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BASQUE NATIONALISM AND THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE

An Analysis of Public Perceptions of ETA in Spain and France

Anthony T. Spencer and Stephen M. Croucher

Abstract / This study represents a test of the spiral of silence theory across national boundaries regarding the Basque separatist group, ETA. Approximately 200 participants were surveyed for this study in France and Spain. The study found a stronger spiral of silence effect the closer participants were to the Basque homeland both geographically and culturally. This test of the spiral of silence is consistent with previous research in finding a need for cross-cultural applications of the theory.

Keywords / Basque separatists / ETA / France / looking-glass effect / Spain / spiral of silence

The world's recent 'war on terror' led by the US has thrust many ethnic and religious separatist factions into the global spotlight. One of those groups receiving attention is the Basque people of northern Spain and southern France. The Basque struggle for independence is not an easy history to dissect and evaluate. It is one muddled by various wars, uprisings and conquests over the past several centuries by both the French and Spanish. The Basque homeland constitutes seven provinces, four in Spain and three in France (da Silva, 1975). For the reasons of recent ethnic conflict, language oppression and terrorist activity, this article focuses primarily on the Basque people and region in modern-day Spain.

This project examines the formation of the Basque identity, the struggle to forge a separatist ethno-linguistic movement and the willingness to speak out for or against that movement depending on ethnic and national identity. This struggle is not new; the Basque people have struggled for centuries against domination by the Spanish and French governments. Since the 19th century, the Basques have had uniform resistance to that domination. That struggle turned violent in the 20th century with mixed levels of support within the nation and around the globe. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 on the US and the 2004 Madrid train attacks have changed the world's view of armed resistance. However, no one has yet systematically studied public opinion in a region of armed conflict, such as in the Basque region, in the post-9/11 world.

This comparison of willingness to voice opinions across national and ethnic boundaries will enhance knowledge of the context as well as lead to an untapped

area of theoretical development of the communication theory spiral of silence. Only one study has compared the spiral of silence effect of an issue across national borders (Waipeng et al., 2004). However, several studies have called for more cross-national and cross-ethnic studies of public opinion.

National Identity

The fragmentation of Spain into the Basque and other autonomous regions that make up Spain, such as Catalonia, Galicia and Valencia, has been exacerbated by the lack of a national Spanish identity. According to Aguilar and Humlebæk (2002), 'For any Spaniard who had lived under the dictatorship, expressions such as "Spain" and the "Spanish Nation" or cheers of "Viva España" immediately evoked Francoist discourse.' Basque identity, patriotism and language have been intertwined since the repressive language policies of General Francisco Franco (Urla, 1993). While Franco ruled Spain, the Basques, like other minority-language groups in the nation, were not allowed to speak their own language, teach it in schools or have media outlets in their own tongue.

Unlike other ethno-linguistic minority groups in Spain, the Basques have never embraced being part of the Spanish nation, nor have they been fully represented in the process of nation building (Edles, 1999). Radical Basque separatists were not part of the conversion to democracy after the death of Franco; however, more moderate political leaders were involved to a minor degree.

Watson (1996) maintains that minority European languages such as Basque, Catalan and Irish need protection and support as opposed to languages that are the official languages of a nation-state. Under Franco's regime, speaking Basque or any other indigenous Iberian language other than Spanish was a crime (Shepard, 2002). Since 1977, Basque and other regional languages in Spain have had co-official status in their respective provinces along with Spanish (Encarnación, 2004a). The very identity of the Basque people centers around their language, a situation, Blommaert and Verschueren (1998: 192) note, that is 'reminiscent of nineteenth century scholarship' in its romantic focus of language as identity. The Basque language is one of a very few non-Indo-European tongues spoken in Europe. It is so complex and concentrated in the Basque nation that it has come to be the very symbol of the people's identity (Clark, 1984; Edles, 1999; Linstroth, 2002; Urla, 1988). Hargreaves (2000) found the Basque language declining as the functional language of households in the Basque region of France, which already has a much lower population of Basque speakers than Spain.

