

MULTIPLE VIOLENCES AND
PRACTICES OF PEACE

A FEMINIST APPROACH TO THE
POST-CEASEFIRE PROCESS IN THE
BASQUE COUNTRY

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To my grandma. *A mi yaya*, Lucía García.

ABSTRACT

This thesis develops a critical feminist and anthropological study of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country. The permanent ceasefire declared by ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* - 'Basqueland and Freedom') in 2011 opened a socio-political process in which the armed violence that started in the early 1960s has ended, but different violence continues. This study develops a critique of, and offers an alternative to, conceptions of this process in terms of orthodox peace-building discourse, as 'post-conflict', seeking 'reconciliation', and centred on recognition of the experiences of the 'victims of terrorism'.

Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out over one year in order to explore the full range of meanings about violence, reconciliation, perceptions of the past and the future held by Basque people, how those meanings are being contested and their relation to hegemonic narratives in circulation in the Basque context. Participant observation was conducted with different groups and individuals, some of them part of *convivencia* ('living-together') initiatives while others call into question the very existence of a peace process. Twenty-one unstructured interviews were carried out only with women, which is an epistemological and political decision that has allowed for the study of violence and peace to gain in complexity and for the analysis of gendered framings of the post-ceasefire process.

The first chapter stresses the importance of attending to gender dynamics and gendered meanings and emotions in the analysis of post-ceasefire processes. The second chapter studies the Basque scenario as featured by contestation. The following chapter explores how otherness is constructed in the representation of divisions of the past and how the image of 'the other' precludes acknowledgment of different experiences of violence. Chapter four analyses what I term as 'pacification mechanisms' that structure the post-ceasfire process in restrictive and exclusionary ways. In chapter five, the multiplicity of violences is revealed through paying attention to narratives that are excluded from spaces of recognition. Chapter six identifies the importance of everyday gestures and actions not frequently exposed in the public display of testimonies in post-ceasefire contexts, and explores how, during and after the armed conflict, 'practices of peace' have displaced violence by placing vulnerability and care at the core of relationships.

Key words: Basque Country, Feminism, Anthropology, Gender, Violence, Peace, Conflict.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	10
LIST OF FIGURES	11
GLOSSARY	12
INTRODUCTION	18
Contestation and Rupture	22
Naming Contestation in the Field	22
A Rupturistic Approach towards Reconciliation and Living Together	27
Rationale and Contribution to Knowledge	30
The Context	33
History and Key Agents in the Armed Conflict	33
Tracking Back from the Ceasefire of 2011	38
Thesis Outline	43
1 – METHODOLOGY:	47
A FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY OF PEACE	47
A Research that Must Be Feminist	50
Doing Feminist Ethnography	53
Situating Myself from a Slippery Starting Point	54
Ethnographic Fieldwork	58
Vulnerability and the Research Process	69
Conclusions	71
2 - THE CONTESTED SCENARIO AFTER ETA'S CEASEFIRE	74
What Process?	75
Baiona: One of the Steps in the Unilateral Process	77
Alsasua: Terrorism after the Ceasefire	84
Reconciliation and Living Together	89
Reconciliation: Closure Warning	90
<i>Berradiskidetza</i> or 'Being Friends Again'	96
<i>Convivencia</i> and Truth-Seeking	99
Conclusions	105

3 - TROUBLING DICHOTOMIES: DIVISIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'THE OTHER'	107
Othering the Neighbour	110
Intimacy of Violence: the Uncle and the Nephew	110
When your Neighbour Calls you a Murderer: The 'Two-Banners' Protest	113
Miguel Angel Blanco and 'Everything is ETA'	116
Silence and Fear in the Construction of the Violent Other	120
Marked Territories, Marked Bodies	127
Bodies Exposed	127
Intersectional Marks and Spaces	130
<i>Dime con Quién Andas y Te Diré Quién Eres</i>	133
Navigating Dichotomies	136
In a Sandwich	137
Barriers for an Encounter	140
Conclusions	143
4 – SPACES OF INSCRIPTION AND PACIFICATION MECHANISMS	145
Pacification Narrative: from Violence to <i>Convivencia</i>	148
The End of Violence	149
The Inclusive 'We' in the Living-Together Horizon	152
The Configuration of Recognition and Victimhood	156
Contestation over Victimhood	158
Inscribing and Containing Demands for Recognition	163
Emotional and Ethical Landscape	169
Empathy and the Good Citizen	170
Thou Shalt not Kill	176
Conclusions	178
5 - WHAT VIOLENCE MATTERS	180
Delegitimised Voices	183
The Evil Voice of the Terrorist	183
Unacceptable Responses in the Pacification Context	188
The Violence that Does not Fit	193
Dispossession of the Everyday	193
Hindrances to Expressions of Violence	198
Broadening Meanings of Violence	202
Violence Beyond the Armed Conflict	202

Sufferings and Violences	205
Streets as Spaces for Disruptions	209
Conclusions. A Change of Paradigm	214
6 - PRACTICES OF PEACE. THE PROCESS AS AN OPPORTUNITY.	218
Ruptures with the Image of ‘the other’	221
Acknowledgment in Spaces for Recognition	222
Narratives of the Unexpected	230
The Value of Bonds and Relationships	239
A Period of Opportunity	243
Confrontational Bodies in Movement	244
From the Epic of the <i>Gudari</i> to Vulnerability	248
Conclusions	251
CONCLUSIONS	254
Questioning and Revealing Violences	254
Practices of Peace	257
Displacements and Vulnerability	260
Open Challenges	262
LIST OF REFERENCES	265
APPENDIX	287
Sample Information Sheet – English	287
Sample Information Sheet – Basque	292
Sample Information Sheet – Spanish	296

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the research contained within this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Andrea García González

15 September 2019

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. ' <i>Bakea ez da existitzen</i> '. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.	18
Figure 2. 'Rally. We Were also Refugees in the Civil War.' Poster. 2017.	47
Figure 3. Doodle of my Object of Research. Drawing. 2016.	59
Figure 4. Doodle of Me in Relation to my Research. Drawing. 2017.	69
Figure 5. 'The End of Violence'. Image: The Mile of Peace. 2016.	149
Figure 6. ' <i>Gu</i> '. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.	152
Figure 7. 'Peace is Possible'. Image: The Mile of Peace. 2016.	171
Figure 8. Feminist Graffiti. Image: Andrea García González. 2017.	180
Figure 9. 'Peace is Possible'. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.	210
Figure 10. ' <i>Gure Hormek</i> '. Image: Txintxua Films. 2016.	251

GLOSSARY

Ahotsak (‘Voices’ –B)¹: Group composed by women from different political parties and social organisations to promote peace during the previous ETA*² ceasefire in 2006.

Alternatiba (‘Alternative’–B): Left-wing political party that split from *Ezker Batua** in 2009. Member of *Bildu** and *EH Bildu** coalitions.

Aralar: Basque left-wing and pro-independence political party. It was founded in 2000 from a critical tendency within HB* that opposed ETA violence. The name comes from the Basque natural park of Aralar. The party dissolved itself in 2017 after many of its members became part of the political coalition *EH Bildu**.

ATA (*Amnistia ta Askatasuna* –B- ‘Amnesty and Freedom’): Group that dissents from the political strategy taken by the *izquierda abertzale** in the post-ceasefire scenario in the Basque Country. Created in 2014. They demand amnesty for all Basque prisoners* and for people in exile.

Basque prisoners: In the field and in this thesis, Basque prisoners refer to those who have been put into jail for being part of the *izquierda abertzale** movement serving out sentences mainly in Spain and France. Some of them have been convicted for belonging or collaborating with ETA*. Others could have been convicted for offences such as belonging to political organisations that were prohibited by Spanish courts, or for participating in *kale borroka**. The collective of Basque prisoners is called EPPK, *Euskal Preso Politikoen Kolektiboa* (‘Collective of Basque Political Prisoners’), which speaks and negotiates for, and has as members the majority of these prisoners.

Batasuna (‘Unity’–B): Political party that represented the *izquierda abertzale** from 2001 until prohibited by law in 2003. It was the successor of the political party HB* (*Herri Batasuna*), founded in 1978.

¹ In this glossary, I indicate the language of the names described using ‘B’ for Basque and ‘Sp’ for Spanish.

² I use asterisks to indicate that the term is included in the glossary.

Bildu ('Reunite'–B): Founded in 2011 as a coalition among different political parties close to a left pro-independence stance. It is formed by *Alternatiba**, *Eusko Alkartasuna* (EA*), and other groups and individuals. It became *Euskal Herria Bildu* (EH Bildu*) when *Sortu** was legalised and included in the coalition.

Civil Guard: Spanish military police. Founded as a national police force in 1844. Reinforced during Francoism. They have been the security forces sent to arrest those accused of terrorism in the Basque Country and to control the territory with checkpoints and roadblocks. Some of their members lived in the Basque Country, in barracks.

COVITE (*Colectivo de Víctimas del Terrorismo* –Sp- 'Collective of Victims of Terrorism): Constituted of people affected mainly by the violence committed by ETA*. The majority of the members are from the Basque Country. Founded in 1998.

EA (*Eusko Alkartasuna* –B - 'Basque Solidarity'): Basque nationalist and social-democratic political party founded in 1986 after splitting from the PNV*. Part of of *Bildu** and *EH Bildu** coalitions.

EH Bildu (short for *Euskal Herria Bildu* –B - 'Basque Country Unite'): Political coalition comprised of the independentist left party *Sortu** and other left-wing and Basque nationalist parties: *Alternatiba**, EA* and members of *Aralar**. It was created in 2012 to contest the Basque parliamentary elections of that year, after *Sortu* was declared legal and could integrate the coalition.

Elkarri ('From one to another'–B): Group created in 1992 to promote a conflict resolution scenario based on dialogue and political agreement between parties. After 15 years it changed its name to *Lokarri**.

Emagune ('Women's space' –B): Group where women from different political backgrounds gathered to discuss their experiences of the armed conflict in order to make a contribution to the post-ceasefire process. It started in 2014 and finished in 2016 with a public presentation of their work.

Eraikiz ('Build'–B): Described as a 'plural and diverse' group, *Eraikiz* is composed by relatives of people killed during the armed conflict. Promoted by the Basque government. It was publicly presented in 2015.

Ertzaintza ('People's guard'–B): Police of the Basque Autonomous Community. Created in 1982. An *Ertzaintza* member is called an *ertzaina*.

Ezker Batua ('United left'–B): Basque branch of the Spanish left-wing party *Izquierda Unida*. Created in 1986. After part of the members left and created *Alternatiba**, *Ezker Batua* founded a new party named *Ezker Anitza* ('Plural Left').

Etixerat ('Homeward'–B): Organisation formed by relatives of people who have been imprisoned or exiled because of their activity in the *izquierda abertzale** movement. Founded in 1991, after in 1989 the Spanish government begun to split Basque prisoners* in prisons all over Spain.

ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* –B – 'Basqueland and Freedom'): Armed group founded in 1959 during the dictatorship claiming freedom for the Basque Country and against Franco. The first killing happened in 1968. The disbanding of ETA occurred in 2018. They claimed 830 victims until the permanent ceasefire in 2011.

GAL (*Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* –Sp- 'Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups'): Paramilitary group created in the early 1980s. Composed by members of the Civil Guard and mercenaries with the objective to defeat ETA* killing, kidnapping, torturing and making disappear members of ETA* and members of the *izquierda abertzale**, including members of trade unions or journalists. Between 1983 and 1987, the GAL* killed twenty-seven people. It was proved to have been established illegally by officials of the Spanish government.

Gesto por la Paz ('Gesture for Peace'–Sp): Coordination of different organisations established in 1986 to oppose armed violence defining itself as pacifist. The *gesto* ('gesture') referred to silent demonstrations carried out weekly. It ended in 2013.

Glencree: Pioneer initiative of gathering of ETA* victims and victims of paramilitary organisations and police forces. Named 'Glencree' due to the town where the first meetings took place, in Co.Wicklow (Ireland). It was set up by the Basque government. The gatherings were held in secret from 2007. The initiative went public in 2011.

HB (*Herri Batasuna* –B – 'The People United'): Political coalition formed in 1978 as the electoral flagship for the political stance for independence and socialism in the Basque Country. It was refounded as *Batasuna** in 2001.

International Conference to Promote the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque

Country: Conference held in San Sebastian on 17 October 2011. ETA*'s announcement of the definitive cessation of its armed activity took place after the final declaration released at this conference and endorsed by international figures involved in different peace processes. Conference organised by *Lokarri**.

Izquierda abertzale: *Izquierda* means 'left' in Spanish and *abertzale* means 'patriotic' in Basque. Social and political movement formed by different organisations that support the independence of the Basque Country. The first coordination started during the years of the Transition* in opposition to the reforms being carried out after the death of the dictator Franco. A majority of members of the *izquierda abertzale* movement reject the term 'patriotic'; neither do they identify themselves as nationalists (which in the Basque context has a conservative connotation, linked with Spanish nationalism and to the PNV*). They prefer using the term '*independentista*' when *abertzale* is translated into Spanish to refer to the political movement for Basque independence. Even though some authors have translated *izquierda abertzale* as Basque radical nationalism (such as Aretxaga, 2005 or Hamilton, 2007), I use the term *izquierda abertzale* and the made-up translation 'independentist left' during this thesis.

Kale borroka ('Street fight'–B): Actions in the streets carried out by the independentist youth movement from the mid 1990s. These actions included attacks against public buildings and services, police vehicles and rioting.

Living-together local forums: Groups set up in different parts of the Basque Country, mainly in the region of Guipúzcoa, where citizens gather to discuss their experiences in relation to the armed conflict. One of the most known groups developed in the town of Rentería from 2013, as part of a pioneer initiative in the gathering of politicians from different political parties, separated from citizens that gathered in the local forum. I joined the living-together local forum of the town that I name Sareka as a pseudonym.

Lokarri ('What unites'–B): Established in 2006 as successor to *Elkarri** in order to create awareness against armed violence and to promote a peace process. It ended in 2015 considering that the peace process was irreversible by then.

Nanclares encounters: This is the abbreviation for the restorative encounters that took place between victims and perpetrators in a prison of the Basque town Nanclares de la Oca. This initiative was set in 2011 in a collaboration between the Spanish and Basque governments, at a time when PSOE* was ruling both. The prisoners were part of the *Via Nanclares* project, set by the Spanish government in the same year offering ETA* prisoners to gain better conditions in prison and eventually to be released on condition they fulfill certain conditions. The core of these conditions were that they distanced themselves from ETA*, asked for forgiveness, and agreed to pay compensation for their actions.

Permanent Social Forum (or abbreviated as Social Forum): A coordination of different social and political organisations and trade unions in the Basque Country. It was presented in October 2016. It took the legacy of the organisers of the International conference of peace that led to the ceasefire in 2011. It focuses on the resolution of the consequences of the conflict, through different thematic areas including the conditions of the prisoners, DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) and a specific area on memory and living together. In this thesis, the same as happens in the field, I abbreviate its name to Social Forum.

PNV (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco* –Sp - ‘Basque Nationalist Party’): Conservative Basque political party founded in 1895. After the dictatorship, PNV headed the Basque governments between 1980 and 2009, and again from 2012.

Podemos (‘We can’–Sp) - Left-wing political party founded in 2014 in the aftermath of the movement that started in May 2011 to protest the economic malaise and political corruption in Spain. *Podemos* put into question the Spanish Constitution in relation to the right of self-determination of different parts of Spain, although the main voices of the party reclaim Spain as the homeland where different nations that conform Spain can be felt represented.

PP (*Partido Popular* –Sp- ‘Popular Party’): Right-wing Spanish political party. The name of this party was initially *Alianza Popular* (‘The People’s Alliance’), founded in 1976 as a post-Francoist electoral coalition, led by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who held ministries during the Francoist dictatorship. PP has been

disputing the presidency of the government of Spain with PSOE*. The Popular Party headed the Spanish government from 1996 to 2004 and again from 2011.

PSE (*Partido Socialista de Euskadi* –Sp- ‘Socialist Party in the Basque Country’): Basque branch of the PSOE*.

PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* –Sp- ‘Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party’): Founded in 1879. In clandestinity during the Francoist dictatorship. It headed the government of Spain in the following periods: 1982-1996, 2004-2011 and from 2018. During their first period in government (1982-1996), Felipe González Márquez was the Prime Minister. It was during that time that the paramilitary group GAL* was created. Investigation of the links between this group and the government of González was one of the main reasons of the failure of this party in the Spanish elections of 1996.

Sortu (‘Create’–B): Political party of the *izquierda abertzale*. In its presentation in February 2011, their members rejected any kind of political violence, including ETA* violence. Declared legal by the Spanish Constitutional Court in June 2012. Member of *EH Bildu** coalition.

Transition: The Spanish ‘Transition’ refers to the transitional period between the death of the dictator Franco in 1975 and the establishment of a parliamentary democracy, with first elections held in 1977 and a Constitution approved in December 1978.

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1. '*Bakea ez da existitzen*'. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.

'*Bakea ez da existitzen*': 'Peace doesn't exist'. I used to read this statement, written in Basque, almost every time I took a break when working on my field notes at the University of the Basque Country. Toilets act here as spaces for dissent to be expressed. This graffiti (figure 1) pointed to the contestation currently going on in the Basque Country, since the Basque pro-independence armed group ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* - 'Basque Homeland and Freedom' in Basque) announced a permanent ceasefire in 2011, after more than fifty years in existence. The graffiti was a reminder of my initial research questions: what are the meanings given to concepts such as 'peace', 'reconciliation', or 'conflict', in the context of the Basque Country. These are internationally recognised words but the meanings given to them in so-called post-conflict scenarios imply different conceptualisations of the past and the future, rely on embodied experiences, and link with perceptions of 'the other'.

'Condenado a 16 años de cárcel un etarra por un atentado en un hotel de Getxo en 2003' ('ETA member sentenced to sixteen years in prison for an attack in a hotel

in Getxo in 2003' in Spanish). I was sent this headline by one of my research participants just as I was about to start writing this introduction to my first draft of the thesis, in August 2018, six years after ETA's ceasefire. The full article explained that this alleged member of ETA, known as Gogoan, had been found guilty due mainly to incriminating evidence from a co-defendant extracted under torture.³ The court sentenced Gogoan even though the co-defendant had withdrawn his accusation during the trial and denounced the torture committed against him.⁴ It has been common practice for judges to ignore evidence and testimony of police torture of detainees in trials of ETA members.⁵ This news story acts as a reminder of the importance of silences, of denial and of recognition of experiences of violence in the post-ceasefire process.

During my fieldwork, an exceptional trial put four Civil Guards (members of the Spanish military force) in the dock accused of torturing a woman detained in 2010. The painful testimony of Sandra Barrenetxea was in the news for days in what appeared to be a new scenario in which the wall of silence surrounding torture started to crack. At the time, the well-known anthropologist Paco Etxeberria was coordinating a report on torture commissioned by the Basque government. The report was described by some of the participants in my research as an important step toward acknowledging this violence, which was previously depicted as a deception strategy used by ETA against the Spanish state. This time, the Provincial Court of Vizcaya opened the case but the defendants were acquitted due to what the tribunal considered the

³ "Condenado a 16 años de cárcel un etarra por un atentado en un hotel de Getxo en 2003", *Público*, 3 July 2018, accessed 21 April 2019, <https://www.publico.es/politica/etarra-condenado-16-anos-carcel-etarra-atentado-hotel-getxo-2003.html>

⁴ Even though the Spanish Constitutional Court has disallowed incriminations by co-defendants as evidence (STC 207/2002) and self-incrimination goes against the constitutional right to remain silent, Spanish courts have still used such incriminations against ETA members (Conde Muñoz, 2009).

⁵ The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has found Spain guilty of failing to effectively investigate torture in multiple cases (Spain condemned on ten occasions between 2010 and 2018), mainly in relation to alleged ETA members ("Torture and inhuman and degrading treatment in European jurisprudence. Comments on the case of Juananea and Yarzabal vs. Spain", *International Law Blog*, 11 June 2018, accessed 15 August 2019, <https://internationallaw.blog/2018/06/11/torture-and-inhuman-and-degrading-treatment-in-european-jurisprudence-comments-on-the-case-of-juananea-and-yarzabal-v-spain/>). The ECHR and UN Committee against Torture have both issued statements admonishing judges in different Spanish courts for their passivity in relation to allegations of torture (Etxeberria *et al.* 2017).

‘implausibility’ of the testimony.⁶ The socio-political process in the Basque Country encounters these dissonances: recognition of experiences of violence developed on the ground through the Basque government’s ‘Peace and Living-together’ programme in opposition to an absence of accountability and denial at judicial level. The aim is that such recognition should lead to closure but the reality is that torture acts in the present and is not just restricted to a violent past.

The permanent ceasefire declared by ETA in 2011 opened the way to a scenario in which armed violence has ended, but tensions, contestation and different kinds of violence still continue. This thesis aims to analyse this socio-political process. In order to address the complexity of this scenario, ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in the Basque Country during the year 2016-2017. Participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews were the methods used to include a range of different groups and individuals as part of the research. To date, no other research has been done in this context that achieves this broad understanding of how the post-ceasefire process is being negotiated in the Basque Country. In addition, the feminist approach taken to the study of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country addresses a neglected aspect in the literature on the armed conflict and both builds on and contributes to an emerging body of comparative research on women, conflict and peace.

The Spanish state and the armed organisation ETA were the two main parties to the armed conflict that left around 1,500 dead and countless others injured, exiled, imprisoned and deeply affected from the early 1960s. The armed conflict also gave rise to an important number of organisations and initiatives within civil society, as well as an extensive set of competing political and media discourses. In 2011, ETA announced a unilateral and permanent ceasefire. In April 2017, an International Commission verified the disarmament of ETA. In May 2018, ETA announced it was disbanding. The other main protagonist in the conflict, the Spanish state, has remained reluctant to set up peace negotiations.

⁶ “Absueltos los cuatro guardias civiles juzgados acusados de torturar a Sandra Barrenetxea”, *Naiz*, 6 April 2017, accessed 21 April 2019, <https://www.naiz.eus/eu/actualidad/noticia/20170406/absueltos-los-cuatro-guardias-civiles-juzgados-por-las-torturas-a-sandra-barrenetxea>

The particularity of this socio-political process characterised by its unilaterality and the absence of peace negotiations is part of the reason for the statement ‘peace doesn’t exist’. For a sector of the population in the Basque Country that has striven for independence, ‘peace’ may be deemed not to exist in the current context on the grounds that the ‘historical political conflict’ has not ended since ‘repressive mechanisms from the Spanish state’ continue and one of main demands in relation to the political conflict, the right to self-determination of the Basque people, has not been addressed.⁷ Contrary to this stance, another sector of the Basque population (in consonance with discourses articulated in Spanish media and by Spanish institutions) doesn’t recognise the existence of a political conflict, as the past is depicted as violence committed by a terrorist organisation. Many of ETA’s victims, some of them organised in the group that was part of my fieldwork, COVITE (‘Collective of Victims of Terrorism’), deny that the Spanish state played any role as party to the violent conflict and was therefore responsible for part of the violence. The term ‘peace’ appears to be unrealistic for both stances. As expressed by the president of COVITE, Consuelo Ordoñez, accepting the existence of or the need to build ‘peace’ is to accept the ‘theory of the conflict’, which for her is based on the understanding that the Spanish state committed violence as much as ETA did, something that is described as an ‘intentional fallacy’ promoted by Basque nationalism.⁸ The statement found in the university toilets (figure 1) could be echoed by different political positions, expressed by people with different experiences of violence, in the contested scenario of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country.

⁷ This idea is expressed in an article by members of a group created in 2017 under the framework of the Permanent Social Forum working specifically on the consequences of the armed conflict on women

“Construyendo la verdad de las mujeres vascas. Pasos hacia una paz no patriarcal”, *Revista Marea*, 30 June 2018, accessed 19 April 2019, <https://revistamarea.com/2018/06/30/construyendo-la-verdad-de-las-mujeres-vascas-pasos-hacia-una-paz-no-patriarcal/>

⁸ “Consuelo Ordóñez: Destituir a Urquijo es una cesión del PP al PNV contra las víctimas”, *El Mundo*, 9 January 2017, accessed 13 March, 2019, <http://www.elmundo.es/pais-vasco/2017/01/09/587281dd46163f33138b4661.html>

Contestation and Rupture

Naming Contestation in the Field

Trying to grasp the meanings given to this post-ceasefire process entailed listening to a variety of stories, with conflicting conceptualisations of the past and different understandings and experiences of violence. I listened to a woman who had suffered years of harassment from the youth independentist movement and expressed to me the impact this violence had on her family even before ETA killed one of her relatives. I listened to a person from the same town who belonged to that movement and decided to join ETA after suffering constant police persecution. These people reflected on the suffering caused by everyday violence in their lives, violence coming from opposing actors. Life experiences, ideological standpoints — everything is mixed in a small territory with a population of three million⁹ where violence and contestation are coated in discourses on *convivencia* (a Spanish word which I translate in this thesis as ‘living together’).

I understand contestation as a main feature of this socio-political process. Contestation is also found inside myself as a researcher, as a listener, even as a friend of those who became close to me during the fieldwork. Contestation is part of the research process in different ways, as I explain in this thesis. Competing narratives are shaping the current context in relation to interpretations of the past, representations of otherness, understandings of violence and peace, and the use of the Basque idea of living together. The concept of contestation that has emerged in the field is one of the theoretical contributions this research makes to peacebuilding approaches. Awareness of contestation is needed in order to approach the complexity inherent in so-called post-conflict scenarios and to open up possibilities for socio-political change. Some

⁹ The historical territory of the Basque Country is composed of a region in the south of France called *Iparralde*, covering 2,995 square kilometres, and a region in the north of Spain called *Hegoalde*, administratively divided between the Basque Autonomous Community (7,234 km²) and Navarre (10,391 km²), giving the whole territory an extension of 20,620 km², with a population of approximately three million. A significant majority of the population of the Basque country live inside the Basque Autonomous Community (about 2,100,000, or 70% of the population) while about 600,000 live in Navarra (20% of the population) and about 300,000 (roughly 10%) in the Northern Basque Country in France (“Basque Country (greater region)”, *Wikipedia*, accessed 1 August 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Country_\(greater_region\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Country_(greater_region)))

approaches on ‘political reconciliation’ (including the work of Mihalea Mihai, Danielle Celermajer and Lawrie Balfour in Thaler, 2018: 14) have highlighted the importance of contestation in the analysis of these scenarios. One of the advocates of political reconciliation, Andrew Shaap (2005: 2-4), understands that the possibility for reconciliation to be political lies in the contestability of opinions, in a world held in common from the multiple perspectives that are part of everyday political interaction.

Terms that refer to the past are part of the contestation of the post-ceasefire scenario in the Basque Country. In this context, the dispute over terminology is the essential element of what has been named in this context as *la batalla por el relato* (‘the battle over the narrative’ in Spanish). Naming the past and the present involves creating particular narratives, prioritising some experiences over others, and giving specific meanings to violence. In his analysis of the peace process in Colombia, Alejandro Castillejo (2016: 41) indicates that ‘different ways to name the past produce different conceptions of the victim, of the violent act, of the perpetration and of the causal relationships between some things and others’. This tension is reflected in terms used in institutional programmes and local initiatives in the Basque Country. The ‘Basque case’ is a term employed in an effort to avoid controversy. In the local report for a comprehensive account of experiences of violence that was carried out in the town of Rentería in 2015 and which triggered other local reports as part of initiatives on memory,¹⁰ the research was presented as examining ‘the impact of politically-motivated violence in the so-called “Basque case” [...], what some describe as the “Basque conflict” and others as “the struggle against the terrorism of ETA”’ (Argituz,

¹⁰ In the Spanish context, the concept of memory has expanded in the last twenty years due to social and political movements that have claimed memory as ‘the experiential and emotional knowledge of the past’ and have displaced historians for being the only source of creation of the narratives of the past (Izquierdo, 2018: 333-336). A wide range of scholarly literature have approached memory in Spain since the last decade of the 20th century (such as Aguilar, 1996; Aguilar and Humlebaek, 2002; Molinero, 2006; Richards, 2006; Ysàs, 2009). The study of memory has also internationally proliferated from the late 1990s. The concept of memory possesses numerous and contested meanings. As McDowell (2016: 40) affirms, memory cannot be discussed as a unitary entity: there are multiple types of memory, such as official, unofficial, public, private, collective, communal, local, national, historical and so on. In the Basque post-ceasefire context, the different initiatives and institutions that describe themselves as working on ‘memory’ use this term to refer to the gathering and display of experiences of the armed conflict, creating a narrative about ‘what happened’ in the past. The approach to memory in the Basque Country is linked to the different narratives about the armed conflict, which are contested in the current socio-political process.

2015:13). The use of ‘the Basque case’ to describe the years before the ceasefire appears in other reports commissioned by the Basque government, such as in the ‘Local portraits of human rights violations in the Basque case 1960-2010’¹¹ or the ‘Report on human rights violations in the Basque case (1960-2013)’ (Carmena *et al.*, 2013).

Relationships in the Basque Country are marked by the selection of some terms over others. Expressing oneself through some concepts is part of the construction of the ‘us’ and of ‘the other’, and it situates the person in relation to a particular standpoint on the narratives of the past. I had to be aware of the importance of discourse in this context during my encounters and formal interviews with participants in this research. This is illustrated by the following conversation with a member of COVITE in their reaction to my hesitation on how to describe my project in relation to the violence committed by ETA:

Andrea: So my research... The idea is to get to know how... I mean, since, let’s say, the end of ETA, or when ETA says that they will not make more... will not commit more acts of this...

Concha: More murders.

A: More murders.

C: But they don’t say that [laughs].

A battle over meanings permeates the post-ceasefire process. The avoidance of the use of the term ‘terrorism’ by Basque institutions has been criticised by COVITE. On the organisation’s website, an article by law professor Fernández de Casadevante directly criticised the terms used in Basque government programmes on memory, referring to them as ‘the institutional attempts [by the Basque government] to avoid a memory that is both critical and in solidarity with the victims’:

Naming and identifying ETA as a terrorist organisation and its prisoners and victims as what they really are (prisoners for terrorism and victims of terrorism) continues to be a pending task [for the Basque government]. The activity of ETA

¹¹ This project contains reports of recognised victims located town by town in the autonomous Basque region. This project is commissioned and hosted by the Basque government in the website page “Retratos Municipales”, accessed 19 April 2019, <http://www.euskadi.eus/retratos-municipales/web01-s1lehbak/es/>

has not been just ‘violations of human rights that happened in the past’ (in the words of the Basque government’s Secretary for Peace and *Convivencia*), nor are its members in prison simply ‘prisoners’, nor are their victims simply victims of human rights violations.¹²

In the writing of this thesis, I faced the complexity of choosing what terms to use. Writing entails naming and placing words into a specific order. On the one hand, during the analysis of all the material gathered, it was difficult to separate into closed categories the excerpts of life that I encountered during fieldwork. I found it difficult to create clear demarcations between the chapters. I realised that it was in part due to how entangled those concepts were in the field and how stories can be oppositional but intertwined at the same time. If I wanted to create a conversation with the field through my writing, I would have to reflect that mingled diversity, contestation and conflicting standpoints as crossroads that affected my reflections and perceptions, and therefore my analysis. I made decisions about what concepts I was going to use. I resolved not to use the term ‘post-conflict’ for the scenario I am researching. Describing violence as ‘conflict’ is misleading, for ‘conflict’ is part of human life and not necessarily negative in itself. What makes a conflict harmful is when it is addressed with violence, a difference that I note in this thesis. I decided to name the current scenario in the Basque Country as ‘the socio-political process coming after ETA’s ceasefire’ or ‘post-ceasefire’.

Using the term ‘terrorism’ to refer to the violence that happened in the Basque Country and also in other parts of Spain could work when referring to the effects that some actions and the narratives around those actions had on some parts of the population, *i.e.* those who felt terror, or fear. However, using it as an analytical category becomes problematic as it places the causes of the violence selectively on those individuals and organisations which used armed violence against the state. In their insightful analysis on terrorism, Zulaika and Douglass (1996: ix) highlight the reality-making power of the discourse of terrorism. In the opinion of these authors, to demonise violence categorised as terrorism and make it taboo not only prevents clear

¹² “De la banalización del terrorismo de ETA”, *Observatorio del Terrorismo*, 3 January 2018, accessed 19 April 2019, <https://observatorioterrorismo.com/justicia/de-la-banalizacion-del-terrorismo-de-eta/>

analysis of this armed violence but also confers on its protagonists a ‘mythical power’ that gives greater efficacy to this type of violence (Ibid.: 119, 149, 239).

I name the situation when ETA was active and the Spanish and French states participated in a violent confrontation as a ‘violent armed conflict’ (sometimes reduced to ‘violent conflict’ or ‘armed conflict’ during the thesis). With this term, I refer to a specific violence, *i.e.* armed violence, which defines the activity of ETA that is particular to this period. This violence can also be described as political violence, a term that includes the violence exerted ‘in the name of a political ideology, movement, or state’, as well as ‘armed struggle against a repressive regime’ (Bourgois, 2001: 3). This is the definition of violence also used in some of the initiatives on memory in the Basque Country, as mentioned above in reference to commissioned reports. Since the political violence by the state could be analysed as ongoing in the post-ceasefire context, I find it more precise to refer to the years of ETA’s activity as armed violence, without restricting the violence of those years only to that committed by ETA. ‘Armed’ and ‘violence’ are attached to ‘conflict’ in the term ‘violent armed conflict’ to make it clear that referring to ‘conflict’ alone does not imply the existence of violence and also to point out the fact that armed violence was used to address an underlying conflict.

In the context of the Basque Country, this underlying conflict corresponds to conflicting interests in relation to territorial demands, political claims, identity and cultural belonging. Basque culture was negated during the Franco years, a repressive dictatorship (1939-1975) that prohibited any cultural expressions that failed to conform to the regime’s understanding of a single and united Spain. After the dictatorship, the Spanish Constitution established different administrative territories within Spain which included a Basque Autonomous Community covering three provinces. Basque nationalists consider that the Basque Country is not restricted to these provinces and that the historical roots of the Basques are to be found in the province of Navarre (a distinct Autonomous Community under the Spanish Constitution). The name in Basque of the Basque Country is *Euskal Herria*, which can be translated as where Basque-speakers settle. The total political and cultural territory claimed by nationalists also includes three provinces in the South of France. However, not everyone in the Basque Country calls it *Euskal Herria* or considers the Basque territory to comprise the seven provinces. This contested conceptualisation and

emotional belonging has been an essential part of the conflict, divisions and antagonisms in the Basque Country and in Spain alike.

A Rupturistic Approach towards Reconciliation and Living Together

In this thesis, I challenge the concept of reconciliation, drawing on analysis of scholarly literature and the material gathered in the field. I criticise a notion of reconciliation that focuses only on the creation of good relations among people, bringing closure to violence perceived as happening in the past, while failing to acknowledge the continuation of multiple violences in the present.

In the Basque Country, reconciliation is a contested term, as I examine in this research. However, the term *convivencia* ('living together') is a more widely accepted concept in the post-ceasefire scenario, creating the basis for a renewed citizenship in what is presented as a new future to come once the suffering and violence have been left behind. Analysing the literature on reconciliation and current Basque initiatives on *convivencia*, I explore what I call 'pacification mechanisms', meaning those elements that promote a patriarchal and liberal order (as criticised in other contexts by authors such as Castillejo, 2017 and Richmond, 2011) and prevent social change from happening during a post-ceasefire process. Within pacification narratives, the past is framed by the image of violence and division and the future is depicted as the end of suffering and the creation of common shared values. These narratives institute a particular understanding of violence and ignore the legacies and ongoing effects of the armed conflict. Any violence that doesn't appear directly connected with the armed conflict is also ignored, so violence that prevails such as socio-economic and patriarchal violence is left untouched in these approaches.

My stance towards reconciliation follows a feminist 'rupturistic approach', based on the definition by feminist economist Amaia Pérez Orozco (2014). This author analyses feminist approaches to economics dividing them into three categories: economics of gender, feminist economics of integration and feminist economics of rupture. The first corresponds to liberal approaches whose objective is to get women into spheres of power. The other two entail a feminist commitment and use gender as a central analytical category. They differ in the degree of rupture with the patriarchal

order. The integration model maintains the same methodology of patriarchal science and focuses on giving women visibility as a means to achieve equality. Feminist economics of rupture establishes conceptual and methodological ruptures within the discipline, disrupting analytical categories and proposing the need for radical change.

A rupturist approach aims for a change of paradigm, a disruption, a turnaround of an order that sustains different kinds of violence. This has to entail an epistemological rupture, in line with the feminist idea expressed by Audre Lorde (1984) that ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’. In an essay with this title, Lorde (1984:110-1) asks ‘What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable’. The rupturist feminist approach proposed by Pérez Orozco must also involve creating analytical approaches to what are narrowly called ‘post-conflict’ scenarios, seeking out new interpretations and new imaginaries. These scenarios could be periods of opportunity in terms of creation of knowledge and in terms of social change.

The period after a ceasefire could represent a time of awareness with the potential to shake the foundations of a socio-economic order founded on violence. The period defined in the Basque Country as the time to construct a living-together society could focus debate on the inevitability of interdependency (among humans and non-humans), challenging the patriarchal capitalist idea of the self-sufficient modern individual. In this sense, *convivencia* would not be understood as something to be created but as an unchosen precondition of human existence on earth (as argued by scholars such as Arendt in Butler, 2012: 23 and Cavarero, 2014: 88). Contrary to the idea of closure and the opening of a new stage inherent to linear peacebuilding narratives, a different approach to *convivencia* would recognise that ‘we live together within time’, as philosopher María Zambrano (1998: 25-27) argues when affirming the idea of *convivencia* as an ‘essential condition of a human being’ that implies the interdependency of ‘knowing that our lives are opened to others’ and ‘understanding the whole planet as our home’.

My intention is to explore different practices that work towards rupture and social change. I argue that any such change must be rooted in an awareness of the need and desire to relate to others that does not ignore the multiple conflicts and violences that take place in the current socio-economic order and within our relationships. In this

thesis, I also challenge a conceptualisation of peace that instead of giving a transformative potential to this concept is being used to impose a liberal order. This imposition, which I call pacification, differs from the concept of ‘practices of peace’ that I am suggesting in this thesis.¹³ Practices of peace name violence, challenging its normalisation. Practices of peace address conflicts, accepting them as part of human lives and managing them without resorting to violence. Practices of peace work to break hierarchical dichotomies that are part of the configuration of a violent social order. Practices of peace acknowledge human vulnerability, our need and desire to relate to others.

This thesis could itself be deemed, epistemologically, a practice of peace. This epistemological approach pays attention to relationality, creating knowledge from conversations (in line with the proposals of feminist epistemology), exploring the everyday using an anthropological approach that reveals practices that break with hegemonic discourses. My research aims to reveal the multiple violences that get concealed through the mechanisms of pacification. It is the task of academic research to reveal exclusions. Anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo (2016: 55) describes Colombia as a territory where a state of silence reigns, since silence has been used as a military strategy but also as a way to survive. For this author, academic research becomes political when it breaks with that rule of silence. Pointing out the continuities of power and violence is the task of the scholar and the objective of ‘an anthropology grounded at the present time’ (Ibid.: 56). My research as a practice of peace also puts into question the violence that is exerted during the research process. As Castillejo (2005: 174) warns, it is important to rethink ‘the epistemic space in which students of violence locate themselves and reinforce, even if unwittingly, the power relations that structure, produce, circulate and consume a particular notion of “knowledge”’. As a practice of peace, this research also addresses conflicts inherent to the research

¹³ As I explain in chapter 6, the use of this concept draws on feminist literature (Hernandez and Jaramillo, 2000) and on the educational project I had the pleasure of taking part in from 2009 to 2014. ‘*Relaciona*’ (‘Relate’) was a project set up at the Spanish Institute for Women on prevention of gender-based violence in education. It consisted in both producing literature for teachers in formal and non-formal education and delivering workshops to teachers all over Spain. My understanding of peace owes a great deal to the conversations I had with the women in this group: Ana Mañeru Méndez, Ana Isabel Simón Alegre, Laura Latorre Hernando, Itxaso Sasiain Villanueva, Gloria Serrato Azat, Almudena Mateos Gil, Soraya González Guerrero, Marta Monasterio Martín, Susa Cerviño Saavedra, Ana Carolina Ortiz Asensio, Lupe García Rodríguez, Patricia Verdés Giménez and Sara Añino Villalva.

process. Conflicts occur in the field, in the analysis, in the writing process. This thesis also explores vulnerabilities involved in this process of research, and complexities that cannot be trapped in binary accounts.

Rationale and Contribution to Knowledge

The Basque case is of particular interest as it is one of the last examples of nationalist armed conflict in Europe; additionally, it is going through a particular process defined by the lack of a formal, signed peace agreement. As such its analysis has important implications for enhancing understanding of social and discursive dynamics in so-called post-conflict situations and the gendered power relations involved in the socio-political process coming after ceasefires are declared.

This thesis makes a contribution in different areas: first, international debates in relation to peacebuilding and ‘post-conflict’; second, feminist literature on reconciliation and peacebuilding; and third, the examination of a specific context, the Basque Country, where little research has been done in relation to gender and conflict and no research has taken into account the wide range of perspectives in relation to the Basque political conflict. This research contributes to existing literature on reconciliation and peacebuilding (Aiken, 2013; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003; Dawson, 2007; Galtung, 1964, 1996; Hamber, 2009; Knox and Quirk, 2000; Lederach, 1997, 2005) using a gender-sensitive approach. This approach is needed in order to rethink conceptualisations of peace, violence and reconciliation.

In relation to international debates on peacebuilding, concepts such as reconciliation, post-conflict, or peace are analysed and challenged through the examination of scholarly literature and the exploration of how meanings circulate in the post-ceasefire scenario in the Basque Country. My analysis of the concept of reconciliation expresses caution on discourses that place the responsibility for overcoming violence on relationships without addressing the need to tackle structural violence. This analysis also warns about the lack of accountability of institutions that promote initiatives on memory when they also had a part in committing violence during the armed conflict. The examination of other concepts such as that of *convivencia* used in the context of the Basque Country raises concerns about the use of the language of inclusiveness and plurality to win a battle over memory that

privileges some narratives over others and to establish specific meanings of violence that exclude some voices in the construction of the post-ceasefire scenario. The use of concepts such as pacification or practices of peace has proved useful in this thesis in order to investigate meanings given to peace and violence in the analysis of post-ceasefire processes.

The use of the concept of practices of peace in this thesis makes a feminist contribution to peace and conflict studies. It goes beyond concepts such as positive or negative peace (coined by Galtung, 1964 and followed by many other scholars). Peace is understood in this thesis as something positive in itself, so there is no need for redundancy. The concept of practices of peace challenges both a devalued patriarchal notion of peace seen as unattainable and essentialist understandings of women as naturally peaceful. Peace is seen not as an idealised concept, but as an everyday practice. In a critical approach to how the concept of reconciliation is being understood by scholars and practitioners as focusing on relationships but ignoring the multiple dimensions of power and violence, the concept of practices of peace identifies different kinds of violence in order to overcome and transcend them.

This research is based on the importance of taking into account the role of women in peacebuilding processes, and using a gender-sensitive analysis in the examination of peace and violence. In the Basque Country, although there has been significant development in gender studies over the last thirty years (Novo and Elizondo, 2010), little research has been done on the analysis of the violent conflict from a gender perspective. Until recently, Alcedo (1996), Aretxaga (1988) and Hamilton (2007) were the only exceptions. At the time of my fieldwork, two doctoral projects at the University of the Basque Country were examining experiences of women in relation to the armed conflict, focusing on female ETA members ('Participation and Political Practices of ETA Female Members' by Zuriñe Rodríguez) and on women that suffered torture and prison (Olatz Dañobeitia's PhD project 'Political Violence and Gender in the Basque Country from the 1990s'). Some literature is being written in the Basque language analysing gender dynamics in the armed conflict (such as Etxebarrieta and Rodríguez, 2016).

In other contexts, the roles of women have been examined in relation to both armed conflict and peacebuilding, as shown in compilations of cross-national case studies (*i.e.* Cheldelin and Eliatamby, 2011; Cooke and Woollacott, 2014; Giles *et al.*,

2003; Lorentzen and Turpin, 1998; Moser and Clark 2001).¹⁴ This research builds on and contributes to this body of comparative research on women, armed conflict and peace. The acclaimed United Nations Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security recognised that the role of women during and after conflicts continues to be relegated to marginality, as research on different societies emerging from violent conflict has shown (such as De La Rey and McKay, 2006; Hinton et al, 2008; Moosa et al, 2013; Nkuuhe, 2013). Peacebuilding has been deemed ‘gender-blind’, a “masculinized” construct that mirrors the militarized masculinities characteristic of the conflicts being addressed’ (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002; Strickland and Duvvury, 2003). Studies of gender aspects of armed conflict demonstrate that gender relations of power shape so-called pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations, and shed new light on the roles of women in waging war and building peace (Giles *et al.*, 2003; Moser and Clark, 2001). A feminist point of view on the lack of women’s participation in decision-making in peacebuilding processes has pointed out that women have gender-specific experiences of the conflict, and it has also highlighted the need for a ‘transformative feminist engagement with international politics’ (Bell and O’Rourke, 2007: 30).

In addition, women are misrepresented by the maintenance of female stereotypes. On the one hand, women are portrayed as victims and not as agents of change (Björkdahl and Mannegren Selimovic, 2013). On the other hand, the risk of misrepresentation arises when talking about women as ‘natural’ peacemakers. This latter issue has been extensively discussed among feminist scholars (Alison, 2009; Aretxaga, 1997; Cockburn, 1998; Helms, 2003; Porter, 2007; Reardon, 1993; Ruddick, 1983, 1995; Ward, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989). Some draw attention to how that kind of essentialisation can be ‘a dangerous political force’, which sustains dominations, operating fixed and stereotyped dualism of ‘women victim, male warrior’ (Cockburn, 1998: 13). This dichotomy is widespread in different cultures (Alison, 2009: 85) and corresponds with the role of women as nurturing and caring as part of the task of being ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ (Porter, 2007: 3).

¹⁴ As Wibben (2016: 6) highlights, feminist research on violence and war has proliferated in recent years. She adds to the literature the work by: Al-Ali & Pratt 2009; Alison 2009; Cohn, 2013; Gentry & Sjoberg, 2015; Giles & Hyndman, 2004; Jacobs, Jacobsen & Marchbank, 2000; Kaufmann & Williams, 2010; Riley, Mohanty and Pratt 2008; Sylverster, 2011, 2013.

Some political movements of women, however, have found a way to manipulate gender stereotypes through their political claims (Taylor, D. 2001: 106), and to 'fulfil traditional expectations of femininity and at the same time violate them' (Ruddick, 1995: 229). As the late anthropologist Begoña Aretxaga (1997: 78) reflects, the tension between the transgression and reproduction of gender ideology is a dynamic process. The analysis of the actions carried out by women and also the analysis of gender dynamics taking place in a post-ceasefire process allow us to break away from these kinds of discourses and make it possible to critically examine patriarchal structures and reveal the challenges posed to these structures in everyday life. The feminist and anthropological approach taken in this research enables us to pay attention to social processes looking at the everyday, where rigid categories get shattered and where those categorised as victims break with gendered-stereotypical representations.

My feminist approach to this research has allowed me to listen to experiences that broaden understandings of violence, putting into question pacification mechanisms in this process, and highlighting the need to reveal practices of peace. Widening meanings of violence, exploring mechanisms of pacification and locating practices of peace are the main contributions of my research to peace studies, feminist studies and Basque studies.

The Context

History and Key Agents in the Armed Conflict

The Basque Country was immersed in an armed violent conflict between supporters of Basque independence and mainly the Spanish (later Basque) security forces for more than fifty years (1959 to 2011). The violent conflict developed mostly under the jurisdiction of the Spanish state. However, the French territory has also been affected due to different factors: Basque nationalist claims for the Basque region that lies within French territory (*Iparralde*); Basque organisations settled in this territory; milestones of the armed conflict and the post-ceasefire process that have taken place in *Iparralde* (such as ETA's disarmament); police and judicial actions taken by the French government against ETA members and members of the independentist left;

and violent activity conducted in France by ETA and also by Spanish paramilitary groups.

The Basque government has also played an important part in the armed conflict. The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) has dominated the Basque parliament since its inception in 1980 (interrupted only by the Socialist Party –PSE- administration in the years 2009-2012). PNV has raised some parliamentary proposals in relation to the right to self-determination¹⁵ that were denied by Spanish institutions. PNV, an economically and socially conservative party, has also been active in the violent conflict by confronting the *izquierda abertzale* movement, *i.e.* social and political organisations that have supported Basque independence from a socialist stance. As analysed by Begoña Aretxaga (2005), the Basque police, under the jurisdiction of the Basque autonomous government, came to be viewed as traitors by the left independentist movement. Basque police and institutions managed by the PNV were seen during the armed conflict as allies of the Spanish government in the repression carried out against the *izquierda abertzale*, particularly, against the youth movement.

During its history, ETA carried out killings, bombings, kidnappings and economic extortion. Since 1968, ETA killed over 800 people and injured thousands more. Its targets and strategy changed over the years. ETA was founded in 1959, in the midst of Franco's dictatorship. In the Basque Country, but also in Spain, ETA had significant social support during the years of this repressive political regime. ETA committed the first killing in 1968, when the member of the Civil Guard José Pardines was shot after trying to detain two members of ETA at a roadblock. One of ETA members, Txabi Etxebarrieta, also died that day when pursued and killed by the military forces (Whitfield, 2014: 43). The most significant assassination performed by ETA during Franco's dictatorship was a bomb that killed Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's chosen successor, in 1973. It was applauded by many as a symbol of the struggle

¹⁵ The president of the Basque parliament Juan José Ibarretxe proposed in 2003 a new statute for the Basque Autonomous Community, acknowledging the right to self-determination. The Spanish parliament refused to negotiate. In 2005, he made a second attempt to promote a Basque referendum on: first, starting a peace process with ETA laying down their arms; second, initiating a political procedure to enable Basques to determine their political status. In June 2008, the Basque parliament approved a law to hold a referendum, but the Spanish Constitutional Court struck it down as contrary to the Spanish Constitution's provisions on the indivisibility of the nation (Murua, 2014: 140).

against the regime. The oppressive context of the Franco years is concisely described in letters exchanged between Basque scholar Begoña Aretxaga and a republican woman imprisoned in Northern Ireland:

[N]othing was allowed by the dictatorship, not freedom of religion, neither of speech. All political parties, except Francoist ones, are banished, any symbol of identity other than Spanish prohibited, from language to music. It was absolute, plain repression and something like a pamphlet from an internationalist organisation was an intolerable defiance. You could be tortured and charged with years of prison for handing out leaflets (Warren, 2007: 25).

After the death of Franco in 1975, Spain embarked on a transition to parliamentary democracy during the years known as the ‘Transition’. Elections were held in 1977 and won by the conservative *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD). The Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) was the main opposition. PSOE leader Felipe González became president in the following elections of 1982 and headed consecutive governments until 1996, when the PSOE lost power due in part to scandals over the ‘dirty war’ tactics used against ETA members and the independentist left movement during the 1980s.

The Spanish Constitution was promulgated after a referendum held in December 1978. It defined Spain as an indivisible nation structured in 17 autonomous bodies. The Basque territory lying within the Spanish state (*Hegoalde*) was divided into two of these autonomous bodies: the officially named Basque Autonomous Community and the Foral Community of Navarre. The Basque Autonomous Community includes the provinces of Álava (whose capital is Vitoria-Gasteiz), Vizcaya (Bilbao as its capital), and Guipúzcoa (capital: Donostia-San Sebastian). Only 34.9% of the electorate in the Basque Country supported the Constitution in the referendum (Murua, 2014: 85).¹⁶ Basque political parties either positioned themselves against it or called for abstention since the Constitution was seen as denying national rights and defined the function of the armed forces as the defense of national unity.

¹⁶ Basing his calculation on the official results released by the Spanish government, Murua (2014: 85) determines this figure of Basque electorate’s support from the fact that ‘abstention in the four Basque territories reached an average of 51.2 percent; among the voters, a 71.8 percent voted affirmatively’. His calculation includes electorate from ‘the four Basque territories’, namely Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre.

The Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country was approved in the same month as the Constitution and ratified by referendum a year later. The Basque independentist left refused to recognise the Statute of Autonomy and the party *Herri Batasuna* ran a campaign for ‘active abstention’. The statute was approved with the abstention of more than 40% of the electorate (Murua, 2014: 90). The Statute of Autonomy is the legal document organizing the political system of the region that includes Álava, Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, but not Navarre. It established a system of parliamentary government vested with powers over areas such as tax collection, policing, and transportation.

During the Transition, the question of whether to continue the armed struggle drove ETA to split into two separate groups: ETA political-military or ETA (pm), and ETA military or ETA (m). The first advocated an end to armed actions. The other group set five conditions for the cessation of hostilities in 1978: amnesty for all Basque prisoners; legalisation of all parties; withdrawal of the Spanish police forces from the territory of the four Basque provinces, including Navarre; recognition of the right to self-determination and the inclusion of Navarre within the Basque Statute of Autonomy; and improvement of basic living conditions for the working class. Through the 1980s, ETA (m) developed a violent campaign mainly targeting military forces. In the 1990s, targets expanded to include politicians, journalists and other actors seen as complicit with the repressive structure of the Spanish state (as I analyse in chapter 3). The continuation of the armed activity and the expansion of its targets, the development of the discourse that placed terrorists at the peak of evil in Spain, and repressive measures taken by the Spanish, French and Basque government against the independentist left movement, were the main factors in the decrease of social support for ETA.

The ‘dirty war’, which involved the Spanish government in attacks against ETA and the independentist left movement, took place during the 1980s. It was mainly pursued by the state-sanctioned paramilitary organisation GAL (*Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación* - ‘Antiterrorist Liberation Groups’), which claimed twenty-seven murders from 1983 to 1987. Some of the people killed, kidnapped or tortured were ETA members; others were members or supporters of the legal political movement for Basque independence. They were mainly murdered in the French Basque Country, where Basque activists persecuted by the Spanish police took refuge.

Other right-wing paramilitary groups were active during this decade, with demonstrated connections with the Spanish security forces (Aretxaga, 2005: 218). ETA responded to the dirty war by intensifying its attacks, including planting car bombs that killed many civilians mainly in Madrid and Barcelona. The GAL disappeared in the late 1980s, although the court cases against them ran on until after the year 2000, when it was proven that the organisation had direct ties to senior officials in the Spanish government, run by PSOE during the 1980s (Woodworth, 2002).

Data on violence by the Spanish state and paramilitary groups is hard to obtain. Spanish legislation on victims does not cover this data. In a report commissioned by the Basque government on human rights violations in the period 1960-2013, it was stated that ninety-four people were killed by agents of the state and seventy-three by extreme right and paramilitary groups, seventy-seven cases still required investigation, and approximately 1,172 individuals were wounded (Carmena *et al.*, 2013). Another more recent report commissioned by the Basque government documented 4,100 cases of torture between 1960 and 2014 (Etxeberria *et al.*, 2017). In the data about the armed conflict gathered by the website *Euskonews*, belonging to the Basque Studies Society *Eusko Ikaskuntza*, it is stated that 4,770 people were jailed between 1977 and 2001.¹⁷

During the armed conflict, state violence was not only directed towards ETA members, but also towards those holding similar political positions even if they were not engaged in armed violence, but were part of the left-wing pro-independence political movement *izquierda abertzale*. The first coordination of organisations happened during the Transition in opposition to the reforms being carried out during those years. In 1975, ETA gathered together with different organisations under the coordinating committee KAS (*Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista* - ‘Socialist Independentist Coordinating Committee’). Parallel to this, a number of political parties formed the coalition *Herri Batasuna* (HB), which became the electoral flagship for the political stance for independence and socialism in the Basque Country. During the 1990s and 2000s, there was a shift in strategy by the Spanish government from police pursuit of ETA to the criminalisation of the political, social and cultural

¹⁷ “Datos Significativos del Conflicto Vasco, 1968–2003”, *Euskonews*, accessed 22 April 2019, http://www.euskonews.eus/0256zkb/gaia25604_01.html

organisations of the *izquierda abertzale* (as I analyse in chapter 3). Following the dissolution of HB in 2001 (refounded as *Batasuna*), successive political parties of the independentist left were banned in the 2000s, until the Spanish Constitutional court legalised the *izquierda abertzale* political party *Sortu* in 2012.

Notwithstanding claims in the Spanish media that ETA and pro-independence supporters are an extreme and small minority isolated within Basque society, the *izquierda abertzale* has had supporters and members of its different organisations spread throughout the Basque territory. A wide range of organisations conform this movement, besides the political party. Organisations include those focusing on the youth struggle (*Jarrai*, refounded as *Haika*, then *Segi*, substituted by *Ernai* from 2013), in support for Basque prisoners (*Gestoras pro-Amnistia*), feminist organisations (*KAS Emakumeak*, subsequently *Aizan* and *Bilgune Feminista* from 2002), a trade union (*LAB*), groups in support for international struggles and dissemination of the Basque question internationally (*Askapena*), environmentalist organisations and other initiatives. At the time of the Spanish ban of *Batasuna* in 2002, this party was taking about ten per cent of the vote in Basque regional elections.¹⁸ Since ETA's ceasefire, the party *EH Bildu* (a coalition composed of the independentist left party *Sortu* and other left-wing and Basque nationalist parties) has run councils in towns, cities (such as San Sebastian between 2011-2015) and provinces (Guipúzcoa during the same years). *EH Bildu* got almost twenty-five per cent of the vote in the Basque parliamentary elections of 2012 and twenty-one percent in 2016 (becoming the second political force in Basque parliament after PNV),¹⁹ and took fourteen per cent in the 2019 Navarre parliamentary elections. The *izquierda abertzale* has not been a marginalised movement. As the figures above show, after the ceasefire, a left-wing pro-independentist stance is still alive in Basque society.

Tracking Back from the Ceasefire of 2011

We believe it is today possible to end more than fifty years of violence and attain a just and lasting peace. In light of this: we call upon ETA to make a public

¹⁸ "Spanish parties unite in vote to ban Batasuna", 27 August 2002, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/27/spain>

¹⁹ "Elecciones Parlamento Vasco", *EITB*, accessed 15 August 2019, <https://www.eitb.eus/es/elecciones/autonomicas-vascas/resultados/>

declaration of the definitive cessation of all armed action and to request talks with the governments of Spain and France to address exclusively the consequences of the conflict. If such a declaration is made we urge the governments of Spain and France to welcome it and agree to talks exclusively to deal with the consequences of the conflict ('Declaration'. Donostia-San Sebastian. 17 October 2011).

This statement is part of a public declaration made at the 'International Conference to promote the resolution of the conflict in the Basque Country' on 17th of October 2011, where international figures related to other contexts where peace processes had been carried out, such as South Africa and Northern Ireland, asserted the need to put an end to the armed violence in the Basque Country. Three days after this conference, the armed group ETA declared 'the definitive cessation of its armed activity'.²⁰ This came one year after ETA's announcement of its decision to abstain from 'armed actions'.²¹ Following the declaration of a permanent ceasefire in 2011, the hoped-for next step of Spanish and French governments engaging in talks failed to happen.

Other ceasefires called by ETA in previous years had been accompanied by negotiations with Spanish governments of different parties. During the 15-month ceasefire of 1998 and 1999, there was a dialogue between ETA and the conservative Popular Party (PP) government of José María Aznar. As discussed by Begoña Aretxaga (2005: 244-245), the Spanish government stalled on the negotiations using as an argument the continuation of what the Spanish government considered a form of terrorism: the *kale borroka* or 'street fighting', carried out by the independentist left youth movement since the mid 1990s.²² In March 2006, ETA declared a permanent

²⁰ "Eta declares halt to armed conflict", *The Guardian*, 20 October 2011, accessed 22 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/20/eta-spain>

²¹ Announcement made through a video released by the BBC: "Basque separatist group Eta 'declares ceasefire'", *BBC*, 5 September 2010, accessed 22 April 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11191395>

²² As I explain further in chapter 3, *kale borroka*, which consisted of attacks to public buildings and services and rioting, had an important impact on Basque society and was part of the extension of violence of the armed conflict to the everyday. During the late 1990s and 2000s, Basque and Spanish police increasingly arrested young people involved or accused of belonging to youth groups that became considered 'terrorist' organisations by Spanish courts ("El Supremo enmienda a la Audiencia Nacional y considera terroristas a Jarrai-Haika-Segi", *Noticias de Navarra*, 20 January 2007, accessed 15 August 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070930155032/http://www.noticiasdenavarra.com/ediciones/2007/01/20/politica/espana-mundo/d20esp20.794324.php>).

ceasefire. The Spanish president at that time and leader of the PSOE, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, informed the Spanish parliament that steps would be taken to negotiate with ETA. Delegates of ETA and of the Spanish government held meetings. Three of the four major Basque political forces also engaged in negotiations (PNV, PSE and representatives of the *izquierda abertzale*) though the right-wing Popular Party remained absent (Murua, 2017: 96). In December 2006, a bomb blast in Madrid's Barajas airport brought this ETA ceasefire to an end. By 2011, therefore, there was already a history of failed negotiations²³ and failed ceasefires.

The reasons behind the permanent ceasefire of 2011 emerge as another example of contestation in the field. For some ETA victims, the ceasefire declaration is seen as the way ETA tried to manage its defeat.²⁴ For other participants in my fieldwork, the ceasefire relates to a political time when the armed struggle had stopped being effective as a strategy and lost much of its social support. This is also the thesis sustained by scholars such as Imanol Murua (2007:93) who in his analysis of the end of ETA's activity maintains that 'the leadership and social base of the political movement to which ETA belongs concluded that political violence was not effective any more and, furthermore, was damaging for the Basque pro-independence movement'.

Political leaders of the *izquierda abertzale*, such as the Secretary General of the independentist party *EH Bildu*, Arnaldo Otegi, have emphasised the importance of the context in the decision to change strategy.²⁵ The ceasefire happened in 2011, a year of revolt in Spain. Thousands of people took to the streets in the middle of a global and

²³ Negotiations were also carried out during the 1980s. In 1989, ETA declared a temporal ceasefire during negotiations known, in Spanish, as *Mesa de Argel*, or in English, Algiers Table (Vázquez, 2018; Whitfield, 2014).

²⁴ These kinds of statements were conveyed to me during my fieldwork, and have been publicly expressed by ETA victims. As an illustration, in an interview for the BBC broadcast at the time of ETA's disbandment, Ruben Múgica, son of a PSE leader killed by ETA, defined ETA's ceasefire as 'the police defeat through the rule of law of Spanish democracy' ('Eta: Disbandment won't change our policy says Spain's Rajoy', *BBC*, 3 May 2018, accessed 13 March, 2019 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-43991629>)

²⁵ Otegi interviewed on the Spanish television channel *La Sexta*: "Otegi: "ETA dejó la lucha armada gracias a la izquierda abertzale" – Salvados", *Youtube*, 22 April 2016, accessed 21 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNINEqwfTnQ&list=PLWDFGcANsZkoe39TXsv070e gZy6RFEhmY&index=11>

local financial crisis, the worst experienced by the generation born in the years of Spain's Transition. The movement to protest against cuts to the national social budget, against closure of workplaces and impoverishment of the population brought together different generations and social classes. Debates and demands for socio-economic justice and the politics of mutual support swamped squares, workplaces and neighbourhoods, challenging traditional strategies of struggle and activism.

The process leading towards the ceasefire was developed through a number of encounters and negotiations within the independentist left movement. This initiative, however, faced a blockage set by Spanish institutions. The month before the International Conference of Peace, in September 2011, leaders of the *izquierda abertzale* (among them Otegi and the trade unionist Rafa Díez) were sentenced to prison for trying to 'plan and manage a new strategy'. In the court records it was stated that the political party of the independentist left had long been working for ETA to declare a ceasefire so they could strike agreements with other Basque nationalist parties and trade unions on a common political project.²⁶

Disagreements and different perceptions of the process within the independentist left appeared during my fieldwork. A politician of the independentist left party explained to me, in an informal meeting, the reasons that motivated the adoption of a new political strategy arguing that it was due to a situation of 'too much suffering' that they felt compelled to call a halt to ETA violence and the struggle in the streets. The suffering referred to killings committed by ETA, repression by the Spanish and French states, the banning of political parties and organisations of the independentist left, the

²⁶ "Garzón dice que Otegi trató de engañar a EA para liderar una nueva negociación", *El Mundo*, 16 October 2009, accessed 22 April 2019, <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2009/10/16/espana/1255714453.html>

extensive imprisonment of members of this movement (in 2008, the number of Basque prisoners²⁷ reached its peak at 762),²⁸ and social confrontations in everyday life.

