the *sine qua non* of the researcher-researched dichotomy and the heart of reigning versions of the social-scientific method—are deeply problematic. Pachirat's solution is to embrace, rather than reject, his partiality. Recognizing that partiality is the natural state of affairs for any observer, he demonstrates, is the first step toward an understanding of real-world truths.

FOUR

When Nationalists Are Not Separatists: Discarding and Recovering Academic Theories while Doing Fieldwork in the Basque Region of Spain

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How should we integrate the insights of theories we learn in the classroom with the views of participants in politics? Can we simply discard and view reality cold, without the images, categories, and words that our professional vocabularies provide us? Or, if by chance we choose to take advantage of our scholarly traditions, which of our inherited concepts should we employ?

Rather than discuss the process of concept adoption (and adaptation) abstractly, I shall recall my first attempt to listen carefully to participants and to relate their knowledge to the concerns of established political scientists. From this case study, some practical trade-offs and dilemmas may come to light. These include the challenges of reconciling the long-term and large-scale concerns of many academics with the short-term intentions and local objectives of many political actors; balancing the deterministic tone of political sociology with the ubiquitous choices and contingency that actors perceive; and concisely portraying the shared political beliefs of opposition groups during times of intense internal debate and widespread ideological creativity.

Acquisition of a Theoretical Option

At the end of the 1970s, I was a doctoral student at the University of California at Berkeley, preparing for fieldwork in the Basque region of Spain—a territory that many nationalists call Euskadi Sur. My motivation was partly career driven. The job market for new Ph.D.s in political science was tight,

and I needed an "angle" to survive as an academic. Comparatively little had been published about Iberian politics (although a handful of eminent scholars studying regimes either were describing Spain as a paradigmatic example of a breakdown of an authoritarian regime, or were analyzing Spain for lessons about the founding of a liberal democratic regime). For an ambitious young scholar, Spain appeared understudied, a place about which a green academic might quickly make a mark. The trick (the survivalist side of my mind whispered) was to think about Spain in a manner that would interest older, more established scholars. It was, after all, important to secure approval from the professionally influential.

Nondegree temptations to think differently abounded, however. Spain held a special place in my mind. It symbolized a land of New Left ideals, to which I—a former participant in a cooperative housing experiment in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and in antiwar and anti-Shah demonstrations at the University of Michigan and Stanford University—was personally wedded. During the 1930s, anarchist experiments in the countryside and in major cities, such as Barcelona, terrified both Western bankers and Soviet commissars (according to Bookchin 1977, Chomsky 1967, and other commentators sympathetic to experiments in participatory democracy). George Orwell (1952) learned about Trotskyism and anarchism while in Spain. Perhaps while conducting fieldwork, I could take a break now and then, and look at remnants of a revolutionary upheaval that I had long admired from afar.[1]

Then there were profoundly personal motivations fueling my desire for fieldwork in Euskadi Sur. Being a first-generation U.S. citizen, I repeatedly had noticed while growing up that U.S. citizens of European descent had not always welcomed my devoutly Catholic mother (from Guatemala) or my headstrong atheistic father (from Iran) with softly socialist sympathies. My parents, wishing me a happy life, had worked hard through my infancy and childhood to rid me of overt signs of difference, such as "funny accents" and stiff hair. Partly out of fear of being shunned and partly out of desire to take advantage of the open avenues available to a well-educated suburbanite, I had spent a quarter-century learning how to behave like a person of northern European descent. I was rewarded for my efforts to assimilate with steady academic and professional advancement. Going to Spain and observing the arguments and behavior of Basque nationalists seemed an emotionally safe method to wrestle with my nagging feelings of guilt about my abandonment of my parents' heritages.[2]

Facing pressures to complete the dissertation in a hurry (my wife and I were gamely raising a two-year-old in a partly converted fieldworkers' mess hall) and drawing on very limited financial resources, I decided to travel

to Euskadi Sur for just one summer. My dream was to distribute a concise three-page research instrument among diverse political activists to test a set of sociological hypotheses about Basque politics that some well-known scholars in the United States had been developing. Having read the extant scholarly literature in English on Basque nationalism and on the sociological origins of nationalist movements, I felt sufficiently prepared to analyze distant events.

Novelist Margaret Shedd, who died the year my dissertation was approved, provided my entry point into the world of Basque politics. Shedd was a "Red" writer in northern California with a long history of involvement in socialist politics. She had acquired fame in the Basque region for her novel (in English) about the infamous "Burgos trial." The name refers to a series of events that began when security forces arrested and tortured several young Basque men and women affiliated with the nationalist organization ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna, or Basque Homeland and Freedom), and then subjected them to a military tribunal that imposed severe sentences, including capital punishment. Shedd's book, which openly sided with the ETA suspects, pulled no punches: it was an indictment of the Franco regime. In retrospect, I realize that the novel, and the letter the author penned on my behalf to her friends in the Basque region, contributed to my deviation from a fairly straightforward research agenda. Shedd facilitated my exposure to events and incidents that were important to local Basque activists but that were far from the political concerns of the U.S. academy.[3]

At the time, most English-language social scientists and political commentators were not particularly interested in the goals and perceptions of local Basque activists per se; more salient were the topics of regime stability and regime change. In addition, most students of Iberian politics desired a peaceful transition of the peninsular political order from its Francoist, authoritarian past to a European-like pluralist regime. Hence, they interpreted events in the Basque region within a broader story about democratization. The struggle for constitutional liberties and rule by an elected parliament gave local events in the Basque region their significance. Scholars wanted to know whether the activities of Basque nationalists advanced the realization of a liberal-democratic Spanish nation-state. The answer was almost universally no, leading to the use of derogatory terms, such as *extremists* and *millennial*, to label the Basque nationalists who either called for immediate political independence or refused to denounce particular acts of violence by their compatriots (Linz 1980, 20, 43–51; Medhurst 1982, 235–61; Payne 1976, 76–102; Payne 1979, 169–70).