Basque nationalism developed in the 1890s under the leadership of Sabino de Arana y Goiri. He modeled many of his ideas of linguistic and cultural separatism ideology on the Catalan nationalist movement in northeastern Spain. Arana was very much a traditionalist in his views of conserving Basque culture, believing that a complete isolation from other peoples was needed to preserve cultural identity. In 1898, Arana founded the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), which was the major political arm of the Basque separatist movement until younger, more radical members split off to form Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) (Edles, 1999). The word ETA

is Basque for the conjunction *and*, so the word *eta* appears somewhere on most Basque-language texts (Shepard, 2002). This allows for repetition of the group's name, even when the group is not being referenced.

In the past few decades, Basque symbolic space in the Spanish nation has been identified with ETA and its violent resistance to everything Spanish (Llera et al., 1993) as the Spanish are looked upon as colonizers of the Basque homeland (Guibernau, 2000). Even today, the Basque separatist movement distinguishes itself from many other ethnic conflicts in that it is a campaign centered on language, as opposed to many others around the world that are founded on religious differences (Encarnación, 2004a). Even schools in the Basque region have begun to associate language knowledge instead of lineage as the key determinant of Basqueness or Basque identity (Echeverria, 2003). For many people both inside and outside the Basque regions of France and Spain, Basque identity has become synonymous with violence and terrorism.

Terrorism

Terrorism is difficult to define; every cultural group has different interpretations of what it means to be a terrorist. The US does not have a clear, consistent definition of terrorism that is used by all its administrative departments, and nor does the collective community of the world's nation-states (Tuman, 2003). These views also depend on one's perspective. A person or group can be a freedom fighter to one individual and a terrorist to another (Kellner, 2004). Terrorism means one thing to a terrorist, something different to a victim and something completely different to an outside observer.

Generally speaking, the targets of a terrorist episode are not the victims who are killed or maimed in the attack, but rather the governments, publics or constituents among whom the terrorists hope to engender a reaction – such as fear, repulsion, intimidation, overreaction or radicalization (Cronin, 2002–3: 32).

Encarnación (2004b) adds that in the last several decades, Basque terrorists have killed more than 800 people in Spain. In the eyes of the US, Basque terrorism does not bestow legitimacy on its claims, particularly after the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Shepard, 2002). Other authors, such as Zulaika (2003), note that countries, including the US and Spain, can use the term terrorist or terrorism to their advantage to rhetorically frame and thus punish particular individuals or groups. Through various means of terrorist tactics, the Basque separatist movement has become most identified and divided by the militant tactics of ETA.

Turner and Sparrow (1993) note the importance of effective polls and other market research in gauging support in political campaigns. One traditional methodological problem to survey research that focuses on support in the Basque region centers on validity. Researchers often attempt to ask if people support ETA; however, they usually do it in an indirect way, not tapping into the main principles of support given to the group (Clark, 1984). This means that there are problems with reliability in measuring what they intend to measure; that is, whether people in the region support ETA.

Asking a respondent in a public opinion survey if he or she supports armed struggle to achieve regional independence is rather like asking the head of a family if he or she advocates bank robbery to provide his or her family with food and shelter. Naturally, viewed this way in the abstract, very few respondents in any sample would ever answer affirmatively to either question. The crucial datum lies in how many persons would answer affirmatively *if all other measures fail*. If, for example, family heads could not provide for their loved ones in any other way than to resort to criminal action, how many would do so? If supporters of Basque independence could not achieve their goal in any other way, how many would advocate insurgent violence? Regrettably, public opinion surveys do not usually give us such discriminating information (Clark, 1984: 169).