For some participants in this research, the process led by politicians is described as treason to the cause of ‘socialism and independence’. The group ATA (*Amnistia eta Askatasuna* - ‘Amnesty and Freedom’) dissents from the strategy followed by the political leaders of the independentist left. In a meeting with me, two female members raised different examples to stress the fact that the decision on the ceasefire was not taken by those who had to face the consequences of their armed activity in prison or in exile, but that it was a decision imposed on them, arrived at through secret negotiations between leaders of the *izquierda abertzale* with representatives of the Spanish government. In a conversation with me, a person released from prison at the time of my fieldwork stated that many things cannot be said and will not be said for years, since that would mean ‘the skeletons in the cupboard would come out’.

The ceasefire, and the reasons behind it, is linked with silences, and also with frustration. As I explain in chapter 2, there is a widespread feeling among members of the *izquierda abertzale* that, from the ETA ceasefire to its disbanding in 2018, all the steps taken have been ‘in exchange for nothing’. Some relatives of prisoners stated to me that when they knew that the ceasefire was part of the negotiations between the independentist political leaders and representatives of Spain’s then governing party the PSOE, they were hopeful that improving prisoners’ conditions would be one of the first steps the Spanish government would take after ETA’s announcement. However, they said that penitentiary policies (controlled by the right-wing Popular Party after it won the Spanish elections held in November 2011) had remained the

²⁷ In this thesis, I abbreviate the definition of the prisoners that have been put in jail in relation to the armed violence (they could be part of ETA or not) as ‘Basque prisoners’. This shorter description is also used in everyday language in the Basque Country. I am aware that this abbreviation is not the most accurate since other prisoners from the Basque Country are also incarcerated in Spain and France. I do not use the term ‘political prisoners’ although organisations of prisoners and relatives of prisoners use it. It is controversial since that term implies a judgement on the action committed, do not have an agreed international definition and entails a hierarchical conceptualisation of prisoners being part of what is a complex and very debatable incarceration system (see Llorente, 2016).

²⁸ Figure based on data collected by *Etxerat* and gathered in Wikipedia (“Basque National Liberation Movement prisoners”, *Wikipedia*, accessed 22 April 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_National_Liberation_Movement_prisoners).

same or even worse, which had caused a feeling of disappointment and what some defined as a ‘collective depression’.

Contestation around the ceasefire and on the process before and after this important event in the history of the Basque Country and Spain appears evident in my research. Contestation is accompanied by frustration on the part of those suffering from the absence of steps by the Spanish government to address the historical demands of the independentist left and the consequences of the armed conflict (such as prisoners’ conditions). The post-ceasefire process is also affected by ongoing criminalisation and accusations of terrorism that reaffirm the unilaterality of this process and that influence how memory is being configured in relation to the armed conflict.

Thesis Outline

The title of this thesis has gone through several important changes that represent the different dilemmas and learning outcomes in the process of research. The title presented at the Research Plan Approval meeting that was held at the University of Brighton in March 2016 was ‘Women and Reconciliation in the Basque Country: A Feminist Analysis of the Impact of Gender Dynamics in a “Post-Conflict” Society.’ More than a year later, after coming back from fieldwork and having drafted my first chapters, the title changed to ‘Understandings of Violence and Practices of Peace. A Feminist Approach to the Reconciliation Process in the Basque Country’. This variation came from a critical reflection after reading the perspective that Aretxaga applies to her work in Northern Ireland, where she states:

The question that must be posed is not about the relation between two different terms women and nationalism, or women and colonialism; the question is about the mechanisms by which colonial and nationalist discourse and practices are engendered and the process by which gendered subjects may change them via practice (Aretxaga, 1997: 11).

I understand my research as working in this same direction. This thesis is not about the relation between ‘women’ and ‘reconciliation’, but about the analysis of the mechanisms by which discourses and practices on reconciliation, or living-together, are gendered and how these mechanisms are challenged. I highlighted ‘understandings

of violence’ and ‘practices of peace’ in the title as relevant to the analysis of both the mechanisms where gender dynamics and reconciliation intertwine and the challenges posed to hegemonic practices and discourses. In the final version, after considering using the term ‘pacification’, I resolved to stress the multiplicity of violences along with practices of peace that this thesis reveals, since the conjunction of these two concepts works as a proposal for applying a feminist analysis to post-ceasefire scenarios. I also changed the description of the process being studied, removing the term ‘reconciliation’ from the title. Even though I dedicate space in this thesis to exploring this concept, as it is relevant for debates on peacebuilding, I did not want to name the socio-political process in the Basque country as reconciliation due to the rejection that this concept encounters in the field and my own criticism of it. The title then became ‘Multiple Violences and Practices of Peace. A Feminist Approach to the Post-Ceasefire Process in the Basque Country’.

In relation to other changes in this thesis, I decided not to include a separate chapter reviewing the literature, but rather to include the literature explored on the main topics of this research as part of my conversation with the material gathered in the field, distributed through the different chapters. During the first academic year of my PhD (2015-2016), I put together and discussed scholarly contributions to debates on reconciliation and peacebuilding. During the year, there was a shift in my approach to this literature. I became more critical of the main authors in the field of peace and conflict studies. Through the reading of feminist scholars, I became more aware of the different dimensions of violence. I also found it important to connect feminist theory from different fields of knowledge (philosophy, ecology, economics, philosophy, etc.) to peace and conflict studies.

After the year of fieldwork carried out in 2016-2017, I finished a chapter on methodology (which became the current chapter 1 in a shorter version). Writing this chapter, and motivated by the encounter with the thought of feminist scholars, I started to find my own voice, a way of writing I felt comfortable with. I started to use vignettes mainly from the field (in the form of photographs or quotes) as triggers for each section of a chapter. I followed this model for the whole first draft of my thesis, submitted in September 2018; it reflected the conversation with the field that I wanted to convey. However, when I restructured the thesis during the year 2018-2019, I found that I had created a self-limiting frame for my writing and decided to eliminate a

uniform way to start each section. The first draft was more an exploratory approach where the material from the field, literature and reflections were gathered. During the last year of work, I found key concepts that made a neater structure, conceived the thesis as a whole as an argument and placed ethnographic stories at its core.

This thesis opens with a chapter explaining the methodology of this research. I present my motivations and positionality in this project since it affects my research questions, the material gathered in the field and its analysis. I draw on literature from feminist scholars and anthropologists in order to enrich my epistemological and political approach. The second chapter addresses the context in which this study develops, highlighting contestation as a main element in the socio-political process stemming from the ceasefire of ETA in 2011. I look into conflicting understandings of this process, the uses and approaches towards the concept of reconciliation and the alternative term used in this context, *convivencia*. Chapter 3 addresses antagonisms in the past that affect contestation in the current socio-political process. Milestones in the perception of social and political divisions in the Basque Country are examined in this chapter. I also investigate embodiments of confrontation, discursive mechanisms in the construction of ‘the other’ and spatial representations of otherness. In chapters 4 and 5, I delve into mechanisms of pacification that narrow understandings of violence and I demonstrate how paying attention to narratives that are set apart from the current scenario of *convivencia* allow for a comprehensive examination of violence. I explore what voices are being privileged in the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country, the configuration of victimhood that establishes a frame for these voices to be heard, what voices are being excluded in this process, and spaces for recognition created around a sense of ‘we’ that serves to legitimate a future based on the idea of living together.

A different understanding of ‘we’ is examined in chapter 6 in the investigation of practices of peace. In this chapter, that sense of ‘we’ is analysed in relation to awareness of human vulnerability and interdependency. I delve into everyday practices that break with fixed and fixing representations of ‘the other’, practices that cross boundaries in relation to hegemonic accounts of each ‘side’ of the conflict. Practices of peace refer to everyday gestures and actions that are not frequently narrated or exposed in the public sphere. Practices of peace disturb pacification paths settled in the post-ceasefire process in unexpected ways. A post-ceasefire process

could be a period of opportunity to discuss and tackle the existence of multiple violences. Overcoming impediments set by pacification mechanisms, by gendered configurations of what experiences count as important in the public sphere, and by barriers established through the construction of otherness, a post-ceasefire process could be a time for vulnerable listening to happen, and where social transformation can be experimented.

A feminist gaze can widen the examination of social processes as it pays attention to the space-off, the space that is not visible in the frame (as in the cinematic expression used by De Lauretis, 1987). My feminist analysis incorporates into the study of post-ceasefire processes those narratives that do not fit into hegemonic frames. Turning the focus on experiences that are excluded from established settings, off-frame violence is placed in the spotlight breaking with the normalisation of different kinds of violences. Shedding light on everyday practices that are dismissed on stages set for reconciliation encounters can expand imaginaries for the different ways that relationships can displace violence and promote support and mutual care. During the development of this thesis, my own frame demarcations have been shattered. I have been emotionally moved and symbolically moved from the position where I had placed myself to interpret the world from. Vulnerable listening can blur available scripts and create unexpected transformations in the everyday, and this everyday includes the day after day of the research process.

1 – METHODOLOGY:

A FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY OF PEACE



Figure 2. 'Rally. We Were also Refugees in the Civil War.' Poster. 2017.

Just before leaving the field, my attention was drawn to this call for Basques to remember that they had once been refugees and should stand in solidarity today with refugees from Syria and other contemporary civil wars, by protesting against anti-immigration policies. This poster (figure 2) links ongoing global violence with the violence in the Basque Country. It creates a connection between generations and places. It broadens the understanding of war and violence beyond the violence committed by the armed group ETA during the armed conflict. Moreover, this is the story of part of my family. My grandmother was a refugee. However, neither she nor I had described her in this way. She was one of the 'children of the war', the designation used in Spain to refer to sons and daughters of those who fought against the fascist uprising in 1936 and who were sent to exile. My grandma, with 2,000 other children, was put on a ship to the Soviet Union. She was a refugee, a lucky one for she was hosted by a country that gave her means to survive, but also a good life, with education, a house and a community of friends that she considered family.

The displacement of my grandmother from the Basque Country happened in June 1937. I came back to Brighton to write my thesis on violence and peace in the Basque

Country in June 2017, eighty years later. The story of my family motivates this research. It helps explain my attachment to the Basque Country, even though it could be said that it is a displaced attachment. I had no family left in the Basque Country, since the rest of them fled to France due to the Francoist victory in Spain in 1939. My grandparents arrived in Madrid in 1957. It was my grandfather's place of origin, and it would be the city where I was to be born more than twenty years later. My family had to live under the Francoist dictatorship, often being interrogated in police stations and constantly observed by police forces; since they came from a communist country they were also labelled as 'evil others' who must be under surveillance.²⁹ Violence had a continuous presence in their lives. In undertaking this research, I wanted to contribute to diminishing violence in a territory, the Basque Country, which has also suffered from a continuum of violence up to now.

Growing up in Madrid, references to the Basque Country were mainly in relation to the violence of ETA: bombs and murders. Many of these occurred in the city where I lived. That violence was part of my childhood and teenage years. At fifteen, I remember crying with rage in front of the television while witnessing the consequences of a bomb that exploded in a working class neighbourhood not far from my house. I could not understand why this violence happened. In the summer of 1999, I visited the Basque Country with friends I met through my political involvement at the University Complutense of Madrid. We learned that people from different social and political initiatives were detained and tortured, charged as terrorists even when they claimed that they did not belong to the armed group ETA. From then on, being in touch with activists from the Basque Country, I learnt more stories of detention and torture.

In October 2011, ETA called a permanent ceasefire. I cried again, this time for joy. I thought this could be a chance for that violence of torture, prison, murders and bombs to come to an end. Nonetheless, I quickly realised that it was not going to be an easy process. On the one hand, the ruling party of the Spanish government formed two months after the ceasefire was very reluctant to engage in any kind of negotiation.

²⁹ The conceptualisation of communists or 'reds' during Francoism as 'the evil other' was not only part of institutional control, but also extended in different ways in society. My mother recurrently remembers when she was attending a party as a teenager and some people wanted to find her tail, as they thought communists were demons.

On the other hand, the armed conflict had deeply affected the lives and identities of the population. Some months after the ceasefire, I bumped into an acquaintance at a bar in the Basque Country. He was involved in social movements close to the independentist left. Still drunk from the night before, he called the ceasefire treasonous, arguing mainly that his best friend was recently put into prison ‘because he believed in the cause of Basque freedom’, referring to his involvement in ETA. I knew that the paramilitary group GAL had killed this man’s father when he was a child. The statement of this young man about the ‘treason’ and his anger stuck in my mind. The violence he suffered made him want to continue fighting. I wondered whether people in Basque society would be open to learning about what happened to ‘the other’, to those who suffered other kind of violence, when loaded with this anger. This anecdote, this encounter, also influenced my determination to conduct this research.

Positionality and self-reflectiveness are essential in the research process, as I explain in this chapter. The violence suffered by my family and the violence I became aware of through my political activity are pillars in this research. My research questions, the material gathered in the field, its analysis, my creation of knowledge, has been influenced by these experiences. My positioning in relation to gendered power relationships has also influenced this research. During years (2006-2013), I worked on gender-based violence prevention. In 2013, I carried out a Master’s in Anthropology at Queen’s University Belfast. My trajectory in feminist activism and work and scholarship on gender was connected to my concern with how to overcome years of hostility and suffering of war or armed conflict. In my MA dissertation, I focused on the role of women in peacebuilding and, more specifically on a mixed group of women from Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist backgrounds. My PhD project has allowed me to incorporate my commitment to diminishing violence into a context of special significance for me, the Basque Country.

This research is an ethnographic analysis of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country intended as a contribution to a feminist anthropology of peace. My research takes a feminist epistemological and political approach to an anthropological study of violence and peace. I advocate for feminist anthropology not as a separate subfield of the discipline. The discipline should become feminist. Anthropology entails a critical approach to the analysis of cultures, including the one where

researchers are embedded. In this sense, anthropology needs to take into consideration all the different layers of power, including power relationships hinging on the gendered construction of societies. In this chapter, I explore feminist contributions to ethnography and anthropology and explain my methodology informed by feminist epistemology.

A Research that Must Be Feminist³⁰

I am about to cross a square in order to meet a friend for a drink after a long day of work at the University of the Basque Country. Boys are playing football. I need to be aware of where the ball is in order not to be hit. The feeling I used to have in the school playground comes back to me. Weakness, silliness, vulnerability. Boys in the center. Girls trying to navigate that space, trying to deal with the violence of that playground being caught by the boys and the ball.

In this research, I don't want to adapt to the masculine centrality. Neither do I want to feel compelled to show myself strong when crossing patriarchal spaces. I want to claim vulnerability as a way to be more conscious about violence, about the world we live in. I want to connect with women that I don't see in the centre of the playground. I want to understand the dynamics in the playground including the point of view of those that are usually displaced from the centre. These ideas and feelings come from years of living a feminist life.³¹

Feminism might be, as in Haraway's account, 'about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in unhomogeneous gendered social space' (1991:195). I critically positioned myself experiencing the link of the personal and the political in the discussions of a women's group during my first years as an undergraduate student in Madrid. When I first joined the weekly meetings of *Meigas* ('witches' in Galician), I just felt comfortable. I could talk without having to raise my voice in order to be heard by the witty veteran guys as happened at other mixed political collectives. In this feminist group, I learned how my self-perception was influenced by media,

³⁰ The title of this section is inspired by the political slogan 'The Revolution will be Feminist or it won't be'.

³¹ Borrowing here the title of Sarah Ahmed's book 'Living a Feminist Life' (2017).

magazines, TV series, and from the expectations coming from friends, family, teachers – all them conveying normative accounts of what a woman should be. As a teenager, I did not feel like I was the girl I was expected to be. I did not fit. In sharing my experience with other women, I realised this was not just a personal problem. It was part of how gender is constructed, how gender is imposed on us, women, and how we resist and create some freedom out of this process of resistance. Understanding gender as a social construction was revealing. Hierarchical relationships based on this gender construction are sustained by a heteropatriarchal structure: a system of power relationships that shapes sexual desires, that tries to impose behaviours, thoughts, and feelings in our sexual bodies.

When I was a child I was not trained to play football in the middle of the playground. But I talked with my friends at the edge of the soccer field. We talked about our emotions. This talking has sometimes been called ‘gossip’ and devaluated by a patriarchal gaze. I find interesting the way that feminist scholar bell hooks values this practice when she states that ‘gossip has been a social interaction wherein women have felt comfortable stating what they really think and feel’, in opposition to a gendered education where ‘rather than asserting what they think at the appropriate moment, women say what they think will please the listener’ (2000: 59-60). Although I would question this last statement as making a too general assumption, I believe that giving value to this dismissed practice is necessary when taking into consideration how knowledge is created and how it evolves in the everyday. In the women’s group the training that I got through those conversations was useful. Sharing feelings was the way to become politically conscious, politically critical, and hence to become a feminist.

My research is feminist research. Engagement in conversations with feminist scholars –as well as with feminist friends and colleagues- is crucial in this thesis: from the research questions to the theoretical framework, from reflections on relationships in the field to the analysis of the material gathered. Sara Ahmed suggests that we, as feminists, need to find ways not to reproduce patriarchal grammar (2017: 4). Finding support in feminist thinkers and feeling related to them has been a fundamental support in that challenge. From the book ‘Women Writing Culture’ (Behar and Gordon, 1995), I learnt how the history of anthropology has been shaped by masculine standards and it contributed to my understanding of feminist critique within the discipline. Feminist

ethnography had an early start at the beginning of the 20th century with anthropologists such as Elsie Clews Parsons (Lamphere, 1995). It re-emerged in the 1970s, shaped by the social movements of the time (Lamphere, 1995: 96, 99). When the book was written, women ethnographers were 'practicing an antilogocentric or antiphallocentric approach to writing by speaking "otherwise," against, even outside, paternal truth, reason, and phallic desire.' (Tedlock, 1995:275). Like other feminist scholars, they claimed that women's lives must be taken seriously, by 'listening carefully, digging deep, developing a long attention span, being ready to be surprised' (Enloe, 2004: 3).

Contrary to the epistemic violence that marginalises, assimilates and neglects women's voices (Segato, 2016; Spivak, 1988), privileging them challenges the masculine gaze and its claims to be neutral and universal. In this research, interviews were conducted only with women, which is an epistemological and political choice. This decision follows my awareness of the lack of visibility of women in 'post-conflict' contexts (De La Rey and McKay, 2006; Hinton *et al.*, 2008; Moosa *et al.*, 2013). It also relies on my interest in listening to what women have to say.³² Interviewing women is a methodological strategy to examine the Basque post-ceasefire process that is gendered, hence framed by patriarchal conceptualisations and social representations that need to be challenged. The creation of spaces for listening to women's accounts is also political. From hesitations raised by some of the interviewees about having 'something to contribute to' my research to the realisation of the insightful experiences that they could share, their narratives acquired a relevance that is often not received in the public display of accounts of the Basque armed conflict. Creating these spaces also meant that men to be displaced from the centre of the playground. Finally, attending to women's voices also broadens understandings of violence, as I argue in this thesis.

My feminist approach implies a challenge to hegemonic narratives assuming a normatively masculine worldview. This approach reveals how discourses and

³² I recall here an event where the Spanish film director Cecilia Bartolomé was talking about her work. I asked her why she paid particular attention to women in her documentary on the Spanish transition *Después de...* (1983). She answered that it was simply because she was interested in what they were saying. There was no need of further theoretical explanation for her.

practices of the socio-political process that I am analysing are gendered. It also highlights the importance of experiences and reflections conveyed by women as a political and epistemological choice. A feminist perspective is used as part of the theoretical framework and methodology of this research. This approach also entails recognising and valuing the intrinsic vulnerability of the researcher, as I explain further in this chapter. Feminist anthropology is a necessary mode of inquiry. Feminist anthropologists have affected the whole discipline of anthropology (Behar and Gordon, 1995; Lewin and Silverstein, 2016), paying attention to issues not examined before, collecting new information, asking new questions, and challenging entrenched methods.

Doing Feminist Ethnography

The methodology used in this research is feminist and ethnographic. Ethnography is central to anthropological practice, since it facilitates the understanding of ‘the ways in which people actually live their lives in their specific lifeworlds’, which is the focal point of anthropology (Carter, 2017: 18). Ethnography is a key tool for the study of violence, as it enables insight into people’s lived experiences and perceptions and, consequently, into how violence impacts human lives and how everyday practices work for the displacement of violence (what I refer to as ‘practices of peace’). Ethnography has been described as being both a practice framed by methodology and the textual product of that practice (Madden, 2010: 16). Other authors have expanded the understanding of ethnography beyond methods and texts, arguing that ethnography is ‘a specific way of doing research and producing knowledge about our world’ (Carter, 2017: 16).

My fieldwork took place between July 2016 and June 2017. During these months, I carried out participant observation, conducted interviews and gathered documents of the groups selected for the study. Ethnographers undertake research and write about groups of people by systematically observing and participating in the lives of people they study (Madden, 2010:1). Ethnography requires a ‘prolonged engagement’ in the site of the fieldwork (Guba, 1981; Shah 2017), where researchers have to develop different skills in order to gain the rapport needed to participate in the everyday with an essential ethical respect for those with whom daily activities are shared.

Ethnography is about an encounter between what Dorinne Kondo (1990: 39) calls ‘positioned subjects in particular situations’. Understanding everyday cultural meanings in the context of fieldwork, and finding the complexities, ambiguities and contradictions in people’s actions and discourses, is tied in to relationships developed between the ethnographer and the group of people being studied, and to how affects and mutual perceptions are negotiated. The background of the researcher, their understandings of the reality, values and political standpoints, influence the research and the knowledge being generated. Feminist scholars have influenced the relevance given to reflexivity in ethnography with their analysis of the violence inflicted through the production of knowledge.

In this section, I explore feminist reflexivity and reflect on my positionality. I explain the selection of groups studied, the methods used, the difficulties I encountered in relation to my immersion in the field, along with the ethical dilemmas and uneasiness in the relationships being established. I also stress the importance of considering emotions as a source of knowledge and political insight.

Situating Myself from a Slippery Starting Point

Eta hemen hasitzen du...³³ [‘and here it starts...’] 5an Oztaila 2016 [‘5 July 2016’] And how wonderful it is to begin. Yet it might be tiring, sometimes misleading, unsettling. But that would be precisely why this is *ederra, polita* [‘beautiful’]. Being moved from your habitual place when something new starts. And the intensity. I’ve been in the *barnetegi*³⁴ just for two days and it feels as two months. *Hitz egin* [‘speak’] however you can. The encounter with a new language. Understanding its logic, a different way to structure your mind, to situate yourself. I love this.

These are the first lines in my fieldwork notebook. They were written three days after arriving in the Basque Country to commence my research. The emotions I experienced then have continued to be part of the whole research process. Being moved from

³³ Literally copied from my fieldwork journal. I wanted to write my first words in the Basque language. The grammatically correct sentence would be ‘*eta hemen hasten da*’.

³⁴ In Basque, *barnetegi* is the place where students undertake intensive language courses. It literally translates as ‘boarding school’.

familiar ground, the unsettling displacement, the tottery journey. Moments of illumination, when I feel I am grasping meanings circulating around myself. Times of overwhelming confusion. Passion for my research. I started my journal sitting in a café of the little village where I undertook an intensive Basque course. My first words on a blank page were a starting point. It was the starting point of my reflexive journal, but certainly not the beginning of my fieldwork. I could say that fieldwork began when reading news about the Basque Country and preparing my research proposal the year before. It could also have started in my frequent visits to this territory for years. Or it could have begun in the violence that my Basque family suffered before I was even born. Settling a starting point is difficult. It is probably not necessary. Rather, reflecting about these milestones in my relation to the field could serve as a way to situate myself in this research, as I have done from the beginning of this chapter.

My knowledge of and attachment to this territory cannot be set as starting the day I landed in Bilbao on 2 July 2016. Nor did it end when I left on 30 May 2017. There are no clear beginnings or endings. Furthermore, the distinction between being an outsider and an insider in the field is problematic. In some ways, I think of myself as an outsider; but somewhat as an insider too. The distinction is a contested one (Naples, 2003: 46). For a long time in the practice of anthropology, the natives were ‘the others’, and the ‘field’ was an exotic and unexplored territory for the researcher. However, the ‘the lines between participant and observer, friend and stranger, aboriginal and alien are no longer so easily drawn’ after anthropologists started doing research in familiar places from the last decades of the 20th century (Behar, 1996: 28). Scholars have challenged rigid constructions of the insider/outsider, native/non-native dichotomies, stating that they are not fixed or static positions, but constantly negotiated in everyday interactions in the field (Naples, 2003: 46), and arguing for a focus on ‘shifting identities in relationship with people and issues an anthropologist seeks to represent’ (Narayan, 1993: 682). Considering one of the positions to be more objective than the other is questionable. From the distant illusionary objectivity of an ‘outsider’ to the alleged empathetic approach of those researchers sharing the ‘same ethnic belonging as their object of study’ (Gregorio Gil, 2014: 300), both stances risk not paying close and constant attention to relationships of power taking place. As Bourdieu (1988: 67) states, epistemological vigilance, namely to work on the ‘objectivation of the subject of objectivation’, must be part of methodology. This

implies analysing the assumptions that the ethnographer is carrying from their personal and academic background.

Ethnography has incorporated reflexivity as an essential element that allows checking the 'ethnographic baggage for presumption and prejudice' (Madden, 2010: 22). The importance attached to situating one's self in the field has become increasingly prevalent in anthropological literature (Crang and Cook, 1995: 7; Gubrium and Harper, 2013: 29; Kondo, 1990: xi; Narayan, 1993). In the 1980s a criticism arose in the discipline of anthropology questioning a 'naturalist' or 'realistic' tradition that aimed to represent reality drawing on the right method and did not reflect on how that representation was generated. 'Writing Culture', by Clifford and Marcus (1986), is deemed an essential critique leading to the so-called crisis in representation. Here, Clifford (1986) stated that ethnography is based on partial truths, because any cultural account is artificial and constructed. He encouraged the self-reflection of the ethnographer about relationships of power in the interpretation of 'the other' (Ibid.). Years before, Edward Said (1978) had highlighted this partiality as one essential characteristic of the creation of knowledge in his seminal work 'Orientalism'. Knowledge, Said (1978: 10) affirmed, is produced by scholars that cannot detach themselves from the circumstances of life, including those of class, set of beliefs and social position. The different dimensions of power embodied by researchers affect the production of knowledge.

During those same years, feminist scholars (such as Abu-Lughod, 1990; Fonow and Cook, 1991; Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1991; Reinharz and Davidman, 1992) called into question the way knowledge is produced through 'androcentric research with its claims to value neutrality' (Tickner, 2005: 8). The book 'Women Writing Culture' (Behar and Gordon, 1995) was edited in reaction to the masculine standpoint which was dominant in Clifford and Marcus anthology 'Writing Culture' (1986), where 'women anthropologists and women's anthropological writings were decidedly absent from that agenda' (Behar, 1995: 4). This book broadened the field to women's contributions along the history of anthropology, and it also incorporated critiques against white middle-class feminism (stemming from criticism raised by Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981 in Behar 1995: 3,6). In the seminal work by Fonow and Cook 'Beyond Methodology' (1991), reflexivity was defined as the tendency of feminists to reflect on, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process.

Feminist scholars contribute to ethnography creating more awareness of how social positions, along with our values and attitudes, affect our research questions, our fieldwork experiences, the interpretation of material gathered, and the way the findings are conveyed (Ali-Ali and Pratt, 2016: 78-79; Naples, 2003: 197).

Feminist reflexivity implies an awareness of the vulnerability intrinsic to the research process, challenging the modern formation of a masculine subject that is represented as self-standing and self-sufficient. Feminist reflexivity should also entail constant criticism. A feminist reflexivity reminds us that 'however critical we may be of others' cohesive, universalizing framings that sediment subject positions, silence voices, and render people invisible, we too are complicit in reproducing our own (violent) and limiting framings' (Eriksson and Stern, 2016: 134). Vulnerability should not be about self-indulgence and the dismissal of a critical approach to the researcher's positioning within several dimensions of power. As Behar (1996:14) argues, exposing the self 'has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake'. Vulnerability and reflexivity do not mean that research becomes about the researcher, in an 'unwitting self-absorption' (Enloe, 2016: 258). Vulnerability needs to engage with questioning our positioning in relationships of power.

There are multiple and variable embodied dimensions of power. When I reflect on my positionality, I cannot see myself trapped in fixed categories of class, gender, race, educational background, nationality, and so on. Relationships of power are contextual. They depend on the background and experiences of the subjects in interaction. Relationships of power also take place in spaces with a particular history and sociological context. The power I hold regarding my economic status is not the same in the context of Brighton as it was in my recent visit to Ciudad Bolivar, a big neighborhood in Bogota inhabited mainly by impoverished people displaced by the war. The colour of my skin is not perceived the same way in Brighton as in Ciudad Bolivar either: in the British context, my lightly brown tone identifies me as a Southern migrant in a territory that seeks to close their borders; in Colombia, my accent along with my whiteness is perceived as coming from a Global North and its colonial history. Having a Spanish ID situates me in a different place of privilege in the context of my research than in United Kingdom. Through conversations during my fieldwork, I became aware that my birthplace allowed me to speak a language that has been historically promoted rather than repressed (contrary to the history of the Basque

language). On the other hand, writing my thesis in English is due to global power relations in which academic knowledge is embedded and through which funding is unequally distributed. The different layers of embodied privileges and oppressions in being gendered as a woman play differently in those diverse contexts. Being critical of our self-position is not easy, as Enloe states:

Being reflexive makes us more accountable, keeps us engaged and makes our work more reliable. Being reflexive reduces the chance that we will leave damage in our wake. Exercising genuine reflexivity, nevertheless, should not be easy. It should not be comfortable. Feminists, though, have never promised that placing a feminist consciousness at the core of our work in and on war and its aftermath would ensure comfort (Enloe 2016:258).

During my fieldwork, I had to deal with my different positions in relation to structural power relationships that became concrete in the field. I was sometimes confronted for having been born in Madrid, the capital of the nation state that carried out the repression of the Basque culture for years. Other times, being from Madrid was a way to access to some groups and participants that didn't identify with Basque nationalism. On the other hand, the fact that I am carrying out research in an international university and not in Madrid was stressed by some of the participants as crucial for them to being open to share their experiences with me. Positionality should definitely not be ignored when carrying out research.

Ethnographic Fieldwork

Groups Approached for this Research

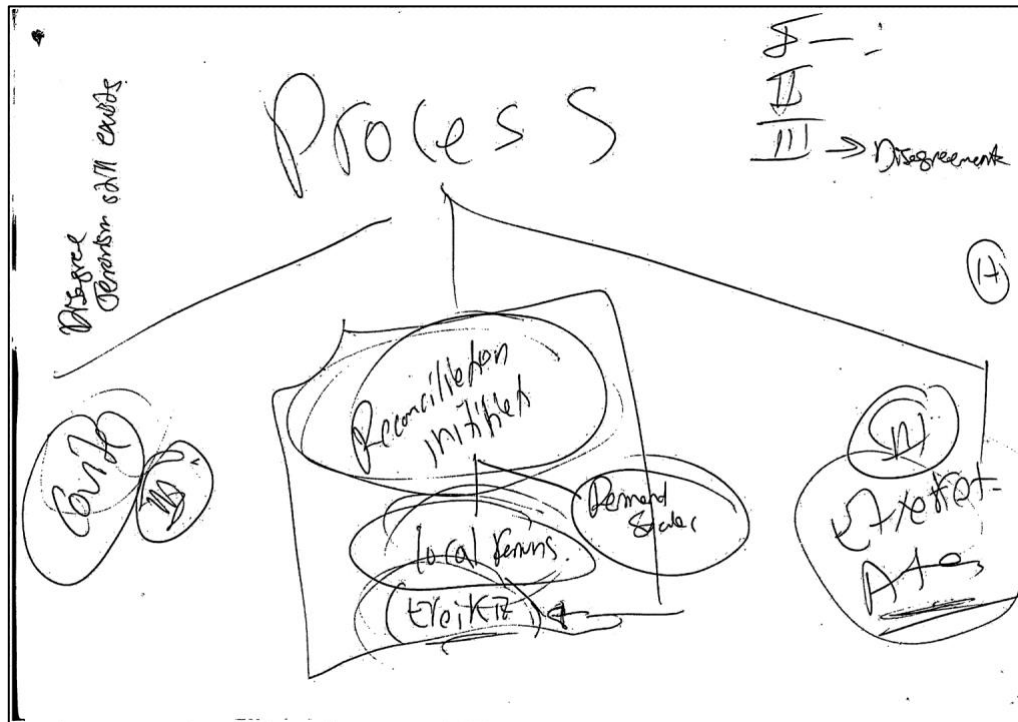


Figure 3. Doodle of my Object of Research. Drawing. 2016.

After my first months of fieldwork, mapping the field and getting access to different groups and people in the Basque Country, I drew this doodle (figure 3) in a supervision meeting held in Brighton in December 2016. ‘So, what is then the object of your research?’, my supervisors asked after two hours of talking. And I quickly drew this. I had it clearer in my mind than I thought. The object was what I then called ‘the reconciliation process’ and how different groups were negotiating it. The groups selected would include those involved in ‘reconciliation’ or *convivencia* (‘living together’) initiatives and those who were not. The inclusion of groups that are not part of ‘reconciliation’ initiatives responded to the invitation made by Hamilton (2007: 182-183) to do research not just focusing on ‘those victims whose stories lend themselves more readily to reconciliation’, but to look for a ‘more balanced and complete study of conflict’ that may include those people who are not fully disposed to meet ‘the other’.

The groups were selected for their relevance in relation to my object of research and for their accessibility. In relation to initiatives working on the idea of living together, I selected ‘living-together local forums’ and the Permanent Social Forum. The first consist of the gathering of citizens with different views of the conflict. The latter is composed of social organisations, and covers different areas in relation to the post-ceasefire process: disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR);

prisoners and people in exile; memory and living together (sub-group that I joined for the research); and an area described as working on ‘women’s contribution to the peace process’ (a sub-group that started to work when I was about to leave the field).³⁵ I situated these groups in the mid strand of the doodle (figure 3). On the sides, I placed the groups that were not part of living-together initiatives. These groups put into question whether violence has come to an end. On one of the sides sits the association of victims of terrorism, COVITE. Representatives of this group state that terrorism is still part of society and of political institutions (referring to Basque institutions that include members of the *izquierda abertzale* political party). On the other side of the drawing, I situated the organisation of relatives of political prisoners, *Etxerat*, which also understands violence as part of political institutions, stating that political violence coming from the Spanish and French governments continues since the situation of the Basque prisoners is worse than before the ceasefire.³⁶

Access to different groups took time, even when I had established previous contact with some of their members. Gaining access has been deemed an essential phase in the research process since it is a prerequisite for research to be conducted and because it influences relationships among the researcher and the people in the field, hence affecting the material gathered for its subsequent analysis (Burgess, 1984: 36). The groups working on the construction of a ‘living-together society’ were not many. They were mainly local forums that were not easy to access. Facilitators of these groups, aware of the delicate balance of trust among their participants, were afraid that the presence of a stranger could be disruptive to their capacity to share experiences and concerns within the group. I didn’t want to create any disruption either. However, one of the facilitators gave me access to one group. I will use Sareka as the pseudonym for the town where this group is based. Their participants welcomed me; some of them made explicit that they were even proud of having an international researcher in the group. In addition to this local forum, I joined the subgroup of the Permanent Social Forum that had just started to work on memory and living together. They encouraged my active participation, mainly in the organisation of the main event on memory and

³⁵ Areas explained on the Permanent Social Forum website, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://forosoziala.eus/es>

³⁶ These different standpoints in relation to the post-ceasefire process are further examined in the next chapter of this thesis.

living together that they held during my fieldwork, in the town of Guernica at the end of April 2017.

I have also included in this research some groups that had stopped their activity but were points of reference for other living-together initiatives: *Glencree*, *Eraikiz*, *Gesto por la Paz* and *Lokarri*. The first two are relevant since they were composed of those recognised as victims by Basque institutions, who suffered ETA violence and also violence committed by paramilitary groups. They were set up by the Basque government. *Glencree* started in 2007 and became public in 2011. *Eraikiz* presented its manifesto in September 2015. Members of *Eraikiz* used to gather once a month, but they did not organise any meeting during my year of fieldwork. *Gesto por la Paz* and *Lokarri* were created independently from governmental institutions. *Gesto for la Paz* started to protest against political violence in 1986; its activity ended in 2012. *Lokarri* (previously called *Elkarri*) commenced at the beginning of the 1990s to promote a conflict resolution scenario based on dialogue and political agreement between parties. This organisation announced its end in March 2015, considering that the peace process in the Basque Country was by then irreversible (and implying that its work was therefore complete).

All these groups were mixed, with people of different gender identities. I also approached groups composed of only self-identified women. One of them was *Emagune*. It started in 2014, set up by women from the academic environment, and later opened to women working on different areas of society. During more than two years, the group held monthly meetings where experiences of the Basque armed conflict were discussed. This process concluded with the presentation of a statement in September 2016. *Plazandreok* and *Ahotsak* have also been taken into account in this research. *Plazandreok* was formed in San Sebastian in 1994 to influence local politics, specifically to ensure greater representation of women and women's issues. *Ahotsak* was composed by women from different political parties that gathered with the aim to influence the scenario of ETA's ceasefire in 2006. Both groups are still active in the organisation of some events. *Ahotsak* is part of the list of groups that form the Permanent Social Forum.

Ethnographic Material Gathering

Participant observation was used during fieldwork and carried out with different levels of involvement. I maintained regular contact and participation with five of the groups: Sareka living-together local forum, the Social Forum subgroup on memory and living together, two different local groups of *Etixerat*, and COVITE. I attended meeting and events. I also related with their participants at different spaces, from informal gatherings over drinks after meetings to protests or commemorations in the streets or other venues. I also attended presentations, conferences, and workshops organised by other of the groups described above and by institutions working on the promotion of a living-together scenario. Additionally, I met with forty-three people with whom I arranged meetings mainly to map the context and get access to groups and interviewees. They were part of human rights organisations, or people who had participated in peace talks in the past, journalists, participants in feminist organisations and people critical of the peace process. I call these meetings ‘arranged conversations’ since I consider they are part of participant observation but they differ from spontaneous conversations that can happen in a bar or at an event. They were usually one-to-one meetings. They also differ from interviews since they were explicitly not set up with this in mind and didn’t follow the same aims and approaches as my formal interviews were. Moreover, I didn’t record them, so my fieldnotes on these ‘arranged conversations’ come from jottings during the encounter and from having memorised what my interlocutor expressed to me.

Participant observation took place in different parts of the Basque Country, although the main area of observation was San Sebastian and its surroundings. The material-gathering and gaining of trust did not come only from my physical presence with the people of the groups, but also from emails, Facebook and WhatsApp groups. This online dimension adds complexity to the idea of no ends and not beginnings in fieldwork, and also to the need to challenge a traditional concept of ‘the field’ only based on physical interaction.³⁷

Participant observation is considered the core of ethnographic research (Boellstorff, 2012; Crang and Cook, 1995; Emerson, 1995; Jociles, 1999). This

³⁷ This challenge to the concept of ‘the field’ has been raised by different scholars, such as Amit (2003), Gupta and Ferguson (1997), or Marcus (1995).

qualitative method implies direct contact with social practices, what enables the researcher to interpret the interpretations given by their actors to the ‘ensemble of texts’ that a culture is based on (as Geertz would put it, 1973). It entails observing how people present themselves in everyday life (Goffman, 1959 in Turner, 1987: 81), how their identities are relationally constructed (Kondo, 1990) and what they experience as meaningful and important (Emerson, 1995). Participant observation has been considered as a potentially revolutionary praxis since it forces researchers to challenge hegemonic conceptions of the world, revisiting and revising the questions we enter the field with, through engagement with others (Shah, 2017).

During observations and arranged conversations, I could take handwritten notes only on some occasions. At other times, I had to memorise the information and then transcribe it, preferably before the end of the day. The word count of these recordings extended to nearly 320,000 words! In order to analyse this enormous data set, I coded these fieldnotes, along with interview transcripts, by themes that related to my research questions and other themes that came up from the data. Themes included: social configuration (with sub-themes such as Basque language, or territorial entanglement), ‘the other’ and the ‘us’, ‘gender’, ‘violence’, ‘silences’ or a theme I labelled as ‘me’, in order to analyse my own role as a researcher. Then I created separate documents for each theme with excerpts of fieldnotes and transcripts. Through these themes, I organised the chapters, incorporating in each chapter my analysis of field recordings and of relevant literature.

Twenty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with women involved in the groups in which I participated, and with those who had participated in initiatives in the past. I also gained access to those who were not organised in any group and had a critical understanding of the armed conflict. Also, women who did not feel themselves as belonging to any ‘side’ of the conflict (a feeling that one participant defined as feeling like in a ‘sandwich’) were included as interviewees. The interviews were all voice recorded, except for one – since this interviewee was not comfortable with being recorded.³⁸ In these kind of interviews, the interviewer poses

³⁸ I contacted this woman through someone who knew she was in bad health, so he asked me to be careful with her. In our first meeting, I barely took notes and asked her how she wanted the interview to be when we met next time. I suggested to her that instead of being formally interviewed, she could write something about her impressions on the post-ceasefire process and on *convivencia*. She came to our next meeting with some reflections handwritten in a

open-ended questions that invite interviewees to develop freely their answers (Burgess, 1984; Jociles, 2005; Skinner, 2012). This method allows the researcher to have access to the ‘subjective facts’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984), to ‘locate the knowledge people carry in their heads, their “notions”, the beliefs and values driving their actions’ (Hockey and Forsey, 2012). This type of interview is typically used in the field of anthropology. But in-depth interviews are also part of the methodology used by oral historians. As Hamilton (2007) highlights, oral history allows the analysis of memory and language in representations of the past, the personal memories of the narrators and the wider historical context in which such memories are formed. Oral history has occupied a privileged place in the development of contemporary women’s history (Hamilton, 2007) and it has been widely used in the analysis of armed conflicts and their consequences (Rodríguez and Villanueva, 2015).

Interviews were carried out during my final months of staying in the Basque Country. By then, I had a clearer understanding about the selection of interviewees and the general and particular objectives that would guide the interviews. Since ethnography is by definition open-ended in nature (Carter 2017: 18), decisions on when, where, what and whom to observe and interview are constantly being taken by the researcher (Burgess, 1984: 43). Snowball sampling was the procedure I used to select the interviewees: people that I gained trust with put me in touch with others. The criteria used in the selection of the sample also incorporated a theoretical sampling, which consists of carrying out an initial interview analysis in order to identify the characteristics that the next interviewees must have (Burgess, 1984: 44). Six people were selected as a start. From a preliminary analysis of those interviews, I decided which others to include as interviewees.

The main aim of the interviews was to understand different subjectivities, experiences and expectations in relation to the concepts of reconciliation and living together. Particular objectives of the interview included the individual’s relationship with the group they were involved in, their perceptions of ‘the other’, experiences of

document but she was also up for explaining more about her views and her experience. We started chatting in an informal way until I asked her whether she wouldn’t mind me taking notes, so I wouldn’t forget what she was saying. She agreed. I told her I had brought the voice-recorder with me but that I didn’t need to use it if that made her feel uncomfortable. Her answer was just a gesture that conveyed to me that she’d rather not be recorded.

divisions and also of practices that broke with divisions, and their motivations and constraints to listen and talk about different experiences of the past. With each interviewee, I drafted an outline of objectives and questions. During the interview, I had those objectives in mind but I also allowed for the interview to flow and take unexpected directions.

All of my interviewees were women. The only exception occurred when I went to the house of the interviewee and the husband stayed during the interview, participating in it. I had not developed enough trust to tell this person to leave their living room. This interview was still valuable as it gave me a good insight of male intervention in spaces where they should displace themselves. I met with the interviewees at least once before we carried out the interview. That took time, but it was an advantage in order to have more information about her and better prepare the interview, and also for both of us to feel more comfortable with each other. I also found it important to keep in touch with the interviewees after the interview. Through phone messages and email exchanges, I tried to be sure that they were feeling well after having expressed their experiences and emotions to me, and that they could communicate to me any concern they had.

Spanish was the main language used during my fieldwork. My command of the Basque language was limited. However, I tried to use this language whenever possible. The participant information sheet given to the participants was translated both in Spanish and in Basque.³⁹ Having some knowledge of Basque was important for establishing relationships in the field. The Basque language holds important affective and symbolic dimensions. People close to the independentist left, but also others who identify themselves as Basque, appreciated that I tried to express myself in Basque and they helped and congratulated me when I made the effort.⁴⁰ Interviewees who

³⁹ This document is attached as an appendix to this thesis.

⁴⁰ The Basque language has been crucial in the construction of the Basque identity. From the 1960s, Basque nationalist intellectuals stressed the importance of language as a community-making element that should be central in the construction of the nation. From being the object of the nation, the Basque language became the subject of the nation (Garmendia and Azurmendi, 2019). Praxis in favour of the Basque language became widespread from those years, from clandestine schools during Francoism to including Basque in the lyrics of popular rock bands or organising popular parties with the Basque language as the main focus and connecting it with joy. It was a language revitalisation movement that took the form of a social

speak primarily Basque agreed on conducting the interviews in Spanish. During participant observation, meetings were mainly held in Spanish due to other participants not understanding Basque. However, on some occasions Spanish was the language being spoken because of my presence. ‘It is worth it’ was the answer of one of the members of a group when I told her I felt bad about them not speaking their language. She wanted me to be there and understand what they were saying, as she found it important to have a researcher from a foreign university giving an international dimension to their issues. In relation to recent literature about my research topic written in Basque, I arranged meetings with some of the authors in order to get some sense of the contents.

Ethics and the Total Experience of Fieldwork

Anthropologists working in territories characterised by political instability, armed conflict and insurgency have identified the ‘special ethnographic, methodological, theoretical, and ethical sensitivities’ that are required when working on, and in, dangerous areas, where ‘to a substantial degree the dangers faced by anthropologists in their fieldwork can be mediated through foresight, planning, and skillful manoeuvre’ (Sluka, 2012: 260). In planning my research, I was concerned with taking care of myself and of the participants. Since the context being investigated in this thesis is not free from potential risks in relation to the political violence, I decided to take different measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The participant information sheet received by the participants in the groups observed and interviewees included this information. Their signature in approval of their participation was not required for confidentiality reasons. In no paper or electronic notes were the names of the participants written down. Locations were also anonymised in my fieldnotes.

In processing the material gathered and in writing, I took what I consider necessary measures for participants not to be identifiable. Names and roles of participants have been made neutral. When using verbatim quotes, I have been cautious for the person not to be identifiable by the pattern of their voice. Throughout the thesis, I have used different names for the same person, so the reader could not follow their whole story and hence identify them. The audio recordings from the

movement in the waning years of the Franco regime, as investigated by Jacqueline Urla (2012).

interviews will be deleted after completing my PhD thesis and following publications. I will only keep the transcripts. When I described these measures at the beginning of each interview, many of the women affirmed that they had no problem in relation to anonymity. However, I still thought it was my task to take care of their security. Another way to ensure confidentiality was to attend the meetings of different groups of the same organisation, specifically of *Etixerat*. With the different experiences raised in different groups and interviews conducted with women with similar experiences, the recognition of any person, I believed, could be more difficult.

The pioneering anthropologist Margaret Mead (1977: 117-118), in her personal letters from Samoa and New Guinea in the 1920s, referred to fieldwork as a 'total field experience'. Mead (Ibid.) included as part of this experience different details such as the 'interchange with those who tried to bar or facilitated our way to our field site', as well as the books the ethnographer reads, or 'the chills and fevers that accompany work', becoming all part of the 'evolving consciousness' of the ethnographer. Being in the field entails being constantly alert to new information, making mental recordings, jotting, writing down observations and reflections. Fieldwork is also a learning process about when to say no to some encounters, when to say no to attending events related to the topic of research, when to say no to your head's desire to keep track of every small detail. Fieldwork is a total bodily immersion with relationships at its core. Relationships are not static; but they are negotiated and renegotiated in the everyday during and after fieldwork (Burgess, 1984: 85; Naples, 2003:49; Svašek, 2010).

Relationships involve ethical dilemmas. The role of the researcher in the field is not easy to manage. 'You are just doing your work' were the words I got from some friends or participants of the research when I talked about my feelings of deceiving some people by not sharing with them my point of view on politics, on the conflict, or my background - ultimately my positionality. Due to the fact that I dealt with a wide range of political stances, I had to choose what elements of my background to stress. With some people, I stressed the fact that I was an outsider from Madrid. With some others, my Basque roots and having close friends in the field played a significant part of gaining trust and keeping the flow of relationships. My genuine interest on what the diversity of people that I approached had to say was an anchor element in navigating

all the different arguments. This does not mean, however, that being in disagreement with those who were opening their experiences to me did not entail distress and guilt.

Other ethical dilemmas were connected with my constant presence in the field, along with the continuous presence of the field in me. Although I presented myself to the participants as a researcher, the role of an ethnographer is easy to forget, since we are not always taking notes or using the voice recorder. As an example, conversations that I had over dinner with my housemates were included in my fieldnotes, since I believed that I shouldn't ignore that these conversations were informing my perception of the context being studied. Nonetheless, I wondered whether people were aware of this constant engagement in the field. These questions and doubts may not have definite answers, which, in Carter's (2017: 45) account, 'happens to be exactly what ethnography should feel like: raising uncertainties in our certitudes'. He adds a beautiful metaphor of this intellectual-emotional-body immersion regarding his work in Cuba: 'My stomach still churns every time I return to Cuba' (Ibid.).

My research practice embodies the contested process I am dealing with. I am part of it. This awareness means that I would now include myself in that doodle, taking figure 3 and transforming it in figure 4, with a body drawn in parallel to the abstract term 'process', a process that is based on people, on bodies and emotions and on relationships.

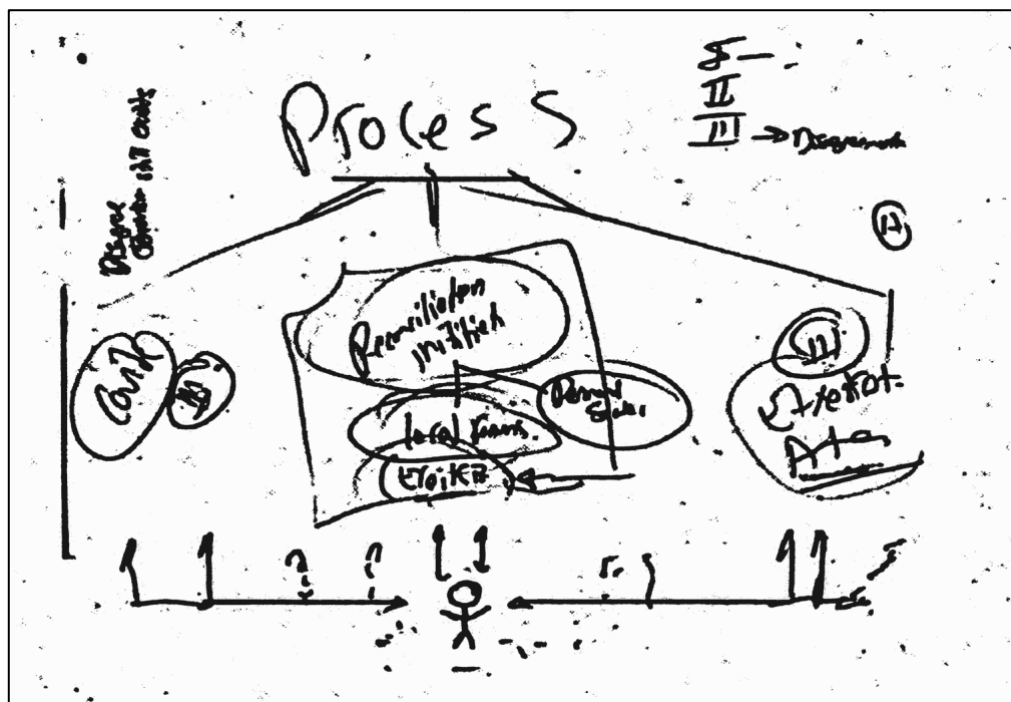


Figure 4. Doodle of Me in Relation to my Research. Drawing. 2017.

Vulnerability and the Research Process

They are superb! [humorous tone]. Don't you know that the Basque cheese is the best? [Me laughing]. Milk, cows, there is no cow equal to the Basque one... Unbearable. So short-sighted. [pause] So then... My father...we went there, we left in the Simca 1000 [a model of a car] at 6am. It was 1962. With a small Spanish flag gripped on the radio antenna of the car. Of course, then we put Spanish flags where we felt like it, as it was Franco times. So, we arrived there and they had done their business on the flag. The nationalists. Some nationalists. That was my first contact with all this. I had never heard anything about this at home. Only my grandmother... [raising the tone], who was Basque. [...] She couldn't stand nationalists. During the war, they came to look for their sons. And they were driven to Azpeitia, by those of the PNV [Basque Nationalist Party] with the priests, nationalists.

Listening to a wide range of narratives in the field was often unsettling and uneasy. In this case, the interviewee represented an oppositional stance in relation to my political views, to my family narratives. This interviewee explained how she used to go with her father to 'mend the Spanish flag', which was a symbol of violence in the home where I grew up. The interview took place the morning after a very intense day. In the morning, I gave a presentation in a seminar organised by the Department of Anthropology at the University of the Basque Country. Then I attended a meeting of relatives of prisoners where not everyone knew me from before. Late in the evening, I met up with a young man who used to be part of ETA in order to understand his reasons to join an armed group and commit violence. I woke up early the next morning in order to draw an outline for the interview quoted above. The interview lasted more than three hours, during which I had to deal with the discomfort of my concealed disagreement. The day after the interview, I became physically ill. It was a marathon of emotions, a marathon in trying to understand different perceptions of the past, the present, the future. My body appeared as a site of contestation, an internal contestation. I was embedded in a contested context that I constantly receive and have to deal with.

Emotions and bodies are part of the research process. In my personal diary, I wrote: 'When I am ill, I feel vulnerable; I recognise myself as vulnerable'. I also

reflected on my frustration when I got ill and not meeting my own deadlines set for fieldwork. I am delaying the transcription of the first interviews. I am not able to attend some meetings. I criticise myself for being so overloaded that I am not reacting correctly. For example, I attended a special meeting of *Etixerat* with two guests belonging to an Argentinean organisation of Basque prisoners' support. I was the only external guest and introduced myself as a PhD researcher. One of the Argentinian guests asked how I managed to get there, namely who I knew in there. I was bewildered. I felt like the stranger, the researcher. I whipped myself for my mistake of not approaching the guest at the beginning of the meeting. The people who knew me reacted immediately, showing that they trusted me. But still I found it difficult to deal with the situation. Confusion, guilt, dealing with diverse viewpoints, trying to feel productive and not losing time... resulted in illness.

Fortunately, feminist scholars have opened the debate on the recognition of body and emotions in the production of knowledge. Scholars working on feminist epistemology have broken with the Cartesian separation of emotion/body versus reason/mind. Reflecting on our emotions in the field is part of an epistemological stance and it is political. Emotions are deemed as a source of theoretical and political insight (Fonow and Cook, 2005: 2215). Vulnerability and weakness are not tolerated well in this productive and patriarchal society. Listening to different testimonies, I felt I had no strong political position where I could stand. I was standing on the ground of contradictions and doubts. During my years of involvement in political groups, I had argued for these expressions of vulnerability to be necessary bases for dialogue, in contrast to categorical opinions and expressions of political righteousness that tend to close rather than opening conversations. During fieldwork, however, feeling moved made me felt politically weak and inconsistent. I was not able to see how vulnerability could be transformed into something powerful, until I read the work of feminist researchers (such as Behar, 1996; Esteban, 2016; Page, 2017). I realised that my unsteady position was relevant for the analysis of the socio-political process I was dealing with. It helped me to reflect about my object of research through those contradictions, coming up with new research questions, such as those related with feelings of 'otherness' and difficulties faced in the encounters with 'the other'.

Vulnerability does not end when leaving the field. As proposed by feminist scholars, there might be no map to follow when doing research (Behar 1996: 35), no

pre-existing route (Gunaratnam and Hamilton, 2016: 5). In the journey, there is no one correct method, nor 'a' feminist methodology (Tickner, 2005: 3). The uncertainty that it entails is part of the vulnerability of the researcher. Leaving the immersion in the field does not mean that vulnerability comes to an end. It stays in the analysis and in the writing process. There is an estrangement in leaving the field and starting to write about those who were part of daily relationships. Questions around respect and honesty towards the participants arise then. The required analytic distance runs the risk of adopting a position of superiority and dismissal, when theorising about what people experience and feel. The analytical process may fall into searching for (or even creating) the coherence in narratives from the participants in order to close the unease and give better academic arguments. However, lives are never coherent; they are contradictory and fluid. Dealing with uncertainties and vulnerability in and after fieldwork is a strength and an effort, which is worthwhile in connection with the necessity of exercising reflectiveness and responsibility in the construction of knowledge.

Conclusions

A feminist anthropology of peace is the field I am contributing to with this research. A feminist anthropology of peace refers to an object and an area of study (peace and peace studies), and to how knowledge is generated. In this thesis, I explore violence and peace, attending to meanings given to these concepts and how they are experienced and practiced. The study of violence has had an important presence in anthropology (*e.g.* Aretxaga, 2005; Nordstrom, 2004; Nordstrom and Robben, 1995; Riches, 1986; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Schmidt and Schröder, 2001; Sluka, 2000; Zulaika, 1988). As argued by Ferrándiz and Feixa (2007: 52), writing about violence should not be easy and it requires an ethical and political reflective stance towards the methodology used and the literature being produced. For these authors, an anthropology of violence must contribute to the diminishing of suffering; the anthropology of violence being, '[f]rom a utopian point of view', a disciplinary antecedent of an anthropology of peace (Ibid.: 65). Just as in this thesis I approach peace not as a utopian concept but as grounded in everyday practices that can be studied, I argue here that an anthropology of peace can be developed in the present.

A feminist anthropology of peace embraces the way that feminist scholars have approached the creation of knowledge in an active positioning that displaces violence in science and in societies (Ahmed, 2017; Behar and Gordon, 1995; Segato, 2016; Spivak, 1988 and so on). Feminist scholars have identified the violence inherent to an androcentric view that conceals and neglects women, where men are shown as the reflection of the whole of humanity. Feminist epistemology opposes the scientific approach of the omnipotent researcher who has the power to name, to mark subjects and transform them into objects, to categorise, to close definitions and explanations, to 'discover' on his own, and to make knowledge the instrument for the exercise of power. One of the most insightful scholars working on this epistemological deconstruction, Donna Haraway (1988: 589-590), understands the science linked to militarism as the technology of perfect language and final order, while she advocates for a science of stuttering, of non-closure, being contestable and contested, coming from the view of a body which is complex, contradictory, contrary to a view from nowhere, from the claimed neutral scientist.

Feminist anthropologists have questioned the ethnographic process as one where violence can also take place. In the 1980s, Judith Stacey (1991) opened a debate on the paradox of ethnography where feminism could be developed through relationships of solidarity and care along the process while stressing the exploitative nature of the ethnographic process. The concern about the violence generated through the exploitation of the participants of the study for the benefit of the researcher not only connected with relationships in the field, but also with the text production (Stacey, 1991: 114). In my view, feminist ethnographies can exist because of the fact of the existence of these discussions, because of the constant reflexivity that opens up conflict from which knowledge circulates and expands, in connection with our bodies and emotions (García González, 2019). Conflicts are inherent to the whole research process. Conflicts (when managed with no violence) open unexpected meanings and words, allows thinking our reality in ways that we did not imagine.

The methodology that researchers use is part of how power relationships are configured and also how we challenge the violence that those relationships entail and how we promote the displacement of violence and value given to practices of peace in a contribution to transform societies. Concepts developed through feminist theories

such as intersectionality⁴¹ and reflexivity are essential in questioning relationships of power that we perform in our research and in our daily lives. The generation of knowledge, the methodology that researchers choose and how we use it is political. Feminist politics and the feminist epistemology that should inform an anthropology of peace is open to hesitations, contradictions, to state and retract, reconsider, losing balance, and finding support in others in the tiring endeavor of managing conflicts, handling vulnerability and constant reflexivity. A feminist anthropology of peace can be part of the science that Haraway advocates for, being a science of non-closure, accepting the research process has having no conclusion or resolution, aiming to hold continuous conversations through which knowledge is shared and expands, in an understanding of science as contestable and contested.

⁴¹ Intersectionality refers to the several dimensions of power that a person is embedded in. In the late 1980s, the concept was raised in the reformulation of defining ‘women’ as a singular group with the same experiences, affirming that gender hierarchies intersect with other hierarchies such as class and race. Intersectionality was first developed as an analytical approach by black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989: 149), who describes it using the simile of a traffic intersection: ‘Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them’.

2 - THE CONTESTED SCENARIO AFTER ETA'S CEASEFIRE

'My research is about...' and then my hands made the gesture of inverted commas when uttering the words 'peace' and 'process', or started to mumble when 'reconciliation' came out from my mouth. Contestation is a main characteristic of the socio-political process coming from the ceasefire set by the armed pro-independence organisation ETA in 2011. I noticed early in my fieldwork that terms of common use in peacebuilding literature are controversial in this context. They are not just words, but represent different and many times antagonistic conceptualisations of the past, coming from experiences of violence and rendering in demands of recognition at different levels. In this chapter, I demonstrate how contestation in and over language is part of the terrain of political dispute.

As in other contexts, terminology referring to the past affects the approach to the present. In his analysis of the peace process in Northern Ireland, Graham Dawson (2007: 25) affirms that competing narratives within the political arena were articulating 'antithetical versions of the causes, conduct and meaning of the conflict'; those narratives remembered the armed conflict 'in distinctive and incompatible ways' that were part of the dispute during the peace process. Amaia Álvarez Berastegi (2017: 543), in her comparison of transitional justice mechanisms in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, states that, in transitions from conflict taking place within Western democratic states, 'concepts of conflict and change are, per se, contested', and that '[d]iffering narratives of violent confrontation are built around a paradigm of terrorism vs. conflict'.

The Basque city where I lived during my fieldwork, San Sebastian, was one of the two European cities chosen as capital of culture for the year 2016. The programme of San Sebastian European Capital of Culture (DSS2016 in its acronym) based its activities around the concept used in the Basque post-ceasefire process *convivencia* ('living together'). I held a meeting with one of the organisers of these events in a building that used to belong to the city Fire Department and that during 2016 was used as the DSS2016 staff offices. She admitted to me that their work was mainly to deal with euphemisms: terms like 'Basque conflict' or 'terrorism' had implied controversy

among different institutions involved in the activities on memory, so those words were eventually erased from the programme.

Contestation in the Basque context is not only over language, *i.e.* the significance of different terms in the representation of the past, but also over the perception of the existence of ‘a process’ itself. Peace negotiations are essential for setting up a peacebuilding process that assumes that there has been a violent conflict that has to be resolved. However, in the context of the Basque Country and Spain, the denial of the existence of a political conflict and defining the violence of the past as ‘terrorism’ has led to a lack of peace agreements and of formal steps tackling the causes and consequences of the armed violence. Spanish mainstream media, Spanish political parties and some associations of ETA victims such as the Collective of Victims of Terrorism COVITE have held this argument. They negate the need of any negotiations, since the objective is to defeat terrorism and not to establish any dialogue with murderers. On the other hand, other political positions, mainly from those with demands for Basque independence, reject the description of the current scenario as ‘post-conflict’ or in a ‘peace process’ since violence is perceived as something still committed by the Spanish and the French governments. This violence refers mainly to the conditions of Basque prisoners in Spanish and French jails, the lack of recognition of the victims who experienced violence perpetrated by other agents that were not ETA (such as death squads or police forces), the non-development of a process of self-determination in the Basque territory and political prosecutions under the allegation of ‘glorification of terrorism’ that are still ongoing.

In this chapter, I first situate the context in relation to contestation over the process after the ceasefire. I then analyse the diverse approaches towards the concept of reconciliation. Finally, I examine the conceptualisation of the term *convivencia*, exploring its different meanings and how it connects with narratives on the past and the future.

What Process?

The situation after the ceasefire has been characterised by its unilaterally. The steps taken by ETA up to their disbanding have not found response from the other parties in the armed conflict, *i.e.* the Spanish and the French governments. However, in the

lack of peace agreements, some political actors in the scenario of the Basque Country have been acting in the creation of a ‘process’- or paving the path towards a ‘peace process’. These actors have resorted to international figures who can give legitimacy to the existence of a political conflict that must be addressed. These initiatives have made use of international peacebuilding language, while insisting on the importance of the role of the ‘civil society’ in this process.

