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The Influence of Leaders on the Outcome of Self-determination Movements - A Case Study of the Basque Country

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List of Abbreviations

BL   Bad Leader

ETA   Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

DV   Dependent variable

GL   Good Leader

HSL   Home State Leader

IV   Independent variable

PP   Partido Popular (People's Party)

PSOE   Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)

SDM   Self-determination Movement

SL   Separatist Leader

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Abstract

While the Basque Conflict between the separatist group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) and the Spanish Government came to a conclusion in 2011, it is considered to have been one of the longest violent self-determination movements (SDMs) in contemporary Europe. Drawing from existing literature on leadership effects, this thesis puts forward a leader-centric approach on the Basque case to determine the extent to which home state leaders and separatist leaders influence the outcome of SDMs. In my theoretical framework I argue that the dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' leaders has an effect on the increased or decreased likelihood of a peaceful conflict resolution. Whereas mutual 'good' leadership is expected to lead to a more peaceful outcome, I anticipate that the presence of 'bad' leadership elevates the chances of a violent result. Through a process-tracing theory-building approach as well as content analysis, I evaluate Spanish and Basque leadership behaviour and compare it to the processes and outcomes of the separatist movement. I find supporting evidence for my claims, indicating that whether leaders are 'good' or 'bad', and more specifically whether they show flexibility or inflexibility in their willingness to compromise, has an effect on the outcome of a SDM.

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

The history of Europe has been marked by the redrawing of borders and by the disappearance and emergence of states, resulting in significant socio-political changes over the last decades. Currently, there are over twenty substantial pro-independence movements in Europe, including the Flemish, Catalan, Scottish and Northern-Cypriot ones (Borgen, 2010; Coggins, 2011). While numerous secessionist struggles remained relatively peaceful or have

concluded, others have persisted for decades with varying intensities of violence (Coggins, 2011).

The Basque self-determination movement (SDM) raged for over five decades, reaching a conclusion in 2011. With the separatist group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) leading the movement, the Spanish-ETA struggle is considered to have been one of the longest violent conflicts in contemporary Europe (Whitfield, 2014). Although Spain transitioned from an autocratic to a democratic regime, this critical juncture barely seemed to impact the conflict (Whitfield, 2014). However, following decades of leadership changes in both home state leaders, meaning Spanish heads of government, as well as in separatist leaders, in this case ETA chiefs, violent activities ceased at last. This questions whether individual leaders have been attributed enough attention when investigating the conflict's resolution.

1.2 Relevance of Research & Research Question

The importance of focusing on leaders when analysing self-determination demands is essential for both practical and theoretical reasons. Behavioural investigations could reveal whether the electorate should focus on specific leadership characteristics and vote accordingly. Indeed, the increased attention on the nature of leaders as determining factors in the implementation of change underlines "a need for a greater understanding of leadership" (Higgs, 2009, p. 175). Since independence movements are led by individuals, explanations focusing on specific personalities should be favoured (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Accordingly, literature should shift its focus from the predominant economic grievance, institutionalist and macro-structural approaches towards more leader-centric research, allowing for a greater understanding of leaders' impact on conflict dynamics (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis, 2009; Toft, 2012).

In light of this and the rising significance of adopting more actor-driven approaches, I advance the following research question: To what extent do decisions of home state leaders and separatist leaders impact the outcome of self-determination movements?

1.3 Societal Framework

The last 200 years have shown that secessionist movements include both dynamic and static characteristics, suggesting a degree of uncertainty when it comes to the resolution of current or future separatist tensions (Coggins, 2011, p. 40). Under this socio-political context it is

necessary to study SDMs by isolating some of the factors influencing their outcomes, especially since "[i]f the past is any indication of the future then, violent secessionism will continue to proliferate" (Coggins, 2011, p. 40). Hence, studying the profound mechanisms that might influence the outcome of separatist tensions is highly relevant. The results of a leader-centric research could have wider implications as we improve our understanding of possible solutions.

This thesis will provide a literature review outlining the existing research on this topic and its shortcomings, followed by my own theoretical framework, argumentation, hypotheses, concepts and my research design. I will end this thesis with an in-depth case analysis on the Basque Country, a discussion of findings as well as some concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

The following review will briefly explore the existing literature on the role of leaders influencing self-determination outcomes, before advancing the argument of the paper.

Toft's research (2012) discusses the usefulness of leader-centric inquiries, suggesting that rulers have an influential role in forming secessionist claims. However, she also scrutinizes this approach, arguing that a "chief weakness of elite-manipulation approaches [is that] they cannot be generalized" (Toft, 2012, p. 589). Moreover, regarding citizens as passive and easily manipulable actors, underestimates their influence on self-determination outcomes (Toft, 2012). Similarly, other authors agree that rather than assigning excessive importance to leaders as units of analysis, academia should gear its focus towards the population and the nation as a whole (Berdún & Guibernau, 2007, p. 12).

Nonetheless, numerous researchers contend that there is a meaningful relationship between leadership and secessionist outcomes that requires further inquiry. When analysing the Cypriot case, Direkli (2016) assumes that a significant factor influencing the resolution of this secessionist struggle is leadership. He presumes that if instead of president Anastasiades there were a more charismatic leader with a higher interest in resolving the conflict leading the negotiations, an agreement to end the struggle could have been reached (Direkli, 2016, p. 132). However, this remains an untested assumption. Indeed, there is a gap in literature as to the extent to which individual leaders can impact the outcome of separatist challenges.

Accordingly, Walter (2006) acknowledges the lack of research on this topic, as scholarship says little about "the effects of a leader's time in office" on the resolution of a SDM (pp. 324-25).

Moreover, on the separatists' side leaders' interests, such as accumulating prestige and power, substantially hinder the negotiation process "as [they] become increasingly dedicated to independence at all costs" instead of searching for optimal solutions and assuring the population's well-being (Coggins, 2011, p. 34). However, Coggins (2011) does not elaborate on this statement further or provide empirical support. Whereas Coggins (2011) more specifically mentions secessionist leaders, by opposition Hechter (1992) accentuates the need to improve the understanding of the intimate decision-making and bargaining processes of home state leaders (HSLs) and how it subsequently influences the results of SDMs (p. 268).

Some authors, including Walter (2006), state that the behaviour of a government is important as it is "significantly related to the decision to secede" and subsequently also influences the outcome (p. 106). However, the author fails to provide detailed explanations of the chiefs of government themselves, even though they influence its decisions and thereby ultimately also secession. Although Benson (2006) has provided evidence underlining that 'bad' leadership results in dysfunctional performance outcomes, Higgs (2009) argues that there has been an incredibly limited amount of empirical research on 'bad' leadership and that more in-depth analyses on leaders' behaviour are needed.

Theron's (2020) recent case study on South Sudan analyses responsibility, statehood and identity-construction from a leadership perspective while focusing on rulers' power and influence pre- and post-secession (p. 58). She concludes that even though the outcome of the movement has been secession, it continues to be characterized by an increase of violence. She attributes this puzzling result to the country's leadership structures and processes, as rulers hold insufficient amounts of power as well as lack mutuality with their followers (p. 58). Theron (2020) underlines the lack of leader-centric research by demonstrating that "there has been no systematic effort to understand the leadership challenge and its role in conflict" (p. 58). However, she adopts a 'leadership process approach', focusing on the whole leadership body, rather than on individual leaders (Theron, 2020, p. 60). Hence, even though more recent studies on leaders exist, their individual behaviour and impact on secessionist resolutions has been omitted from analysis, presenting a literature gap this research aims to address.

When arguing about which factors contribute to successful outcomes of independence movements, Wood (1981) lists three elements, namely organization, ideology and leadership (p. 115). He contends that both organization and ideology, although crucial, are not a sufficient explanation. In fact, leaders shape the preconditions, processes and consequently outcomes of SDMs, as "the leadership imperative itself becomes a factor in the development of the movement" (Wood, 1981, p. 123). Although the scholar dives into leaders as impacting factors, "further research in comparative secession [on leadership] is warranted" (Wood, 1981, p. 134). Wood's (1981) claims, made in the early-1980s, remain true today, highlighting the limitations of academia's state of the art and the need for more contemporary research.