Social scientists in the United States were never simply teleological

thinkers, however. They also embraced a causal argument that made sense of extremist behavior in Euskadi Sur and rendered it less surprising and unexpected. Prominent Iberianists who often wrote in English, such as Juan Linz (1973, 78–83), Ken Medhurst (1982, 239–42, 248–9), and Stanley Payne (1976), interpreted Basque nationalism as a form of xenophobic and backward-looking politics fairly common in rapidly industrializing territories during the early and mid-twentieth century. Their argument paralleled a broad scholarly consensus about the dangers of rapid modernization: regardless of where on the globe, artisans and owners of small farms, small workshops, and small stores feel threatened by the sudden secularization of local spiritual thought and culture; by the establishment of large public and private bureaucracies (in lieu of small-scale, personal ties); by the rapid growth of cities; and by the rise of novel and gigantic economic forces (big businesses, global markets, and organized labor).[4] Dizzied, unanchored, and vulnerable, members of the traditional middle classes in the Basque region (like their counterparts elsewhere) sought emotional refuge in romanticized images of the past and joined political parties committed to purging recent social changes from their homeland. There is nothing particularly puzzling, then, about the "extremist" nationalist politics in Euskadi Sur. Basque nationalists (like the German Nazis, the Italian Fascists, and the supporters of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the United States) were disoriented burghers and small farmers bucking modern social trends.

This theory matched what I knew about Basque history. The city of Bilbao (the most populous urban center on Spain's northern coast) had industrialized rapidly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and by mid-century was the steel, naval, and mining center of Spain. It was in Bilbao that Sabino de Arana, son of a socially downward-moving businessman, articulated the first version of Basque nationalist ideology. Furthermore, the two northernmost Basque provinces (Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa) were also the most industrialized and commercial provinces of Euskadi Sur and, coincidentally, where most acts of political violence by nationalist groups, such as ETA, occurred. The two southern provinces (Alava and Navarra), in contrast, remained overwhelmingly rural and fairly nonindustrialized, although the provincial capitals enjoyed influxes of foreign capital and a growth spurt between 1965 and 1975. Here, violence was less common, and support for nationalist organizations less widespread. Thus, the spatial distribution of economic development corresponded to the spatial distribution of extremist behavior, suggesting to me: "Voilà! The modernization thesis works!"

Given the scholarly consensus about how rapid modernization feeds

extremist politics, and given my basic knowledge of Basque economic development, my plan was simple. I would talk to fifty to a hundred local political activists from different parts of Euskadi Sur. After I returned to Berkeley, I would look at the survey results and explore statistical relationships between the respondents' stated political beliefs and their social backgrounds. I anticipated that my correlations would mostly match conventional wisdom. I also secretly hoped that there would be one or two unexpected anomalies that would allow me to draw on my knowledge of the history of Western political and social thought, and demonstrate my creativity.

Learning to Discard Theories

My first few weeks in the Basque region were, frankly, frustrating because of difficulties in gaining access to a "representative sample" of Basque patriots. The political climate was not hospitable to survey research. Although the Spanish government had adopted a new northern European–like constitution, which contained promises of civil liberties and included an elected parliament, in the four provinces that constitute Euskadi Sur police officers continued to patrol city streets with their hands near the triggers of automatic weapons; miniature tanks continued to roam the streets; and states of exception and martial law were periodically declared. In this situation of arbitrary arrests and ubiquitous symbols of repression, local residents did not immediately trust strangers (who could be informers). When I discussed the idea of impartial social science and promised to protect the anonymity of all respondents, my professional courtesies met awkward silence.

My problems were compounded by my political naïveté. Thanks to my mother's friendship with a high-school teacher from the United States who routinely took his students to Spain for summer trips, I had secured a second letter of introduction that garnered me access to political conservative circles in the Basque region. I had been initially pleased with the letter because it would (I thought) ensure a broad range of interviewees. I would have a "control sample" against which to assess the responses of the nationalists.

That second letter of introduction, in fact, enabled me to peek into the world of right-wing Basque politics. This in turn helped me realize that the region's political struggles involved clashes of feelings, interests, and goals that are absent in the modernization literature, and entailed policy controversies and social organizations that are overlooked in analyses of regime change. For instance, in Pamplona (the capital of Navarra), I

attended a Sunday mass for Catholics sympathetic to the arch-conservative organization Opus Dei. After the service, a local Basque business executive offered to drive me around town. His car had a pistol in the glove compartment, in case (he told me) members of ETA jumped him. As we rode, he pointed to a group of people near a working-class housing complex who were enjoying an outdoor barbeque. My host commented that it was a typical neighborhood-association gathering, and then added, in effect, "That's the trouble with supporters of ETA. They complain that they are exploited and mistreated by the wealthy, but their large stomachs show that they are overfed."

