WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE: THE CASE OF SPAIN

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WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE
THE CASE OF SPAIN

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Abstract

Recently, academic discourse surrounding gender equality has included in it a discussion of how equity relates to political violence. With the recent upswing in political violence worldwide, it is necessary to continue to investigate the relationship between these two variables in order to better understand how to combat this trend. This study will add to the existing research on this topic by looking more specifically at the role women’s economic empowerment may play in reducing intrastate political violence. Statistical studies have found a negative relationship between gender equality, measured in economic terms, and intrastate political violence. By conducting an in-depth examination of the evolution of Basque political violence in Spain and the changing role of women in Spanish society this study attempts to more clearly determine the causal linkage between the two. The results suggest that while women’s economic empowerment, and gender equality more broadly, may not directly influence political violence via the reduction of material grievances, it is necessary for the development of a more liberal and inclusive democratic society that discourages the use of violence.
Introduction

“As we look forward, I urge you to invest in gender equality and women’s empowerment not only as ends in themselves, but as critical means of achieving our overarching aim of preventing and ending conflict and building peace and prosperity in the world for all.”

- UN Secretary General António Guterres, October 25, 2018

What is the relationship between women’s economic empowerment and intrastate political violence? More broadly, how important is women’s empowerment as a security issue?

Despite the rarity of modern interstate warfare intrastate political violence continues to persist. Notably, there has been a recent upward trend over the past several years. With it there has been increased discussion on its causes and possible solutions. One such discussion has centered on the role that gender equality may or may not play in mitigating the levels of violence.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1325, which for the first time emphasized the role that women need to play in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Specifically, Resolution 1325 states that the full participation of women in peacebuilding and security efforts is essential to preventing the outbreak of conflict. Since then, the UNSC has passed seven more resolutions all together which comprise the UN’s Women,

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Peace, and Security Agenda. These declarations suggest that gender inequality is not just a social justice issue, but a security one as well.

Recent literature finds that increases in gender equality, measured across various indicators including female labor force participation, correspond to decreases in political violence across the world. These studies use large-n statistical regression analysis to corroborate their claims. What these studies lack, however, is a qualitative evaluation of the causal relationship between the two variables. This research will add to the ongoing discussion of gender equality and political violence by conducting an in-depth analysis of a singular country while testing two theoretical predictions.

In the short term, women’s economic empowerment will reduce economic grievances that may generate political violence by increasing the level of household income. In the long term, increased gender equality in a society encourages and coincides with the development of democratic societies that condemn violence as a means to resolve political issues.

This study begins by summarizing the theoretical literature on causes of political violence. It outlines the existing discourse on women and peace and how women’s economic empowerment is expected to reduce domestic political violence. Next, after selecting Spain as a country of analysis using a method of difference methodology, this paper analyzes the history of Spain from 1980 to 2017. It uses data on female to male labor force participation, human development measurements, and political violence counts to make an initial determination on the relationship between women’s economic empowerment and political violence. This paper then provides a historical overview of political violence, economic development, and the situation of women in Spain in order to subsequently analyze the nexus between the three. Finally, this paper

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evaluates whether the events in Spain do or do not support the predictions of the theory and what the results imply for future research.

**Literature Review**

**Causes of Political Violence**

Intrastate political violence is defined as non-state, politically-motivated violence that includes revolutions, civil wars, domestic terrorism, insurgencies, and guerrilla warfare.\(^5\) It does not include interstate war or crime and excludes state-sponsored or transnational terrorism. Hereinafter it will be referred to as political violence.

In existing studies on gender equality and political conflict the conflict was measured as internal violence between citizens and their government, as well as terrorist acts by non-state actors at both a domestic and transnational level. Despite various operationalizations of gender equality and conflict the results are the same: an increased amount of gender equality corresponds with a decreased amount of conflict, measured as either internal political violence or as terrorism. The underpinnings of these studies do not differ at a theoretical level. That is, the same basic theoretical arguments are used to link gender equality (measured with various indicators) to different forms of political violence, whether they be terrorism, civil wars, insurgencies, etc.

This study only focuses on intrastate forms of political violence as gender equality, and women’s economic empowerment specifically, is a domestic-level variable. It would not be useful nor reasonable to use the domestic policies of one state to evaluate the emergence of political violence in another.

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The various cited causes of political violence describe how individuals and groups respond to perceived grievances regarding various economic, political, or social conditions. These include the level of economic and human development, the type of political institutions, the degree of political stability, and the level of cultural modernization.

Although various forms of political violence have different reported causes, aggregated together the causes all fall within the same broad economic, political, or social categories.

Economic Development

The degree of economic development in a society may create grievances that in turn may generate political violence. Traditional explanations of political violence claim that individuals who lack the means to obtain necessary economic and material needs are more likely to use radical or violent actions to obtain them. In other words, individuals who live on lower incomes or below the poverty level are more likely to engage in internal political violence as a means to protest and improve their situation. This is linked to the idea of relative deprivation, which argues that perceived inequalities within a society generate violence. The implication, therefore, is that economic growth can help alleviate the number of political violence incidents in a country.

At a causal level, poverty can help terrorist or insurgent groups generate support in the societies where they function by giving them a cause around which people can rally. Poverty

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can also incentivize participation in cases where terrorist or insurgent groups offer financial compensation to families whose members volunteer to become suicide bombers. Additionally, some terrorist groups have offered needed social services and protection in poor regions lacking, for one reason or another, parallel government support.

Globalization can also create economic grievances that may motivate political violence. Globalization introduces changes to countries via economic integration, new foreign policies, and alliance structures. These changes have the potential to generate relative deprivation grievances among particular groups in societies due to resulting increases in economic inequalities and social polarizations. Increased inequalities may lead to demands for political change, which depending on regime type, may or may not encourage terrorism.

Conversely, many scholars have empirically disproved economic factors as a direct cause of political violence. Many countries with political violence have little socio-economic similarities. Political violence occurs in both low- and high-income countries, which reduces the credibility of poverty as a causal factor. Furthermore, many terrorists come from educated, middle-class backgrounds rather than from a low-income stratum, as the poverty-terrorism relationship would predict. These claims are further validated by regression analyses that show

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10 Hippel, 58.
11 Hippel, 55, 61.
14 Gotchev, 106.
16 Piazza, 46-47.
17 Piazza, 48-49.
how economic growth has no significant impact on terrorism. That said, economic growth may still play an indirect role in promoting internal political violence by creating conditions that may facilitate its emergence.

Political Institutions and Stability

There is no clear consensus on the impact of political institutions. On one hand, some findings show that liberal democracies are less likely to produce political violence as they can provide nonviolent channels to express dissent. By allowing its constituents to participate in the political process democracies make their citizens feel like they have vested interest in the institution. Additionally, democratic political designs hold politicians accountable to their people. Politicians are more likely to address adverse social conditions that may generate grievances that trigger terrorism in order to be re-elected.

Having said that, democracies also tend to be more ethnically diverse. Some argue that states with higher levels of ethnic diversity may be more susceptible to political violence.