The event that started the path of this unilateral process was the ‘International Conference to Promote the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque Country’, which was held on 17 October 2011. In this conference, the final declaration set the steps for a ‘just and lasting peace’, being the first ETA’s ceasefire, which should have been followed by Spanish and French governments engaging into talks to ‘deal with the consequences of the conflict’.⁴² The conference drew on peace processes from contexts such as Northern Ireland and South Africa, with representatives of the Irish political party Sinn Féin, the British government, United Nations, international organisations and top figures of different governments present. Kofi Annan, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Bertie Ahern, Gerry Adams, Pierre Joxe and Jonathan Powell chaired the event. Tony Blair, Jimmy Carter and George Mitchell subsequently endorsed their recommendations.⁴³ The picture of that day was of those sanctioning (mainly male) figures acting as validating the process.

The conference was organised by the Basque organisation *Lokarri*, with a history of work for the end of the violence of ETA and of violence committed by the Spanish

⁴² “Declaración”, *Naiz*, accessed March 13, 2019 https://gara.naiz.eus/agiriak/20111017_decl_es.pdf

⁴³ Kofi Annan served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1997 to December 2006. Gro Harlem Brundtland served three terms as Prime Minister of Norway and has been involved in initiatives for peace such as the The Elders, which also includes Kofi Annan, Desmond Tutu or Nelson Mandela. Bertie Ahern has been in office and leader of the opposition in the Irish government. Gerry Adams was the leader of Sinn Féin between 1983 and 2018; he was a main figure in the Northern Irish peace agreements. Pierre Joxe is a former French Socialist politician and has been a member of the Constitutional Council of France since 2001. Jonathan Powell is a British diplomat who served as a senior adviser during the whole period of Tony Blair's leadership in the British government. Tony Blair served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2007. The Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland was reached under his term of office. Jimmy Carter was president of the United States from 1977 to 1981; he is also part of the human rights organisation The Elders. A United States Senator from 1980 to 1995, George Mitchell has had a leading role in negotiations for peace in Northern Ireland and the Middle East.

governments. After the ceasefire, the Permanent Social Forum took over the lead in setting up the conditions for the different steps of the unilateral process to continue, such as the disarmament of ETA. The Social Forum was presented in October 2016 as a coordination of social and political organisations and trade unions⁴⁴ with the aim of the ‘civil society’ pushing towards the ‘peace process’, in order to reach a ‘permanent peace based in justice’.⁴⁵ The released statement affirmed that it was necessary to continue the peace process for ETA to carry out an internationally verified disarmament ‘within a reasonable time’ even in the circumstances of ‘multiple blockages’, in reference to the lack of willingness to engage in negotiations by Spanish and French governments with ETA.⁴⁶

In this section, I look into different positions in relation to the building of the socio-political process coming after the ceasefire and the centrality of the concept of civil society. I also analyse the role that terrorism still plays in this scenario where accusations of terrorism are on-going even though ETA has disarmed and disbanded.

Baiona: One of the Steps in the Unilateral Process

Baiona. 8 April 2017. Thousands of people gather in the main square of this Basque French town. There is a main stage where international figures and representatives of Basque social organisations celebrate what is depicted as a decisive step for the ‘peace process’: the disarmament of ETA, taking place almost six years after the declaration of the permanent ceasefire. In the audience, people carry a sign with an open hand that reads ‘we are all artisans of peace’. In December 2016, five people were detained in the South of France. They were French activists of long trajectory linked with environmentalist and social organisations and trade unions that tried to act as mediators for ETA’s disarmament. They were released days later and became known

⁴⁴ Fourteen organisations conform the Permanent Social Forum: trade unions ELA, LAB, CC.OO, and Steilas; social and political organisations Paz con Dignidad, Sare, Baketik, Etxerat, Gernika Batzordea, Uharan, Bake Bidean, Egiari Zor, Ahotsak, and Antxeta Irratia, and fourteen individuals from a range of backgrounds.

⁴⁵ “El Foro Social Permanente pide un "desarme completo" de ETA "en un plazo razonable", verificado internacionalmente”, *El Diario.es*, 22 October 2016, accessed 15 July 2019, https://www.eldiario.es/politica/Foro-Social-Permanente-ETA-internacionalmente_0_572193055.html

⁴⁶ Ibid.

as *Artisans de la Paix* ('Artisans of Peace' in French). This event gave strength to the conceptualisation of a process where the hindrances set by the Spanish and French governments and their unwillingness to negotiate could be overcome by those not belonging to political institutions, *i.e.* the 'civil society'.

In the morning of 8 April 2017, 172 volunteers from social and political organisations wait for the French police to arrive to the places where ETA's armament is hidden in order to confiscate the weapons.⁴⁷ The operation is supervised and conveyed as a success by the so-called International Commission of Verification (IVC). This commission was created on 28 September 2011 to verify ETA's declaration of a definitive end of violence and composed of figures linked to previous peace processes, particularly in South Africa and Northern Ireland.⁴⁸ On the stage set in the city centre of Baiona, different figures read the statement signed by the 'Artisans of Peace' (who translated their name into English as 'peace workers'): in Basque by Estitxu Eizagirre, director of the Basque magazine *Argia*; in French by Louis Joinet, former magistrate, expert of the Human Rights Committee of the UN; in Spanish by Fenando Armendariz, member of the Permanent Social Forum, and in English by the social activist and writer Susan George. The statement described 'disarmaments' as being 'at the centre of peace processes' and raised different demands that Spanish and French governments should listen to in order to 'bring this chapter to an end'. Among those demands, it was stated the need to end the dispersion of Basque prisoners and the creation of ways for exile people to return, along with recognition and reparation to all the different victims.⁴⁹ While Spanish press reacted to the disarmament as a

⁴⁷ "El desarme se materializa bajo supervisión de los artesanos de la paz", *Naiz*, 8 April 2017, accessed 13 March, 2019, <http://www.naiz.eus/en/actualidad/noticia/20170408/los-artesanos-de-la-paz-en-los-ocho-depositos-de-armas-dados-a-conocer-hoy>

⁴⁸ More detailed explanation of the group in "International Verification Commission (Basque Country)", *Wikipedia*, accessed 15 June 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Verification_Commission_\(Basque_Country\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Verification_Commission_(Basque_Country))

A description of the process in a short BBC interview with the main mediator of IVC: "Mediator optimistic on ETA ceasefire", *BBC*, 12 April 2017, accessed 15 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-39577097/key-mediator-ram-manikkalingam-on-eta-ceasefire>

⁴⁹ "Text to Peacemaker", *Artisans de la Paix*, 8 April 2017, accessed 13 March, 2019 <http://artisansdelapaix.eus/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Text-to-PeaceWorker.pdf>

proof of ETA's defeat or a fake disarmament,⁵⁰ the main newspaper linked to the Basque independentist left celebrated the event as victory of the people, describing the 'civil society' as being in charge of promoting peace in the Basque Country.⁵¹

The event of the disarmament epitomises both the aim to validate a process constructed on the basis of international peacebuilding discourse and the contestation over this process. The effort to involve the international community in the resolution of the consequences of the armed conflict links with the use of specific descriptions of the process that use peacebuilding jargon and highlights the importance of the 'civil society' as leading the process. This discourse fits with argument raised in peacebuilding literature highlighting the importance of the societal level in peace processes (Aiken 2013; Knox and Quirk 2000; Lederach 1997; McFarlane 2011). In some approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation, there is an established differentiation between the level of political institutions acting in negotiations for political settlements and initiatives carried out at the community level, both of them being complementary (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003). In the case of the Basque Country, the narratives that have guided the process around the ceasefire and ETA's disbanding display the concept of 'civil society' as an entity that is detached from the main actors of the armed conflict, *i.e.* Spanish and French states and ETA. While these were the actors setting the pace of the events in the past, they stay apart in the creation of the path for the new future. The concept of civil society as an entity separated from governmental institutions has been, however, put into question by scholarship on the state (Alonso 1994, Aretxaga 2000b, Borneman 1998, Brown 1995, Gupta 1995, Mitchell 1991, Navaro-Yashin 2002, Trouillot 2001 –in Aretxaga, 2003: 398). Similarly to my approach to the concept of state that I develop in chapter 4, this literature stresses that the separation between civil society and the state doesn't exist in reality since the state is produced through discourses and practices at the everyday

⁵⁰ In the website *Las portadas* that collects different front pages of Spanish newspapers, we can get, at a glance, the representation of the disarmament, characterised by statements of defeat and images of the police: "Portadas de los periodicos 9 Abril 2017", *Las Portadas*, 9 April 2017, accessed 15 June 2019, <https://www.lasportadas.es/d/20170409>

⁵¹ "Jornada histórica que cambia el modo de afrontar el conflicto vasco", *Naiz*, accessed 15 June 2019, <https://media.naiz.eus/gara-20170409.pdf>

level and in different spheres of society such as public culture, rituals, or organisation of space (Aretxaga, 2003: 398).

The idea of the civil society as leading the future in the Basque Country and separated from the armed conflict has also been prevalent in the discourse performed by ETA since the announcement of the ceasefire in 2011. In the statement on being a ‘disarmed organisation’, ETA described the blockage set by the Spanish and French governments as overcome by the actions carried out by the civil society: ‘Fortunately, civil society took a step forward, and taking political and technical ownership of the disarmament process, have made a decisive contribution to unblock a situation very close to entrench’.⁵² In the final paragraph, ETA referred to ‘the Basque people’ as heirs of the armed struggle, but heirs with no arms. In this socio-political process, ETA seems to have put itself aside on the understanding that its visibility could be an obstacle for the process. In this statement, ETA also reinforced the argument that the armed violence carried out was in response to the Basque people’s will and that now ‘the people’ have to lead a process that withdraws from the armed activity.

There are different initiatives that have promoted the existence of a process after the ceasefire. The aforementioned Permanent Social Forum involves a range of social and political actors in the process. Other organisations and institutions have explicitly aimed to contribute to the socio-political process. One of these is *Emagune*, a group of women meeting for more than two years (2014-2016) to share experiences of the armed conflict and to make a contribution to the ‘new scenario opened for the Basque society after the cessation of the armed activity of ETA’.⁵³ At the institutional level, the Basque government has developed different initiatives under the programme on ‘Peace and Living Together’, launched in 2013. Finally, even those who aren’t willing to address the political conflict are aware of the need to create spaces to affirm their narratives of the past. As an example, the Spanish government has created a museum

⁵² ETA statement of the disarmament, *Naiz*, 7 April 2017, accessed 13 March, 2019, https://www.naiz.eus/media/asset_publics/resources/000/382/399/original/20170407-statement-eta.pdf

⁵³ “Emagune: Algunas conclusiones de la reflexión compartida en torno a la paz y la convivencia”, *Ehu*, 30 September 2016, accessed 7 April 2019, <https://www.ehu.eus/documents/10136/6079296/Documento+Emagune>

commemorating ETA victims in the capital of the Basque Autonomous Community, Vitoria, along with the publication of reports focusing only in the violence of ETA.

The disarmament exemplifies the contestation over the unilateral process. The organisation of victims of terrorism COVITE considered the disarmament an offense towards the victims and a strategy from ETA to whitewash its own image.⁵⁴ COVITE promoted the release of a statement in relation to the decommissioning entitled ‘For the End of ETA without Impunity’, signed by different Spanish politicians and Basque and Spanish writers and published in an Internet platform to gather anonymous signatures.⁵⁵ A similar declaration was presented during the international conference of 2011 by COVITE and other organisations (such as the Foundation of Victims of Terrorism led by Mari Mar Blanco).⁵⁶ The statement ‘Against Impunity’ opposed any peace negotiation, declaring that ‘[c]riminals must be prosecuted, judged and serve their sentences’ and that ‘[w]hat ETA deserves is not a peace conference, but a historic Nüremberg’.⁵⁷ The recognition of a peace process is seen as the equivalent to accepting the existence of a political conflict. Members of COVITE have argued against the idea of two equivalent sides, ETA and the state, committing both illegitimate and systematic violence. In an interview for a Spanish newspaper, the president of COVITE, Consuelo Ordoñez, stated:

The PNV has always been working for a peace based on the theory of conflict. They have been developing the ‘Peace and Living Together’ programme for years, which is based on the argument that organisations such as ETA and the state practiced illegitimate violence in a systematic way. That is a lie and an

⁵⁴ “Consuelo Ordoñez: “El proyecto totalitario de ETA está más vivo que nunca, ahora en las instituciones”, *Okdiario*, 8 April 2017, accessed 15 July 2019, <https://okdiario.com/espana/consuelo-ordonez-898451>

⁵⁵ “Un fin de ETA sin impunidad”, *Change.org*, 6 April 2017, accessed 15 July 2019, https://www.change.org/p/a-la-gente-de-bien-que-no-acepta-que-los-asesinos-pong-an-reglas-un-fin-de-eta-sin-impunidad?recruiter=705017657&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

⁵⁶ Mari Mar Blanco has an iconic status due to the intense publicity and reaction to her brother’s death, Miguel Ángel Blanco, whose murder by ETA and the impact on the Spanish and Basque society I am explaining in next chapter.

⁵⁷ “No a la impunidad”, *Libertad Digital*, 17 October 2011, accessed 13 March, 2019 <http://www.libertaddigital.com/nacional/2011-10-17/las-victimas-acuden-a-la-cumbre-para-recordar-que-unos-matan-y-otros-ponen-los-muertos-1276438507>

intentional fallacy in order to manipulate and create confusion using the idea that all victims are united by suffering. They want to whitewash ETA's terrorism.⁵⁸

On the other hand, there is contestation over the unilateral process coming from those who feel that they are still suffering from the violence of the political conflict. The lack of any negotiation with the government has led to a widespread criticism among the *izquierda abertzale* that the disarmament has been '*un desarme a cambio de nada*' ('a decommissioning in exchange for nothing'). The step towards disarmament (and disbanding later on) has been regarded as a loss in different senses. The initial demands set by ETA for ceasing armed activities (stated in the introduction of this thesis and that included the recognition of self-determination, amnesty for Basque prisoners and withdrawal of Spanish police forces) have not yet been fulfilled. The community created around the struggle for independence has faded along the process of ETA dissolution, something that has been difficult to manage by this section of the Basque population and that would deserve deeper analysis. The day after the decommissioning, banners and graffiti with slogans in gratitude to ETA appeared in different towns.⁵⁹ These public manifestations may be seen as a way of overcoming the perception of not being able to talk favorably about the armed struggle and the feeling of loss.

During my fieldwork, I could perceive the feeling of frustration in relation to the unilaterality of the process in statements raised by relatives and friends of the prisoners who have been put in jail in relation to the armed conflict. The belief that the situation of the prisoners is even worse than before the ceasefire is prevalent in their comments.

⁵⁸ "Consuelo Ordóñez: Destituir a Urquijo es una cesión del PP al PNV contra las víctimas", *El Mundo*, 9 January 2017, accessed 13 March, 2019, <http://www.elmundo.es/pais-vasco/2017/01/09/587281dd46163f33138b4661.html>

⁵⁹ Banners in different towns showed slogans such as 'ETA herriarekin herria zurekin mila esker' (ETA with the people, the people with ETA, thank you very much) ("Aparecen pintadas con "Eskerrik asko. Gora ETA" en el frontón de Hernani", *Deia*, 9 April 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.deia.com/2017/04/09/politica/euskadi/aparecen-pintadas-con-muchas-gracias-gora-eta-en-el-fronton-de-hernani->; "Aparecen pintadas a favor de ETA", *Noticias de Álava*, 10 April 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://m.noticiasdealava.com/2017/04/10/politica/aparecen-pintadas-a-favor-de-eta>)

The phrase 'ETA, Eskerrik asko' ('ETA, Thank you') also appeared after the ETA's statement on its disbanding on public walls and social media. ("El 93% de la militancia de ETA aprobó su disolución", *Público*, 6 May 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.publico.es/espana/93-militancia-eta-aprobo-disolucion.html>)

In the meetings of relatives of prisoners that I could attend, they complained about the isolation of the prisoners, provoked through hindrances in the visits and preventing communication among prisoners with the outside. Prisoners can be located a thousand kilometers from the Basque Country.⁶⁰ These long distances and difficult access to many of the prisons are some of the obstacles that prisoners' relatives and friends have to navigate to carry out a visit that normally lasts 40 minutes. The organisation of relatives of prisoners *Etixerat* has claimed that the penitentiary policy of the dispersion of the prisoners has caused sixteen mortal victims who died in car accidents when travelling to the prisoners' visits. *Etixerat* demands for these victims to be recognised as victims of the armed conflict.⁶¹ Organisations in support of Basque prisoners and their relatives hoped that a first step taken by the Spanish government after ETA ceasefire would be to release ill prisoners. Some relatives of prisoners described the denial to give special permissions to these prisoners as part of a 'vindictive' strategy coming from Spanish and French institutions. Frustration with this situation makes this section of society to put terms such as 'peace' into question. Julen Arzuaga, member of Basque parliament for the independentist left party *EH Bildu*, affirmed in a radio broadcast that '[w]e cannot say that in our country we are in a situation of peace since there are still people suffering from severe human rights violations'.⁶²

The unilateral process is a space of contestation and of dispute over the representation of the past and the steps needed in the present. ETA victims in organisations such as COVITE argue against peace negotiations. On the other hand, those affected by the consequences of the conflict such as the relatives of prisoners find this process frustrating for one of its main characteristics is the lack of involvement at state level in its resolution. These antagonistic views are present in different situations after the ceasefire and I analyse them in the next section.

⁶⁰ *E.g.* from the Basque Country to the prison of Puerto de Santa María in the South of Spain there is a thousand of kilometres only one way.

⁶¹ "Los familiares muertos por la dispersión deben ser considerados víctimas", *Etixerat website*, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://www.etxerat.eus/index.php/es/noticias/1402-los-familiares-muertos-por-la-dispersion-deben-ser-considerados-victimas>

⁶² "Arzuaga: No podemos decir que en nuestro país estemos en una situación de paz", *Naiz*, 31 January 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.naiz.eus/eu/mediateca/audio/arzuaga-no-podemos-decir-que-en-nuestro-pais-estemos-en-una-situacion-de-paz>

Alsasua: Terrorism after the Ceasefire

During the night of the 15th of October 2016, two members of the Civil Guard and their life partners reported to the police to have been injured in an attack in a bar in the town of Alsasua, in the Basque-speaking part of Navarre. Alsasua has been a settlement of Spanish military forces for years. This military presence has been met with campaigns for them to leave the Basque Country organised by the *izquierda abertzale*, mainly under the slogan ‘*Alde hemendik*’ (‘leave’ in Basque). While some witnesses said the injuries were the result of a fight in a bar, some media depicted the incident as an ‘ambush’ carried out by radical independentists.⁶³ Eight people were arrested. They were prosecuted under allegations of terrorism, based on the accusation made by the association of victims of terrorism COVITE. The public prosecutor of the Special Spanish Court for terrorism⁶⁴ requested more than 375 years of prison for the eight detainees.⁶⁵

A week after the detentions, the political party of the independentist left *Sortu*, along with social organisations, made a call to demonstrate against what they described as a ‘media and political farse’.⁶⁶ In the square where the demonstration took place, four members of COVITE confronted the crowd. The banners they held represent what appears as an irreconcilable antagonism. The president of COVITE, Consuelo Ordoñez, shows a banner that reads ‘*Odio fuera. Gorrotoa kampa*’, using Spanish and Basque to express the statement ‘hatred, out’,⁶⁷ reversing the ‘*Alde*

⁶³ ‘Emboscada a dos guardias civiles en Alsasua: radicales abertzales los apalean en un bar mientras estaban con sus novias’, *El Español*, 15 October 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://navarra.elespanol.com/articulo/sucesos/paliza-guardia-civil-alsasua-teniente-sargento-cuartel-grupo-abertzales-agresion/20161015105900072723.html>

⁶⁴ Explanation of this special and exceptional high court, named Audiencia Nacional can be found in “Audiencia Nacional”, *Wikipedia*, accessed 13 March 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audiencia_Nacional_\(Spain\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audiencia_Nacional_(Spain))

⁶⁵ An article in English on the case: “Basque bar fight trial tests 10 years of fragile peace in the region”, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/14/basque-country-bar-fight-high-court-ruling-terror-related?CMP=tw_t_gu

⁶⁶ Una manifestación en Alsasua niega la agresión a los guardias civiles y la califica de “montaje mediático y político”, *InfoLibre*, 22 October 2016, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.infolibre.es/noticias/politica/2016/10/22/una_manifestacion_alsasua_niega_agresion_los_guardias_civiles_califican_montaje_mediatico_politico_56603_1012.html

⁶⁷ “Consuelo Ordoñez encabeza en Alsasua un “acto de rebeldía” en medio de una protesta contra la Guardia Civil”, *Europa Press*, 22 October 2016, accessed 15 June 2019,

hemendik' campaign. For COVITE, those who 'hate' the Civil Guard (in this case referring to the detainees and their supporters) are the ones that must leave the town. The banner held by another woman next to Consuelo asks the Civil Guard to stay in Alsasua 'because we like you, we need you'.⁶⁸ In the annual conference of COVITE that took place in Madrid in 2016, I found out that she was the widow of a member of the Civil Guard and that she was born in Alsasua.

In November 2016, I attend the annual meeting of COVITE. It is the first time I meet Consuelo Ordoñez in person. She is aware of my presence, as the press officer of COVITE lets me know, but she is busy organising the event. I only know of her from the media. She co-founded COVITE in 1998. Her brother, Gregorio Ordoñez, was one of the first politicians killed by ETA. It happened in 1995 after ETA switched its violent strategy from targeting mainly police and military forces to those considered to be in collusion with the repressive methods of the Spanish government, including politicians and journalists. Consuelo has been a reference in the last years in her claims against ETA, and against Basque nationalism depicted as supporters of the 'terrorists'. She moved to Valencia (600 kilometers away from her town San Sebastian) in 2003 due to the fact that nobody wanted to work with her, as she has put it.⁶⁹ Also members of COVITE commented during the interviews on her bravery when bearing the threats from supporters of the *izquierda abertzale* while she lived in the Basque Country.

The annual meeting of COVITE is held in a co-working space hired for the occasion. Around seventy people attend the inaugural evening. Consuelo introduces the first speaker, a daughter of the main founder of the oldest association of victims of ETA Association of Victims of Terrorism (AVT, created in 1981), Ana María Vidal, whose husband was killed by ETA in 1980. In an emotive speech, the daughter of Vidal insists that the victims of ETA are 'against the tide' since they oppose that

<https://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-consuelo-ordonez-encabeza-alsasua-acto-rebeldia-medio-protesta-contra-guardia-civil-20161022142420.html>

⁶⁸ "Radicales insultan e increpan en Alsasua a cuatro víctimas de ETA", *El Mundo*, 22 October 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2016/10/22/580b50c9e5fdead1628b4689.html>

⁶⁹ "Los exiliados forzosos de ETA: "Ser víctima no prescribe", *Voz Populi*, 6 May 2018, accessed 15 June 2019, https://www.vozpopuli.com/espana/exilio-forzoso-ETA-victima-prescribe-josu-ternera-terrorismo-fin-araluce-pagazaurtundua-Casadevante-victimas_0_1132388032.html

‘terrorists with an ideology of hatred are taking control of the institutions’.⁷⁰ I could hear the same indignation in conversations with other attendants who talked about ‘terrorists’ being ‘in the government’, in reference to members of the independentist left political party holding seats in the Basque parliament.

The actions carried out by COVITE hinge on the idea that terrorism is still a threat and must be punished. COVITE pushes political and juridical actions against those they consider to be ‘terrorists’. They promote prosecution of those who commemorate prisoners being released after being held on ETA membership charges (even if prisoners denied that they were members of ETA). One of the main claims of COVITE is to establish the truth about all the crimes committed by ETA and to continue the prosecution and punishment through incarceration. In the annual event of 2016, Gaizka Fernández Soldevilla was introduced by Ordoñez as a promising young historian. He stressed that terrorism is rooted in the belief by part of the Basque society of an ‘immemorial conflict between Spaniards and Basques’. Fernández Soldevilla stated that this belief has been the ‘breeding ground’ for hatred and for the potential return of terrorism in coming generations. The use of the concept of terrorism by COVITE denies the existence of a political conflict, hence hindering any agreement for its resolution, and expresses continuity with the violent past in the understanding that terrorism is not over.

The invocation of ‘terrorism’ not only stigmatises but also criminalises those considered ‘terrorists’. Allegations of terrorism, such as in the Alsasua case, are still on-going. Some sections of Basque society put the existence of a ‘process’ into question because of the continuity of this criminalisation. For instance, during the electoral campaign for the Basque parliament in September 2016, Arnaldo Otegi, leader of the *izquierda abertzale*, was prohibited from standing as a candidate. Otegi was released from prison that same year, in March 2016. He was sentenced to 10 years accused of an attempt to reorganise the banned political party of the independentist left *Batasuna*, a crime characterised as ‘belonging to a terrorist organisation’.⁷¹

⁷⁰ This quote, the same as other quotes from events that I attended during fieldwork, comes from the notes that I took during the event.

⁷¹ Cronology of Otegi’s case: “Cronología del caso Otegi”, *El País*, 24 August 2016, accessed 13 March 2019
https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2016/08/16/actualidad/1471356361_662433.html

Spanish courts considered that the period of disqualification that the Spanish law sets for those who have been in prison that prevent them from standing as political candidates was not over.⁷²

In a more general frame, prosecution for glorification of terrorism has gone beyond the territory of the Basque Country in last years. In Spain, there have been notorious cases of people found guilty for writing tweets in relation to victims of ETA or for singing ‘laudatory wordings towards terrorist organisations’.⁷³ After the referendum in Catalonia on independence held on 1 October 2017, allegations of terrorism also put organisers of pro-independence protests in prison.⁷⁴ The Spanish Criminal Code was reformed in 1996 to introduce larger sentences to those trying to ‘subvert the constitutional order’, addressing what was considered as ‘ETA environment’, including different organisations in the Basque Country. In 2015 (four years after ETA’s permanent ceasefire) that same allegation was converted into a terrorist offence.⁷⁵

⁷² “El Supremo confirma que Otegi no podrá ser candidato a 'lehendakari' en las próximas elecciones vascas”, *El Mundo*, 14 September 2017, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2017/09/14/59ba7cfce5fdea10508b4598.html>

⁷³ On a rapper sentenced to three years and a half under those allegations: “Tres años y seis meses de cárcel para el rapero Valtonyc por injurias a la Corona”, *Huffpost*, 20 February 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.huffingtonpost.es/2018/02/20/tres-anos-y-seis-meses-de-carcel-para-el-rapero-valtonyc-por-injurias-a-la-corona_a_23366426/

Another rapper sentenced to two years of prison: “Dos años de cárcel para el rapero Pablo Hasél por enaltecer el terrorismo”, *El Mundo*, 1 April 2014, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2014/04/01/533ac8b6ca474151088b4570.html>

One year of sentence to a person who twitted jokes about Carrero Blanco, one of the victims of ETA during the dictatorship: “La Audiencia Nacional condena a Cassandra Vera, la tuitera que hizo chistes de la muerte de Carrero Blanco”, *El País*, 30 March 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/03/29/actualidad/1490788774_203770.html

There has been an international echo in relation to ‘risks of free expression’ in Spain, as expressed in this New York Times article: “Spanish Artwork Denounced Political ‘Persecution.’ It Was Ordered Removed.” *The New York Times*, 21 February 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/21/world/europe/spain-art-censorship-catalonia.html?smid=tw-share>

⁷⁴ “Detenida una integrante de los CDR, acusada de "terrorismo" y "rebelión", por las protestas en las autopistas”. *Público*, 10 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.publico.es/politica/detenida-integrante-cdr-coordinar-protestas-carreteras-y-peajes-durante-semana-santa.html>

⁷⁵ Some articles explaining the reform of the Criminal Code: “Los CDR, el terrorismo y el pacto antiyihadista de PP y PSOE”, *20 Minutos*, 11 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/3310904/0/cdr-terrorismo-fiscalia-codigo-penal/>; “Un

It was in the years of the Transition, after the death of the dictator Franco in 1975, that the image of the terrorist as the figure of stigmatisation and main enemy of Spanish democracy became prevalent (Baby, 2009: 193). During the Transition, political violence was equated with the ‘terrorism’ of ETA, even though there was a high level of political violence during the period of the Transition, coming from state institutions, armed groups and political organisations.⁷⁶ This hostile image has been used to reinforce Spanish national unity and continued as the main narrative in Spanish media and literature (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 49). Specific legislation against terrorism started in Spain in 1978. It allowed suspension of basic civil rights. It came after the general amnesty of 1977 that left future political violence open to criminal punishment (Hamilton, 2007: 140). In the Basque Country, consequences included mass arrests and torture. From 1978 to mid 1990s, over 14,000 Basques were arrested for political reasons, and about 85 percent of those detainees denounced to be subjected to torture and maltreatment of all kinds (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 205). This repression took place almost exclusively among the *izquierda abertzale*, with approximately one out of twenty people from this political movement having suffered the effects of arrest and potential torture during those years (Ibid.).

This section has addressed the role that the concept of terrorism plays in the socio-political process coming after ETA’s ceasefire. The history of the use of the concept of terrorism in Spain has created a hostile ‘other’ that includes those using armed violence, but that also expands to those seen as supporting ‘terrorist’ actions. Evilness attached to those described as ‘terrorists’ impedes any attempt to understand the causes of violence and promotes prosecution against them. The rethorical characterisation of terrorism serves as the argument to deny political negotiations to address causes and consequences of the armed conflict and keeps a section of Basque and Spanish society as enemies of democracy that must be put aside from the public realm.

cambio legislativo pactado por PP y PSOE en 2015 permite perseguir a los CDR como terrorismo sin armas”, *El Diario*, 10 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/politica/legislativo-permite-perseguir-CDR-terrorismo_0_759424951.html

⁷⁶ In her analysis of political violence during this period, historian Sophy Baby (2009) counted 3,200 violent actions and 700 people killed in a period of seven years (1975-1982). Specially hidden has been violence coming from the Spanish state during that period (Ibid.).

Reconciliation and Living Together

In the context of the Basque Country, the concept of reconciliation is seen with mistrust and disaffection by a large part of society. The Roman Catholic Church is one of the institutions that have embraced this concept in the Basque Country, drawing on its religious connotations. ‘Reconciliation’ is also used as part of the peacebuilding language that addresses the international community in order to achieve recognition of the existence of a political conflict in the Basque Country and the need to tackle the consequences of the armed violence (recognition of different victims, conditions of the Basque prisoners, *etc.*).

As I demonstrate in this section, the same actors that use the concept of reconciliation can also use the term *convivencia* in their different activities and discourses. The concept of living together gives legitimacy to discourses that address an audience within the context of the Basque Country. *Convivencia* is a term used in the everyday, holding different connotations, and broadly accepted to define the scenario that must be created in the period of the aftermath of the armed violence. Its wide acceptance also makes of this concept a battlefield. It is the point of departure for demands in relation to truth-seeking. COVITE raises demands of truth, justice and reparation using the concept of terrorism. Their voice is being echoed at the level of Spanish media and institutions. Within the social and political territory of the Basque Country, it is mainly the use of the concept *convivencia* that frames actions in relation to memory and recognition.

In this thesis, I decided to translate the concept *convivencia* as ‘living together’ even though some scholars have chosen to use the term ‘coexistence’ or ‘political coexistence’ as its translation for the analysis of the Basque context (Álvarez Berastegi, 2017; Gago, 2011; Vázquez Guevara, 2018; Whitfield, 2014; Zernova, 2019) and for other Spanish-speaking territories (such as Theidon on Peru -2013- and Colombia -2016- or Velásquez in relation to El Salvador -2015-). In the field, the slogan of DSS2016 was translated using ‘living together’: ‘*Convivir. Vivir con*’ appeared in English on their promotional sites as ‘Living Together/ Living With’. However, in the exhibition ‘The Mile of Peace’ that was part of DSS2016, some of the captions of the photographs used ‘coexistence’ as the translation. The Professor of jurisprudence at the University of the Basque Country Joxerramon Bengoetxea (2013:

56) used the translation ‘living together’ in his article on transitional justice in the Basque Country, what he described as ‘the euphemism for reconciliation’.

In peacebuilding literature, the term ‘coexistence’ is used in relation to the encounter of divided population that can happen after a violent conflict (such as in Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003; Butler, 2012; Knox and Quirk, 2000). Some authors differentiate coexistence from reconciliation considering the first a previous step to reach the latter (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003) or removing the idea of forgiveness that is attached to reconciliation from the description given to coexistence (Hamber, 2009; Theidon, 2013). However, I resolved not to use the term ‘coexistence’ since its translation into Spanish would be ‘*coexistencia*’, a word that differs in meaning from *convivencia*. ‘*Coexistencia*’ is not a term being used in the Basque post-ceasefire context. When I asked directly about this concept, it was rejected and linked with ‘tolerance’, which diverges from the characteristic ‘respect’ given to *convivencia*.

Reconciliation: Closure Warning

In the Basque Country, mistrust around the use of the concept of reconciliation hinges upon suspicion of political interests handling it in order to avoid accountability for the violence committed, using a discourse that sets a closure on the past and promote a scenario of ‘good relations’ that is perceived as imposed.

In reconciliation literature and policies, there is no agreement about the definition of this concept. The main aim of reconciliation, its timing, or the actors involved in it are all questions with no definitive answers (Aiken, 2013; Bloomfield, 2003; Doxtader, 2003; Hamber 2009; Sokolić, 2019). In the handbook ‘Reconciliation after Violent Conflict’, practitioner and analyst David Bloomfield (2003: 12) describes reconciliation as based on ‘finding a way to live alongside former enemies’ after ‘sustained and widespread violence’. Reconciliation can refer to the outcome of the transitional justice law (as the approach taken by the UN and criticised by Doxtader, 2012). However, different scholars refer to reconciliation as a process (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003; Nordquist 2007; Theidon 2006, among others). Reconciliation, understood as a process of relationship building, can happen at every stage, including during the violent conflict (Lederach, 1997). The conceptual ambiguity of reconciliation has been taken by some authors as a positive quality of the concept, since it can open a space for discussion, for debate: the idea of reconciliation may provide ‘a common

vocabulary within which citizens may contest the terms and possibilities of their political association' (Schaap, 2005:13).

In the Spanish context, the term 'reconciliation' (*reconciliación* in Spanish) was used during the Transition. This transitional period from dictatorship to parliamentary democracy was set as an example of 'reconciliation' between the 'two Spains', in reference to those who fought in support of the democratic Republic and those who supported Franco's coup d'état during the Spanish Civil War (1936 to 1939) coming together into what was depicted as a democratic, stable and united nation (Baby, 2009: 179). The discourse prevalent in relation to the period of transition was the representation of this time as stainless, pacific process, where any anger from the past had to be forgotten in order to look into a reconciled future. One of the representative songs of the Transition was titled 'Freedom without Rage'.⁷⁷ The period relied on the pervasive silence that was the main characteristic of the dictatorship, where silence became crucial for the normalisation of what Aretxaga (2005: 129) refers to as a 'state of terror'. The Transition, like the dictatorship, silenced the memory of the violence of the civil war and post-war repression, as part of the 'politics of consensus' that established an 'agreement over the past' that entailed no accountability, lack of trials and general amnesty for the crimes from the dictatorship (Cuesta, 2007: 126-7).

The image of the transitional period after the dictatorship as a peaceful process has been put into question by a broad section of the population in the Spanish state in recent years. For instance, social organisations such as the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory have been working on collecting oral and written testimonies of the victims of Franco and, from 2000 onwards, exhumations have been carried out in mass graves in order to identify their bodies. As explained in the thorough ethnographic work carried out by anthropologist Francisco Ferrándiz on the exhumations of mass graves in Spain, these activities have challenged the oblivion set by Spanish Transition on the crimes committed in the past (2006, 2013). In addition to this, the rise of nationalist and independentist feelings in some parts of Spain is breaking with the unity of the nation promoted by the Spanish Constitution enacted during the Transition. In Catalonia, demonstrations demanding a referendum on

⁷⁷ "Libertad sin ira", *Wikipedia*, accessed March 13, 2019, https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertad_sin_ira

independence led to the referendum being organised by Catalan institutions in October 2017⁷⁸ and their political leaders put in prison or in exile.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the social mobilisation that broke out in the whole Spanish territory in May 2011, mainly addressing the economic crisis, led to prominent discourses on the need to reform the Constitution. While discussions on the right of self-determination were silenced by the political period of the Transition, this issue has been placed in the public sphere in the last years.

During my fieldwork, no participant explicitly linked their rejection of the term reconciliation to the discourse raised during the Transition. However, different initiatives on memory recurrently referred to the false closure set on the violence that happened during the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship as something that must not happen again. As an example, the group of the Social Forum working on memory chose the town of Guernica to organise their first event held in the Basque Autonomous Community, in April 2017. This town was destroyed by aerial bombings during the Spanish Civil War at behest of Franco's fascist uprising, in April 1937. In the opening statement of the event, the Social Forum criticised the policies developed during the Transition as based on 'a logic of winners and losers, without recognition, justice and reparation for the victims'.⁸⁰ Reparations, justice, recognition are seen as having been avoided by the closure developed through political mechanisms such as

⁷⁸ An explanation on the reasons for the referendum: "Catalonia calls independence referendum for October", *The Guardian*, 9 June 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/09/catalonia-calls-independence-referendum-for-october-spain>

⁷⁹ After the referendum, sixteen Catalan leaders were put in prison or fled Spain in the aftermath of the independence referendum. The 12 June 2019 marked the end of the four-month trial against twelve of them. Former deputies of the Catalan parliament along with grassroots activists involved in the organisation of the independence referendum were accused of rebellion, which carries a prison sentence of up to twenty-five years. Other charges include sedition and the misuse of public funds ("Catalan leader defends push for independence on final day of trial", *The Guardian*, 12 June 2019, accessed 15 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/12/catalan-leaders-did-not-engage-in-rebellion-spanish-court-told>).

⁸⁰ "Presentación de un nuevo "Hitzorduak" sobre "Construcción de la convivencia" que se celebrará el día 29 de abril en Gernika", *Foro Soziala*, 2 April 2018, accessed 15 June 2019, <http://forosoziala.eus/es/presentacion-de-un-nuevo-hitzorduak-sobre-construccion-de-la-convivencia-que-se-celebrara-el-dia-29-de-abril-en-gernika>

the general amnesty declared in 1977, and also through a narrative based on the need of reconciliation for the opening of a 'new' and 'clean' democratic period.

The Church, once a very powerful institution both under Franco and among PNV supporters in the Basque Country, appears to take a contemporary role in a largely secular society through their recent involvement in initiatives explicitly framed around the concept of reconciliation. Former Bishop of the Basque Country José María Setién is one of the promoters of the use of the term 'reconciliation', with publications such as the book titled 'Peace, Pacification, Reconciliation' (Landa and Setién, 2012). The Diocese of Vizcaya holds a special section on 'Peace and Reconciliation', and it has recently started to organise events where people related to the Church gather to discuss elements in relation to reconciliation, drawing from passages of the Bible, and also inviting victims to give their testimony. When I described my project as focusing on the 'reconciliation process in the Basque Country' to the person in charge of this section, he answered my first email celebrating my choice as 'a topic', but also as a 'life matter'. We held a meeting at his office in Bilbao. He explained to me their programme in relation to reconciliation, highlighting the importance of focusing on forgiveness, in order to recover the humanity of 'broken humans', and the need for different people to find the common suffering, which will work 'over ideologies'.

This approach to reconciliation has similarities with the religious view spread during the South African process, which has served as a milestone in the growing use of the concept of reconciliation over the last two decades. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), encouraged a religious ideology of reconciliation, focusing on the renewal of social and personal relations, the rediscovering of a common humanity through moral reflection, contrition, and interpersonal forgiveness (Hamber, 2009; Verdeja, 2014). In the analysis of the peace process in Northern Ireland, Graham Dawson (2007) points to the TRC as having influenced the perception of a need of apology and forgiveness in the openness to others. Dawson (Ibid.: 316) states that these terms are 'problematic insofar as they constrain the process within normative and highly ideological forms, and may function to shut down acknowledgment of the inherent complexities, paradoxes and ambivalences rife within conflict resolution'.

Elements that appeared linked to reconciliation in the South African process such as forgiveness, restorative justice and healing, find resonance in interpretations on

reconciliation in the Basque context. In some of the interviews that I carried out in the Basque Country, reconciliation was described as taking an active commitment in apologising after recognising the past wrongs –being those about actions committed or the absence of taking any action. Under these requirements, reconciliation is considered as more unreachable than the goal that the concept of living together represents: this is seen as a more appropriate option to be applied to the current situation and the future. As one of the interviewees explained to me: ‘If I don’t want to forgive you, I can anyway be capable of living together with you’.

The initiative known as ‘Nanclares encounters’ has also linked reconciliation with forgiveness. It takes this name since the programme was held in the prison of Nanclares de la Oca, in the Basque Country. This initiative started in February 2011 and consisted of encounters between prisoners of ETA and victims of ETA. At that time, the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) ruled both the Basque government and the Spanish government, both governing bodies promoting these encounters. The programme ended in 2012, after the right-wing Popular Party took over the Spanish government. In my first approach to COVITE through the person in charge of media relations, after introducing my research as focusing on reconciliation she associated reconciliation with this initiative. It was the president of COVITE, Consuelo Ordoñez, who pushed for the end of this programme after meeting one of the murderers of her brother. The ETA member Valentin Lasarte asked her for forgiveness and her answer was that she would never forgive him, since the person who must decide on that forgiveness was death (in reference to her brother Gregorio Ordoñez).⁸¹ During the encounter, she asked for the identification of the murderers of those whose cases are non-resolved. The lack of answer was for her a proof of the inefficiency of the restorative encounters programme.⁸² In opposing this initiative, interviewees also connected to COVITE criticised the lack of accountability that the initiative implied

⁸¹ “Consuelo Ordoñez, tras reunirse con el etarra que asesinó a su hermano: "No puedo perdonarle”, *20 Minutos*, 23 June 2012, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1519447/0/consuelo-ordonez/etarra/asesino-de-su-hermano/>

⁸² “Un cauce de reinserción en vía muerta”, *El País*, 25 March 2015, accessed 13 March 2019, http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/03/25/actualidad/1427315571_590299.html

and their feeling of the prisoners ‘getting away with the murder’ with the only requirement on perpetrators being to recognise what they did and apologise.

Concern on the lack of accountability and dismissal of responsibilities when focusing on reconciliation appears in different approaches to the concept. The use of the term by the Church is not only seen with suspicion for its relation to forgiveness, but also because of criticism towards the role played by this institution in the violence of the armed conflict. The Basque Church has been central to the preservation of Basque nationalist culture under Franco and as major political influences on early ETA (Hamilton, 2007: 39-40). The role performed by the Church in the Basque Country has been criticised either for not taking sides or for supporting ETA. In a meeting with an ETA victim who has promoted initiatives on memory and living together, she linked her mistrust of the use of the term reconciliation with the ‘contemplative and equidistant role’ of the Church and the neglect that this institution had had in relation to ETA victims.

Healing and truth also appear in different discourses in relation to reconciliation in the Basque context. In the post-ceasefire process, truth is a crucial element that implies what experiences of the past are taken into account. The declaration released after the International Conference of Peace of 2011 urged the need to ‘promote reconciliation, recognise, compensate and assist all victims, recognise the harm that has been done and seek to heal personal and social wounds’.⁸³ In addition, in a statement released by ETA reflecting about the harm caused, on 8 April 2018, a paragraph is dedicated to the reconciliation that must come, linking it with healing and truth.

As we look to the future, one of the aims we must work towards in the Basque Country is reconciliation; and it is already happening, sincerely, on many levels, among the people. Reconciliation is necessary to bring out the truth in a

⁸³ “Declaration of the International Conference to Promote the resolution conflict in the Basque Country”, *Basque Peace Process*, 17 October 2011, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://www.basquepeaceprocess.info/2011/10/17/declaration-of-the-international-conference-to-promote-the-resolution-conflict-in-the-basque-country/>

constructive way, to cure wounds and to build guarantees for such suffering not to happen again in the future.⁸⁴

The term reconciliation is used in discourses that aim for the international community to place the Basque Country in the same category as other contexts where processes of peacebuilding have developed. In addition to this, the Church has been one of the promoters of this concept. This institution raises controversial feelings in the population of the Basque Country in relation to its ambiguous positioning in relation to the violence of the armed conflict. In the Basque Country, reconciliation is rejected when coming from those considered ‘the other’ seen as managing this concept in order to avoid responsibility for actions committed during the armed conflict. In a wider socio-political and historical context, concerns on a closure set in the past that implies avoidance of accountability connect with memories of the contested period of the Transition. During these years after Franco’s death, reconciliation was part of an imposition of oblivion about the violence that occurred during the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship.

***Berradiskidetza* or ‘Being Friends Again’**

The concept of reconciliation is also rejected in the Basque context when its objective is described as the creation of a scenario where friendly relationships are rebuilt. This idea comes from the meaning that the word ‘reconciliation’ has in Basque language. One of my interviewees, a participant of the living-together group in Sareka, works in the promotion of the Basque language. She could not find the way to say reconciliation in Basque, so she had to check the dictionary to look for the translation from the Spanish ‘*reconciliación*’. The term coming up was *adiskidetzea*, a verb formed from ‘*adiskide*’ (‘friend’). Other participants during fieldwork confirmed the meaning of reconciliation in Basque as ‘being friends’. In the aforementioned declaration on harm caused released by ETA, the Basque word that referred to reconciliation was

⁸⁴ “ETA statement to the Basque Country: Declaration on harm caused”, *Naiz*, 20 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://www.naiz.eus/eu/actualidad/noticia/20180420/eta-statement-to-the-basque-country-declaration-on-harm-caused>

berradiskidetza. This term added the prefix ‘*berri*’ (‘again’), so becoming friends again would be the meaning of it.⁸⁵

Erasing responsibilities for the violence committed in the past gets linked with the friendly meaning given to reconciliation. For some interviewees the idea of ‘becoming friends’ implies the definition of the past as a social conflict, a conflict among neighbours, avoiding putting the focus on the violent activities, either committed by ETA or from other actors in the armed conflict. During the interview carried out with a woman who used to work supporting ETA victims, she warned on the erasure of responsibilities on past actions through what she understands as a current atmosphere of joy and friendship:

I don’t have to reconcile with anyone, since I haven’t had a fight with anyone... Those sectors that advocate for reconciliation [...], the nationalist blocs that promote specific politics with very specific objectives [...], they try to show that now everything is *guachi guay* [childish expression of naïve happiness], so that everyone is equal, we have to live all together, and all for peace, and Ave Maria [...] They talk about a process of whatever, bla-bla-bla, without any assumption of responsibility.

The focus on good relations in avoidance of institutions being accountable for the violence of an armed conflict has been discussed in peacebuilding literature (such in the critique towards policies applied in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement by McVeigh and Rolston, 2007). However, some scholars when defining the concept of reconciliation insist on the need of ‘rebuilding friendship’. In his work

⁸⁵ The statement in Spanish mentions the word *reconciliación*:

‘Precisamente de cara al futuro, la *reconciliación* es una de las tareas a llevar a cabo en Euskal Herria, algo que en su medida se está produciendo con honestidad entre la ciudadanía. Es un ejercicio necesario para conocer la verdad de modo constructivo, cerrar heridas y construir garantías para que ese sufrimiento no vuelva a suceder’ (‘ETA al Pueblo Vasco: Declaración sobre el daño causado’, *Naiz*, 8 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.naiz.eus/eu/hemeroteca/gara/editions/2018-04-20/hemeroteca_articulos/eta-al-pueblo-vasco-declaracion-sobre-el-dano-causado).

The version in Basque uses the word *berradiskidetzea*:

‘Etorkizunari begira, hain zuzen ere, *berradiskidetzea* da Euskal Herrian egin beharreko lanetako bat, maila askotan zintotasunez herritarren artean jadanik egiten ari dena’ (‘ETA-k Euskal Herriari: Eragindako kalteari buruzko adierazpena’, *Naiz*, 8 April 2018, accessed 13 March 2019, https://www.naiz.eus/eu/hemeroteca/gara/editions/2018-04-20/hemeroteca_articulos/eta-k-euskal-herriari-eragindako-kalteari-buruzko-adierazpena).

on reconciliation, Nevin T. Aiken (2013: 18) affirms that it is ‘generally accepted’ that reconciliation describes ‘the act of creating or rebuilding friendship and harmony between rival sides after resolution of a conflict’. In the reconciliation process, relationships need to come from ‘hostility and resentment to friendly and harmonious relations’ (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004: 72). The emphasis of the meaning of reconciliation of good relationships becomes problematic if it leaves out the role and actions carried out by power structures and institutions in the analysis of so-called post-conflict societies. It may eliminate the responsibility of the institutions in the conflict, the analysis of historical inequalities and of structures of domination and power.

The conceptualisation of reconciliation as if there was a time of harmony in the past that needs to come back as a proof of overcoming the violence of the armed conflict (as in the idea of being friends again) has also been criticised in some scholarly literature.⁸⁶ The word reconciliation itself, with the prefix ‘re-’ indicating repetition or backward motion, conveys the message of a time to return, where population was conciled, a state of equilibrium broken by the violent conflict. As Ernesto Verdeja (2012: 169) notes in his analysis of reconciliation theories, some of these theories are ‘often indebted to theological conceptions of moral renewal and community’ and ‘rest on a narrative of return to a prelapsarian harmonious condition’. The idea of restoration of that harmony has been criticised by feminist scholars:

As feminist critiques of restorative justice in domestic law settings have addressed, the notion of ‘restoring’ that lies at the heart of this conception of justice speaks of a return to a set of relationships that for women may have been fundamentally unjust. For women in transitions an emphasis on post-conflict restoration without challenging uneven gender power relations can mean giving up the perverse equality gains of war and returning to the home and perhaps other forms of abuse. Restoration or reconciliation can also seem to be particularly ‘soft’ options in a context where impunity for crimes against women is already endemic’ (Bell and O’Rourke 2007: 41).

Reconciliation as an umbrella for the configuration of memory in the Basque Country is also rejected as based on exclusions. For instance, organised groups of

⁸⁶ I further develop this argument in chapter 4 in relation to the pacification narratives that frame the Basque post-ceasefire scenario and other so-called post-conflict contexts

women are raising how experiences of the past that do not fit within a specific idea of violence are not having a place in the creation of memory in the Basque Country. The group *Memorandra* was created in the town of Rentería, a Basque town known for being a pioneer in so-called reconciliation initiatives. I interviewed one of the participants of this group. In a meeting we held before the interview, in order for her to know more about my research, she stated that the ‘reconciliation boom’ was flawed since reconciliation was not including violence against women. The activity of *Memorandra* has consisted of collecting experiences of women’s groups in the town. They organised an exhibition and different presentations revealing the underground network of women that enabled other women to get abortions in France when it was illegal in Spain. They also exposed the sexual violence committed by military forces against women during the Transition after the dictatorship.⁸⁷ The endeavour of the group has been to give visibility to stories of women that were concealed in the history about the Transition in Spain. The participant interviewed stated the need to gather narratives that could show the participation of women in different areas so that they will not be hidden again in the history written in what she described as a new transitional period.

Reconciliation is broadly understood in the Basque context as defined in a backward motion that aims to recuperate a better past for the present (the ‘being-friends-again’ idea). The creation of a scenario of good relations finds mistrust for the disguise of power relationships that it can imply, along with avoidance of accountability. Disaffection over reconciliation also comes when is seen as reproducing a previous pattern (the Transition model) that ignored activities carried out by women and how violence affected women at different levels.

***Convivencia* and Truth-Seeking**

While the concept of reconciliation is contested and mainly rejected, *convivencia* has become the term widely used in the scenario after ETA’s ceasefire. Reconciliation is linked with a ‘post-conflict’ situation, whereas ‘living together’ has had different uses in the past, mainly in educational settings. As seen above, reconciliation is seen with

⁸⁷ A report on the violence that took place during the armed conflict in Rentería, the human rights organisation *Argituz* (2015) included this violence.

suspicion on the grounds of the political uses made of it in the current post-ceasefire context. On the contrary, *convivencia* is presented as happening among people, far from politicians. The post-ceasefire process is broadly referred to as *construcción de la convivencia*, meaning the construction of the living-together process. Initiatives on *convivencia* connect this term with a claim for ‘the truth’ about violent actions committed in the past to be revealed. In this sense, as examined in this chapter and in chapter 4, *convivencia* is part of the scenario of political dispute, where experiences of the armed conflict battle to be registered and to configure the memory of the past.

In the Spanish context, the term *convivencia* is also used in reference to other territories beyond the Basque Country. In the traditional Christmas speech of the Spanish King in 2017, the most repeated word was *convivencia*. It referred to what was depicted in his discourse as a ‘social fracture’ generated by the process of independency of Catalonia.⁸⁸ The history of the term also relates to the ‘religious tolerance’ among the Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Spain mainly in the 10th and 11th centuries. The definition of *La Convivencia* in Wikipedia refers to that part of history as ‘an academic hypothesis [...] [that] claims that in the different Moorish Iberian kingdoms, the Muslims, Christians and Jews lived in relative peace’.⁸⁹

The Basque term for the concept living together takes two different forms. *Elkar bizitza* refers to close contact among people, in the same place, as the word ‘cohabitation’ would imply. The term *bizikidetza* is understood as living in the same society, to respect each other in a wider space. The latter is the broadly used term. It used to be connected mainly to education in cultural diversity and non-discriminatory practices in relation to gender, race, and cultural difference in the Basque Country. I met with a promoter of current initiatives on *convivencia* when I was tracing the map of initiatives existing in the Basque territory at the beginning of my fieldwork. She explained to me that the concept *bizikidetza/convivencia* was employed within welfare policies. Her organisation proposed activities formulated using the concept as a masked way to start speaking about political violence. Curiously, nowadays the

⁸⁸ “El Rey exige al nuevo Govern "recuperar la convivencia" en Cataluña”, *El Mundo*, 24 December 2017, accessed 13 March 2019, <http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2017/12/24/5a3fbfe7468aeba6508b460e.html>

⁸⁹ “La Convivencia”, Wikipedia, accessed 13 March 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Convivencia

concept is mainly used to refer to political violence. As stated to me by the person involved in the programme DSS2016 that I met with, activities on *convivencia* only barely address ‘the different questions implied in living together beyond political violence’, such as ‘ethnic, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, gender social hierarchies’.

Definitions of *convivencia* in the current scenario can just refer to establishing any kind of contact with those that were categorised as ‘the other’ and did not deserve even a greeting. The greeting was revealed by participants of the research as the signifier of a change in society: while the withdrawal of the greeting is expressed as a mark of division, recovering or establishing the greeting hinted at the normalisation of living together. *Convivencia* could also refer to reestablishing contact among relatives or friends that had stopped relating with each other because of political disagreements in the past. Talking about what divided them is not seen as necessary for *convivencia* to exist. Resuming contact can entail a greeting, doing activities together or talking about issues that don’t need to be connected with experiences of the armed conflict. Talking is not necessarily seen as an essential aspect for *convivencia* to exist, while ‘respect’ was usually highlighted as fundamental.

However, initiatives promoting *convivencia* in the post-ceasefire process place at the core of their activities the act of talking, through the expression of reflections and experiences of the violent conflict. Many events are based on a logocentric performance. The activities on *convivencia* organised by the Institute for Memory of the Basque government consist mainly of people giving public testimony about the violence they suffered in the past. The first event organised in relation to memory and *convivencia* by the Permanent Social Forum, in the parliament of Navarre in November 2016, also displayed testimonies of different victims. At the living-together local forum in Sareka, participants talk about how they experienced the violence of the armed conflict and also their different standpoints in the political consideration of the conflict. A table set for monthly discussions is the format of the gatherings in the living-together local forums.

At the event organised by the Permanent Social Forum in Guernica in April 2017, living-together forums were invited to participate to explain their work. These groups were described as ‘laboratories of *convivencia*’. Trust and empathy were stressed as the requirements for participants in initiatives on *convivencia* to express themselves.

These elements are also featured in literature on reconciliation as prerequisites for the encounter among different political positions (Aiken, 2013; Beirne and Knox, 2007; Bloomfield *et al.*, 2003). Nevertheless, the creation of safe spaces where those conditions can be developed is not easy in a context where some experiences of the past cannot be easily raised, as I am going to analyse later in this thesis.

The idea of *convivencia* merges with the conceptualisation of ‘civil society’ in some accounts that describe the current socio-political process as being led not by those who were main actors in the armed conflict or instigated it, but by people at the societal level. At the public invitation to the event in Guernica, the Permanent Social Forum stressed how living-together local forums demonstrate that ‘society goes far ahead of political parties in agreements and consensus’⁹⁰. In their previous event held at the parliament of Navarre in November 2016, the panel formed by different victims was entitled ‘*La Sociedad Civil, Motor de Convivencia*’ (‘Civil Society, in the Lead of Living Together’). The testimonies shared at that panel included those raised by politicians targeted by ETA, by a person incarcerated for his political activity, by the relative of a person killed in a car accident on her way to a prison visit, among others. The discourses referred to *convivencia* more than to reconciliation. This latter term appeared at the opening presentation titled ‘Generosity, a Bridge for Reconciliation’. The presenters referred to the need for ‘recognising the suffering generated by ETA violence, by extreme right paramilitary groups, and state-sanctioned violence’ as steps towards ‘peace and reconciliation’⁹¹. At the final recommendations, made by representatives of the Social Forum, both reconciliation and living together appeared linked to internationally recognised outcomes of other peacebuilding processes such as truth and justice. The statement read: ‘We recommend that institutions promote a broad and comprehensive process on truth, justice and reconciliation. A future of

⁹⁰ “Presentación de un nuevo “Hitzorduak” sobre “Construcción de la convivencia” que se celebrará el día 29 de abril en Gernika”, *Foro Soziala*, 2 April 2018, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://forosoziala.eus/es/presentacion-de-un-nuevo-hitzorduak-sobre-construccion-de-la-convivencia-que-se-celebrara-el-dia-29-de-abril-en-gernika>

⁹¹ Stated by the president of the Navarre Parliament Ainhoa Aznarez. I took notes of the event directly on my laptop. However, some of the speeches of the event can be found in a video created by the Social Forum and presented at the event in Guernica: “GUREAN GAUR: Indarkeriaren biktima ezberdinek Nafarroako Parlamentuan emandako testigantzak”, *Youtube*, 22 May 2017, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvhoGkGG38U&feature=youtu.be>

living together must be built on the respect of fundamental human rights'.⁹² Reconciliation serves in this case as a way to reach the international discourse, while *convivencia* is being used to open the expression of different experiences of violence that seek to be recognised in the creation of memory in the Basque Country.

The need to write the history from below, being able to express diverse experiences and political options, and truth-seeking is connected with the construction of a living-together society. In some accounts, truth is seen as a prerequisite for living together. At the event organised by the Social Forum at the parliament of Navarre, the relative of the person killed in a car accident on the way to prison stated her reluctance to believing that *convivencia* could happen since, she affirmed, 'so much truth is missing'.⁹³ In order to fix this, she pointed to the need for society to be able to listen to all the different accounts of the past. In this vein, work done towards *convivencia* is seen as revealing a comprehensive truth, with the inclusion of those events of the past that have not been institutionally recognised.

Revealing the truth was one of the reasons stated by some interviewees for being involved in initiatives on *convivencia* or in groups in support of victims. A participant in the Sareka local forum affirmed during the interview that her aim was to cast light on experiences of the past that she considered concealed. When asked why she thought it was important to be part of this group, she replied:

Well, it was a way to try to do... to do something. I think it's very important to be capable of living together after all the difficult situations that have happened. And I want some things to come to light. I want to try that all... that the truth –I am not going to say the absolute truth, I'm not going to be demagogic-, one truth, the most complete truth possible, comes to light. Because in some way, many times we have seen only one of the sides. The media have always gone on and on about the same thing. The other things aren't visible. And now they are being

⁹² El Parlamento de Navarra acoge el pleno social 'Hitzorduak: Construyendo la convivencia en Navarra', *Pamplona Actual*, 5 November 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://pamplonaactual.com/parlamento-navarra-acoge-pleno-social-hitzorduak-construyendo-la-convivencia-navarra/>

⁹³ Her complete testimony can be found on this video: "Testimonio víctima de la dispersión", *Youtube*, 6 November 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=RDFkN2Ffbmk

revealed: the police brutality, or the brutality that once came with Francoism, or the persecution that some people say that is still on-going...

Initiatives on *convivencia* such as Sareka local forum or the Permanent Social Forum link their work to internationally recognised outputs of peacebuilding processes, such as justice, truth or reparations. The Sareka local forum released the statement titled ‘An Ethical Accord for Living Together’, in January 2018, with the subheading ‘Truth, Justice, Recognition and Reparation for All the Victims with no Discrimination’.⁹⁴ The participants of the group distributed this declaration on their social media and among different associations in Sareka asking all those committed with the ‘ethical accord’ to sign it.

In the Basque scenario, truth and no-closure seem to be the main objectives in the understanding of *convivencia* as a process that entails the recognition of experiences of violence. Truth has been linked to reconciliation in different peacebuilding processes, from South Africa to Peru. Desmond Tutu, in his prologue to the handbook on reconciliation edited by Bloomfield *et al.* (2003) highlights that ‘truth was at the heart of reconciliation: the need to find out the truth about the horrors of the past, the better to ensure that they never happen again’. In this sense, although reconciliation is not a term widely accepted in the context of the Basque Country, elements deemed in the literature as ingredients of a process of reconciliation (such as trust and empathy) or those described as foundations ‘of the various outcomes of the reconciliation process’ (Bloomfield, 2003: 24, referring to ‘healing, truth-seeking, justice and reparation’) are being implied in this context when using the term *convivencia*. Therefore, the rejection of the use of reconciliation by some actors of this process does not entail dismissing the main features connected to this concept in peacebuilding literature.

In the Basque context, *convivencia* replaces the term reconciliation that is seen with suspicion and distrust for its connotations in relation to a religious stance, to political interests and for trying to impose relations of friendship that conceal injustices of the past and present. *Convivencia* is shown as a more feasible way for a rapprochement among the population in the Basque Country, in different grades of

⁹⁴ This document was distributed among the participants of the group and neighbours mainly through social media. I’m not giving the exact reference to it for confidentiality reasons.

closeness and intimacy. *Convivencia* is usually presented as belonging to the society and not to politicians, which seems to add more legitimacy to those working on it. This legitimacy turns the concept of *convivencia* into the site to search for the ‘truth’, *i.e.* to look for the inscription of experiences of violence in the narratives of the past.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented the context where this study develops. In this context, different experiences and understandings of the past and violence are framing a contested process coming after ETA’s ceasefire. Contestation cannot be ignored when studying transitional processes. Practices and discourses trying to conceal this contestation must be revealed in the analysis, as I will do later in this thesis.

Terms broadly used in the academic literature such as ‘post-conflict’ or ‘reconciliation’ are challenged when brought to the Basque post-ceasefire context. Exploring uses and rejections, meanings and different understandings of those terms and others used in this context, such as *convivencia*, enables this research to tackle the complexity of a socio-political process featured by contestation. Contestation over language demands recognition at different levels: legislative, juridical, political and social levels. The unwillingness of the Spanish government to address the political conflict and the consequences of the violent conflict entails a situation of frustration for a section of the Basque population. Some of the actors of the post-ceasefire process have intended to put pressure on the Spanish government raising their demands internationally and adopting peacebuilding jargon. The demands rose connect with problematic facts such as the Basque prisoners conditions or the lack of recognition of some victims of the armed conflict, such as victims of state-sanctioned violence. These actors present the post-ceasefire process as led by civil society and rely on international male figures to sanction the steps taken in this unilateral process.

Mistrust towards the concept of reconciliation in the Basque Country has been shown as linked to a particular socio-historical context, marked by the memories of the dictatorship and the Transition. Rejection of the idea of reconciliation connects with an awareness of the risk of manipulation of the narratives in relation to the past with an intention to set a closure on the violence committed, and hence to avoid pursuing accountability, as it happened during the Spanish Transition in relation to the

violence of the Civil War and the dictatorship. When using the concept of *convivencia*, different actors in the post-ceasefire process aim to prevent experiences of violence from being erased from the narratives of the past.

The use of the concepts of *convivencia* and reconciliation in the Basque context is part of the political dispute to find legitimacy for competing conceptions of the past (antagonistically described as terrorism or as a political conflict) that has important implications for the future, in terms of reparations, justice and the creation of memory. This dispute has been called in this context as ‘the battle over the narrative’ (as I further explore in chapter 4), which finds similarities with the ‘war over memory’ that Dawson (2007) highlights in the Northern Irish process after the peace agreements.

In the Basque context, the expression of different experiences is affected by the fact that the concept of terrorism not only plays a role in the recognition of the past, but it is still prevalent in the Spanish and Basque society. Despite the fact of ETA ceasefire and their later disbandment terrorism defines what violence is and who is the violent perpetrator that must be prosecuted or excluded. The concept of terrorism still legitimises repressive methods against the Basque population. Moreover, it impedes that one of the main actors in the armed conflict, the Spanish government, engages in any kind of negotiations, assumes responsibility for the violence committed, or takes steps to tackle the causes and consequences of the conflict. The conceptualisation of terrorism implies per se the negation of a political conflict and the blockage of any process towards its transformation.