The comment was revealing for many reasons (perhaps the least of which was my host's predictable failure to entertain another hypothesis: large bellies can be the result of high-starch diets, which nonwealthy people sometimes perforce adopt). More important for purposes of my intellectual growth was his observation that ETA might have organizational ties to local working-class culture. The social phenomenon he mentioned in passing—the *asociaciones de vecinos*, or neighbors' associations—was at that time almost never discussed in U.S. academic literature about Spanish politics. The day after our drive, I began to collect reports from local newspapers and newsmagazines on the *asociaciones de vecinos*. I learned that they had been legalized toward the end of the Franco regime and had flourished in Bilbao, Pamplona, and other Basque cities for about a decade. The *asociaciones de vecinos* were not only recreational groups. They also lobbied the regime for public services; provided myriad services (including education, sanitation, and medical care) to impoverished immigrant neighborhoods; and took to the streets when civil liberties were being blatantly violated. What, I began to wonder, could the *asociaciones de vecinos* have to do with the militant nationalist group ETA?

In addition, my host's repeated caricatures about the unreasonable expectations of poorer Pamplonians brought to the forefront of my thinking the conflicting images of economic justice within Euskadi Sur, where class awareness and consciousness seemed high, and interclass relations appeared strained. The theme of class conflict, however, was largely absent from mainstream U.S. academic literature about Basque nationalism, which to this day is much more about the speed of the region's economic development than about possible maldistribution of wealth and income. For most scholars, the only social class within the region worth analyzing was the traditional middle class.

During my two weeks in Pamplona, opportunities to meet with ETA sympathizers and former members were few and far between. My problems

arose from many sources. First, I was physically darker and blockier than Basques who, for me, resembled northern Europeans in their light skin coloring, their nonbrown eyes, and their narrow and finely chiseled facial features. Second, I was linguistically an outsider, since I speak Spanish with a Central American accent. Finally, I had obvious connections to right-wing politicians in town. Consequently, whenever I tried to strike up a conversation about current events in a corner bookstore, my friendliness was unreciprocated. Most customers left the store and waited outside, while the owner and I arranged to have books mailed to the United States.

I did hold a forty-five-minute interview with one woman who, according to the conservative business owner who had befriended me, was said to be a former member of ETA. She told me much about politics within the *asociaciones de vecinos*, their complex relationship to ETA cells during the Franco regime, and their role in recent events, including what she viewed as the antecedents of a recent antigovernment and pro-ETA riot that had coincided with Pamplona's famous running of the bulls. A few days after the interview, she was arrested, and I never saw her again.

Perhaps my most extended conversation with local residents who condoned ETA took place at a dinner with the owner of a modest barbershop (a member of the region's traditional petite bourgeoisie?), who said that he once had sympathized with ETA. After dinner, he and his wife retired, and his younger brother and I talked for a while. The brother gave me a glossy dossier, which had been covertly published by and distributed among friendship circles and the *asociaciones de vecinos* in Pamplona. It discussed the origins of the recent riot where some citizens had shouted, "Long live ETA!" According to the news articles reprinted in the dossier, police misconduct—specifically, the firing of rubber bullets into an unarmed crowd within a bullring—had sparked the days of trashing and burning of cars and stores.

Near the end of my stay in the city, I visited the provincial headquarters of the Communist Party because I had read a detailed article about factions within Basque nationalist politics written by a CP member. The scene was briefly disorienting to me because of the heavy security outside the main door and the festive atmosphere within (including travel posters to attract members to vacation excursions). I chatted with a couple of organizers about the town's electoral politics, its recent economic growth (several international corporations had opened plants in the outskirts), its current labor turmoil (a one-day general strike took place during my visit), and about the appeal of ETA in the newly constructed working-class neighborhoods that encircled the city.

By the end of my stay in Pamplona, I realized that ETA was much more multidimensional and programmatically eclectic than U.S. academic literature had suggested. I also realized that "modernization" did not capture the economic issues that concerned local residents. The region's recent economic development was not simply fast paced; practical problems were being generated, as well as issues of distributive justice. A plethora of parties, unions, and associations had formed in every major Basque city to respond to the housing shortages, unsafe work conditions, boom-and-bust cycles, rising unemployment, and heavy pollution. The voices and views of Basque politics were more numerous and diverse than I had expected.

Building Bridges to ETA Sympathizers

By the time I reached the Bilbao metropolitan area, which would become my home base for almost six weeks, I had decided to jettison my survey. I had discovered that whenever I used it—for example, with the chief pollster for the Basque Nationalist Party—my battery of questions (for example: How intensely do you feel about independence? How would you classify yourself in terms of class status?) bored the respondents. The survey had little to do with how nationalists (and local residents in general) saw themselves, understood their political disagreements, and defined their political options. I concluded that if I were to write a dissertation that would be meaningful for everyday people (a legacy of my New Left background that I could not shake), I had to find a way to represent the world that captured participants' understandings, feelings, and choices.

After I arrived, I severed all ties with right-wing parties and rented a room in a nationalist hotel in the city's Casco Viejo (or old downtown). Most of the major antigovernment political bars (Trotskyist bars, anarchist bars, Herri Batasuna bars) were located nearby, as was a park where nationalist periodicals were readily available, where political rallies were held, and where posters announcing political meetings could be easily viewed.

Despite the half-dozen acquaintances I had made, courtesy of Shedd, my evenings were lonely, and I experienced little success in meeting activists at local political taverns.[5] After two weeks, my isolation abruptly ended. By accident, as I was returning from watching a nationalist demonstration in the newer downtown (where banks and department stores are located), I found myself on the wrong side of a line of police officers, who were firing rubber bullets to disperse a crowd. My survival instinct led me to join some young people who were crouching in doorways and seemed to know what

they were doing. We scampered from building to building. They mistook my act of sheer desperation as a sign of solidarity. As I entered a bar that evening for my nightly try at conversation—a project that I fully expected to end in futility once again—a dozen or so people approached me and started to talk. The next morning my hotel mailbox was packed with pamphlets, alternative newspapers, and invitations to public events. My survey had died, but I was collecting unexpected information.