According to Martinez-Herrera (2002), the figures for attachment to a Basque identity have not changed much in the last 25 years, with about 50 percent of the region's population identifying itself as primarily Basque. However, the Spanish preference for identification has fallen to a low of less than 10 percent of the population (Martinez-Herrera, 2002: 436). Zirakzadeh (1991) claims that the likely reason the Basque people have not risen up against the Spanish government is that the government is very selective and careful about the way in which it represses this minority group. Hargreaves (2000) notes that France has had far fewer violent clashes between the Basque separatists and the government than those carried out in Spain. This could be linked to the fact that the French government has been less repressive of the Basque language, even allowing it to be taught in some regional schools since the 1951 Deixonne Law.

Mees (2003) cites 143,000 ETA followers as recently as 2001; this figure includes a wide age range and support level. He reiterates how strong a force ETA is in maintaining separatist attitudes in the Basque region. It is a well-developed organization that retains tight controls over its members and a high level of pressure against potential dissidents. Recognition of ETA and Basque identification by participants in the present study must be established to examine what factors will or will not create a spiral of silence effect on willingness to express public opinion of nationalistic views based on the actions of the controversial paramilitary group ETA.

Our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Spanish residents from outside the Basque region will have a more unfavorable opinion of ETA than Spanish residents inside the Basque region of Spain.

Spiral of Silence

The public opinion theory spiral of silence focuses on a person's willingness to voice their opinions on an issue depending on whether they feel they are in the majority viewpoint or the minority one, which is determined through what people deem to be the climate of opinion. They detect this climate of opinion through what Noelle-Neumann (1974, 1984, 1985) terms a 'quasi-statistical sense'.

There are four theses central to the ability to detect a spiral of silence effect in a population (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1977, 1984). First, most people are afraid of becoming isolated by their views. Next, people observe the attitudes of others around

them and express their own views accordingly. The individual will also attempt to discern which viewpoints can be expressed without creating a sense of isolation. Last, a person will be more likely to express a viewpoint if the viewpoint concurs with the majority's opinion and less likely to express an opinion if it is not consistent with the climate of opinion.

Climate of Opinion

The climate of opinion is dependent upon who speaks up and who remains silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1984). In a later study (Noelle-Neumann, 2004), this was deemed less of a statistical function and more of a cognitive decision-making process. Often the person who holds the minority viewpoint will not go against the majority. They often fall into a spiral of silence, refusing to be a part of the vocal minority (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1984). According to Scheufele et al. (2001), most studies before the late 1990s simply assumed fear of isolation played an important role in the spiral of silence without operationalizing it.

The amount of public support shown for an opinion impacts how the public perceives the opinion. If a person believes their opinion is unpopular, they will be less likely to voice it; thus a group that perceives itself to be in the minority will fall into a spiral of silence on a particular issue. The converse also holds true; if a group perceives its view to be dominant, the group members are more likely to speak out. This phenomenon was first recognized in Asch's work with confederates who attempted to mislead participants as they gauged the climate of opinion on a particular issue (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1984). Noelle-Neumann and her team diverge somewhat from part of Asch's premise. In Gonzenback's (1992) study, respondents incorrectly evaluated whether they were in the majority viewpoint. This makes researchers question whether a group really has the ability to accurately gauge a climate of opinion or if members often fall into the public opinion fallacy of pluralistic ignorance in which members of a society reject a belief, but believe that most others accept it (Prentice and Miller, 1996; Taylor, 1982). Past research has shown perceived public support during a conflict or wartime can be inaccurate and even inflated (Eveland et al., 1995). Eveland et al. found 6 percent variance in personal support for the US 1991 war in the Persian Gulf. Moreover, research into the 'looking glass effect' has revealed that most people think most others will have opinions similar to their own. Little research has examined why this effect happens, while research has demonstrated similarities between the 'looking glass effect' and pluralistic ignorance (Glynn et al., 1999).

We propose the following hypotheses:

H2a: Spanish residents in the Basque region will be more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques.

H2b: Spanish residents outside the Basque region will be more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques.