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20 Krieger and Meierrieks, 7.
22 O’Neil, 228.
study found that democracies are more likely to encourage transnational terrorism specifically, as they are more likely to be involved in international politics that may create foreign resentment and therefore be the targets of transnational terrorism.\(^{25}\)

Authoritarian regimes on the other hand, are better able to quell dissent and any ensuing internal political violence through means of harsh repression.\(^{26}\) That said, they are more likely to generate grievances associated with political disenfranchisement that in turn may trigger political violence.\(^{27}\)\(^{28}\) By failing to provide political means of dissent, such as the legalization of political opposition groups, authoritarian regimes ultimately are more likely to see higher rates of political violence.\(^{29}\)

Most significantly, the degree of political stability in a country may impact the likelihood of political violence. Countries in political transition are relatively more likely to experience political violence than consolidated democracies or authoritarian regimes.\(^{30}\) Accordingly, when a country is experiencing regime transition or contention the probability of political violence within the state is increased.\(^{31}\)

\(^{25}\) Savun and Phillips, 878.
\(^{27}\) Ibid.
\(^{28}\) This is a probabilistic statement, not a deterministic one. There are cases that seem to be outliers to this observation, such as China, Singapore, and Vietnam. Explanations as to why are not relevant to this study.\(^{30}\)
\(^{30}\) Abadie, 55-56.
Cultural Modernization and Human Development

Cultural modernization occurs when social institutions and practices shift away from traditional identities to more modern ones.\textsuperscript{32} This cultural shift puts more emphasis on secularism and rational-bureaucratic thinking, rather than on religious or traditional knowledge.\textsuperscript{33} Especially in the case of religiously and ethnically motivated violence, cultural identities strongly rooted in an adherence to certain religious or cultural beliefs are more likely to perceive a social or cultural outgroup as a threat.\textsuperscript{35} Politically violent groups can recruit support by building on identity-related ideologies that appeal to a certain ethnic, cultural or religious group.\textsuperscript{36} As such, countries that have culturally modernized and consequently uphold tolerance, diversity and individual expression would be less likely to generate political violence. Interestingly, research shows that many grievances that are connected to modernization are generated during the transition period in which the society moves from a traditional to a modern society.\textsuperscript{37}

Cultural modernization is linked to socioeconomic changes.\textsuperscript{38} As societies shift from industrial to post-industrial economic models there is an increase in self-expression values among the populace. This in turn leads to demands for political freedoms. A society that legally protects individual choice sees cultural changes in which individual difference is respected rather than persecuted.\textsuperscript{39} Such changes include shifts in gender roles, sexual norms, family values,

\textsuperscript{36}Krieger and Meierrieks, 8.
\textsuperscript{37}Ross (1993).
\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
religion, communal activities, or political participation.⁴⁰ Although modernization may begin at a socioeconomic level, it has a unique impact on the culture and norms of the impacted country.⁴¹

For this reason, various organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have developed indexes that aggregate socio-economic factors in order to produce a more comprehensive picture of the level of development in a country. One such index is the Human Development Index (HDI), which aggregates country-level measures of longevity (life expectancy at birth), education (expected and mean years of schooling) and standard of living (GNI per capita) to produce a more comprehensive measure of development.⁴² Findings suggest that low HDI is necessary to ensure political stability, though the same does not hold for high HDI.⁴³

Existing Theories on Women and Violence

There are two broad theories that have been used to explain why empowered women would mitigate levels of violence within a society. The first is based on biological explanations, and the second, on sociological ones.

Biological explanations are rooted in evolutionary psychology and contend that evolutionary pressures caused women to be less violent than men.⁴⁴ The result is that males today are more prone to aggressiveness, competitiveness and risk-taking behavior as a result of a

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⁴⁰ Inglehart and Welzel, 3–4.
⁴¹ For a more detailed and comprehensive discussion of development and freedom, see Amartya Sen Development as Freedom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).
⁴⁴ Robinson, 737.
natural selection that forced males to compete for scarce resources, relative power, and females (mates). The more aggressive and violent males tended to win this competition for survival and consequently passed on their behavioral tendencies to their offspring. This genetic propensity among males to be violent makes them more likely to engage in culturally available roles that favor the use of force as a form of conflict resolution, as is the case with politically-motivated violence. It should be noted that although natural selection favored male characteristics of violence and strength, it does not follow that all males are subsequently violent, or that violent patriarchal social structures are inevitable to the human condition.

Sociological explanations, on the other hand, do not place the burden of male tendencies towards violence on biology, but rather on socialization due to patriarchal legacies. The position and role of most women in society is based on their role as the primary family caretakers. As a result, women will not engage in violent activities that could potentially inflict harm on their charges. Men, conversely, are less constrained by their role in society. Furthermore, since men marry at an older age, they have a longer period of time in their life in which they are not constrained by familial obligations. The implication is that young men will have less responsibilities holding them back from participating in political violence. This claim is based

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45 Robinson, 737.
46 Ibid.
47 Evolutionary theorists argue that male-dominated social hierarchies were selected for in human evolution because they were best able to maximize group survival. This is because evolutionary reproductive pressures selected for male physical strength. The stronger the males, the better they could protect the group. It also follows that the social hierarchies that formed served to protect the reproductive interests of ingroup males against outgroup males by enabling “alpha” males to dominate both subordinate ingroup males and outgroup males, as well as control sexual access to females (see Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, Sex and World Peace (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 14).
48 Many authors argue that this is due to an entrenched system patriarchy as a result of evolutionary pressures that favored male dominated social structures (see Hudson et al., (2012))
49 Robinson, 737.
50 Ibid., 737
51 An argument has been made that religiously motivated terrorism, in which the participants tend to be men, is in part fueled by a perception of sexual failure by part of the terrorist. These failures are connected to the traditional roles assigned to the male gender by their respective culture, that when unfulfilled, can lead to a participation in
on the argument that socialization in patriarchal societies promotes ‘hegemonic masculinity’, or cultural practices and institutions which elevate more aggressive and dominant male characteristics.\textsuperscript{52} In these societies, social learning models teach patriarchal norms of violence to younger boys, who in turn teach them to their progeny.\textsuperscript{53} Consequently terrorists and other individuals that partake in political violence, the majority of them being men, may resolve their political disputes using violence, an action they see as appropriate for their male gender.\textsuperscript{54}

It is problematic, however, to make the blanket claim that all women are peaceful, and all men are violent. Although natural selection favored male characteristics of physical aggression and strength, it does not follow that all males are subsequently violent, or that violent patriarchal social structures are inevitable to the human condition.\textsuperscript{55} In fact, contemporary examples contradict this very notion. Women are capable of, and do commit violence, just as men have been seen to lead peace movements.\textsuperscript{56} Additionally, it has been shown that there is no significant correlation between the presence of female executives and lower levels of intrastate conflict.\textsuperscript{57} That said, a more aggressive or bellicose female executive could merely be behaving in a terrorism as a form of symbolic empowerment (see Mark Juergensmeyer, \textit{Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003) at 199).

\textsuperscript{52} Raewyn Connell, \textit{Masculinities} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

\textsuperscript{53} Hudson et al. (2012), 23-24.


\textsuperscript{55} Hudson et al. (2012), 16-17.