I suddenly was invited to several local party headquarters. My favorite probably was the Trotskyist hovel, largely because of its archives with many years of newspaper clippings carefully arranged in cardboard boxes, and partly because Trotskyists' curiosity about U.S. politics led to a friendly, relaxed exchange of opinions. I also developed a rapport with the Trotskyists when seemingly minor coincidences led to laughter. For example, they liked my brightly colored shirt and asked where I had bought it so they could get some for an upcoming street event (unfortunately for them, I had bought it a few months earlier in the United States).

During my visits with Trotskyists at their headquarters and homes, I came to appreciate the breadth of ETA activists because the Trotskyists were one of the splinter groups within ETA (they constituted the so-called ETA VI) and their political goals and tactics included neither total separation of Euskadi Sur from Spain nor armed struggle. They favored, instead, the creation of a social-democratic enclave within Iberia in which neighborhood marches for municipal services, wildcat strikes, boycotts, and other disruptive but nonlethal forms of street agitation would flourish. The Spanish state, from their perspective, was inevitably and incurably oriented to capitalist development and regimentation of the workforce. Better to turn one's back on the state and cultivate more local and informal political gardens.

The flip side of access to the Basque Left was that centrist parties, including the electorally powerful Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), suddenly refused to allow me access to their second-tier officials, including their pollsters and electoral strategists. In the United States, most scholars and journalists label the PNV as politically moderate in tactics (because it avoids gunplay) but as sometimes extremist in its goals (because some PNV factions desire complete secession from Spain and unification with Basque provinces on the other side of the French border). Few U.S. writers doubt that the party deserves attention because it is the longest lasting of the numerous nationalist parties in Euskadi Sur, the most popular party among voters in the region, and the most visible and active party within formal government institutions. Consequently, I had spent weeks cultivating rela-

tions with PNV activists at all levels and from diverse factions. While previously social scientists within the PNV had generously given me access to their exit-poll results and their neighborhood-by-neighborhood tabulations of votes for successive elections, now I could not enter their offices.

So my collection of material remained one-sided. Now I was receiving documents from the so-called Abertzale Izquierda (or "Basque Patriotic Left," a vernacular term for the loose coalition of participants, followers, and sympathizers of different wings of ETA), rather than from either the ideologically bourgeois and sociologically middle-class PNV or the conservative managers of big businesses in Pamplona. Through the reams of material that I was slowly gathering, I began to see Basque nationalist politics in a very different light. The politics no longer appeared to take place amid a large-scale, regionwide transformation of a premodern society into a commercial, bureaucratic, industrial, urban, and secular one. Ideas, institutions, and organizations seemed ephemeral. Parties, unions, newsmagazines, neighborhood associations, and other political organizations often appeared and disappeared in the course of a few years.

My perceptions of salience, scale, and time were dramatically changing. Basque politics now seemed primarily to involve a new set of street-level episodes and small, local organizations. When talking about politics, residents were mainly concerned about problems coming to their attention within the past weeks and months: the impending completion of a nuclear-energy plant on the outskirts of Bilbao, the release of workers from a Bilbao steel mill, the shortage of medical services and schools in the working-class shantytowns on the Left Bank of the Nervion River (a major waterway that snaked through the metropolis), and the periodic meanderings of Gypsy families through working-class neighborhoods, where they were harassed by nonaffluent but homeowning families.

Further, as I explored bookstores and kiosks, I realized that local writers (whose publications were either overlooked or neglected within the U.S. academy) were discussing Basque nationalist politics as open-ended and unpredictable.[6] While U.S. scholars saw violent actions, such as bombings and kidnappings, as sociologically predetermined, local writers saw a much more contingent world. While U.S. scholars saw continuity over time in terms of nationalist violence—with killings, bombings, and kidnappings forming a lethal social and cultural pattern that would persist and perhaps intensify—local observers were prone to see a series of discrete events, each partly reversing and contradicting what had occurred before. To give a taste of what I was uncovering, I shall briefly describe the *asambleas* of ETA, a topic marginalized if not ignored in most English-language scholarship.

ETA *Asambleas*, or Local History Uncovered

According to writers in Euskadi Sur, between 1959 and 1980 ETA held more than a half-dozen official leadership meetings (*asambleas*) of ten to twenty persons to determine the group goals, strategy, and tactics.[7] At each gathering, the assembled discussed what ETA's several hundreds of members, who were spread across the region and organized in cells of three to six members, were to do. Consensus was usually elusive. Moreover, officially adopted positions changed dramatically from one *asamblea* to the next. Typically, an alliance of leaders mustered enough votes to nominally pass its agenda at a meeting. Then, a subset of the defeated factions would form a cabal, monopolize the next *asamblea*, and pass policies that supported its vision. A few years later, a counter-coup would jettison many previous ideas and adopt a few strikingly novel proposals and concepts. Through this process of initiatives, reversals, setbacks, and accretions, the thinking of the "ETArras" (as they were called and called themselves) not so much "evolved" as shifted.[8]

Attendance did not falter, despite the absence of consensus. Murmurings and reversals were acceptable to participants because revolutionary hopes were high. Between 1960 and 1980, it seemed as if the Franco dictatorship was finally in its last throes and a new political order would soon be crafted. Almost every leader of ETA, regardless of his or her distinctive political aspirations, believed that to affect the course of history, one needed to collaborate with other militants, regardless of their convictions.