Hence, not solely the field of secession lacks leadership-focused research, but the political science domain at large, since most scholars prefer concentrating on macro institutions, despite the essential role individual leaders play in politics (Peele, 2005, p. 188; Theron, 2020, p. 61). In light of research scarcity surrounding this topic, I set forth a theory-building argument on leadership and its effects on self-determination outcomes in a moderate attempt to contribute to conflict and behavioural studies as well as emphasize the necessity for further academic improvements and empirical studies in this field.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Theoretical Argument

Through an actor-centric and behaviouralist approach, this micro-level research concentrates on leaders as units of analysis and expects them to have a significant influence on the outcome of SDMs. Leaders, especially charismatic ones, inspire populations through discourses and play a substantial role in mobilizing groups and forming common goals (Kolstø, 2006; Toft, 2012). Their ability to construct common narratives generates internal support and reinforces symbolic nation-building, a determining factor in self-determination outcomes (Caspersen, 2011; Kolstø, 2006; Tannenbaum & Massarik, 1957).

Although a predominant amount of studies have focused on business leaders, their results are significant. Indeed, effective organization and performance outcomes are direct results of 'good' leaders, as they efficiently manage unstable environments and secessionist tensions (Bass & Bass, 2008; Cameron, 2011; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). High levels of virtuousness are

positively associated with higher performance levels (Cameron & Dutton, 2003, p. 12). Therefore, the best method of achieving progress and meaningful outcomes is through 'good' leadership. Although these studies have focused on business organizations I extend their scope to include leaders of political organizations (states and separatist groups).

On some occasions, leaders act in a self-interested manner, influencing the bargaining processes and manipulating the population through speeches and media to further personal goals (Stogdill, 1950, p. 1). Therefore, I underline the importance of portraying the duality within leadership by contrasting the notions of 'good' leader (GL) and 'bad' leader (BL), assuming that whether a leader is 'good' or 'bad' influences the outcome of independence challenges differently. I argue that BLs negatively affect separatist outcomes and the likelihood of a peaceful resolution process, as their incentives for power and reputation can corrupt negotiation processes. Rather than aiming for the optimal outcome, they prefer maintaining their initial goal of independence and "are often willing to take extraordinary steps to ensure" this (Coggins, 2011, p. 32).

Although Coggins (2011) concentrates on 'bad' separatist leaders (SL), I contend that the same is true for 'bad' HSLs. The ambition to increase power and control could derail rulers' motivation to focus on achieving the best solution. Indeed, one of the main challenges of attaining resolutions to separatist demands are leaders' expansionist rather than contractionist fantasies (Hechter, 1992, p. 277). HSLs advocate against secession at all costs, seeking the enlargement rather than the division of 'their' territory.

Whereas BLs negatively influence resolutions, I assume that the presence of responsible or 'good' leadership positively affects separatist processes. Agreeingly, Young (1994) argues that one of the factors influencing peaceful secession is HSLs accepting that separation will inevitably happen as well as leaders on both sides taking the "responsibility for negotiating secession" and making concessions (p. 782). Thereby, secession and its possible outcome are the result of a range of decisions made not only by citizens, but more specifically by their leaders (Hechter, 1992, p. 267). Moreover, my assumption that a GL impacts self-determination outcomes is partly grounded on Cameron's (2011) research on the advantages of virtuous and responsible leadership. His study demonstrates that "[s]tatistically significan[t] relationships were found between virtuousness scores and [...] performance outcomes" (p. 31). Evidently, 'good' and responsible rulers generate desirable outcomes (Cameron, 2011, p. 32).

In light of these claims, I draw the logical conclusion that if GLs are connected to effectiveness and responsibility, then BLs are linked to ineffectiveness and irresponsibility. Rather than aspiring for optimal solutions for their citizens, BLs focus on their personal interests, often resulting in a deteriorating situation or the promulgation of the status quo. Indeed, whereas a GL's behaviour is more likely linked to success, failure is associated with 'bad' and self-interested rulers (Rowland & Higgs, 2008).

Thus, the proposed research question entails two variables that have to be investigated. I expect there to be a correlation between the independent variable (IV) *home-state leaders* or *separatist leaders* and the dependent variable (DV) *outcome of self-determination movements*. Accordingly, I will inquire whether the variation between GLs or BLs impacts the outcome of SDMs and whether it increases or decreases the likelihood of a peaceful outcome. Variation in leaders' 'good' or 'bad' style of ruling should cause variation in the type of outcome. For this to be true, changes in GLs or BLs must precede the investigated outcome (Halperin & Heath, 2017, pp. 129).

The presented theory leads us to three hypotheses (**Table 1**). Firstly, I expect that if both sides - SLs and HSLs - embody GLs, then the likelihood of a peaceful outcome is higher (H1). Secondly, if both sides are headed by BLs, then the likelihood of a violent outcome is higher (H2). Thirdly, regardless, if one side has a GL and the other one a 'bad' one, then the likelihood of maintaining a status quo is higher (H3a & H3b). Therefore, changes in the form of leadership are expected to produce changes in the outcome of the movement. Overall, I assume that there will be a divergence between the outcome of SDMs depending on whether a GL or BL was present.

Table 1. Leadership Combinations and Expected Outcomes

Possible Combinations of HSL & SL			
Hypothesis	**HSL** **Home State Leader**	**SL** **Separatist Leader**	**Expectation**
H1	Good Leader	Good Leader	The likelihood of a peaceful outcome is higher.
H2	Bad Leader	Bad Leader	The likelihood of a violent outcome is higher.
H3a	Bad Leader	Good Leader	The likelihood of maintaining the status quo is higher.
H3b	Good Leader	Bad Leader	The likelihood of maintaining the status quo is higher.

3.2 Conceptualization and operationalization

3.2.1 Self-determination Movement

A SDM refers to one or more mobilized political entities claiming independence on behalf of 'their' community (Caspersen, 2011, p. 340; Sambanis, Germann, & Schädel, 2018, p. 659). They usually entail some form of struggle and are predisposed to a varying degree of violence as well as ethnic conflict (Brancati, 2006; Coggins, 2011). These phenomena do not necessarily seek or result in national independence or separation, as they might settle for a federal solution or enhanced regional autonomy. SDMs will be operationalized as having requested self-determination, increased autonomy, national independence or a federalist state (Brancati, 2006; Coggins, 2011).

3.2.2 Outcome

The outcome of SDMs can range from full solutions - conflict resolution, partition, reintegration, federalism - to steps falling short from a full solution - concessions, negotiation achievements, home state granting more autonomy - or to processes showing a change in the

direction of the conflict, such as ceasefires, the breaking of ceasefires, peace proposals, increases or decreases of violence, and regional agreements (Brancati, 2006; Coggins, 2011). Hence, by outcome I do not necessarily refer to the end of the struggle, but also to the processes leading up to it.

<u>3.2.3 Leader</u>

Based on the conceptual framework, being a leader is characterized as a process of social influence that focuses on achieving specific aims (Higgs, 2009, p. 167; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 172). It entails "the exercise of power, and the quality of leadership – good, ineffective or destructive" which is dependent on the person's ability to exert authority (De Vries, 1993, p. 22). The following will more specifically concentrate on the nuances of 'good' and 'bad' leadership with the terms leader and leadership being used interchangeably.

Good Leader

There is no consensus in the literature on when to define leaders as 'good' or 'bad', as these notions are highly controversial. Nonetheless, numerous scholars attribute the idea of GLs to dependability and accountability, as leaders are responsible for achieving the promised and efficient outcomes as well as for the proper execution of ideas (Aasland, Skogstad & Einarsen, 2008; Bass & Bass, 2008; Kellerman, 2004). Indeed, GLs have the ability of taking prompt and timely decisions in uncertain, pressing or dangerous situations (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 173). They "focus on elevating, flourishing, and enriching outcomes" by seeking "ultimate good" solutions (Cameron, 2011, pp. 26, 27, 28). Hence, a GL prioritizes the public good and general well-being over private incentives as well as promoting good and peaceful outcomes.

When operationalizing, numerous scholars employ survey instruments as an indication of which proxies to use when measuring 'good' leadership attributes (**Appendix 1**). They used the resulting character traits as indicators, namely responsibility, trustworthiness, optimism, achievement orientation, openness, accountability, competence, authority, and flexibility (Cameron, 2011; Chun, 2005; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Bad Leader

BLs act in a self-interested, destructive and hostile manner (Rowland & Higgs, 2008, pp. 85, 89). Accordingly, 'bad' and abusive leadership is associated with performance shortcomings

(Higgs, 2009; McCal & Lombardo, 1983). Drawing from existing conceptual frameworks on BLs, I will define them as self-interested rulers who prioritize their personal goals and private interests over the general public good as well as demonstrate inflexibility in negotiations through their unwillingness to compromise (De Vries & Miller, 1985, p. 583).