\textsuperscript{56} The rise and prevalence of female terrorists contradicts the notion that all women are violence-averse. That said, various authors in the literature have debated whether the pull and push factors that compel women to join terrorist organizations differ from those of men. Interestingly, one scholar found that female terrorists tend to be a part of groups motivated by political or secular ideology, rather than a religious one. More specifically, the more radically religious a terrorist group is, the less likely women are to participate in it (see Juergensmeyer, 199-200). Additionally, well-known historical figures such as Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. provide examples of scenarios in which male figures used peaceful methods, rather than violent ones, to resolve societal grievances.

\textsuperscript{57} Melander, 704-711.
stereotypically masculine way in order combat the stereotypes of weakness that are associated with women making decisions about economics or national security. 58

Women’s Economic Empowerment and Political Violence

Studies have found that the level of gender equality in a state is negatively related to political violence. 59 The broad theoretical explanation is that high levels of gender inequality in a society are indicative of a culture that is more likely to use violence to address grievances as a form of conflict resolution.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of looking at political violence as a social phenomenon born of grievances resulting from social contexts and the relationship between governments and their citizens. 60 Through the use of violence, the perpetrators of political violence acquire tangible or intangible goods that are social and symbolic in nature. 61 Socio-psychological explanations of political violence argue that a group’s frustration towards negative stimuli can result in aggression, which can take the form of violence. 62 Within the frustration-agression theory lies the theory of relative deprivation, which argues that perceived inequalities within a society generate violence. 63 When individuals within a society see themselves as having less than they think they should, they resort to violence in order to change

61 Robinson, 735. According to Robinson, an example of these goods are rights afforded by a government to its people.
their situation. These inequalities are many times generated by socioeconomic changes that create broad disparities within societal groups. Violence is used by the disadvantaged groups to ameliorate their situation. That said, not all situations of relative deprivation result in violence. It is therefore important to look at specific social factors that would encourage and validate the use of violence as a means of addressing grievances.

Various studies have argued that domestic culture is an important predictor of a state’s likelihood of political violence. Many specifically examined the role that gender inequality and the culture surrounding it play in predicting the prevalence of political violence. This type of social discrimination tends to be embedded in religious and cultural norms that shape how individuals in society interact with one another. Overall, the literature has found there to be a negative relationship between gender equality and political violence.

The existing research on gender equality and political violence has looked at various measurements of equity. These include the percentage of women in parliament, female workforce participation, fertility rates, the existence of a female executive leader, the number of

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64 Gurr (1970).
65 The relative deprivation theory has most commonly been applied to economic causes of terrorism. Specifically, the poverty-terrorism theory argues that individuals who lack the means to obtain necessary economic and material needs are more likely to use radical or violent actions to obtain them. Research, however, seems to refute this linkage (see Krieger and Meierricks, 10; Piazza, 37-38, 46-49).
years of education acquired by women over 25, and the female-to-male higher education attainment ratio. More generally, these studies use various operationalizations of gender equality, under political, economic, and social dimensions.

This thesis will look at women’s economic empowerment, rather than other indicators of gender equality, as women’s economic empowerment more effectively measures the public participation of women in society. Women’s economic empowerment is a broad term that refers not just to the number of women working in the formal economic sector, but also to the ability of women to hold property, run a business, make independent financial decisions, retain earnings, gain the necessary skills to work in a competitive global market, and to be self-reliant.68

Women’s economic empowerment better reflects a broader form of material and social empowerment than do other indicators, such as political participation.69 Political participation is limited in its scope in that it tends to only focus on a small demographic, such as an elite group of women, rather than women across the society.70 Education measures are also limited in that they measure potential, rather than actual, women’s participation in their society.71 Finally, measures looking at polygyny rates, while indicative, would limit the data pool to only those countries in which polygyny is practiced.72

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69 Robinson, 741.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 The theory is that polygyny increases the number of unmarried, low-status, young males in a society, which then increases levels of societal violence. This is because in polygynous societies single women are more likely to be married off to wealthier, older males, who accumulate various wives. This in turn creates a scarcity of mates for low status, young unmarried males. Given that these non-alpha males are likely to see reproductive failure, they become prime candidates for social unrest. These young unmarried men are statistically prone to violence. This is explained in part by higher baseline levels of testosterone in young males, who if unmarried, are more likely to turn to violence. Additionally, these unmarried males may have a greater incentive to seek status dominance through violent means, in the hopes of acquiring enough resources needed to attract sexual partners. (Caprioli (2005), 162; Bradley A. Thayer and Valerie M. Hudson, “Sex and the Shaheed: Insights from the Life Sciences on
At a quantitative level, women’s economic empowerment can be operationalized using indicators such as the percentage of women that make up the formal labor force, the income gap between men and women, and the amount of years of female education. At a qualitative level, it can be looked at in terms of existing policies and protections that allow women to participate in the formal economy while retaining earnings.

Theory

Women’s economic empowerment participation may reduce political violence by changing the material conditions that are associated with an increase in political violence. As more women join the labor force, the amount of income in a given household will increase, which may in turn mitigate material conditions (i.e. poverty or wealth inequality) that generate economic grievances. Economic grievances may increase the likelihood of political violence, particularly in societies where violence is a more common method of conflict resolution.

Normative changes can also follow changes in material conditions. Patriarchal societies tend to be those which are dominated by male values promoting dominance and aggression. As the number of women in the labor force increases, however, there is an eventual change in norms, institutions, and power relations as they affect the status of women.

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73 The amount of education, or human capital, a woman has is related to the skillset she has that allows her to work in the formal economy. This is more of an indirect indicator of women’s economic empowerment. (see Annika Törnqvist and Catharina Schmitz, “Women’s Economic Empowerment: Scope for Sida’s Engagement,” Sida Working Paper, December 30, 2009, 6-10).

74 Ibid.

75 Robinson, 738.

76 Von Hippel, 61; Choi, 172.

economic power leads to greater female social visibility and human capital development. Such changes encourage the establishment of new institutions and norms that replace those espousing cultural, social, and legal discrimination. Women’s economic empowerment also leads to women’s empowerment in other areas, such as in the political or domestic sphere. The result is a society in which traditional gender roles and norms are replaced by new ones embracing gender equality and broader egalitarianism. The normative gender shift is implicitly accompanied by broader liberal norms of equality in which diversity is tolerated and protected. Broader norms of equality reduce the likelihood of political violence.

Hypothesis 1: More women in the labor force will increase household incomes and reduce economic grievances that may lead to political violence.

Hypothesis 2: As women become economically empowered there is an overall increase in gender equality attitudes in society, which coincides with a broader culturally-liberal shift in which diversity is respected and conflict is resolved democratically.

Considering Endogeneity

There is reason to believe that the correlation between women’s empowerment and political violence is in fact a larger function of other economic, political, or social phenomena. The existing literature suggests that gender equality may have resulted from economic development, specifically industrialization and post industrialization. Women in industrially

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78 Eastin and Prakash, 166.
79 Ibid.
80 Inglehart and Welzel, 3-4.
advanced societies see higher levels of gender equality, as they are able to earn a living independent of husbands, fathers, or other males.  

