Vol.45, No.1 (Winter 2001), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.4.

rebel against that power structure. Since the continuity of that gives no chance to change their social status and living conditions in terms of modern society. Thus, leftist ideologies have had a specific attraction to many of the Kurds.

In other words to describe the Kurdish problem after the foundation of Turkish Republic, there is another approach which is based on state repression. As Ahmet İçduygu argues that: “since its founding in 1923, the Turkish Republic has pursued aggressive assimilation policies towards its Kurdish minority...hence it did not permit the expressions of Kurdish identity and language within its borders.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, Mustafa Saatçi also argues to assimilation policies of Turkish state and he says that the, it rejected the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnic group and tried to eradicate the issue through forced assimilation.<sup>10</sup>

In 1924, the Caliphate was abolished and religious activities by the religions orders were banned. The combined effects of those changes was an uprising led by Sheik said in 1925. The revolts during the 1920s and 1930s were suppressed harshly. The cumulative effects of those events on Kurdish Nationalist Movement have been momentous. In the long term, the assimilation policies and urbanization of Kurdish population created a wider and stronger Kurdish consciousness, which has expressed itself in the armed, long and bloody resistance on one side, although limited, a political movement within the Turkish political system on the other side.<sup>11</sup>

As it was explain above, Turkish state chose the way to co-opt with tribal leaders as the Ottoman done and this caused the appearing of leftist ideologies among the Kurdish new generations to challenge against that structure. After 1962 Constitution, more freedom led to a mushrooming of leftist activities among Kurds and others. Leninist-Marxist affiliations emerged. During 1970s, leftist radicalization continued and enrollment in higher education increased. Those parallel process heightened awareness of economic and political disparities between the southeast and rest of the country. As Michael Rubin explains, industrialization also largely bypassed Kurdish areas in eastern Turkey. This led to urban migration and social dissatisfaction among the Kurds.<sup>12</sup>

Finally the coup of 1980 and its aftermath increased state repression towards the Kurdish Nationalists. In October 1983, the Turkish state banned all of the mother languages except Turkish. The Kurdish publications were also banned. Therefore; with those

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<sup>9</sup> Ahmet İçduygu, David Romano and İbrahim Sirkeci, “The ethnic question in an environment of insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.22, No.6 (November, 1999), p.993.

<sup>10</sup> Mustafa Saatçi, “Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish-Kurdish conflict,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.8, No.4 (ASEN, 2002), p.557.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.558.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Rubin, “Are Kurds a Pariah Minority?,” *Social Research*, Vol.70, No.1 (Spring 2003), p.311.

repressions, migration to the west and keeping national tendencies in the western country to mobilize populations has become more popular. Kurdish Nationalism was also affected by Palestinian struggle against Israel and double standard policy of Turkey about Turkish minorities in Bulgaria. As a result, the terrorist organization, which is called the PKK, is an outcome of state repressions. In other words, as Baskin Oran argues that; “the PKK basically was produced by the September 12.”<sup>13</sup>

### **1.3 Conclusion:**

As it was argued before, both of the Basques and Kurdish problem became violent due to the state repression policies of Spanish and Turkish States. In Spain, Franco tried to assimilate Basques via Hispanic tradition. In Turkey, the Kurds were tried to assimilate according to Turkish identity. Their language was banned in daily life and in intellectual life. In both of the countries, economic policies increased insufficiency among those groups. As a result, in both conflicts, Spain and Turkey have experienced terrorist and violent rebellion movements.

## **2. Responses of ETA and PKK**

In that stage, it is aimed to find the similarities of ETA and PKK about their responses to conflicts in their countries. Are the reasons of violent similar in both two countries? Do they use the same tools? Are the organizational schemes same? And finally how the states in Spain and Turkey responses their activities? At the end of the day, it will show you that the tactics, decades, ideologies, and responses of the states to those terrorist organizations are very similar. As a result, if Turkish government can follow the way as Spanish government went, there can be the same result. However, in the side of PKK, there should be the tendency to solve the conflict about the Kurdish community. In that sense, ETA intensified to solve the Basque conflict in Spain since especially after the Madrid bombing, it lost massive support and unsatisfactory feelings about using violence increased in Spain. In other words, the anti-terror atmosphere in Europe influenced the survivability of ETA. In the side of the PKK, the massive support among the Kurdish population to violent action tends to decrease. Additionally, if the European community, especially EU pushes the process and Turkish government can benefit from that atmosphere, there can be an end of violence in Turkey.