After presenting the current scenario of the post-ceasefire process and the contrasting understandings and demands of the different actors that are part of it, the next chapter examines how current antagonisms are informed by the construction of an ‘otherness’ in relation to the armed conflict and the repercussions of the creation and maintenance of the figure of ‘the other’ in the current socio-political process.

3 - TROUBLING DICHOTOMIES: DIVISIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ‘THE OTHER’

The disarmament should allow for further decisive steps towards comprehensive reconciliation. It allows us to move forward on other core issues: victims, prisoners... Altogether we need to do our part in this collective undertaking: a just, global, permanent peace, respectful of the past and oriented towards the future. While the past created divisions, the future must bring about unity (*Artisans de la Paix*, ‘Text to Peacemaker’, 8 April 2016).

This statement was part of the declaration⁹⁵ given by the ‘artisans of peace’ the day of ETA’s disarmament, on 8 April 2016. In the context of the Basque Country, discourses on peacebuilding have hinged upon the representation of divisions in the past and unity for the future: divisions must be overcome for the sake of good *convivencia*. However, the definition of a ‘divided society’ is taken for granted. In this chapter, I explore narratives on socio-political division in the Basque Country. After addressing in chapter 2 the context where this thesis develops, stressing the actual contestation over the post-ceasefire process and confronted understandings over the armed conflict, in this chapter I delve into how confrontational standpoints have been constructed.

Signs of division come along with understandings of the armed conflict and of violence. ‘The other’⁹⁶ is configured and affirmed based on a dualistic approach that places the main responsibility of the cause of the violence of the past either on ETA or on the state. ‘The other’ is the one defined as violent or as complicit in that violence.

⁹⁵ “Text to Peacemaker”, *Artisans de la Paix*, accessed March 13, 2019 <http://artisansdelapaix.eus/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Text-to-PeaceWorker.pdf>

⁹⁶ I am using inverted commas when referring to the concept of ‘the other’ instead of using a capital letter (‘the Other’) or no punctuation signs (the other). The capital letter would have connotations of universality, whereas the conceptualisation of ‘the other’ takes place in a specific time and place. The conception of ‘the other’ is variable, not fixed as an institutionalised term written in capital letters would convey. ‘The other’ is defined through boundaries set by a dichotomous approach to relationships. Inverted commas materialise that boundary, that division. Inverted commas make ‘the other’ an abstraction. As Cavarero (2014: 90) puts it, ‘these others never have the distinct and unrepeatable face of each human’. Inverted commas would disappear when it comes to the realisation of ‘the ontological status of a who, which is always relational and contextual, for whom the other is necessary’ (Ibid.). In contrast with ‘the other’ which goes against uniqueness, the conception of an other or the other—with no signs of separation—would imply relationality, and interdependency, representing ‘the inassimilable, the insubstitutable, the unrepeatable’ (Ibid.).

There are different dimensions of social division in Basque society, such as class, territorial origin and gender. My aim is to investigate how the divisions that connect with different understandings of the armed conflict are being narrated from the time of the post-ceasefire process, how ‘the other’ has been configured and perpetuated, how politics of gender influence the configuration of ‘the other’ and how this ‘otherness’ impedes listening to the experiences of those who are not ‘us’. In the Basque context, experiences of violence can be close in proximity but closed in separate compartments, due to the role played by ‘otherness’.

Polarisation in the Basque Country has been highlighted by different scholars as a basic component of daily life (Aretxaga, 2005; Vazquez, 2010; Zulaika, 1988). The ideas of polarisation, social fracture and division are controversial. Some standpoints argue that focusing on the existence of a social conflict disguises the main origin of the violence suffered during the armed conflict, whether the violence is that of ETA or the state. However, different narratives emphasise divisions and cleavages as being of significance in Basque society, affecting relationships among neighbours, workmates, friends, and families. Political divisions go back to identities connected with the Spanish civil war and Franco’s regime. The pre-existence of a fractured body politic was the condition for new, entrenched divisions to emerge after the death of the dictator in 1975. Divisions are multiple; there is not a single one. They work at the level of cultural identity and feelings of belonging to a specific political territory (Basque or Spanish), linguistic identity (using and promoting the Basque language or not using it or even loathing it), political-ideological positions (left wing or right wing) or in relation to the violence of ETA (rejection or acceptance). These divisions have been neither static nor rigid, but fluid. As in other armed conflicts, in analysing and tackling social divisions, there is the risk of falling into the rhetoric of the existence of two homogenous communities, which denies the complexity of the society and the complexity of the conflict.

In this chapter, dichotomies get troubled, problematised in the analysis through the narratives of the field. Dichotomies are troubling, on the other hand, because they put people in situations that are uneasy, uncomfortable, and violent. Dichotomies fertilise the soil with potential violence. In peacebuilding literature, dichotomies are widely addressed. Lederach (2005: 35) states that ‘cycles of violence are often driven by tenacious requirements to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that

attempt to both describe and contain social reality in artificial ways'. The dichotomy 'us' versus 'them' has been said to be 'characteristic of situations of extreme conflict and war', as Yuval-Davis (2010: 276) points out. The creation of 'the other' is a condition of that dichotomy and of violence. In his definition of violence, the anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo (2016: 37) describes this concept as 'the multiple ways in which the other is denied their status as another, a neighbour, radicalising their perceived "otherness", turning them into an enemy, into a target of control, surveillance and even annihilation or physical disappearance'. The configuration of 'the other' establishes a division between the good and the evil.

Dichotomies have been also tackled in feminist literature. Gender organises social life in hierarchical, mutually exclusive categories, which are in a relationship of sub/super-ordination to one another (Confortini, 2006). Categories associated with femininity are valued less than the ones associated with masculinity. Ecofeminist theories point out the links between women, animals, nature and those 'feminised' others, all considered as inferior in order to legitimate their subordination under a militarised male-dominant order (Gaard, 2011). Hierarchical dichotomies establish a way to see the world, a 'gender symbolism' (Harding, 1986) that upholds logics of domination, oppression and hence violence. The configuration of 'the other' as inferior and as a threat creates and reproduces the conditions for violence. Catia Confortini and Abigail Ruane (2014: 74) refer to peacebuilding scholars and postcolonial writers⁹⁷ that "concur that some of the roots of violent interactions among humans are to be found in social, political and psychological (gendered) processes of "othering"". In the context of the Basque Country, the politics of gender establish the ground of creating 'the other' and make it difficult to challenge a dichotomised view of society.

After exploring in the previous chapter the contestation going on in the Basque Country in the aftermath of the ceasefire, I am going to analyse here how those antagonist discourses were built. Divisions have been fueled by the main actors in the armed conflict (ETA and mainly the Spanish state), who have created certain dynamics that affect the population, creating fractures among different sensibilities

⁹⁷ Confortini and Ruane (2014: 74) quote the following authors: Anderson, 2006; Asad, 2007; Boulding, 1959; Confortini, 2006, 2011; de Beauvoir, 1989; Doty, 1996; Fanon, 2005/1961, 1967; Galtung, 2002; Muppidi, 2009; Said, 1979; Todorov, 1984.

with different experiences of the violence of the conflict. I analyse the uses of silence and fear as essential elements in the creation of 'the other'. Moreover, the voice of women who did not want to align with any of the 'sides', the diversity of divisions and the non-homogeneity of each of those 'sides' are also explored in this chapter.

Othering the Neighbour

The decade of the 1990s marks the time of increasing social cleavages in Basque society. The armed parties involved in the violent conflict, mainly ETA and successive Spanish governments, expanded their targets to a broader population. The protest against the different violence committed by those actors in the armed conflict intensified, in a dichotomous understanding of violence that expanded the image of 'the other'. In a territory where those assimilated with the figure of the 'terrorist' or with that of the 'state' can live in the same building, where the murdered and the murderers can be neighbours in the same town, entanglement creates a particular situation of intimacy of violence where 'the other' is part of the everyday.

Intimacy of Violence: the Uncle and the Nephew

Around three years before, they started to come home. With the first demonstration, we got scared to death. They started to throw stones at the windows. We were in the kitchen and my husband went to the window. They kept throwing stones and did not let him talk or anything. It was the first time. From then on, every demonstration ended up at the bottom of our house. Other times they came in a group to leave banners, to do whatever. They sent us packages at home, or empty bottles with messages about the prisoners.

Juana explained to me the situation of constant harassment during three years before the killing of her husband in the late 1990s. Eusebio was a councillor of a Spanish political party in a Basque town. Their family place became a target for accusations against him. Insults such as *carcelero* ('prison guard' in Spanish) were shouted at the demonstrations that ended under their window or written on the banners and graffiti found around the town. Because he belonged to a political party that enacted penitentiary policies, accusations against Eusebio pointed at his complicity in the violence of the state. I asked Juana if those people were from the same town: 'Yes, of

course’, she answered, ‘People that you have known all your life were there, in the demonstrations’. Neighbours in the same building stopped greeting Eusebio and Juana in a sign of protest for his decision to stay in the political party. Even one of their daughters stopped talking to her father, since, as Juana explained, she was overwhelmed by the constant persecution against him.

Attacks on a wider population in the armed conflict started in the 1990s after the detention of the full leadership of ETA in the French town of Bidart in 1992. The change in the strategy of ETA broadened the conflict from targeting military Spanish forces to other structures (*e.g.* political parties, media) deemed as acting repressively against the Basque people. Parallel to this strategy, a new factor appeared in the conflict: *kale borroka* (‘street fighting’), which consisted of rioting against the Basque police, burning public property, attacks on public buildings and ATM machines, as well as intimidation against opposing parties (Aretxaga, 2005: 139-140). That strategy was answered by Spanish and Basque institutions with a wider prosecution of all those considered part of the *izquierda abertzale*. Groups of young people involved in *kale borroka* were labeled as the ‘Y groups’ of ETA by the Basque government, with the Basque police acting against them along with the Spanish judiciary. Sentences for *kale borroka* are still being served in Spanish and French prisons in the same conditions suffered by those that have belonged to ETA. In an arranged conversation with the mother of a young person serving a sentence of fifty-six years for *kale borroka*, she described his constant transfer from one jail to another, always under the special condition known by the acronym FIES (*Fichero de Internos de Especial Seguimiento* - ‘File of Inmates subject to Special Monitoring’) that entails being locked in a cell twenty hours a day.

In the change of strategy carried out by ETA, Eusebio was considered complicit in violence even if he was not a torturer or directly responsible for the penitentiary policies. During our encounter, Juana tried to remove the image of ‘the other’, that of an ‘enemy’ of the Basques, from her husband. She highlighted that he participated in the *Korrika* (an activity in promotion of the Basque language), that he was affiliated to a nationalist union, and that he even used to go to nationalist bars to grab a drink. A person who became an ETA member at the time of the murder affirmed to me that killings didn’t depend on who the person was, but what they represented in their belonging to a political structure and the feasibility of the killing. In his words, targets

were often chosen by ‘operative motifs’, *i.e.* being relatively easy to kill. In the speech of this former ETA member, these targets belonged to political structures that sustain the repression against the Basque people and their aim for self-determination, and that are also part of a wider repressive capitalist order where ‘these structures kill people everyday in the world, killed by hunger, killed due to freezing cold, killed by the poverty they create’.

Eusebio was killed by two fellow townspeople. Iker, Eusebio’s favourite nephew, knew his uncle’s killers from school. Later that year, the murderers were killed.⁹⁸ The funerals were so close in time that Juana still remembers how the picture of Eusebio and the picture of ETA members were close to each other at the place where public commemorations are held in the town. Iker attended the homage to the ETA members who killed his uncle. Juana got a video recording of him at the funeral ‘with his fist like this’ -she explains, lifting her arm up. I asked whether Iker attended Eusebio’s funeral: ‘Of course he did. It made a big impression on him. But as the others were friends...’ Iker doesn’t live in the Basque Country anymore. Juana does live in the same town, where she has ‘my friends, my people’, even though she frequently crosses paths with those that were harassing her and her family.

Attachment to the town where people and their family grow up is significant in the Basque Country, which creates the entanglement that is a particularity of the Basque conflict. Different interviewees pointed to the fact that in a town where someone had been killed, a resident may be suspected of having given information about that person to ETA, and how that was ‘very tough’. A young man who grew up in a small town described to me how the violence of different actors has been part of his life: he witnessed ETA shoot a Basque policeman, his uncle’s brother-in-law was killed by GAL, and a friend of his mother was an ETA member. Similarly, a woman living in a town in the province of Guipúzcoa recalled when her father, who was affiliated with the Basque conservative party PNV but used to hide people in ETA on the run, received a threat by ETA since he was compelled to pay the ‘revolutionary tax’ as he had a small business. Then, the family spoke with her cousin, who collaborated with ETA, and he never received any other threat. In another town in this

⁹⁸ I am not explaining how they were killed, since specific data like this would risk the anonymity of the people that I am mentioning in this story.

same province, when I met with one of the interviewees, she pointed to a balcony that displayed the banner demanding an end to the dispersion of Basque prisoners, explaining that the mother of an ETA leader lived there. She then mentioned that the sister of a journalist killed by ETA, Renata, lived just next door, and that Renata was probably the teacher of the current ETA leader when the latter was a child. She added that ‘these things of being all so close to each other seem far fetched when they are told now, they are difficult to believe’.⁹⁹

Violence swamped everyday life in the Basque Country, especially during the 1990s and 2000s. This is the intimacy of violence that Aretxaga (2005) refers to in her analyses of the peculiarity of the context of violence in the Basque Country where a neighbour can be the ‘terrorist’. ‘It was tough¹⁰⁰ when the councillors started to be the targets, since they were our neighbours’, I was told by a person who belonged to one of the organisations of the *izquierda abertzale*. During those years, the violence against the Spanish state pervaded households. So did the institutional repression of successive Spanish governments and also Basque governments, with hundreds of detentions of mainly young people, many of them reporting torture before being put in prison. ‘Everyone knows someone who is in prison’ is a common statement heard in the Basque Country. ‘Otherness’ had to be created in order to transform the neighbour into a stranger who is deemed as deserving of violence being committed against them.

When your Neighbour Calls you a Murderer: The ‘Two-Banners’ Protest

I think that, in general, we have all been very divided. Because *Euskal Herria* [the Basque Country] is very small. There have been very hard times. Not only ETA

⁹⁹ This entanglement of violence and vicinity has been thoroughly examined by Joseba Zulaika (1995, 1999, 2005) drawing on the ethnography carried out in his natal village of Itziar in the 1970s.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Tough’ here has a double sense: both emotionally difficult for the speaker and risky because it made them regular targets of rage from their non-*abertzale* neighbours. In this sense, ‘tough’ has a tone of victimhood to it, but also perhaps a hint of martyrdom: this form of close-to-home violence frequently had to be silently and stoically accepted by ETA’s supporters in a show of unity, even if the speaker didn’t always agree with it ethically or strategically.

carrying out actions against very specific people ... But then society that begins to take part, and we are all part of society. When you go into the street and it is no longer the hooded *ertzaina* [Basque policeman] who is hitting you, but you are facing ... Your neighbour is the one who is calling you a murderer. You don't see the hooded *ertzaina* every day, but you see your neighbour, and you end up not greeting each other in the building. At the time of the *lazo azul* [blue ribbon], just because of the fact that some people wore the blue ribbon and the others did not wear the blue ribbon, we no longer greeted each other in the street, or in the *ikastolas* [Basque schools] or ... It was when the whole society was more involved. It was when we protested, some face-to-face with the others! Not in Bilbao, where you go and do not know anyone, but it happens in your town. In front of you is that person who you went to the school with.

Nerea, a relative of a person killed by GAL, and an active member of the *izquierda abertzale*, described during the interview how painful it was that it was not only the police who were against the independentist movement, but a neighbour or a former classmate 'calling you murderer'. It happened during the 1990s and it is epitomised in the so-called two-banners protest, a synecdoche of social and political division through conversations and interviews in the field.

The organisation *Gesto por la Paz* ('A Gesture for Peace' in Spanish) started to call for silent protests against the violence of ETA in the late 1980s, reaching its peak of popularity between 1993 and 1997. They also promoted wearing a blue ribbon, a small piece of cloth in the shape of an 'A', for *Askatasuna* ('Freedom' in Basque). The *lazo azul* (blue ribbon) represented a demand to free people kidnapped by ETA, a symbol against ETA (Murua, 2014: 379) At the protests organised by *Gesto por la Paz*, the independentist left movement responded with another protest under the slogan '*Euskal Herria Askatu*' ('Free Basque Country', in Basque). In the squares of many towns in the Basque Country, two groups of people, of neighbours, confronted each other behind two different banners that indicated different violence: the violence of ETA *vs.* the violence of the state. That confrontation expanded to the everyday.

Streets became the stage for a battle over visibility that highlighted who was to be blamed for the violence going on in the Basque Country. The 'two banners' was a protest that represented that battle. In some interviews, it was stated how the media have mainly ignored any violence exerted by the Spanish state, while the only violence

depicted has been that committed by ETA. However, in the streets, the representation of violence had taken another dimension, with the independentist left having important visibility in that public arena of streets, festivals and spaces of encounter. In his analysis of the process that led to ETA's ceasefire, the journalist Imanol Murua states that *Gesto por la Paz* created a situation where '[t]he street protests were no longer a quasi-monopoly of the MLNV [independentist left movement]' (Murua, 2014: 116). A member of an organisation of relatives of prisoners told me that they were asked to take part in the two-banners protest in order to protest against the injustice committed towards the prisoners, and because 'the street was ours'.

The two banners represented a dichotomous view of the society, as divided between those deemed ETA supporters and those seen as complicit in the violence of the state –these latter therefore considered right-wing or 'Spanish'. Even though there was a variety of political standpoints and sensibilities on each of the 'sides', they were homogenised in the confrontation.

During the protests, violence was denounced and also suffered. In her book about the history of *Gesto por la Paz*, one of its members, Gómez Moral, explains how the people behind the banner of the independentist left tried to silence those protesting against ETA through physical and verbal aggression: 'The thing that most defined those days were the frequent confrontations. Those of us who regularly went to those demos will forever vividly remember chants like "the murderers wear blue ribbons" and the well-known "kill them, ETA"' (Gómez Moral, 2013: 100). The protest organised against *Gesto por la Paz* suffered from police attacks, since it was prohibited. Riots, detentions and consequent fines were part of the weekly consequences of being in the square protesting behind the banner '*Euskal Herria Askatu*'.

Confrontation permeated the everyday. It created the 'otherness' in the neighbour. On some occasions relationships could be maintained. In Juana's account, her husband Eusebio was on the side of *Gesto por la Paz* while their nephew was 'on the opposite one'. They continued going together to football matches. However, Sonia, a relative of a prisoner who joined the weekly protests, explained how that confrontation affected relationships. She stated that, in small towns, constantly crossing paths with those that were in the protest was 'tough'. In addition to this, Sonia described how relationships at the workplace were affected. She used to have a good relationship with

a colleague who voted for the Popular Party. They used to ‘have discussions about many different things, knowing where each of us stood’. When the two-banners protest started, Sonia sadly recalled that ‘Pili and Rosa stopped talking with me.’

The objective of both *Gesto por la Paz* and also the independentist left movement was to break the silence about violence, through different methods that were felt by the other ‘side’ as violent and producing silence. Pointing fingers at those who were perceived as perpetrating violence took the form of a confrontation in the streets that created polarisation, expanding the ‘otherness’ to all those seen as complicit in sustaining violence. ‘Otherness’ got spread and closed communication channels among the Basque population.

Miguel Angel Blanco and ‘Everything is ETA’

My sister in law was coming back from visiting my brother [in jail]. I heard on the radio that he [Blanco] had been killed. I started to cry. I started to cry... and said ‘oh no’. What happens is that..., at least me personally, we have cried over our deaths and over theirs. I have always felt strongly about death and that. I have suffered a lot.

The killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco by ETA in July of 1997 is another milestone in terms of the deepening social fracture in the Basque Country. Even if those who were part of organisations belonging to the *izquierda abertzale* movement cried over the killings committed by ETA, their tears could not be seen because they were concealed under a homogenising image of ‘the other’ as a terrorist. In the interview with the relative of a prisoner quoted above, she states that the killing of Blanco entailed a very difficult situation since ‘all of us who were on “the other side” [referring to the banner of *Euskal Herria Askatu*] were considered as if we were all the ones who had killed Miguel Ángel Blanco’. This event weakened social support for ETA, hit its social organisations, turned the mobilisations against violence into an attack against Basque nationalism in general, and was taken by the Spanish executive and judiciary as an excuse to worsen the repression against a wider sector of the population in the Basque Country.

On 10 July 1997, ETA kidnapped Miguel Ángel Blanco, a politician for the Popular Party, in the Basque town of Ermua. Ten days before, the Spanish Civil Guard

had ended the longest kidnapping in ETA's history. The prison guard Jose Antonio Ortega Lara had been liberated after 532 days of captivity and the images of his skeletal figure were broadcast widely. In the case of Blanco, ETA threatened to assassinate him unless the Spanish government started to transfer all Basque prisoners to prisons in the Basque Country within forty-eight hours. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered in demonstrations throughout Spain, demanding his release. After the deadline expired, Blanco was shot dead. In the Basque Country, demonstrations were overwhelming. In an interview, a member of COVITE who used to be part of *Gesto por la Paz* remembered that day as a turning point in the rejection of ETA's violence, since there were 'massive spontaneous demonstrations taking the streets'. Those demonstrations expressed anger against the whole independentist left movement and led to attempts to attack their social centres (*herriko taberna*) in different towns. In an informal conversation, Aurora described it as one of the most difficult times in her activism when she went to protect the *herriko*, and saw from that place that her mother was part of the demonstration. On the other hand, some people who identified with the *izquierda abertzale* went to demonstrations against what ETA was doing. Azucena was one of them and she remembered during the interview how uneasy that was since 'demonstrations were full of Spanish flags'.

ETA's violence was rejected by its supporters when they felt that the threshold of acceptability had been exceeded, as investigated by Imanol Murua (2017). This author states as milestones the increased number of non-selected victims in the 1980s, 'the qualitative leap into killing political representatives' in the 1990s, and specific actions considered cruel such as the kidnapping of Ortega Lara and the killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco (Murua, 2017: 99). In some of my interviews with people close to the independentist left at that time, the killing of Blanco is narrated with the incredulity that ETA could carry out such an act. Azucena explained how this murder broke with any further understanding of actions carried out by ETA.

Blanco... nobody thought that... I remember my mum, 'nah, but they are not going to kill him'. When I went to hers and she tells me that they killed him, *oh*, I mean it was like *oh*. It was terrible [...] In those years, I think that we were all seeing that they were going down a path... that you do not control, or that you don't understand.

In an interview with Fernanda, who has been part of social movements in the Basque Country, she described the killing of Blanco as a turning point in being able to speak about the armed violence as a struggle that could be considered legitimate, stating the lack of social support for ETA that this murder represented.

Fernanda: I think that eventually the armed struggle stopped making sense because it stopped having popular support. Then if you don't have the support, in the end you are alone.

Andrea: When do you feel that the support ended?

F: I think that from the time of Miguel Ángel Blanco They went all in and it had tremendous repercussions. At the level of people who suffered it, but also at the social level. There is a social fracture there.

A: Social fracture in what sense?

F: You felt it in the streets. There was a confrontation between the two sides. Before that... I think it also has to do with fear. Before that, you could openly say that you were in favour of the armed struggle. From then on... you could not defend that position, even if it were legitimate. Because people did not understand or it was not easy to explain the desire for independence: that for an independent country they were killing people that did not agree with you. I believe that there was a turning point there.

The killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco also affected social and political organisations. Azucena has been involved in different feminist organisations. In the interview, she recalled divisions that emerged at that time, putting as an example a feminist group composed of women close to different political parties that used to meet. The killing of Miguel Ángel Blanco entailed a split in the group that could not be fixed. *Gesto por la Paz* also suffered from the situation that surrounded the response against the killing of Blanco. In his analysis of this organisation, Egoitz Gago explains how the right-wing Popular Party 'used the situation to take over the social response and became the major protagonist, pushing aside *Gesto por la Paz*' (Gago, 2011: 120). Some members left *Gesto* and joined other organisations closer to Spanish nationalist discourses. In an arranged conversation with a woman that remained in *Gesto* referred to that time as when Basque nationalism became contaminated:

Since 1997, the time of Miguel Ángel Blanco, the mobilisations for peace were exploited. It was the time when the organisations *Foro de Ermua* or *Basta Ya*

appeared. Achieving peace became linked to anti-[Basque]nationalist politics. The people who identified themselves with peace connected peace with the end of nationalist domination, but nationalism does not equate to supporting violence.

New organisations such as *¡Basta Ya!* ('Enough already!' in Spanish) or *Foro de Ermua* ('Ermua forum', in reference to the home town of Blanco) were created in defence of 'Spanish constitutionalism', rejecting Basque nationalism and defending the rights of the victims of terrorism. In those years, ETA victims were given more voice, becoming a lobby (Whitfield, 2014: 84), and giving legitimation to new legislation and imprisonment of members of social and political organisations in the Basque Country. In 1999, the Spanish Parliament approved the first law on solidarity with the victims of terrorism. This law 32/1999 on victims of terrorism 'enthroned and placed the victims in the collective imagination to the point that they have probably been and continue to be "the victim" par excellence' (Landa, 2018: 20). That happened in that same period of creating the exceptional legal strategy against ETA -through legislation such as LO 6/2002 of political parties,¹⁰¹ along with a 'battery of substantive, procedural and penitentiary criminal-law reforms' (Landa, 2018: 25).

The prominence of ETA victims reinforced the legitimacy of the Spanish government's stance against ETA and the independentist left (Whitfield, 2014: 84). In 1998, the judge of the special tribunal for terrorism, Baltasar Garzón, created a new approach that considered the independentist left movement as falling under the umbrella of ETA. This led to the banning of Basque newspapers, the imprisonment of journalists, and different juridical attacks against Basque companies, social organisations, lawyers' and prisoners' support organisations, and the youth independentist movement.¹⁰² This new approach changed the reasons for criminal

¹⁰¹ This law was approved during the government of José María Aznar, the president of the Popular Party, and allowed the Spanish parliament to declare the independentist left party *Batasuna* illegal. *Batasuna* was accused of favouring and multiplying the effects of terrorist violence. Judge Baltasar Garzón declared the party illegal two hours before the MPs began their debate. This law was used by Baltasar Garzón to closed down all *Batasuna's* activities, 'from its offices in the main cities to its websites, a string of companies, and even 70 taverns allegedly used to finance ETA's bloody campaign' ("Spanish parties unite in vote to ban *Batasuna*", *The Guardian*, 27 August 2002, accessed 15 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/27/spain>).

¹⁰² "Garzón hizo del sumario 18/98 la causa general contra ETA", *El Correo*, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.elcorreo.com/alava/20071130/mas-actualidad/politica/garzon-hizo-sumario-causa-200711301525.html>

punishment from being a member or collaborator of ETA to the motto of *Todo es ETA* ('Everything is ETA'), as different political and social activities became considered part of ETA.¹⁰³

During the 1990s, the strategies of ETA and of the state resulted in more isolation and repression of the *izquierda abertzale* movement, contaminated by the image of the 'wicked other'. The terrorist image of 'the other' was reinforced in the imaginary of the everyday, and expanded to include all those that had independentist claims, promoted by media discourses and actions in the Spanish parliament and the judiciary. Social cleavages were worse than ever before.

Silence and Fear in the Construction of the Violent Other

In the creation of the dichotomy 'us' *versus* 'them', 'the other' is constructed as a 'violent other' that can be perceived as the executor of violence, or understood as complicit in the violence committed against the 'us'. Accounts about the past divide the good people from the bad people through the use of discursive tools. The concept of silence, in combination with other elements such as fear, reinforces 'otherness' and a dualistic representation of society. Bad people are those silencing the population, or those complicit with their silence about the terror inflicted. Fear acts as an essential element in defining 'the terrorist other'. In her analysis of the global economies of fear, Sara Ahmed (2004: 128) highlights that fear 'is named in the very naming of terrorism: terrorists are immediately identified as agents of extreme fear, that is, those who seek to make others afraid [...] as well those who seek to cause death and destruction'. I analyse first how fear and silence are used in the creation of the dichotomy 'us' *versus* 'them' and then I explore these elements under a gender sensitive approach. Fear and silence interact with the politics of gender, creating the scenario of a dualistic representation of society, where bravery is used to give a more powerful representation of the 'us', where silence is only broken in specific ways to validate the actions taken, and where there is no complexity over the reasons behind silence beyond dichotomised approaches.

¹⁰³ "Sumario 18/98: "¿Se puede ser de ETA sin saberlo?", *Periodico Diagonal*, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/libertades/1898-se-puede-ser-eta-sin-saberlo.html>

Fear reinforces the ‘us’ *versus* ‘them’ dichotomy in different ways: creating a sense of community (in a shared fear) and reinforcing the image of a spectral other. ‘The other’ is represented as a wicked violent agent that inflicts terror in the population through fear in order to impose their objectives and keep the population quiet. In May 2017, one of the interviewees who used to belong to *Gesto por la Paz* invited me to the event ‘Violence of Persecution (Socialisation of Suffering)’, held in a town in Guipúzcoa that I call Arretxe as a pseudonym. The event was organised by a group in the area working on *convivencia* and mainly made up of people affiliated with political parties close to Basque nationalist parties that were confronted with the independentist left in different towns during the armed conflict. The audience is less than thirty people, mostly in their 60s and 70s, and mainly men. The presentation of the event, carried out by a male leader of *Gesto por la Paz*, and the later debate with some of the male organisers that are sitting among the audience, hinge upon the fear inflicted by ‘the violent other’. A participant in the debate expresses how some people had to develop their political thoughts clandestinely, how some teachers were brave to work during strikes called by the *izquierda abertzale*, in an atmosphere where ‘the whole society was terrified; the entire population was attacked and the suffering was immense’.

In this town, fear was spread throughout the population. The campaign ‘*Euskal Herria Askatu*’ aimed at spreading violence everywhere. There were only twenty of us or less demonstrating. It was not due to lack of solidarity, but out of fear. Fear leads to protecting your close ones, and not engaging with public manifestations of solidarity.

In this quote, fear is depicted as creating a situation where part of the population that were against ‘the violent other’ (in this case, *Euskal Herria Askatu*) could not raise their voice. This population is described as silenced by ‘the other’. They could thus be included in the ‘us’ in the representation of the past.

Fear, the ‘us’ and ‘the other’, are also linked in the perception of state violence. Fear is like glue that, combined with the bravery to overcome it, creates a sense of community in which to share the suffering and find support in times of violence. Aretxaga (2005: 168-169), in her examination of the everyday violence during the armed conflict in the Basque Country affirms that ‘[t]he dispersion of prisoners, the persistence of torture and the violence of the state literally construct the national

community as one of suffering, to which one is linked not just through emotional bonds but also through feelings of fear and panic'. The state as 'the other' shows its cruelty through killings, torture, and imprisonment. It is through these actions that 'the state materializes as a powerful spectral reality, which marks the bodies and souls of those subjected to its practice' (Aretxaga. 2003: 402). The community that experiences the fear of state violence and confront this fear through raising their voices with different methods is the 'us' while 'the other' gets represented by those identified as executing state violence or not protesting against it.

Discourses based on fear and silence created by those subjected to either state or ETA violence construct a spectral image of 'the wicked other'. This creation, applied to the terrorist or the state, result in magnifying the two main parties in the armed conflict. Both parties get mystified by the narratives on the terror that they inflict, as Abrams (1988: 77) analyses when referring to the power of the state. Their image becomes more powerful through discourses that affirm their influence in keeping the population silent and expanding their power to all those that are seen as complicit with them.

A dual vision of silence as coming out of fear or out of complicity is reflected in two popular sayings in the Basque Country in relation to the armed conflict: '*no podemos hablar*' ('we cannot talk') and '*algo habrá hecho*' ('they must have done something'). The former saying hints at 'the other' that creates silence through fear (the fear of being killed, or of being tortured or imprisoned), while the latter points at silence being complicit in violence.

'We cannot talk' expresses the idea of 'the violent other' that silences. In an interview with a member of COVITE who was born outside the Basque Country, she refers to those in the *izquierda abertzale* and also to Basque nationalists ('those from here') as those who could speak, whereas others such as police officers had to be silent: '[t]he [independentist] left or those from here can say whatever they want and in any way they want, and talk about their prisoners or whatever, but the police cannot say "this is my son, this is my husband, this is my..."' In conceptualising 'the other' as oppressive, the 'us' are silenced while 'the other' can raise their voice. In this same line of argument, during the armed conflict, I remember conversations I had with people close to the independentist left who affirmed that those complaining that they could not talk clearly expressed themselves in the media and through Spanish

institutions that not only gave them voice but acted against the *izquierda abertzale*. In their affirmations, members of this movement were those being repressed and incarcerated if they protested or raised their demands that clashed with the status quo; they were the ones that could not talk. In the battle over the narratives of the past in the post-ceasefire process, the struggle to have a place in history consist of showing the suffering that the ‘us’ experienced in the past as a consequence of the violence of ‘the other’. In this sense, the saying ‘we cannot talk’ and pointing at the perpetrator of the act of silencing is part of the battle over memory.

The saying ‘*algo habrá hecho*’ (‘they must have done something’) is what people supposedly thought when someone was arrested or killed. It is explained as attributing guilt to the dead and the arrested. It is the argument behind the complicit silence. In the workshop ‘A Map of Suffering’ organised by the Social Forum in April 2017 as a way to raise different violences suffered during the armed conflict, one of the participants explained this idea by contending that the argument of ‘*algo habrá hecho*’ was complicit in the infliction of suffering:

‘They must have done something’ was thought when they took [arrested] a kid, and maybe this person was arrested because they were in an association [so they did not belong to ETA]. Or a taxi driver is murdered and then ‘he must have done something’, he would be an informer... And then, what? Then you have to kill him?

Silence is represented as complicit, since those seen as using that argument accepted that violence and supported it through their silence. Those keeping silent are seen as responsible for inflicting suffering, and must be accountable for it. In an interview with a woman who used to support ETA victims, she affirmed the responsibility of each person in Basque society for keeping silent, but pointed to the fact that some were more responsible than others: she referred mainly to the Basque Church and the conservative Basque nationalist party, the PNV. In her account, one proof of their complicity was not having members killed along their lines. For her, the reason for their silence was that they benefited from the violence committed by ETA. In this sense, silence is directly linked with guilt.

In opposition to ‘the wicked other’, the good people, the ‘us’, are understood as taking an active positioning against violence. The good people broke that silence

imposed by ‘the other’. Methods stated as breaking that silence could range from demonstrations to other kinds of protests, such as statements of support for people under threat. Breaking the silence was a must, and also the brave thing to do. Breaking the silence is depicted as a commitment, even if raising a voice against a specific type of violence could entail arrest, torture or death. Those who were killed are frequently represented as brave people who refused to shut up. In front of the grave of Gregorio Ordoñez, his sister Consuelo, surrounded by other members of COVITE, politicians, journalists and other attendants at the memorial held 22 years after his death in January 2017, argues that ‘ETA and its political wing, along with the society supporting ETA, buried him’. The reason for his murder, continues Consuelo, was that he spoke up, and ‘he didn’t give in to blackmail either, from gunmen or from those he used to call “verbal gunmen” [in reference to Basque nationalist politicians that in her view supported the violence of ETA]’.

A simplistic idea of ‘speaking up’ or ‘breaking the silence’ as a *de facto* act of bravery is raised in different narratives when establishing the division of ‘the other’ and the ‘us’. Opposing the violence of ‘the other’ is narrated as in specific channels of action. Other ways to oppose violence that did not entail taking to the streets or releasing public statements are not considered valid enough. This is part of a prevalent narrative that connects the traditionally male assigned characteristic of bravery with suffering and martyrdom. This bravery is recognised when it happens in the public sphere, following the patriarchal dichotomy of the public and the private, with the former prevailing over the latter (Segato, 2016). Other ways to transform the socio-political reality are not considered important enough if they did not imply this public exposure.

Bravery related to being visible and speaking up against violence is also linked to involvement in political parties, especially when standing for elected office. Politicians were direct targets of ETA or targets of state repression. In the workshop ‘A Map of Suffering’ organised by the Social Forum in April 2017, a participant described the fear suffered from being involved in politics in the *izquierda abertzale*, since being part of a candidacy in times of banning of political parties could lead to imprisonment. On the other hand, in the interview with Rosario, a female member of the Popular Party who was under threat, she gave special importance to the suffering

of those ‘brave ones’ who were councillors in towns that she described as terrifying places.

The brave men, that were mainly young guys... There were twelve or thirteen of them, no more. It was terrible since they had to live... constantly changing homes, they had to go to the university with three members of the Civil Guard as bodyguards. They had to sleep over at their parents one day, another day at a friend’s... [pause] They were councillors in the cursed villages in inland areas, which were horrifying. In the 1980s and 1990s.

The almost total lack of intended female ETA targets¹⁰⁴ creates a situation where those considered as more brave and hence in deserve of more recognition are men. Moreover, those female politicians who were under threat were not considered to be suffering the same fear as their fellow male politicians. During the interview, Rosario’s narrative expressed the contradictory views that she had no fear since she was not going ‘to be touched’ because she was a woman, while complaining about the lack of support by members of her party who did not understand the suffering of being accompanied by a bodyguard for more than ten years. With similar security measures, men were deemed as the brave ones and therefore were awarded higher positions in the party. Rosario explained that women were those more involved in the daily work of the party since men ‘did not dare because they were automatically threatened with death’. Bravery is associated with those that are recognised and hence lead the narrative of the past, since they were the targets of fear and broke the silence through their visible activity, while women in other kinds of political commitments do not get mentioned in the narratives about the suffering of the past, not even by members of their own parties. A gendered economy of suffering works in the Basque Country in a similar way to the analysis of Aretxaga (1997) on the armed conflict in Northern Ireland, where men were constructed as the direct victims of violence whereas women were represented as suffering the loss of others (even when they were also politically active).

¹⁰⁴ According to the report commissioned by the Basque government on ‘Politically Motivated Violence against Women in the Basque Case 1960-2014’, seventy-eight women were killed in that period of time. In 70% of the cases, the violence was not directly planned against them. Fifty-four women were killed in different circumstances such as attacks planned against their partners or relatives, as a result of bombs, indiscriminate attacks in commercial establishments and public spaces, and in attacks against Civil Guard barracks (Argituz, 2016: 58).

Simplistic accounts on silence and fear deem those who did not raise their voice in the validated ways as being in a complicit or fearful silence. However, there could be other reasons for not raising a voice that would have to be located in one of the ‘two sides’. Rejection of violence could be expressed in other ways than those proposed by organisations like *Gesto por la Paz* and *Basta Ya*. A lecturer at the University of the Basque Country described in the interview how she and other colleagues were strongly criticised for not showing a public positioning in support of other lecturers that were threatened by ETA. She explained her refusal due to her feeling of being used as part of political strategies that some ETA victims were using. She did not agree either with the strategy followed by ETA. Not raising a positioned voice was not easy to handle:

When they [the people threatened by ETA] say that they have not been able to talk ... We had to be quiet as well. I understand how terrible it must have been to live with a bodyguard, not being able to go out in public. I think that’s terrible, horrible. But I also say that to aggravate that, to use it for a situation that they ask you to take sides... If you positioned yourself for the *izquierda abertzale*, then you were seen as agreeing with ‘kill them’... And if not... How can you be in more of a middle position where you could say that you don’t agree with this, but neither do you agree with that other positioning? You had to keep quiet.

Silence and fear are part of the elements that establish the division between ‘the other’ and the ‘us’. Fear and silence get entangled with the politics of gender. On the one hand, breaking the silence gets circumscribed to validated paths that are influenced by a gendered understanding of spaces and emotions that includes the predominance of the public sphere, and a dualistic approach to silence and bravery that do not consider different reasons and options to oppose violence. On the other hand, bravery is allotted those that are seen as directly breaking with the threat of the violent, *i.e.* the recognised targets of ETA who were mainly men. Accounts on silence and fear establish a dichotomous split in society that do not allow for different arguments to be raised. Behind the representation of keeping silent there can be different ways to react against violence (as I further explore in chapter 6) that can be deemed as acts of resistance that break with normative accounts on the representation of the past.

Marked Territories, Marked Bodies

In the book 'Terror and Taboo', Zulaika and Douglass (1996) search the taboo and demonisation over what they call 'the unspeakable act of terrorism'. It is not only unspeakable, but terrorism is personally, politically and morally 'utterly untouchable' (Ibid.: 181). Terrorists are untouchable, 'highly dangerous, polluting persons with whom contact is to be avoided at all costs' (Ibid.: 179). In the context of the Basque Country, contamination plays an important role in the creation of 'the other'. Those described as violent are not only those who commit violence, but also that surround 'the figure of the loathed villain' (Ibid.: 150). Being in any kind of contact, or sharing similar spaces, a similar appearance or similar ideology, is to be rendered part of that 'violent other'. It happens especially with the figure of the 'terrorist', but also with the figure of the 'repressive state'.

In this section, I analyse how contamination works in creating 'the other': through the 'telling' or identification of 'the other' using particular embodied signs; through spaces acting as closing compartments; or through the associational relationship that transforms the person with any contact with the 'untouchable' into one of 'them'. The 'violent other' deserves being removed, in a symbolic or physical elimination, from the withdrawal of a greeting to different levels of aggression. These different ways of reinforcing 'the other' are inserted in spirals of violence that came to be part of the everyday in the Basque Country. They are also embedded in politics of gender.

Bodies Exposed

Exposing oneself and your beliefs immediately led to consequences. As soon as the demonstration had finished, when I was walking home, I ran into a relative who had been at the *Herri Batasuna* demonstration and they asked me 'What were you doing with "them"?' If you showed your face in the square, just because the fear impeded you from seeing anything, it didn't mean that you hadn't been seen. That was when people began to treat you differently (Gómez Moral, 2013: 54-55).

Different signs that represent 'otherness' marked the bodies during more confrontational times in the armed conflict: in the squares, during the oppositional protests of the 'two banners'; in the everyday life of the streets, workplaces, during

leisure time, or in family relationships. ‘Otherness’ permeated the bodies that carried certain signs of identification, frequented certain marked territories and had relationships with other marked bodies.

In the context of the violent conflict in Northern Ireland, identifying someone with one group or another has been called the practice of ‘telling’, which reproduced social identities and reaffirmed social boundaries in the smallest interactions (Donnan and McFarlene, 1986: 26). ‘Telling’ was explained by Burton as ‘the pattern of signs and cues by which religious ascription is arrived at in the everyday interactions of Protestants and Catholics’ (Burton, 1978 in Aretxaga, 1997: 35). In the Basque Country, this ‘telling’ took different forms during the armed conflict. It was manifested in the body through clothing, haircuts, badges, and jewelry. In the *izquierda abertzale*, the distinction was created by wearing outdoor clothes, a specific haircut (a short fringe for girls, a mullet for guys), hoop earrings for both men and women, and badges and other complements with demands for independence or for the rights of prisoners. The words uttered by those bodies have also been part of that ‘telling’: speaking in Basque or in Spanish can reflect a political standpoint.

Bodies carrying specific signs moved through specific places in cities and towns where they felt more comfortable, accepted, and could express themselves. Some of the participants from the independentist left stressed the fact that due to repression, a stranger coming into those spaces was seen with suspicion. Spaces were also part of the creation of a community of feeling, with those spaces welcoming some people and not others. This is especially relevant in sites of leisure that are also meeting places where people gather and communicate with each other. The independentist left created the *herriko taberna* or ‘bar of the people’ for this gathering, where normally signs, like banners in favour of Basque prisoners along with posters against the repressive methods of the Spanish state or struggles in other countries, were part of the decoration.¹⁰⁵ A flag in favour of ending the dispersion of the prisoners and also an

¹⁰⁵ Under the motto created by Judge Baltasar Garzón that ‘Everything is ETA’, *herriko tabernas* were also part of the prosecution. Criminal proceedings started in 2002 since these gathering places were considered a way of obtaining financial resources for the independentist left movement. Many of these places were shut down. In the 2008 trial, forty-three people related with the *herriko tabernas* were accused by the Spanish public prosecutor of raising funds for the movement and also recruiting members for the movement and hence for ETA. The sentence was announced in 2014 and entailed the confiscation of 111 *herriko tabernas*. Twenty people were found guilty of trying to refound the banned political party *Batasuna*,

ikurriña or Basque flag can hang at the door so it can be easily identified from the outside. The *batzoki* ('meeting place' in Basque), likewise, normally flies the *ikurriña*, but this is the gathering place of people associated with the Basque conservative party PNV. The Spanish socialist party PSOE has in the Basque Country, as in other parts of Spain, the *Casa del Pueblo* ('house of the people', in Spanish). Being the main differentiation of spaces for socialising along political party lines, other bars in the Basque Country that don't belong to these parties have not been free from being included in the social imaginary within political demarcations and assumptions of political standpoints of their users, as I analyse in the next section.

The political assignation of spaces could serve as a means of designating safe spaces but it can also be felt as restricting movement around the city. In the workshop for creating a 'map of suffering' about the armed conflict held by the Social Forum, a participant from Pamplona (the capital of Navarre) pointed out as an element of 'suffering' the fact that she could not enjoy leisure time in the old town since she was seen as not aligned with the independentist left. In those spaces, when not feeling comfortable with the political messages being uttered, some bodies created different strategies in order to not follow these messages but also to go unnoticed, which could be as simple as taking a sip of a beer, as one of the interviewees observed. Lourdes, who was not part of any social or political movement, stated in the interview that she did not go to the bars linked to the independentist left in her town San Sebastian just because they were not part of her mental map of places to hang out in when she was a teenager. However, when she went to university in Pamplona, she started to go to the bars in the old town that she connects with the Basque language and with the *izquierda abertzale*.

Andrea: And how did you feel when you started hanging out there? It was pretty new for you, right?

Lourdes: Yes, but I did not see it badly, it wasn't traumatic, I adapted well (laughs)

seen as responsible for funding ETA through the *herriko tabernas* ("Claves del juicio sobre el macrosumario de las herriko tabernas", *Eitb*, 30 July 2014, accessed 15 July 2019, <https://www.eitb.eus/es/noticias/politica/detalle/2448570/juicio-herriko-tabernas--cronologia-claves-marcosumario-3502/>; "Condenas de hasta 3 años de cárcel en el caso de las herriko tabernas", 30 July 2014, accessed 15 July 2019, <https://www.eitb.eus/es/noticias/politica/detalle/2449950/sentencia-herriko-tabernas--condenas-3-anos-20-imputado/>).

A: Were there things that surprised you there?

L: Yes, the photographs of the prisoners, the piggy bank [for donations for the prisoners or for collecting money for different campaigns of the independentist left]

A: But did you feel comfortable?

L: Yes, I did not feel bad. [pause] Well, you felt bad when they played the song of... I don't remember... This song by Barricada [a rock Basque band]... And everyone then started to shout 'ETA, ETA, ETA' [accompanying the shouting with the melody of the song]

A: And, you, in that situation...

L: Well, I wanted the ground to just swallow me up.

A: And what did you do?

L: Just had a sip of the beer.

The embodiment of 'otherness' did not only happen when making public appearances, but also through the signs that bodies show in the everyday or the spaces that those bodies transit. Exposure of the bodies can lead to social rejections. Different strategies are created to deal with that exposure, from individual strategies to the search for safe spaces where those bodies feel comfortable.

Intersectional Marks and Spaces

In a territory of proximity and entanglement such as the Basque Country, spaces were marked through political identity. Bars and spaces for social gathering and leisure corresponded to ideological divisions, creating material separations with 'the other'. In analysing descriptions given to spaces, divisions are revealed as multiple: class, territorial and cultural origins, nationalist feelings and gender cross with political standpoints.

Spaces where bodies move lead to those bodies being identified as belonging to a particular identity. I felt that assimilation when carrying out my fieldwork. Even if I were clear with my participants that my research aimed at including different standpoints, being in particular leisure spaces could identify me as being sympathetic to a specific group. Most of the accounts in the field stressed the separation between spaces that created permanent barriers with the other. Adela stated to me, when talking during an interview about divisions in her town, that still nowadays it is very difficult

for people to go to the bar of the PSE *Casa del Pueblo*, since ‘you don’t want to become associated with them, even if you’re really thirsty and the bar is right there.’ Some exceptions in the field talked about sharing spaces for leisure. In an informal conversation with a lecturer at the University of the Basque Country, he wanted to break with the idea of strict divisions when explaining to me that his father, who was close to the *izquierda abertzale*, used to hang out with his friends from the PNV, even going to the ‘*batzoki*’.

The description of spaces is linked to political standpoints and also to territorial origins, nationalist demands and class. Clear demarcations can get blurred in this regard. Adela described the ‘marked’ areas of her town as not only bars but also residential areas, defining one of the neighbourhoods as very *abertzale*, while others were composed mainly of ‘immigrants’ –these being from different territories of Spain or from Latin America. In one of the neighbourhoods populated mainly by Spanish immigrants, she narrated how those territorial origins did not prevent the residents from getting involved in the demands of the *izquierda abertzale*. She recalled how, in one of the community centres, people were making banners for *abertzale* demonstrations ‘to the sound of rumba’ (a rhythm associated with the south of Spain).

Other accounts stressed this assimilation between immigrants and those committing violence as a way to prove their Basqueness. This argument is presented in contrast to what is considered as being genuinely Basque, something that people have to embody and comes from being born in this territory and having a family legacy of belonging. Curiously, these affirmations were made by members of COVITE that showed clear hostility against Basque nationalism. A member of a Spanish political party born in the Basque Country explained to me during an interview the time when workers from different regions of Spain ‘arrived in the trains in their thousands’. Some daughters of these workers went to her school. Being raised in a Francoist school, it was surprising for her that they became aligned with a socialist and independentist ideology later in their lives. Her indignation was evident when she made fun of the fact that their children had Basque names: ‘All those Iker, Iker Castillejos... “But if you are from Valladolid!” “No, no, I’m Basque”, “Ah, sorry”’.¹⁰⁶ In contrast to what

¹⁰⁶ ‘Iker’ is a common Basque name, while ‘Castillejo’ acts as a Spanish surname that would be mainly found in Castile. ‘Valladolid’ is a province in Castile.

she showed as an appropriation, she stressed during the interview that she is ‘Basque Basque’, since her family built up part of the town, and she was baptised in the church that gives the authentic belonging to that town. Another interviewee belonging to COVITE lived for many years in the old part of one of the main Basque cities. She stated that she was hardly ever confronted by Basque nationalists due to her belonging to the territory: ‘[i]t was difficult to say something to me, since I am more from the neighbourhood than they are’. Showing the authenticity of belonging to the Basque Country seems like a way of giving legitimacy to political standpoints and to their narratives, in a conflict that has hinged on demands about that territory, its definition, and the definition of being ‘Basque’.

Divisions are also described in terms of class that gets mixed with nationalist and social demands and territorial origins. Some participants described a separation in terms of areas seen as ‘posh’ and areas connected with the *izquierda abertzale* and in favour of social justice. Marcela’s town is the setting of one of the *Alardes*,¹⁰⁷ a traditional men-only parade where women started to demand their inclusion in 1998. This resulted in a socio-political conflict there and the population divided between those supporting the traditional parade and those in favour of women taking part in it. Claims for gender equality also define Marcela’s account in relation to leisure areas: what was a division between the posh and the *borroka* (‘struggle’, in reference to the *izquierda abertzale* struggle for independence) areas were transformed into ‘where people were in favour of maintaining the tradition’ and those ‘in favour of women’. In the narratives of Marcela and other interviewees close to the independentist left, their definition of leisure areas represented their political stance, identified with claims for social justice, including gender equality, which is raised as another element of division in Basque society.

Finally, language is another element of demarcation that intersects with political standpoints. Itziar, who was raised in Navarre, highlighted in our conversations that there has been greater polarisation in this territory than in other parts of the Basque Country. She pointed to a clear division between the north and the south of Navarre, a demarcation created mainly by the promotion and development of the Basque

¹⁰⁷ A comprehensive anthropological study of the *Alarde* and the breaking of relationships in the towns where these parades are carried out can be found in the ethnography *Tristes espectáculos: las mujeres y los Alardes de Irun y Hondarribia* (Bullen and Egido, 2003).

language. She also stated the fact of a strong confrontation in Navarre between the left and the right-wing, the latter controlling the government of Navarre for years and trying to suppress the development of the Basque language. Entzane comes from a small town in Guipúzcoa where Basque is the main language. She expressed her uneasiness at university, due to the way she speaks Spanish. Entzane was labelled as *euskalduna*, which means Basque native speaker, but that entailed an assumption about her as supporting Basque nationalism. Her place of origin that influenced the way she expresses herself and the language she uses implied being fixed in a political position that she did not want to belong to.

In the description of spaces and territories, different lines of divisions emerge. These lines can be moveable or fixed, but represent the perception of the different identities that are part of Basque society, along with claims about those identities and prejudices towards them. In the narratives, references to political parties linked with spaces act as synecdoches. Political parties represent other points of division such as nationalism and understandings of violence. Different elements are included in narratives about divisions: territorial origin and territorial belonging, support for or rejection of ETA violence, political standpoints in relation to nationalist or independentist Basque demands or Spanish constitutionalism, class origins and gender.

Dime con Quién Andas y Te Diré Quién Eres

After the death of my husband, I was at my workplace, doing the cleaning as usual, when one of my colleagues came to me. ‘Hey, this guy has called me and he asked me to talk with the manager so they move you to another place’. And I said: ‘Why? What’s going on? As far as I know... And if I forget something, forgive me, but I don’t think... I think I’ve done everything correctly’. She just answered: ‘No. It’s because it stinks’. Then I affirmed that I was using the same cleaning products. [Pause]. You’ll be staggered by her answer, as I still am when it comes to my mind, and I just try to let it go. She said: ‘It smells like a dead man’ [...] So, as I was the wife of a policeman, this person took this to the extreme... It is the policeman who died, but this person thought ‘I don’t want anyone related to the police here’.

Jimena works as a cleaner. Her work is put into question not because of her performance but because of what her body represents. She is treated as if she were part of the other body understood as the enemy even when dead. The police, as Aretxaga states, represent ‘the permanent body of the state’, the violence of law (2003: 406). For Jimena, there is no possibility to perform the task she carries out in the everyday any better: however hard she cleans, she is dirty, since her dead husband contaminates her. The killing acts as a sign of confirmation of that person, the policeman, as a wicked other, in this case as the embodiment of the violent state. Jimena, as a working-class woman, is forced to bear the guilt and stigma of her dead husband, in addition to her personal grief.

There is a saying in Spanish that reads ‘tell me who you go with, and I’ll tell you who you are’ (*dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres*). In the process of social divisions and hardening of ‘otherness’ in the Basque Country, being in contact with a person deemed to be the violent perpetrator meant that bodies were contaminated and permeated with the stigma of violence. The idea of dirt and contamination was also stressed by a member of COVITE when talking about the difficulties that Consuelo Ordoñez had to face while working as a solicitor in the Basque Country: ‘She couldn’t work here, there was nobody going to her office. Why? Because it [asking for her service] meant getting dirty’.

There are certain bodies that represent the armed conflict. These can be the relatives of a person killed - killed by ETA or by state-sanctioned violence. Due to the politics of gender that mark the armed conflict and its representation, those being killed are mainly men and those that are seen as an extension of the murdered are normally women. Gentzane expressed to me, in our first encounter before we held an interview, the pressure she felt for being the relative of a man killed by a paramilitary group. She rebelled against assumptions made in her town about what her political standpoint was, and even what her emotions should be. She felt pushed by some people close to the *izquierda abertzale* to keep a feeling of hatred towards ‘the other’: this figure of the enemy included all those seen as responsible for or complicit in the killing of her relative. Women can suffer the effect of being associated with male relatives that are seen as part of their identity when being either marginalised or assimilated.

Some bodies become the representation of the armed conflict when accompanied in the public domain by the constant presence of another body: the (usually male)

bodyguard. They were escorted people that Spanish and Basque police institutions recommended protection for due to threats by ETA or for belonging to institutions targeted. The attached body of the bodyguard meant that other bodies did not want to interact with them, *e.g.* crossing the street in order not to bump into them. On the contrary, taking a side against ETA violence is depicted in some accounts in their visible support of these people with bodyguards. A former member of *Gesto por la Paz* explained how the gesture of physical approach was a political claim as part of her commitment against violence:

A PSOE [Spanish Socialist Party] councillor, who I knew because he lived in my neighbourhood, had fought against Francoism... The first time I saw him with three bodyguards... my heart sank. It was seventeen or twenty years ago [the late 1990s], when people did not show any solidarity with them. There were very few of us who stopped in the streets and talked with them. I, of course, did it. I also did it as an activist, in order to be seen.

Bodies representing the conflict are also those in close connection with Basque prisoners, especially girlfriends and mothers. They can receive support or rejection not for who they are, but for being like an extension of their relative. Female bodies are approached as a reflection of the prisoner. Prisoners are mainly men, considered the fighters. The representation of the women follows the stereotype of 'the repose of the warrior' that has been also found in representations of female ETA members, as analysed by Hamilton (2007: 96, 110). Even though in my encounters with partners of prisoners many of them stated their active decision to continue taking care of their partner, this active role has often been ignored. Different participants in the field explained how after the detention, people did not ask their girlfriends about how they were doing, but always about those in prison. Their emotions and wellbeing, their independent personality got displaced.

In a conversation with mothers of prisoners, they referred to how daily gestures were connected to the armed conflict, and to their relative in prison. Lucía expressed her gratitude for the support she has found in her town. She describes feeling that support when she goes anywhere and 'they ask you how you are'. There is a mutual interpretation of that question meaning how she is dealing with the situation of having her son in a distant prison. Lucía also referred to greetings as symbols of support. Contrary to these affirmations, another mother of a prisoner stated that since she has

been ‘in this, in *el rollo* [referring to the movement of support of Basque prisoners]’, many people do not greet her anymore. Greeting these women or not is a representation of acceptance of their connection with the armed conflict or the consideration of them being ‘the other’.

The consideration of women’s bodies as an extension of men can come in the form of support or of rejection. Some women expressed that, because they were part of the left independentist movement, they were seen as supporters of the killings committed by ETA. Talking with Marina about social divisions in her town, she raised the case of the sister of a member of the independentist political party who suffered a boycott of her business and verbal aggressions after ETA killed a town councillor.

Marina: At that time, for example, there was a lot of tension. Not only in the plenary session, but also in the streets. The sister of the councillor [from the independentist left] worked in a public place, so then everyone went there to attack her.

Andrea: And who was going to attack her, or in what way?

M: Citizens. Because you are the sister of that person, so when I go to her pharmacy, I rip you to pieces. Verbally. I do not think that she got physically attacked. But verbally, yes. So then you say: ‘how far are we taking this?’

Contamination merges with gender stereotypes with the assimilation of female bodies and those that they are related to. Those who were killed or put in prison, or are targets of ETA, can be seen as the enemy, but they own that enmity. Women are not regarded as taking an active role, but they are the ones to blame for being the carers and hence supporters of ‘the violent other’.

Navigating Dichotomies

The configuration of a society divided into homogenous sides through the expansion of ‘otherness’ has been explored in the previous sections. In this last section, the construction of dichotomies is problematised in different ways in the field.

In the context of the armed conflict in the Basque Country, those with no aim to be part of one side or the other have been punished, eliminated symbolically or even physically. Aretxaga (2005) studies one of the milestones in the history of ETA, the murder of Yoyes in 1986, in relation to the rupture that she created in this

dichotomised view of political commitments. Yoyes was part of the leadership of ETA and left it during the 1980s to go into exile. When Yoyes came back from exile, the representations of those that had been connected with ETA were public treason or being fully committed with the armed struggle. There had been ex-members of ETA that had joined political parties that opposed the armed violence. Yoyes did not fit in to any of those sides. She wanted to live her own life, separate from the world of political parties and the armed violence. Yoyes was dismantling the polarising view of ‘with us or with the enemy’. She offered another open imaginary that should be erased. Breaking with dualistic compartments led to her being killed by ETA in her town, Ordizia, in front of her child.

The creation of ‘the other’ and a dichotomised view of society entail different violence, from social rejection to physical danger. ‘Otherness’ also impedes the awareness of different experiences of violence. Different challenges and ways to navigate dichotomies have been placed in the everyday and expressed by the participants of this research.

In a Sandwich

I feel like a victim because there was a time in this country when if you were with me then you have to be against those other people. But why do I have to be against them? I can understand one thing and the other. If I was involved in activity with someone from the *izquierda abertzale*, people from my town would say ‘Hey, I saw you with these people’. Or when I joined a traditional dance class, some of my colleagues asked me why I was dancing. I said because I love dancing. They asked what people were part of the dance group. I named the people and they stated that the dance was too radical, too *abertzale*. So then I just said: Ok, so when I dance I am *abertzale*, so what?

Paloma considers herself a victim¹⁰⁸ of the conflict since she suffered from a constant judgment in relation to who she was in relationship with. Other interviewees also

¹⁰⁸ She explicitly refers to the term ‘victim’ in her narrative. In the living-together local forum where she is involved she used this concept to express her experiences of violence. Other female members of the group have also applied this term to experiences that are normally put aside in hegemonic narratives of violence, such as domestic abuse, as I explore in chapter 5. On the one hand, this use of the term ‘victim’ poses a challenge to hegemonic definitions of victimhood and violence in the Basque context. On the other, referring to oneself as a victim

referred to the oppressive feeling of having to identify with one side or the other when they did not want to belong to either of those, or at least not in a homogeneous understanding of political positions. Rebeca explained her feeling as being 'like in a sandwich' since she felt in the middle and feared being placed on one side or the other. Almudena, who is part of an association that promotes the Basque language, commented on her resistance to being positioned under a political label and how that resistance was seen as betrayal: '[i]t is so easy to judge, so they [people from her town] affirm "they are traitors because they do not sign this or that other statement..." Then there comes a time when you get sick of it and just want to tell them to go to hell'. Being compelled to carry out some actions or, on the contrary, not to be part of some activities is felt as part of the negative impacts of the armed conflict in daily life.

Many of the women that rejected having to identify themselves with one 'side' were aware of the different violences going on during the armed conflict: the violence of ETA, of the state, and, in many cases, also gendered and socio-economic violence. The description of Rebeca as being in a 'sandwich' hinged upon the fact that she did not agree with the independentist left in terms of nationalist feelings and also because of her rejection of ETA violence. However, her life has been one of political engagement for social justice, and denouncing state violence, so she did not want to be placed on the side of the state.

Then I [confident tone and short pause] did not want to applaud ETA. And uh ... on the other hand, we had this mentality... -and I think that was a terrible mistake – that if you're not with these people, then you support the others, right? Then, well, obviously I was not with the state [firm tone] I was against an oppressive state, that represses, tortures... well, everything that the state was doing...

Lorena has also been politically active, mainly in the autonomous political movement that developed in some squats in the Basque Country and other social organisations. In a conversation with me, she explained her experience suffering the violence of both ETA and the state. Lorena recounted the time when her boyfriend was forced to hide an ETA member at gunpoint. He was accused of collaboration with ETA and was put in prison. He refused to belong to the collective of Basque political

in the post-ceasefire process seems to be a way to give legitimacy to the narratives, to the experiences of violence expressed.

prisoners. Lorena kept on visiting him, so she received threats from ETA for stepping out of line. On the other hand, she was afraid of the violence committed by the state since she knew that, as a political activist, she could be detained, tortured and imprisoned even if not belonging to the independentist left.

Paloma became aware of state violence in the Basque Country when spending summers at her family house in a town of Guipúzcoa when she was a teenager. She found it difficult to speak about it with her friends in her village in Castile. This difficulty connects with the prevalence of a hegemonic account of a division between evil and good people. Paloma also perceived having those conversations as a tiring endeavour since exposing the existence of different violences, breaking those dichotomies, could entail potential conflictive responses.

Paloma: I am from a village in Castile where ETA was seen as evil. That simple. And then you see that there is another part that is also suffering. But only you see it, and you see it during all the times that you come here. And it is not what the media sells.

Andrea: Sure, and then what was the contrast you faced? For example, that summer you went back to your town, and did you talk about it?

P: Yes, I talked about it, but not with everyone. I was nineteen at that time. You wonder why you are getting into conflict with people who are your lifelong friends. I am not saying that they wouldn't believe it, but they would not understand it. Then...

A: Was that because you had tried before to make them see something?