81 Today, many of the world’s leading democracies, all of which went through an industrialization phase, are also champions of women’s equality. Therefore, it is plausible that any negative relationship between female economic empowerment and political violence is actually explained by poorer social contexts where women do not work in the formal economy or are not economic empowered.  

82 A country with more economically independent women may also be a wealthier country in which grievances are less likely to be generated due to poor economic conditions.

Economic development can be proxied using indicators such as GDP per capita, and the relative weight of agricultural versus manufacturing versus service sectors as part of GDP. These are good proxies for two reasons.

First, increased female economic empowerment may indicate a larger middle class where a larger proportion of households have dual incomes. A larger overall income per household could be indicative of a society in which there is less likelihood of poor economic conditions that may generate grievances that could lead to political violence.  

83 Second, manufacturing-heavy economies, which are male-dominated, are more likely to unionize. Prevalent unionization increases the possibility of organized protest that may lead to terrorism. Conversely service-heavy economies, which tend to be labeled as advanced economies, are less prone to unionization and its potential risks. Women are also more likely to work in services than they are in manufacturing. A correlation between female labor force

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82 Robinson, 741.

83 Robinson, 738.

84 Robinson, 738, 742.
participation and political violence may thus be explained by more the existence of an advanced economy, or an economy with a relatively larger service sector.\textsuperscript{85}

It is also reasonable to think that any connection between female labor force participation and political violence is actually the result of broader political liberalism. Societies in which women have increased female labor force participation may also be societies in which women, as well as any marginalized or minority group, are granted widespread civil and political liberties. This would limit the possibility of political violence as a response to repression.\textsuperscript{86} Thus a negative correlation between gender equality and political violence could actually be explained by the level of civil or political liberties in a society.

As mentioned in the literature, countries in political transition are more likely than consolidated democracies or authoritarian regimes to see political violence. The level of political or civil liberties in a country should be taken into account along with a measure of political dissent within the society, in order to account for regime transition.

Finally, female labor force participation could be but one measure of a larger cultural modernization in which an increased emphasis on self-expression reduces the likelihood of terrorism by changing the way in which individual differences are addressed. In other words, a society that has modernized to the point of economically empowering women may also be a society in which traditional norms, including those pertaining to gender roles, have shifted enough to allow for broader acceptance of differing identities that in the past may have triggered

\textsuperscript{85} Robinson, 739, 742.
\textsuperscript{86} Robinson, 739.
conflict. In fact, women’s labor force participation has been used as a measure of modernization, along with other variables.

Cultural modernization can be proxied using measures of atheism and urbanization. Using atheism as a cultural modernization indicator assumes that atheism is a modern belief and that therefore societies with higher numbers of atheists in their populations are also more modern societies. Likewise, high rates of urbanism in a country are assumed to represent more modern and secular lifestyles.

**Methods and Research Design**

Various statistical studies show that female labor force participation has a negative and independent effect on different types of political violence, such as terrorism or civil war. This finding holds when controlling for other possible causes of political violence, such as regime type, economic development, regime transition, or cultural modernization. These statistical studies conducted large-n, negative binomial and logistical regression analyses to determine the effect of gender equality on political violence. By having a large number of independent observations, the studies are able to find a negative correlation between female labor force participation and political violence that can be more plausibly generalized.

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87 A similar argument is made by Robinson, 740.
89 Robinson, 742.
90 Robison, 742.
91 Robinson, 742.
92 Caprioli (2005); Melander (2005); Robinson (2010); Salman (2015).
93 Each author measures gender equality using different indicators. Caprioli uses fertility rates and female labor force participation, Melander uses percent of women in parliament, Robinson uses female labor force participation, and Salman uses average years of female educated for ages 25+, female labor force participation, percent of women in parliament, and measures of government and institutional support for women’s rights.
Do these results hold up in specific case study contexts? In other words, do efforts to economically empower women in a particular country with a history of political violence reduce political violence in the ways articulated by the above theory? Or are there other factors, such as development or political stability that are necessary for women’s economic empowerment to have a mitigating effect on political violence?

Thus far there have not been many empirical case studies testing whether this causal relationship holds at a qualitative level. Qualitative analysis, however, includes the use of plausibility probes to determine not just whether women’s economic empowerment reduces political violence in a particular country, but the way in which it would do so. This process is important to investigate given that existing statistical studies fail to specifically outline or predict the causal mechanisms that would connect these two variables.

Furthermore, a case study in one country could more easily look at regional differences that might contribute to political violence (i.e. horizontal inequalities), rather than rely on aggregate national indicators that might skew the data and not reveal relative deprivation inequalities within a country that may drive conflict.94

Country Selection

To qualitatively test the implications of the theory this study selected a country in which gender equality, measured using the female-to-male labor force participation ratio (FMLPR) for each country, and human development, measured using values from the Human Development Index (HDI), changed differently from one another from 1990 to 2017.95 FMLFPR is used as an

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94 This observation was made in a similar study, Gudrun Ostby, Regnhild Nordas, and Jan Ketil Rod, “Regional Inequalities and Civil Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa,” International Studies Quarterly, 53(2), (June 2009): 301-324.

95 This time period is decided by the availability of data published by the World Bank for FMLFPR, and the United Nations Development Program for HDI.
indicator of women’s economic empowerment, while HDI is an indicator for economic and human development, another cited cause of political violence.

The absolute values for both FMLFPR and HDI are converted into global percentiles in order to compare the two independent variables across countries. The percentile rank for each country’s FMLFPR and HDI is calculated using a method of difference procedure in which the global percentile values in 1990 are subtracted from those in 2017. The result reflects how much each country has changed in terms of women’s economic empowerment and human development relative to other countries.

The purpose of such a procedure is to find a country in which the effects of FMLFPR and HDI can be isolated from one another, in order to avoid the issue of collinearity. Effects can be isolated when a change in one independent variable does not correlate with a change in the other. In practice, this is seen when either a country has a large positive change in one independent variable and a large negative in the other, or when a country has a large positive or negative change in one independent variable and little to no change in the other. The global results are displayed in the case study prediction box below.

**Independent Variable 1: Female to Male Labor Force Participation Ratio**

As previously discussed, female labor force participation is one of the many indicators that can be used to measure women’s economic empowerment. Although there are other indicators that may be more accurate in measuring women’s economic empowerment, they are not as widely available in terms of data as is female labor force participation. In order to compare the largest number of countries and consequently choose one to study in depth, it is thus necessary to use the most widely available set of data, i.e. female labor force participation.
Moreover, participation in the formal labor force is an important first step in broader women’s economic empowerment.⁹⁶

That said, absolute female labor force participation does not capture the relative nature of gender equality vis-à-vis how the status of women compares to that of men. The data used in this thesis as the first independent variable is, therefore, a ratio of female to male labor force participation (FMLFPR). FMLFPR is calculated by dividing female labor force participation by male labor force participation and multiplying the result by one hundred (FMLFPR is a percent value). Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population that is economically active and above the age of 15 and is derived from the World Bank database.⁹⁷

**Independent Variable 2: Human Development Index (HDI)**

The HDI, developed by the UNDP, is an aggregate measure of development that accounts for economic as well as social dimensions of development.⁹⁸ It is scored on a scale of 0 to 1, with lower values indicating lower HDI scores and higher values indicating higher HDI scores.