### **2.1 What is ETA and its responses to the conflict:**

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<sup>13</sup> Baskin Oran, “Kürt Milliyetçiliği: Doğuşu ve Gelişmesi,” in Seyfettin Gürsel and et al. (ed.), *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: Tüses Yayınları, 1996), pp.43-46.



ETA is headed by three-man executive committee. There are two hundred active members and supports can be counted as two thousands. There are also sympathizers who voted for Herri-Batasuna as nearly one hundred and eighty thousands<sup>14</sup>. Because of its organizational structure, there has been no problem to recruit the organization. ETA generally responded with violent to the Basque conflict between Spanish state and their country. In that sense, there are three levels of violent involvements for ETA: a) the direct commitment to violent actions of ETA; b) the intermediate level of involvement consistent of person who is trying to mark public places with the icons of radical separatism, destroying symbols of Spanish community. The participants are relatively more visible than ETA members; c) popular support for violent separatism is the third and weakest level of involvement. Sympathy for ETA is reflected in voting for Herri-Batasuna.<sup>15</sup> Herri-Batasuna combines leftist radical and anti-system ideas that may have a specific attractiveness to social groups suffering from market integration.

After 1968, ETA passed through an ideological ferment, moving rapidly from Catholic social radicalism through a spectrum of anti-colonialist position which was a Marxist, Leninist Movement.<sup>16</sup>

ETA's military actions had a particular model which can be formulated in a three consecutive actions like that; action-repression-action. It means that 1) ETA carries out a provocative violent action against the political system; 2) the system responses with repression against the masses; 3) the masses response with a mixture of panic and rebellion whereupon ETA embarks on a further action that brings the masses a step further along the road to revolution.<sup>17</sup>

In order to understand the ETA's responses to the Basque Conflict, we should lastly look at the stages in its life. In that sense, there are three main decades in ETA's activities. First decade started with the cultural pressure policies of Franco and the main attempt was to react of those policies. After the first social government in 1982 which means the end of the transition period in Spain in the post-Franco period ETA started use different tools such as car bombing which caused the death of so many civilians. The last decade is based on a new strategy made by radical nationalists. It was based on a grim slogan "Socialize the suffering."

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<sup>14</sup> William S. Shepard, "The ETA: Spain Fights Europe's Last Active Terrorist Group," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Winter 2002), p.65.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Mansvelt Beck, "The Continuity of Basque violence: A geographical perspective on the legitimization of violence." *GeoJournal*, No. 48 (October 1999), p.110.

<sup>16</sup> Ludger Mees, "Between votes and bullets. Conflicting ethnic identities in the Basque Country," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.24 No.5 (September 2001) p.805.

<sup>17</sup> Paddy Woodworth, "Why do they kill? The Basque Conflict in Spain," *World Policy Journal*, (Spring 2001), p.5.

This meant that all of the society shares some of the pain suffered by their militants and prisoners. Another name of this new strategy can be the *intifada* (street struggle). In other words, the survivability of ETA is based on the popular support. In the last decade, they declared a permanent cease fire since they lost massive support to response to the Basque conflict with violent tools.

Essential targets for ETA were security officers and government buildings, also in recent years journalists and civil people. Their first event was to a train that was carrying politicians in 1961. In 1980 their most bloody attack was resulted with 118 dead and one of them was prime minister of Franco, Luis Carrero. They continued their actions until 1998, because they signed a one year armistice in that year. But after that one year they again started their murder attempts.