H2c: French residents will be more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques.

H3a: Spanish residents in the Basque region will believe their personal opinion of ETA is similar to their perceived climate of opinion.

H3b: Spanish residents outside the Basque region will believe their personal opinion of ETA is similar to their perceived climate of opinion.

H3c: French residents will believe their personal opinion of ETA is similar to their perceived climate of opinion.

Fear of Isolation

Noelle-Neumann (1977) defines public opinion in two ways: the judgment of citizens made in a rational manner and the pressure to conform. It is from this concept of conforming that she devises the fear of isolation concept. She further explains her concept of societal isolation by stating: 'Our social nature causes us to fear separation and isolation from our fellows and to want to be respected and liked by them' (Noelle-Neumann, 1984: 41). However, Salmon and Kline (1985) argue that reference groups might play more of an important role in reinforcing a person's minority opinion and their willingness to speak out on an issue. This alludes to the potential richness of theory development within the construct of fear of isolation. This is what Moscovici (1991: 304) calls the 'dynamic center' of this public opinion theory.

This tenant of spiral of silence could be modified by focusing on the importance of the aforementioned reference groups in not only forming opinion but also encouraging or suppressing minority viewpoints on politically salient issues. In a study on the issue of disputed territories between Jews and Muslims in Israel, Shamir (1997) found that political discontent is significant when it comes to willingness to express a less demanding opinion and most importantly has interpersonal implications; such as joining a conversation on a bus ride. Shamir states, 'Who speaks up and who remains silent is thus not only a function of social conformity considerations, but no less a matter of people's need to express their values and of politics' (Shamir, 1997: 611).

This fear of isolation has often been examined through hypothetical voting research, which yielded mixed findings. For example, voting research (Katz and Baldassare, 1990) comparing conservative and liberal voters in Orange County, California did not find respondents who felt they held a minority political view as more hesitant to speak 'on the record'; however, the research did find that women, older and lower-income residents were less willing to voice their opinions.

Researchers in the spiral of silence found the structure of the theory did not accommodate hypothetical scenarios well and have proposed focusing on a person's willingness to voice an opinion on a particular issue in the public arena (Glynn et al., 1997; Scheufele et al., 2001; Taylor, 1982). This holds especially true in political contexts, as Turner and Sparrow (1997) noted about the problems with polls predicting voting patterns in British elections. Concrete issues generally lead to more valuable results.

Lasorsa (1991) found that political interest and self-efficacy play important roles in formulating a person's desire to speak out against the climate of opinion. The more involved someone felt they were in an issue and the more power they felt to create change, the more likely they would be to voice an opinion. Creation of a nationalistic identity through a controversial movement such as ETA provides just such an opportunity to examine both interest and efficacy.

Focusing on Basque identity provides a salient political issue by which one can measure public opinion and a person's hesitancy or willingness to voice that opinion. Salmon and Neuwirth (1990) advocate that in political contexts the nature of the fear might be more one of appearing ignorant than a fear of isolation. This fear of ignorance might hold true for political topics that require knowledge of more abstract concepts than nationalism. In the context of the Basque separatist movement, however, this issue is so much a part of the residents' lives in this region that people are inundated with interpersonal and media messages about the issue.

Cross-Cultural Applicability

Perry and Gonzenbach (2000) found that in a hotly debated issue, cultural norms impact a person's likelihood to express themselves or restrain public display of opinions. Cultural impacts can lead researchers to a rich area of theory development; especially as it tests the differences in willingness to speak across national or linguistic boundaries. Spiral of silence research has been applied to salient, topical issues in many countries, such as Britain (Turner and Sparrow, 1993, 1997), Canada (Glynn and Park, 1997), Germany (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1977, 1984, 2002), Mexico (Neuwirth, 2000), Israel (Shamir, 1995, 1997), the Philippines (González, 1988), Singapore (Willnat et al., 2002) and Slovenia (Petric and Pinter, 2002). Jeffres et al. (1999) addressed the ideas of group loyalties and nationalistic norms, incrementally paving the way for the issues to be addressed outside of the US.