The UNDP has also developed more specific measures of human development that account for gender disparities, inequality, and poverty such as the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index. Such indices, however, are not analytically useful for this study as available data only extends as far back as 1995 and 2010, respectively.⁹⁹

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⁹⁶ Eastin and Prakash, 166.
⁹⁷ ‘Economically active’ refers to any person who supplies labor for the production of goods and services.
⁹⁸ The HDI does not reflect inequalities, poverty, human security, empowerment, etc. While these values would be more useful, they are limited due to their recent implementation and therefore would reduce the number of years studied.
⁹⁹ Although not possible due to data availability, it would have been useful to gender-disaggregate HDI and then run a correlation analysis between FMLFPR and male-only HDI. If it turned out that the correlation between male-only HDI and FMLFPR is lower than the correlation between the combined HDI and FMLFPR, then it would have reduced the extent to which HDI and FMLFPR are measuring the same thing.
A Note on Correlations between Gender Equality and Human Development

Correlations between changes in FMLFPR and HDI 2017-1990 are near zero. This is counterintuitive, given that the literature finds that overall gender equality and economic growth have a positive relationship. That said, this relationship is not linear, which may in part explain the correlation discrepancy.

One study, using data spanning from 1970 to 1992, calculated a correlation coefficient of 0.8 between Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita over a sample of 130 countries. Another study found that while there was an overall positive relationship between GDI and GDP, this relationship follows an S-curve. At low levels of GDP GDI increases are low, while at higher levels of GDP GDI increases are relatively much larger. A third study found that the effects of economic development on gender equality, measured using various indicators such as GDI and female labor force participation, are dependent on the degree of development. At low and high levels of development, measured as GDP per capita, gender equality increases. At middle levels of development, however, gender equality decreases or plateaus. As development continues to rise, it becomes necessary for states to implement legislative reforms supporting gender equality in order for it to continue increasing.

Additionally, it may be that the nature of development in the countries with the highest HDI improvements does not include actual improvements in economic gender equality, specifically female workforce participation. They may also be countries in which

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102 Eastin and Prakash, 156.
103 Ibid.
104 Rwanda, China, Mozambique, Iran, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia. Data for this is not included in this paper but is part of the large data analysis used to construct the prediction box.
development occurred very quickly, hence the large change, but did not coincide with actual improvements in gender equality due to legislative or cultural barriers.\textsuperscript{105} If one of the major barriers to gender equality is culture, then perhaps in those countries there is a cultural component that discourages female labor force participation, which may therefore explain the anomalous correlation. This is speculative, however, as an in-depth analysis of those countries falls outside the realm of this study.

Moreover, HDI does not account for gender disparities within countries as it is an aggregate measure of national longevity, average years of education, and GNI. Increases in HDI, accordingly, may not necessarily correlate with increases in FMLFPR. Female-to-male labor force participation is also in itself a limited measurement of gender equality, as it only captures raw participation of women in the society but does not factor in raw income or types of labor, which are factors included in development measurements.

Despite this correlation anomaly it is still useful to use HDI and FMLFPR as independent variables to compare countries, as development is still a major variable in the political violence literature. In terms of country selection, it also removes development as a perturbing third variable by selecting a country in which human development does not significantly change over the time period studied.

\textsuperscript{105} For further discussion on the effect of cultural barriers on improvements in gender equality, see Robert Inglehart and Pippa Norris, \textit{Rising Tide} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
Spain was chosen for this analysis because its HDI and FMLFPR change differently from one another from 1990 to 2017. By choosing a country in which HDI and FMLFPR do not change in tandem allows the effects of each variable to be analytically isolated from one another. As displayed in the graph below, Spain’s percentile rank for HDI changed only marginally over this period of time, while its percentile rank for FMLFPR had one of the largest increases as compared to the rest of the world.
Unlike some of the other countries that also have different FMLFPR and HDI change patterns, Spain’s status as an OECD and more developed country increases the availability of data for Spain in particular. This is useful in order to extend the time period studied back to 1980 and increase the number of observations studied. This consequently increases the degrees of freedom for this study which improves the credibility of its results.

Finally, Spain’s relatively small HDI change during this time period makes it easier to isolate the effects of changes in FMLFPR by eliminating major development as a perturbing variable that could contribute to a reduction in political violence.

**Dependent Variable: Incidents of Political Violence**

Incidents of violence were derived from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Although this database excludes cases of civil war, it is useful to use in the case of Spain, as the timeframe used to analyze Spain (1980-2017) does not include episodes of regime transition or civil war. Spain officially became a democracy in June 1977, when it held its first round of free elections
following the death of the dictator Francisco Franco in 1975.\footnote{Pamela Beth Radcliff, Modern Spain: 1808 to the Present, (Hoboken & Chichester: John Wily & Sons, Incorporated, 2017): 256-258} Cases are limited to political violence events occurring after 1980, as FMLFPR and HDI data is available only from 1980 onwards.\footnote{During the country selection process analysis was limited to the years 1990-2017 due to data availability. In the case of Spain specifically, however, data can be expanded backwards one decade using country-specific measures of FMLFPR calculated using OECD data. Additionally, HDI values from 1980 and 1985 for Spain were found in older UNDP reports. Such an expansion of data cannot be applied on a global level, particularly in the case of FMLFPR, as the OECD only reports data for OECD member countries.}

Only cases of known domestic political violence were included in the count of incidents of political violence. This means that acts carried out by transnational groups were not included in the count, as the focus of this study is only on domestic political violence. Furthermore, cases in which the identity of the perpetrator is unknown were not included either, as including such groups could possibly assign analytical significance to non-domestic groups. Finally, incidents of political violence were chosen rather than casualty counts as casualty counts indicate outcome rather than intent, which is the focus of this research.

**Country Analysis: Spain**

Spain’s FMLFPR and HDI data is divided into time period intervals of five and ten years from 1980-2017. Both five- and ten-year intervals are used as a measure of sensitivity analysis. For further sensitivity analysis and to test for potential lag effects these five- and ten-year intervals are subject to a five-year lag of both FMLFPR and HDI. Percentile changes are included alongside raw data changes in the findings tables to illustrate the extent to which Spain changed relative to the rest of the world.\footnote{The purpose of this is to further emphasize the degree to which Spain’s FMLFPR improved over the 27-year period, and how little Spain’s HDI changed during the same time.}
Available FMLFPR data in the World Bank database is limited to the years 1990-2017. Additional FMLFPR data for 1980-1989 is obtained and calculated using OECD data.\textsuperscript{109} Extending the data availability by 10 years will increase the number of observations for this country.

This preliminary data analysis will broadly reveal whether the findings expected by this theory hold in the case of Spain. Further qualitative analysis and process tracing will provide a more detailed understanding of whether women’s economic empowerment in Spain has a plausible causal effect on Spanish political violence from 1980-2017. It will also account for any perturbing variables that may affect the changes in political violence.