The presence of a BL will be measured through the following indicators (**Appendix 2**): narcissism (proxies: hostility to criticism, overconfidence), power-hungriness, skill inadequacy/deficiency, untrustworthiness, abusive authority, corruption, manipulation, exploitativeness, irresponsibility, lack of compassion, and inflexibility (Aasland et al., 2008; Ashforth, 1997; Benson & Hogan, 2008; De Vries & Miller, 1985, p. 583; Higgs, 2009, pp. 167, 170, 175).

4. Research Design & Methodology

4.1 Single Case Study & Case Selection

For the purposes of this research, a single case study is appropriate, as it is best-suited to track leadership changes and assess whether they influence the outcomes of SDMs as well as uncover causal developments and their determining mechanisms (Halperin & Heath, 2017; Theron, 2020). Following Geddes' (2003) selection criteria, I chose a representative case, offering an extensive time period with considerable amounts of data, facilitating detailed analysis. The Basque-Spanish case fits the aims of this research, as it provides a fifty-two-year range of information on various leaders. Furthermore, Spain has experienced several large-scale SDMs, such as the Catalan and Basque cases. Choosing the Basque Country over the Catalonian case was based on two reasons, namely (1) the Basque Conflict 'ended' in 2011, whereas the Catalonian movement remains highly active and (2) scholars have concentrated less extensively on the Basque case, demonstrating that more research should be conducted (Guibernau, 2013; Serrano, 2013).

Concerning the units of analysis I will solely concentrate on Spanish prime ministers. French leaders will be omitted from analysis as they were not initially participating in the conflict (Whitfield, 2014). On the secessionist side I will focus on leaders of the Basque nationalist and separatist group ETA, as it is with the organization's creation in 1959 that the Basque Conflict started and is seen as the leading actor of the national liberation movement

(Reinares, 2004, p. 465). Six leaders will be analysed, three on each side of the conflict. The selection is partly influenced by feasibility reasons, such as word limitation and data availability. Also, since this research puts forward three hypotheses it is appropriate to test them on three different time periods in order to confirm or disconfirm them.

4.2 Methodology: Process-tracing

I will combine a comparative design with historical research, as a longitudinal approach includes a more extensive temporal frame into the analysis (Halperin & Heath, 2017). Employing across-time studies, by concentrating on the 1982-2011 time span will allow for the detailed study of a single case and compare the SDM and its evolution across multiple points in time.

Through process-tracing the Basque case is situated in its cultural, political and historical context. This way, influential events or alternative explanations will be included, increasing the research's overall validity (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). This approach will help develop a systematic understanding of the origins and processes that led to a decrease in secessionist tensions in the Basque context and identify significant causal mechanisms (Halperin & Heath, 2017). I will more specifically engage in theory-building process-tracing. Although my starting point is inspired by existing research I am presenting a new theoretical framework to explain the causal relationship between leadership and self-determination outcomes (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 3, 11). If my hypotheses are confirmed this paper would provide the first evidence for this type of relationship.

Guided by the presence of critical junctures and/or peace talks, as in accordance with path-dependency analysis, I will investigate the following periods and its leaders (**Appendix 3**): (1) 1982-1995 (HSL: Felipe González; SL: José Luis Álvarez Santacristina, (2) 1996-2003 (HSL: José María Aznar; SL: Vicente Goikoetxea), and (3) 2004-2011 (HSL: José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero; HSL: David Pla). It is imperative to investigate these periods, as they offer instances of violence, ceasefires, critical junctures, a new democracy, death squads, terrorist attacks, assassinations, peace talks, negotiations, conferences as well as an outcome to the conflict. Also, by analysing consecutive time periods, tracing the evolution of the conflict can be carried out with more precision.

4.3 Research strategy & Data Collection

Grounded on the 'bad' and 'good' leadership dichotomy, my qualitative data analysis will heavily rely on the steps and strategies provided by Beach and Pedersen's (2013) guide on process-tracing as well as Halperin and Heath's (2017) methods. Since it is an actor-centric research, specific leaders and their accompanying 'good' or 'bad' types of ruling will be presented as units of analysis. Through an interpretivist approach, I will make use of both primary sources, such as speeches and memoirs, as well as secondary sources, including interviews, historical writing and archival data, allowing for data triangulation, ensuring the reliability of this research. However, it must be noted that comparatively there are a lot more accessibility limitations as well as some contradictions when it comes to data on ETA. Hence, the employed dates on ETA leadership could be disconfirmed by future research

To assess whether the six leaders fall into the GL or BL categories, I employ a content-analysis approach by conducting detailed examinations of leaders' behaviour. If I find a predominant amount of indicators from one of the categories, the leaders will be presented as such in the analysis. Although I initially planned on measuring ETA leaders the same way as HSLs, data limitations prevented this. Therefore, whether they are operationalized as GLs or BLs will be assessed differently. Since, ETA was highly hierarchical with leaders exerting control over all the members and activities; I will equate the behaviour of ETA as a whole with the leader in charge (Heiberg, O'Leary & Tirman, 2007). Hence, SLs will be grouped into the GL or BL category depending on how ETA dealt with events, public opinion, pleas and ceasefires. While measuring whether ETA leaders belong to GL or BL categories I will disregard the conflicting notions of terrorist or freedom fighters attributed to them. Hence, being part of ETA does not automatically select them as BLs.

5. Analysis

5.1 Historical Context

The exact origins of the Basque population and its language remain undiscovered, making the Basques one of the oldest ethnic groups in Europe (Clark, 1984). In the Middle Ages, the unification of seven provinces into a singular Basque state led to the emergence of the Kingdom of Navarre (Woodworth, 2008). Its sovereignty lasted for centuries until a substantial part of the region was annexed by the Castilians in 1512. Nonetheless, the

provinces were granted legal and political self-governing powers (Clark, 1984). Later, the ideas promulgated by the French Revolution in 1789 spread to Spain, creating tensions within the population and resulting in the Basque provinces losing their authority under a centralized Spanish Government (Woodworth, 2008). This deprivation of Basque autonomy led to the rise of nationalist sentiments that transformed into a catalysing force pushing for the ultimate goal of independence.

In 1936, the Spanish Civil War, headed by General Franco, broke out. He overthrew the government and revoked the 'Statue of Autonomy' that had been granted to the Basque Country. Starting in 1939, Franco's dictatorship was characterized by violent assimilation and marginalization policies directed against any regions deemed culturally distinct (Muro, 2013; van Dongen, 2014). The Basques' cultural identity was repressed, through the prohibition of traditional activities and their language *Euskera* (Anderson, 2002). Frustrations against the *Francoist* regime grew, resulting in a group of students creating the ETA in 1959, with the objective of establishing an independent Basque State (van Dongen, 2014). After Franco's death in 1975, Spain started its democratic transition leading to its first free elections in 1978 (Shepard, 2002).

5.2 Timeframe 1: 1982-1995

5.2.1 González's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

Felipe González was one of the first democratically elected prime ministers in Spain in 1982. He was the leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and remained in office for three consecutive terms, from 1982 until 1996 (Heiberg et al., 2007). When analysing his behaviour it becomes clear that he was seen as a highly charismatic and visionary leader (Woodworth, 2004, p. 9). He also showed competence and was achievement-oriented, qualities associated with GLs (**Appendix 4**). Nonetheless, the observations collected in the content analysis reveal the overarching presence of 'bad' leadership characteristics, namely irresponsibility, untrustworthiness, overconfidence, power hungriness, corruption and abuse of authority. The latter two are especially related to the activities of the paramilitary *Anti-terrorist Liberation Group* (GAL) and the illegal Dirty War, in which González was presumably involved (Tardivo & Cano, 2020, pp. 115, 131). Hence, the predominant amount of BL indicators characterizes him as such under this context.