Only two projects have tested spiral of silence across cultural boundaries. A recent study conducted in both the US and Singapore asked respondents to speak out against the perceived climate of opinion regarding interracial marriages and equal rights for homosexuals (Waipeng et al., 2004). This project concluded that a spiral of silence effect was found in Singapore but not in the US. The researchers feel 'that the theory might be more relevant to less individualistic cultures, particularly those in Asia' (Waipeng et al., 2004: 223). An even more recent study conducted in the US and Taiwan (Huang, 2005) creates a similar argument, pointing to the more collectivistic nature of Taiwanese culture than the more individualistic nature of US society. This has been further supported by a meta-analysis of Asch's conformity research, finding that conformity was higher in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures (Bond and Smith, 1996).

The US-Singapore study was a direct answer to Scheufele and Moy's (2000) call for testing the theory across cultures. Additional research would not only add to the body of knowledge but also to the applicability of the theory's basic premises established by Noelle-Neumann. This is also consonant with the need for a macroscopic approach to the theory as first defined by Salmon and Kline (1985) and further advocated by Scheufele and Moy (2000).

The present study also examines the differences in willingness to express an opinion for members of the same ethnic group who are indigenous to regions but separated by national boundaries created by others; in this case, Spain and France. Traditionally, the French government has ignored ETA's actions in France as long as the organization did nothing to ignite separatist movements among the French Basque. However, in 1974, the French government banned all separatist

organizations, including those among its other minority groups. Little was done in France nevertheless to stop ETA because of the harsh policies of Franco's totalitarian regime in Spain (Clark, 1984). Both cultural and linguistic ties are strong between the French and Spanish Basque peoples. However, there are marked differences in their populations. The Spanish Basque territory has a more urban and youthful population than the French Basque region (Cheval, 1992).

France and Spain also have a very different history of nationalism and the two countries have fundamental differences of opinion about nationhood. Many Spanish, for example, believe they can retain political stability and create a stronger government by 'integrating decentralized regions into a wider unit' (Parekh, 1999: 311). Thus, Basque residents in each nation have a different history with statehood as well as differing levels of support for and repression of ETA.

We hypothesize thus:

H4a: French residents will be likely to have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA than Spanish residents who live in the Basque region.

H4b: French residents will be likely to have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA than Spanish residents who live outside the Basque region.

H5a: French residents who have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA are more likely to express that opinion to both Basques and non-Basques than Spanish residents inside the Basque region.

H5b: French residents who have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA are more likely to express that opinion to both Basques and non-Basques than Spanish residents outside the Basque region.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study are, broadly speaking, French and Spaniards who live in the Basque regions and French and Spaniards who live outside the Basque territories. The survey distribution was a non-probability method of data collection. Convenience sampling was used in both nations. A network of contacts was compiled to survey various established groups; primarily those in university and civic settings. This allowed for a variety of demographic groups to be included in the sampling frame, such as: age, gender, media usage and income. Seventy-one participants were surveyed in France, 52 outside the Basque region in Spain, and 54 within the Basque region of Spain. Participants were selected in public places such as train stations, on public transportation, in parks, at grocery stores and in hotels. Since the participants were selected in random locations in different cities, in each region/country we assert they are representative of the general population of each region or nation.

Variables

This investigation features a 2×2 design to assess hypotheses 1, 2 and 4. For hypotheses 2 and 5, the 2×2 design features country (Spain and France) and

perceived opinion (minority and majority). Hypothesis 3 features only country (Spain and France) and is restricted to those who agree with ETA. In hypothesis 4, the 2×2 design features country (Spain and France) and newspaper use (Basque-language and non-Basque-language). The dependent variable is willingness to express one's opinion on the issue of ETA's actions. Various sociodemographic variables serve as covariates (age, gender and education).