Why could the ETArras not agree on a program? One might view the disharmony as evidence of stubborn contrariness, possibly suggesting emotional instability and personal insecurity (images compatible with the modernization thesis). Yet on further reflection, the pandemonium within and among the *asambleas* has another explanation. Coming from different towns and hiding from the police, many members of ETA were strangers to one another. Moreover, coming from different occupations (including farming, industry, education, and religion), levels of intellectual training, and political experience, the activists held opinions, values, and expectations that often diverged and sometimes clashed. As well, the organization's office personnel underwent rapid turnover. The Spanish police hounded the ETA leaders who led the movement's various "fronts." Security forces arrested and incarcerated not only ETA combatants carrying sidearms, but also writers who composed the movement's outlawed publications, covert labor organizers who planned demonstrations, and recruiters of new members. Many leaders sooner or later were either killed, thrown in jail and

tortured, or forced to flee the Peninsula. Then a younger generation of activists would take office and would act in accordance with their own experiences, values, and political calculations.

As they met and listened to one another, activists sometimes discovered that they truly disliked the programs and aims of their comrades. Before the Fifth *Asamblea*, for example, many older ETA members openly expressed frustration with younger authors and editors whose handling of movement publicity was colored by a European New Left perspective. The movement's broadsheets and pamphlets said that the region was already a place of heavy industry and extensive commerce and there was no turning back; that Basque workers and residents in general desired greater expressive rights in daily life and opportunities for workplace comanagement; and that radical nationalists should seek not political and cultural separation from Spain but a modicum of constitutional autonomy within the Spanish state and then work with progressive groups in other parts of Spain and Europe for a creative and unregulated society. Opponents of the New Leftists arrived at the Fifth Assembly armed with dossiers with which to expel leaders of the publicity front before they had an opportunity to defend their actions. When sympathizers of the New Left writers protested such conniving and attempted to walk out, they were placed under house arrest, and the meeting proceeded under the orchestration of the conspirators (Unzueta 1980).

By the mid-1970s, at least three major ideological currents competed for influence within the movement.[9] One stressed the need to work with clandestine communist, Trotskyist, Maoist, socialist, and anarchist parties within Spain and to organize the region's sizeable industrial working class and the growing number of college-educated white-collar employees. The goal of these ETArras was gradually to create a democratic and socialist state for the region that, ideally, would become the vanguard of progressive politics and economics throughout Europe.

Another ETA current looked with trepidation upon the industrial workers (many of whom arrived from non-Basque-speaking parts of Spain) and called for the resuscitation of the region's native language and culture. While the proletariat wing of ETA was generally amenable to Basque regional autonomy within a federated Spain, the culturally sensitive ETArras desired total independence, as well as the purging of non-Basque habits from the territory.

Last but not least, there were the so-called Third Worldist activists who were inspired by national liberation movements around the globe, from Cuba to Algeria to Vietnam. These ETArras argued that the organization

should facilitate the formation of a populist alliance of Basque-speaking small producers and exploited industrial workers, and should provoke a mass uprising by means of armed attacks on government figures. In theory, the attacks would prompt a violent backlash by the Franco dictatorship. Indiscriminate state repression, in turn, would motivate the normally cautious to rebel. According to a theory of escalating violence (popularly known as the action-repression-reaction cycle), sooner or later the Spanish state would find military occupation of the Basque region too costly and would withdraw, leaving the Basque people free to determine their own postcolonial political and economic order.

Each ideological current contained mini-factions that disagreed on how to respond to fast-moving changes in Spanish politics that immediately preceded and followed Franco's death in 1975. They also disagreed on how best to respond to the global economic recession of the 1970s, to surges in unemployment and bankruptcies, and to other hardships in the economically diverse Basque region, which included isolated farmsteads, small-scale manufacturing towns, and enormous centers of heavy industry with shipyards and steel mills. Then, there were disputes within each faction about which street-level activities were de facto permissible and would become legal in the near future (a succession of state officials varied in their enthusiasm for enforcing laws about censorship, public assembly, and the use of police torture).

During the 1970s leaders of the Spanish government wavered between liberalization and crackdown. Scores of ETA cells meanwhile continued to act autonomously to evade police infiltration and arrest. Cells experimented with different methods of mobilization and, occasionally, armed action. The result was a mishmash of peaceful and quasi-legal labor organizing, defiant promotion of non-Castilian culture, and gunplay (Amigo 1978).

The radical nationalist coalition, in the end, could not endure as a loose federation of local, autonomous cells. A few small teams of ETA activists, acting independently of the organization's purported leadership, carried out audacious murders, such as the bombing of the car carrying Franco's handpicked successor, Carrero Blanco. By the close of the 1970s, more than sixty people were dying each year due to actions by ETA armed cells. The government responded by arresting suspected ETA activists and sympathizers, and suspending the already flimsy civil liberties that had been granted to labor and neighborhood organizers. The increased repression further fragmented the organization. Some cells (especially those engaged in labor organizing) called for an end to armed action. Others called for an escala-

tion in the scale and scope of violence. Still others took complicated (and perhaps confused) positions between pacifism and militarism.

After more than a decade of uneasily living together, members of ETA permanently divided themselves into separate organizations engaged primarily in electoral and legislative politics, labor organizing, the rejuvenation of regional culture, or guerrilla warfare.[10]

Finding a Scholarly Audience, Sort Of

The information that I was collecting on the ideological debates within ETA and on the role of local social institutions and policy issues in ETA's heated disagreements over armed action was not what I originally had been seeking. Moreover, it was not what interested scholars in the United States. They wanted first and foremost to talk about regime change and, second, to portray violence by members of ETA as a regrettable but explicable phenomenon. The pressing practical question for democratically oriented scholars was how best to contain extremist behavior, which was, sociologically speaking, only to be expected. What should government officials do? To borrow Howard Zinn's (2006, 105) phrase, English-speaking scholars wanted to "airbrush" Basque political history, making it less puzzling, contingent, and unpredictable, and therefore within the control of state officials.