\textbf{Findings}

The first part of this section lays out the data analysis results for Spain in terms of FMLFPR and HDI, 1980-2017. The second part of the analysis provides a historical background on the lifespan of Spain’s main terrorist group, ETA, Spain’s economic modernization, and women’s economic empowerment. Finally, there will be an empirical discussion of evidence that could causally link women’s economic empowerment and political violence in the case of Spain.

\textsuperscript{109} The OECD provides data on male and female labor force participation, which is then divided and multiplied using the same calculation carried out by the World Bank. Interestingly, the FMLFPR data values slightly differ between those provided by the OECD and the World Bank (differences range from 1-5%). For consistency purposes the World Bank Data is used from 1990 onwards, as that is the data that was used to select Spain from other countries.
### Table 1. Raw FMLFPR and HDI Scores, 1980 and 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FMLFPR (Raw)(^{110})</th>
<th>HDI (Raw) (^{111})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38.078</td>
<td>0.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>81.770</td>
<td>0.890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Changes in FMLFPR and HDI Values Across Intervals, and Corresponding Changes in Incidents of Political Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>FMLFPR Change (%, Raw)</th>
<th>FMLFPR Rank Change (%)</th>
<th>HDI Change (Raw)</th>
<th>HDI Rank Change (%)</th>
<th>Incidents of Domestic Political Violence (^{112}) (Raw)</th>
<th>Incidents of Political Violence (^{112}) (Raw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td>1980: 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1984: 111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1985: 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1989: 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-70</td>
<td>1990: 104</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1994: 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-28</td>
<td>1995: 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1999: 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2004</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>2000: 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2004: 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2005: 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2009: 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2010: 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2014: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2017</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2015: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2017: 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Data for FMLFPR for the years 1980-1989 was calculated using OECD, rather than World Bank, data as the latter does not provide FMLFPR data prior to 1990. \(^{111}\)*


\(^{112}\) All incidents of domestic political violence accessed at: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database [Spain], 2018, Retrieved from https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd

Table 3. Changes in FMLFPR and HDI Values Across Intervals, and Corresponding Changes in Incidents of Political Violence, with a Five-Year Lag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>FMLFPR Change (Raw) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>FMLFPR Rank Change (%) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>HDI Change (Raw) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>HDI Rank Change (% – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>Incidents of Domestic Political Violence Change</th>
<th>Incidents of Political Violence (Raw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td>1980: 137 1984: 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1985: 93 1989: 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-70</td>
<td>1990: 104 1994: 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2004</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>2000: 70 2004: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2005: 19 2009: 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2010: 1 2014: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2017</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2015: 1 2017: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval</th>
<th>FMLFPR Change (Raw) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>FMLFPR Rank Change (%) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>HDI Change (Raw) – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>HDI Rank Change (% – Five Year Lag</th>
<th>Incidents of Domestic Political Violence Change</th>
<th>Incidents of Political Violence (Raw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>1980: 137 1989: 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>14.12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-99</td>
<td>1990: 104 1999: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2017</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>+19</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2010: 1 2017: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, initial findings show a negative relationship between FMLFPR and incidents of political violence. The significant exception to this case is seen between 1985-1989 in which there was a 27% increase in political violence.\textsuperscript{114} \textsuperscript{115} When looked at in the context of a ten-year interval (1980-1989), however, there is a net reduction in incidents of political violence by 7%.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} Percent increase is calculated using the following equation: \((((127-93)/127)*100\)

\textsuperscript{115} There is also an exception from 2010-2014. This exception, however, is not significant as levels of political violence in 2010 were already so low that an increase to a total of four political violence incidents in 2014 does not represent a real increase in political violence.

\textsuperscript{116} Percent decrease is calculated using the following equation: \((((127-137)/127)*100\)
Based on the data the most significant period of decline in political violence occurred during the 1990s and 2000s, particularly from 1990-2005. Simultaneously, Spain’s largest increase in FMLFPR occurred from 1990-2009.

Though these overall findings support the predicted negative relationship between FMLFPR and political violence, they do not indicate causality. They, therefore, need to be historically contextualized in order to determine exactly how the two variables of interest, women’s economic empowerment (measured as FMLFPR) and political violence relate to one another in the case of Spain.

**Historical Background**

**Political Violence**

Unlike most of Western Europe Spain did not democratize until 1977. Prior to that it had undergone an almost 40-year dictatorship under Francisco Franco, who took power following a bloody civil war in the late 1930's. Using harsh and repressive measures Franco united Spain under his rule and brutally enforced the creation of a nationalist Spanish identity, known as National Catholicism. Franco sought to unify the Spanish state under one identity and religion. On top of violent repression his methods included a broader strategy of cultural indoctrination. Education curriculums were changed to include mandatory observation of Catholicism and use of the Spanish-Castilian language for all students. The values of family, nation, and Catholicism were heavily emphasized in Spanish media and film. All of this was part of Franco’s objective to return to what he saw as ‘authentic Spanish roots.’

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118 Watson, 171.
119 Ibid.
In a country composed of many cultural groups this created high levels of animosity and dissent. In 1941 the Francoist regime outlawed the use of ‘dialects,’ such as Catalan and Basque and obligated the use of Castilian first names.\textsuperscript{120} Anyone found using or teaching non-Castilian culture or language was imprisoned or killed. Many parents refused to teach their children other traditional languages or non-Castilian cultures out of fear of retribution. The memory of violence and a desire for peace led to submissive attitudes among the older generation.\textsuperscript{121}

It is this behavior that later led to backlash among the younger generation, particularly in the Basque Country, against what they saw as cowardly acquiescence to the Spanish government.\textsuperscript{122} This was combined with a growing disillusionment with the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), or Basque Nationalist Party, which was seen as weak and incapable of protecting Basque identity by many nationalist groups in the Basque country.\textsuperscript{123}

The behavior of the Basques was also influenced by their particularly violent relationship with the Franco regime. Although the Spanish Civil War ended in 1939 fighting continued in the Basque region for several years. This ultimately led Franco to use especially severe and brutal tactics in the Basque region to maintain control.\textsuperscript{124}

It was in this repressive and humiliating context that a new form of Basque nationalism emerged. In the early 1950s a group of urban, upper-middle class Basque students began to meet to learn about Basque history and culture and later disseminate to the public what they had found.\textsuperscript{125} They soon organized into a formal activist group advocating for a form of Basque nationalism that included the creation of completely autonomous and independent Basque

\textsuperscript{120} Watson, 171.
\textsuperscript{121} Watson, 214.
\textsuperscript{122} Watson, 175.
\textsuperscript{123} Watson, 177, 186.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} Watson, 187-188.
republic. This differed from the stance of the traditional Basque party, the PNV. Rather than demanding complete separation from the Spanish state, the PNV felt that agreeing to be part of Spain while pushing for a degree of autonomy was the optimal choice for the Basques.

This small group of students ultimately became Spain’s most notorious and active terrorist group, Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA), or Basque Homeland and Freedom. From 1990-2017 ETA carried out 1445 of the 1747 incidents of domestic political violence (or 83%). As such this thesis will focus on this Basque group, given that it is by far the greatest perpetrator of political violence in Spain.