5.2.2 Santacristina's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

The SL José Luis Álvarez Santacristina was the head of ETA's political branch from 1986 until his arrest in 1992. He was the main strategist of the group at the time and created the armed faction *Kale Borroka* which carried out urban guerrilla activities (Gorospe, 2015). He was also responsible for creating ETA's target lists. Indeed, in 1986, ETA committed the "cold-blooded assassination" of María Dolores González Catarain -a former ETA leader who left the organization- while she was taking a walk with her three-year old (Whitfield, 2014, p. 66). She was killed as a way to intimate and deter members from leaving the group (Whitfield, 2014). This action not only showed lack of compassion, but also Santacristina's lack of strategic competence, as it led to the alienation of ETA supporters. Furthermore, the evolution of ETA killings reveals that during Sanatcristina's leadership the organization saw peaks in deadly violence (**Figure 1**). Overall, these actions highlight multiple BL qualities, including untrustworthiness, blackmail, lack of compassion, irresponsibility, skill deficiency and abuse of authority. Although in 1989 peace talks took place in Algiers, the negotiations were aborted, showing both sides' inflexibility and unwillingness to compromise (Alonso, 2011). Overall, ETA's behaviour and thus by extension Santacristina's present an overarching amount of BL qualities.
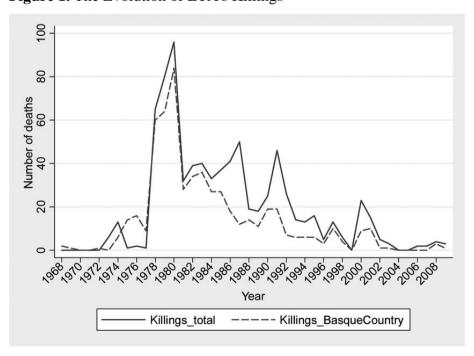
Figure 1. The Evolution of ETA's Killings

Source: De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013, p. 98

5.2.3 Results: Processes & Outcome

During the 1982-1996 time period mediocre steps were made from both sides towards finding a solution. A year after González's accession, the PSOE illegally created GAL, thus initiating the Dirty War (Whitfield, 2014). The paramilitary group's main objective was fighting ETA and targeting its members. However, innocents with no established links to the separatists were sometimes caught in the crossfire. As a response to GAL, the ETA changed its modus operandi, starting a war of attrition against the Spanish State (Whitfield, 2014, p. 66). In 1986, the group assassinated Catarain, provoking loss of popular support for the organization and its cause (Whitfield, 2014). A year later, ETA planted a car bomb near a supermarket, killing twenty-one people and injuring many. In Algiers in 1989, the first and only peace talks of this period took place (Alonso, 2011). During the negotiations, ETA announced a ceasefire with a sixty-day-duration. However, the formal talks came to an end without having reached a conclusion, resulting in ETA's resumption of violent activities (Whitfield, 2014, p. 51). In 1992, French and Spanish authorities captured the three top leaders of the organisation, including Santacritina (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2009).

5.3.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Outcome

In this temporal frame, I have defined both the SL and the HSL as BLs. According to my second hypothesis (H2) the expectation is that if BLs are present on both sides, then the likelihood of a violent outcome is higher. Indeed, the armed activities of GAL, the breaking of ceasefires, as well as the high amounts of ETA killings and the increase of violent *Kale Borroka* incidents, indicate higher amounts of violence in comparison to prior years and after (Gorospe, 2015).

The Dirty War between Santacristina's ETA and GAL can be considered the most violent outcome of this period. The latter was implicated in "murders, several kidnappings, bombings, and torture" of ETA members (Woodworth, 2004, p. 10). The Dirty War in particular seems to confirm H2, as in this period higher amounts of killings and other violence can be observed, from both ETA and the government. Interestingly, there was a decrease in ETA killings as well as a decline in its violent activities in 1987 (**Figure 1**). Contrastingly, it was GAL's bloodiest year with most violence inflicted. This underlines that González's primary goal was the eradication of the group. Rather than searching for solutions, he focused his attention on promulgating dispersion policies and ordering intense

police action not only against ETA members, but also against activists, journalists and Basque politicians (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 14).

Spanish citizens saw González as a charismatic, young, ambitious and vibrant visionary, as a leader that could invoke change (Arráez Bueno, 2017, p. 177). Nonetheless, not much changed in the Basque Conflict during his term in office. The only steps towards resolution were made in Algiers in 1989, yet "neither side was prepared to enter into a serious process of negotiation", resulting in ETA's resumption of violent activities (Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014, p. 51). Although the talks "placed within reach a peace settlement to end nearly 21 years of separatist violence", the leaders' shared megalomania and unwillingness to compromise resulted in an unfruitful outcome (Nicholson, 1989; Woodworth, 2004, p. 10). Considering both leaders' aversion to compromise, no agreement could have been reached under these unfavourable and inflexible conditions, questioning whether under different types of leadership the outcome could have been different (Nicholson, 1989). Hence, the interpretation of these outcomes leads me to the preliminary conclusion that BLs on both sides of a SDM might indeed increase the likelihood of a violent outcome.

5.3 Timeframe 2: 1996-2004

5.3.1 Aznar's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

After Felipe González, José María Aznar, the head of the conservative People's Party (PP) became the prime minister of Spain in 1996 and retained the position for two terms (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018). The content analysis has shown some GL elements, such as competence and achievement orientation, especially in regards to the successful implementation of counter-terrorist measures (**Appendix 5**) (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 6). However, Aznar maintained a hard-line approach of no negotiation with 'terrorists', "refus[ing] to start a peace process and the meeting with ETA" (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 18). In the behavioural evaluation, a predominant presence of BL indicators - inflexibility, lack of compassion, exploitativeness, irresponsibility, manipulation of information, overconfidence and hostility - is noticeable. Power-hungriness and abuse of authority are also associated with him, as he exuded "authoritarian" behaviour and had the tendency to "exploit democracy as a function of power" (Woodworth, 2004, pp. 8, 14). The main BL indicator is inflexibility in negotiation processes, as he always "refused to comply" (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 5).

5.3.2 Goikoetxea's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

Vicente Goikoetxea was the political leader of ETA during the mid-1990s and early-2000s. He became the leading figure after the organization underwent major leadership changes following the 1992 arrests (Whitfield, 2014). In comparison to Aznar, the ETA made more efforts towards finding solutions, showing openness, optimism and flexibility. Indeed in 1996, ETA drafted a peace proposal for a second consecutive year (Woodworth, 2004). This behaviour reflects GL indicators, such as achievement orientation, optimism and openness. However, in 1997 the group killed Basque PP politician Blanco, suggesting a lack of compassion as well as poor strategy, as it caused a massive anti-ETA uproar with millions mobilizing in protest (Whitfield, 2014). A year later, in 1998 the group declared its first ceasefire of unlimited duration, when Basque parties signed the *Lizarra Agreement* (Whitfield, 2015). The decision to cooperate shows flexibility, responsibility and achievement orientation on ETA's side as well as highlights Goikoetxea's authority to impose the truce on the rest of the members. Overall, ETA's behaviour and thus by relation Goikoetxea's presents more GL qualities, as it is under his leadership that the group was willing to resume dialogue with the state in hopes of finding a solution.

5.3.3 Results: Processes & Outcome

During the years 1996-2004 numerous attempts were made by ETA to progress in the conflict negotiations. Under Goikoetxea's leadership a peace proposal was drafted, which was rejected by Aznar with no further engagement attempts, as "Aznar refused to comply with their demands" (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 5). A further outcome was the *Lizarra Pact*, pleading ETA to cease its violent activities and the Spanish Government to open dialogue (Alonso, 2011). However, the negotiations yielded no results and no progress was made, resulting in ETA ending its truce and resuming armed activities in 2000 (Gooch, 2017). The new cycle of violence was the deadliest one in a decade (**Figure 1**). However, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 and the Al-Qaeda-related 2004 Madrid trainbombings, ETA's violence again heavily declined (Whitfield, 2014). ETA agreed to end its violent campaign in return for Aznar granting a vote of independence in the Basque Country, which was refused by the prime minister without further consideration (Shepard, 2002, p. 5).

5.3.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Outcome

In this context, I have defined the SL as a GL and the HSL as a BL. According to my third hypothesis (H3a) I expect a higher likelihood of status quo persistence. Indeed, the observations drawn from process-tracing are partly supportive of this claim. Aznar's strategy was to combat violence with violence, instead of engaging with the 'terrorists' to advance negotiations. Rather than focusing on solution-oriented behaviour and seeking optimal outcomes, his goal, similar to his predecessor González's, was to eradicate the group's existence by all means necessary. This might be due to Aznar's personal experience with ETA, as there was a failed assassination attempt on him in 1995. It is likely that this influenced his behaviour in regards to the group. Indeed, his use of multiple war politics, yet zero peace policies might indicate vengeful behaviour (Woodworth, 2004, pp. 10-11). As a result, whilst ETA renounced violence during its period of truce, Aznar showed complete unwillingness to compromise.