Contrariwise, inside the Basque region, historians and journalists (many of whom were former ETA activists) published interpretations in which the *asambleas* appear as major determinants of ETA's long-term evolution. These writers viewed participants in ETA as capable of choosing and reassessing goals, aims, and strategies, and as chief determiners of the organization's fate. If activists who attended the *asambleas* had chosen to act differently, the history of ETA (including its use of violence) would have changed markedly. Large-scale cultural and economic trends did not cause members of ETA to embark on a journey of violence. There was no material determinism.

When I returned to the United States, I brought with me boxes of newspaper clippings, local periodicals, and books by regional authors. The next few years proved exasperating for me and my faculty advisers as I tried to piece together a story about a multitude of parties, factions, labor organizations, and protest campaigns that did not fit neatly into a tale about modernization. Having learned to see the world from the vantage points of some of the actors, I believed that the social changes in the region were too complex to fit into the unidimensional modernization model; that the

range of political options people were choosing was shaped by more than rage against modernity; and that the nationalists' agendas involved much more than degrees of separation from the Spanish state. Questions about nuclear power, women's rights, economic recovery, and labor organization were at least as salient in the nationalists' propaganda and in their supporters' minds. My advisers feared that I was producing unstructured reportage. Without a parsimonious model to inform my findings, my dissertation would resemble (in the unforgettable words of one adviser) "scrambled eggs."

Grasping for any theoretical framework, I called on my undergraduate training in Marxist economic and political thought at the University of Michigan and began to organize my findings in terms of responses to distinct modes of production. The notion of uneven capitalist development provided a set of contextual categories to describe the unions, general strikes, *asociaciones de vecinos*, right-wing town parties, producer cooperatives, and other actors and events that I had uncovered. Compared to the parsimonious and linear logic of modernization theory, the categories of core, periphery, and semi-periphery, of precommercial and commercial agriculture, and of monopoly capitalism provided more ways to classify social issues and describe local problems.

Moreover, I chose not to advance a socially deterministic argument. I did not say that the peculiar economic conditions in Euskadi Sur fixed the nature of political programs and organizations in the region. Rather, I argued that economic conditions provided experiences (both problems and opportunities) against which people invented and revised political programs and organizations. Despite the Marxist scaffolding, the spirit of my interpretation was highly voluntaristic and democratic, as I insisted that people freely and endlessly create and jettison political projects, notions, and beliefs.

Employing Marxist and neo-Marxist world-system classifications of types of capitalist economy, I was able to publish some of my earliest findings in interdisciplinary journals and anthologies (Zirakzadeh 1985, 1989). My relatively conventional Marxist language perhaps helped my readers relate my discoveries to their own substantive interests involving other times and places.

Still, my tale lacked overall coherence. Anyone who read my work closely could tell that under the familiar language about classes and economic structure, I was conveying an image of nearly orderless conflict among ephemeral groups and nearly anarchistic politics. It was an image of local-level politics in industrializing societies that, I later discovered, was

being advanced at roughly the same time by some notable Leftist scholars opposed to structural Marxism, including political scientist James Scott (1985) and historian E. P. Thompson (1978), who insisted (correctly, I was coming to believe) that everyday people make their own political visions independently of the wishes and efforts of elites and nation-states.

A few years after my dissertation was approved, I attended a conference about "the frontiers of social-movement theory" in Ann Arbor. There, U.S. sociologists who had secured tenure and who were slightly older than I was—for instance, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Myra Ferree, and Aldon Morris—publicly declared that modernization theory was passé and that theories of middle-class angst and "extremism" misrepresented the goals, motivations, and pragmatic decision-making processes within twentieth-century social movements.[11] I found the conference liberating because at long last, I had met a group of respected and established scholars who treated modernization theory with the same disdain that I did and who were for the most part committed to New Left ideals and concerns.[12] After the conference, I began to incorporate the ideas and logic of McAdam, Tarrow, Ferree, Morris, and others into presentations of my fieldwork. The result was my first book (Zirakzadeh 1991), which explains, through detailed descriptions of traditions of protest in the Basque region, why modernization theory is not useful for understanding contemporary Basque politics.

Even so, I remained uneasy. Part of me knew that I cleaved to the newly formed academic group out of unhealthy resentment. I praised the Ann Arbor writers because their enemy—modernization explanations for "extremism"—was mine. This, I secretly knew, was not a good reason to embrace an entire theoretical orientation, which had a specialized jargon, unexamined philosophic assumptions about the stability of group identity and solidarity, and a fascination with the role of leaders, called movement entrepreneurs, who intellectually guided and amassed resources for social movements.

In particular, the literature on social-movement theory for me posed a new conceptual problem involving the nature of culture. According to the Ann Arbor generation of social-movement theorists, ideas about justice and strategy sometimes can "put fire in the belly" and prompt action. Ideas are, psychologically speaking, among the preconditions for collective action. I certainly found this hypothesis plausible. The Ann Arbor group also argued that a subset of incendiary notions can be found in the widely accepted store of ideas of every society, and that movements often attract followers by employing ideas that already are widely believed. This argument also made sense to me.