P: Yes, because in the course of your life you have had many conversations, and then, well, they can call you whatever. My family were part of those who were repressed during the civil war [...] There comes a time when you already have consciousness, and you speak. And then, well, the friendship continues, but they refer to you as 'red'¹⁰⁹ [...] So you tell those things to some people and not to others, because you're not interested in arguing. It is difficult because you are criticising those who are seen as the 'good' people [in reference to the Spanish police in the Basque Country] [...] They cannot understand what you explain if

¹⁰⁹ In Spain, the term 'red' has been applied as an insult towards those who resisted Franco's coup d'Etat. This term represents the construction of 'the other' as rejectable when assimilating them with a communist evil.

you break with the idea of these people being good and those evil. If I tell how people were beaten by the police in the Basque Country they think that it is because they might have done something, as they are the Basques.

Paloma tried to navigate the dichotomies established in the Spanish narratives about Basque people. She had to navigate the designation from the history of the Spanish Civil War of being a 'red' as a way to delegitimize her discourse. Being an immigrant in the Basque Country, she also found a way to get involved in social activities, traditional dances and relating with different people, even facing the pressure of having to align herself. She found a way to break with the good vs. evil dichotomy and to be open to understand different positions. She was part of a living-together local forum during my fieldwork.

Dichotomies are addressed by some participants in the context of the Basque Country as oppressive, with narratives referring to the classification of the population in two sides as something violent. Some people tried to negotiate and challenge these dichotomies. 'Otherness' restricted relationships and established a narrow understanding of politics and of society that some women strove to break.

Barriers for an Encounter

Dichotomies impede the encounter between different standpoints. Experiences and understandings of violence configure the barrier between the 'us' and 'the other', built and sustained by the argument of fear and suffering. During the 'Violence of Persecution' event held in May of 2017, participants in the debate presented fear as only suffered by one of the 'sides'. Explaining the threats and harassment suffered by politicians in the Basque Country, one participant stated that '[s]ome people had to suffer from a lack of freedom and fear that others did not experience'. Ignoring the suffering of 'the other' is not only a strategy in the creation of the memory of the armed conflict, but silence over those other experiences is also part of identity affirmation. Achino-Loeb (2006: 43), in her analysis of silence, states that 'any identity would not exist but for the silencing of potential otherness'. There is an internal silence created in order for the self not to be shaken. To prevent the meanings given by the self to the world being disturbed, certain voices must be suppressed by not listening to them.

Understanding that ‘the other’ is the only source of violence leaves no room to raise awareness about other kinds of violence and of the violence committed by the ‘us’: not only physical violence, but also the violence expressed through attitudes or behaviours. In the interview with two COVITE members, they frequently described their activity as connected with non-violence, comparing it with Gandhi. State violence is minimised in their explanations, with torture or killings described as failures of the Constitutional state and not named as violence.

In a conversation with a person who used to be an active member of the *izquierda abertzale*, he criticised how, in the everyday, they –himself included– were ‘oppressors’ in relation to those people that did not share the same political standpoint: ‘I crossed paths with someone and held them in contempt, almost spitting on them’. He reflected about the fact that it was not about political disagreement, ‘but a question of identity’. The notion of sharing this criticism with other people who were also active in the independentist left at that time was seen by him as a bad idea that could get him into trouble, as if dissonant voices in this political movement were not accepted. In a different assessment to what is being criticised about the past, another person close to the independentist left stated in an informal conversation with other people about the post-ceasefire process that the only people being self-critical about violence were the independentist left. These two opinions raise two different levels in the criticism of violence. The second affirmation relates to political decisions on violence that are placed in the public sphere. The first reflection refers to a more personal sphere that calls into question behaviours carried out in the everyday. This latter exploration is not something that many people are willing to carry out as it implies a deeper questioning of self-identity that in many instances comes from listening to ‘the other’.

Opening up to listening to ‘the other’ has come from set spaces created with this goal, especially during the post-ceasefire process, as I am exploring later in this thesis. In other cases, spontaneous gestures of the everyday are narrated as a change in the othering that had placed each body in enclosed positions. Discussing two workmates that stopped talking to Sonia since the two-banners protest, she explained to me how she approached one of them when she learnt that this workmate was going through a serious illness. In her account, this physical and emotional encounter would have not happened before the ceasefire (*‘si hubiera seguido el rollo’*) because of her fear of

being rejected by her. The hug that happened that day opened up the possibility of talking again.

For example, these two workmates... One had breast cancer. I heard about it quite late. One day coming out of *Eroski* [a Basque supermarket], she was coming inside. I went to her and gave her two kisses and a hug. 'Pili, *chapeau* [meaning 'well done you']. She was surprised. And I think she was very grateful, because it was a personal issue. If the other thing had still been going on [*i.e.* if the ceasefire hadn't been called]... Well, I think I wouldn't have approached her, because of the fear of her rejection. Because she stopped talking to me. But I reacted like this spontaneously. I asked her how she felt, as she was receiving the chemo[therapy]. I've been with her twice. If the other situation [the armed violence] had continued, I wouldn't have dared because of the fear of her rejection in that sense. This was a personal issue of her cancer.

In situations like this, it is talking about a 'personal issue' that disrupts 'otherness' and facilitates the encounter.

'Otherness' is built on signs that reinforce understandings of violence: fear, suffering, and silence. 'The other' is the violent people, including those complicit through their silence or their links to the same structure or ideology. 'Otherness' led to the existence of what is described in the field by some participants as 'closed compartments', in reference to the isolation of their suffering and the hindrances to be heard by others. The construction of 'the other' ensures that despite the mix of standpoints in small territorial spaces and knowing about the experiences of suffering on the part of different people, those experiences were not listened to, not taken into account.

In the development of this thesis, I became aware of my own barrier in listening to 'the other'. I recall when, years ago, a colleague from the social movements in Madrid expressed to me the suffering of his father, a writer, who had been threatened by ETA. During that conversation, he blamed me for working for a magazine that explained the involvement of this writer in the criminalisation of the independentist left movement. He was blaming me as complicit in the violence of ETA for my activity as a journalist, even if I wasn't personally writing about his father. I did not want to listen to him. I put him in the place of 'the other', seen as closer to the structure of

state oppression than committed to challenging structures of injustice. During those years, my connection with the Basque Country was in that compartment where I listened to terrible experiences of torture and prison. That was a priority in my feelings of justice and my social and political commitment to stop the violence of the state. Years later, during this research, and listening to those I could have placed as ‘the other’ at some point in my life, I felt moved by their suffering. This feeling unsettled me, making me be more open to their experiences. During this research, I have also become more aware of ‘the other’ that dwells in my approach to the situation in the Basque Country, which connects with the story of my family not just in relation to the Basque Country but also to the Spanish civil war and the dictatorship. Listening to experiences of those that I do not normally have contact with in my daily life in the Basque Country and in Madrid led me to break prejudices and shatter the homogeneity of ‘the other’. The research process in itself has allowed for the challenge of dichotomies.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have analysed how dichotomous identities are constructed and expressed in relation to the armed conflict in the Basque Country, in what Yuval-Davis (2010: 267) calls ‘embodied narrations’, which construct and reproduce collective identities, having an effect on daily understandings of society, on relationships and on the performativity of bodies in a context of confrontation. Constructions of ‘the other’ stigmatise and contaminate bodies, a contamination affected by gender politics. While ETA and the state are abstract figures, bodies take the burden of the performance of this dichotomy: fighting in the streets, walking in the shadow of a bodyguard, wearing a blue ribbon, showing their belonging to a political stance through their appearance. While silence and fear are elements used for the creation of ‘otherness’, the visibility of the bodies creates situations of social tension in a territory of proximity and entanglement. Bodies look for shelters, creating their own spaces and establishing material separations from ‘the other’. In describing divisions of spaces, ‘the other’ gets identified beyond political standpoints, but also in terms of territorial origins, nationalist feelings, class and gender. Through symbolic and material divisions, ‘otherness’ entails that experiences of and expressions about the armed conflict are closed off in separate compartments that may only be broken through risking a

vulnerable listening or through physical approaches such as what a hug can represent. Antagonisms are built and sustained, but also divisions get shattered through diverse practices of the everyday that I term ‘practices of peace’ and that I examine later in this thesis.

In armed conflicts, when violence appears overtly, the construction of ‘the other’ becomes more explicit. However, binary accounts of society, dichotomies that lead to violence, are part of the liberal and heteropatriarchal system. Audre Lorde (1984: 114) argues that it is in a society ‘where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need’ where ‘there must always be some group of people who, through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior’. Dichotomies are not created during the armed conflict, but they are part of a system based on violence and hence on creating diverse otherings that sustain that violence. As I explore in the following chapters, ‘otherness’ can still be reproduced in the scenario of *convivencia*, giving privilege to some voices while excluding others as part of pacification mechanisms at work in the post-ceasefire process.

4 – SPACES OF INSCRIPTION AND PACIFICATION MECHANISMS

Law works as the institution that recognises and inscribes the silhouette of each of the collectivities whose life it seeks to govern. This way, the struggle for rights is the struggle to obtain that inscription. Whoever gets access to the inscription exhibits that capacity, an ontological plenitude, the status of being-among-others, above those that cannot achieve it. Approached from this angle, the struggle for rights is close to what some authors have called the ‘right to narrate’ (Segato, 2016: 131-132).

Rita Laura Segato describes the institution of law as that which ‘recognises and inscribes’ the ontological status of the subject. Inspired by this feminist scholar, I extend her analysis of law to other spaces that, in the Basque context, are part of the struggle for the ‘right to narrate’. I call ‘spaces of inscription’ those spaces where experiences of violence get institutional and public recognition in the aftermath of the Basque armed conflict. Being ‘inscribed’ in these spaces entails having a place in History, securing an ontological status, being included in what counts as important for the narratives of the past and for the configuration of the post-ceasefire scenario.

Laws, museums and commemorations, spaces for the encounter between victims, academic reports, exhibitions or artistic representations are institutionally created spaces of inscription that give validation to particular experiences of violence. In the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country, conditions and requirements for specific voices to be heard are set through these spaces. They channel expressions of violence and configure the category of victimhood. Those who suffered the violence recognised as such in these spaces and express their experience in ways that fit with the emotional and ethical landscape of the post-ceasefire scenario are inscribed as victims. Narratives circulating through these spaces don’t only define who can fit in the definition of a victim. Through the established requisites for their voices to be heard, these narratives also configure the subject who listens and constrain political demands and emotional responses within what is depicted as acceptable for the creation of the scenario of *convivencia*.

The period after a ceasefire represents a critical time for the configuration of power relationships. It could be an opportunity in terms of opening up and challenging

structures of oppression. Since they influence social perception of violence, spaces of inscription could contribute to raise awareness of the different violences committed during the armed conflict and ongoing violences linked to the current socio-political structure. However, the narratives being deployed in these spaces can also solidify narrow understandings of violence that perpetuate a liberal and patriarchal order. I use the term ‘pacification’ to refer to these discourses and practices that, in a post-ceasefire process, aim at maintaining the social order.

Pacification is understood in this thesis as the diverse mechanisms used by the state to secure the continuation of a liberal patriarchal order through both repression and acceptance in the aftermath of a violent armed conflict. Following Bourdieu’s (2014: 4-5) definition, the state would be ‘the principle of the organisation of consent as adhesion to the social order’ which ‘is defined by possession of the monopoly of legitimate physical and symbolic violence’. The figure of the state is not just an abstract entity whose power can be magnified through the construction of a spectral image of it (as explored in chapter 3). The political power of the state is materialised in institutions and social practices that are multiple and historical and sustain a social order based on inequalities that values some lives more than others. The maintenance of this social order can be done through repression or through legitimation.

Pacification has been used as a concept to analyse the role of military force during imperialist domination of territories or during times of revolt when public order needed to be re-established by authoritarian governments or kingdoms (Lop and López, 2015; Üngor, 2012). More recently, the term has been reclaimed as a tool in the analysis of ideological discourses on security and the liberal legitimation of violence (Neocleous and Rigakos, 2011). These new approaches understand the concept not just as ‘the military crushing of resistance’ but with a more productive dimension (Neocleous, 2013). Pacification is understood as working to integrate populations into the networks of liberal governance (Kienscherf, 2011), especially through police power that secures ‘the insecurity of capitalist order’ (Neocleous, 2011). In this sense, pacification has been defined as ‘the continuum use of police violence upon which the fabrication of capitalist order is planned, enforced and resisted’ (Rigakos and Ergul, 2013: 169).

Pacification in so-called post-conflict scenarios works in a productive dimension, deploying specific sets of narratives. These narratives strive to co-create consensual

meanings that must be assumed by those who do not want to be excluded from the new stage of ‘equilibrium’ after armed violence. Pacification is linked with hegemony and the creation of a renovated culture: hegemony being the form of a cultural leadership that works by the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons not through domination but by consent (as explained by Said, 1978: 6-7, drawing on Gramsci). Scholarship on propaganda and rhetoric argue that ‘meaning is most persuasive when it is a co-production and the force of an argument varies directly with the freedom left to the addressed individual. Those that seem to be imposed seldom convince; an argument is all the stronger when the addressee is free to reject it’ (O’Shaughnessy 2004: 77-78). Spaces of inscription are part of this co-production of meanings, part of the pacification mechanisms that conceal economic and political interests under the disguise of inclusiveness.

The term ‘pacification’ is barely used in the context of the Basque Country. During my fieldwork, when I heard the term in Spanish *pacificación* (‘pacification’) being employed, it was usually used as a translation from the Basque ‘*bakegintzan*’. However, the word in Basque would be more the equivalent of a ‘peacebuilding process’. ‘*Bakegintzan*’ is composed by ‘*bake*’ (‘peace’) and ‘*gintzan*’ (‘producing’ or ‘constructing’). I am using the term pacification differentiating it from peace, or specifically from ‘practices of peace’, a concept that I examine in chapter 6. In my proposal, pacification creates the conditions to set a liberal and patriarchal democracy, where structural violence¹¹⁰ is not transformed. The concept of pacification finds similitudes with what has been criticised by scholars working on peacebuilding as ‘liberal peace’ (such as Richmond, 2007 and Theidon, 2007). Liberal peace has been described as ‘based on the “three pillars” of democratisation, free markets, and the

¹¹⁰ I understand structural violence as the continuous violence that is necessary for the maintenance of the institutionalised social order of capitalism, whose constitutive element, as Nancy Fraser (2014, 2016) affirms, is the expropriation of unfree, gendered and racialised unwaged labour. Structural violence is committed with the aim of subjugating populations through multiple forms of domination. As stated by postcolonial and decolonial scholars, the global capitalist structure has in its axis a universal social classification of the population, a codification of ‘the other’ that promotes the perpetuation of relations of domination. This classification works through the concept of ‘race’ (Quijano, 2000) and, fused with it, gender, as a ‘colonial concept and mode of organisation of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing’ (Lugones, 2007: 186). Symbolic violence reinforces the sustenance of structural violence in the configuration of what is desirable and what is abhorrent for the subjugated population.

rule of law’ (Millar, 2018: 2) and its main aim being ‘actively contributing to the construction of liberal polities, economies and societies’ (Bellamy, 2009: 4–5).

In the analysis of narratives in circulation through spaces of inscription, I locate different elements that serve to legitimate the liberal and patriarchal order. First, pacification narratives set a linear understanding of time that places violence in the past, in a period of disequilibrium that is depicted as overcome in a new stage of equilibrium named under the concept of *convivencia*. Second, narratives deployed in spaces of inscription can serve to quell demands and complaints under discourses based on inclusiveness and plurality. Third, the configuration of victimhood responds to a gendered structure that influences what is deemed as important enough to be registered, what bodies are representative of a ‘true testimony’, and who are the ones sanctioning the expression of those experiences. These different elements are, nonetheless, contested and challenged in the field by different actors, which I am exploring in this chapter.

Among the range of activities allowing specific voices to be heard in the post-ceasefire scenario, I focus on initiatives framed as working on ‘memory and living together’ carried out in the Basque Country, by Spanish institutions, Basque institutions and Basque social organisations. I also investigate how different organisations take part in reaffirming or contesting the different narratives in circulation in spaces of inscription.

Pacification Narrative: from Violence to *Convivencia*

In the context of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country, pacification narratives establish a linear understanding of the armed conflict and its aftermaths, viewing violence in the past as exceptional without tackling its causes and preventing awareness of the continuum of multiple violences existing in society. This narrative that sets a closure on the violence of the past as the way to build a new scenario of *convivencia* is explored in this section.

The exhibition ‘The Mile of Peace’ will guide part of the reader’s journey. ‘The Mile of Peace’ was programmed during the San Sebastian European Capital of Culture 2016 (DSS2016), directed by the Foundation San Sebastian 2016 which was composed of representatives of the Basque government, the provincial council of

Guipúzcoa and the city council of San Sebastian.¹¹¹ The activities in DSS2016 deployed specific understandings of violence and peace agreed by the Basque institutions that supported the programme. Initiatives like this are part of spaces of inscription.

The End of Violence

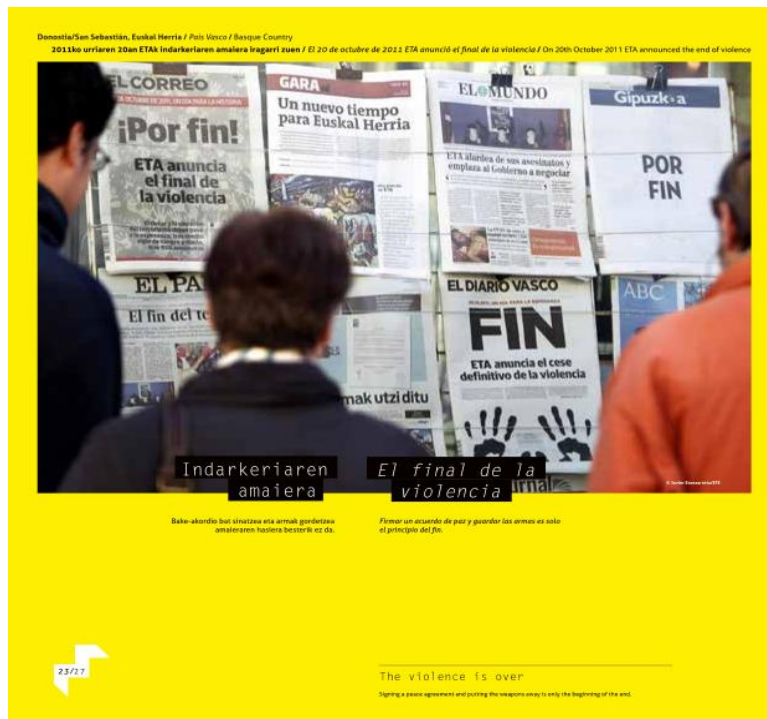


Figure 5. ‘The End of Violence’. Image: The Mile of Peace. 2016.

During the year 2016, ‘The Mile of Peace’ displayed photographs and statements on boards showing to the audience what peace and violence should mean. When addressing violence in general, part of the open-air exhibition addressed socio-economic violence, such as poverty, or the arms trade. However, when focusing on the violence in relation to the Basque context, meanings of violence established a closure on the past, drawing a line in the announcement of ETA’s permanent ceasefire. In the photograph of ‘The Mile of Peace’ (figure 5), under the title ‘The End of

¹¹¹ There were political changes in the management of the programme of DSS2016 since the parties running the provincial and city council changed after the local elections held in 2015. Previous to this year, the independentist left party *EH Bildu* had an important presence in the Foundation San Sebastian 2016, whereas after 2015 it was the conservative party PNV who had control of it. This change had an impact on the activities being developed and in how they were accepted and the contestation that they raised.

Violence’, a blurred audience representing society look at newspapers that exclaim ‘*por fin*’ (an adverb meaning ‘finally’) and ‘*fin*’ (meaning ‘end’ in Spanish). What does that ‘end’ mean? What violence is the one that is targeted, depicted as finished, and that must not return again?

The violence being targeted in different programmes set by the Basque government, and also by the Spanish government, is mainly the violence committed by ETA, which is described as a disruption in the socio-political order and which must not happen again. The picture above (figure 5) clearly manifests this interpretation of violence with the announcement of the permanent ceasefire of ETA representing ‘the end of violence’. In defining violence in this way, hegemonic narratives make no connection between the violence that provoked death and suffering during the armed conflict with a set of values that circulate through the configuration of power relationships. There is no link between the violence of the armed conflict with a gender order that promotes competition, imposition of interests in the resolution of conflicts, contempt and subjection. While the violence of ETA is set as not acceptable and it is punished, structural violence is not being named and remains normalised.

In these narratives, the perpetrators of the violence during the armed conflict are represented as those who broke the norm. The norm, which rests on a structural and historical organisation of power relationships, is not regarded as violent in itself. After the Francoist dictatorship, the norm was that of the parliamentary democracy. Those depicted as representing ‘the’ violence are the ones that didn’t respect that new stage. From this perspective, ETA continued committing violence when the democratic path was open. On the other hand, execution of violence by state institutions after the death of Franco has been depicted as failures of democracy. Those violent acts were out of time. They disrupted the basis of a legitimate system, creating a disequilibrium that ought to be mended in the post-ceasefire scenario.

The transitional imaginary represented in the context of the Basque Country by the concept of *convivencia* follows the pacification narrative that signifies the arrival of an equilibrium coming after a phase of disequilibrium: from division to ‘living together’; from violence and suffering to harmony, understanding and encounter. Pacification, as a productive process, ‘does not simply prohibit what is undesirable but also creates the desired end’ (Jackson *et al.*, 2016: 86). A sense of closure to that disequilibrium is part of that desirable end, in combination with the idea of achieving

harmonious relationships. The restoration of the equilibrium is represented by the concept of *convivencia* in the case of the Basque Country, or named as ‘reconciliation’ in other contexts and literature. Anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo (2017: 18) criticises reconciliation in this sense as using an idea of ‘fracture’ as an institutionally-created barrier that entails to perceive violence ‘as part of the past, as done, or remembered’, while certain forms of violence continue. ‘Coming to terms with the past’, ‘moving on’ or ‘putting the past behind’ are some of the expressions that are used in transitional times, in what Michael Ignatieff (1996 in Hamber, 2009: 180) has called a ‘false reconciliation’, where different groups ‘indulge in the illusion that they had put the past behind them’, with the party responsible for injustice trying to impose a ‘forgive and forget’ mentality. Such ‘forgive and forget’ might not be the only mentality imposed, but also an abandonment of any claim for institutional accountability, and moreover, of any claim of a change of paradigm in relation to socio-economic and political structures.

Narratives and diverse mechanisms of pacification produce the reinforcement of the capitalist order. In his research on the Northern Irish peace process, Graham Dawson (2007: 60) states that the politics of reconciliation promoted in that context tried to stabilise the territory, ‘laying the basis for a permanent political settlement in the mutual interests of capital and state security in both the Irish Republic and Britain’. The sense of equilibrium is represented in discourses selling the advantages of liberal economics. In Northern Ireland, supporters of neoliberal peacebuilding strategies used as an argument for this imposition of liberal economics that the development of a culture of entrepreneurial initiative would encourage social actors to view themselves not as members of communal groups, but purely as individuals, thus decreasing the possibility of ethnic conflict (see Strong, 2009). As Scott (2013: 14) affirms, after the Cold War era, liberal democracy has been presented as the ‘absolute horizon of political civilisation’.

Peacebuilding mechanisms establish a narrative connected with an idea of progress aiming for the maintenance and promotion of the capitalist system. This narrative corresponds to a linear and modern conception of time that is widespread in theories on peacebuilding and reconciliation (and which has been criticised among others by Bevernage, 2013 and Scott, 2013). These narratives point to one specific

kind of violence as the one that must be addressed and eliminated while concealing other violences that could put the liberal social order into question.

The Inclusive ‘We’ in the Living-Together Horizon



Figure 6. ‘Gu’. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.

The *Gu* Project wants to reflect the need to develop our human capacity to close distances and overcome the personal and social barriers that often prevent us from developing a peaceful *convivencia* (‘The Mile of Peace’, 2016).

Gu (‘we’ in Basque) sits in the middle of the Urumea River, which runs through the city of San Sebastian. This installation (figure 6) was part of ‘The Mile of Peace’. Ironically, it was made of fragile materials and consequently sank quite often, as commented by the person in charge of ‘The Mile of Peace’, who expressed her relief for it being dismantled months before the end of 2016. In ‘The Mile of Peace’, ‘we’ appears to represent the idea of an encounter that transforms divisions and generates *convivencia*. The *Gu* (with a parallel translation in the Spanish masculine plural ‘*nosotros*’ on the other side of the bridge) was installed a few meters away from the

mouth of the river, as if it were on its way to flowing into a new horizon, the horizon of *convivencia*.

The idea of an inclusive ‘we’ as an outcome of a peace process has been raised in literature and policies on peacebuilding and reconciliation. In his work on the peace process in Northern Ireland, Nevin T. Aiken (2013:4) suggests that reconciliation provide opportunities for sustained positive contact between ‘previously divided groups’ in order to move ‘polarised “Us *versus* Them” identities towards an increasingly inclusive sense of “We”’. The creation of a common identity is prevailing in different reconciliation proposals. In ‘Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook’ (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2013), reconciliation is defined as ‘a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future’ (Bloomfield, 2013: 12). In this book, Luc Huyse (2003: 21) proposes the concept of humanity as the basis of the creation of a ‘common identity’ in the aftermath of violent conflicts. Explaining the different stages of reconciliation, he affirms the importance of ‘the recognition that victims and offenders share a common identity, as survivors and as human beings, and simply have to get on with each other’. In the context of Northern Ireland, a ‘shared Northern Irish identity’ has been proposed as a way to break divisions (McFarlane, 2011).

In opposition to a shared and imposed identity, Cynthia Cockburn (1998: 225) showed in her analysis of a cross-community group of women in Northern Ireland that they affirmed differences in a positive manner and strived towards a ‘non-closure of identity’ which allowed for all sorts of self-expression. Another differing view to that common identity is found in political theory on agonism. Differences are stressed, and a logic of disparity is privileged rather than common identity:

The understanding, so often viscerally espoused in the field, of reconciliation as the restoration of a relationship shared between alienated co-members of a single moral community would be viewed sceptically by an agonist, who would question both the prospects for future rehabilitation as well as the verifiability of that broken community’s originary social coherence (Hirsch 2012: 83).

Laclau and Mouffe (2001), in their proposal for pluralist democracy politics, raise the impossibility of ‘a final reconciliation’, of ‘a fully inclusive “we”’. In their view, ‘[t]o believe that a final resolution of conflicts is eventually possible [...] far from providing

the necessary horizon for the democratic project, is to put it at risk' (Ibid.: xvii-xviii). Conflict is part of life and discourses trying to hide this daily evidence through consensual illusions and masquerades of harmonious relationships are suspect of sustaining demagogic discourses in order to legitimate the socio-political order.

In the Basque Country, *convivencia*, inclusiveness and plurality are concepts used to gain the battle over memory without explicitly waging it. In this context, what has been called *la batalla por el relato* ('the battle over the narrative')¹¹² is not well regarded since it is linked with the imposition of a single narrative following a political agenda, as different participants in initiatives on memory that I encountered during my fieldwork expressed. Contrary to it, a legitimate way to create a narrative of the past is using concepts such as inclusiveness and plurality and to claim who must be the ones inscribing 'the truth' of the past. An illustrative example can be found in the article written in the Basque newspaper *El Correo* under the title '*¿La Batalla por el Relato?*'¹¹³ The author, historian López Romo, is part of the Institute of Social History Valentín Foronda, which has been in charge of producing reports about ETA violence commissioned by the Spanish government. He opposed 'fighting in a battle over the narrative' since that would put 'professional historians against radical propagandists', while only the former do 'science'. López Romo affirmed that the narrative must be 'plural', but that 'there should be no room for the version that places the victims and the perpetrators at the same level. This is something unworthy and we must act against it just finding the way to tell the truth'. Plurality gets linked to guiding the narrative

¹¹² Media, politicians, or people involved in initiatives on *convivencia* in the Basque Country refer to the configuration of memory in this period using this term. *La batalla por el relato* had mainly referred to the armed conflict in the Basque Country. However, in the last years, it has also been used in relation to the narratives over the independence in Catalonia, and in a broader context in relation to conflicting political stances at the level of Spanish political parties. In an article in the Catalan newspaper *La Vanguardia*, his author Ruiz Simon describes as the starting point for the use of the term the debate at the Spanish parliament about the law of victims of terrorism in October 2010. A member of the association of victims of ETA 'Freedom Foundation' stated at that forum that 'Spanish democracy could not turn its back on the combat over the narratives about the meaning of fifty years of terrorism' ("*La batalla por el relato*", *La Vanguardia*, 7 February 2017, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20170207/414078548422/la-batalla-por-el-relato.html>).

¹¹³ "*¿La batalla del relato?*", *El Correo*, 29 January 2018, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.elcorreo.com/opinion/batalla-relato-20180129203938-nt.html>

towards the ‘truth’ by those claiming to be the legitimate sanctioners of the experiences that must be included in the memory of the past.

Other examples in the field show how the concept of inclusiveness disguises a struggle to set the ‘truth’ about the violence of the armed conflict. This truth implies affirming specific definitions of violence, and categorising victims and perpetrators. The events organised by COVITE that I attended had as a main point of discussion the narratives of the past. In March 2017, the ‘International Observatory of Studies on Terrorism’ (OIET), which is part of COVITE, organised the event ‘Terrorism, Communication and Propaganda’ in Pamplona, Navarre. It consisted of the following panels: ‘Terrorism and Media’, ‘Narratives of Terrorism’ and ‘Strategies of Counter Narrative’.¹¹⁴ One of the OIET members affirmed in his presentation that they had to create a narrative based on human rights values so as to block those ‘who try to justify the illegitimate violence’. After this presentation, a member of the Spanish military, who was also an expert on Jihadism, explained the need to counter the victimised narrative of the terrorists by creating ‘an inclusive narrative’:

How to fight against terrorism: it is not a matter of opposing one narrative to another, but it is necessary to create an inclusive, real narrative that includes the elements of frustration that terrorists have been able to generate. We must listen to what they say. The defeat of terrorism occurs not with the detention of terrorists, which must be done, but with the defeat of the narrative of terrorism. This narrative is what is going to generate the terrorists of tomorrow. The narrative must be one that is not confrontational, but that absorbs and surpasses the terrorist narrative [...] Why does the dirty war fail? Because it deals with the epiphenomenon that is the terrorist. It aims at the branches of the tree and not at its roots. It compromises the essence of the struggle, which is legitimacy, namely the narrative.

From a very different stance, the Social Forum has used the idea of inclusiveness as a way to incorporate experiences of violence that risk being excluded from hegemonic narratives of the past, since they do not correspond to ETA violence. The

¹¹⁴“Seminario sobre terrorismo, comunicación y propaganda (Pamplona)”, *Blog de Gaizka Fernandez Soldevilla*, 22 February 2017, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://gaizkafernandez.com/2017/02/22/seminario-sobre-terrorismo-comunicacion-y-propaganda-pamplona/>

group working on memory chose as one of their objectives the construction of a ‘middle lane’ where experiences of violence as diverse as the ones raised by victims of state-sanctioned violence and by victims of ETA violence could merge in order to create a ‘comprehensive truth’.¹¹⁵ The group working on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) released a statement reporting on their meetings with political and social actors affirming that their wish was for ‘all the actors to step up to the important challenge that as a society we are facing: from an inclusive memory, the construction of a *convivencia* that lays the foundations for a necessary social reconciliation. This is the only guarantee of non-repetition’.¹¹⁶ While COVITE manages the international language of terrorism in order to delegitimise the narratives of ‘the other’, the Social Forum uses international peacebuilding language in order to gain legitimation for their actions. References to their activities as willing to include the narratives of ‘the other’ through their inclusive narrative are a common strategy in the confrontational terrain of memory configuration.

Battles over setting the truth about the past are part of the scenario coming after ETA’s ceasefire. These battles are waged through discursive elements such as inclusiveness and the concept of *convivencia*. The illusion of Basque society merging into an inclusive ‘we’ works as part of the pacification narrative that aim for the co-production of meanings in order for broader parts of the society to accept the new order. This inclusion gets materialised in the ‘spaces of inscription’ that I analyse next.

The Configuration of Recognition and Victimhood

The voices of those deemed as belonging to the category of victim are heard through the establishment of spaces of inscription where their experiences of violence get sanctioned as relevant. As stated by Bhabra and Shilliam (2009: 5), what is spoken

¹¹⁵ The concept of the ‘middle lane’ was raised in some of the meetings that I attended. It was also affirmed in the presentation of the event that this group carried out in Guernica in April 2017 (“El Foro Social impulsará «un carril» para que la sociedad lidere la convivencia”, *Diario Vasco*, 20 April 2017, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.diariovasco.com/politica/201704/20/foro-social-impulsara-carril-20170420133433.html>)

¹¹⁶ The statement was sent by the Permanent Social Forum to all those subscribed to their email list. It was titled ‘Conclusions of the Encounter on 11 April 2018 in Donostia/ San Sebastian’.

through discourse is never a revealed experience, but at once the production of understanding of that experience. Spaces of inscription create the frame for experiences to be produced and understood, under particular requisites to be accepted.

Spaces of inscription configure categories under which recognition is established. The main category is that of the victim. The recognition as a victim inevitably connects with the definition given to violence, since it is the suffering of violence which gives someone a place as a victim. I find it useful to make a distinction between recognition and acknowledgment to refer to the different ways of how experiences of violence and the meanings given to them circulate in a post-ceasefire context. Recognition is linked with an institutional inscription in a category that validates the experiences of violence of those being recognised as suffering that violence. Acknowledgement refers to engaging with the experiences of others. Acknowledgement relates to a transformative listening that can move the listener from previous standpoints and expand social meanings given to violence. This change of perception can happen in public spaces or in daily interactions, as I examine along this thesis. Acknowledgment can also happen in spaces of inscription, so the relation between recognition and acknowledgement is not that of a strict division, but fluid. The actors that are part of spaces of inscription can break institutional constraints, contest categories being created and raise awareness of a number of violences existing in societies through the development of relationships that become transformative (which I study in chapter 6). On the other hand, however, the focus on recognition as where to strive for validation of experiences of violence harbours the risk of precluding a transformative listening that, through the awareness of multiple violences, could shake institutions and structures where violence lies. The recognition of demands through institutional inscription can quell further claims within the frame of pacification mechanisms.

There is a political battle being waged for the establishment of recognition. Institutions that hold the power to inscribe establish a hierarchy of victimhood that varies in relation to political configurations of power. Spanish and Basque institutions deploy different narratives that characterise victimhood in contrasting ways. Tensions between these different narratives have effects in the field. Also, organisations working on memory and living together raise their dissent in relation to the selection of victims and try to narrow or broaden who are included as those suffering the

violence of the armed conflict. I explore the tensions in relation to these spaces where narratives on violence and victimhood are articulated.

Contestation over Victimhood

‘So then, you don’t consider myself a victim... of terrorism, right?’ The electoral debate is being broadcasted on the public Basque television channel. Pili Zabala, representative of the left-wing party *Podemos*, addresses this question to the leader in the Basque Country of the right-wing Popular Party. Alfonso Alonso tries nervously to find an answer. Zabala stares at him. The image seems to be frozen, only broken by the voice of the facilitator of the debate.¹¹⁷

This scene became a hit in the electoral campaign for the Basque parliament that ran during the end of the summer of 2016. Pili Zabala, before standing for the presidency of the Basque parliament, had been known for her involvement in groups composed of different victims of the armed conflict. Her brother disappeared in the early 1980s and was found to have been killed by the paramilitary group GAL years later. The leader of the party *Podemos*, Pablo Iglesias, described her as an ‘example of reconciliation’.¹¹⁸ Her presence at the electoral debate as a reconciliatory voice managed to bring the past to the present, the history of the conflict to the current context. Her challenging gaze raised important questions in relation to contestation over meanings given to violence, struggle for recognition and the configuration of victimhood in the post-ceasefire process.

In the Spanish context, as previously analysed in this thesis, ETA victims have been placed as the victims par excellence; terrorism has been equated to ETA violence; and ETA violence has been depicted as violence by definition in Spanish laws, media, and policy. In her question, Zabala was breaking this univocal understanding of violence, hinting at other perpetrators of terrorism, in reference to the GAL and the

¹¹⁷ The clip can be found here: “Pilar Zabala: Entonces usted no me considera víctima, a mí?”, *YouTube*, 16 September 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INbuNS0TFK4>

¹¹⁸ “Pablo Iglesias muestra su admiración por Pilar Zabala: "Es un ejemplo de reconciliación y representa un futuro de paz", *Europa Press*, 21 July 2016, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://www.europapress.es/nacional/noticia-pablo-iglesias-muestra-admiracion-pilar-zabala-ejemplo-reconciliacion-representa-futuro-paz-20160721111233.html>

involvement of the Spanish government in that violence.¹¹⁹ Actions undertaken by the Spanish government in relation to the recognition of victims in the post-ceasefire context have insisted on ETA victims being the only ones deserving the category of victimhood. With this aim, the right-wing Popular Party created the Memorial Centre of Victims of Terrorism. It consists of a documentation centre and a museum set in the capital of the Basque Autonomous Community, Vitoria. It also promotes research and educational activities as part of the objective of ‘building the collective memory of the victims and raising awareness among the population as a whole for the defence of freedom and human rights and against terrorism’.¹²⁰ The role of the Spanish state in the battle over the accounts of the past also involves political and judicial actions. The Spanish government and the Spanish Constitutional Court have acted against reparations for GAL victims arguing that their relatives were part of ETA, even though in many cases there were no trials that could demonstrate their membership.¹²¹ Spanish courts have prohibited the implementation of laws created by both the Basque

¹¹⁹ The case of the brother of Pili Zabala, Joxin Zabala, and of his friend Joxean Lasa, both disappeared and murdered by GAL, has been especially important in revealing the connection of the Spanish government with paramilitary groups acting in the Basque Country. Trials on this case exposed that connection and provoked a scandal that led to the collapse of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) in the elections of 1996. The first fiction film on state-sanctioned violence in the Basque Country focused on this case (*Lasa eta Zabala*, Pablo Malo, 2014), showing also the involvement of the Spanish institutions in the paramilitary group.

¹²⁰ “Presentation”, *Centro Memorial de las Víctimas del Terrorismo*, accessed 1 August 2019, <http://www.memorialvt.com/en/home-presentation/>

¹²¹ In April 2014, Spanish government withdrew reparations to forty-six victims (“Interior retira subvenciones a 46 víctimas de los GAL por estar acreditada su pertenencia a ETA”, *El Mundo*, 10 April 2014, accessed 1 August 2019, <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2014/04/09/534556eeca47411f4c8b4577.html>).

In February 2017 the Spanish Constitutional Court rejected the appeal of Zabala’s family in relation to this withdrawal under the same argument that the relative murdered was a member of ETA. A dissenting vote raised the fact that there was never criminal procedure that could prove that belonging to ETA. (“Auto dictado al recurso de amparo número 5656-2015J”, *Tribunal Constitucional*, 27 February 2017, accessed 1 August 2019, https://www.tribunalconstitucional.es/NotasDePrensaDocumentos/NP_2017_016/AUTO%20Y%20VP%205656-2015.pdf).

government¹²² and the government of Navarre¹²³ in relation to state-sanctioned violence. This can be seen as an active statement against the existence of spaces of inscription that can break with the representation of ETA as the only perpetrator of violence.

The Basque government has included violence committed by paramilitary groups and state-sanctioned violence in law proposals, reports and different initiatives on memory. The report ‘Human Rights Violations 1960-2013’ (Carmena *et al.*, 2013) was commissioned by the Basque government as an initial stage of the Basque law for Victims of Politically Motivated Violence 1978–1999 that followed. Victims and perpetrators differed in this report from the hierarchy of victims established by the Spanish government: perpetrators not only included ETA, but also the Spanish state and security forces, along with paramilitary and right-wing extremist groups. The Basque government has commissioned other reports to the University of Deusto,¹²⁴ such as the ‘Report on the Injustice Suffered by People Threatened by ETA (1990-2011)’ (Intxaurbe *et al.*, 2016), or the report on ‘The Impact of the Penitentiary Policy of Dispersion on the Relatives of Prisoners’ (Intxaurbe *et al.*, 2017). The report on ‘Torture and Ill-treatment in the Basque Country between 1960 and 2014’ (Etxeberria *et al.*, 2017) was coordinated by the well-known forensic anthropologist Paco Etxeberria and was published in December 2017.

The selection of victims and the inclusion of different perpetrators in accounts of the armed conflict have been controversial. This can be seen in the case of the report ‘Local Portraits of Human Rights Violations in the Basque Case 1960-2010’.¹²⁵ It was

¹²² From the lack of recognition of state-sanctioned violence in the Spanish Law for Victims of Terrorism (passed by the Spanish parliament in 1999 and modified in 2011), the Basque parliament approved in 2016 the Law for Victims of Politically Motivated Violence 1978–1999. The Spanish president appealed this law in May 2017. The Spanish Constitutional Court admitted this appeal and put the Basque law under precautionary suspension. (“El Constitucional admite el recurso contra la ley vasca de víctimas de abusos policiales”, *El País*, 29 May 2017, accessed 1 August, https://politica.elpais.com/politica/2017/05/29/actualidad/1496069513_614906.html)

¹²³ “El Constitucional anula la ley navarra de víctimas de extrema derecha y violencia policial”, *Naiz*, 29 July 2018, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.naiz.eus/eu/actualidad/noticia/20180729/el-tc-anula-la-ley-navarra-de-victimas-de-extrema-derecha-y-violencia-policia>

¹²⁴ A private university in the Basque Country owned by the Society of Jesus.

¹²⁵ The report can be accessed through a website set up by the Basque government where the different victims are splitted in their own municipality. “Retratos municipales”,

commissioned by the Basque government in 2015 in order to create a database through which ‘remember[ing] those who were unjustly murdered’, responding to the ‘institutional duty of promoting a critical memory in the face of violence and in defense of life’.¹²⁶ The author of the report explained to me that the selection followed the international law of the Court of Justice in The Hague: ‘victims’ were considered as those whose human rights were violated, thus it did not include those who died in military confrontations, only extrajudicial killings. There were protests from relatives of prisoners since those who died in car accidents when visiting Basque prisoners weren’t included as victims. On the other hand, Spanish politicians raised criticism towards the incorporation and equation of different victims, so did some victims of ETA. Representatives of the Department of ‘Peace and Living Together’ of the Basque government handed the report to the mayor of Vitoria, from the Spanish Popular Party. The mayor expressed his disagreement calling the report a victims ‘hodgepodge’: ‘ETA victims are not like the others, so they can not be placed on the same plane as other victims of human rights violations’, the mayor stated.¹²⁷ At the event organised by COVITE on terrorism and propaganda in March 2017, one of the presenters stated that including different victims pretended to ‘undermine the credibility of state agents’, when the ‘legitimate violence of the state security forces are raised at the same level as illegitimate violence’.

The category of victimhood and understandings of violence depends on the territorial and political configuration of power relations. While some of those that suffered violence during the armed conflict do not find recognition of this suffering when being removed from the category of victim in the frame of the Spanish policies, some other victims feel neglected in the political frame of the Basque Country. ETA victims organised in COVITE have stated that Basque political parties do not want them as part of their initiatives on memory. A COVITE member affirmed to me during

Lehendakaritza, accessed 31 March 2019, <http://www.euskadi.eus/retratos-municipales/web01-s1lehbak/es/>

¹²⁶ “Culminando el Mapa de la Memoria”, Basque government, 29 May 2014, accessed 31 March 2019, http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/documentos_paz_convivencia/es_def/adjuntos/Culminando_el_Mapo_de_la_Memoria.pdf

¹²⁷ <http://www.eitb.eus/es/noticias/politica/detalle/2955914/informa-memoria--retrato-memoria-gasteiz/>

the annual meeting of the organisation in November 2016 that the DSS2016 programme was all about ‘their’ victims, describing those other victims as the ones who were ‘gathering together’. This description made reference to initiatives such as Glencree or *Eraikiz* (where victims from ETA, from paramilitary groups and from police abuses met), initiatives deemed as responding to the interests of the Basque government. The stance from COVITE is that these victims submit to discourses that sustain ‘the theory of the conflict’. The president of COVITE, Consuelo Ordoñez, has rejected to equate different violence and the suffering of the victims, since that would mean to accept the existence of a political conflict with ‘two sides’.¹²⁸ Within the Basque frame, the victims that publicly appear as willing to listen to experiences of violence of the ‘other side’ of the armed conflict are depicted as leading the construction of *convivencia* in Basque society.

The configuration of victimhood is linked to meanings given to violence and it is challenged. In hegemonic narratives circulating through spaces of inscription in the Basque Country, the main element that defines a victim in relation to the armed conflict is the killing, predominantly when referring to the murders committed by ETA. Victims are those who were murdered or the relatives of those who died. Some initiatives have tried to broaden this definition of victimhood, hence widening the understanding of violence. Due to the insistence of participants in Glencree, encounters incorporated people threatened by ETA and those who were tortured by Spanish police or military forces. The Social Forum in the events organised on ‘memory and living together’ invited people who were put in prison for belonging to a political organisation or those killed in car accidents when visiting Basque prisoners. With this selection of voices, the Social Forum was displacing the central position that killings have in public discourse and public policies. In an interview with a relative of a prisoner, she stated that she felt herself to be a ‘victim of the dispersion’, *i.e.* a victim of the penitentiary policies that place Basque prisoners far from their families. The category of victimhood is in dispute since it entails not only potential reparations

¹²⁸ “Consuelo Ordoñez: “Destituir a Urquijo es una cesión del PP al PNV contra las víctimas”, *El Mundo*, 9 January 2017, accessed 1 August 2019,

<https://www.elmundo.es/pais-vasco/2017/01/09/587281dd46163f33138b4661.html>

but also legitimization of experiences of violence, thus being part of the battle over the narrative.

The selection of victims responds to their testimonies playing a major role in the configuration of the ‘truth’ about the past. The idea of ‘the truth’ revealed through the testimony of victims has been studied by different scholars. The centrality of ‘revelation and enunciation’ is seen by anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo (2017: 15) as reinforcing a particular model of remembrance, which defines the limits of what can be spoken or deemed as relevant, the same as establishing ‘a model of oblivion, since some forms of violence might be left out of the conceptual structure of this “model”’. The authority given to testimonies is also analysed by Graham Dawson in his work on the peace process in Northern Ireland. Dawson (2007: 47, 52) states that ‘the survivor testimony has become a form of dominant memory in its own right’ in recent years, one of its characteristic features being that ‘it offers itself as unmediated, “raw” experience’. Fassin and Rechtman (2009: 76), in their analysis of the ‘empire of trauma’ state that it has been in the last three decades that the universalisation of the victim status has happened and the testimony of those seen as traumatised has been ‘gradually recognised as offering ultimate truth about the human condition’.

Political strategies in relation to victimhood permeate the current post-ceasefire scenario. Moreover, contestation, as highlighted in previous chapters, features the current socio-political process and it is not absent in the configuration of the narratives of the past that circulate in spaces of inscription. What voices are the ones being heard, who sanctions them, what violence defines victimhood, and accountability in relation to the configuration of memory are points of dissent, as I continue exploring.

Inscribing and Containing Demands for Recognition

Experiences of violence expressed through testimonies of those considered victims are sanctioned by those who inscribe them. This inscription can take different forms. In this section, I delve into the commissioned reports as a materiality of recognition in order to explore how spaces of inscription influence the configuration of memory in the Basque Country, how they search legitimization as if they were narrating the ‘truth’ about what happened during the armed conflict and how the sanctioning process is gendered. The information gathered in reports finds different ways to impact social practices and the social imaginary on victimhood and violence. One way is the

amplification of this information through the media. Another way to expand their influence is their use as a basis for different activities carried out in relation to memory. Reports can both be of value to those pushing for recognition of their experiences and as a way to channel these voices into acceptable forms that contain, limit and exclude experiences of violence.

Commissioned reports have served to configure victimhood when entangled with other spaces of inscription such as the law or commemorations. As commented above, the report on human rights violations by Carmena *et al.* (2013) preceded the creation of the Basque law in relation to the violence of the armed conflict. Reports have also been used for commemorations in the Basque Country. An illustrative example is the use of the report ‘Local Portraits of Human Rights Violations in the Basque Case 1960-2010’. As planned from its design, this report has been used in the selection of victims for institutional memorials such as the annual Day of Memory on the 10th of November. Moreover, it has been used to select victims in the ‘Peace and Reconciliation’ programme of the Diocese of Vizcaya, and also in theatre performances such in the play *Adiorik Gabe*, part of the programme of DSS2016, where the lives of different victims killed in San Sebastian were artistically recreated.

Participants in the field referred to reports carried out on human rights violations as acting as a *de facto* Truth Commission. Reports have influenced the activities of different groups working on memory and *convivencia*. The local report carried out by the human rights organisation *Argituz*¹²⁹ gathering experiences of violence of the town of Sareka was defined in the meetings of the living-together local group as ‘displaying what happened’. After its release, the group committed to disseminate the report as part of their work on *convivencia*. The first local report by *Argituz* (2015) was commissioned by the town council of Rentería, published with the title ‘Towards a Shared Memory’. It was carried out parallel to the set of initiatives launched in this town with members from political parties meeting together in parallel with meetings of citizens, all discussing their views on the armed conflict and having the report as the ‘facts’ of the violence that affected the town. This model has been reproduced in different towns of the province of Guipúzcoa. The report of the town of Rentería was

¹²⁹ I am not giving the reference to this report, since it would name the town that I am calling Sareka as a pseudonym for the sake of confidentiality of the participants of the living-together local group I attended.

a main reference in the meetings of the group working on memory of the Social Forum when discussing how to categorise violences in a comprehensive ‘map of suffering’ that they eventually presented in their first event held in April 2017. Other reports have not had the same impact. The report ‘Politically Motivated Violence Against Women in the Basque Case 1960-2014’ (Argituz, 2016) carried out a comprehensive examination of human rights violations and ‘sufferings’ against women during the armed conflict. The Basque government commissioned the report, but this institution released it only one day before the parliamentary term ended. The report received barely any media attention. Not all the reports are created and distributed in a way that can reach the attention of the population and possibly change perceptions of violence.

The inscription of experiences of violence and its dissemination can have an impact within the public framework in terms of recognition. However, reports can be part of mechanisms of pacification when including different experiences of violence to create a consensual ‘we’ that would accept what is presented as a ‘new’ scenario. This idea connects with the analysis carried out by Sara Ahmed on how complaints can be halted through ‘the very promise of being heard’. She warns on the fact that in some situations ‘agreeing to something is a way of stopping it from happening’.¹³⁰ In this sense, demands are accepted when they follow the path established for claims and demands to be raised. Furthermore, inclusion has been highlighted as necessary for the legitimization of the institutions setting these paths in the aftermath of a violent conflict. In the handbook on reconciliation by Bloomfield *et al.* (2003), the inclusion of women’s voices is considered necessary in order to improve the confidence in the system being set up:

Gender is an indispensable dimension of reconciliation at the official and institutional levels. Most experience demonstrates that women (and often also other politically marginalized groups) have limited access to peace negotiation processes and little or no representation in government and other decision-making bodies. This lack of involvement in political processes seriously reduces their possibilities to voice their concerns and interests and ensure that these are

¹³⁰ “Sara Ahmed: On Complaint”, *YouTube*, 29 October 2018, accessed 1 August 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j_BwPJoPTE

recognized as political concerns at a crucial point. And this may again result in a certain alienation from the nation and the state (Bloomfield, 2003: 12-13).

The case of the report on torture (Etxeberria *et al.*, 2017) serves as an example of the tensions between recognition of experiences of violence as a result of organisations pushing for their demands to be heard, along with suspicion of the lack of accountability. In a conversation with two members of an organisation formed by victims of state-sanctioned violence, one of them stated that the report on torture had given more credibility to those who suffered it. ‘There has been a change in the perception of torture by the Basque population’, she affirmed ‘This is important for those who suffered torture, as they feel they can speak about it, they have legitimacy now, as no one can say to them that what they suffered is a lie’. During the armed conflict, media and sectors of the population denied testimonies of torture as if they were part of the strategy of ETA’s propaganda. The report documented 4,100 cases between 1960 and 2014, 1,792 of those being attributed to the Civil Guard, 1,985 to the Spanish police and 336 to the Basque police. In response to my question about why the Basque government had commissioned the report, my interlocutors answered that those in charge of the Department of ‘Peace and Living Together’ had faced a lot of pressure from different organisations of victims ‘so they have had to do things’. However, these members of the organisation of victims of state-sanctioned violence doubted that the report would ensure accountability of those responsible for torture. In this sense, the report could be seen as being used to pacify the demands of a sector of Basque society that worked for years on documenting cases of alleged torture.

Spaces of inscription are part of the display of a conciliatory stage. To go further and claim accountability is depicted as not acceptable in the post-ceasefire scenario. Before the release of the report on torture, the independentist left party *Sortu* in the Basque Country called for demonstrations in front of Basque police offices, in order to affirm the involvement of this institution in practicing torture, while asking for ‘recognition and reparation’ for the victims.¹³¹ Other Basque political parties depicted

¹³¹ “Sortu insiste en su ofensiva contra la Ertzaintza pese al rechazo de EA”, *Deia*, 16 February 2017, accessed 31 March 2019,

<https://www.deia.eus/2017/02/16/politica/euskadi/sortu-insiste-en-su-ofensiva-contra-la-ertzaintza-pese-al-rechazo-de-ea>

these demonstrations as ‘returning to the past’.¹³² The Basque security counsellor stated that they were ‘stirring the pain of the past’ and that there were no cases of torture committed by the Basque police.¹³³ These voices had to be raised in the currently established spaces of inscription, not in the streets, not through public protest.

In spaces of inscription set up both by the Spanish government and by the Basque government, narratives on violence and victimhood would tend to avoid responsibility for violence committed by those that elaborate the inscription. For the Spanish government, exclusively ETA, and some other groups that acted in early 1980s such as *Comandos Autónomos Anticapitalistas*,¹³⁴ also classified as terrorists, committed violence. In the case of the Basque government, inscription of violence includes ETA violence and also violence committed by the Spanish government (as in the reports mentioned above, penitentiary and police and military institutions are tackled), leaving out the responsibility of Basque institutions. In this sense, a problematic fact during post-ceasefire processes appears: institutions that belong to specific systems of power are the same ones sanctioning the process. The institutions that were responsible for some of the violence committed become the guarantors of the ‘new’ and ‘peaceful’ time.

Experiences registered in spaces of inscription need validation through legitimacy given to their creators. As in the example of the article by López Romo, truth tries to be owned by those who claim to be legitimate sanctioning figures. The director of the Memorial Centre of Victims of Terrorism followed this same line of argument when affirming that this space displays the ‘historical truth’, based on the ‘scientific rigor’ of the work of historians of Institute Valentín de Foronda that ‘give credible and

¹³² “Las críticas de Sortu a la Ertzaintza abren una crisis en EH Bildu”, *El País*, 16 February 2017, accessed 31 March 2019, https://elpais.com/politica/2017/02/16/actualidad/1487241928_206156.html

¹³³ “Las acusaciones de torturas en la Ertzaintza agrietan la relación del Gobierno vasco con Sortu”, *El Independiente*, 15 April 2017, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.elindependiente.com/politica/2017/02/15/las-acusaciones-de-torturas-en-la-ertzaintza-agrietan-la-relacion-del-gobierno-vasco-con-sortu/>

¹³⁴ *Comandos Autónomos Anticapitalistas* was a Basque armed group defined as anticapitalist and independentist that were active in the 1970s and 1980s, with attacks against companies and later with killings of members of the military forces, company executives and politicians (Anonymous, 1996).

solvent support to everything that is done, without ideological reconstructions'.¹³⁵ The affirmation of truth in connection with the work of historians corresponds with the image of the 'dispassionate investigator' criticised by feminist scholars, such as Alison Jaggar (1989) in her seminal work on emotions and epistemology. Jaggar (1989: 165). analyses 'dispassionate inquiry' as a 'classist, racist, and especially masculinist myth'. Through this kind of inquiry women are defined as bearers of emotion and so are perceived as more 'subjective' and biased (Ibid.), in opposition to the rationality placed on the 'dispassionate investigator'.

Those considered experts, mainly university departments or specialised organisations, carry out the reports. They sanction the testimonies of those that are given the role of victims, who are mainly women, giving them the credit and legitimisation to be part of the narrative of the past. Although some authors of the reports are women (in particular within the organisation Argituz), the main figures that appear publicly in relation to the reports are usually men: the 'Foronda report' on 'The Historical Context of Terrorism in the Basque Country and the Social Consideration of its Victims' written and presented by Raúl López Romo;¹³⁶ the report on 'The Injustice Suffered by the People Threatened by ETA (1990-2011)' that appeared in radio and television programmes¹³⁷ with the co-author José Ramón Intxaurbe, or the image of the men-only team of researchers in its presentation.¹³⁸ One of the main figures in relation to commissioned reports is the forensic anthropologist Paco

¹³⁵ "Euskadi y Madrid, entre 'dos memorias', *El Independiente*, 19 April 2017, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.elindependiente.com/politica/2017/02/19/euskadi-y-madrid-entre-dos-memorias/>

¹³⁶ López Romo has carried out presentations at different places, sometimes in the company of other 'sanctioning voices' of male professors or lawyers, such in the presentation in San Sebastián: "Presentación en San Sebastián del Informe Foronda. Los efectos del terrorismo en la sociedad vasca", *Blog de Gaizka Fernandez Soldevilla*, 8 July 2015, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://gaizkafernandez.com/2015/07/08/presentacion-en-san-sebastian-del-informe-foronda-los-efectos-del-terrorismo-en-la-sociedad-vasca-de-raul-lopez-romo/>

¹³⁷ Example on radio: "José Ramón Intxaurbe: "Los amenazados por ETA han tenido sensación de soledad", *Onda Cero*, Podcast, 11 April 2016, accessed 31 March 2019, https://www.ondacero.es/programas/mas-de-uno/audios-podcast/entrevistas/jose-ramon-intxaurbe_20160411570b4e6c4beb28169be6a8c8.html

Example on television, at *La Sexta* Broadcast: Intxaurbe: "A un amenazado por ETA le pintaron su portal con sangre", *YouTube*, 9 May 2016, accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv9GMthH4Nc>

¹³⁸ "El informe del miedo", *El País*, 9 April 2016, accessed 31 March 2019, https://elpais.com/politica/2016/04/09/actualidad/1460218746_128910.html

Etxeberria, the coordinator of the report on torture. He is seen as a legitimate voice recognised by different sectors of Basque society. Even a television show at the Basque broadcast was created around his figure, with Etxeberria and a journalist going through different cases he has resolved during his career.¹³⁹

This idea of men sanctioning female voices also explicitly appeared during the only interview I carried out in which the husband of the interviewee participated. He claimed his role of being *'el papeles'* ('the papers' in literal translation) referring to his knowledge on historical data, on books and other formalised knowledge. When I stated I wanted to interview only women, so he would realise that it would be better for him to leave the room, he affirmed the idea of women leading the post-ceasefire process and put as an example women who have been the leading figures for the claims of ETA victims. He stated that he collaborated in 'everything they command', followed by the affirmation that one of the important books written by one of the women was created due to 'his existence'. In the space of the interview, in relation to the role of women in the socio-political process and in their expression through materials such as a book, he had to be there in order to validate the voices of women.

In the gendered configuration of recognition and victimhood in the Basque context, (mainly male) sanctioning figures inscribe and also constrain the experiences of violence of the armed conflict. These 'dispassionate investigators' appear as legitimate narrators of the 'truth' about the armed conflict, defining the violence that is recognised as such through the emotional testimony of the (mainly female) victims.

Emotional and Ethical Landscape

Narratives articulated in spaces of inscription are part of the creation of an emotional and ethical landscape for the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country. Concepts such as violence are stated within a language of emotions. Those deemed as victims are placed as taking a leading role in the construction of convivencia. Their voices raise moral and ethical statements, configuring a gendered model of the citizen in the convivencia scenario. In his analysis of how emotions work in 'post-traumatic

¹³⁹ "Paco Etxeberria y Dani Álvarez, al frente de 'El lector de huesos'", *Deia*, 11 August 2016, accessed 31 March 2019, <http://www.deia.com/2016/08/11/ocio-y-cultura/comunicacion/paco-etxeberrria-y-dani-alvarez-al-frente-de-el-lector-de-huesos>

contexts', Zembylas (2013: 180) refers to 'technology of affect' (drawing on Hook, 2007) as 'the mechanisms through which emotions come to be instrumentalized, containing certain social norms and dynamics of inclusion/exclusion with respect to one's self and the Other'. I state that the creation of an emotional landscape is part of mechanisms of pacification, with the display of certain emotions that respond to particular interests in the maintenance of the configuration of power relations.

Pacification produces not just an order, but also the ideal citizen-subject (Jackson *et al.*, 2016), defining what is acceptable in this 'new' order and what is not. It is not just through repressive mechanisms, but also by what is expressed that the subject is constructed. Testimony configures the subject who utters it, in the public realm and in the intimate sphere. Testimony also configures the subject who listens, and the subjects that must listen in order to be part of the new configuration of the society.

Empathy and the Good Citizen



Figure 7. ‘Peace is Possible’. Image: The Mile of Peace. 2016.

We want to demonstrate that something is moving, that if we can be together, society must take note and can set about doing it too, because we must take advantage of the moment of peace we are in just now (‘The Mile of Peace’, 2016).

This is a quote by Rosa Rodero, widow of Basque Autonomous Community police sergeant Joseba Goikoetxea who was killed by ETA in 1993. It is the caption for one of the pictures above (figure 7) where Rodero talks with Edurne Brouard, daughter of Santi Brouard, member of the independentist left party killed by GAL in 1984. They talk under the gaze of the mayor of San Sebastian from the PNV, in what seems to be an approving stance without him being the protagonist. This photograph is part of an ensemble of scenes representing peace, in the installation entitled ‘Peace is Possible’ of ‘The Mile of Peace’ exhibition. The pictures represent examples of encounters, of the building of peace, led mainly by those who are widely recognised as victims in the socio-political context after the ceasefire. In the Basque Country, testimonies that are given public relevance are those who are not seen as ‘entrenched’, but the opposite:

they meet with ‘the other’, since they are empathetic, and they make a display of their suffering in order to get the empathy of the audience.

In initiatives set by Basque institutions, victims are depicted as exemplary for the construction of *convivencia* for they are shown as building a bridge between divided sides. In the presentation of the initiative *Eraikiz* (that also appears in one of the pictures of the cube ‘Peace is Possible’ in figure 7) their members described themselves as an ‘example of being able to live together’.¹⁴⁰ In their statement released in September 2015, the participants defined the group as ‘plural’ and ‘diverse’, and ‘decided to share reflections and experiences of the pain we have suffered, with a restorative and constructive spirit’. Relatives of people who were killed either by ETA or GAL or died as a consequence of state-sanctioned violence compose the initiative *Eraikiz*, promoted by the Basque government. During my meeting with the person in charge of the area on ‘Peace and Reconciliation’ in the Catholic Diocese of Vizcaya, he compared the ‘reconstruction’ of these victims with the work done by God with Jesus. While going over the excerpts of the biblical passages that are used in their reconciliation programme, his discourse pointed to empathetic victims becoming as exemplary as Jesus, who could break the ‘barrier of hatred’ and ‘reconcile two peoples linking them in an only body through a cross’.

The representation of the victims in the spaces of inscription set in the Basque Country are based on their good, so empathy can be raised towards them, while those depicted as evil have no place in the new scenario. Being the victim represented in the public space the person killed or their relative; they are all depicted as the good. This representation was especially clear in the artistic performance *Adiorik Gabe*. The tribute to the victims consisted of representing their intimate life, their love life, their family life, as a display of the good and the absurdity of the killing. The intrinsic goodness of the victims precludes questions on the complexity of the violence committed during the armed conflict and stops criticisms towards a compulsory empathetic stance.

¹⁴⁰‘Eraikiz’, *Basque government*, 11 September 2015, accessed 31 March 2009, https://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/uploads/attachments/6872/ERAIKIZ_CAST.pdf?1441983342

The creation of an emotional landscape for the post-ceasefire scenario in the context of the Basque Country relates to a global understanding of violence and trauma. Fassin and Rechtman (2009) analyse the predominance of what they call the ‘empire of trauma’ within a moral economy of humanitarianism. These authors affirm that trauma obscures the diversity and complexity of experiences, eliminating individual features through the focus on consensus (Ibid.:281). Trauma also ‘operates as a screen between the event and its context’ (Ibid.). The recognised and homogenised victim is the one affected by the violence that is targeted as the one to be eliminated by the society, while other violence is not put into question:

Both before and after the tsunami, the survivors in Aceh were already victims of political domination, military repression, and economic marginalisation. Both before and after Hurricane Katrina, the people of New Orleans were already victims of poverty and discrimination that reinforced class inequalities through racial distinctions. Trauma is not only silent on these realities; it actually obscures them (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009: 281).