In 1992, the ETA leadership arrests led to Goikoetxea becoming the head of the group, changing ETA's engagement strategy with the government. Indeed, Aznar and Goikoetxea engaged in peace talks during the *Lizarra-Garazi* peace negotiations, however sources confirm that Aznar participated with no intention of finding a solution or softening his stance concerning the Basque SDM, showing his "inflexible response to these opportunities" (Woodworth, 2004, p. 11). During the Lizarra Pact, ETA agreed to its requests by declaring an unlimited ceasefire in 1998, thereby acting on the popular demand to halt violence (Woodworth, 2004). However, rather than seizing the opportunity to make progress, Aznar retained his inflexible stance, keeping any negotiations with ETA at bay (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018).

The false accusation of ETA being the culprit of the 2004 Madrid train bombings, even though evidence suggested otherwise, shows the impossibility of conflict resolution (Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014). I agree with Woodworth's (2004) assumption that "ETA's attacks actually served the PP's interests, because if the violence ended, the party could no longer refuse to negotiate" (p. 12). However, the electorate caught wind of the state's manipulation and "found [Aznar] nakedly guilty of playing politics with a terrorist massacre", causing the conservative government to lose elections to the socialists under Zapatero (Woodworth, 2007, p. 66).

5.4 Timeframe 3: 2004-2011

5.4.1 Zapatero's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

PSOE's Zapatero took over as head of government in the 2004 elections. When analysing his leadership in regards to the Basque Conflict, mainly GL behaviour is observed, as he showed flexibility and openness through his "readiness to resume contacts with ETA" (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 15). Other repetitive GL indicators include trustworthiness, accountability, achievement orientation and responsibility (**Appendix 6**). However, the content analysis has also found some elements belonging to BLs, especially concerning skill deficiency caused by "inexperience" (Woodworth, 2007, p. 66). Nonetheless, due to the high amount of GL factors I conceptualize him as such. Zapatero showcased selfless behaviour when promoting peaceful outcomes as well as demonstrated trustworthiness by following through with his promise to rekindle dialogue with ETA (Woodworth, 2004, p. 21).

5.4.2 David Pla's Leadership Style: Good or Bad Leadership?

In the years leading up to the end of the Basque Conflict in 2011, ETA made numerous attempts to engage in peace talks with Zapatero, showing its motivation to end the struggle. David Pla, the leader of ETA's political apparatus at the time is thought to have been the main negotiator of the peace process as well as the one having declared ETA's permanent ceasefire ("Always around", 2013). In 2010, Basque parties were demanding ETA to cease its armed activities and commit to the democratic process (Alonso, 2011). The organization accepted the demand and committed to a non-violent political cause, showing GL indicators of responsibility, integrity and flexibility. It also shows how permissive the organization acted in response to the plea of non-violence. Hence, David Pla can be seen as a leader who listened to the people, who put a halt to the organization's armed activities and engaged in peace talks as well as was willing to compromise. Indeed, on October 20th 2011, under David Pla's demand, ETA declared "a new and definitive ceasefire" (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 16).

5.4.3 Results: Processes & Outcome

The 2004-2011 period saw numerous peace negotiations and motivation from both sides to find solutions to the Basque question (Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014). Although violent activity still continued, it was significantly less present during this timeframe. One of

Zapatero's first actions in 2004 was to re-start peace talks with ETA. In 2006, ETA declared a ceasefire during on-going conversations with the Spanish Government (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018). However, peace talks ended later that year, when ETA broke its truce by planting a bomb at Madrid-Barajas airport (Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018). 2007 saw the rekindling of negotiations, however as no progress was in sight, ETA officially ended its ceasefire (Alonso, 2011). The year 2010 marks the turning point for the group, as numerous members were arrested, thereby undermining its capacities. The most important critical juncture of this timeframe was the international peace conference held on October 17th 2011 with the goal of promoting a resolution to the struggle and requesting ETA to completely terminate its violence (Alonso, 2011). On October 20th, ETA announced its definitive end of violent activity and called for open talks with the Spanish Government, marking the end of the half-century long Basque Conflict (Whitfield, 2014).

5.4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Outcome

In my theoretical framework, I assume that if both sides of the conflict present GLs, then the likelihood of a peaceful outcome is higher (H1). Since both leaders have been operationalized as GLs and ETA ceased all forms of violent activity in 2011, starting a process of disarmament, culminating in its complete dissolvement in 2018, this hypothesis has found some confirmatory evidence (Whitfield, 2014). Indeed, ETA's armed activities ceased, making way for a peaceful resolution, as peace talks, a permanent ceasefire and an end of violent activities were observed.

However, this finding remains somewhat ambivalent and inconsistent. Indeed, what differentiates the second timeframe from this one is the change from a 'bad' HSL to a 'good' one. Although both Zapatero and Aznar employed the same policies - predominantly war policies - the latter saw a stagnation in the conflict with some occasional increases and decreases of violence, whereas Zapatero saw a peaceful conclusion to the struggle. What differentiates them is not their policies but their leadership styles. Hence, the combination of GLs Zapatero and David Pla was more conducive to a violent-free outcome and towards the end of the Basque Conflict.

5.5 Discussion of Overall Results

Overall, these findings maintain the initial expectations of H2 and H3a with somewhat inconclusive empirical support for H1. However, H3b could not be tested, although I assume that the result would have been similar to H3a, namely conflict stagnation. This case study shows that BLs are indeed linked to ineffectiveness and GLs to efficiency. It is under an environment of mutual 'good' leadership presence, that the Basque Conflict came to a relatively peaceful end. Hence, the research question on the extent to which HSLs and SLs impact the outcome of SDMs can be answered. The results of this investigation are suggestive of a correlation between the IV and the DV, meaning HSLs' and SLs' decisions influence the outcome of SDMs.

In agreement with Tarín Sanz and Rivas Otero's (2018) argument, this analysis demonstrates that whereas BLs with "more inflexible stances, [...] [are] more likely to trigger conflicts", GLs open to dialogue are more inclined to engage in successful peace talks (p. 4). Indeed, during the Basque Conflict, the BL factor of inflexibility, especially in Aznar's analysis, was the main deterrent to finding a peaceful solution. The content analysis of Aznar, González and Santacristina demonstrated that their main common denominator is their unwillingness to find compromises. Hence, a surprising finding of this research is that flexibility or inflexibility are one of the highest determining factors when it comes to the Basque Conflict resolution, whether on the HSL's or SL's side. The findings demonstrate that inflexibility on both sides led to an increase of violence, as demonstrated by González and Santacristina. When one side is flexible and the other one is not, stagnation is the likelier outcome, as observed with Aznar and Goikoetxea's case. It is only when both leaders, in this case David Pla and Zapatero, showed more openness and flexibility, that the negotiations came to a fruitful conclusion, thereby ending the conflict.

However, although I found some supporting evidence to maintain my claims, it is crucial not to disregard possible alternative explanations, as although individual leaders may have a determining effect on the outcomes of SDMs, they are not the only influencing factors. Indeed, other explanations, include (1) withering popular support; (2) the state's successful employment of counter-terrorist measures, which caused loss of financial capital and therefore a decrease in operational capabilities; and (3) intensified French-Spanish cooperation (Alonso, 2011, p. 706; Whitfield, 2014; Whitfield, 2015).

Nonetheless, I argue that if the HSL Aznar had shown more permissive leadership qualities, the outcome in the second timeframe might have been different. With the granting of concessions, such as the *Ibarretxe Plan* which would have increased the Basque region's autonomy but was strongly opposed by the PP, ETA might have reduced its violence or even given it up completely. However, for this to occur I presume that both sides need to present GL elements. Overall, as the H3a predicted, the Basque Conflict was relatively stagnant during this period.

Moreover, when comparing HSL Aznar and Zapatero's behaviour I debate that if differences in leadership style did not result in differences in policy, I question to what extent the changes in outcome can be attributed to the leadership factor. Nonetheless, although Zapatero, Aznar and in some instances even González maintained similar policies, they approached the conflict resolution processes differently. Whereas Aznar and González employed more aggressive methods aimed at destroying ETA and at abruptly ending rather than resolving the conflict, Zapatero was more open to dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms. Indeed, it is the good progress made during the negotiations that led ETA to declare its final ceasefire, terminating the conflict (Barros, Caporale, & Gil-Alana, 2009, p. 289).

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary

Drawing from existing literature on leadership effects, this thesis put forward a leader-centric approach to determine the extent to which HSLs and SLs influence the outcome of SDMs. Through a process-tracing approach I find that two of my hypotheses hold true in the Basque-Spanish case, indicating that whereas the mutual presence of BLs increases the likelihood of a violent outcome (H2), the existence of one GL and one BL results in status quo persistence (H3a). The empirical support for the first hypothesis stating that GLs result in more peaceful outcomes is somewhat inconclusive. Nonetheless, reiterating the research question, I maintain that leaders' decisions are contributing factors in the outcome of SDMs.