I balked, however, at two additional hypotheses: (1) that a self-conscious subset within a movement (sometimes called "movement entrepreneurs") develops ideas for the entire movement; and (2) that for a movement to exist and expand, there needs to be agreement within it on images of justice and strategy. According to the Ann Arbor tradition of analysis, movements are internally homogeneous in terms of predominant beliefs, as a leadership cadre self-consciously combines beliefs into a single package (or "master frame") that other activists and major factions in the group accept with minimal opposition. These additional hypotheses jibed neither with what I had observed in Euskadi Sur, nor with my own experiences with New Left organizations. ETA was, culturally speaking, not unitary, ideologically cohesive, or top-down in terms of the dissemination of ideas. Nor did I find these features within Ann Arbor's Students for a Democratic Society, Berkeley's Caucus for a New Political Science, or the University of California's Association of Graduate Student Employees.[13]

As I began to study social movements around the globe, I reached the conclusion that in terms of movement culture, many (if not most) modern social movements have family resemblances to ETA. In its ideological heterogeneity, organizational decentralization, and intra-organizational pluralism, ETA shares much with the Greens in Germany (Markovits and Gorski 1993), Solidarity in Poland (Garton Ash 1991), and the Students for a Democratic Society in the United States (Gitlin 1980). In the language of social-movement scholarship that existed prior to the Ann Arbor meeting, the Basque liberation movement was a "segmented," "polycentric," and "reticulated" organization composed of diverse groups with complex ties to other political organizations, and with multiple, diverse, and often competing local leaders and centers of influence (Gerlach 1971).

To rethink my own view on social-movement culture, I began to explore research by political and cultural historians that the Ann Arbor social-movement writers were not discussing seriously or at length. Essays on movement culture as "free spaces" (where local followers second-guess and resist the ideas of nominal leaders and submit their own innovative notions) by Alan Brinkley (1981), Sara Evans (1978), Lawrence Goodwyn (1978), and Robin Kelley (1990) pointed to a more polymorphous and dynamic image of culture, in which subgroups within society are constantly employing and subverting inherited ideas. The British cultural-studies tradition (Chambers 1986; Hebdige 1979; Turner 1996) likewise viewed culture as malleable by all persons. A country's "national culture" should not be viewed as fixed and logically coherent, the cultural-studies folk insist; instead, culture is best understood as a logically pell-mell mix of stories, images, and terms. From the

British popular-culture analysts and the U.S. historians of popular culture, I was learning to see culture as a loose terrain of words, images, and symbols susceptible to rearrangement and redefinition by innumerable and (from an outsider's perspective) often anonymous people.

Again, I was finding myself in an intellectual maelstrom. If I were correct in interpreting culture as a set of constantly questioned and rearranged sensibilities and points of view (and not as a set of slowly changing and largely unquestioned customs, habits, and traditions), could I say anything about culture besides ephemeral and locally diverse truths? And if culture is constantly constructed not only by government elites and movement entrepreneurs but also by anonymous people who hold neither offices nor titles in political organizations, can there be more than disorder in political history? Can we say much more than that political projects throughout society are in constant flux and that in all organizations—even protest movements—there is an element of Babel?

Conclusion

My quarter-century journey to and from Euskadi Sur has led me to appreciate the contingent and pluralistic aspects of contemporary politics. I have lost faith in parsimonious causal theories—whether the modernization thesis of older social scientists, the social determinism of more mechanistic versions of Marxism, or the master-frame theories of the Ann Arbor generation of social-movement theorists. None, in my opinion, accounts for the complexity, decentralization, dynamism, and multivocality of local politics in the Basque region (or elsewhere).

As a result, I have gradually abandoned the hunt for widely applicable generalizations. After all, if it is difficult to make predictive statements about a single historical and regional case because a multiplicity of actors appear (each with a distinct and constantly evolving agenda, interacting and individually contributing to but never determining historical outcomes), why should we believe that we can easily find parsimonious causal hypotheses that fit *multiple* cases? Stated differently, why should we expect less complexity and indeterminacy when we look at a large collection of events instead of one? Peter Hall's (2003) suggestion about interpreting political conflict as long, complex, nonrepetitive sequences of choices and events makes more sense to me than do efforts by some scholars to discover enough parallels between political conflicts in different times and places to construct a large set of analogous cases and then explore the set for probabilistic hypotheses via regression techniques.[14]

Although I have lost faith in parsimonious causal theory, I find the notion of complete randomness, which Nietzsche and some Romantic poets periodically advanced, equally unappealing. Human initiatives have consequences, after all. Occasionally, an initiative secures the actor's goals as planned. Sometimes, however, an initiative ironically begins a series of events that subvert the actor's goals; and sometimes, an initiative brings about a condition that no one had anticipated. Outcomes result in part from the complex developments that predate and exist alongside the choice being made, and in part from other people's actions in response to the choice. Noting how every action is embedded in layers of social relations and then tracing the sequence of events, actions, counteractions, reversals, and (finally) long-term consequences can teach us simultaneously about the centrality of choice in human affairs and about our limited control over the future.[15]

My current methodological preference is to look at political events closely, identifying persons who are acting, moments of choice, and the contingent nature of every event with regard to antecedent events and subsequent ones. I increasingly believe that useful political analysis requires attention to the manipulation of cultural artifacts, which sometimes proves successful and sometimes does not. Culture must be understood anthropologically and democratically, as the result of the capacity in *all* humans to adjust their beliefs, construct words, and coin images. This highly fluid, nonstructural understanding of culture obviously complicates the study of political history because it requires an acceptance of the openness and unpredictability of life: in principle, nothing—goals, tactics, and decision-making processes—is immune from change because humans, unlike rocks, can assess their current condition and attempt to change it.[16]

The establishment and promotion of a political anthropology that looks closely at choice and at linguistic and artistic[17] innovations seems invaluable for political science today, when scholars tend to be overly sympathetic to assumptions of ideological conformity within parties, movements, and other forms of popular politics. But there are costs to viewing political history as radically contingent. Businesses and states offer professional opportunities and monetary enticements to scholars who can represent humans as pliable and uncreative subjects, akin to blank pages upon which a government can write orders without fear of resistance.[18]

Moreover, it is easier to assert that one is being sensitive to contingency and complexity than to be so in practice.[19] Whenever a researcher is writing an account, it is impractical and perhaps impossible to be sensitive to all voices. To compose a story, one must choose whose tale to tell. Some voice

or viewpoint must set the parameters of the study. By what criteria will the choice be made? Whose perspective will provide the framework for understanding events? Whose understanding of reality will be privileged?