In the Basque Country, the main elements in the representation of trauma and preventing debates about structural violence are the use of emotions such as empathy and suffering. Empathy is proved when one person who is seen as belonging to one of the ‘sides’ of the armed conflict is portrayed as open to listening to ‘the other’. They are shown as meeting with that ‘other’, coming together on the basis of empathy and common suffering. Empathy is displayed as a prerequisite for a good citizenship in the new society. Empathy towards suffering opens the door to establishing the ‘truth’ about the past. Empathy can lead to not questioning structures that have generated that suffering. A caution on empathy has also been expressed by different authors, stating that empathy creates a kind of assimilation, absorbing the story of the other (Cavarero, 2014: 91; Thaler, 2018: 34).

Emotions being displayed, mainly in relation with suffering, create the ‘good’ victim that must be listened to. Suffering gives legitimacy to testimonies, to their inclusion into the ‘victim’ realm. I was able to attend one of the sessions where a victim that is part of the programme *Adi-Adian* (or ‘victims as educators’, set by the Basque government) went to explain her experience to university students of social work. She narrated her suffering and the suffering of her children in relation to the murder of their father, going into intimate details of their lives. In the round of

comments at the end, the students expressed their admiration for her strength, for being able to keep her family going and for her capacity to forgive. It is her pain, her intimate life that was exposed for the sake of creating a healed society. The teacher of this degree in social work affirmed that her testimony was a good lesson for students on how to deal with mourning in Basque society.

Showing vulnerability can be transformative (as I explain in chapter 6), but it becomes problematic when this emotional exposure becomes a proof of the suffering experienced and an imperative to be listened to. This emotional exposure can reinforce gender stereotypes and displace from public recognition those who don't wish to expose their pain in the public sphere. The value given to a suffering widow connects with valuable attributes assigned to women, such as empathy, mothering care, or the lack of agency in the events that created the painful situation. Women as victims have a voice because they were the relatives of others. Their testimony is emotional; it arises from intimate explanations, in many occasions with no historical or political context attached to it. Their narratives are based on the consequences of the painful violence of an armed conflict that they did not decide to be involved in.

The display of emotions is what is expected from a female body. As Jaggar (1989: 164) affirms, '[w]omen appear to be more emotional than men because they, along with some groups of people of color, are permitted and even required to express emotion more openly'. Some male bodies also give public testimony in the context of Basque initiatives on memory.¹⁴¹ This could correspond to the 'inclusive pattern' of pacification mechanisms analysed above. The display of emotions is gendered since emotions are undervalued compared to 'rational' arguments in the patriarchal organisation of cultures and societies. Sara Ahmed (2013: 3), in her seminal book 'The Cultural Politics of Emotion', states that 'to be emotional is to have one's judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous'. To

¹⁴¹ As examples: Iñaki García Arrizabalaga, son of a person killed by the leftist group *Comandos Autónomos* in 1980, has participated in different groups (such as *Eraikiz*) and given testimony at different events (such as the one organised by the Social Forum in Navarre in November 2016); Iván Ramos, son of a woman killed in a petrol bomb attack in the town of Portugalete, gave testimony in his town as part of the project *Memoria Plaza* of the Institute of Memory of the Basque government consisting of testimonies on the armed conflict displayed in a travelling exhibition and through presentations delivered by selected local victims.

be emotional corresponds to the stereotype of victim as passive. They made no rational decision over what happened to them.

However, the subject position of the victim is complex and not reducible entirely to an effect of pacification. Being included in those recognised voices could have different impacts on the subject. Fitting in the description of a 'victim' could shape a gendered understanding of the role of women, but also give confidence to those women affirming their experiences of the past and their aims for the future. This can be the case for many of the participants in initiatives promoted by the Basque government, whose protagonists attend many different events. I could notice a difference between the women that I interviewed that were used to public appearances as recognised victims and those who were not.¹⁴² Whereas some of the latter were hesitant about having something to contribute to my research, thinking of their experience as unimportant, the former were more confident about the importance of their narratives.

Some women reappropriate the representation of the victim, in line with what Fassin and Rechtman (2009: 216) express when stating that '[a]s a tool of a politics of humanitarian testimony, trauma contributes to constructing new forms of political subjectivation and new relations with the contemporary world'. The image of a passive victim gets shattered when they perform unexpected roles. Then they can be socially punished. Victims are supposed to give testimony of their suffering, but not to take a political stance. Being recognised as a victim offers a language and some of them use it to claim their rights. In the case of the president of COVITE Consuelo Ordoñez, her rejection of an empathetic approach to accepting that all victims are equally linked by suffering¹⁴³ gives her the label of 'entrenched', in the context of the Basque Country. Being 'entrenched' connects with revenge and bitterness, and those emotions are not well regarded in the construction of the living-together scenario.

¹⁴² I became aware of this difference when my colleague and friend Lucy Kate Newby asked about the impact of the voices that were more 'heard' in this process and the ones who were less 'heard' after my presentation entitled 'Spaces of Acknowledgment and the Legitimation of the Past in the Basque Country' at the 7th Annual Conference of the Historical Dialogues, Justice, and Memory Network. Columbia University, New York City. 7-9th December 2017.

¹⁴³ "Consuelo Ordoñez: "Destituir a Urquijo es una cesión del PP al PNV contra las víctimas", *El Mundo*, 9 January 2017, accessed 1 August 2019,

<https://www.elmundo.es/pais-vasco/2017/01/09/587281dd46163f33138b4661.html>

The emotional landscape serves in the maintenance of a dichotomy of the good and the evil. The ‘good’ of the victims is shown either through showing the ‘innocent’ elements of the life of the murdered or through the exemplary and the good of their relatives. ‘The other’ is the one who does not show empathy towards them, towards the suffering. ‘The other’ is irrational, not controlling their emotions, out of time, out of the patriarchal modernity that establishes rationality as imperative and a linear line of progression that sets as primitive the emotions that do not fit in the narratives of the new era. In her analysis of emotions as cultural practices, Sara Ahmed (2013: 2) affirms that ‘evolutionary thinking has been crucial to how emotions are understood: emotions get narrated as a sign of ‘our’ prehistory, and as a sign of how the primitive persists in the present’. She adds that there is a hierarchy between emotions: some being signs of cultivation, while others are signs of weakness (Ibid.). In the case of the Basque context, an ‘elevated’ emotion, leading the current process of ‘*convivencia*,’ is that of empathy, while revenge is a ‘lower’ emotion that discredit those who are labeled as emotional and vindictive.

The use of a language of emotions is necessary in the creation of the common ‘we’, in the legitimation of the social order through mechanisms of pacification. Empathy could be a value that opens the way to listening to different experiences, to the understanding of different dimensions of violence, to the enhancement of solidarity and to the questioning of inequality. However, when it is used in a scenario that ‘good relations’ prevail over criticism, where consensus is the abstract ideal that strives to glue any cracks in the structure that sustains capitalism and patriarchy, empathy contributes to the creation of hierarchies of victimhood and serves as the fences of a ‘we’ where critiques of the process are set apart. Emotions sanctioned as an example to follow establishes the inclusion in the ‘we’, while leaving others as not belonging in the new scenario.

Thou Shalt not Kill

In his analysis of the voice given to those described as victims, Gabriel Gatti (2016: 185) states that victims have been placed at the top of the moral ladder, and from there they climbed to other summits such as justice or public policies beyond issues related with victimhood. The moral value of the victim connects with the image of the victim

as innocent, which gives the victim ‘the absolving capacity of all kinds of evil, past and future’, as stated by philosopher and facilitator of encounters such as the Glencree meetings Galo Bilbao Alberdi (2017). When described as ‘innocent’, it is ‘the other’ who is blamed for the violence, as affirmed by Zulaika and Douglass (1996: 130-132) in their analysis of the figure of the terrorist.

Through the voices of those recognised as victims, the main motto in the scenario of *convivencia* is ‘*matar estuvo mal*’, which I translate as ‘killing was wrong’ although in Spanish the word used is ‘bad’, with the moral connotation that it entails. The utterance of this statement is a way to be able to speak in the public sphere. As an example, in the meetings of the local forum Sareka, some participants contemplated this statement as a basic requirement for people to participate in the group, defining it as the ‘ethical basis’ for conversations. In the post-ceasefire scenario in the Basque Country, rejecting killing as the peak of expressions of violence goes parallel to the imperative of ‘not justifying’ violence, especially ETA violence. The impediment on talking about the causes of violence through the accusation of supporting violence might be dangerous when prosecution against apologies for terrorism is still happening. It might also be a way for censorship and self-censorship, as Butler explains in reference to the 9/11 attack on the United States, when ‘anyone who sought to understand the "reasons" for the attack on the United States was regarded as someone who sought to "exonerate" those who conducted that attack’ (Butler, 2006: xiii).

Disclaimers on ‘justifying’ the violence of ETA precede statements in diverse spaces, from the reports on human rights violations to discussions in the living-together local forum or during the interviews. In the document ‘Towards a Shared Memory’, the inclusion of different victims and using the term ‘political violence’ instead of ‘terrorism’ was made clear to not be a ‘justification’ of ‘any violent actions’ (Argituz, 2015: 6), as if not using the word ‘terrorism’ was equated with justifying that violence. In the interview with one of the members of Sareka local forum, she talked about violence during Francoism as something that must be acknowledged, connecting it with the causes of ETA violence. She made clear that stating that link did not mean making an apology for violence. In one of the meetings of the Sareka group, one participant described as ‘justificative memory’ what people from the independentist left do when not carrying out ‘recent memory’ but ‘historical memory’. This

participant explained that this meant ‘to connect what has happened with ETA with the Franco regime, something that they see as the same war, when it is not linked’.¹⁴⁴ He added that this was a getaway for the *izquierda abertzale* so ‘not to condemn what was wrong’. In this case, reference to the historical context where violence developed is depicted as a justification for violence rather than part of an explanation.

The creation of moral and ethical statements as requirements to be able to participate in dialogues and to be listened to creates a situation that impedes analysis of causes of violent conflict and obstructs the possibility to discuss the existence of different violences.

Conclusions

In the post-ceasefire scenario in the Basque Country, different mechanisms establish hegemonic understandings of violence that target one specific violence set in the past (mainly the armed activity of ETA), and conceal violence that continues in a patriarchal capitalist society. The monopoly of violence held by definition by the

¹⁴⁴ This division between ‘historical memory’ and ‘recent memory’ echoes an institutional approach taken by Spanish and Basque institutions. In Spain and the Basque Country, ‘historical memory’ has been described as corresponding to the period set by the law known with that name approved by the Spanish parliament in 2007. This law recognised the victims of the Spanish Civil War and of the dictatorship, from 1936 to 1975. ‘Recent memory’ points to what was set as the period of ‘terrorism’ by the Spanish law 29/2011 on victims of terrorism: a period of time starting in 1960, considered as when ETA began its activity. In the Basque Country, the violence that has happened from 1936 to 2011 has been split into those two different periods. There is a differentiation in research projects and timing in the release of reports. The report on human rights violations addressing violence during the armed conflict within the period 1960-2013 (Carmena *et al.* 2013) was released in 2013. In July 2019, the Basque government published a report on human rights violations committed during the Spanish Civil War and the first period of Francoism, including the years 1936-1945 (UNESCO and Aranzadi, 2019). This report was presented as the first step of a later report that will comprise the years 1936-1975. In a statement released by the Social Forum with the conclusions of an encounter of victims of state-sanctioned violence in March 2019, the participants in this encounter criticised the differentiation between ‘historical memory’ and ‘recent memory’ made by institutions in the Basque Autonomous Community and in Navarre. They stated that this differentiation is ‘discriminatory’ and ‘hampers an inclusive approach without categorisations among victims’. They suggested avoiding these temporal distinctions and using ‘historical memory’ to refer to all the violence suffered in the past. (“Conclusiones del encuentro celebrado el 16 de marzo entre víctimas de distintas violencias practicadas desde estamentos oficiales y representantes de las entidades que conforman el Foro Social Permanente”, *Naiz*, 16 March 2019, accessed 1 August 2019, https://www.naiz.eus/media/asset_publics/resources/000/588/194/original/20190401-conclusiones-victimas-estado-foro.pdf)

modern liberal state (as in Weber's -1994: 310- analysis where the state is 'the source of the "right" to use violence') continues to be legitimated and unquestionable through pacification mechanisms implemented in this transitional period.

Spaces of inscription have been analysed as part of the struggle for recognition in the Basque post-ceasefire context. The narratives deployed in these spaces set up by institutions influence the approach taken by a number of initiatives on memory, affecting social meanings given to violence. Pacification narratives that keep the monopoly on violence in the state and create acceptance of a system where multiple violences are not put into question can permeate spaces of inscription. As part of these narratives, the concept of *convivencia* (presented in chapter 2 as the most accepted term used to define the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country) is being managed to configure a particular memory of the past and the ideal citizenship for the future. In the absence of a Truth Commission in the context of the Basque Country, these spaces of inscription are acting to set the truth about the violence of the armed conflict. Mainly female voices, which express their experiences of violence through mainly male sanctioning figures, convey values that correspond to stereotypes such as women as essentially empathetic. Victims represent the embodiment of the truth of the past and articulate the emotional and ethical landscape for the future, where emotions such as empathy are set as a requirement for the renewed citizenship. Emotional and moral imperatives hinder critiques over the post-ceasefire socio-political process, and avoid the responsibility of institutions that had a part in the armed conflict.

Identifying how pacification mechanisms work through spaces of inscription can allow for challenging and going beyond constraining memory frames. The discourses and practices that I am exploring could work at the level of disciplinary arrangements over the population and reinforce logics of domination. However, as I will examine later in this thesis, those who participate in spaces of inscription can make use of them in unexpected ways and transcend their limitations. Using these transmitters can give an active stance to those that are depicted as passive victims. Through the development of relationships happening within these spaces, recognition can merge with acknowledgment and expand definitions of violence.

5 - WHAT VIOLENCE MATTERS



Figure 8. Feminist Graffiti. Image: Andrea García González. 2017.

‘*Hau ez da gure bakea*’: ‘This is not our peace’, in Basque. This statement written in a graffiti (figure 8) is accompanied by the claim *#Ni una menos*, which in Spanish translates as ‘not one less’, in reference to an international campaign that started in Latin America against the murder of women. Peace and violence are entangled in this graffiti, questioning the current post-ceasefire process in relation to what violence matters. Feminist voices (the mural is signed by the feminist organisation *Bilgune Feminista*)¹⁴⁵ were pointing at the fact that violence has many layers and multiple dimensions, not all of them considered in the current Basque socio-political process. I bumped into this graffiti on my way to attend the event ‘Violence of Persecution (Socialisation of Suffering)’ held to denounce the harassment suffered by politicians opposing ETA during the armed conflict. This town (Arretxe in its pseudonym) has been connected with the violent conflict in reports and even in bestseller books.

¹⁴⁵ *Bilgune Feminista*, as stated previously in this thesis, is one of the organisations that belong to the *izquierda abertzale* movement. This Basque feminist organization was set up in 2002 in order to merge feminist demands and Basque pro-independence claims.

Arretxe has become an example of tensions among the population and different levels of violence committed. However, in none of those references was the violence highlighted by this mural being taken into account.

The need to draw attention to gender relationships as a way to understand logics of violence has been highlighted by different scholars. ‘No peace can exist without addressing gender relationships’, states Rita Laura Segato (2016) in her book ‘The War against Women’. She affirms that gender relationships are the basis of other forms of domination.

This structure, which we refer to as ‘gender relations’, is, by itself, *violentogénica*¹⁴⁶ and potentially genocidal, due to the fact that the masculine position can only be achieved -acquired as a status- and reproduced as such by exercising one or more dimensions of a package of powers, that is, of intertwined forms of domination: sexual, war, intellectual, political, economic and moral (Segato, 2016: 83).

In relation to the question about how the war can come to a halt, in particular the war scenario expanding in Latin America, Segato (Ibid.: 23) answers: ‘dismantling, with the collaboration of men, the mandate of masculinity, that is, dismantling the patriarchy, because it is the pedagogy of masculinity that makes war possible and without a gender peace there can be no true peace’. As an analytical tool, feminist approaches to armed violence and peacebuilding have claimed that gender is essential to uncover the distribution of power, especially in regards to how, in an intersectional analysis, gender can reveal the unequal distribution of power that leads to the escalation of the conflict (Sharoni, 2010).

The stress put by feminist scholars on the need to tackle the roots of the violence finds similarities with the work of one of the most well known scholars on peacebuilding, Johan Galtung. His first arguments on a definition of peace created a frame where the end of an armed violent conflict had to be tackled not just in relation to the end of the armed violence (what he called ‘negative peace’ in his early work - 1964), but also addressing other kinds of violence going on in the society. This

¹⁴⁶ The term *violentogénica* is difficult to translate. It adds to the word ‘violence’ the suffix – *génica*, which means relative to or the origin of. Using this concept, Segato is stating that the structure of ‘gender relations’ is intrinsically violent.

violence can be direct, structural or cultural, committed and suffered by different actors.¹⁴⁷ Several studies and policies have included structural and cultural change into peacebuilding processes. However, in some of these analyses, social, economic, political change focuses on the demand for a better balance between divided groups (such in Aiken, 2013 and Hamber and Kelly, 2005). The understanding of structural and cultural violence gets limited to its connection with the armed conflict.

A narrow definition of violence established in pacification narratives prevents us from understanding the multiplicity of violence, the entanglement of different manifestations of violence and their common basis. In this chapter, I investigate how that narrow understanding of violence is reinforced through the delegitimation of certain voices, mainly the voices attached to the image of the evil terrorist and voices of all those that are represented as the fearful others that want to go back to the violence of the past. On the other hand, different voices challenge this narrative path in relation to violence and claim the need to understand the inequalities that are the basis of multiple forms of violence. Graffiti, such as the example that opens this chapter (figure 8), aims to disrupt hegemonic narratives by using the streets as the space to denounce the structural violence that is perpetuated through pacification narratives. In this chapter, I also delve into experiences of violence that are neglected in hegemonic narratives in constructing *convivencia* in the Basque Country. I examine these exclusions as responding to a gender order that establishes what counts as relevant enough to be presented in the privileged place of enunciation of the public space. Spaces where women's experiences can be heard allow for more complex and broadened meanings of violence to be raised. Naming and identifying violence is important in order to protect vulnerable bodies from it, and to understand the roots of violence in systems of oppression. A post-ceasefire process could be an opportunity to open debates on vulnerable bodies, on violences that many times do not get named

¹⁴⁷ Galtung (1996: 2, 31) defines direct violence as the one that includes physical and verbal violence and is intentional; structural violence refers to the indirect violence that comes from the socio-economic structure itself; cultural violence serves to legitimise direct and structural violence, motivating actors to commit direct violence or to omit counteracting structural violence.

as such and to challenge the paradigm that perpetuates inequalities and power relationships that are at the roots of violence.

Delegitimised Voices

The process of creating what is presented as ‘inclusive memory’ in the post-ceasefire process (as analysed in the previous chapter) generates exclusions of those considered as ‘the other’ in the pacification period. In this sense, exclusions are justified by the need of creating a ‘delegitimising memory’, which is set as the moral path of the pacification process hinging on narratives based on ‘human rights’ and ‘democratic’ values. I investigate how different voices and actors in the post-ceasefire process are being characterised in order to be excluded.

The main actor banished from public discourses is the figure of the evil terrorist. As analysed in other representations of the terrorist subject, it is the heinous criminal whose ‘mere invocation would appear to foreclose the need for any further discussion’ (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 149). In addition to this outcast figure, other voices are put aside as their actions and emotions are not appropriate under the representation of a harmonious scenario of *convivencia*. They are those depicted as ‘out of time’, as if they were not following the peacebuilding path and wanted to go back to the violence of the past. They are also the ones charged as unreasonable and unempathetic, unsuitable for the emotional landscape that the pacification narrative sets.

The Evil Voice of the Terrorist

*Ese relato tiene que tener un enemigo claro: el que ha practicado la violencia. A la próxima generación que le quede claro que el malo es quien ha practicado la violencia porque le ha salido de las pelotas.*¹⁴⁸

[‘That account of the past must have a clear enemy: the one who has practiced violence. The next generation has to get the clear message that the bad guy was the one who committed violence just for the hell of it’].

¹⁴⁸ I keep the original quote in Spanish since the expressions being used have specific connotations in this language that is part of the analysis of the statement.

In Arretxe, the same town where I ran into the feminist mural, a politician utters this statement in the ‘Violence of Persecution’ event held in May 2017. This politician is part of the group organising this event described as having the goal to create a ‘comprehensive memory of the torment’. In his account, violence is depicted as committed just because. There is no reason behind the actions of those depicted as ‘the violent’. The politician, in the quote above, uses a common expression in Spanish to refer to the unreasonable use of that violence, a sexist expression nonetheless: ‘*porque le ha salido de las pelotas*’. The direct translation would be ‘because they’ve got balls’. However, this is not the translation of the meaning. In English, this expression conveys bravery, whereas the politician was referring to the stupidity of the violent actions. The protagonist of this quote depicts the violent people as if they were all men, and as if masculinity had to be reinforced through violence. Even though this statement could open an interesting debate on the gendered nature of violence, it is stated so as to prevent those portrayed as the irrational evil to have opportunities to express themselves. During the post-ceasefire process, ‘the violent other’ is pushed aside by creating a representation that acts to delegitimise their voices, and also through directly banning their expression from the public space.

‘The violent other’ holds the opposite values that are set for the emotional landscape of *convivencia*. They are morally and ethically wrong, they are not innocent, and they are not moved by rationality. As explored in the previous chapter, the configuration of an emotional landscape in the pacification process entails the creation of a dichotomy of the good and the evil where the latter is not considered as in the same stage of evolutionary rationality. As stated by Aretxaga (2000: 64), ‘the terrorist other’ has become the contemporary savage. The violent people of ETA are seen as those ‘others’ with no humanity and who also dehumanise ‘the other’ through killing or threatening them. In the exhibition ‘The Mile of Peace’ of the San Sebastian European Capital of Culture 2016, one of the pictures depicts the grave of one of the first politicians murdered by ETA, Gregorio Ordoñez, covered with graffiti stating ‘*Gora ETA*’ (‘Rise up ETA’). The photograph is entitled ‘Dehumanisation’. This description refers to both the murderers and the ones who support that murder through the graffiti. In the caption, the words of Consuelo Ordoñez demonstrate the dehumanisation: ‘ETA committed murder to impose a totalitarian, discriminatory

political project'. They are not fully humans as they are evil. The representation of wickedness is assimilated with totalitarianism.

Another trope used in the representation towards 'the terrorist other', and also towards those considered as complicit with terrorism, is the label of 'fascist'. Different interviewees, close to associations supporting victims of ETA, represented the cruelty of 'the other' stating that they are 'fascists' or 'nazis'. Under these labels, 'the other' gets equated with the wicked recognised by history in relation to the Holocaust, or the connection with the Spanish history of the dictatorship. The model of the Spanish Transition as rupture haunts the post-ceasefire process. Those defined as totalitarian terrorists are the ones that did not accept a closure on the times of the dictatorship and continued carrying out violence in times of what is described as a democratic stage. While some interviewees, including some of the ones close to ETA victims, talked about the legitimacy of ETA's actions during the dictatorship, those actions were described as terrorist after the death of Franco. In order to demonstrate the fascist characterisation of the members of ETA, some of these interviewees stressed that many of the politicians that were targets of ETA struggled against Franco and suffered the repression of the dictatorship in the past.¹⁴⁹ This link, from being targets of Franco to being targets of ETA, affirmed the idea of ETA as fascist. ETA did not accept the fracture of the Transition so acted in a fascist way.

There is an unequal representation of the violence committed by 'the evil terrorist' and state-sanctioned violence. The violence committed by successive Spanish governments during the parliamentary democracy is displayed in public discourse as 'failures' of the institutions. It is not violence foundational to the state, but simply abuse that has to be mended. In 'The Mile of Peace', a photograph portrays a murder committed by the paramilitary group GAL in the south of France. The title is 'Attacks against Democracy'. With this title, victims of that murder are not placed at the forefront. It is 'democracy' which appears to be the main victim. Democracy is

¹⁴⁹ Spanish media has also frequently highlighted the link between those murdered by ETA and its commitment against Franco. An example is the representation of the killing of the journalist Lopez de Lacalle. The day of the murder, the Spanish newspaper *El País* (with an editorial line close to the Spanish socialist party) set in the headline that he was a 'historical fighter against fascism' ("ETA asesina a José Luis López de Lacalle, un histórico luchador contra el fascismo", *El País*, 8 May 2000, accessed 6 April 2019, https://elpais.com/diario/2000/05/08/espana/957736801_850215.html).

represented as wounded by the extraordinary violence that should have never happened. Begoña Aretxaga (2000: 47) describes how, after the Transition, democracy in Spain became fetishised, representing ‘a new, European, modern, successful form of life’, produced by ‘the forgetting of the traces that linked the Spanish democracy to the former regime’. In this transitional period of the post-ceasefire in the Basque Country, the democratic regime is not put into question. Aretxaga (Ibid.: 64) affirms that ‘state terrorism must be contemplated not as a deviation of democracy, a corruption of power or "power gone awry," but as an intrinsic part of contemporary practices of power’. In Aretxaga’s (Ibid.) account ‘[t]hese practices of power are deployed within a universe of fantasy in which the terrorist “Other” has become the contemporary savage [...] against whom the state can indulge in the excess of terrifying violence’.

Pacification narratives remove ‘the violent other’ from the process of building *convivencia* pointing to the violence they commit as the one that matters, the one that has to be eliminated in the new society. Basque prisoners are the embodiment of the terrorist evil that has to be removed. They have been put apart from the society when they were imprisoned, and in the current narratives they must stay voiceless, and even not visible. The references to Basque prisoners include all those that have been in prison under accusation of terrorism, regardless of the prisoners affirming their belonging to ETA or not. Basque prisoners are depicted as breaking the creation of *convivencia* and inflicting suffering to the recognised victims. Institutions responsible of the DSS2016 programme censored part of the exhibition ‘Out of Place, Out of Time’, based on a project done in a Basque prison. The work made by Basque prisoners accused of belonging to ETA was removed under the argument that they could create more suffering to the victims.¹⁵⁰ The elimination of the artwork was not due to messages conveyed in it, but for who made it. No representation of or made by members and former members of ETA and those seen as supporters is allowed to be part of the building of the *convivencia* stage.

¹⁵⁰ “Comisarios de una exposición de DSS2016 denuncian la "censura" de dos obras por estar realizadas por presos de ETA”, *Europa Press*, 17 november 2016, accessed 6 April 2019, <http://www.europapress.es/euskadi/noticia-comisarios-exposicion-dss2016-denuncian-censura-dos-obras-estar-realizadas-presos-eta-20161117151654.html>

The prohibition of representations linked with Basque prisoners has a longer trajectory. From the late 2000s, different court decisions and institutional orders have established a ban over photographs with the faces of Basque prisoners so they could not be shown in the public sphere, including in demonstrations and in spaces of social gatherings. The argument to remove pictures and banners and to prosecute those responsible for showing those images has been that they represent an incitement to terrorism and damage towards the victims.¹⁵¹ These prohibitions led to clashes between supporters of the prisoners with the police (especially with the Basque police, who were in charge of removing the pictures), with consequent detentions during riots and fines imposed to those demanding to be able to show the image of the prisoners. In the current scenario, body representation of the prisoners is still prohibited,¹⁵² and their physical presence intended to be concealed. Homages to prisoners released from jail is denounced by the organisation of victims of terrorism COVITE. Interestingly, this organisation publishes on their website every homage they are notified of, giving them more visibility. In a memorial for the politician killed by ETA Gregorio Ordoñez that I attended in January 2017, Consuelo Ordoñez pointed in her speech at the narratives being created through performances in the streets. In front of the mayor of

¹⁵¹ In 2007, Daniel Portero, son of a public prosecutor killed by ETA and president of an association of victims of terrorism named *Dignidad y Justicia*, filled a complaint to the Spanish court *Audiencia Nacional* under the argument that the photographs of Basque prisoners shown in different stands at the popular *fiestas* in Bilbao was an incitement to terrorism. Members of the groups that showed these images were prosecuted. Even though they were found not guilty, in 2011 the Spanish High Court *Tribunal Supremo* sentenced that showing images of prisoners was glorification of terrorism. The person in charge of the Department of Interior of the Basque government at that time affirmed that the sentence endorsed the actions taken by the Basque police against exhibition of photographs as part of a ‘zero-tolerance policy against terrorism’ that entailed ‘to take public spaces from those that practice, justify or support violence’ (“El Supremo corrige a la Audiencia y ve como delito mostrar fotos de etarras”, *El Mundo*, 8 June 2011, accessed 3 July 2019, <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/06/08/paisvasco/1307540733.html>)

¹⁵² In demonstrations of relatives of prisoners that I attended during fieldwork, this prohibition is made explicit with the participants of the demonstration holding posters with blank faces crossed by the word *debekatua* (‘banned’ in Basque).

Moreover, in the popular *fiestas* in Bilbao in August 2019, one of the collectives working on support of Basque prisoners displayed in their stand the faces of prisoners with their eyes covered. The first night of the *fiestas*, the Basque police removed the pictures after the Spanish Special Court for Terrorism *Audiencia Nacional* alleged that it constituted a ‘humiliation towards the victims’ (“La Ertzaintza se presenta en la txosna de Txori Barrote para retirar las fotografías de presos”, *Naiz*, 18 August 2019, accessed 1 September 2019, https://bilbotarra.naiz.eus/en/info_bilbotarra/20190818/la-ertzaintza-se-presenta-en-txori-barrote-para-retirar-las-fotografias-de-presos).

San Sebastian attending the memorial, she criticised the Basque nationalist party PNV running the city for allowing ‘the terrorists to take the streets’ in reference to a homage of a Basque prisoner held weeks before, concluding that ‘the PNV is one of the biggest problems for delegitimising terrorism’.

The expression of ‘the evil terrorist’ is trying to be banned, marginalised and delegitimated. In the post-ceasefire scenario, only representations that affirm an image of the terrorist as with lack of rationality and repentance for the suffering caused are accepted. The restorative encounters called ‘Nanclares encounters’ (explained in chapter 2) have been depicted in a theatre play titled ‘*Los Ojos del Otro*’ (‘The Eyes of the Other’). Exhibited in theatre venues and in educational spaces, the play has been frequently followed by discussion with some of the victims who were part of the initiative. In the play, the terrorist blames himself while wondering why he acted in that violent way, why he had to kill another human, as if he were possessed in the past by a kind of an evil spirit. The terrorists were evil, with no sense of reality and no humanity, but they can become good, through the encounter, through redemption. This redemption can come from repentance and apologies. These prisoners of the ‘Nanclares encounters’ have appeared on the media, on interviews in Basque and Spanish television,¹⁵³ or have written books (e.g. Rekarte, 2015). Those voices appearing on media and being echoed in daily conversations affirm the futility of the use of violence and the image of the terrorist as brainwashed.

In the context studied, discourses that reinforce the exclusion of ‘the violent other’ get materialised in the aim to ban all those connected to terrorism from public appearances. Basque prisoners have become the embodiment of the main violence that has to be removed from the scenario of *convivencia*, in an explicit elimination of their expression.

Unacceptable Responses in the Pacification Context

In the pacification narratives of the post-ceasefire process, there are certain accepted affective responses, while others are displaced and portrayed as breaking the new

¹⁵³ “Iñaki Rekarte: "Lo que sientes es felicidad cuando has cometido un atentado", *La Sexta*, 10 May 2015, accessed 6 April 2019, https://www.lasexta.com/programas/salvados/mejores-momentos/inaki-rekarte-que-sientes-felicidad-cuando-has-cometido-atentado_201505105724f6496584a81fd882f62f.html

aspired equilibrium being built after the shattering violence of the past, or depicted as trying to go back to that violence. Emotions that are not domesticated in this process, such as empathy used as a to block questions on the causes and roots of violence (as analysed in previous chapter), are connected with lack of sound and sensibility and dangerous for the building up of the stage of *convivencia*.

A recurrent argument to discredit protests is to portray those protests as bringing back ‘the violent past’. In May 2017, the youth independentist organisation *Ernai* carried out a protest against the construction of an incineration plant near San Sebastian. The action consisted of throwing rubbish at the headquarter of the Basque nationalist party PNV. It was labelled as violent by mainstream media and politicians. The independentist left party was asked to condemn it under the argument that, if not, they were reproducing and legitimising the violence of the past.¹⁵⁴ In the day against torture, the independentist left called for demonstrations in front of the police stations of the *Ertzaintza* (Basque police), what again was considered ‘images that go back to past times’.¹⁵⁵ A demonstration was called in Pamplona in March 2017 as part of different events organised by a group called *Errepresioari Autodefentsa* (‘Self-defense against Repression’) to protest against state repression. In the statement read by two people with masks, they referred to the post-ceasefire process as a context of ‘social peace’ where struggling for radical changes entails more vulnerability in a situation of ‘direct and indirect attacks by repressive forces’.¹⁵⁶ Riots after the demonstration led to people detained being charged with accusation of terrorism.¹⁵⁷ During my fieldwork, also those protesting against gentrification of Basque cities were described

¹⁵⁴ “Sortu resta importancia al ataque de sus juventudes a la sede guipuzcoana del PNV”, *ABC*, 9 May 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, https://www.abc.es/espana/pais-vasco/abci-sortu-resta-importancia-ataque-juventudes-sede-guipuzcoana-201705091325_noticia.html

¹⁵⁵ “Egibar dice que las concentraciones ante la Ertzaintza "retrotraen al pasado", *Deia*, 16 February 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, <http://www.deia.com/2017/02/16/politica/euskadi/egibar-dice-que-las-concentraciones-ante-la-ertzaintza-retrotraen-al-pasado->

¹⁵⁶ “Nueva dinámica contra la represión: Errepresioari autodefentsa”, *Kaos en la Red*, 2 February 2017, accessed 3 July 2019, <https://kaosenlared.net/nueva-dinamica-contra-la-represion-errepresioari-autodefentsa/>

¹⁵⁷ “Prisión sin fianza por terrorismo para los detenidos en los incidentes de Iruñea”, *Deia*, 13 March 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, <http://www.deia.com/2017/03/13/politica/euskadi/prision-sin-fianza-por-terrorismo-para-los-detenidos-en-los-incidentes-de-irunea>

by media and politicians as ‘turismophobics’ and their actions described as ‘attacks’, ‘violent acts’¹⁵⁸ and an ‘intimidatory campaign’.¹⁵⁹ Anthropologists Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004: 20) refer to times of ‘domestic peace’ when ‘[e]veryday forms of state violence’ are accepted by a public consensus that is based primarily on a new mobilisation of an old fear of the mob, the mugger, the rapist, the Black man, the undeserving poor’. In the Basque context, the fear that gets mobilised in order to settle the pacification process is the reference to the violence of the past to be back.

The representation of some actors as being out of time, linked to the armed violence of the past, is dangerous in a context where criminalisation leads to detentions for alleged terrorism. The group ATA (*Amnistia Ta Askatasuna* -‘Amnistia and Freedom’), a critical group with the politics of the independentist left party, has denounced attempts of being criminalised as if their stance implied willing to go back to the ‘armed struggle’. When I met with two female members of the group I felt also loaded with assumptions about their dissidence as if they were part of a clandestine collective. They set the meeting at a bar in the old part of a Basque city. Even though it is a small bar with a small entrance, I can easily locate it since it has a flag at the door with the amnesty symbol, which at that moment represents a dissident claim.¹⁶⁰ At the door, there is also a poster calling for the demonstration for the amnesty of the Basque prisoners that ATA organises. My perception of the clandestine group starts to dissolve. I arrive first and sit at the only table in the bar. I am facing the door. When Idoia arrives, she sits in front of me so with her back to the entrance. She does not seem to worry about checking out who comes to the bar. Neither does she seem to be concerned about people in the small bar that can easily listen to our conversation. Esti arrives later and acts in the same way. In our conversation, they express their

¹⁵⁸ “La turismofobia llega al País Vasco”, *El Nacional*, 9 August 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, https://www.elnacional.cat/es/sociedad/turismofobia-pais-vasco_181548_102.html

¹⁵⁹ “El PNV aprueba en Bizkaia una moción del PP que habla de «campana intimidatoria» de Ernai”, *Naiz*, 1 February 2018, accessed 7 April 2019, <https://www.naiz.eus/es/actualidad/noticia/20180201/el-pnv-aprueba-en-bizkaia-una-mocion-del-pp-que-habla-de-campana-intimidatoria-de-ernai>

¹⁶⁰ Although for years the main claim of the *izquierda abertzale* in relation to the Basque prisoners has been amnesty, in the post-ceasefire scenario the claim has focused on the end of the dispersion and the release of ill prisoners. The group *Sare* was created in 2014 to work on those claims. It is defined as a network and includes people from different political backgrounds, being one spokesperson Joseba Azcarraga, who was in charge of the Justice Department in the Basque government run by PNV from 2001 to 2009.

disagreement with the strategy adopted by the *izquierda abertzale* perceived as an imposition ‘from the top’, and as treachery since the main objectives of independentism and socialism have been left aside. They affirm that action in the street is not the strategy anymore, but that ATA’s political strategy is about civil disobedience, even though some sectors are depicting them as willing to take the armed struggle back for them to get isolated. Months after this conversation, an argument on this topic between ATA and the independentist left party *Sortu* jumped to the media. The leader of the party, Arnaldo Otegi, accused ATA of being dissidents of the will to abandon the ‘armed activity’. Members of ATA answered that Otegi was trying to put them in the spotlight for political repression.¹⁶¹ In conversations with members of different organisations of the *izquierda abertzale*, they insisted that ATA generates division, and that they use emotions to get their message across. The image of them driven by emotions, even described in the field as ‘primitive’ and with lack of political arguments, is recurrent. The dissidence coming from ATA gets discredited and refused under the argument of their emotional messages and the alleged link to violence.

Critical voices are discredited in different ways. Judith Butler (2006: xix), in her analysis of the restrictions on the public debate after 9/11, states that ‘dissent is quelled, in part, through threatening the speaking subject with an uninhabitable identification’. In an interview with Irene, who used to be active in support of ETA victims, she expressed her concern about being considered as opposing the peace-process even when she doesn’t agree with the current political scenario:

Now we all have to live together, and *aquí paz y después gloria* [and that's that]. [...] This discourse is promoted by the nationalist blocs, driving certain politics. And if you think differently, oh, then you are against the... you’re against the peace process [...] Well, either you shut up or you leave, because if you stay and talk, they point their finger at you. They know you think differently and that always has repercussions.

¹⁶¹ “ATA acusa a Otegi de "mentiroso" o "chivato" al colocarle "en el punto de mira de la represión”, *Deia*, 13 February 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, <http://www.deia.com/2017/02/13/politica/euskadi/ata-acusa-a-otegi-de-mentiroso-o-chivato-al-colocarle-en-el-punto-de-mira-de-la-represion->

Those who oppose the new order are seen as out of place, criminalised, or described as emotional, non-rational, or non-empathetic. In a visit to Colombia that I carried out in 2017, I was aware how, in a different context, concepts of suffering, empathy and victimhood also work in order to put protest aside. A person critical with the peace process told me he couldn't talk about his stance with hardly anyone, as criticising the peace process was seen as being non-empathetic with the suffering of people, mainly of the victims. Any criticism was silenced with this argument.

The Spanish Transition has been portrayed as a fracture in relation to the violence of the dictatorship. In this new transitional time, that same idea of a fracture with a violent past plays a part in the consideration of those breaking with the new equilibrium as violent, anachronistic figures. Those who do not accept the creation of harmonic relationships in the 'democratic' scenario of *convivencia* are regarded as opposing what it must mean to be human and live in a society with other human beings. In the conclusions of the handbook on reconciliation, Bloomfield (2003: 168) affirms: 'Unreconciled people, still driven by fear or suspicion, do not afford each other's human rights the same respect. If human rights are not upheld widely and collectively, the basis for democracy is fatally flawed.' The concept of 'human rights' serves as a rhetorical¹⁶² trope used to convince those who have experienced the armed conflict that there is a unique right way to follow in the path towards 'peace'. In the analysis of the notion of reconciliation handled by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, Brandon Hamber (2009) explains the situation of some families that criticised the ability of the TRC to grant amnesty. The Commission and the governing party ANC considered the families 'anti-reconciliation' and 'Archbishop Tutu himself said that he was "annoyed and very hurt for the many people I know who want to tell their stories" and hoped the group bringing the case would "get their come-uppance"' (Ibid.: 77). In this sense, a 'reconciliation' process defined in terms of harmonic relationships supervised by institutions whose aim is to appear as legitimate become a trap for those who do not agree with the process itself. Peacebuilding mechanisms establish a strict chronological model where the different temporalities being

¹⁶² I follow here the definition of rhetoric by O'Shaughnessy (2004: 78), who refers to rhetoric as the strategic and tactical use of language to persuade, and adds that '[t]he importance of rhetoric is that it persuades because it gives vivid definition – to fluid situation, to what would otherwise be vague or abstract'.

experienced by different sectors of the population are not taken into account. Those who do not accept ‘coming to terms with the past’, ‘moving on’ or accepting the conditions set in the new scenario could be excluded.

In what I have examined as ‘pacification narratives’, the meaning of violence is limited to armed violence perpetrated by ‘the other’, who usually does not belong to the institutions of the state and who is constructed as irrational and evil. This focus on an evil perpetrator has been criticised in other contexts, such in the analysis of the violence in Sierra Leone in the 1990s by Jackson (2013: 142) who states that this rhetoric ‘disguises the violence’ of the exploitation of the territory and ‘overlooks the impoverishment’. Trying to go beyond the targeted evil in contexts of armed conflict allows us to understand the violence that circulates in the everyday that is upheld by a structure based on interwoven strands of domination where gender plays an essential role.

The Violence that Does not Fit

Reflecting on queer feelings, Sara Ahmed (2013: 148) states that normative spaces are lived as comfortable by bodies that fit in. Taking this idea for the examination of normative accounts of the past, my analysis suggests that in the context of pacification mechanisms, some accounts of violence fit while others do not. They do not belong. These experiences of violence are displaced from hegemonic narratives of the armed conflict due to both a gender order that structures what counts as important enough to have a place in the public space of enunciation and the politics of memory created within the context of pacification that limits the meanings given to violence.

Dispossession of the Everyday

The day that the relative of Bego was detained, in a Spanish police operation against a number of alleged members of ETA, she travelled to Madrid to wait outside the court with the relatives of other detainees. They had to deal with the fear of their relatives being tortured and the possibility of sentence of decades of prison. At the end of the day, without any news, they went back to the parking lot to get their cars and find an inn to spend the night. Bego remembers how she was shocked when finding that ‘they had taken everything’, referring to their belongings that disappeared from the cars.

While explaining her distress about her relative being detained, she goes back and forth during the interview to the event that she considered one of the most violent for her ‘personally’, insisting on the idea that ‘we were left with nothing’. It was an attack to her intimacy, an invisible attack from an invisible state that targeted not only the detainees but also the relatives. Violence left them naked, dispossessed, adding more suffering to that which they were already experiencing. Her reaction shows incredulity of violence coming to that extreme, to that intimate space.

Juana exposed similar incredulity recalling the day when she had to confront what she referred to as a violent situation that disrupted her quotidian life. An incident that, she affirmed, made her more aware of the violence that ETA victims were suffering. There was a call that day for one of the frequent strikes organised by the *izquierda abertzale* to protest against actions carried out by the Spanish government, such as detentions. Juana received a phone call from the school of her daughter informing her that they had to shut down due to the protest. Juana left her work and drove to fetch her child. She got stuck in a barricade that blocked the roads entering the town, impeding the access to her daughter. In the interview, Juana seemed affected by the memory of it. The intimacy of violence comes up through an event that she does not normally recount when she talks publicly on her experiences of violence.

In the field, when I asked some of the interviewees about their first experience of violence, statements were connected with the armed conflict (since my main research questions pointed mainly at the armed violence), but taking a different approach to what appears as the violence of the conflict in public accounts. Their narratives pointed to disruptions in their daily life, to their everyday being shattered. In the public display of testimonies, women talk mainly about the violence that targeted their relatives. In the spaces created during this research to interview women, they also reflected about how violence affected them directly. Bego stressed during the interview that what she was expressing about violence was her personal experience: ‘personally’ is a word that precedes some of her statements. The violence that affected directly to her seems to be put in a different level of importance. It is the violence expressed in the private sphere, the violence that is perceived as insignificant in comparison with that of torture, prison, or killings.

Different interviewees described their experience of violence through quotidian details. Zoraida explained in an interview that we held at her place how she became

aware of the repression that the police forces committed against the population in the Basque Country. She used to go to the popular *fiestas* of a town in Guipúzcoa. That year, tension had risen over the possibility of the hoisting of the Spanish flag that could happen at the inaugural day. People were gathering in the main square of the town when, out of the blue, police started to beat people and armored vehicles appeared. Zoraida was shocked to see that everyone was beaten up, from elderly people to young ones. She expressed her fear and how the only thing she could think of was her sandals: she did not want to lose her sandals.¹⁶³

They started to beat everyone. Just like that. Beating everyone... Well, I remember that I could only think 'I'm going to lose my sandals; the shoes'. I only could think of that: 'I will lose my shoes' [...] I was very frightened. Because you hear of this, but you don't feel it in your own body. People can tell you, and when you are 17 or 18, it's almost like an anecdote, almost like fun... right? But when you experience it... Fear, panic, you don't know where to go...'

It was the first time that Zoraida experienced that violence, breaking with the expectation of a time for joy. She conveys the fear of the police brutality through her worry of being barefoot. Violence connects in these memories to experiences of dispossession that leave the protagonist with no control over the situation, stripped of their daily protections, of the shelter of their routines, of their expectations.

Violence and dispossession. For Maribel that dispossession is described in the lack of a happy childhood. Both in the interview and in the living-together group that she participates in, when she reflects on the violence of the armed conflict she links it with the violence suffered at home. She stated to me that, during her childhood, children 'were not worth anything' and they were badly treated. Maribel connects the violence she suffered with the experiences of her parents living through the repression of the dictatorship. Another reason she gives for that violence to happen is 'the anger they had, because they did not have life, because they did not sleep well' due to the exploitative conditions they had at work. The continuum of violence of the everyday,

¹⁶³ This memory leads me to remember the initial scene of the film '*Te doy mis ojos*' (2003), an excellent work done by Icíar Bollaín on domestic violence. Escaping from the violence of her husband, Pilar arrives to her sister's place and the only thing that she can articulate at her doorstep is 'I forgot to put on my shoes'. Details express disturbing feelings and abstract concepts such as violence.

conceived in connection with state repression, with the structural violence of working conditions, was manifested in her suffering of getting the abuse from her parents. Violence entangled and sharing common grounds: relationships of power in which violence is exerted towards ‘the other’, who is deemed and treated as inferior.

Gender politics are entangled with politics of memory when experiences of violence are considered as not related with the armed conflict, or not important enough to have a place in what is represented as the violence that matters. Gender structures and pacification mechanisms establish what narratives are the prevalent ones. A gendered structure of speech establishes what matters, what is important and what is considered as just anecdotes. In her analyses of the transformations caused by colonialism, anthropologist Rita Laura Segato (2016: 83) stresses that colonial modernity imposed the gender system as a binary and unequal structure in which the masculine position hijacks for itself the enunciation platform of universal truth called ‘public sphere’. What is hierarchically constituted as the ‘private’ lacks general interest, is considered not political, just a partiality, a question of intimacy, and it is kept in the margins (Ibid.: 83, 143).

Research questions posed to the participants in the field are also important in terms of the expression of different meanings given to violence. On the one hand, the presentation of my research could have limited the approach to violence. The purpose of my research was explained to interviewees as examining ‘reconciliation’, so it was assumed that armed violence was my main interest. Framing my research this way could have impeded expressions of violence that are not usually linked to armed violence. On the other hand, having introduced my research as focusing on the experiences of women had an impact on the narratives of the interviewees, made explicit by some of them. They expressed the consequences of violence on intimate levels, in accounts that some of the interviewees recognised that they don’t explain in other contexts.

The violence suffered by the women that I interviewed and how violence affected their daily lives also appeared when I switch off the voice recorder. Then complex emotions, the body, sexuality, and relationships were revealed. In our way to the café where we are about to talk about her perception of the armed conflict, Izaskun speaks about her health, and how she is trying to overcome the illness that she considers connected with her experiences of the armed conflict, as she was an active member of

the independentist left movement. Amaia, after ensuring that what I am interested in the specific experiences of women, and with the recorder off, reveals something to me that she has just recently learned about herself: how the torture she suffered affected her body in the most intimate sense, affecting her sexuality, her pleasure. Then we talk about how torture in a system marked by the domination of men over women could be understood always as sexual violence regardless of the different methods of torture being used. After we attend an event together, Belén comments on the time when she had to leave the Basque Country: it was not due to the armed conflict, but because of the violence she suffered from her husband. During the interview, she had not raised this violence that had a strong impact on her life.

The lack of confidence of many interviewees about their experiences being relevant for my research was recurrent. The gender order that establishes what counts as important is represented in the everyday: in the gatherings of the living-together local forum or in conversations over drinks at bars, mainly men recall memories of the armed conflict. Cristina, and Miren, and Olatz expressed that they were insecure about contributing with anything interesting to the interview. They affirmed they have not had the experiences that those referred as ‘the others’ have had. Those ‘others’ alluded to mainly the men in their groups, who were part of the visible politics in political parties, who show their knowledge on the history of the conflict through dates, law enactments, names, or give detailed accounts of stories behind known events. Narratives that are raised in interviews or in the daily interaction of fieldwork activities go beyond the gendered understanding of what experiences are regarded as ‘important enough’. Details that can be deemed as futile for the narratives presented in the public sphere find their expression in these encounters.

Violence appears more complex and widens its meanings when a feminist approach puts into question a gendered structure that situates some people over others, and some narratives and experiences over others. When looking at experiences of the everyday, violence appears in connection to power relationships, pointing to hierarchical categorisations that give more value to some people over other human and non-human beings. Violences remain in societies when hegemonic narratives prevent their expression, when debates on violence are focused on specific harms, and when the description of violence has to follow specific paths of articulation.

Hindrances to Expressions of Violence

Expression of experiences of violence is not only a question of individual agency, but of what spaces are created to give a place to those experiences. As seen in the previous chapter, what I call ‘spaces of inscription’ register the experiences of violence that reach specific requirements, while other voices get excluded. Sara Ahmed (2013: 152) describes ‘discomfort’ as ‘not simply a choice or decision [...] but an effect of bodies inhabiting spaces that do not take or “extend” their shape’. In the scenario of *convivencia*, spaces being created do not take the shape of experiences that do not fit under the meanings of violence that those spaces aim to convey, so those experiences find more difficulties to be heard. These experiences are excluded from hegemonic narratives of memory, but many times they are not in silence, since they can be heard when the protagonists find ways to speak about them, out of constrictive frames of the mechanisms of configuration of memory.¹⁶⁴

There are diverse factors that block the expression of different violence. First, I have explored how the gender order along with pacification mechanisms create a scenario where only some violence counts, and this violence can be expressed only in specific ways. Second, some voices are banned or criminalised. Third, the category of victim impedes the display of a variety of voices. Finally, conveying experiences of violence is tough and not everyone is ready and willing to explain their pain and suffering in order to legitimise their experiences.

On-going criminalisation for alleged terrorism and the fact that some organisations have been labelled as criminal (not only ETA has been considered a terrorist organisation, but also others of the left independentist movement) make the expression of memories from the past difficult. At different meetings of the Sareka living-together local forum, one of the participants, Rafael, insisted on making public the testimonies of the group in order to have more impact in the town. In one of the discussions, two people that had participated in political groups of the *izquierda abertzale* expressed their reluctance to publish their experiences on the Sareka’s Facebook page. Rafael encouraged them, as if their concern were a question of embarrassment. They answered that they felt comfortable to express their opinions

¹⁶⁴ Meaning the economic and political mechanisms that I have described as mechanisms of pacification, and also including as constrictive frames some limiting research frames.

and experiences in what they consider as the safe space of the group, but not in public statements since '*por escrito igual te empapelan...*' (meaning 'you could be arrested'), due to the fact that accusations of terrorism are still on.

Avoidance of talking about activities of the past due to criminalisation is embedded in daily conversations. In an informal conversation with Haizea and Iker, who were part of the youth independentist movement, I could see the difficulties that some people involved in groups of the *izquierda abertzale* have in speaking about their involvement in these organisations, the networks of solidarity they created, and their fears during the years of detentions and repression. Iker conveyed this idea stating that '[y]ou cannot talk about what you did, what you experienced, since some people have been in prison for six years for that reason [activities they carried out in the past]. You cannot say if you were involved in this or in that'. He explained to me fears he experienced, from the fear to the checkpoints to being chased by the police: 'In the meetings, we used to decide who was the first one leaving the room, since we knew that the police were waiting outside, and sometimes you knew you had to be the prey'. Haizea talked about the days that they could not sleep since they knew there was a high risk of detentions being carried out. Iker added: 'Sometimes you did not back home to sleep, just in case, and then you learned that five people were detained that night'. The fear was the detention, torture, and the prison –what Iker described as 'the legitimate violence of the system, something that the state does and will not be prosecuted for it'. Haizea concluded affirming 'We must write many different stories, but we cannot tell them yet'.

Suffering is a main element for the recognition of experiences of violence. Mainly relatives of people killed during the armed conflict, but also other victims talk about their experiences of suffering at different events (such as those organised by the Social Forum and detailed previously in this thesis). Other memories are left from the narratives of the past. Any agency not connected with what is described as 'non-violent' actions against ETA is not asserted. Prevailing narratives focusing on suffering weaken social and political activities carried out, ignoring the affirmative aspects of the past. Joys and pleasures, the reasons and motivations for being part of political organisations, are eliminated from those accounts. This might result in the creation of a memory based on pain and violence, not on social motivations, political arguments, diversity and complexity.

The creation of the image of the victim in the Basque context does not allow for those that do not feel comfortable within this category to express themselves. Aitana used to give her testimony at different forums about the torture she suffered. During the armed conflict, testimonies were deemed as the way to raising awareness on torture. Aitana recalled during our conversation how difficult it was to articulate her traumatic experience once after another, facing different responses from the audience and also having the concern that revealing her experience could ‘spread the fear’ to people that were active in different organisations. The same week I met with her, a group of victims of state-sanctioned violence had been made known. Aitana decided not to be part of the public presentation of the group since she didn’t want to be identified as a victim her whole life. This rejection goes in line with the point made by Theidon (2013: 141) about women in Truth Commissions where ‘telling a story’ is linked with ‘being a subject’ so then ‘many women choose not to narrate episodes of victimisation as the core of who they are today—the core of the self they live with and present to their interlocutors’.

Compelling those who experience violence to talk about it could have a negative effect on them. In her analysis of ‘reparation programmes’, Theidon (Ibid.) expresses her concern in relation to rape testimonies: ‘In a woman’s refusal to make rape the narrative core of her subjectivity, might we see an insistence on the right to opacity in this era of confessional obsession and the tyranny of transparency?’ Different hesitations can be raised in relation to this point: Are there ways of healing and acknowledgement that do not have to pass through logocentric approaches? How can different initiatives (including research) dig into experiences of violence, know about and communicate them without exposing women or the people who experienced it to get hurt? In so-called post-conflict settings where the configuration of memory is linked to the truth uttered by testimonies, in contexts where silences entail that experiences get banished in the ‘battle over the narrative’, what is the place of those experiences that are not being exposed? In May 2018, I attended a closed session organised by the Human Rights Department of the University of the Basque Country. Under the title ‘Ireland and the Basque Country: An Account after Violence’, the objective of the workshop was to ‘allow a calm debate among the participants’ on the peace process in Northern Ireland and on ‘the situation in the Basque Country after the ceasefire of ETA’. In one of the presentations, anthropologist Mari Luz Esteban

raised the need to respect silences and give value to them. In a later discussion, a man in the audience stated that in the context of ‘the battle over the narrative of the past’ silences would mean losing a place in History. This is the ambiguity of ‘post-conflict’ scenarios, where the configuration of memory is based on compulsory utterances.

Some participants in the field expressed to me that they refused to give testimony about their suffering after doing it for a long time. Displaying memories and emotions is energy draining. A participant in Glencree explained in an interview how she decided to withdraw from hectic public appearances.

There have been years when ETA victims and of other groups, all of us who went through painful times, have been under a big demand. We wanted to give, especially those of us who have been in Glencree, *Eraikiz* and these groups. We have been in many schools, universities... here and there. And that stirs up a lot. They say that if people hear direct testimonies, they have more impact. Yes, but, *buf...* [expression of tiredness].

After we held the interview, she took the day off, as she is aware of her need of some recovery time after exposing her experiences of violence. One of the participants in the workshop organised at the University of the Basque Country in May 2018 stated the difficulties of dealing with a ‘peace process’ when ‘bodies are still in pain’. This affirmation found an echo of agreement in other women of the audience. The coordinator of a group of victims of state-sanctioned violence also sustained this idea of open wounds. When I met with her to talk about the work of the group, she referred to the difficulties that many people find in speaking about their experiences: ‘Remembering hurts. There are people who are worse now. They feel more pain since they have started to talk about all what happened to them’. Haizea described in our informal conversation when her partner had to be hidden due to risk of being detained for his belonging to the youth independentist movement. Not many people knew of the situation so she could barely talk about how she was coping with the fact of not knowing in what conditions her partner was. She recognised that she went through a hard time. The day after talking about her experience, she told me that she was suffering from ‘emotional hangover’. Bodies that have been exposed to violence could happen to be not recovered at the time of this post-ceasefire period and manifest their discomfort physically and emotionally.

There are many elements that affect the exclusion of experiences of different violence in the post-ceasefire context in the Basque Country. There are structural factors such as the gendered understanding of what counts as important. Also, the economic and political configuration of this scenario hinders the acknowledgement of violent experiences that can put structural violence into question. There are other elements that prevent expression of experiences such as the discomfort found in the victim category. In addition, the compulsory display of emotions through public testimony is problematic when these emotions were kept in the intimacy of those who experienced violence and whose bodies are still in pain.

Broadening Meanings of Violence

Narrow meanings given to violence in the context of pacification get broadened when listening to women in the field, and to initiatives and disruptions created against hegemonic narratives. Peacebuilding literature from feminist scholars and anthropologists also provide the framework to understand violence in a more complex way that allow putting into question the basis of power domination, through the concept of the continuum of violence.

Violence Beyond the Armed Conflict

The ‘Basque conflict’ has retained all the socio-political attention and had tended to cover other situations that also generate violence and that were not considered as relevant [...] Among the conflicts that have been overshadowed we identify mainly those provoked by gender inequality, by socioeconomic and income inequality, impositions in relation to religion, identity, linguistic, cultural and racial discriminations. All those have affected and affect many people’s lives in Basque society. Finding non-violent solutions for those conflicts is a requirement for peace and for living together to become a reality in this country.¹⁶⁵

This is part of the statement released in the presentation of the women’s group *Emagune* in September 2016. This group consisted of women initially linked to the

¹⁶⁵ “Emagune: Algunas conclusiones de la reflexión compartida en torno a la paz y la convivencia”, *Ehu*, 30 September 2016, accessed 7 April 2019, <https://www.ehu.es/documents/10136/6079296/Documento+Emagune>

University of the Basque Country and later opened to other women mainly connected to social and political organisations with different political stances. The participants of this group met for more than two years (2014-2016) sharing experiences of the armed conflict, in order to make a contribution to the scenario opened after ETA's ceasefire. *Emagune* aimed to broaden the understanding of violence beyond ETA pointing at the different power relationships existing in Basque society. The presentation of *Emagune* lacked in media coverage. The emphasis on the different layers of violence does not have a place in hegemonic narratives in the Basque Country.

Feminist scholars have raised the limitations of narrow understandings on violence and conflict in 'post-conflict' settings. Transitional justice mechanisms have been criticised as insufficient in addressing the consequences of armed conflicts on women. These mechanisms set a 'gendered hierarchy of abuses' that ignores different kinds of harms such as 'socio-economic injuries suffered predominantly by women as internally displaced persons, heads of households and refugees' (Bell and O'Rourke, 2007). When they have been listened to, testimonies of women have been circumscribed to specific spaces (such as Truth Commissions -Richters, 2004), and violence made visible has referred to the violence suffered in public spaces (Hamber, 2009). Kimberly Theidon (2016b: 192), in her analysis of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (PTRC), insists on the hindrances that spaces like this provoke on creating comprehensive accounts of violence, armed conflict and justice.

A critical rereading of the PTRC's 2003 final report reveals that women frequently spoke about the systematic violation of their social, economic, and cultural rights injuries that cannot be reduced to the violation of bodily integrity, as horrible as that violation may be [...] When speaking outside the 'victim-centered' space of the PTRC (or in the offices of the National Victims Registry), women narrated much more complicated stories about war and its effects, and about the multiple roles they assumed during the armed conflict and its aftermath. In these nuanced stories, women challenged some common sense notions of gender and war, and provided us with an opportunity to think beyond rights and remedies to a more robust sense of gender and harm, of gender and justice.

Beyond legal definitions and rigid categories that institutions set for specific violence to fit in, feminist approaches have highlighted the concept of the continuum

of violence (Cockburn, 1998; Porter, 2007; Reardon, 1993). It encapsulates the idea that violence against women during armed conflicts is committed not only by the 'enemy', and not only during the period of armed violence. As Cockburn (2012) explains, the continuum of violence is a time continuum (pre-war, post-war, peacetime), a continuum of place (home, street, battlefield), and a continuum of scale (from military and paramilitary abuse to the institutional control over women's bodies). In the context of the armed conflict in Colombia, the organisation *Ruta Pacífica* coordinated an unofficial Truth Commission that gathered testimonies of more than a thousand women. The report that collects these testimonies talk about different harms, referring to 'the mourning for the loss of affects, the land, the life that was left behind' or the damage done to their life projects, consequences on their health and the psico-social impact (Ruta, 2013: 12). The different impact of violence on women stayed frequently invisible. However, this report states that these testimonies 'put into question a system, an ideology and a dominant culture that consider women as objects of control, of violence or of contempt' (Ibid.). In the analysis of women's experiences of violence, *Ruta Pacífica* (Ibid.: 32-33) considers that the concept of 'continuum of violences' is a useful tool since 'it allows us to understand how the violence during war time is linked to violences ever-present in the relation of domination of men over women that happen in times of peace' and how those violences are challenged.

The discipline of anthropology in its engagement with the study of violence has raised both the need to use a plural form of the concept and to approach violence 'not so much as an act but as a continuum' (Ferrándiz and Feixa, 2007: 52-53). In line with feminist statements, anthropologists analysing armed conflicts raise the idea of continuum of violence avoiding a separation between what is considered war and what is regarded as peace. Caroline Nordstrom (2004) describes this situation as a not-war-not-peace scenario. Blurring distinctions of times of war and times of peace is also the argument that Sluka (2009: 282, 296) in his exploration of the post-peace agreement process in Northern Ireland where political violence was still part of the everyday. In the introduction of the seminal edited book on 'violence in war and peace', Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) state the impossibility of defining 'violence' and criticise the approach taken by different studies on violence which perpetuate structural violence. They raise the concept of continuum to stress how mass violence is not

separate from everyday violence conducted in normative social spaces. Other approaches in anthropology have linked the continuum of violence with the analysis of violence as foundational to the state. In the analysis of the Kurdish case, anthropologist Onur Günay (2013: 174) points at the diverse mechanisms employed by the Turkish state and the need to analyse that violence through the concept of continuum of violence in order to highlight the different ‘forms of state violence and their historical continuity in a particular space in making and remaking of the law and subject populations’.

Violence becomes normalised and invisible in the everyday through different mechanisms of domination, as stated by anthropological and critical studies of transitional justice. In the Basque context, initiatives such as *Emagune* challenge the normalisation of violence naming multiple inequalities that need to be tackled. Also, exploring experiences of violence raised by women allow for naming multiple violences that appear entangled when looking at the everyday.

Sufferings and Violences

Some initiatives in the Basque Country show the existence of different violences that are getting concealed and the continuum of violence. In April 2017, the town of Guernica turned into a stage for different violences to be named. Activities on memory were organised for the commemoration of the 80th centenary of the infamous bombings of the Basque town during the Spanish Civil War. On 29 April 2017, marches started at different locations in the Basque Country and ended in a big gathering in Guernica in the evening. They responded to the call made by the Platform *Ongi Etorri Errefuxiatuak* (‘Refugees Welcome’ in Basque). This platform has been a meeting point for organisations and individuals of different political backgrounds to make a claim against the current global war whose violence is killing and displacing people the same way it did eighty years before. Violence and war came temporarily linked in the global violence that excludes people from the right to life.