In agreement with Young (1994) and Hechter (1992), these results confirm that a crucial factor influencing peaceful secession are SLs and HSLs taking the responsibility for engaging in negotiations and making concessions. Moreover, this study has also maintained Cameron's (2011) argument that attributes GLs with efficient performance and positive results (p. 32). Indeed, similar to Hogan and Kaiser (2003) this study has demonstrated that the best method of achieving progress and peaceful outcomes is through GLs. Also, surprisingly, the assumption that variation in the flexibility trait impacts leaders' decisions and by extension results, holds true in this political context.

6.2 Strengths & Limitations of Research

Notwithstanding this thesis' strengths, it is also important to recognize the weaknesses of my research. Indeed, seen as leaders form part of complex social processes, applying the 'black-and-white' categories of 'good' versus 'bad' leadership might be restrictive and not nuanced enough. However, this categorization also provides an advantage as it allows for more systematic analysis. A further strength is the combination of process-tracing and content analysis methods, increasing the thesis' internal validity as well as reliability due to systematic data triangulation.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, a large-N research would have helped avoid false uniqueness and false universalism as well as increased the research's external validity, making it easier to generalize my findings and apply them on a larger scale (Halperin & Heath, 2017). However, although the extent to which my findings hold true beyond the Basque case can be questioned, single-N research also provides advantages. It allows for an in-depth analysis into the complexities of the unique Spanish-ETA struggle, contributing to existing knowledge on how and why a SDM can come to an end.

Thus, independence movements are complex and multi-faceted occurrences, whose outcome cannot solely be attributed to a stand-alone factor, such as leadership. In the case of the Basque Conflict, it was also a result of numerous elements at the macro- and meso-levels. Also, of alternative explanations, such as withering support for ETA, and interconnected developments occurring on the regional, national and international sphere. Nonetheless, although alternative explanations might be presented as a weakness in most papers, I argue

that they do not necessarily undermine my findings but rather contribute to the overall explanation of SDMs as complex socio-political phenomena.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has shown how disentangling leadership behaviour and its influence on the outcomes of SDMs may be useful to better understand its conflict dynamics and resolution. Nevertheless, further empirical research is warranted to test these hypotheses within other contexts, as to provide more precise understanding on the relationship between leaders and outcomes. More comparative and quantitative research is also needed to assess the extent to which my theory holds true in distinct cases and differing contexts. Lastly, a deeper look into the way in which flexibility or inflexibility of leadership behaviour affects conflict processes is needed. This would provide increased clarity on how to sustain peaceful relations and how to bridge the gap between HSLs and SLs in their efforts to find solutions.

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7.2 Appendix List

Appendix 1. Operationalization of a 'Good' Leader

Concept	Operationalization	
'Good' Leader Synonyms: responsible, ethical, accountable, effective	Responsibility	Flexibility (in compromises)
	Trustworthiness	Openness
	Optimism	Achievement orientation
	Competence	Accountability
	Authority	

Appendix 2. Operationalization of a 'Bad' Leader

Concept	Operationalization	
'Bad' leader Synonyms: toxic, evil, destructive, abusive	Hostility (to criticism)	Exploitativeness
	Lack of compassion	Overconfidence (also: hubris)
	Skill inadequacy/deficiency	Power-hungriness
	Abuse of authority	Inflexibility (in compromises)
	Manipulation	Untrustworthiness
	Irresponsibility	Corruption

Appendix 3. Timeline 1936-2018: Important events, leaders, and evaluating the presence of critical junctures (CJ) or peace talks (PT)

Date	Important Events	Leaders	CJ or PT	Source(s)
1936	Start of Civil War	Spanish: Niceto Alcalá-Zamora	CJ	(Muro, 2013; van Dongen, 2014)
1939	End of Civil War Start of Franco's dictatorship • Start of assimilation & marginalization policies against the Basque population	Spanish: General Franco	CJ	(Muro, 2013; van Dongen, 2014)
1959	**Creation of ETA & Start of "Basque conflict"** • 4 Founders: Julen Madariaga, José María Benito del Valle, Rafael Albisu and Txillardegi	Spanish: General Franco ETA: Julen Madariaga, José María Benito del Valle, Rafael Albisu and Txillardegi	CJ	(van Dongen, 2014)
1970	*Burgos Trials* → several ETA members condemned to death	Spanish: General Franco ETA: Xabier Zumalde (military)		(Heiberg, 2007)
1973	ETA becomes more active & gains more power ETA kills Luis Carrero Blanco, the president of government (meant to be Franco's successor)	Spanish: General Franco ETA: Xabier Zumalde (military)	CJ	(Whitfield, 2015)
1975	Spanish forces arrest hundreds of ETA members November - Franco dies • transitional period to democracy • King Juan Carlos I elevated to head of state & chooses (1975-77) Adolfo Suárez as Prime Minister	Spanish: King Juan Carlos I ETA: Xabier Zumalde (military) & José Miguel Beñarán Ordeñana ('Argala')	CJ for Spain, but for the conflict?	(Muro, 2013)
1977	First Spanish Free elections: Adolfo Suárez gets elected	Spanish: Adolfo Suárez ETA: José Miguel Beñarán		(Heywood, 1991)

		Ordeñana ('Argala')		
1978	ETA establishes political party Herri Batasuna.	Spanish: Adolfo Suárez ETA: José Miguel Beñarán Ordeñana ('Argala')		(*Timeline: Basque Group ETA's Decades of Violence, Gradual Demise*, 2018)
1981	New prime minister: Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo (February) → for less than one year ETA attempts a coup d'état (failed)	Spanish: Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo ETA: Txomin Iturbe		(Heywood, 1991)
1982	**Felipe González as new Prime Minister (1982-1996)**	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: Txomin Iturbe		(Heiberg, 2007; Shepard, 2002)
1983	Creation of GAL (paramilitary squad carrying out attacks against Basque Country) GAL was active from 1983-87, also known as the period of the *Dirty War*	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: Txomin Iturbe	CJ (start of *Dirty War*)	(Whitfield, 2014)
1986	ETA assassinates María Dolores González Catarain, former ETA member who left the organisation.	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: José Luis Álvarez Sanatcristina		(Whitfield, 2014)
1987	End of *Dirty War* ETA car bomb kills 21 people at supermarket.	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: José Luis Álvarez Sanatcristina		(Whitfield, 2014)
1989	January: ETA announces 60-day ceasefire Both sides hold formal **peace talks** → negotiations between government & ETA in Algiers → April: process breaks as no successful conclusion reached **ETA resumes violence**	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: José Luis Álvarez Sanatcristina	PT	(Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014)

1992	Arrest of ETA's top 3 leaders: • Francisco Mujika Garmendia ("Pakito") • political leader José Luis Alvarez Santacristina ("Txelis") • logistical leader José María Arregi Erostarbe ("Fiti") → resulting in changes in leadership & direction	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: Mikel Albizu Iriarte	**CJ & PT**	(Sánchez-Cuenca, 2009)
1995	ETA tries killing José María Aznar & King Juan Carlos I ETA assassinates PP politician Gregorio Ordoñez **ETA drafts peace proposal** → was refused by the government	Spanish: Felipe González ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	PT	(Shepard, 2002; Whitfield, 2014)
1996	**José María Aznar becomes Prime Minister (1996-2004)** **ETA makes peace proposal** → again rejected by new conservative government	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	PT (only from ETA's side)	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018; Woodworth, 2004)
1997	ETA kills Basque Popular Party member Miguel Ángel Blanco, mobilizing millions in anti-ETA protests (predominantly Basque protestors)	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	CJ (mass mobilization against ETA)	(Whitfield, 2014)
1998	Basque elections: the left gets a lot of support due to ETA's **ceasefire declaration a month before elections** (first without a time limit) • "ceasefire came after Herri Batasuna and several Basque organisations, such as the PNV, which at that time was part of the PP's government, agreed to the Lizarra pact/agreement, aimed at putting pressure on the Spanish government to make further concessions towards independence." Influenced by Northern Ireland Peace processes, **ETA & Spanish government engage in peace talks**	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	PT	(Alonso, 2011; Woodworth, 2004)