Measures

Two measures were employed to identify people's perceptions of ETA's position of independence for Basque people and their willingness to speak out for or against this position. A four-item, seven-interval attitude measure was employed to identify the participant's perception of ETA's action. The same four-item attitude measure was used to identify the participant's own opinions about those actions. The items included: favorable/unfavorable, negative/positive, right/wrong and just/unjust. This scale has been created and utilized in previous communication research to measure attitudes on various issues of persuasion (Burgoon et al., 1978; Miller and Burgoon, 1979; Pfau and Burgoon, 1988; Pfau et al., 1994, 1998).

Willingness to speak about Basque separatism has been measured in many ways through previous research. The most notable is a person's desire to enter into a conversation with a stranger on a salient issue. The original test of the spiral of silence involved a person's willingness to enter into a conversation with someone about a controversial political issue on a five-hour train ride (Noelle-Neumann, 1984). Later research focused on various other situations in which a person would enter a conversation on a controversial political issue. These scenarios include conversations at a wedding (Willnat et al., 2002), a public meeting (Gonzenbach et al., 1999), 'on the record' with a news reporter (Katz and Baldassare, 1990) and through computer-mediated communication (McDevitt et al., 2003).

Another recent measure of willingness to speak out in Europe modeled its methodology after the original train test, by putting respondents in a more generic situation of engaging in conversation with fellow travelers. For the purposes of this present study, a variation of the original train test was employed. Based on Noelle-Neumann's (1985) response article to criticisms of spiral of silence research, the respondents were asked if they would be likely to engage in a conversation during a five-hour train ride with someone who holds the participant's viewpoint and with someone who holds the opposite viewpoint regarding Basque separatism as defined by the actions of the paramilitary group ETA. This method of questioning is particularly applicable to the countries involved in this study since rail travel in Europe continues to be one of the most convenient, economical and common ways for most people to travel long distances for both business and pleasure. A seven-point Likert-type scale was used to gauge how willing or unwilling each participant is to engage in conversation about Basque separatism with a stranger in a train carriage. Participant background was assessed by inquiring about age, education and sex.

Data Analysis

A 2×2 multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to assess hypotheses 1, 2, 4 and 5. A one-way MANCOVA was employed to assess hypothesis 3. Planned comparisons for predicted effects were run, and Scheffe post-hoc tests were run to test for unpredicted effects.

Results

The MANCOVA indicated significant effects for the covariates: age, $F(4,162) = 6.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .01$, with univariate tests revealing significant effects on the dependent measure of perceived climate of opinion on ETA, $F(1,10.32) = 6.84$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$; and region, $F(8,324) = 3.21$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and with univariate tests revealing significant effects on the dependent measures of personal opinion of ETA, $F(2,14.83) = 6.2$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .07$, overall perceived climate of opinion on ETA, $F(2,20.07) = 6.9$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and willingness to voice opinion about ETA to Basques, $F(2,37.22) = 4.7$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$.

Hypothesis 1 posited that Spanish residents would have a more unfavorable opinion of ETA than Basque residents. This prediction was supported. The results are presented in Table 1.

To test significance for hypothesis 1, a planned comparison was computed comparing how Spaniards and Basques rated their personal opinions of ETA. The results revealed that Spaniards who live outside the Basque region have a more unfavorable opinion of ETA, $F(1,133.2) = 111$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c examined whether groups are more likely to voice an opinion with Basques or with non-Basques. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of willingness to voice an opinion with Basques and with non-Basques.

Hypothesis 2a claimed Basque residents are more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques. An independent samples *t*-test revealed there was no significant difference between a Basque resident's willingness to voice an opinion about ETA to a non-Basque or to a fellow Basque: $t(53) = 1.85$; $p > .05$.