In the post-Franco period, the Spanish state made a new constitution and it was approved in 1978. In that new era, all parts in Spanish country demanded more liberties and rights. The Basque community was one of them. Although with the constitution of 1978 they've gotten autonomy in education, health, police and taxation, they were the only community who refused the new constitution. Since, they believed that the new constitution was based on the non-Basque identity.<sup>18</sup> They thought that the new constitution which was made with leading of Franco's commander, King Juan Carlos, fixed the dependence of Basque Country on the Spanish State and perpetuate the territorial separation of different Basque regions. As a result of this unfortunate atmosphere of the post-Franco time, violent reactions by ETA increased and as the figure 1 shows below that most of the ETA's victims died in the transition period between 1978 and 1983.

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<sup>18</sup> Ludger Mees, "Between votes and bullets. Conflicting ethnic identities in the Basque Country," p.808

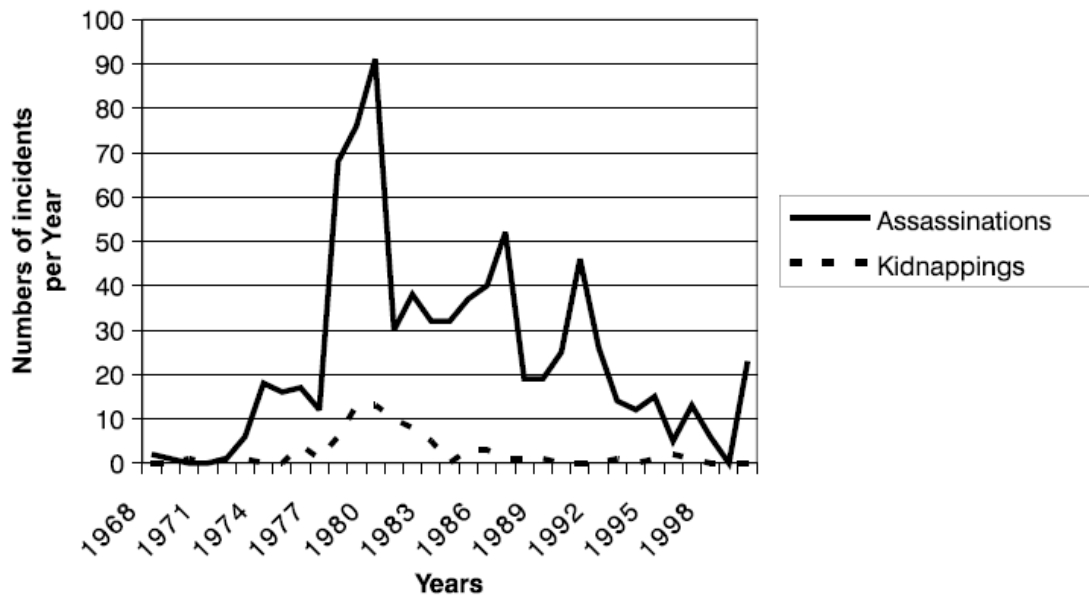


Figure 1<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, there is another important reason of increasing violent actions in the transition period. The pure reason is the “dirty war” run by democrats. In October 1982, an absolute majority was won by Felipe González Márquez’s Socialist Party. This was a cardinal changing point in the Spanish transition. Since, it was the first post-Franco government whose members had no links with the dictatorship. There were high hopes that ETA would give an end of its bloody actions. However, such hopes were lost when ETA killed another senior general in Madrid. After that point, an extra-legal organization which is called GAL (Anti-terrorist Liberation Group) founded by the socialist government of Felipe Gonzales to combat ETA. From 1983 to 87, the GAL killed 27 people. Most of its targets were senior members of ETA, but a third of its victims were not the members of ETA. They were ordinary French citizens.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the actions of GAL caused a disastrous picture in the Spanish democracy and increased the bloody actions of ETA such as car bombing in the streets. This new strategy by ETA also victimized so many civilians.

In the industrialization stand, the loss of protection made by Basque industries became subject to international competition, especially in the globalization era. This caused the closing down of many factories and so many Basques suffer from unemployment. During the 1990s, the unemployment rate was 22 percent.<sup>21</sup> In other words, this can be illustrated in the

<sup>19</sup> Carlos Pestana Barros, “An Intervention Analysis of Terrorism: The Spanish ETA Case,” *Defence and Peace Economics*, Vol.14 No.6 (December 2003), p.403.