1999	**End of peace talks and ends ceasefire**	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	PT	(Alonso, 2011)
2000	**ETA resumes violence**	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea		(Whitfield, 2014)
2002	Spanish government passes law called *Ley de Partidos* (Law of Parties) allowing the banning of parties which directly or indirectly sympathize with terrorist organizations (ETA was regarded as one → Batasuna was a sympathizer, they got banned in 2003)	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea		(Alonso, 2011)
2003	Spanish government bans Batasuna for not condemning terrorist attacks (first time party was banned after dictatorship) Spanish government closes Basque newspaper *Egunkaria* & arrests journalists (allegations that they were linked to ETA → accusations were dismissed in 2010)	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea		(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018)
2004	Government under Aznar falsely accuses ETA of 2004 Madrid train bombings • Thus, conservative government loses elections to socialists under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero → becomes president	Spanish: José María Aznar ETA: Vicente Goikoetxea	CJ	(Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014)
2004	ETA leader Iriarte is arrested **One of Zapatero's first actions: engaging in peace talks with ETA**	Spanish: José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero ETA: Francisco Javier López Peña	PT	(Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014)
2005	**ETA is trying to open a peace process**	Spanish: José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero ETA: Francisco Javier López	PT	(Whitfield, 2014)

		Peña		
2006	ETA declares ceasefire → conversations between Batasuna, ETA and the Basque and Spanish governments start • European Parliament endorsed this ceasefire as a peace initiative for the Basque Conflict **Peace Talks ended in December** when ETA planted a car bomb at Madrid-Barajas airport	Spanish: J. L. R. Zapatero ETA: Francisco Javier López Peña (& Arnaldo Otegi) & Mikel 'Txeroki' Rubina (military leader, completely opposed to peace talks)	PT	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018)
2007	More **negotiations** in May **ETA officially ends its ceasefire** and resumes violence	Spanish: J. L. R. Zapatero ETA: Francisco Javier López Peña (& from 2008-2009: Aitor Elizaran Aguilar)	PT	(Alonso, 2011)
2010	Many arrests of ETA members, greatly undermining its capacity Demands from a banned leftist party to fully commit to a democratic process without violence (due to these demands, ETA stops violent actions in September)	Spanish: J. L. R. Zapatero ETA: David Pla	CJ (for ETA)	(Alonso, 2011)
2011	**October 17th: international peace conference** in Donostia-San Sebastián • Goal: promoting resolution to Basque conflict • Plea for ETA to cease violent/armed activities and to demand negotiations with Spanish & French governments October 20th: ETA announces **"definitive cessation of armed activity"** and call for open talks with Spanish & French governments Zapatero described it as victory for democracy December: Rajoy becomes new head of government	Spanish: J. L. R. Zapatero ETA: David Pla	CJ & PT	(Alonso, 2011; Whitfield, 2014)

2012	ETA starts disarming	Spanish: Mariano Rajoy ETA: Iratxe Sorzabal David Pla		(Whitfield, 2014)
2017	ETA declares complete disarmament of organization and end of its political initiative	Spanish: Mariano Rajoy ETA: no leader or data not available		(Whitfield, 2014)
2018	Dissolution of ETA	Spanish: Mariano Rajoy ETA: no leader or data not available		(Whitfield, 2014)

Notes: Coloured columns show the selected timeframe & leaders for analysis: (1) 1982-1995; (2) 1996-2003; (3) 2004-2011

This table only shows critical junctures under the context of the 'Basque Conflict', not Spain as a whole.

Appendix 4. Content Analysis on GL or BL Style of HSL González

Meaning unit (Text)	Indicators	BL or GL category	Source
"**hindering judicial inquiries** into the activities of the Antiterrorist Liberation Groups (GAL), a clandestine organization linked to the Spanish government, which had kidnapped and **extra-judicially executed** a number of ETA militants"	Abuse of authority Corruption Lack of accountability Irresponsibility	BL BL BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 14)
"**intense police action that not only affected the members of ETA**, but also journalists, activists and political leaders in the organization's 'orbit'"	Abuse of authority	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 14)

"The Spanish government has used different tactics, by **arresting Basque activists**"	Abuse of authority	BL	(Linstroth, 2002, p. 208)
"Vibrant young leader who radiated charisma and **modernizing efficiency**"	Competence	GL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 9)
"The golden image of Felipe González and the PSOE had been sullied by a series of **chronic financial and political scandals**"	Untrustworthiness Corruption	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 10)
"**power of patronage**, which were **clearly being abused**"	Abuse of authority Untrustworthiness	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 10)
"**Links** between the administration and the **illegal Dirty War** [...] involving **murders, several kidnappings, bombings, and torture**" "Revelations of **corruption** and the dirty war"	Untrustworthiness Lack of compassion Corruption Corruption	BL BL BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 10) (Woodworth, 2004, p. 10)
"The **megalomania** of which González was now widely suspected."	Power-hungriness Overconfidence (hubris)	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 10)

Described as charismatic, **visionary leader** that **can invoke change**	Achievement-oriented	GL	(Arráez Bueno, 2017, p. 177)
	Competence	GL	
"Although González **has never directly admitted his participation** and that of his Government in the **GAL** fight against ETA terrorism, **most sources seem to confirm it.**"	Irresponsibility	BL	(Tardivo & Cano, 2020, p. 115)
	Untrustworthiness	BL	
	Abuse of authority	BL	
"GAL **murdered** many Basques, including **minores** forming part of ETA [...] and some **civilians** in the crossfires"	Corruption	BL	(Tardivo & Cano, 2020, p. 122)
	Lack of compassion	BL	
"**No compassion** for the victims of GAL"	Lack of compassion	BL	(Tardivo & Cano, 2020, p. 131)
"**No accountability or responsibility** from González for what the GAL did" → "although multiple sources hint at him being **directly involved** in its creations, since GAL was created within his party"	Lack of accountability	BL	(Tardivo & Cano, 2020, p. 131)
	Irresponsibility	BL	
"The Algiers talks are viewed widely as the **most determined effort yet** by the government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez to seek peace with the ETA"	Achievement-oriented	GL	(Nicholson, 1989)
	Openness	GL	
"The government, [...] in a further **gesture**, has allowed an **unprecedented** month-long **lull** in arrests of suspected terrorists in the Basque region. "	Flexibility (compromises)	GL	(Nicholson, 1989)
	Openness	GL	

"In recent weeks, even conservative **members of parliament have given Gonzalez a vote of confidence in the talks**"	Competence	GL	(Nicholson, 1989)
"**discrepancies** when it comes to the PM's **discourses and real life actions**, in his discourse terrorism is not central, however the creation of GAL says otherwise"	Untrustworthiness Abuse of authority	BL BL	(Tardivo & Cano, 2020, p. 132)

Note: BL refers to bad leadership and GL refers to good leadership

Leadership style assessed in relation to the 'Basque Conflict' (1959-2011)

Appendix 5. Content analysis on GL or BL style of Spanish Prime Minister Aznar

Meaning unit (Text)	Indicators	BL or GL category	Source
"On 10 July, the Basque terror group held the PP councilor Miguel Ángel Blanco for 48 hours, while it demanded that the Spanish government regroup ETA prisoners in Basque jails as a condition for his liberation. **Aznar refused to comply** with their demands and the armed organization promptly executed the councilor"	Inflexibility (in compromises) Lack of compassion	BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 5)
→ this action of the ETA lead to mass protests, this movement was "swiftly **exploited by** the Popular Party, which extended its criticisms to include not only radical nationalism, but nationalism as a whole"	Exploitativeness Abuse of authority (in case the government stopped complying with ETA to acquire the desired effect of popular uproar)	BL BL	(Ibarra & Ahedo 2004, p. 364)
"During his second term in office, his management of the conflict	Inflexibility	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas

became more inflexible"			Otero, 2018, p. 5)
"The third—the 11-S attacks and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—gave Aznar the extra (international) justification that he needed to **apply stricter counterterrorism measures**"	Authority	GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 6)
"During the four days between the bombings and the 2004 general elections, the Aznar government **defended** the thesis that ETA was to blame, **despite** the fact that different political **sources** and national and international media released information that **pointed more to** a jihadist attack motivated by the controversial Spanish support for the Iraq War"	Manipulation (of information) Irresponsibility (false accusations against ETA)	BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 6)
"Aznar is slightly above average in the categories measuring **openness** to information [...] and [...] above average in **self-confidence.**"	Openness Indication of Overconfidence or Courage	GL Not measurable	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 12)
"his **identification with groups is incredibly low** at 0.27 points below average, but his **distrust of other groups** is 1.27 percent, i.e., 0.98 points above average."	Lack of compassion Hostility	BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 12)
His approach was imprisoning inmates far from their homes and to "**prevent them from communicating** among themselves"	Lack of compassion Competence (good strategy)	BL GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 12; Zernova, 2017, p. 372)