ETA was initially founded in 1959 as a cultural movement. The main goal of the group was to push for the creation of a completely autonomous Basque state, and more broadly, the preservation of Basque language and culture. To the founders of ETA the Basque language represented Basque culture and identity; its gradual disappearance under Franco was interpreted as the gradual demise of Basque culture as a whole. This belief led to an organizational tactical transformation in 1968, a decision influenced in party by other national liberation movements taking place at the time in Algeria, Vietnam, and Cuba. From that point on ETA used violence as a means to achieve its political objectives. Counterintuitively, ETA’s violence dramatically escalated during the years of democratic transition. This can be attributed

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126 Watson, 187-188.
128 This total only refers to cases in which the identity of the perpetrator group is known.
133 Watson, 222.
to the group’s dissatisfaction with how the issue of Basque autonomy was handled during the
democratic negotiations, as well as intense levels of police repression throughout the decade.134

ETA is no longer active today. In 2011 ETA declared a permanent ceasefire following
the agreements made at the internationally-coordinated Aiete Conference. This was the last of
many attempts at peace negotiations that had occurred since the beginning of the 1990s, all of
which failed due to the inability of the Spanish government and ETA to reach a compromise on
the issue of Basque sovereignty. In exchange for a ceasefire, ETA demanded that the Spanish
government free or reduce the sentences of ETA prisoners and legalize the formation of a new
Basque nationalist political party, Sortu.135 At this point, ETA was severely weakened due to
increased policing and arrests during the second half of the 2000s as well as internal divisions
and loss of political support.136

The peace process halted, however, when a new political party under Mariano Rajoy took
power in 2011. Though the Rajoy government legalized Sortu as a political party, they also
demanded ETA’s unconditional dissolution and refused to demonstrate flexibility concerning
ETA prisoners.137 The Rajoy government’s refusal to work with ETA was due to growing
political pressures from the Spanish political right and victims’ organizations who saw such
action as a form of concession.138 ETA, however, continued its disarmament process. In 2015 the
Basque parliament proposed that ETA’s disarmament be supervised by an independent

134 Hamilton (2007a), 136; Belzunce F. Letamendia, Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de E.T.A. Vols 1 and 2, (San
Sebastian: R&B Ediciones, 1994).
135 In 2002 the Spanish government banned Herri Batasuna, the political party that historically supported ETA. As a
result, ETA lost much of its financial and operational capacity. The newly proposed party, Sortu, would uphold
ETA’s political objectives while condemning the use of violence.; Teresa Whitfield, “The Basque Conflict and
136 Whitfield (2015), 8
138 Ibid.
international commission. The Spanish government rejected this proposal and continued to make
arrests.\textsuperscript{139} By 2017 ETA was fully disarmed.\textsuperscript{140}

What was the role of women in reaching this peace over the course of the studied years? From the
time ETA’s violence reached its peak in 1980 to its disappearance in 2011 the number of working
women in Spain increased significantly, as did the overall status of women in Spain. Whether this
contributed to the decrease in ETA’s activities will be determined in the following sections.

\textsuperscript{139} Whitfield (2015), 11.
Table 4. Number of Domestic Political Violence Incidents Committed By ETA, 1980-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (5-year intervals)</th>
<th>Incidents of Political Violence Committed by ETA</th>
<th>% of Total Incidents of Political Violence Committed by ETA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1981: 63</td>
<td>1981: 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1982: 110</td>
<td>1982: 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983: 88</td>
<td>1983: 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1984: 74</td>
<td>1984: 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 453</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total: 82%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1986: 93</td>
<td>1986: 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1987: 57</td>
<td>1987: 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988: 81</td>
<td>1988: 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989: 117</td>
<td>1989: 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 433</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total: 81%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>1990: 75</td>
<td>1990: 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991: 64</td>
<td>1991: 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1992: 37</td>
<td>1992: 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1993: Data Unavailable</td>
<td>1993: Data Unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1994: 32</td>
<td>1994: 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 208</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total: 79%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996: 41</td>
<td>1996: 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1997: 40</td>
<td>1997: 98%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998: 9</td>
<td>1998: 82%</td>
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<td>1999: 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 123</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001: 35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002: 27</td>
<td>2002: 93%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003: 11</td>
<td>2003: 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004: 20</td>
<td>2004: 100%</td>
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<td>2007: 4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2008: 32</td>
<td>2008: 100%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Total: 86</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total: 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 0</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total: 0%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: Missing data in 1993 due to a data loss that occurred as the GTD database was transitioning from a paper to an electronic system.

141 National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database [Spain], 2018, Retrieved from https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd
Modernization and Women’s Economic Empowerment

One of Franco’s goals was the economic modernization of Spain.\(^{142}\) Initially, the modernization model centered around economic self-sufficiency in which the Francoist regime pursued a policy of import-substitution industrialization.\(^{143}\) Much of this process was carried out at the expense of the Spanish lower class, in an effort by Franco to further consolidate his power and exert control over the Spanish people.\(^ {144}\) Yet by the 1950s it was apparent that these policies were failing to meet the industrialization goals of the regime. Francoist officials realized that in order to modernize the Spanish economy they would have to implement liberalization reforms that more closely aligned with the international economic order.

The Stabilization Plan of 1959 marked the beginning of Spanish economic liberalization.\(^ {145}\) The implemented policies transitioned Spain from an agrarian to an industrial and service economy, marking the beginning of what later became known as Spain’s ‘economic miracle.’\(^ {146}\) Spain’s GDP doubled from 1960 to 1975, and by the early 1970s Spain’s GDP per capita elevated it to the world’s eighth largest economy.\(^ {147}\) This growth was in large part due to increased foreign direct investment, tourism, and remittances from Spanish migrants working abroad.\(^ {148}\)

Thus, by the time Spain democratized in 1977, much of Spain’s economic development had already taken place. Abrupt or large changes in development that may be associated with

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\(^{142}\) Watson, 169.

\(^{143}\) Ibid.


\(^{145}\) Radcliff, 232.

\(^{146}\) Radcliff, 224, 231-232.

\(^{147}\) Radcliff, 232.

outbreaks of political violence, especially those due to relative deprivation or globalization grievances, are likely not as applicable in the case of Spain during the time period being studied.

Although Spain modernized in the 1960s and 1970s, Spain’s female labor force participation remained very low. During these years only 17-20% of Spain’s women were working in the formal labor force.\(^{149}\) This was largely due to the legacy of Franco’s Catholic nationalist policies that legislatively and culturally subordinated women to men, consequently relegating them largely to the domestic sphere.\(^{150}\) By comparison, female labor force participation in other European countries was as high as 40-50%.\(^{151}\)

At a legislative level, family planning policies such as contraception and abortion were outlawed, which severely limited women’s autonomy by removing family planning measures.\(^{152}\) In 1938 Franco passed a law known as Fuero del Trabajo in which employers were obligated to replace their married female employees with male ones.\(^{153}\) Women were also required to secure their husband’s permission to work, travel, or own property and were subject to stricter definitions concerning crimes such as adultery and desertion than were their husbands.\(^{154}\)

Although in the 1960s legal restrictions on female employment were partially lifted, working

\(^{151}\) Philips, 13.
\(^{154}\) Solsten and Meditz (1988).
women were still statistically few and largely found in more ‘feminine’ professions such as nursing, secretarial work, or primary school education.\(^{155}\)

At a cultural level, a working woman was scorned and considered as low-class, as only a woman from a poor family would need to work.\(^{156}\) This reflected Spain’s broader patriarchal culture, dubbed as ‘Machismo,’ which maintained the inferiority of women and made it very difficult for them to become independent or economically empowered.\(^{157}\)

From 1980 to 2017 FMLFPR in Spain increased from 38.078 to 81.770 (See Table 1). Compared to the rest of Europe at the time, however, Spain’s raw female labor force participation was relatively well below the EU average until 2008 (see Table 5). This means that for the majority of the time period studied in this analysis, Spain’s gender equality (measured as female labor force participation) was much lower than its regional average.