<sup>20</sup> Paddy Woodworth, “Why Do They Kill?,” p.7.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Mansvelt Beck, “The continuity of Basque violence: A geographical perspective on the legitimization of violence,” p.116.

figure 2 which shows us that the number of ETA members who are worker had increased dramatically.

ETA militants according to their occupation at the moment of recruitment,  
by periods of time (in percentages)

Occupational categories	1970–1977	1978–1982	1983–1995	Total
Industrial or tertiary sector self-employed	0.8	0.7	—	0.6
Agricultural small holders	1.6	—	—	0.6
Managers and executives	—	0.7	—	0.3
Administrative, sales & technical personnel	20.6	20.6	24.3	21.0
Services sector personnel	5.6	8.2	8.1	7.1
Specialized industrial and services workers	50.0	35.6	16.2	39.3
Industrial & services nonspecialized workers	11.1	11.6	13.5	11.7
Agricultural workers	1.6	0.7	—	1.0
Unemployed	—	0.7	2.7	0.6
Students	5.5	21.2	32.5	16.2
Other categories	3.2	—	2.7	1.6
Total	(126)	(146)	(38)	(310)

Missing data: 304

Figure 2<sup>22</sup>

Spanish government and ETA had made many debates, negotiations until 1998, but due to continuing their actions government's attitude was harden. Aznar said that he wasn't going to sit for debate unless ETA surrendered. From 2001 they have arrested lots of militants and in 2003 they closed Batasuna Party which they named it as the political wing of ETA. Finally after 9/11 both USA and EU have freezed out the accounts of ETA. After the establishment of the socialist government in Spain, both parts of the conflict made many negotiations and they resulted in a permanent cease fire declared by ETA. Additionally, end of the Irish conflict in Britain, the general feelings against terrorism, loss of popular support pushed ETA to declare the *permanent cease fire*.

## 2.2 What is PKK and its responses to the conflict:

PKK was founded in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist Kurdish Political Party and advocated the creation of a Marxist-Kurdish State. From the beginning, Abdullah Öcalan was the

<sup>22</sup> Fernando Reinares, "Who Are the Terrorist?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, No.27 (August 2004), p.484

obvious leader of the organization. In Party's 1978 program, Kurdistan is seen as a "classic colony" divided among four colonizing states that kept it in a state of semi-feudal backwardness.<sup>23</sup>

There are three decades in the life of PKK:

1) Between 1978-1984: The PKK tried to gain the support of the population. It attacked the machinery of governments and the distribute propaganda in the region. Its tactics were based on ambush, sabotage, protests, and demonstrations against the Turkish government.

According to Cornell, with start of military operations in 1984, the PKK left Turkish Kurds with few choices: a) Stay out of politics completely; b) or join the PKK.<sup>24</sup>

2) Between 1984-1999: It is called terrorism stage. Attacks on the government's military vital institutions all over the country. It also conducted suicide bombing on government and police installations, kidnapping and assassination against government officials and Kurdish tribal leaders. Why the tribal leaders are enlisted in target list by the PKK? Since they are in co-operation with Turkish State and their behaviors led to continuity of feudal structure of region. Additionally, the PKK turned down the Marxist-Leninist approach because of the little resonance of its rhetoric among the population in agricultural, rural, Southern Turkey.<sup>25</sup>

3) Third stage involves the conventional fighting which is used to seize cities, overthrow the government and take control of the provinces where the majority is Kurds. After the capturing of the organization, A. Öcalan, in 1999, the PKK tried to change its strategy towards to political aims. In that sense, it changed its name on KADEK or Kongra-gel. However, all of those names are enlisted in the terrorist organizations list by EU and US.