"**hindering judicial inquiries into the activities of the Antiterrorist Liberation Groups (GAL)**, a clandestine **organization linked to the Spanish government**, which had kidnapped and extra-judicially executed a number of ETA militants" (p. 14)	Untrustworthiness Corruption / Manipulation Irresponsibility Abuse of authority ("hindering judicial inquiries")	BL BL BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 12)
Aznar "**broke off the negotiations** with ETA"	Inflexibility (to compromise)	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 14)
While ETA tried to engage in peace talks, Aznar "**refused** to transfer the ETA prisoners, dispersed throughout the Spanish geography, towards the Basque Country; it **broke off its interlocution** with ETA and arrested several of its leaders."	Entitlement Inflexibility	BL BL	(Ibarra & Ahedo, 2004, p. 365)
"the official discourse **denied that political concessions would be made** in exchange for dialogue"	Inflexibility	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 16)
"Aznar is recalled for his **inflexibility** with ETA"	Inflexibility	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 17)

"Aznar possesses a 'suspicious' leadership style, characterized by his **'distrust of other groups'**. A 'suspicious' leader has a much greater tendency to **disregard peace and negotiation processes** as ways of resolving armed conflicts."	Inflexibility Hostility	BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 17)
"**uncommitted to peace policies**" "Aznar **refused to start a peace process** and the meeting with ETA in 1999 was just an exploratory meeting, not a dialogue process"	Lack of motivation Hostility Skill inadequacy	BL BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 18)
"ETA hinted in late October that **it would stop fighting if** its maximum demand was met: that Spain must hold a vote on Basque independence. Prime Minister José Maria Aznar **refused**, saying that the 11 September attacks on the United States showed that it was "suicide" to deal with terrorists. "They must be defeated," he said, "because the only aim of killers and fanatics is to kill and exclude those who don't think as they do." **And so the stage was set for the violence to continue.**" (p. 55)	Inflexibility (to compromise)	BL	(Shepard, 2002, p. 55)
"'His personal **authoritarianism**" "Under his second rule there was a deepening **authoritarian atmosphere**"	Abuse of authority Abuse of authority	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, pp. 8, 14)

"he has left Spain more deeply divided than any time since the Franco dictatorship is his greatest failure" (p. 8)	Lack of self-improvement Untrustworthiness	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 8)
Leaders such as Aznar "Aznar "'**exploit democracy as a function of their power**, and they are inclined to undermine democracy wherever and whenever they can" (p. 8)"	Abuse of authority Exploitativeness	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 8)
The author associates the word "**hostility**" a lot with Aznar	Hostility	BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 9)
Aznar used to be part of the extreme right, before coming to power he tried hiding and burying the extremist rhetoric he used to employ → "Some **hurdles were conveniently cleared** before Aznar finally became leader"	Untrustworthiness Abuse of authority Manipulation (of information)	BL BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 9)
"**efficiency**, hard work" & "organizational **efficiency**" → however, "The prize of the **organizational efficiency** was an unprecedented concentration of **power** in the hands of the leader himself, **a grasp that Aznar would tighten further** in the years that followed."	Competence Achievement-oriented Power-hungriness	GL GL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, pp. 9, 10)

"Aznar's **inflexible** response to these opportunities" (Opportunities referring to the Lizarre Declaration of 1998, which called for an end of ETA violence and a right for Basque self-determination)	Inflexibility	BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 11)
"ETA's attacks actually served the PP's interests, because if the violence ended, the party could no longer **refuse to negotiate** a new deal with the PNV [...] He **would prefer to endure a degree of terrorist activity [...] rather than cede any more ground to Basque nationalism.**" (p. 12)	Inflexibility Manipulation	BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 12)
"the PP apparently **manipulated** information about the March 11 bombings in madrid" "The electorate evidently judged, with good reason, that the **PP was lying about ETA's in- volvement,** in the hope of deflecting fresh attention from the Iraq issue. **The conserva- tives were found** nakedly **guilty** of playing politics with a terrorist massacre"	Manipulation Untrustworthiness Untrustworthiness Corruption Manipulation	BL BL BL BL BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 12) (Woodworth, 2007, p. 66)
"Political **hubris**" (p. 18)	Overconfidence	BL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 18)
Before becoming PM he had made a **promise** of only staying for 2	Trustworthiness	GL	(Woodworth, 2004,

Meaning unit (Text)	Indicators	BL or GL category	Source
terms and then stepping down, he indeed stepped down from office at the end of the second administration			p. 18)
When exiting his term "ETA's **terrorism was a its lowest level in 30 years**" (p. 20)	Competence Achievement-oriented	GL GL	(Woodworth, 2004, p. 18)

Note: BL refers to bad leadership and GL refers to good leadership

      Leadership style assessed in relation to the 'Basque Conflict' (1959-2011)

Appendix 6. Content analysis on GL or BL style of Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero

Meaning unit (Text)	Indicators	BL or GL category	Source
"the results obtained by Zapatero in the **openness** to information categories are **slightly above average**: his **lack of conceptual complexity** is 0.16 points **higher than the average**, while his **self-confidence is quite low at 0.49 points below average.** In the motivation categories, neither does Zapatero show **any identification with groups nor** does he have a **tendency to solve problems.** [...] his **distrust of other groups is 0.23 points above average.**"	Openness Skill inadequacy ("lack of conceptual complexity") Underconfidence Lack of motivation	GL BL BL BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 12)

He **promised** the withdrawal of troops from Iraq if he were to be elected and he did so: **"withdrawal of** the **troops** stationed in Iraq and a **greater willingness to dialogue** with ETA" (p. 15) Got elected in 2004 and "announced he would withdraw troops from Iraq, **as** he has always **promised** in his election program"	Trustworthiness & Accountability Openness Achievement-oriented (more motivated to find a solution) Trustworthiness & Accountability	GL GL GL GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 15) (Woodworth, 2004, p. 21)
Zapatero showed "a **readiness to resume contacts with ETA** if the organization first laid down its arms"	Flexibility Openness	GL GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 15)
"Due to the **good progress made** in the negotiations, ETA sent a DVD to different Basque media outlets with a "video communique" declaring a ceasefire"	Achievement-oriented Competence	GL GL	(Barros et al, 2009, p. 289; Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 15)
After ETA planted a bomb in Madrid-Barajas airport "Zapatero, who **discarding his initial optimism** began to deal with the conflict with a **harder hand and greater mistrust**" & "end of dialogue"	Pessimism	BL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 16)
Zapatero: "**tendency to solve problems**"	Achievement-oriented	GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 17)
"Zapatero **opens a dialogue** with this organization **for the conflict resolution** and he **reached a secret agreement** in 2005 which **facilitated the truce** of	Openness	GL	(Tarín Sanz & Rivas Otero, 2018, p. 18)

2006–2007"	Flexibility	GL	
	Competence	GL	
"Has **opened channels for dialogue**"	Openness	GL	(Woodwort, 2004, pp. 23, 24)
"**Reopened active dialogue**"	Openness	GL	
"Zapatero, made an un-precedented offer of talks with ETA "	Openness	GL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 66)
"the inexperienced Zapatero"	Skill inadequacy	BL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 66)
"Zapatero seemed like an **imaginative** and **flexible politician**, who might be **happy to negotiate a new dispensation for the Basque Country** in exchange for an end to Basque terrorism"	Achievement-oriented	GL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 66)
	Flexibility	GL	
	Optimism	GL	
Zapatero's peace initiative: "the foundations of a peace process had **not been well prepared**"	Skill deficiency	BL	(Woodworth, 2007, pp. 67, 69, 72)
"It is now clear that no pillar of this peace process was on firm ground"	Skill deficiency	BL	
"Zapatero's **mishandling of the peace process**" (referring to the 2006 talks)			
"**Zapatero's apparent failure to follow through**, which risks allowing the peace process to stagnate"	Skill deficiency	BL	

	Skill deficiency	BL	
	Irresponsibility	BL	
"Zapatero **refused** to relocate a single prisoner"	Inflexibility	BL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 70)
"Zapatero **should be commended for launching a peace process** of which many of his own party are highly suspicious"	Optimism	GL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 72)
	Authority	GL	
	Courage	GL	
"**There has never been a moment as promising as Zapatero's offer of talks with ETA**"	Achievement-oriented	GL	(Woodworth, 2007, p. 72)
	Accountability	GL	
	Responsibility	GL	

Note: BL refers to bad leadership and GL refers to good leadership
        Leadership style assessed in relation to the 'Basque Conflict' (1959-2011)