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Opinions about ETA among Basques and Spaniards

	Opinion about ETA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Basques	1.23	0.93
Spaniards	1.02	0.07

Note: Significance tests conducted through planned comparisons, *F* values are discussed in text.
* $p \leq .001$.

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Willingness to Voice an Opinion about ETA to Basques and Non-Basques

	Voice opinion with Basques		Voice opinion with non-Basques	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Basques	4.62**	1.99	5.11	1.95
Spaniards	4.46**	2.03	5.17**	1.8
French	3.01*	2.02	4.71*	1.66

Note: Significance tests conducted through planned comparisons, *F* values are discussed in text. * $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .05$.

Hypothesis 2b asserted that Spanish residents will be more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques. An independent samples *t*-test revealed Spanish residents are significantly more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques: $t(52) = 2.73$; $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 2c similarly claimed French residents would be more likely to voice their opinions about ETA with non-Basques than with Basques. The independent samples *t*-test revealed this hypothesis to be significantly true: $t(71) = 7.52$; $p < .001$.

Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c all pertained to whether participants believe their personal opinion of ETA is similar to the perceived climate of opinion of ETA. All three of these hypotheses were found to be insignificant.

Hypothesis 4 compared respondents' personal opinions of ETA. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of participants' overall perceptions of ETA.

Hypothesis 4a asserted French residents would have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA than Basque residents. This hypothesis was supported. A planned comparison was computed comparing how French and Basques rated their personal opinions of ETA. The results revealed that French respondents have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA, $F(1,18.91) = 15.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

Hypothesis 4b asserted French residents would have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA than Spaniards who live outside the Basque region. This hypothesis was also

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Opinions about ETA among Basques, Spaniards and French

	Opinion about ETA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Basques	1.23	0.93
Spaniards	1.02	0.07
French	2.02*	1.63

Note: Significance tests conducted through planned comparisons, *F* values are discussed in text. * $p \leq .001$.

supported. The planned comparison comparing how French and Spanish respondents rated their personal opinion of ETA revealed French respondents have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA, $F(1.30.31) = 2.525$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

Hypothesis 5 compared likelihood of expressing an opinion about ETA among individuals who have an unfavorable opinion of ETA. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations of likelihood to express an opinion about ETA among individuals who have an unfavorable opinion of ETA.

Hypothesis 5a posited French residents who have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA are more likely to express that opinion than Basque residents. A t -test revealed that this hypothesis was supported: $t(113) = -4.1$; $p < .001$. Similarly, hypothesis 5b compared French residents who have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA with Spanish residents who have an unfavorable opinion of ETA, and found French residents are much more likely to express that opinion than Spaniards: $t(112) = -3.44$; $p < .001$.

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Likelihood to Express an Opinion about ETA among Individuals with Unfavorable Opinions of ETA

	Likelihood to express opinion about ETA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
French	4.00*	1.83
Basques	4.92*	1.95
Spaniards	4.82*	1.92

Note: Significance tests conducted through planned comparisons, F values are discussed in text.

* $p \leq .001$.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study represent qualified support for the spiral of silence. The results generally report that individuals who perceive themselves as in the minority opinion are less likely to voice opposition to the Basque separatist group ETA. Public outcry against ETA is not very pervasive in France or in many parts of Spain, even though the overwhelming majority of respondents in France and in Spain had a highly unfavorable opinion of ETA. None of the respondents surveyed in this study expressed a favorable opinion of ETA (mean score of 4 or more on a seven-point scale). Thus, the respondents' generally unfavorable opinion of ETA in this research project is congruent with trends in both nations.