In that same 29 April, the Social Forum holds in Guernica the first event on memory in the Basque Autonomous Community (they held a previous one in Navarre). The event starts with a declaration that explains the place and day chosen with the understanding that the consequences of violence of the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship have been wrongly addressed, with ‘humiliation, no recognition,

no justice and no reparation for part of the victims'. In opposition to that, the goal of the Social Forum is stated as to work on solid guarantees of no repetition. The event is divided in two parts. In the morning, experiences of living-together local forums are exposed as examples of how 'Basque society is far ahead of political parties in agreements and consensus on how to build up *convivencia*'. The second part of the event consists of a workshop to generate a comprehensive 'map of suffering' in relation to the armed conflict. This 'map of suffering' is described by the organisers as a tool 'to identify and recognise the victims produced as a consequence of the conflict, all human right violations, as well as those derived from another type of sufferings'.

The first part of the event takes place in the auditorium of a local theater. Media are invited to cover the statements read by members of the Social Forum. The workshop 'A Map of Suffering' is carried out in a meeting room, with no media attending. Participants in the workshop are invited to reflect on their experiences of suffering separated into four themed sections: the right to life, economic effects, civil and political rights, and physical-psychic integrity. In each group, members of the Social Forum facilitate discussions. I am introduced as a researcher of the University of Brighton and people in my group agreed on me being able to take notes on my laptop. Notes taken during the workshop reveal contestation and the entanglement of violence as main features of the armed conflict in the Basque Country. We start the discussion in Spanish, until one person states that he expresses himself better in Basque so he intervenes in this language, and the rest of the contributions do the same. Participants in the group facilitate translations to me and to another person. This situation would be defined weeks later by one of the participants as a living-together experience in itself. The person who has started the conversation in Basque explains that part of the sufferings he has experienced has to do with not being able to speak his own language. In his description of sufferings, he adds the fear to go back home alone due to the existence of groups of 'uncontrolled', referring to members of right-wing groups that committed attack against members of the *izquierda abertzale*. In the meeting of the Social Forum to evaluate the workshop, I would learn that this person was a councillor in Arretxe, the same town where feminist voices questioned meanings of violence in a graffiti (figure 8), and where politicians who were also councillors were discussing their very different fears at the event 'Violence of Persecution

(Socialisation of Suffering)’. They did not listen to each other’s fears and sufferings, but my notes put them together. When sketching this chapter, the fact that everything is so entangled in these few pages surprises me. It is only one example of different experiences and different people intertwined during my fieldwork, and just a small illustration of how close and at the same time how distant those experiences can be in the territory of the Basque Country during the armed conflict and the current political process.

During the ‘Map of Suffering’ workshop, different reflections and experiences of violence were shared. Socio-economic violence, the impact of the armed conflict in mental health, questions on the meaning of violence, violence affecting the movement of the bodies and the distress when a relative did not come home, were among the numerous aspects of violence tackled. The mixture of different stances and experiences of suffering was something remarked upon by the organisers of the event in the evaluation meeting, as I wrote down in my notes:

Naroa details what happens in the group she facilitated. They were eight or nine people. She explains: ‘The second person who talked said that he used to be an *ertzaina* [Basque policeman], a commander. He explained that six of his colleagues were killed’. Ruth and Ibon are nodding. Ibon: ‘*Oso ondo*’ [‘very good’]. Naroa continues: ‘Then a lady spoke. After her, a young girl said that she had been an ETA activist, and that she was tortured...’ Ibon exclaims ‘Manage that!’ [referring to the difficulty of handling this situation]. He asks if there was tranquility in the group. Naroa: ‘Yes, absolute respect. Everyone listened and all the participants spoke’.

I could only know of some of the experiences expressed during the workshop gaining trust with some people through months of close relationships developed during fieldwork. The participants of the workshop named a plurality of violences, naming them not as such, but as ‘sufferings’.

The stress put on suffering by the Social Forum has different connotations. On the one hand, the use of the plural ‘violences’ is linked to the political stance of the independentist left. During a discussion on *convivencia* held as part of the electoral campaign for the Basque parliament elections in September 2016, a member of the Basque conservative party stated clearly that it was the independentist left party who

insisted on the concept of ‘the violences’, stressing the plural form. Using the term violences is depicted as if addressing different layers of violence meant to displace what is considered the main violence, namely the killings committed by ETA. On the other hand, suffering is an emotion that gives legitimacy to experiences of violence in the configuration of the emotional landscape in the scenario of *convivencia* in the Basque Country.

In reports commissioned by the Basque government on human rights violations in the last few years, a clear grammar of hierarchies has put the right to life at the peak of violence. Sufferings have been relegated to just a final suggestion. The basis for this differentiation has been an ‘international normative’ that separates ‘suffering’ from ‘violation of human rights’, as stated in the report ‘Human Rights Violations in the Basque Case (1960-2013)’ (Carmena *et al.*, 2013). In the local report ‘Towards a Shared Memory’ (Argituz, 2015), which gathered experiences of violence of the armed conflict in the town of Rentería, the same argument is stated at the introduction:

Once we have prioritised these two big blocks - right to life and the right to physical and mental integrity - we have to deal with how to give access to all the casuistry of cases and victims that we encounter. We want to clearly distinguish what are human rights violations and what are other sufferings. Indeed, everything is suffering, but not all suffering is a violation of human rights according to the standards of international law of human rights. We want a complete picture of what happened, but properly ordered.

The frame of law, and especially of international recognition of human rights violations also influenced the work of the group of the Social Forum working on memory. Preparing the workshop ‘A Map of Suffering’, the organisers discussed about hierarchies of violence, classifications and terms to be used. They showed concern about naming, classifying and finding the balance among different sufferings in order not to be controversial or not to be seen as ‘leaning to one of the sides’. Although during the workshop, the experiences of the participants were the main elements for discussion, breaking with hierarchies of violence, the legal framework structured the idea of the map. Similarly to the use of the concept of ‘international standards’ applied to human rights made by the authors of the reports mentioned above, the Social Forum presented the initiative affirming this concept in their opening statement:

We believe that a contribution to the future of living together in our society requires knowing and acknowledging all suffering as a direct consequence of violations of human rights considered in accordance with international standards in this area. It is essential to recognise and repair all the victims produced, all human rights violations as well as to determine and recognise other types of suffering.

Drawing on legal understandings for the exploration of sufferings could be a way to impede controversy and contestation, both in reports and in the initiative of ‘A Map of Suffering’. Rights, as framed by law, could legitimise some activities, and halt some others. Rights and suffering, since they are linked with understandings of violence, are part of political dispute in the aftermath of the armed conflict.

After the event in Guernica, other workshops followed in order to create a comprehensive ‘map of suffering’. These workshops have allowed for the expression of different violences and have given a shared space for people to display emotions that were kept in private in the past. However, these expressions of different violences are attached to elements of legitimation that are part of the post-ceasefire process in the battle over the narrative of the past that get masked under the concept of *convivencia*. The first of these elements of legitimation is suffering used in the current scenario as an emotion that can lead to be recognised as a victim, and give validation to experiences of violence (as analysed in the previous chapter). The other element being used is the international law frame, which provides international validation to experiences of violence and bypasses the reductive understanding of violence articulated within the Spanish context. Suffering and human rights in connection with law are the basis of legitimation for experiences of violence being inscribed in the context of the pacification process. They are also used by the Social Forum. In this case, the expression of other violences follows the same legitimation patterns in order to find their recognition.

Streets as Spaces for Disruptions

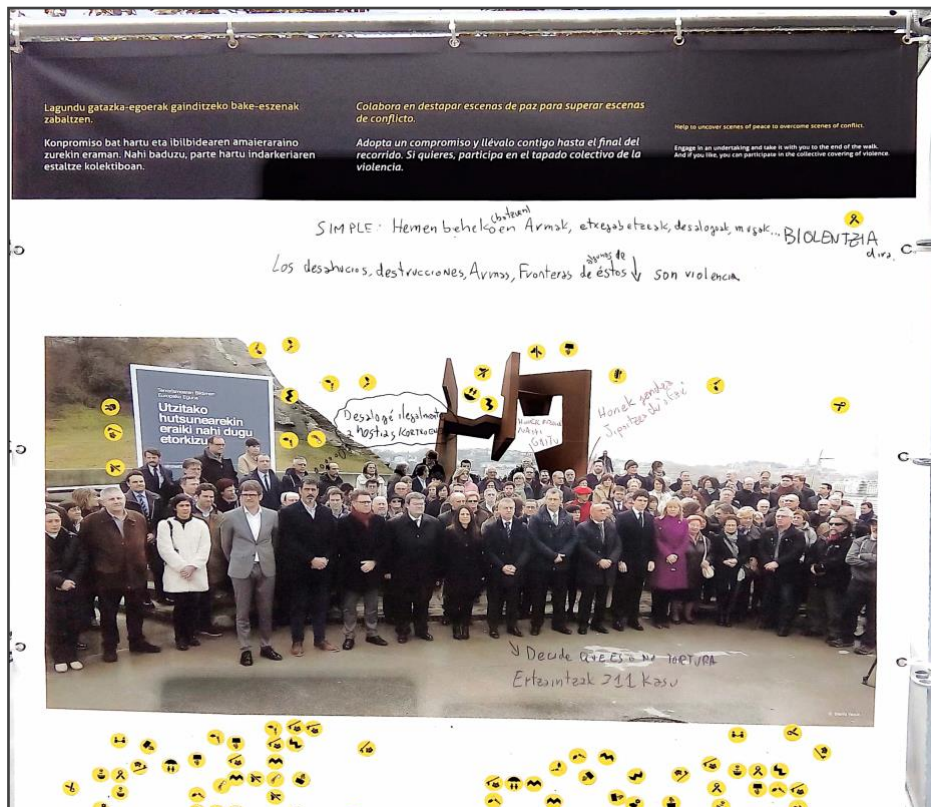


Figure 9. 'Peace is Possible'. Image: Andrea García González. 2016.

This photograph (figure 9) covered one side of the installation 'Peace is Possible' at 'The Mile of Peace' exhibition in the San Sebastian European Capital of Culture 2016 (DSS2016). This intended to be a picture of unity that included all the political parties of the Basque parliament in a commemoration. The photograph depicts a united gathering in sorrow for the victims of certain kinds of violence. At the top of the image, an instruction to be taken for the rest of the exhibition is shown: 'Help to uncover scenes of peace to overcome scenes of conflict', accompanied by stickers as part of a suggested interactive experience. Under that invitation, a handwritten statement in Basque and Spanish: 'Evictions, destructions, weapons, borders, created by some of these, are violence.' The institutionally suggested 'uncovering of peace' turned into an unexpected shape. The message conveyed by 'The Mile of Peace' portraying inclusive representation of peace was disrupted by this graffiti that questions what violence is. Political representatives shown as guarantors of peace in the cube 'Peace is possible' received a claim for accountability. A balloon was drawn from the head of the mayor of San Sebastian and the words inside referred to a violent police eviction of a squatter's community centre in the city. Under the image of the president of the Basque government, a handwritten note reads: 'He decides what or what is not torture.'

Ertzainak, 311 cases'. This statement represented a claim for the inclusion of the violence committed by Basque police forces in the report on torture commissioned by the Basque government. Contestation and different understandings of violence are manifested through spontaneous comments that create a sense of dissent against the pretended harmony of peace and living together shown in the exhibition. Lack of accountability and a narrow understanding of violence, when it refers to the context of the Basque Country, are some of the points raised by the handwritten comments.

From the graffiti of the first section of this chapter (figure 8) to these other manifestations, the need to show and name violences that are ignored in the post-ceasefire process takes the streets. Streets act as spaces to disrupt the pacification order. Violence against women was placed to the fore in the feminist graffiti (figure 8). Women killed by their partners or ex partners is part of the violence still happening in Spanish and Basque society.¹⁶⁶ Socioeconomic violence is set at the forefront of the disruption in figure 9 that broadens the understandings of violence and peace conveyed by the Basque institutions that supervised the contents of 'The Mile of Peace'. Socioeconomic conditions have worsened in the Basque Country in the last years. The ceasefire happened in the middle of the Spanish economic crisis. Different factories in this territory have ceased their activity mainly due to relocation, causing people to lose their jobs.¹⁶⁷ Unemployment rates in young people under twenty-five have ranged

¹⁶⁶ In June 2019, the number of women killed in Spain reached the number of a thousand since the data started to be registered in 2003. "La violencia machista deja mil mujeres asesinadas por hombres en los últimos dieciséis años", *El Diario*, 10 June 2019, accessed 22 July 2019, https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/violencia-machista-mujeres-asesinadas-hombres_0_908509652.html

¹⁶⁷ "General Electric plantea el cierre de su filial en Ortuella (Bizkaia), con 147 trabajadores", *El Mundo*, 4 July 2017, accessed 7 April 2017, <http://www.elmundo.es/paisvasco/2017/07/04/595be2cae2704e93548b4617.html>

"Daewoo cerrará su fábrica de Vitoria aunque Empleo rechace el ERE", *El País*, 1 September 2011, accessed 7 April 2017, https://elpais.com/diario/2011/09/01/paisvasco/1314906006_850215.html

"Ahora vemos que la planta de la ACB no es intocable, ni eterna", *El Diario.es*, 29 January 2016, accessed 7 April 2017, http://www.eldiario.es/norte/euskadi/ACB-acero-siderurgia-Sestao-Arcelor_Mittal-dumping-China_0_478752497.html

"La nueva fábrica para sustituir a Pastguren eleva la inversión a 12 millones", *El Diario.es*, 27 April 2014, accessed 7 April 2017,

http://www.eldiario.es/norte/euskadi/fabrica-sustituir-Pastguren-inversion-millones_0_254074877.html

between 30% and 40% in the last years.¹⁶⁸ A high number of young people have emigrated and have not come back to the Basque Country.¹⁶⁹ These figures and the economic malaise is not part of the public debate in relation to the post-ceasefire scenario. Few voices have addressed this situation. One is the group *Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu* ('San Sebastian Sells and Destroys' in Basque), created to oppose the message deployed by DSS2016. They criticised their understanding of living together on the basis of the lack of freedom of expression, socioeconomic and political violence carried out in the city such as evictions or lack of assistance to homeless people among others.¹⁷⁰

During the year 2016, *Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu* created different ways to disrupt hegemonic messages. In a guerrilla communication¹⁷¹ style, they held different protests in the streets. The same day that the king of Spain was invited to the opening of the exhibition 'Peace Treaties', on the 17 June 2016, San Sebastian woke up with advertisements with the word 'Welcome' in different languages over the image of the king of Spain and with the logo of DSS2016. The organisers of DSS2016 denied being responsible for the campaign.¹⁷² For a large amount of population in the Basque Country, the previous king is the synecdoque of the violence of the Spanish state and links with the dictatorship, since Franco chose him as his successor.¹⁷³ With this

¹⁶⁸ "EPA del País Vasco", *Expansion*, December 2016, accessed 7 April 2017, <http://www.datosmacro.com/paro-epa/espana-comunidades-autonomas/pais-vasco?dr=2016-12>

¹⁶⁹ "Al menos 7.800 jóvenes se han marchado de la Euskadi en crisis", *El Mundo*, 20 January 2014, accessed 7 April 2017,

<http://www.elmundo.es/pais-vasco/2014/01/20/52dd077922601df51b8b456d.html>

¹⁷⁰ As found in this statement in Basque

"Elkarbizitza gezurra da" aldarrikatuko dute Mozal Legearen zigor eta isunei erantzuteko festan", *Argia*, 8 November 2016, accessed 7 April 2017,

<http://www.argia.eus/blogak/donostia-2016/2016/11/08/elkarbizitza-gezurra-da-aldarrikatuko-dute-herri-mugimenduen-zigor-eta-isunei-erantzuteko-festan/>

¹⁷¹ Guerrilla communication refers to a 'subversive and enjoyable practice' that uses creative actions that disrupts everyday normality in order to put into question the socio-political dominant order (Blisset and Brünzels, 2000).

¹⁷² "Pentsatu. Ez sinistu", *Youtube*, 17 June 2016, accessed 3 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32Syh9Z1kFY>

¹⁷³ For a complete biography of Juan Carlos I of Spain that includes what media has said and has silenced about the king see Quintáns, 2000.

action, *Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu* used the imaginary of ‘the violent other’ to establish an analogy with the discourses held by DSS2016, pointed out as violent. Using the divisions that are not only part of the past, but also of the imaginary of the present, violence was exposed.

Streets have been for years the space to point at what violence refers to. During the 1990s and 2000s, protests took place in the Basque Country in order to demonstrate who was ‘the other’ that must be blamed for the violence that happened (as explained in chapter 3). Streets have been the place where messages about different violence have been raised. One of the interviewees remembered how she became aware of social injustice and political repression through banners displayed in leisure areas of her town. Nowadays, those expressions are cleaned up: in the streets, and even inside the bars. She framed this cleanup as part of processes of gentrification taking place in main Basque cities and due to the existence of a different socio-political scenario. Tourism is exponentially growing in the Basque Country.¹⁷⁴ Centres of towns in the Basque Country have placed economic benefits obtained through tourism over the needs of neighbours. Residents are being displaced by the construction of luxury apartments and hotels.¹⁷⁵ Gentrification is not a phenomenon circumscribed to the Basque Country,¹⁷⁶ but in this territory converges with the pacification process. Narratives of pacification that, as examined earlier, criminalise any protest depicted as ‘a reminder of the violence of the past’ serve to silence dissidence in the process of expropriation of the everyday life, in the displacement of life by economic benefits.

¹⁷⁴ “El turismo en Euskadi crece al 4,6% y apunta a una "cifra récord" en 2018”. Europa Press, 24 September 2018, accessed 3 April 2019, <https://www.europapress.es/turismo/destino-espana/espana-verde/noticia-turismo-euskadi-crece-46-apunta-cifra-record-2018-20180924153024.html>

¹⁷⁵ This was the case of the flat where I lived during my fieldwork, in the center of San Sebastian. Many people lived in this building of the old town paying affordable rents, until it was sold with consequent evictions in order to transform the flats in luxury apartments. This happened at the same time of some traditional bars shutting down in the same area, as described in articles like this: “Donostia: El cierre del bar Rekalde como síntoma”, BI-FM Radio, 2 January 2019, accessed 6 April 2019, <http://www.bifmradio.com/firmas/donostia-rekalde/>

¹⁷⁶ On gentrification of cities of Spain: “Gentrificación, cuando tu ciudad se convierte en un parque temático”, BI-FM Radio, 18 January 2017, accessed 6 April 2019, <http://www.bifmradio.com/radio/carne-cruda/185-gentrificacion/>

Streets are the space of struggle over meanings of violence. This struggle took different forms in the 1990s and 2000s. Streets are the place for protest to happen, for dissent over hegemonic narratives to get exposed. Streets are also the space that mechanisms of pacification try to appropriate for efforts of the liberal order to be installed after the ceasefire. Streets represent a battle over meanings of violence and a struggle for the right to life.

Conclusions. A Change of Paradigm

Elkarbizitza gezurra da, menderatuen errealitateak ezkutatzeko erabiltzen denean. Eta gezurra delako egiten diogu iseka, irain eta eraso [...] Hitz hil. Gezurra hil. Heriotzak galdera berrien aurrean jartzen gaituelako. Eta orduan esanahiak asmatu behar, zaharrak berritu. Hitz aintzat hartzeko. Munduko gauzak oraindik izenda daitezkeela frogatzeko. Mintzaira balioan jarri eta munduko gauzak hobetzeko. Hitz berriro bizi ahal izateko. Eta hitzarekin gu.

[‘Living together is a lie when it hides the realities of the oppressed. As it is a lie we tease it, mock it, attack it [...] We kill the word. We kill the lie. Since death makes us face new questions. And then we have to invent new meanings, renew the old ones. In order to take words into consideration. To believe and demonstrate that things in the world can still be named. Giving value to language and improve things in the world. In order to be able to live in the word again. And we with the word’]

(Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu, ‘Elkarbizitza gezurra da’, 19 November 2016).¹⁷⁷

In the Basque post-ceasefire scenario, some actors reveal the risk of the concept of *convivencia* being used to cover different conflicts and multiple violences and demand the need to tackle inequalities in society. This chapter has also shown how narratives about the past have difficulties in paying attention to silences and how some people in

¹⁷⁷ This is an excerpt of the call for a fundraising event organised by *Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu*. The event brought a traditional carnival that usually happens in the French part of the Basque Country to the province of Guipúzcoa. The story represented in the carnival has a main character, *Pitxu*, dying and being reborn. In their statement, the collective *Donostia Saldu eta Suntsitu* played with this story and the idea of the concept of *convivencia* dying in order to revive differently.

“Bestelako kulturen hiriburutik”, *Borroka Garaia*, 1 January 2017, accessed 7 April 2019, <https://borrokagaraia.wordpress.com/2017/01/01/bstelako-kulturen-hiriburutik/>

the field demand the right for silences to exist. In the statement above, a rupture with hegemonic conceptions of the current socio-political process is raised, demanding that concepts and narratives must be discussed, and the word liberated. Ruptures are created through different interventions in public spaces, over what appears as a clean, aseptic, new modern and consensual space.

Different spaces act as a way to break with a single account of what violence means. They could be the space of the interviews, the space of a wall, or the space of a workshop where people feel they can express themselves. The violence of the killings of the armed conflict has been the main violence being made visible in the public domain. The other violences become private, personal, and normalised. They are upheld by the denial of their prioritisation. Sustained violence requires denial or dismissal of the importance of it (Cohen, 2001). Violence that is shown in media, in hegemonic narratives, in the legal field, or in public policies, is based on a narrow understanding of violence that may allow for other violences to continue in its normalisation and denial.

Keeping narratives and experiences apart from the spaces where they are sanctioned as legitimate is the way to generate or maintain subject positions, to maintain the configuration of power relationships. In patriarchal social relations, Bhambra and Shilliam (2009: 6) state that “silencing women” rather than an act of dominance exercised on a pre-existing subject (woman) is rather the generation of the subject position known as “woman”. Systems of subordination are naturalised so they are not experienced as oppression.¹⁷⁸ Narratives that can break with that naturalisation are kept apart. In words of Bhambra and Shilliam (2009:2), ‘[t]he solution to “silence” is not simply “voice” –or, in other words, “inclusion”- but the deconstruction and possible reconstruction of the initial paradigms that produced and re-produce certain silences’. In this chapter, exposing experiences of violence excluded from the spaces of inclusion has not aimed for the inclusion of those voices into the hegemonic narratives. Conversely, the purpose of this exploration is to question the violence intrinsic to a socio-economic paradigm of a capitalist and

¹⁷⁸ I follow here Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001) in their differentiation of systems of subordination and of oppression. The former would be the inequalities that are normalised. Awareness of the existence of these inequalities transforms the consideration of these power relations as oppressive and hence deemed as something to fight against.

patriarchal society that historically and constantly sustain those exclusions. I do not want to broaden up pacification and include other voices, but to disrupt with this exploration the structure that pacification aims to perpetuate.

In her analysis of the heteropatriarchal system, feminist economist Amaia Pérez Orozco (2014) defines her proposal as framed within ‘rupturist feminist economics’. This approach argues that the sustainability of life is incompatible with the logic of capital accumulation. For Pérez Orozco (Ibid.: 49), the evidence of that irresolvable conflict reveals that trying to achieve equality without a radical transformation of the system is no more than a chimera. A rupture approach implies the aim of a change of a paradigm, the turnaround of the order that sustains different kinds of violence. In an analysis of the conciliation between work and family and personal life, Ana Maria Rivas (2006) pointed at the impossibility of that conciliation when the objective is to reconcile two opposite logics such as pursuit of profit (capitalist accumulation) and the sustainability of life. In the same vein, trying to end the violence within a system that needs violence for its continuation seems incompatible. Therefore, a transgressor and creative change is needed.

Thinking beyond rigid categories, and thinking from the body is what Icaza and Vázquez (2016: 6) suggest in their claim for an alternative vocabulary that is not grounded in the logic of oppression. The time after overt armed violence can be an opportunity to look for new words, new narratives, new practices. Doxtader (2012: 53) states that ‘the potential of a beginning (anew), is not a moment of mutual understanding or intersubjective consensus, an agreement that could only signal a simple return, a turning back to the given language beneath the conflict which thus risks its repetition’. Challenging the violent grammar imposed in the everyday can come from an attentive listening to different experiences of violence that break constraining frames.

In this chapter, I have examined what is excluded from the context of pacification, through delegitimation, criminalisation and neglect of some voices to express their experiences of violence. I have also stated that listening to what gets excluded allows us to understand the structure that provokes that exclusion. The categorisation of ‘the violent other’ is useful for the maintenance of power relationships, since it points at a singular executor of violence who is described as evil, as extraordinary, as out of any understanding, irrational. This representation conceals that violence is part of the

everyday, committed in daily relationships and committed by institutions on which society relies. I affirm the need to analyse everyday violence, the violence that does not get media coverage, and that is the basis of other extraordinary violence. The post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country could be an opportunity to open reflections about meanings of violence, about what oppressions sustain the system we live in and how we could generate relationships not based on power domination. There are examples of violence in the everyday, but also practices that open different imaginaries of dwelling in the world, what I call ‘practices of peace’ and that I explore in the next chapter.

6 - PRACTICES OF PEACE. THE PROCESS AS AN OPPORTUNITY.

It is important that peace be both a practice and a symbol. Every time we show peace, we make it more thinkable, imaginable and practiceable. How to do it? Looking for, creating and using symbolic resources that represent a world in which violence against women, and violence in general, is unthinkable (Concepción Jaramillo Guijarro, 2005: 51).

Concepción Jaramillo, the author of this quote, was one of the promoters of the project *Relaciona* ('Relate' in Spanish). This was a project set up by the Spanish Institute for Women on gender violence prevention, running from 1998 to 2014. I joined the inspiring team of women of the project in 2009. We facilitated intensive courses for teachers all over Spain. One of the participants, M^a Jesús Cerviño Saavedra (2008: 45), defined the aim of the project on preventing violence against women as, 'undoubtedly, an active position since it is not limited to verifying the absence of violence, but an active search of actions and situations that promote peace'. During the workshops, conversations with the teachers hinged on the importance of identifying violence suffered by girls and women. But, furthermore, it was substantial to reflect on educational practices where violence gets minimised, where relationships oppose values that fuel violence such as force and discrimination and create a different way to be in the world. We called these practices of the everyday 'practices of peace'.

Inspired by the work done in this project, which entailed constant reflection with the women of the team about how to reduce violence, I started to consider the concept of practices of peace as a potential contribution to Peace and Conflict Studies. Going through feminist literature on reconciliation and peacebuilding and the work of other feminist scholars, I found that this concept could be helpful in order to name a critical understanding of violence and promote transformative practices.

I propose a definition of practices of peace through four different points. First, practices of peace name violence and, in doing that, break with the normalisation of violence, uncovering it. Second, these are practices that address conflict instead of hiding the existence of it. Practices that handle conflicts without resorting to violence. Third, practices of peace work to break hierarchical dichotomies, which I have stated along this thesis that are one of the main bases of violence. Finally, practices of peace

give a central position to interdependency and vulnerability as part of a change of paradigm, challenging the violent fallacy of the modern individual as a self-sufficient person.

In the exploration of the concept of practices of peace, it is important to differentiate violence from conflict. Feminist thinkers have addressed this differentiation, understanding conflict as inherent to human lives:

Relating to one another implies conflict. Different ways of positioning ourselves in the world are put into play in our relationships, and they are, quite often, not coincidental. Conflicts do not necessarily entail confrontation, but they make us aware of the existence of words, desires and experiences that need mediation so that they can be said, heard and recognised. [...] Behind every manifestation of violence there is a conflict caused by differences: differences of opinions, values, aspect, culture, race, origin, sex, ways to be and to live, *etc.* Conflict becomes violence when there are people who do not interpret differences as richness, but as an expression of inferiority of the other. The origin of violence is then the inability to acknowledge the other (Morales Hernández and Jaramillo Guijarro, 2000).

Violence appears in a resolution of a conflict when one of the parties imposes (directly or through different mechanisms embedded in power relationships) their own interests upon the others. Conflicts are part of the everyday and they can be resolved respecting other opinions, and ‘understanding that listening to those differences can become a source of learning, exchange and pleasure’ (Cerviño Saavedra, 2008: 62).

Feminist thinkers of the school of thought on sexual difference based at the feminist collective Milan Women’s Bookstore state that it is in the presence of conflict that politics takes place, for there is a displacement and modification of the self and of self-identity (Milan, 1996:10). In reconciliation theories, conflict could also be deemed as a ‘part of life and as a motor of change’ (Lederach and Maiese 2003: 1). Brand-Jacobsen (2002: 16-17), in his proposal on the way and the goal of peace, understands conflicts as natural, differentiating them from violence (what he states as being only one of the ways to address conflicts), raising the idea that an alternative culture in dealing with conflicts may be based on the recognition of conflict as positive, constructive and a creator of opportunities.

The concept of practices of peace calls into question an idealised, essentialised or misleading notion of peace. I define practices of peace as an everyday practice, contrary to a patriarchal devalued notion of peace seen as unattainable and unrealistic (such as Milner, 2010 points at). This concept grounds peace in the everyday. In the Basque Country, understandings of peace are contested. Reluctance towards this concept appears when it is connected with what I name as pacification: the different mechanisms of liberal democracies used to enhance the neoliberal economic system and the gender order during the period coming after overt armed violence. Peace is fraught with negative connotations when it is deemed as the imposition of silence over contestation, imposition of consensus over conflictive narratives. As seen earlier in this thesis, for a sector of the population in the Basque Country, the term peace disguises the existence of different violences that continue in the post-ceasefire process, from violence against women to the conditions suffered by Basque prisoners to the lack of a possibility to exercise the right to self-determination.

Practices of peace challenge the essentialisation of peace as naturally linked to women, exploring the effort entailed by creating conditions where violence gets displaced. Peace, such as other attributes socially linked with ‘femininity’ (like caring, empathy, motherhood...), seems to be valued in the patriarchal system when it serves to sustain established power relationships, when these attributes are domesticated. In this sense, peace is situated in the private sphere, as part of natural attributes given to the feminine, and part of the hierarchical dichotomy that establishes force and competition as a necessary ingredient for humans to survive, provided by the male warrior, and complemented by the care given by the female figure of the warrior supporter. It is important to give value to the work done by women, which does not mean to reinforce a gender role based on subordination. Carmen Magallón (2006: 41), in her referential work on feminist pacifism, states: ‘we women have a long history of action and commitment in favor of peace. We have a legacy of daily practices of unknown women dedicated to sustaining life through thousands of small gestures that have never been reported, but without which the different generations could not have survived’.

Locating and naming practices of peace can create room to imagine ways to displace and transcend violence, to act transformatively. Referring to a scenario after armed violence, Colombian anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo (2017: 7) points to

‘the need to pay attention to the multiplicity of social dynamics that take place when the possibility of imagining another society emerges’. Practices of peace as everyday gestures and actions are not frequently narrated or exposed in the public sphere. Referring to the concealment of these transformative processes, teachers Milagros Montoya and José Maria Salguero (2004: 65) state: ‘[L]ife-giving changes are usually silent, almost invisible because they seem natural to us and are never newsworthy: they produce light, but do not dazzle, or oppress; they always create and make us grow’. Disempowering images of violence overwhelm us, creating an imaginary of a world swamped by destruction that cannot be defeated. There are barely any signs that represent peace, and few references of everyday situations that are handled without resorting to violence.

In this study, I explore practices of peace that emerge through conversations in the field. I have been aware of the difficult endeavour that entails to attend to diverse social dynamics without trying to fit the fluidity and incoherence of human lives into closed categories, in this case into my own theoretical category. I have been open to listening to diverse ways to displace violence that have happened in the past and continue to happen in the current context in the Basque Country. These practices have developed in spaces set for the encounter with ‘the other’, but also in unexpected settings. They break with barriers created in the perception of ‘the other’ and give a central position to relationships of support. This chapter also analyses the post-ceasefire process as a period of opportunity where awareness of vulnerability of the bodies and human and non-human interdependence challenges the patriarchal and capitalist notion of self-sufficient individuals. Being open to seeing, naming and giving value to practices of peace and to vulnerable narratives becomes essential in an understanding of academic research as that which casts light on those aspects of life that could promote change and a life that is worth living.

Ruptures with the Image of ‘the other’

Late night at a bar in San Sebastian. A guy approaches me. When he learns that I’m from Madrid, he claims to belong to ETA. Both of us know that this is no more than a provocation into which I don’t sink. At some point, we talk about my

research. Out of the blue, he states that his uncle was a target of ETA. He talks about how he felt for his aunt, as she had to live with that threat and with a bodyguard always by her side. Through the way he refers to his support to ETA, I can perceive the struggle inside him. I ask how he felt. I get a long gaze as an answer. Followed by a simple ‘I don’t know’.

This memory came to my mind after listening to anthropologist Mari Luz Esteban during a conference organised by the Human Rights Department of the University of the Basque Country that took place in Bilbao on 16 May 2018. She stressed the importance of silences and of a vulnerable attitude in the current socio-political process after the ceasefire. I wonder if the conversation with that young man could have happened years ago. If the hesitation, the ‘I don’t know’, would have come up when talking with a stranger from Madrid during the violent conflict. I wonder if that vulnerability of feeling unsettled from his beliefs would have been expressed.

Ruptures with the image of ‘the other’, and ruptures with fixed understandings of identities and of the division between ‘they’ and ‘us’, entail contradictions, instability and vulnerability. These ruptures take place in different contexts. Some of these contexts are set specifically in order to break with divisions and promote mutual understanding. Others have appeared in more informal ways, when the image of ‘the other’ becomes blurred without necessarily addressing the experiences of the conflict, but based on other kind of bonds, such as the bonds of friendship. In this section, I delve into different experiences within living-together initiatives and in daily practices that are kept out of the spotlight. Alejandro Castillejo (2017: 11) has named the time coming after a ceasefire ‘the demilitarisation of everyday life’, referring not only to the disarming of a society but to ‘the importance of building another order of categories, different to the one established by the conflict’. I believe that in order to build a different collective imagination, specific practices need to be made visible, by paying attention to different examples of fractures of dichotomies. These fractures have happened not only after the ceasefire but also while the violence of the armed conflict was widely hitting the Basque society.

Acknowledgment in Spaces for Recognition

The post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country has established what I have called in chapter 4 ‘spaces of inscription’, where specific experiences of violence find

recognition. Pacification mechanisms have set what narratives get inscribed in this context, excluding those that can put into question narrow understandings of violence, as explored previously in this thesis. However, these spaces for recognition can also harbour experiences of transformative listening, what I have defined as acknowledgement. Participants in encounters with ‘the other’ express the difficulties to handle these gatherings. They do not ignore conflicts rising when discussing different political standpoints, but they recognise how listening to ‘the other’ can create an awareness of the different violences that have been experienced and are still on-going. Some participants also affirm that what created a bond with those others was not only the suffering and pain experienced but also the pleasure obtained in the encounter.

Ainhoa was part of the Glencree initiative, one the most mentioned spaces of encounter between ‘others’ in the current post-ceasefire scenario. She was invited to participate since a paramilitary group killed one of her relatives during the 1980s. In 2007, Ainhoa was contacted by the Department of Victims of Terrorism of the Basque government, specifically by the two persons in charge of that department: Maixela Lasa, widow of a politician killed by ETA, and Txema Urkijo, who belonged to the organisation *Gesto por la Paz*. Within the Basque government, only their superior, the person responsible for Internal Affairs, was aware of the initiative. Discretion was a main feature of the process. The contacted victims were asked to keep it a secret. Ainhoa didn’t even reveal her participation to her relatives. She and other participants were worried of being seen as collaborating with ‘the other’. Nerea, also a relative of a person killed by a paramilitary group and whose political activism has been inscribed in the *izquierda abertzale* movement, stated in the interview that we held that these encounters ‘now are taken as something normal’, but that in those years if her friends from the independentist left had learned about it, ‘they would have thrown me out of the town!’ This exclamation refers to being seen as collaborating with the Basque government at a time when the independentist left party was banned and Basque police was part of repressive actions against the *izquierda abertzale*.

Reaction from their environments was not the only fear that participants of Glencree had to manage when accepting to take part in this initiative. Oppressive dichotomies played a role in a concern about the impossibility of a dialogue. The homogenisation of ‘the other’ has been expressed as prevalent at the beginning of the

encounter. Nonetheless, dichotomies get shaken by listening and feeling moved and by corporeal expressions that cannot be expressed in words. In an interview with Ainhoa, she recounted the first time that the participants met together around a table. Ainhoa explained the emotions that she experienced, re-creating them physically during the interview:

There were ten of us. I was the seventh person to talk. Before my turn came, I felt so many mixed emotions. One person said that her husband was killed by a bomb, that she got a call and when she got there... She saw the blood, pieces of the body... You listen to all that and you [showing herself as out of breath] you can't breathe, your whole body shrinks. Then another one, another one... 'My husband... he got two bullets, and my youngest son...' [takes a breath]. It brought up so many emotions...It moved a lot of things within me, I didn't know quite what to feel, but it was strong. I spoke just a bit, but I had almost no strength to talk about what happened. We were all very moved.

Ainhoa described the conversation that followed where dichotomies re-arised. Conflicts were part of the encounter. These conflicts were not avoided but tackled in ways that don't necessarily have to be resolved through a verbal exchange, but through physical approaches.

I was, obviously [louder tone], the *etarra* [ETA member]. All of us who were not ETA victims, we were considered *etarras*. And then I thought 'If they start hitting me, I am hitting back', 'Don't call me *etarra* again'. There were very tense moments. I said that those who were in jail were also victims. A woman said 'But how [dare you say that]!' [...] With this woman, who was also very bold, I got on the defensive. There was a break and I left the room crying. We came back after twenty minutes. This person said when we were going to resume the talk: 'Ainhoa, when you left, you looked really bad and I felt so sorry for you, all I wanted was to hug you...' [sighs] It was incredible, really, because she was really feeling it. I said 'Ok, give me that hug', rather defiantly. But... wow [reassuring sigh], that hug has made us very close.

In reference to these encounters, Ainhoa talked about conflicts, moments of tension, but also of the pleasure she got and still gets from the relationships established within the group. Ainhoa stated that getting rid of the fear of being hated, the smiles

received when she expressed herself, and also developing a mutual understanding was like the calm coming after years of suffering. This feeling did not stop when leaving the meetings. Breaking with hatred and division is described as pleasurable.

The bond I have with the people from Glencree is something that is difficult to put into words. [...] With all of them I meet, I hug them in a very special way, I have a very special feeling [...] I haven't spoken with Roberto for a very long time, but when I see him, when we hug ... it's something else... the bond is very...[sighs] It is also very pleasant, very satisfying. [...] There have been many friends helping us [she and her family] along these years, but there is something inside me that only... only some people can get there... To hug Roberto, for example, or Jesusa, what can I say... *ayyyy* [sighs].

Dichotomies and stereotypes crack. Vulnerable listening allows for the acknowledgment of different violences. The encounter was not only reassuring for feeling listened to and understood, but, in Ainhoa's account, it also opened to acknowledging the experiences of others, something that she stated she wouldn't have been aware of without that personal encounter. This acknowledgement comes from the encounter and goes beyond just 'knowing'. Peacebuilding scholar John Paul Lederach (1997, 2005) asserts that an individual and collective move from knowing to acknowledging is essential in the creation of sustainable peace, since acknowledging entails intentionality. Ainhoa uses the expression 'I didn't really know' to refer to this shift from knowing to acknowledging.

When the councilor that had to be with a bodyguard expressed what it is to live having to be escorted, how he felt... *buf* [sighs] When we left the meeting, I said to him: 'I want to give you a hug. Today, I've found out that there are more victims'. And I knew before that people were escorted, a lot of people. But I didn't really know until I heard it in person, you don't really know... [...] Listening to how he lived through it. I explained, in tears, how I experienced what happened to me. But they explained their experience too. Listening while looking into their eyes, without any judgment, how he lived... [silence] I discovered the victims of persecution. That struck me.

'The other', as well as the understanding of one's self, moves away from a demonised image to the conceptualisation of being 'normal people'. However, to

acknowledge of the experiences of ‘the other’ doesn’t necessarily mean having to agree with other political positions. Nerea holds this understanding of the encounter. As she states during an interview that takes place at her home, her participation in Glencree moved from the fear of being manipulated by the institution that set up the initiative and her feeling of ‘going to a war’ to her impression of a ‘very positive experience’ where she could talk not only about her suffering but also ‘contextualise’ those experiences. This ‘context’ refers to conversations where Nerea could explain the conditions of Basque prisoners, the torture inflicted in police stations, or even put into question the Spanish political system as whether or not it is truly democratic. However, she was aware of a ceiling for further dialogue.

It breaks your whole way of thinking. You see that they are nice, I mean, that they are normal people. Same as they might say about us, that we are also ‘normal’ [laughs]. Us and them, it seems as if we had horns and they had whatever [...] The problem is that you reach a point where you can speak about some issues, with a lot of respect towards each other, but if you then try to move forward in relation to the ideological aspect, then you cannot make any progress. In the human aspect, we all pass with honours [...] When we came back [from Glencree], we kept meeting up. But then I said ‘I am not going to come any more’, because I didn’t want to keep arguing about why I attended the *ongi etorri* [welcome event] of Xx [name of a well known Basque prisoner], or about... We don’t need to search for a common ideology. Each of us will keep having our own ideology. I don’t need to justify myself about why I go to this or that. ‘Are you then justifying what they have done?’ ‘You are then supporting...’, whatever. We cannot go to that point, because it is then when relationships get broken again.

Acknowledgment of experiences of violence implies a transformation, being moved from previous positions at a personal level, but also having an impact on and broadening other people’s vision of that violence. Some of the participants in Glencree have joined other activities. In the Social Forum, there is one person who was part of Glencree. At the meetings I attended, she raised some of the experiences learnt from listening to ‘the other’ in Glencree and that other participants in the meetings did not know about. Other people involved in Glencree, and the ones that later joined *Eraikiz*, have continued being part in initiatives promoted by the Basque government, such as the initiative ‘Victims as educators’. I was able to attend one of the talks given by the

relative of a politician from the Spanish right wing party killed by ETA in a university classroom. In the round of comments after the talk, one student raised that he was struck by the fact that she supported the end of dispersion of Basque prisoners. Her answer was that she did not want to live with hatred, and also that she knows of relatives of prisoners suffering from that dispersion. The student, who said to be from outside the Basque Country, reaffirmed his surprised while stating that he had not heard these kinds of opinions and that ‘initiatives like this must be held in other parts of Spain’.

On other occasions, the activity of these participants resulted in some people being in events that would be unthinkable for them and for others to attend years ago. I transcribe here the notes I took at the public commemoration of two people murdered by GAL. Siblings of the murdered have participated in Glencree and *Eraikiz*. The event was organised by the independentist left party and it was attended by unexpected people, such a member of the right-wing party Popular Party or members of *Opus Dei*, a very conservative Catholic organisation with substantial social, political and financial power, historically and still today, in Spain and the Basque Country.

We are all in circle. A young guy with a T-shirt with the slogan *Gora Herria* [‘Up the People’ -a slogan of the independentist left-] reads a statement in Basque. He talks about GAL, the dispersion of prisoners... He refers to the independentist left movement at different points. At the end, he shouts *Gora* [‘long life to’] and the names of different people of the *izquierda abertzale* movement who were murdered. ¡*Gora Euskal Herria Askatu!* [‘freedom to the Basque Country!’], he exclaims at the end, and people follow him in a joint cry. They sing the *Eusko Gudariak* [‘Basque soldiers’, a Basque nationalist anthem]. Some people have their fists up. Almost everyone seems to be singing. There are four or five big *ikurriñas* [Basque flags], held by the attendants. In front of me, a woman comments that there are people that she did not expect to see. The commemoration is over. Near me there is a woman with leopard print boots. She is with a man who wears a casual green jacket. I think he is the councillor of the Popular Party in Xx [name of a town where initiatives of reconciliation have taken place among citizens and among politicians]. Later, I talk with Charo [pseudonym of the member of *Eraikiz*] and her brother. She confirms to me that he is the councillor of the Popular Party. The fact that he has attended the homage surprises her brother.

Charo also points at some people that she was previously talking with. She says that they are members of *Opus Dei*. They attended a talk she gave at Xx [name of a foundation]. After the event, one of them approached her. Charo was surprised when he asked her to give a talk to the male students at the *Opus Dei* university residence. Since then, Charo affirms, they have kept a good relationship.

There are different spaces of encounter that are not necessarily the ones being set for dialogue to happen. Gloria, whose relative was killed by ETA, explained to me in our first encounter before we held an interview how she got to know the stories of other victims during the shooting of different documentaries that she has participated in, mainly during off-set breaks. Nerea has attended different events where those considered as victims from the different ‘sides’ of the armed conflict are invited. She has had the chance to know different experiences and feeling close to some of the participants, what she states that do not usually happen at the space set for the discussions or for the public sharing of testimonies, but in the preliminaries or whilst travelling to the event. She recalls a television program that she attended. In the TV set, she was just thinking of the proper answer to say. Where she got to know the other interlocutor better was in the corridors. ‘In Glencree as in other places, it is more relevant what happens in the corridors than in the actual meetings’, Nerea affirmed to me. She recalled how the fact of missing the flight on the way to Glencree was something very positive since the participants got the chance of a non-biased first encounter, where they talked about their daily lives.

When we analyse the experience we see that it was probably the best thing that could have happened to us. We missed the flight, in Paris. We had to be in Paris for many hours, together, without knowing each other. ‘Who smokes?’ And then the smokers went together to the other side of the airport. They did not know whom they were going with. The son of a Civil Guard and Xx [name of a victim of GAL] went together... We started there that kind of relationship where you just talk like ‘ah, so you are from Donosti [San Sebastian]’, or about football teams, or what you have read... It was an icebreaker, just being there for so long. Then, in Glencree, also outside the meetings, in the corridors, we talked. Smokers were the ones who talked the most [laughs].

In the meetings of Sareka living-together local forum, there was also a difference between the monthly encounters set around the table and meeting at other places. The

table symbolised the crossing of opinions and experiences about the past and the future. Mostly voices issued from male bodies were expressed from the stability of unmovable chairs. But there were other places where movement and displacement from stability took place. In January 2017, after two years and a half of gathering, the group went for a day away for the first time. One of the participants of the group had offered the place of the gastronomic society to which he belongs to for the retreat. When we arrived there, he had already prepared some snacks and food. It was an intense day of sharing reflections and objectives for the starting year. During the breaks, people placed themselves differently than in the usual meeting room, talking with one another while having some wine and cheese. Conversations then hinged upon everyday concerns.

Spaces like bars or the gathering around food were highlighted during my fieldwork as promoting bonding experiences. However, bars can be uncomfortable spaces for people that do not enjoy drinking, as one of the participants in Sareka stated to me. She pointed to a different space where she had the experience of feeling closer to another participant of the group: it was the space of a car where they could share intimate conversations on the way to the event organised by the Social Forum in Guernica in April 2017. This situation also entailed a displacement from the usual place of exchange of opinions. Different spaces and situations can create a rupture of the image of ‘the other’: places that open to feelings of unsettlement, and represent displacements from fixed positions.

The image of ‘the other’, the representation of an ‘otherness’ that impedes listening and acknowledgement can get shaken through an encounter that transforms ‘the other’ into an other, when relationality can blur the boundaries of the ‘us’ *versus* ‘them’ dichotomy.¹⁷⁹ Closeness in the encounter not only happens when sharing experiences of suffering but also when elements of joy and pleasure come into play. Another element to take into account is the existence of conflicts that find different ways to get resolved: some through physical approaches, others when accepting the impossibility of an agreement, of consensus. Acknowledgement of experiences of

¹⁷⁹ As explained in chapter 3, ‘the other’ is enclosed by quotation marks representing the boundaries of the dichotomy ‘us’ versus ‘them’. An other, with no signs of separation, points at relationality. An other that is acknowledged as unique and distinct, as Cavarero describes it (2014: 92).

violence can happen in spaces set for the recognition of specific voices, but also in the unofficial spaces where different situations generate transformative listening.

Narratives of the Unexpected

After one of the meetings with relatives of prisoners, some of us go to a café-bar. Women are chatting, separately from the men of the group. Nagore explains that, years ago, she did not want to put a foot in this place for it used to belong to a person close to a right-wing political party. Elena states that she sometimes had a coffee here before taking the bus home. She follows up on this explaining that when her son was incarcerated, the wife of the owner approached her offering the help of the whole family for whatever she needed. Nagore seems to be surprised and states that support can come from people you don't expect, comparing the situation to the opposite behaviour of one of her sisters who stopped talking to her after her daughter was detained.

Unexpected situations, such as daily gestures, break with polarisation and division. Social spaces hold unexpected ruptures in relation to both the event narrated and the narrative itself, as this can be conveyed unexpectedly. In this sense, the value of ethnographic participant observation should be highlighted. The gesture narrated in the excerpt above, taken from my fieldnotes, would probably not have been named in an interview. Being in that café triggered the memory, which was then put into conversation. Social spaces for encounter are multiple and variable, as Lederach states:

[W]e must develop a capacity to recognize and build the locus of social change. Markets, hospitals, schools, street corners, cattle dips, transportation service centers, youth soccer clubs—the list is interminable and different in every context. Think social spaces where people cross in natural ways, in necessary and often unnoticed ways. These are the locus resources, the 'strategic where' of a geography. This is thinking web, finding the location where relationships and platforms hold potential for affecting the whole (Lederach, 2005: 86).

In the past, lines of divisions in Basque society were crossed in diverse ways. Experiences conveyed by different participants in the field show these ruptures. However, there is also a tension between the transgression of dichotomies and the

reproduction of them. In order to examine this tension, I go through an interview with a member of COVITE, Jimena, and through the statements raised in some of the meetings of the organisation of relatives of prisoners *Etxerat*.

Jimena was born in a town of Castile, but went to live to the Basque Country when she was a child. She recalls her childhood in a town in Guipúzcoa. She did not play with Basque children, only with migrants coming from different parts of Spain, who were referred to with the denotative term *maquetos*.

For them, it was like, as you had to emigrate, you were a... let's say, inferior to them. They were like 'I am here in my land, I have my *caserío* [traditional farm house]' [...] They didn't want to associate with us. Neither at school nor at playtime. At fourteen, fifteen, a guy could be looking at you and such, but it was like 'I cannot be with this girl, because they are Castilians... What they are going to say in my house!'

Those strict lines of division got blurred when Basque women approached the Castilian women in order to learn how to make clothes. This encounter made them develop a caring for the others, and caused Basque kids to mingle more with the other kids.

Despite the fact that they had to emigrate, their culture was very rich. So they taught them [to the Basque women] how to sew... Then, of course, they realised that they [the Castilian] were not as bad as they probably thought [...] You could then see more complicity among the women. They even came home and said for example to my mum 'Hey, we noticed that you didn't go out yesterday. Are you ill? Has something happened to you?' They showed more concern for us.

Nonetheless, the narration of this event and realisation of that rupture of divisions does not stop the image of the Basque nationalist 'other' being prevalent in Jimena's speech during the rest of the interview, in connection with her experience of the armed conflict. The image of 'the other' gets shattered when referring to specific experiences, but stays in the discourse when referring to 'the other' as a trope, as the image of the enemy in the violent conflict.

The tension and the complexity of breaking and maintaining dichotomies were manifested in different situations. For instance, in meetings of relatives of prisoners, the image of 'the hostile other' embodied by those seen as representative of the

repressive Spanish state is brought up in some comments, but other conversations challenge this homogenisation. I attended a meeting between members of *Etxerat* and representatives of an Argentinean association that supports the rights of Basque prisoners. In a round of comments, around thirty relatives of prisoners referred mainly to the poor prison conditions, and the difficulties they face in the visits to jail. Lucía stated that she had missed the visit to her son the week before due to weather conditions. The management of the prison, she affirmed, had agreed to add the time of that visit to the following. Other relatives commented on this reaction and raised positive experiences with prison staff, while others persisted on representing warders as non-trustable.

Lucía: This weekend we did not manage to go due to the storm. We rang the prison and explained the situation. They said that the hour and a half will be caught up next month, so we will have three hours.

Pat: Well, they haven't given it to you yet

Vero: I can't trust them...

Lucía: Well, I think they will.

Vero: They [warders] distribute their roles: some are the good ones, and some others the evil ones.

Rebeca: The good ones were good ones. They were sometimes kind to the relatives. Once, there was a relative who forgot her ID. She left it in her purse in the van. I told the prison guard that she could get in and that we could give the ID to him when the van came back to pick us up. He said 'If it was you [who forgot it], as I know you...' But then, he asked her for her ID number and in the end he let us in.

Pat: Well, but maybe some other day, they they won't do something like that. They are screws.

I knew some of these women from the meetings I used to attend of one of the groups of *Etxerat*. The day that I asked for access to these meetings, we met in an independentist bar of the town. Five women came to meet me, the researcher, in order to explain the situation of their relatives. Their sons, daughters or partners are in jail. Two of them are in their fifties, the others in their seventies. We go to the rear of the bar, to a quiet place that is opened only for us. When we sit, Lucía comments to Susana that 'this has no end' and that, at least, neither of them is going to see that 'end'. Susana

states that when the time comes to see her son out of jail, she can then die; ‘Or maybe I can have a bit of an extra time so I can enjoy being with him’, she adds smiling to me. The rest of them follow up on the statement that everything is going to continue as it is now, in reference to the repressive conditions of the prisoners and the obstacles set for the relatives to support them. Their conversation turns at some points to the support they receive by some people in their own towns and the reassuring feeling of being together, go to the demonstrations together, or even hang out with the group. ‘This solidarity is the positive aspect of all this’, Lucía states. In relation to this solidarity, they talk about the places where they have to stay over when they go to visit the prisoners. They highlight how well are treated. Feeling welcomed and cared for makes them break with the image of the Spanish territory as a hostile one.

In a later interview with one of these women, Rebeca used an expression heard in different narratives when breaking with homogenisation of ‘the other’: *hay gente de todo* (‘there are all kinds of people’). She stressed the generosity by picturing these people as not driven by profits or even by an ideological commitment. She also valued the risks they face for caring for them.

Rebeca: There are all kinds of people. We used to go to an inn where the owner knew why we went there and who we were. ‘I always have two rooms reserved for you, in case you need them last minute’, she used to say.

Andrea: And you did not have to talk about anything related with the conflict with them, right?

R: No. It was more like ‘Here again, aren’t you?... You have to travel so much...’ You know, normal conversations.

A: That is pretty common, right?

R: Yes, but until you see it, you think you are going to a hostile territory. You go to a place that you don’t know. The bus leaves you there at 6.30 am. And then you wonder ‘What am I doing here? So far from home...’ But yes, there are good people: the bar owner, the inn owner...

A: Has meeting these people changed your way of thinking somehow?

R: Probably, yes. Because one thinks that that this [support] is limited to the people from here [the Basque Country], and then you see that these people don’t get any benefit from us, and that they still show this solidarity. Now, Gorka [pseudonym for her relative in prison] has received a letter from the Solidarity

Committee from Xx [name of a Spanish town]. They are probably involved in many issues. They might be fighting against nuclear power stations, or against evictions, and things like that. But the one at the bar... He was just a worker, who had enough with his bar and his work. But he went early in the morning just to open up the bar for us. Only for that reason. We sat there. He turned the heater on, or the fireplace... So you establish a relationship with him... Because when you come out of the visit in jail, you come back to his bar, have lunch there... And we wait for the van to get back home there. These are people that... This man did not gain anything from us. On the contrary, he could have got himself into problems, like people saying 'What are you doing opening the bar to these people that are...', you know what. He could have suffered all that. But he kept on opening his doors, for more than twenty years.

These are not isolated anecdotes or exceptional narratives. During my fieldwork, almost every relative of a prisoner with whom I spoke highlighted situations in relation to their trips to the prisons where they had been well treated. These narratives break with a homogenised image of the Spanish 'other' as hostile.

However, sometimes these experiences are not expressed due to the concern about being seen as 'too close' to 'the other'. This fact seems to be a continuation of the idea of contamination analysed in chapter 3, namely the perception of complicity with 'the other' reinforcing the dichotomy of 'us' *versus* 'them'. In an interview with a relative of a longtime prisoner, Izaskun referred to prison guards when she was explaining her conceptualisation of *convivencia* as when people relate to one another joined by 'the human factor' regardless of their different ways of thinking. She then affirmed the good actions that prison guards have sometimes done. Her statement included her worry about being perceived as too inclined towards 'the other'.

We are all people. This should be the point of departure when we talk about *convivencia*. Then, everything is possible, even with the most unlikely person. In prison... –and I cannot say it very loudly, so they think I'm with the prison guards...– in prison, there was a book that wasn't allowed because it did not have an edition number, but I insisted, and, finally, a prison guard managed to get it inside. These are gestures.

Naming gestures like this is attached to a concern about ‘being with the other’. In this sense, a question to be asked can relate to the invisibility of these practices due to this worry for stepping out of established prejudices, *i.e.* established dichotomies.

Some ruptures in divisions do not come from strangers but arise from previous bonds. This was the case of the visits carried out by a member of the Popular Party to Diego, taken into prison under allegations of belonging to ETA, for being part of the board of an independentist newspaper. This story came up around the table of one of the weekly dinners of relatives of prisoners that I attended during my fieldwork. We were talking in small groups and I showed my interest to know about the story of the relatives of the women sitting next to me. At some point, Silvia explained that when her partner Diego was in prison, some female members of the right-wing Spanish Popular Party used to approach her to check on him. Silvia stressed that another member of the Popular Party visited her partner in prison a couple of times. I asked if they were friends, ‘Yes, as long as they were not talking about politics’. Friendship can cross over dichotomies, while a confrontational understanding of politics reinforces them.¹⁸⁰ While having a conversation with two members of the Social Forum about my research, I raised the example described above, and then one of them explained that a similar situation happened to her when she was put in jail under the accusation of being a member of ETA. She received visits from the daughter of a member of the Spanish military force because they were friends.

These narratives are not easily brought up. On many occasions, it is only when I put forward an example that then others examples follow. Whilst speaking to another participant about practices of peace, after I had illustrated the concept with the

¹⁸⁰ Along this chapter and in other parts of the thesis, I have shown how the dichotomy humanity *versus* the ideological and political is widespread in narratives on the encounter between different political positions. In chapter 2, the representative of the Catholic Diocese of Vizcaya established this clear separation that also resonates with a broad accepted meaning of the concept of *convivencia* as belonging to human relationships and far from politicians. The description of politics or ideology as divisive seems to come from an understanding of politics as based on fixed identities that must be defended. In this sense, politics are understood as representing immobility, freezing differences in dichotomies, and relating to the perception of different standpoints as confrontation. Following Cavarero’s (2014) sense on politics, I would advocate for a different understanding of politics that are about conversation, about learning to overcome conflicts through discussions even with no need to reach consensus, about relationality and also about discomfort and vulnerability being exposed when feeling moved while listening.

experiences of other participants, she explained to me that when she and other members of the youth independentist movement were arrested, the members of *Casa de Extremadura* (an association of migrants from a Spanish region) that is placed in their neighbourhood got in touch for the first time with their families just to send greetings to them. This action surprised the detainees. She also described, as a practice of peace, gestures of care while being in prison, for example a doctor who took care of her and other female prisoners. Cracks in the dichotomies of the violent conflict appear unexpectedly and many times connected with care and concern about others, a concern that can come from bonds of friendship or from strangers.

Despite daily compartmentalisations, or the conceptualisation of a fixed 'other', there are practices that show how certain situations have broken divisions in the past. The narration of these practices could be done for multiple reasons or aims. They can break an image of 'the other' as homogeneous and all wicked, and that rupture could help to stop feeling in a constant confrontation or constant fear of what the other can do. It could also be a way to recognise in oneself a rupture with the image of 'the other' imposed on them. For instance, in Jimena's account, Castilian women were approached because they were not as bad as they were initially perceived. Also accounts about the good reception of relatives of prisoners in the Spanish territory entail breaking not only with the image of 'the other' but also of the self, since the image of the wicked terrorist does not seem to be applied to them when they are treated with care. Those who raise these accounts can see 'the others' as 'normal' people, and that image mirrors a self-image. These accounts eliminate the devil's horns put on 'the other' and also on oneself.

These examples also show that ruptures with dichotomies do not always come from logocentric understandings of encounters. The rupture can originate, not in a conversation happening in the encounter, but in the experience of a hug, or in a journey. Reflecting on the case of the member of the Popular Party visiting his friend in prison, it was probably not the conversation itself, but the physicality of the encounter in a particular space, and the journey towards it what was relevant. This person had first to arrange the visit through all the bureaucratic procedures that visiting a Basque prisoner in Spain entails: the prisoner has to put the name of this person on the restricted list of visitors, the profile of the visitor is then checked (and marked as visiting an *etarra*), in order to get the visit accepted. The visitor drives to the prison,

and probably books a place to stay over, far from home. This member of the Popular Party had to go through all the security measures to enter the prison, in order to meet his friend with a glass between them and knowing that their conversation is recorded. Driving back home means leaving his friend locked behind. This experience could spark reflections and emotions before and after the visit: while holding the steering wheel; or in the days after, when conversations might happen with relatives, friends or acquaintances that may know or may not know about the visit. The narration ends up in the ears of a researcher from a British university. Uncontrollable, unexpected elements that are part of the situation that created a crack in fixed divisions. These different situations do not necessarily entail speaking about the experiences of the past, about violence or about political positions.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, exploring the different initiatives that were being carried out, I asked many times about informal spaces where people would be talking about their different understandings and experiences of the armed conflict nowadays. I did not get any specific answers. My sense was that encounters had to be set in a formal way in order to happen (such as the local forums, or the gathering of victims). It was after my time in the Basque Country when I realised that my question was focusing on the act of speech, on the sharing through talking, and in a specific type of conversation: conversations that were addressing experiences of the past, articulated in arguments, rationalised in order to be expressed, to be known and acknowledged. However, my previous research had pointed towards different directions, while carrying out ethnographic fieldwork with a group of women from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds meeting in Belfast for years and whose conversations barely touched the armed conflict (see García González, 2018).

In the Basque Country, different groups, such as feminist collectives, have not addressed the armed conflict either in order to avoid confrontation within the group or because they had other priorities on their agendas, such as giving access to abortion to women, as one of the examples. In an interview with a participant in different feminist initiatives, I wanted to know more about a feminist reading group where she has been involved. Critically looking at how I led the questions, I can see my own insistence of the need to talk about the armed conflict and my idea of the violence of the armed conflict as a major axis in people's lives.

Isabel: The group has grown, and we do not speak at all about...

Andrea: About your experiences

I: We talk about feminism.

A: Not even about your own experiences? For example, you don't speak about what you have told me of the repression that you suffered... And why do you think you don't speak about it?

I: Well, because we meet fortnightly, uh, many times we run out of time when talking about the books...

A: But don't you go for a drink afterwards?

I: Some times yes, but I don't...

A: Or during the trips you have done as a group?

I: No, I haven't seen that those issues have been raised.

A: And is there not someone in the group who could be a mother of a prisoner or similar, so being so directly affected that asking how she is doing practically implies...?

I: Not at all.

On the one hand, I am following my research question insisting on the reasons behind not talking about the armed conflict as if that fact were an anomaly. However, these silences do not always imply a denial or avoidance of conflict. Not addressing the armed conflict can happen also because it might not have as much importance in some lives and some contexts as I was assuming it had, or because people need spaces where the armed violence doesn't dominate their lives. On the other hand, while going over this interview, I also became aware of my assumption of a mother of a prisoner as embodying the conflict. This was a gendered assumption of the body of the mother being a representation of the consequences of the conflict, and of all her interactions manifesting this connection.

Social spaces can be full of unexpected situations where dichotomies get shattered. Different experiences show ruptures of lines of division while also dealing with contradictory expressions of transgression of dichotomies and the maintenance of them. Narratives that break with the image of 'the other' don't come to light easily. Putting them into conversation responds to different reasons mainly based on a relief in breaking with 'the evil other'. Ruptures with dichotomies are often based more in gestures than in logocentric approaches, which I have highlighted as important in terms of critically examining our own methods of research.

The Value of Bonds and Relationships

In the first analysis of the data, I named as practices of peace those practices that have broken with homogenisation and division in the past and the present. But I also wonder about other practices, those of mutual support, such as weekly dinners organised with care and pleasure among relatives of prisoners in a little town of the Basque country. If I focus just on practices that break divisions, I might be following the same rhetoric of reconciliation scholarship and policies that I criticise and that give importance just to those initiatives that mix people from the different ‘sides’ of the conflict? If this ‘cross-community’ element is not present, does that mean that other practices are not relevant? But then, if I include those others as practices of peace, am I not broadening the concept too much so it might include everything?