Finally, there is the challenge of training one's cultural ear to listen to different sides in politics. The range of disagreements, aspirations, and interests that we can discern will depend in part on our exposure to academic theory. But even more important is our personal history—especially the issues that over the years we've come to take seriously. My history in New Left politics, my experience with embracing and rejecting alternative national traditions, and my exposure to theories of Marxism all played a role in what I saw, understood, and could describe. If I had been a woman, had formal training in folk culture, and had more personal acquaintance with the world of high finance, I would have seen and noticed different events. We can expand our range of understandings before we enter the world of others, yet we will always suffer from some shortsightedness and points of blindness.

To report the diverse political positions that people develop, debate, and adopt is no easy task. Challenges and disincentives abound. A choice, nonetheless, remains. Whether we follow those often well-paid and eminent scholars who view humans as objects of external forces—or follow less mainstream and less widely read scholars who highlight human inventiveness—is ultimately up to us.

Notes

1. I was not the only graduate student in the 1970s with New Left sympathies who saw the 1930s Spanish Revolution as worth celebrating and pondering. Contemporaries whose doctoral research was spurred in part by affinity for the Spanish anarchists include political scientist Martha Ackelsberg (1991) and historian Temma Kaplan (1977).
2. Further complicating my feelings were my parents' own examples and choices. To cite but one illustration, my Guatemalan mother exhibited distrust of Mexicans and Chicanos. Her Guatemalan pride had a decidedly non-Latino component, which only further confused my efforts to answer "who am I?" and "who are my people?" Adding in the inevitable challenges of being raised a devout Catholic yet having an Islamic father who loved Sufi music and poetry, I was (and remain) a bubbling cultural stew lacking a clear-cut sense of ethnic identity.
3. As a result of serendipitous misunderstandings, Shedd's friends in the Basque country incorrectly introduced me by telephone and through street gossip as the *son* of Margaret Shedd. Fortunately, this led to considerable access for me because her romantic rendering of the ETA nationalists had generated a good many fans in the region. These sorts of unpredictable yet crucial developments that occur in the field are seldom examined in graduate courses on methodology.

4. For elaborations and criticisms of such logic, see Halebsky (1976); Kimmel (1990, 53–82); and Rogin (1967).
5. It did not help that I was a teetotaler and ignorant of bar decorum and the differences among various alcoholic drinks. By the time I returned to the United States, I was accomplished in ordering gin-and-tonics and striking up conversations with bartenders. The art of making friends in unfamiliar settings should be covered in methods courses, at least for those planning to conduct interviews and to engage in field observation.
6. While I was conducting fieldwork, Robert Clark (1984) at George Mason University was completing a manuscript on ETA that would prove groundbreaking in Basque studies partly because of his sensitivity to local political dynamics.
7. For overviews of the diverse decisions made at the *asambleas*, see Garmendia (1980); Bereciartu (1981); and Letamendia (1977).
8. For detailed descriptions, see Amigo (1978); Iriarte (1980); Iturrioz (1980); and Unzueta (1980).
9. Since the mid-1980s this threefold classification of the major ideological currents within ETA has become standard in English-language studies (Clark 1984; Zirakzadeh 1991).
10. For memoirs that illuminate the disillusionment among former ETArras, see Amigo (1978); Emparanza (1980); and Garailde (1980).
11. For a sample of the conference's papers, see Morris and Mueller (1992). For a later debate over the value of the Ann Arbor tradition of social-movement theorizing, see Goodwin and Jasper (2004).
12. Of course, my classmates and I in graduate school at Stanford and Berkeley often criticized modernization theory. But there was a whiff of parricide in our attacks. In retrospect, I am not sure that we were fully convinced by our arguments. Were we just enjoying the opportunity to say that our intellectually imposing teachers were "obviously" wrong?
13. For a fuller discussion of my unease with framing analysis and my efforts to find an alternative, see Zirakzadeh (2000); Payerhin and Zirakzadeh (2006). For other early critiques of master frames and framing analysis, see Benford (1997); Steinberg (1998).
14. It is not possible within the limits of this essay to expatiate on the implications of Hall's vision. Curious readers should visit his piece as well as other proposals from the "historical sociology" tradition (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003).
15. William Sewell's (1996) event analysis, which combines "radical contingency" with a sense of multiple actors and historical sequence, resembles what I have in mind. Sewell and I differ, however. I see less continuity in history than he does and many more "sudden breaks" (his expression; I prefer the phrase "moments of cultural innovation").
16. For illustrations of how I incorporate culture, contingency, and choice into my work on social movements, see Zirakzadeh (2004, 2006).
17. Say, visual and musical expression.
18. For more on the politics of studying behavior rather than action, see Scott (1998, 309–57) and Amadae (2003).
19. See Schatz's concluding chapter in this volume, on some of the trade-offs involved in conducting research.