Hypothesis 1 asserted Spanish residents will have a more unfavorable opinion of ETA than Basque residents. This hypothesis establishes an ingroup/outgroup dichotomy, illustrating the interethnic relationship present in Spain. This relationship is further illustrated by hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c. The majority of respondents in all three geographic regions (Spain, France and the Basque region) are more likely to voice their opinion of ETA to non-Basques, since ETA is perceived as part of the

Basque populace. Hence, whether the respondent is Spanish, French or Basque, their reluctance to voice opinions about ETA to another individual is directly impacted by whether the other individual is part of the same ethnic group (ingroup) as ETA. This choice is directly impacted by the violence perpetrated by and surrounding ETA. As Davis and Henderson (2003) assert, individuals who experience or witness crimes or violent acts may experience reluctance in expressing an opinion or reporting that violence to others closely related to the act. This reluctance to voice an opinion about a violent act or to report a crime can stem from a fear of reprisal or ostracism (Fishman, 1979). Thus, for Spaniards (Basque and non-Basque), they are much closer to the violence, so it makes sense for them to be more afraid to speak out against ETA than for the French to be so.

Hypothesis 3 was not found to be significant in this study. It posited that respondents in France, Spain and the Basque region will believe their opinion of ETA is similar to the climate of opinion on ETA. Really, this study reveals the null hypothesis to be true, that people can distinguish a marked difference between their personal opinion and the perceived climate of opinion. This is true in all three geographic/cultural regions.

Hypothesis 4 asserted French residents will have a less unfavorable opinion of ETA than Spanish or Basque residents. Hypothesis 5 argues French residents will be more likely to express their opinions on ETA than Spanish or Basque residents. Both hypotheses were supported. These findings reinforce the argument postulated by Salmon and Kline (1985) that reference groups play an important role in reinforcing a person's willingness to speak out on an issue. However, this concept should be expanded from reference groups to the aforementioned ingroup/outgroup dichotomy. Therefore, because of this ingroup/outgroup dichotomy, and the political salience of ETA as an issue it is understandable that there is less fear of isolation in France than in Spain, which causes a stronger spiral of silence effect in Spain and the Basque country than in France.

This study has two weaknesses, the sample size and the lack of a qualitative element. Approximately 100 respondents were surveyed in both countries. An increased data set would further enhance the overall generalizability of this study's findings. The second weakness to this study is its lack of qualitative data. We set out to conduct a quantitative study. However, while conducting our data collection, respondents did of course speak with us about their lived experiences and provide us with 'rich descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of their lives and of their feelings about ETA and their various media outlets. On various occasions, individuals speaking to us offered keen insights, and in future spiral of silence research we will be sure to include a qualitative component. Survey research explains what people think; however, open-ended survey questions and in-depth interviews would add a dimension to this scholarship explaining why respondents feel a particular way, and this added qualitative element would better help researchers represent the 'true' experiences of participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). This limitation provides direction for future spiral of silence research. The theory needs qualitative dimensions to help scholars better understand why a fear of isolation can prevent some participants from voicing an opinion on politically salient issues.

This study also illustrates the need for more cross-cultural spiral of silence research. It represents one of the few studies testing the spiral of silence effect across national and ethnic borders. This research is in line with the recent call for cross-cultural spiral of silence research made by Waipeng et al. (2004). This call has partially been answered by Huang (2005) in the application of this theory across cultural boundaries. This is important, but scholars must also look beyond the US–Asia paradigm. There are also implications of a spiral of silence effect in European nations. Our data collected in France, Spain and the Basque region explicitly demonstrates the influence of culture and ethnicity on the spiral of silence effect within European cultures.

Another implication of this research shows that not only is spiral of silence culturally bound, a silencing effect also varies according to context. This study was conducted in a politically volatile part of an otherwise stable region. These findings are consistent with previous research cited in the review of literature that illustrates a silencing effect is contingent upon a politically salient issue. Future research is not only needed across national and ethnic borders, it is also essential to focus upon those issues that potentially unite or divide populations along contentious political lines that may impact public opinion expression. Spiral of silence is the optimum theoretical grounding for examining how attitudes toward terrorism vary by culture and nation as well as how that process impacts a person's willingness to express opinions and contribute to the political discourse surrounding terrorism and the actions of terrorist groups.

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