I raised these questions at three different presentations I delivered the year after my fieldwork. During the time of the analysis and the writing-up, multiple conversations take place: conversations with the participants of the research -mediated by the documents containing my fieldnotes and interview transcripts-; conversations with supervisors and colleagues; conversations with scholars whose work spark ideas in my mind. As philosopher Marina Garcés states, the boundaries of ones’ own voice and the others are difficult to establish (Garcés, 2013:18). This is one more evidence of the impossibility of the idea of an autonomous individual, since bodies talk about relationality, from ‘its hunger, its cold, and the mark of its navel’ (Garcés 2013: 29). In the same line, during the many drafts of this chapter, I realised that the importance given to bonds is common to the practices that I had located. Stress on bonds and relationships are part of practices that break with fixed dichotomies and also part of practices of mutual support that happen among people of similar ideological standpoints. This common value given to relationships involves a change in relation to violence since it connects with awareness of vulnerability and interdependency, even when not explicitly recognised.

Interdependency is a concept highlighted by key authors in peace studies such as Galtung (1996) or Lederach (2005). Interestingly, some feminist theories have worked deeper on the understanding of this concept. Interdependency related to social change has been used in feminist approaches to peace and conflict. Sara Ruddick (1995) raised

the controversial concept of 'maternal thinking' in her work with that same title in connection to peace politics. She links that concept with a 'commitment to care'. Although she rejects the idea of mothers being naturally peaceful, the use of motherhood for making the point of an antimilitaristic stance has been highly criticised. However, other authors have used it in their research. Elisabeth Porter (2007: 48, 67) links 'maternal thinking' to the development of a 'compassionate' society, which would be the ultimate objective of peacebuilding: a society where difference is 'accepted unproblematically as part of life's rich tapestry'. Other scholars have taken the biological mothering element out of the concept and used the term 'relatedness' to refer to the political value of the neediness of the body (Vaaitinen, 2015).

In addition, feminist scholars working within politics of care, ecofeminism, feminist economics or post-structural feminism, have explored the potential of the idea of interdependency as transformative. The fact that our bodies are vulnerable and need other bodies not only physically to survive, but also symbolically to exist as individuals in the construction of our identities in connection with others, has been raised by different philosophers (Butler, 2010; Mead, 1934; Ricoeur, 1995; Taylor, C. 1985). This fact aims to raise awareness regarding the fallacy of the modern concept of the citizen as self-sufficient, a fallacy on which the capital market is based (as pointed out by feminist economics), sustained through the exploitation of non-recognised carers (politics of care) and of nature (ecofeminism). Drawing on Butler's (2006, 2010) ideas, awareness of the vulnerability of the bodies leads to questioning why, in the patriarchal and capitalist society, some lives matter more than others, some lives are the ones sustained through the exploitation and dismissal of others. Feminist scholars acknowledge the need for care and human vulnerability, an awareness that can unveil the violence that is part of the everyday, embodied in our daily acts. These approaches, breaking with the fallacy of the modern individual, who has no one to care for other than himself, and no more worries than to compete with others through force and violence, are challenging essential values of patriarchy and capitalism.

In weekly encounters of relatives of Basque prisoners around dinner, conversations do not necessarily hinge upon the situation of their close ones. The group that gathers together, mainly women, share recipes, talk about the last theatre play they have gone to, or political activities they have attended. They joke, laugh, eat

and drink. I can feel the joy, the trust developed during years, the care put in the organisation of each of the dinners. Six conversations were happening at the same time when Silvia smiles to me and says ‘Look what the wine can do’. Each Monday during the last ten years, it is the turn for one of them to bring cheese, ham, potato omelet, wine, and other surprises to the table. They explain these encounters, to me and to others, as being ‘like a therapy’. The pain of those more affected by the current situation of the prisoners, the pain that many times is kept in silence, finds, in this space, a symbolic hug surrounded by drinks and food. In an interview held with Arantza, she broke down in tears while expressing her fear of not living long enough to see her daughter out of prison. Arantza said that doesn’t usually allow herself to show these feelings in public. However, in separate interviews with two other participants of the same group, they referred to Arantza’s pain when stating the need of keeping the encounters alive. In the weekly dinners they do not need to cry in order to get the care and support they need: vulnerability might not be exposed, but it is implicit in the practice.

Importance given to bonds appears in narratives of relatives of prisoners, and also in groups of support of ETA victims. In different accounts on the visits to jails, relatives of prisoners recalled with happiness the time that *Etixerat* organised collective trips to prisons. Shared journeys ended due to what they understand as a repressive change in prisons policy: visits became scattered along different times and days, what made it impossible to organise collective trips. These narratives articulate a connection between the repression from the state and impeding bonds of mutual support. On the other hand, narratives in relation to the support of ETA victims highlighted the importance of creating bonds with them. Clara used to belong to an organisation that protested against the violence of ETA. I met her for the interview in a bar at her hometown. She didn’t seem worried about us being surrounded by other people while we talk. She expressed early in the interview her dissatisfaction with the organisation she was involved in. Her main concern was that the organisation neglected some victims, meaning those belonging to Spanish political parties, mainly the Popular Party. At this point of the interview, this statement struck me since in my view those have been the victims given most attention in Spanish media. However, she stated that they found rejection in the Basque Country. For Clara, it was an issue of social justice

to break with the isolation of these victims by keeping a close relationship with them, even if this meant to leave the organisation and engage in this solidarity on her own.

Value given to bonds, awareness of bodies in need of support, and also the pleasure found in keeping those connections alive allow for disrupting the violence of modern individualisation. Anthropologist Rita Laura Segato (2016: 28) affirms this idea stating that '[w]eaving community bonds means to join a historical project with divergent goals to the historical project of the capital'. However, some forms of care and solidarity are not being publicly expressed during the post-ceasefire period in the Basque Country. Only after almost a year of relationship, some of the participants in my fieldwork told me about networks of support that were developed within the youth independentist movement during the armed conflict. Along with expressing their fears about being detained and imprisoned, they talked about the joy that the feeling of support and trust entailed. These are not narratives usually spoken about, as analysed in the previous chapter. On the one hand, because of the criminalisation of a broad sector of the Basque population that is affecting a particular creation of memory. On the other hand, because some emotions do not fit in the current emotional landscape constructed in the scenario of *convivencia*.

Pleasure and joy could be considered in the post-ceasefire process as 'outlaw emotions'. Alison Jaggar (1989: 166-167) defines 'outlaw emotions' as 'conventionally unacceptable' emotions that can become subversive to the *status quo*, helping to develop a critical perspective on the world. This concept can be coupled with the idea of discomfort raised by Ahmed (2013), explored in chapter 5, in order to point both to the normative scenario being created in the post-ceasefire context in the Basque Country and to the challenges that attending to different narratives pose to it. Some scholars have raised the transformational potential of giving attention to pleasure and joy, such as Audre Lorde (1984: 56) when affirming that '[t]he sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference'. In this chapter, some of the motivations for acknowledgement of 'the other' and for mutual support come from these emotions that are not exposed in public performances and spaces of inscription where suffering is the prevailing element used for recognition. These outlaw emotions are transformative not only for breaking the prevalent narratives of this period, but

also because they can also guide the search for a better life and oppose the violence embedded in the everyday.

A Period of Opportunity

We were ‘us’ and ‘them’. You couldn’t go beyond that. It wasn’t well seen. You could feel differently, but you repressed your feelings, because things were very strict. There was a time when I felt I did not know where to stand. I did not want to go anywhere. I stayed with the people who had supported me so much, but their chants, the things they said... I couldn’t agree, I couldn’t.

In the current scenario after the ceasefire, Ainhoa allows herself to express both the feeling of not fitting in either side of a strict division and also the reassurance found in meeting other political stances, breaking with a divisional confrontation within her. Different participants referred to the time of the post-ceasefire as when some elements have changed. Confrontation is not as strong as it used to be. People are more open to listening to each other. The fact that there are no murders and no armed violence helps to unblock communication. Mireia, who has been part of the independentist left movement, stated in the interview that, during the armed conflict, she could not talk to those who were not close to the movement about the repression by the state since people raised the argument ‘until the armed struggle doesn’t end’ as a barrier that prevented any dialogue.

This period might allow for the acknowledgement of different violences, covered during years by the dynamics of the violent conflict. Laura was involved in trade unions in the past, when she became frustrated with the fact that the armed conflict was permanently at the centre of politics. She affirmed that this post-ceasefire period is the time when she can speak more about social and economic problems, and work conditions. Another participant, a woman who was put in prison accused of belonging to ETA, stated to me that, in this period, people do not feel the need to ‘keep fighting’, so they are ‘more relaxed and more open to see what they have experienced and what other people have experienced’.

Different participants in the field described the post-ceasefire period as a ‘more relaxed’ situation. Nerea put as an example her relationship with the mother of her daughter’s best friend. This person used to be a prominent figure on the other side of

the banner, in the weekly protests in the 1990s that I have investigated in chapter 3. They did not talk for years, but this is the time when they talk if they bump into each other on the street. Her friends seemed to be surprised by this closeness:

Nerea: When we met on the street, they exclaimed ‘What a relationship you have with this person!’

Andrea: Why? What were you doing?

N: No, just the normal thing when you bump into someone on the street... But they said ‘What a relationship you have’. She was very famous too. I hadn’t talked to her for years, until recently, and now she is very nice...

A: When did you start talking to each other?

N: Six or seven years ago.

A: Why?

N: Because the issue began to get more relaxed ... It seems like a myth that we are in a historical phase... But at least I have changed a lot and these people have also changed

A: In what sense have you changed?

N: Well, with these people I didn’t use to talk. I had them as *fas* [imitating a crossing out gesture]. I’ve always been very radical. But now it’s not a big effort... And they also do it with me.

A period of opportunity is felt in the bodies that harboured the confrontation during years. A period of opportunity is manifested in openness for the expression of vulnerabilities, contradictions and hesitations that were not allowed in the epic scenario of the past.

Confrontational Bodies in Movement

Every Monday I had the runs. I was even hoping to fall ill so I did not have to go that Monday. I could have stopped going, but I understood that I had to be there even if I was shitting myself [...] You usually kept it for yourself. There were these brave people who said that it was a must to be there, that if it’s your turn is your turn... And I said ‘Well, it could be our turn, but...’

Azucena expressed to me during an interview how the toughness of the years of confrontation was reflected on her body. The period coming after the ceasefire can

result in an opportunity to reflect on fears and contradictions that were not raised in the past. I met with Azucena and Sonia, both members of *Etixerat*, at the beginning of my fieldwork to introduce my project and to check with them the possibility to join their meetings. That day, with no voice recorder, they talked for three hours about their experiences during the armed conflict, affirming at the end that the fact of being with the other person made them remember better what happened and how they felt. They stressed as a significant period of confrontation the time of the two-banners protest (analysed in chapter 3), when they were behind the banner of the independentist left in the weekly demonstrations during the 1990s that entailed confrontation with neighbours placed behind the other banner and with the police. Both Azucena and Sonia told me, at our first encounter and later in separate interviews the fear they felt, manifested by their bodies but not shown publicly at that time.

Confrontation and violence were embodied. On the one hand, bodies showed the violence in expressions of illness. Illness can be part of the past, such as feeling sick before every demonstration of the two-banners protest. Illness can be manifested nowadays, as one of the interviewees stated when referring to her current bad health condition, what she described as a consequence of years of violence and suffering. On the other hand, bodies in confrontation adopted specific postures. In my first encounter with Ainhoa, whose relative was killed by a paramilitary group, she explained the years when she felt the pressure to live in confrontation, as I wrote down in my notes:

She expresses that during many years she lived ‘in the against’ [...] I ask her about polarisation and she answers that if you were just at home and you did not want to know about what was happening, you didn’t feel it, but that if you were active defending something, everything was framed within the confrontation [...] ‘When you did not want to live in the against’, she continues, ‘you were reminded about what you had suffered, and then you regained the feeling of “I have to hate”. And if you greeted someone, you were told “What were you thinking of? Greeting them... with the suffering they have caused to you!”’

Confrontation also entailed to adopt an unbeatable attitude. Relatives of people killed during the armed conflict told me how they did not allow themselves to cry or even talk about the dead for years. Nerea barely cried after the death of her relative. She recalled how she heard that ‘mothers of Basque people do not have to allow the enemy to see them crying’. Concealment of tears was a common experience connected

with not showing weakness to the enemy. It was so embodied that ‘you didn’t realise that you were acting that way’, Nerea stated to me. Ainhoa affirmed that silence was installed in her family in relation to their death relative, so speaking about him could cause more suffering: ‘I heard my mother crying.... We did not ask each other. The first Christmas was very hard, very hard’.

During the current post-ceasefire period, some silences have been broken through initiatives based on artistic approaches that have triggered members of different families to speak about their relatives. It happened with the shooting of the documentary about Mikel Zabalza, who was tortured, killed and disappeared in the 1980s by the Spanish military force Guardia Civil.¹⁸¹ One of the directors explained to me that the relatives of Zabalza had not talked among each other about his death, until they spoke for the documentary. In the artistic project part of San Sebastian Capital of Culture 2016 (DSS2016) *Adiorik Gabe* (‘without goodbye’), four artists met with thirteen families in order to create a performance based on the lives of those who were killed (mainly by ETA but also by paramilitary groups). The coordinator of this project told me how some families were more used to talking about the dead, while others dugged up the memories when listening to the stories spoken about by other members of their families during the creation of the commemorative performance.

Bodies suffered the tension for years. During a night out with a group of young women from a Basque language course, Ohiane commented on the change in the last fifteen years. In her opinion, years ago it was unthinkable to hear the kind of music that was being played in the bars we were in, which are close to the *izquierda abertzale*. Ohiane, who was involved in a youth independentist organisation, explained that ‘it used to be a very closed environment’ for safety reasons, since ‘you were alert all the time. They were difficult times, with detentions, bombs... We were in great tension’. Being ‘in an alert position’ also entailed a rejection of her female body. I reproduce here an excerpt from my fieldnotes about what she expressed that night:

Talking about the years of struggle, she says that everything was felt through the skin. It wasn’t rational. I ask her to explain it further and she answers that there

¹⁸¹ Information on the documentary and the case: ‘El Caso Zabalza’, *Mikel Zabalza*, accessed 14 April 2019, <http://mikelzabalza.eus/es/pages/caso-zabalza>

could be things that you didn't agree with, but it was more about what you felt, through your skin. She then talks about a workshop she attended in Barcelona when the Mexican facilitator told her to stop being on the defensive, that she had to relax her body. She realised that it was true, that she had been in that vigilant position for years. She explains to us that she rejected being a girl, and she wore loose clothes, no pink ... And that now is the time when she recognises herself as a woman. She says that, before, everything was very masculine, even the attitude of women.

In the aftermath of the violent armed conflict, some bodies are in movement, trying to find new ways of expression. The music we danced to during the night out was similar to other bars and festivals being attended by people from the independentist left. One of the bands is a young one from Madrid, *Tremenda Jauría*, which performs feminist Latin rhythms breaking with usually sexist lyrics. Some of their songs are covers of main bands of the *rock radical vasco* ('Basque radical rock'), which was in fashion among young radical people during the 1980s and is still popular among the independentist left representing the struggle of the Basque people. *Tremenda Jauría* plays these songs in a Latin style, with main figures from that time such as Fermin Muguruza¹⁸² joining them on stage at some gigs. 'People wanted to dance and also feel comfortable with the lyrics of the rhythm that moves their bodies', is the commentary made about the success of this band by one of the women joining our night out that usually attends events organised by the independentist left. The lyrics of *Tremenda Jauría* include the importance of caring for each other, or the claim of Madrid as the heart of the beast where different social and political struggles take place. Dancing their songs breaks with the stiffness of the bodies and of political messages: Madrid appears as not being the equivalent of the enemy, of 'the other'; caring is one of the demands for a socio-political change.

Concealment of emotions, the violent conflict as an embodied confrontation, painful memories not being expressed, are all elements that became part of the bodies of those that experienced the violence causing different reactions, from illness to the stiffness similar to a warrior body attitude. The effects of violence on the bodies are

¹⁸² Singer of main bands of the Radical Basque rock, such as Kortatu or Negu Gorriak. Further information: "Fermin Muguruza", Wikipedia, accessed 14 April 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermin_Muguruza

being more expressed, memories are finding spaces to be listened to, bodies find ways to move and express themselves in what is perceived as a time of change.

From the Epic of the *Gudari* to Vulnerability

During years, expressions of suffering were not allowed for people in order to not inflict further pain, and to continue in a ‘fighting mode’. In a conversation with a person from an organisation of victims of state-sanctioned violence, he critically spoke of the influence, in the independentist left, of the image of the *machote gudari* (the ‘macho warrior’), saying that this image did not allow men to show what they were feeling; a model that, he affirmed, extended also to some women. Weakness and vulnerability was hidden not only to the police or to ‘the other’, but also within the group of peers. It was part of what nowadays is becoming criticised within the independentist left as a combatant epic narrative. It was part of a feeling of being in a war and not giving any signs of surrendering.

A critical look towards the past is being taken mainly by women and is happening in different spaces. In October 2016, I attended one of the presentations of the book *Borroka Armatua eta Kartzelak* (‘Armed Struggle and Prisons’, by Etxebarrieta and Rodríguez, 2016), written in Basque. The presentation was held at a women’s centre in San Sebastian. Around forty people attend, mainly people in their thirties; about ten of them are men. Many of them seem to know each other, as they talked among each other and they end up going to the same bar for drinks after the talk. The authors analyse the patriarchal gaze that has permeated the independentist left movement, in a feminist analysis of the armed conflict. They address the harm done by the patriarchal imaginary of the *gudari* (‘soldier’) as pervasive, not just in public discourses about the armed struggle, but also in the conceptualisation of relationships and how the heroic imaginary created a figure of women as the warriors’ supporters. In a meeting with one of the authors of the book, in order to know more about their work, she explained to me that, after other of her presentations, a young man approached her stating the need to talk about vulnerability and expressing the difficulties he has found in talking about how he felt after being tortured, and not only immediately after it happened, but also nowadays. The image of the *gudari* affected

men and women, and different initiatives are starting to slowly break with it and to give space and value to vulnerability.¹⁸³

The need to speak with others who have shared similar experiences of violence in the past was stated by different participants in the field. Some initiatives have been created since 2016, by women related to the independentist movement, such as the gathering of former prisoners that was publicly initiated in December of 2016. They have placed a gender analysis on their own experiences of prison and torture, making women visible in the armed conflict and its aftermath and questioning patriarchal attitudes in their political activity and in the repressive methods suffered. In the year of my fieldwork (2016-2017), members of the feminist organisation close to the independentist left *Bilgune Feminista* were gathering to share their experiences of the armed conflict. Intimate expressions of vulnerability can be a way to break with years of concealment of emotions. A participant in one of these initiatives told me that exposure of vulnerability is not easy in a context where Spanish and French governments are still feared because of their actions taken in the on-going repression of the independentist left movement (detentions and trials). In this sense, she affirmed that this scenario creates unequal positions for different actors in relation to the possibility of showing emotions, feelings, contradictions, critiques, and vulnerabilities.

In the last years, there has also been a rise in Basque literature of essays and novels that reflect on different aspects of Basque society from a vulnerable stance that put into question patriarchal spaces such as the traditionally male-dominated art of *bertsolaritza*¹⁸⁴ (Alberdi, 2019), or the literary arena where the book by Eider Rodríguez (2019) situates the struggle of women writers and their strategies to raise their own voice. Alberdi tackled the Basque armed conflict in a narrative that shows

¹⁸³ In the preliminary findings of the doctoral research by Olatz Dañobeitia Ceballos, she states that there has been a change in the accounts on torture in the last years, from accounts based on techniques to expression of feelings in relation to having suffered that violence. In her presentation at the Memory Studies Association conference held in Madrid in June 2019, Dañobeitia highlighted this shift as being influenced by the feminist movement in the Basque Country. She put as an example an event that took place in June 2019 where three women and a man reflected on their emotions in relation to torture. The title of the event was *Torturaren Ostean Berreraikitzen. Ikuspegi Feministatik Hausnartzen* ('Reconstructing Oneself after Torture. Reflections from a Feminist Perspective').

¹⁸⁴ Basque art of singing poems composed extemporaneously.

the shift from ‘the heroic culture to a culture of vulnerability’ in her previous book *Jenisjoplin* (2017),¹⁸⁵ where the main character grows up compelled by her father to be brave and to avoid any feelings of fear until the message is broken, what the author extrapolates to a collective identity of part of society in the Basque Country.

Coming from a situation where the figure of the warrior permeated behaviours, emotions, relationships and body performances of some of the people that suffered violence during the armed conflict, some initiatives are creating spaces where different expressions that had to be kept silent in the past can now be shown. However, the possibility of expression is uneven in a context where criminalisation is ongoing. The period of opportunity is not accessible in the same way for every actor in this process. However, some actors are developing narratives and creating safe spaces that challenge patriarchal structures and allow for expressions of vulnerability to happen.

¹⁸⁵ This was part of the description of the book made by its author when it was released (“Jenisjoplin habla del paso de la cultura heroica al de la vulnerabilidad” [Podcast], *RadioEuskadi*, 11 October 2017, accessed 30 July 2019, <https://www.eitb.eus/es/radio/radio-euskadi/programas/iflandia/detalle/5139614/uxue-alberdi-nos-presenta-su-segunda-novela-adultos-jenisjoplin/>). Basque anthropologist Mari Luz Esteban, in her presentation on ‘[t]he peace process in the Basque society’ at the AIBR (Association of Ibero American Anthropology) conference in Madrid in July 2019, highlighted Alberdi’s novel *Jenisjoplin* as developing ‘a whole theoretical approach to vulnerability’, connecting events of the past with emotions and replacing the epic vision of the past for a vulnerable stance in a ‘reformulation of ways of feeling’.

The fact that vulnerability is being addressed through the literature in this post-ceasefire period was drawn to my attention by my doctoral colleague Haritz Arizmendi, with whom I shared my time in both the University of the Basque Country and University of Nevada Reno.

All the literary work mentioned (Alberdi, 2017, 2019; Etxebarrieta and Rodríguez, 2016; Rodríguez, 2019) has been released by the same publishing company (Susa), some of them in the feminist collection Lisipe.

Conclusions



Figure 10. 'Gure Hormek'. Image: Txintxua Films. 2016.

This is the promotional image of the short film *Gure Hormek* ('Our Walls' in Basque). It was stuck on the wall of my room in San Sebastian for months, in front of my bed. It was one of the four short films included in the documentary *Hormek Diote* ('Walls that Talk'), produced as part of the programme of DSS2016 with the aim to 'transform walls into a symbol of living together'. Mainly artistic performances in the streets were represented in the film. However, *Gure Hormek* (2016), created by two female directors under the name *Las Chicas de Pasaik*, was shot inside the walls of a house, where footprints of daily life are shown. This film casts light on households and relationships of intimacy that the public sphere has marginalised. Within the domestic walls, there is sorority among women, and also tensions, challenges and complexities that are part of relationships. This film connected me to the concept of practices of peace, namely those daily gestures that go unnoticed, daily gestures that break walls, and leave marks on our walls (like the ones made by the drill used by the protagonist of the film).

Practices of peace, as I have explored in this chapter, entail being affected by others, blurring divisions that escape main narratives about the armed conflict, putting

into question rigid and monolithic divisions, disrupting a fixed image of ‘the other’ and sometimes revealing unexpected relations. These practices can speak from the pain and experiences of suffering, but also highlight pleasure and joy. Encounters with ‘the other’ expose vulnerabilities of those involved. These encounters imply courage to face potential rejection from close people, daring to feel moved and destabilised while listening to other experiences. Practices of peace break with normative accounts of the autonomy of the individuals, and, in doing this, disrupt the violence of the system even when structural violence is not being made explicit in the practices.

Practices of peace happen in different spaces and, when revealed, also break with the division of the public and the private. Even in encounters that have been made public, the bonds between the participants have often developed outside visible spaces. Sometimes during these encounters ‘bodies get dislocated from the speeches and begin to do what their words cannot say’ (Garcés, 2013: 67). In these spaces, bodies deal with different ways of expression, such as gazes, gestures, and silences.

With the concept of practices of peace, I have tried to highlight that a starting point towards a conceptualisation of peace, and to work for the elimination of violence, can be found in what is already happening. It is also important to emphasise that there is no single path and no linear direction for that peace and reduction of violence to happen. Reconciliation plans, or programmes on *convivencia*, establish certain paths to follow and certain results that must be reached, valuing some practices more than others. These mapped roads give a sense of security: they are traced, milestones are reached, and boxes on the list of objectives and results are ticked. However, periods of transition, periods of crisis, exceed boxes and forecasts. In this chapter, I have delved into diverse spaces where people challenge expectations over them. For some people, getting on well with ‘the other’ means overcoming the confrontation they did not want to sustain any longer. For others, initiatives planned for these kind of encounters are far from their needs and desires, and they gather with people whose relationships are already based on trust.

Confrontation usually has a prevalent role in hegemonic discourses. Researcher Diana Gómez Correal (2016: 112), in her analysis of the scenario after the peace agreements in Colombia, argues that in this country there is an ‘emotional hegemonic habitus’ based on hatred, since this hatred has been central to articulate social and political affiliations, to create fear and docile subjects, eliminating differences and

fueling violence. In her examination of relationships developed in groups formed by ‘victimised subjects’, love and ‘dignified rage’ have been placed at the center, creating social bonds of relationality, and in this way unsettling the emotional hegemonic habitus (Ibid.). I would say that hatred, as an emotional hegemonic habitus, is not a peculiarity of Colombia, but of a liberal and patriarchal system that forges hierarchical dichotomies, fueling rejection of ‘the other’ through value given to competition, force and superiority. A transformation can come from placing love at the centre. Love not understood in its romantic idealisation. Puig de la Bellacasa (2012: 204) states that, love and attachment are compatible with conflict, since ‘[r]elationality is all there is, but this does not mean a world without conflict nor dissension’.

Practices of peace create cracks in structural violence when mobilising elements generated through relationships that do not put the value on the autonomy of the individual but on collaboration, on the need and desire to relate to others. Practices of peace open up conflicts and explore the complexity of relationships instead of using force to impose specific points of view. These practices shake structural violence when life is not seen as based on competition, on standing out from others that are perceived and treated as inferior. In addition, in relationships highlighted as practices of peace, pleasure and joy is found. This joy, which Audre Lorde (1984: 59) refers to as the power of the erotic, when identified, has a high transformative potential and can also challenge structural violence: ‘[r]ecognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama’. Johan Galtung (1996: 274) considers peace as a ‘revolutionary idea’, a revolution that he states as ‘taking place all the time’. Practices of peace entail awareness of transformations that are created in the everyday. In line with the idea raised by Audre Lorde (1984), when recognising and giving value to practices of the everyday that make us feel well, it is more feasible that we try to search for that joy and pleasure in other daily practices. This realisation may allow us to reject actions that diminish us and that commit violence against us. Giving value to these everyday practices can result in breaking with the normalisation of daily structural violence.

CONCLUSIONS

The meanings that are given to concepts such as violence, peace, reconciliation, and to the term *convivencia* ('living together') in the Basque post-ceasefire scenario have been explored in this thesis in a contribution to a feminist anthropology of peace. This study has revealed the ways in which the socio-political process that came after ETA's ceasefire is gendered. The feminist approach to this exploration is a political and also a methodological option. Without paying attention to gendered meanings of the concepts examined, and without creating spaces to listening specifically to women, this research would have kept the analytical frame embedded in the dominant patriarchal structure. Displacing that frame, paying attention to experiences that are not considered 'important enough' to be at the forefront of the post-ceasefire process expands the knowledge about this period and puts into question hegemonic understandings of violence. It also gives us clues about how to displace violence from society and approach transitional times as periods of opportunity for social transformation.

Questioning and Revealing Violences

Through an ethnographic approach that has addressed experiences and understandings raised by different sectors of the Basque population, this research has insisted on how contestation is an inherent element of periods coming after armed violence. Ethnography allows for examining the complexity of the everyday, to go beyond hegemonic narratives and fixed discourses.

Contestation in the Basque case hinges upon meanings given to violence, and to internationally used terms related to peacebuilding processes such as 'post-conflict', 'peace' or 'reconciliation'. The mere existence of a 'process' itself raises controversy in the field, as demonstrated in chapter 2. Antagonistic views on the armed Basque conflict move between the definition of it as terrorism, focusing on one of the parties in the conflict (the armed group ETA), and the definition of the situation as founded on a political conflict. For the first standpoint, there's no place for a 'peace process' but only for the realisation of ETA's defeat. However, the latter understanding of the violence that happened during an armed conflict that lasted for almost fifty years has led to the creation of a unilateral process where ETA has taken steps to put an end to

armed violence, while the Spanish government has not made any reciprocal move towards negotiations that could tackle the causes and consequences of the armed conflict. In 2011, ETA announced a permanent ceasefire after the International Conference for Peace held in Aiete, San Sebastián. During the time of my research, from 2015 to 2019, ETA has taken different steps in order to show that their intention has been to pave the way for a peace process to happen and pointing at the Spanish and French governments as the ones impeding peace. ETA disarmed in 2017, and disbanded in 2018 after releasing a statement apologising for the harm caused and encouraging progress on ‘reconciliation’ in Basque society. ETA and other actors have used peacebuilding jargon in order to promote a socio-political process that could overcome the obstacles set by the Spanish and French governments and reach out to the international community with the hope of putting some pressure on resolving the consequences of the armed conflict, such as the situation of the Basque prisoners.

In my analysis of the post-ceasefire process, I attend to feminist critiques that have been raised. On the one hand, some groups of women have put into question how the current configuration of memory could exclude activities carried out by women. Their concern does not only relate to the current process, but also connects with a precedent transitional process, the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy. The ‘reconciliation’ promoted at that time has been perceived as hiding different experiences and multiple violences suffered. On the other hand, feminist voices have challenged the creation of a ‘peace’ that conceals violences that still permeate Basque society, such as violence against women.

By means of discourses that show the creation of memory as consensual and inclusive, specific narrative paths establish restricted meanings of violence and give value to some experiences over others. In spaces of inscription (which include laws, commissioned reports and public display of testimonies), some experiences of violence are validated and those who suffered them become recognised as victims of the armed conflict. Mainly male figures appear as the ones sanctioning the voices that can be included in the configuration of memory in the Basque context. The majority of those publicly displaying their testimony of the violence of the armed conflict are women. The characteristics attributed to the victim category, of having no agency and being conciliatory, fit well with gender stereotypes, although I have demonstrated that some of the women make use of the category for their own purposes.

As my analysis in chapter 4 has revealed, the voices of those recognised as victims display not only narratives about the past but also present emotional, ethical and moral elements that must prevail in the ‘new’ stage of *convivencia*. In the context of Basque living-together initiatives, the victims considered as leading the process of *convivencia* are the ones that meet with ‘the other’ under the basis of understanding of common suffering, raising empathy as a pre-requisite for citizenship. Empathy appears as the way to overcome the suffering and divisions of the past, both provoked by what is understood as ‘the’ violence, *i.e.* violence exerted mainly by ETA. Being recognised as a victim and affirming an empathetic stance are requirements to be able to narrate experiences of violence in the Basque post-ceasefire process.

Empathy has been examined as problematic when it becomes a condition for experiences to be heard and for opinions to be raised. In the Basque context, the ones depicted as innocent victims adopt an empathetic stance towards the suffering of others and prevail upon the audience to take an empathetic stance towards them. I have argued that empathy can impede questions about the causes of such suffering. Empathy can also be used as a tool to exclude voices that could be critical of current socio-political dynamics. These critical voices are described as non-empathetic, too emotional, and also ‘out of time’ and unwilling to walk along the moving-on path of a renovated living-together society. Trying to dig into the causes of the armed violence is often labeled as ‘justifying’ violence, which is, along with the non-empathetic label, an ‘uninhabitable identification’¹⁸⁶ that as such excludes those questions from public spaces for the creation of memory.

As I have demonstrated, listening to ‘the other’ in the context of Basque living-together initiatives is based on some conditions and exclusions. Many experiences can still not be publicly raised, since for part of the Basque population expressing their suffering means to expose their vulnerabilities, leaving them unprotected from more potential violence. In addition, the gendered understanding of what counts as ‘important’ impedes the expression of experiences of violence that even the people who suffered it understand as anecdotes or belonging to the private sphere.

¹⁸⁶ As Butler (2006: xix) puts it in her analysis of how dissent is quelled.

The spaces created for interviews as part of this research are rendered political since the women being interviewed give value to experiences of violence that are usually considered as not worth communicating. These experiences are perceived as insignificant in comparison with those that are narrated in public, which mainly express suffering in relation to killings. In the spaces of the interview, hegemonic understandings of violence get questioned. In these spaces, hierarchies of victimhood get shattered. In the analysis of narratives coming from these spaces of the interview, the examination of violence gains in complexity and meanings of violence are broadened out.

In the narratives of the women interviewed, violence becomes linked with dispossession, and with vulnerability. From the belongings of the relatives of prisoners being stolen from their cars when they were waiting to hear from their loved ones after their detention, or barricades impeding a woman to fetch her daughter at the school, attacks to intimacy and to the everyday appear in reflections on violence suffered. Violence is conveyed in different accounts through symbolic elements that aim to express what can be difficult to articulate. Violence is not always easy to locate, to name and to describe, so violence can be represented by elements that signify it. Zoraida repeated in her narration her concern about losing her sandals when she reflected on the first time she got bodily aware of police brutality. Losing her sandals was a sign of being left unprotected, of vulnerability, of being exposed, feeling naked in front of the violence that attacks bodies, breaks with expectations and stabs intimacy. Giving importance to these narratives that have been placed as not belonging to the public reckonings on the armed violence allows us to recognise violence better, with the hope that we will be able to protect vulnerable bodies from it.

Practices of Peace

In addition to naming violence, this thesis has also highlighted what I call ‘practices of peace’. Contrary to drawing a scenario where violence overwhelmingly covers every aspect of life, the exploration carried out in chapter 6 has shown that violence can be displaced in the everyday, creating other imaginaries about lives that are worth living. In opposition to a conceptualisation of peace as unachievable, essentialised or equated with pacification, the experiences I have gathered under the concept of

practices of peace challenge violence on a daily basis. They put relationships at the core of life. They break with isolation and division and with the modern fallacy of the self-made individual. They are practices that include care, listening, and being open to dealing with conflicts. These are practices that happened in a past, represented in hegemonic narratives as characterised by violence and division. These are practices that also happen in the present, showing different possibilities to inhabit the everyday.

The concept of practices of peace intends to create a different frame of analysis to the frame created by the concept of reconciliation. In my critical approach to literature working on the concept of reconciliation, I have identified as problematic the following elements: a narrow understanding of violence that only connects violence with the armed conflict; the aim to reach consensual agreements for the future to come; and the focus on ‘good relations’ that may conceal different kind of violences, from the violence embodied and manifested in our relationships to structural violence. I have criticised the term ‘reconciliation’ itself as it evokes a return to a time portrayed as a time of equilibrium broken by the armed violence. This linear approach towards the past, present and future, entangled with specific meanings given to violence, results in the risk of perpetuating relationships of subordination. The approach to post-ceasefire processes that frames them as processes of reconciliation has been explored in this thesis as debatable when armed violence becomes the only definition of violence impeding to tackle its causes and its structural roots.

My critique of the concept of reconciliation has drawn on the critical work carried out by a number of scholars. Critical approaches to reconciliation – such as the arguments posed by Castillejo (2017), the school of thought on political reconciliation (*e.g.* Thaler, 2018), or the work done on critiques towards liberal peace (*e.g.* Richmond, 2011) – have warned about the use of reconciliation as creating a false fracture with the past predicated upon the assumption that violence has ended. The creation of an imaginary of consensus through the use of reconciliation and the peril of eliminating contestation and conflict from this imaginary has been raised by scholars who work on the political theory of agonism (as in Hirsch, 2012). In this line of thought, I follow Laclau and Mouffe in their consideration of the need to create a social imaginary that analyses relations of subordination as oppressive relationships in order to transform them (2001: 154-159). The rupturist approach adopted in this thesis works in that same direction: violences need to be named for them not to persist.

The concept of continuum has proved useful for an analysis that is based on the everyday in order to challenge oppressive dichotomies and constraining definitions of violence and peace. Echoing explorations undertaken by feminist scholars of the different dimensions of violence that affect women, the concept of continuum pierces the fence created by hegemonic narratives around what is defined as ‘the’ violence, a fence that keeps this violence separated from the period before and the period after the armed conflict, isolated from other violences. Looking at everyday practices, the continuum also manifests as shattering homogenising conceptualisations of the ‘two sides’ of the violent conflict. Looking at everyday practices, the exploration of practices of peace also reveals peace as a continuum, since peace is understood in this thesis as not only the goal to reach after a ceasefire or peace negotiations, but as happening in daily relationships.

In this thesis, I have explored the transformative change that relationships can imply. I have been cautious not to fall into the same arguments that I have criticised in relation to reconciliation approaches that ignore the continuous existence of conflicts and conceal different kinds of violences under the veil of the establishment of ‘good relationships’. I have stated in this thesis that conflicts are inseparable from human relationships. I have also stressed the importance of looking into different manifestations of violence that occur in societies, in times of armed violence and in pacification times. I have affirmed that acknowledgement of a range of different violence can come through spaces set for recognition, and can also come from unexpected situations and in multiple space and time locations, such as those explored in chapter 6. In this sense, this thesis finds consonance with the argument raised by peacebuilding scholar Lederach (2005) when referring to the web of relationships and everyday encounters where social change can happen.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the thesis itself can be considered a practice of peace. It can be so considered because it challenges narrow understandings of violence and explores conflict and violence as happening not only in the context studied, but also as part of the relationship established between the researcher and the field. This thesis also aims to open up the imaginary of what relationships we wish to engender and sustain. The thesis is not limited to the contours of this written document. Discussions about its contents have informed its writing and will continue to do so long after this document is submitted. The impact of the findings from this research

must be measured beyond the metrics used in neoliberal academia. Impact for me relates to establishing multiple dialogues that aim for the same purpose as this thesis: to name multiple violences so as to be able to protect our bodies from them and put some limits on their perpetuation; and to remark the importance of paying attention to everyday gestures that are not usually recognised but give us the sense of possibility of the displacement of violence.

In the final stage of the writing, I have been invited to present some of my findings in different contexts, from the annual meeting of the network working on gender of Amnesty International Spain to the closing lecture for both the MA in Gender and the MA in Anthropology of the University of the Basque Country. I've also had the chance to discuss the importance of looking at the everyday gestures that do not appear in hegemonic narratives in the construction of *convivencia* with people who are currently involved in initiatives on memory in the Basque Country. In these and other sites (including discussions on already published material), I have been aware of the importance of this research in terms of talking with different audiences about aspects of violence that had been isolated within walls of oblivion for years. Just as some audiences could acknowledge the violence happening to those seen as 'the other' through a presentation and later discussion around this research, some others can see a reflection of their own experience not normally revealed in public through examples of practices of peace that break with hostile representations of that otherness. The vulnerable listening that has permeated this thesis and is part of practices of peace can be developed in multiple ways, including the reading of this research in the form of articles being written and reaching different audiences, invited talks or just conversations that are already happening.

Displacements and Vulnerability

Displacement and vulnerability are fundamental concepts in this research, from chapter 1 to chapter 6. I believe that reflecting on them in these conclusions creates a more complete understanding of my thesis and a proposal for post-ceasefire periods that are potential times for social transformation.

Displacement and vulnerability are part of the methodology of this research. This research draws on and has led me to multiple displacements. As explained in chapter

1, the forced displacement of my family from the Basque Country is one of my points of departure in this research. My interest in the situation of the Basque Country comes from the 'displaced attachment' that I referred to at the beginning of this thesis. A feeling of displacement also relates to growing up in Madrid while developing a curiosity to know more about the Basque context, trying to go beyond the news that depicted the violence in the Basque Country only by the killings committed by ETA. Nevertheless, in the Basque Country, I don't fully 'fit' either. I do not speak Basque, and I was not raised there. Since I approached this context, I have had to deal with the discomfort of trying to understand different situations from a sense of non-belonging. During this research, getting in touch with people with different standpoints, I have had to face issues of how to manage emotionally unexpected situations that also entailed a displacement.

Vulnerable listening creates displacements from fixed identities, and from fixed research questions. It moves the listener. Feeling unstable, with no fixed anchors was felt in the field as a deficiency in my research skills. I felt unsettled when I became aware that the otherness that I was analysing was embodied in me: when I perceived participants in the category of 'the other' for me; when I was concerned for being seen as 'the other' and the consequences that that otherness could have in my research; when vulnerable listening created a break with my dichotomised interpretative frames of what is good and bad, just or unjust, violent and non-violent. Vulnerability appeared when dealing with different standpoints, and also dealing with my contradictions, self-demands and guilt. Thanks to support found through engaging with different authors (mainly feminist), I realised the potentiality of displacement and vulnerability for the research process. These emotions led me, for example, to be more conscious of the embodied otherness in everyday relationships or the multiple obstacles that people in the field meeting with 'the other' have to face.

Nevertheless, my own experiences of displacement and vulnerability don't equate with the experiences of the participants of this research. This simplistic equation would mean absorbing the experiences of others through my unique understanding, instead of listening to them. What vulnerability and displacement opened to me was new questions, such as: the difficulties found in listening to 'the other'; the importance of finding support in order for vulnerable bodies to be protected from violence; exclusions that processes of peacebuilding generate through fixed paths and through

linear conceptions of time that do not take into account different paces and the fears and discomfort in the bodies still marked by pain and by otherness.

I also analyse the potential of displacements when examining practices of peace. Practices of peace displace narratives of division and otherness. They displace their protagonists and the listeners from designated positions. They entail displacements from what is expected that leads to the unexpected.

A socio-political process coming after a ceasefire is a period of crisis. This period of crisis is reflected in new encounters happening, with consequent displacements, instability and vulnerability being exposed. This period of crisis also includes attention being placed on wounds that had previously been hidden, which then become ‘opened’ or more visible. It can be a period of opportunity in which to dig out the different violences suffered and their roots, but it can also be the time when structural and systemic violence can be reinforced through what I have described as ‘mechanisms of pacification’. Pacification mechanisms can drive (as happens in other times of crisis, such as during financial crisis) feelings of unsettlement towards the acceptance of a specific order that excludes some people in order to include others, and plays with the fear of exclusion in order to reinforce a system based on violence.

Open Challenges

In bringing to the forefront experiences that are not often heard in hegemonic practices of the post-ceasefire process in the Basque Country, this thesis both reveals and challenges the multiplicity of violences that exist in this context. This thesis has also placed experiences of support and solidarity as key to challenging violence, giving value to everyday experiences that protect and embrace vulnerability centering the importance of relationships. Practices of peace explored in this thesis do not have to entail the discussion of experiences of violence. In this sense, these practices can differ from the dynamics established by the initiatives on *convivencia* that display testimonies of suffering as the way to include different narratives in the configuration of memory in the Basque Country. As shown in examples given as practices of peace, the act of talking about specific issues is not always what has led to mutual support, to breaking with the image of a homogenised other. Many of those ruptures have happened not around a table set for discussion, but in the displacement of those bodies

to other spaces, such as the hallway of a television set or the intimacy of a car on the journey towards an event.

The examination of what is not explicitly said faces a methodological problem. With many other feminists, I have highlighted the importance of taking into account emotions and bodies in the creation of knowledge. Nonetheless, it is difficult to have access to what is not expressed in words. On the one hand, we can pay attention to symbols and metaphors that show what is not being made explicit (as I have described in relation to symbols connected with violence). On the other hand, participant observation as a method allows ethnographers to grasp the complexity of the everyday. Participant observation transforms our gaze during fieldwork, informs our thoughts and analysis. However, it is not always easy to translate observation and feelings that come up during fieldwork into written notes. Moreover, only some words are brought from the ethnographic context to the ethnographic writing. A challenging methodological question would be how to address what is excluded without pushing those who do not want to express themselves for the sake of research. How to write about what is not speakable, and not expressible, can be challenging for researchers.

Periods after a ceasefire have been pointed out in this thesis as potential periods of opportunity. During these times of crisis, spaces can be created to discuss the existence of different violences and their basis. It can be a time to give value to relational practices that challenge the violent norm based on individualism, division and exploitation. The name given to these periods open to the unexpected is not resolved in this thesis. I have made clear that ‘post-conflict’ is not a term I advocate for. Along with feminist thinkers, I understand conflict as inherent to life. The fact that the ubiquitous nature of conflicts in everyday life is often concealed is in itself part of the perpetuation of a violent structure that defines relationships through domination and exploitation. Addressing conflicts in a non-violent way in the everyday entails practicing the vulnerable listening that I am highlighting in this research. When equating conflict with violence, such as the term ‘post-conflict’ does, acknowledgment of conflicts as part of life and the importance of addressing conflict in different ways that differentiate it from violence is hindered.

In relation to how to name these periods that are open to different possibilities, there is the option of using the concept that is prevalent in the Basque scenario, *i.e.* *convivencia*. However, hegemonic uses of this term makes it difficult to imbue it with

meanings that differ from pacification narratives that conceal power relationships and multiple violences under the use of *convivencia*. What name could we find for periods when processes of vulnerable listening can take place, when transformation can come from displacing designated positions, giving value to everyday practices while also tackling the roots of violence? Shall we, as researchers, give it a name or is it our role to explore different meanings used in the field and opening up the contestation raised around them? I would lean on the latter option, as, for me, research aims to establish conversations, offering analytical arguments for reflection and for knowledge to get expanded. I would not fence the potentialities of transitional periods in one unique word. I would rather offer a contribution to challenge established terms and categories. I would accept the difficult task of embracing the displacement and vulnerability that ethnographic research entails, moving from designated analytical and political frames to the unexpected. In research and in the everyday, I would advocate for conversations to take place, accepting uncertainty and contradictions, slips and staggering, doubts and opened questions. Periods after a ceasefire could be times of learning, in which to give value to everyday encounters where violence appears to have less and less room in our societies.

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APPENDIX

Sample Information Sheet – English

Women and Reconciliation in the Basque Country: A feminist analysis of the impact of gender dynamics in a ‘post-conflict’ society.

My name is Andrea García González, I am a PhD student in Humanities at the University of Brighton. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide if you would like to take part I would like you to understand what the research is about and what I would be asking you to do. You may take this sheet with you and read it carefully. I also will explain this information to you orally, and I will answer any question you have. You will be given time to think about whether you wish to take part before making a decision.

What is the research about?

This is a student project that will form the basis of my PhD thesis. I am interested in exploring the reconciliation process in the Basque Country, the different initiatives that have contributed in the past and in the present to reconciliation, and also the different standpoints regarding this ongoing process. This project will focus on the participation of women in these initiatives. It will also analyse the gender dynamics that frame discourses and practices of reconciliation.

To conduct this research the following data production techniques will be used: participant observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis.

Different groups and initiatives with different viewpoints regarding the reconciliation process are going to be selected as part of this project. I will carry out participant observation in the activities that the group decide that I could join. Interviews will be performed with members of the groups (from the present and the past) that voluntarily accept to be interviewed. In relation to documentation, it will be the decision of the groups to give me access to the documents they want to share for this research.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been selected because you are part of a reconciliation initiative in a broad sense, participating or having been involved in a group or project that has worked on the experiences of the conflict from different perspectives.

Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You can do this by getting in touch via email or phone with me.

In the case that you agree with being interviewed for the project, you are free to stop the interview at any time. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview. The aim of the interview is to understand your participation in the group or project selected for this study and your perspective on the reconciliation process. You do not need to discuss any topic that you might be uncomfortable with, or you may find too sensitive or emotional. If there are specific topics you do not wish to discuss at all, please let me know before the interview takes place and I will respect this decision.

Observing the activities carried out by the different groups is an important part of this research. It aims to get more knowledge about the contributions and understandings from the different initiatives towards the current social and political process in the Basque Country. In the case that you are one participant of one of the groups that are going to be observed during this research, I will ask you to sign a consent form so as to know that you agree with your inputs being part of the data used in this project. If you do not want to be part of this study or decide to withdraw from it, your individual performance during the events observed will not be part of the data collected for this project.

Will I be recorded?

Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed. The audio recording is for my records. I may use verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews in my writing, as part of my current PhD project and in my future research publications. If you wish, the recording itself can be erased at the end of the project.

The observation of the group you are participating in will be part of the data that I will also analyse and use in my PhD project and future publications.

Will my taking part in the project be kept confidential?

Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and measures taken to ensure that it will not be possible to identify the study participants from any publications.

Names and roles of participants will be neutralised when publishing the data. For example, specific dates that might identify the person will not be shown, and they will be referred just in time phases (*e.g.* late 1980s, early 1990s, etc). When using verbatim quotes, I will make sure that the person is not identifiable by the pattern of their voice. Quotes selected will serve as relevant examples, but they won't reveal particular experiences that will lead to find out who that person is. The groups will be mentioned not by name but with the kind of activity they do.

When processing the data I will make sure that you do not feel that you are identifiable, so you will check and agree on how I presented you in the writing before I submit my PhD or any other publication.

Interviews will take place in a quiet, private place. In case you prefer to carry out the interview via Skype or phone, we can also arrange that.

All data will be stored securely. Any paper documentation and anonymity coding will be kept in a locked cabinet, and electronic data will be kept on a password protected external hard drive. Interview recordings will be stored for the time needed to complete my PhD. After that, only transcripts will be kept for publication purposes. Audio recordings will be securely disposed of, at least you want to keep an audio file of your interview.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Anonymised/processed research data will form the basis of my PhD thesis and may be published in other print and online platforms.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?

This research is based on the importance of taking into account the role of women in reconciliation processes, and using a gender-sensitive analysis in the approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Women's role during and after conflicts continues to be marginal, as research on different societies emerging from violent conflict have

shown. The Basque Country is not an exception in this regard, despite the important development of gender studies in this territory.

Your participation in this research will be very helpful in order to contribute to the understanding of societies who have suffered from a violent conflict, and especially to reveal how women have been affected by it and the actions taken to transform it. I hope it will also benefit you in particular as you may have the time during the interview to reflect about your trajectory, your aims, also your contradictions, your motivations... making sense and valuing your own experience. Regarding the participation of the groups in this research, I will be happy to communicate the conclusions to them when the project is finished, if you wish so. I hope this may serve as useful feedback for the activities of the group.

What are the potential disadvantages or risks of taking part?

During the interviews, it is possible that the recall of some events of your life could be distressful for you. However, I will conduct the interview to minimise this possibility and we can discuss this beforehand. If an event that you have experienced as harmful appears in the interview, I will ask you if you want to continue talking, making sure that it won't open any wound. The idea is talking about how you came to be part of a certain initiative of group, and to speak about what you have already expressed to other people. I won't dig into discomforting episodes of your life. And if in any way you feel you don't want to talk about some issues, we will stop the interview. Your wellbeing is the most important thing here. Do not feel the pressure of talking about things you do not want to. You are much more important than the research itself.

What if there is problem?

Please note that the project, and these activities, have been reviewed and approved by the University of Brighton's Arts and Humanities College Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

In the unlikely event that you have any concerns or wish to make a complaint about me, or my work, you can contact me in the first instance or discuss it with an independent member of staff at the University of Brighton (contact details below.)

Contact details:

- You can contact me at any time by email at
A.GarciaGonzalez@brighton.ac.uk or phone: [Spanish phone number]
- Project supervisor: Professor Graham Dawson G.Dawson@brighton.co.uk
Phone number: [Phone School of Humanities University of Brighton].
- Maggie Bullen (Head Department Social Anthropology at the University of
the Basque Country) maggie.bullen@ehu.es Phone [landline phone office
University of the Basque Country].

Sample Information Sheet – Basque

Elkarbizitzarako prozesua Euskal Herrian genero ikuspegitik.

Doktorego tesirako proiektua.

Brighton-eko Unibertsitatea (Erresuma Batua).

Nire izena Andrea Garcia Gonzalez da. Brighton-eko Unibertsitateko (Erresuma Batua) Humanitate Departamentuan doktorego tesia egiten ari naiz. 2016ko irailetik 2017ko otsaila arte Euskal Herrian egongo naiz ikerketaren zati nagusia egiten; alegia, eremu-azterketa egiten. Hilabete hauetan Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko Balioen Filosofia eta Gizarte Antropologia Sailekin batera egingo dut lan.

Eremu-azterketa egiteko, Euskal Herrian gertatzen ari den prozesu sozial eta polikoan parte hartzen ari duten talde eta ekimenekin jarriko naiz harremanetan. (IZENA)-ren eta bertan parte-hartzen duten pertsonen garrantzia dela eta, ikerketa honetan parte-hartzera gonbidatu nahi zaituztet. Datozen lerro hauetan ikerketaren abiaputuak eta bertan parte hartzeko ikusten ditudan arrazoi nagusiak azalduko ditut. Hala nahi izanez gero, informazio hau garatu eta eztabaidatu dezakegu, bai ikerketan parte hartu baino lehen eta baita ikerketa egiterakoan ere bai.

Zeri buruzkoa da ikerketa?

Ikerketa hau doktorego proiektu bat da eta hiru urteko lana egin ostean, doktorego tesi batean isladatuko da. Euskal Herriko elkarbizitza prozesua ulertzeko da ikerketaren helburua eta prozesu hau garatzen lagundu duten ekimenak eta prozesuarekiko dauden ikuspegi ezberdinak aztertu nahi ditut. Zehazki, ekimen hauetan emakumeek izan duten edota daukaten parte-hartzea ikertuko dut eta, hórrela, elkarbizitzarekiko dauden diskurtsoen eta ohituren genero rola ikertuko ditut.

Ikerketan erabiliko dudana metodologia teknika etnografikoak eta ahozko historia izango dira. Hala, behaketa parte-hartzailea, elkarrizketa sakonak eta dokumentuen analisisa izango dira metodo nagusiak.

Eremu-azterketaren zati nagusia behaketa parte-hartzailea da, hau da, ikerketaren tokian zuzenean zer geratzen ari den ezagutzea. Kasu honetan, behaketa parte-hartzailea talde bakoitzak nahi duen ekimen/bilera/topaketa formal/informaletan gauzatuko dut, nire parte-hartzeak jardueran eraginik izango ez duelarik.

Modu boluntarioan, ekimenetan parte hartu zuten edo duten pertsonekin egingo ditut elkarrizketak beraien hausnarketak eta esperientziak gertutik ezagutzeko.

Dokumentazioari dagokionez, talde bakoitzak erabakiko du zer dokumentu helerazi nahi didan taldearen jarduera eta ikuspuntuak aztertu ahal izateko.

Zertan lagundu dezake ikerketa honek?

Prozesu zehatz honetan eta baita beste toki batzuetako prozesuetan ere, elkarbizitzari buruzko ikuspuntu, esperientzia eta ekarpen ezberdinak ikertzea, hala nola adostasunak eta desadostasunak, zailtasunak eta gaitasunak aztertzea, garrantzitsua dela uste dut. Izan ere, emakumeek gisa honetako prozesuetan daukaten rola, eta genero ikuspegiaren erabilera, oraindik ez dago oso hedatua. Zentzu honetan Euskal Herria ez da salbuespen bat, nahi ez eta herrialde horretan ikerketa feministak asko garatu diren.

Ikerketa honetan parte hartzeak gatazkak izan duten gizarteak hobeto ezagutzeko lagunduko du eta batez ere horrelako tokietan emakumeek izan duten eragina eta gauzak eraldatzeko egin dituzten ekimenak hobeto ezagutzeko balioko du. Halaber, ikerketa honetan parte hartzen dutenak ere aberastea dut helburu. Alde batetik, elkarrizketak hausnartzeko espazioak izan daitezke, bizitako esperientziak garrantzi berezia jaso baidezakete. Beste alde batetik, ikerketan parte hartzen duten taldeek ondorioak jaso eta horiek erabiltzeko aukera izango dute, hala nahi izanez gero.

Ikerketan nola parte hartu eta nola parte hartzeari utzi.

Ikerketa honetan parte hartzea erabat borondatezkoa da. Parte hartu nahi dutenei aho bidezko baimena eskatuko diet. Idatzizko baimenik jasotzea ez da beharrezkoa izango, ikerketa hau konfidentziasunean eta anonimatuan oinarritzen baita (aurrerago azaltzen dut hau). Une batean norbaitek parte hartzeari utzi nahi diola erabakitzen badu, esatea besterik ez du izango, azalpenik eman gabe. Talde bateko kideren batek parte hartu nahi ez badu, ez ditut persona horri buruzko datuak jasoko.

Nola bilduko ditut datuak?

Elkarrizketak audio bidez grabatuko ditut eta gero hitzez hitz transkribatuko ditut. Behaketa parte-hartzailean ez dut ezer grabatuko, kontrakoa erabakitzen ez badugu behintzat. Datu bilketa zuzeneko behaketaren bitartez egiten da, batzuetan oharrak

hartuz, eta `behaketaren eguneroko' etnografiko bat osatuz. Datu hauen analisiak tesirako eta etorkizuneko argitalpenetarako erabiliko dut.

Parte-hartzea konfidentziala da?

Konfidentziasuna eta anonimatua ikerketa honen oinarriak dira.

Ikerketa honetatik sortuko ditudan argitalpenetan parte hartu duten pertsonak ez identifikatzeko hainbat neurri hartuko ditut. Parte-hartzaileen izenak, karguak eta ardurak neutralizatuko ditut analisiak argitaratzen ditudanean. Esate baterako, persona bat identifikatzeko balio dezaketen datak ez dira aterako eta, horren ordez, denbora tarteak erabiliko ditut (80. hamarkadaren erdialdea, 90. hamarkadaren hasiera, etab.). Pertsonen aipuak analisisia ilustratzeko erabiliko ditut, baina ez dute pertsona identifikatzeko balioko dezaketen esperientzia zuzenik azalduko. Parte hartuko duten taldeek egiten duten jardueragatik deskribatuko ditut eta ez dut izenik erabiliko.

Elkarrizketak toki lasaietan egingo ditugu. Parte hartzaileak elkarrizketa Skype edo telefono bitartez egitea nahiago badu, hala egingo dugu.

Datu guztiak modu seguruan bilduko ditut. Audio grabaketak tesiak irauten duen urteetan bakarrik gordeko ditut. Denbora hori eta gero, transkripzioak bakarrik geratuko dira. Audioak modu seguruan ezabatuko ditut, baina parte-hartzaileak hala eskatuz gero, berari helaraziko diot grabaketa.

Zalantzak eta kezak

Proiektuaren prozesu guztia Brighton-eko Unibertsitateak baimendu du eta unibertsitate bereko Arte eta Humanitateen Etika Batzordeak gainbegiratzen ari da.

Zalantzarik edota galderarik izanez gero, nirekin jarri zaitezke harremanetan, email bitartez edo zuzenean. Gainera, kezka bat baduzu, Brighton-eko Unibertsitatean eta, Euskal Herrian nagoen birtartean, Euskal Herriko Unibersitatean proiektua gainbegiratzen ari diren pertsonekin jarri zaitezke harremanetan.

Harremanetarako:

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Sample Information Sheet – Spanish

El Proceso de Reconciliación en el País Vasco

desde una Perspectiva de Género.

Proyecto de tesis doctoral. Universidad de Brighton (Reino Unido).

Mi nombre es Andrea García González. Soy estudiante de doctorado del Departamento de Humanidades de la Universidad de Brighton (Reino Unido). Desde septiembre de 2016 hasta febrero de 2017 estaré en el País Vasco para llevar a cabo la parte principal de mi investigación, el trabajo de campo. En estos meses estaré trabajando en colaboración con el Departamento de Filosofía de los Valores y Antropología Social de la Universidad del País Vasco.

Durante el trabajo de campo etnográfico, quisiera establecer contacto con los distintos grupos e iniciativas que son parte del proceso social y político que se está viviendo en este territorio. Dada la importancia de la trayectoria del grupo (NOMBRE) y las personas que participan en él, me gustaría invitaros a participar en esta investigación. En las líneas que siguen explicaré algunas de las ideas de partida del estudio y de las cuestiones que considero importantes en relación a la participación en el mismo. Esta información se puede ampliar y debatir en cualquier momento, sea en un encuentro previo a la decisión de participar en el estudio, o durante la propia investigación.

¿De qué trata esta investigación?

Este estudio es un proyecto de doctorado que concluirá en una tesis doctoral después de tres años de trabajo. Mi intención es entender el proceso de reconciliación en el País Vasco, conociendo distintas iniciativas que han contribuido a su desarrollo, así como las diferentes posturas en relación al mismo. En concreto, se investigará la participación de las mujeres en estas iniciativas, y se analizarán las dinámicas de género que son parte de los discursos y las prácticas en relación a la reconciliación.

La metodología que utilizaré para el estudio parte de técnicas etnográficas e historia oral. La observación participante, entrevistas en profundidad y análisis documental serán los métodos principales.

La observación participante es parte principal del trabajo de campo, ya que implica conocer directamente lo que está sucediendo en el lugar donde se desarrolla la investigación. En este caso, me gustaría llevar a cabo la observación participante en aquellos eventos/ reuniones/ encuentros formales/informales que cada grupo o iniciativa considere que puedo atender, sin que afecte al desarrollo de su actividad.

Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo con aquellas personas que han sido o son parte de iniciativas relacionadas con el proceso y que voluntariamente quieran aportar a la investigación con sus reflexiones y experiencias.

En lo que respecta a la documentación a analizar, dependerá de cada grupo el decidir a qué documentos puedo tener acceso para saber más sobre sus actividades y puntos de vista.

¿Qué puede aportar esta investigación?

Considero que conocer las distintas aportaciones, experiencias y puntos de vista sobre un proceso de reconciliación, los acuerdos y desacuerdos, las dificultades y potencialidades, es importante tanto para el proceso analizado como para el análisis de otros contextos. El estudio del papel de las mujeres en procesos de paz y reconciliación, y el uso de la perspectiva de género en el análisis de estos, está aún poco desarrollado. En este sentido, el País Vasco no es una excepción, a pesar del importante desarrollo de los estudios feministas en este territorio.

La participación en este estudio contribuirá a un mayor conocimiento de las sociedades que han vivido un conflicto armado, y en especial cómo las mujeres han sido afectadas en estos contextos y las acciones llevadas a cabo para transformarlo. Espero que además el proceso de investigación pueda ser enriquecedor para las personas participantes. Por una parte, las entrevistas pueden favorecer un espacio de reflexión único donde las experiencias vividas tomen una mayor relevancia. Por otra parte, para los grupos e iniciativas participantes, las conclusiones derivadas de los datos recogidos durante la observación participante podrán ser comunicadas al grupo si así lo desean las personas integrantes del mismo.

¿Cómo participar o dejar de participar en la investigación?

El ser parte del estudio es completamente voluntario. Solicitaré un consentimiento oral a quienes deseen participar. No es necesario un consentimiento por escrito dada la importancia que esta investigación otorga a la confidencialidad y el anonimato (que explico más abajo). Si en algún momento, alguien decide dejar de participar, basta con que me lo comunique, sin necesidad de mayor explicación. Si en uno de los grupos, hay personas que prefieren no participar, los datos recogidos no incluirán a esas personas.

¿Cómo se recogen los datos?

Las entrevistas serán grabadas en audio y después transcritas literalmente. En la observación participante, no hay grabación, a no ser que así lo acordemos para determinados eventos. La recogida de datos se realiza mediante observación directa, quizás tomando notas ocasionalmente, y volcando lo observado en un 'diario de campo' etnográfico. El análisis de estos datos servirá tanto para la tesis como para futuras publicaciones.

¿Es la participación confidencial?

La confidencialidad y el anonimato de las personas participantes en esta investigación es algo fundamental.

Diversas medidas serán adoptadas para asegurar que las personas participantes sean difícilmente identificables en las publicaciones que surjan de esta investigación. Los nombres, cargos y responsabilidades de las participantes serán neutralizados de diversos modos cuando se publique el análisis de los datos. Por ejemplo, no se mostrarán fechas concretas que puedan identificar a una persona, sino que se usarán períodos temporales (mediados de los ochenta, inicios de los noventa, etc.). Las citas extraídas de las entrevistas serán ilustrativas del análisis, pero no mostrarán experiencias concretas que lleven a identificar a la entrevistada. Los grupos serán descritos por la actividad que desarrollan, y no por el nombre.

Las entrevistas se desarrollarán en un espacio tranquilo. En caso de que la persona participante prefiera hacer la entrevista por Skype o por teléfono, se puede realizar de este modo.

Todos los datos se almacenarán de forma segura. Las grabaciones de audio de las entrevistas se conservarán sólo el tiempo necesario para la finalizar la investigación doctoral. Después de este período, sólo se guardarán las transcripciones. Los audios

se eliminarán de forma segura, a no ser que la persona entrevistada solicite quedarse con una copia del mismo.

Dudas e inquietudes

Todo el proyecto y el proceso de investigación ha sido aprobado y está siendo supervisado desde la Universidad de Brighton y el Comité de Ética de la Escuela de Artes y Humanidades de dicha universidad.

Para tratar cualquier cuestión, puedes dirigirte a mí por teléfono, email o en persona. Además, cualquier preocupación o queja puede ser comunicada a una de las personas que supervisan la investigación, bien de la Universidad de Brighton, o de la Universidad del País Vasco durante los meses en que resida en este territorio.

Contactos:

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