PKK finance itself by the mobilization of international sources. Such as;

- Support of Kurds in exile (primarily in the western Europe);
- Financial resources from the narcotic trade;
- Direct and indirect supports from states (during the 1980s, Soviet Union, Greece, Iran, Greek Cyprus, Syria) There is also support from businessman in the country who are Kurds.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to ETA, most of the members of PKK are the lower class of the society.<sup>27</sup> The PKK saw the education as a tool of assimilation by Ankara administration. In that sense,

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<sup>23</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, "Between Guerrilla War and Political Murder: The Worker's Party of Kurdistan," *Middle East Report*, No.153, Islam and the State. (July-August, 1988), p.42

<sup>24</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics," p.6.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, "Between Guerrilla War and Political Murder: The Worker's Party of Kurdistan," p.40.

between August 1984 and November 1994, they killed more than 120 teachers and burned down 200 schools in the region.<sup>28</sup>

Turkey's response to the PKK was generally in military operations. According to estimation, during the war since 1984; 4049 civilians, 5121 security personnel, and 17248 terrorist were killed. Additionally 3200 villages have been destroyed, 380.000 people were forced to relocate in the region and 3 million to migrate to the western part of the Turkey or Europe.<sup>29</sup> However, in economic terms, Turkey spent 5% of its GDP to the fighting against the PKK. But if Turkey would tried to decrease the lost of state enterprises by 2%, it can get more income as 8% of its GDP. This can be also enough to solve economic problems in the region.<sup>30</sup> As it was said before, one of the responses of Turkish State was the forced migration. In that sense, according to data of 1990s, the average urban population was 59% in Turkey. In southern Turkey, this rate was 40%. In order to suppress the logistic support to PKK, the state emptied the villages; most of them were burned down to make it difficult for peasants to return back.<sup>31</sup> In 1990, the east of Turkey got 11% of all investment in Turkey. However, this rate decreased 4% in 1991, 3% in 1992. In southeastern Turkey those rate was 23% in 1990, 13% in 1991, and 1% in 1992.<sup>32</sup> Those rates show us the disastrous effects of terrorism for Kurdish community in Turkey.

### 2.3 Conclusion

By looking at the Spanish and Turkish cases according to responses of states and terrorist organizations gives us the significant ideas about the socio-economic reasons of conflict. Although there are cultural reasons for those conflicts, as it was explained before, economic; social; and political reasons dominate the conflicts. However, it does not mean to exclude cultural causes of problems. For example, nobody can say that the forbidden of speaking Kurdish language after the 1980 coup raised the terrorist activities. Conclusionally, most of the responses by ETA and PKK are similar. There are also similar cases between Spanish and Turkish states. However, after 2003, with the new government in Spain, the Spanish state preferred to choose more democratic tools to response to Basque problem. In that sense, it can give the same result in Turkey if the conditions will be available for everybody.

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Rubin, "Are Kurds a Pariah Minority?," p.314.

<sup>29</sup> Mustafa Saatçi, "Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish-Kurdish conflict," p.559.

<sup>30</sup> Seyfettin Gürsel, "Önsöz," *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu*, (Istanbul: Tüses Yayınları, 1996), p.3.

<sup>31</sup> Cumhur Keskin, "Türkiye'nin Kürt Politikası ve Resmi İdeoloji," in Seyfettin Gürsel and et al. (ed.), *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: Tüses Yayınları, 1996), p.66.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p.67.

### **3. Conclusion**

At the beginning of this paper, the question was can we find a possible prediction about the survivability of the PKK in the era of anti-terrorism. By using the knowledge was given before, the Spanish and Turkish cases are quite similar except the higher industrialization status of Basque region in Spain. However, it is not a barrier for us to think that both of the conflicts are because of the socio-economic reasons. As it was shown before; rising of using violence in both cases depends on the state repression. It was also shown that both of ETA and PKK are quite similar in terms of their tactics, actions, and ideologies. However, there are some exceptions in the case of PKK. The PKK was use to be supported by more foreign countries such as; Soviet Union, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greek Cyprus etc. However, Turkey is now in a better relation with Iran, Syria, and Greece. Russia, who is the inhabitant of Soviet Union, is the same axis with Turkey and the USA in a war against terrorism. There is also talent in Europe against using violence as a legitimated tool in a struggle against legitimated states. As a result, except the current events in Iraq War, there can be strong an expectation about the permanent ending of using violence in political aims by the PKK. Additionally, the Turkish state should response the current circumstance more democratically and rationally.

*\* All responsibility of this paper belongs to the author.*