Under Franco’s patriarchal social system, Spanish women did not have the types of social, economic, or legal opportunities in which they could imaginably exert influence over others in Spanish society. Yet for the next several decades after Spain’s democratization, women continued to participate much less in the formal workforce than did men. Patriarchal attitudes also continued to persist in Spanish culture, though much less than before.\(^{158}\) As will be discussed in the next section, this economic and social disadvantage may have made it difficult for women to play a role in reducing political violence in Spain for most of the time period studied.

\(^{156}\) Philips, 5.
\(^{158}\) Philips, 2.
The Nexus: Political Violence and Women’s Economic Empowerment

A data correlation alone is not sufficient to conclusively support the theory that women’s economic empowerment reduces political violence. If women’s economic empowerment does reduce political violence by reducing economic grievances and shifting violent cultural norms, then there should be evidence pointing to the increasing influence of women within society, and in particular, within the groups committing the violence. Moreover, this influence would need to be one advocating for non-violent conflict resolution.

The bulk of violence committed by ETA occurred from 1980-1994, with a total of 1,094 incidents carried out by the organization during this time (see Table 4). Major reductions in ETA’s violence began in 1990 and continued until 2011. In the early 2000s there was a brief

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Table 5. Spain vs. E.U. Female Labor Force Participation Rates, 1990-2017

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upswing in political violence counts before numbers once again went down, this time permanently.

What role did women play in peace processes between ETA and the Spanish government? What happened post-1990 that reduced ETA’s violence, and did women play an influential role? What happened in the early 2000s that jeopardized the peace process, and how was peace ultimately achieved in 2011? Broadly, were Spanish or Basque women in a position to exert an influence over Spanish government or ETA’s behavior?

The Role of Women Inside ETA

Despite the approval of the 1978 Constitution that included the establishment of a fairly autonomous Basque province, ETA continued its use of violent tactics to advocate for Basque separatism. At this time the role of women within ETA was confined to supportive roles such as organizational maintenance or information gathering, and this did not significantly change over time. Women were viewed by ETA as mothers and caregivers, not warriors or fighters. Since its origin ETA’s organizational image was oriented around masculine images of violence, which may have made it difficult for any sort of alternative female- or peace-oriented perspective to conflict resolution to emerge within the organization.

Although the percent of female ETA members increased over time, it overall remained very small. From 1970 to 1977 women made up 4.2% of ETA members, from 1978-1982 they made up 6.4% of ETA members, and from 1983-1995 they made up 11.2% of ETA members.

160 Reinares, 466.
161 Reinares, 471, 473. Though more women became involved in armed activism over time, this number was proportionally very small relative to that of men.
163 Reinares, 466. Note on statistics: This data is based off of information gathered from 600 ETA activists, and therefore may be subject to a degree of subjectivity.
Despite membership growth female numbers were nevertheless very low and likely indicate that women had little internal influence over the actions of ETA. This is even more likely given that there are only three notable female leaders in ETA’s history, none of whom had a large impact on ETA’s decision making.¹⁶⁴

There were several attempts at peace negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government from 1980 to 2011, the year in which ETA declared a permanent ceasefire. Overall, there was almost no participation by ETA women in the negotiations.¹⁶⁵ The few exceptions occurred during negotiations that took place from 1986 to 1989 and in 1998.

ETA and the Spanish government met in Algeria from 1986 to 1989. Apart from Maria Belen González Peñalba, one of the ETA representatives, no other women were present at the peace talks.¹⁶⁶ Although it is unknown exactly what specific role Ms. Peñalba played during these talks, ETA ultimately backed out of the negotiations and the corresponding temporary ceasefire, as they were not willing to compromise on the issue of complete Basque autonomy.¹⁶⁷

Ms. Peñalba was also present during the ETA-government negotiations that took place in 1999 following the signing of the Lizarra-Garazi Accord in 1998.¹⁶⁸ Again, she was the only

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¹⁶⁵ Palmer, 34.
¹⁶⁶ Palmer, 35.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid.
woman present for either side and again, negotiations failed because of the Spanish government’s refusal to consider the Basque right of self-determination. Though the exact role of Ms. Peñalba is unclear, her presence as a woman did not lead to a positive outcome in the peace process. That said, it should be noted that ETA’s culture as an organization was very patriarchal, and that it may be likely that any woman in a leadership role would have had to reflect masculine behavior in order to be accepted.

On balance the peace processes between the Spanish government and ETA failed, though whether this was due to lack of female participation in the negotiations is indeterminate. What can be inferred is that the historically low levels of female membership in ETA, the almost-negligible number of female leaders in ETA, and the minimal participation of ETA women in the peace negotiations indicate that any influence women may have had on reducing ETA’s political violence would not have been internal to the organization.

The Role of Women in Basque Society

The majority of working women in Spain from 1975-2005 were employed in services, while the majority of male ETA recruitments from 1970-1995 worked in the industrial sector. Though the time periods do not exactly coincide, the overlap is sufficient to infer that there was

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170 Palmer, 36.

171 Palmer, 41.


173 Reinares, 484.
little opportunity for Spanish women to exert professional influence over men in a way that may have dissuaded them from joining ETA.\textsuperscript{174}

That said, even though Basque women may not have been able to influence their male counterparts in the workplace, the added income to their households may have had a positive impact on reducing ETA’s violence. This claim though is less plausible due to lack of empirical evidence.

During Spain’s economic miracle the Basque Country was one of the wealthiest regions due to a wave of industrialization that transformed it into a hub for iron and steel firms, shipyards, electrical, chemical, and paper industries.\textsuperscript{175} Consequently, the Basque Country saw a huge influx of capital during the 1960s and 1970s.\textsuperscript{176} This is interesting to note given that it was at this time that ETA began to carry out attacks against the Spanish public. That said, when the economic crisis of the late 1970s hit the Basque region its unemployment rate doubled relative to that of other EU countries.\textsuperscript{177} The Basque region did not significantly recover until the early 1990s when it began to diversify its economy and there was a major shift in employment from industrial to service sectors.\textsuperscript{178}

As previously noted, the majority of men in ETA came from the industrial sector. This would mean that the Basque unemployment would have more adversely affected men than women, who were mostly employed in the services sector. While data on which households were

\textsuperscript{174} A more useful comparison would have been one using regional employment percentages between men and women. This data, however, could not be found.


\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
specifically affected by the crisis and whether women in them were employed could not be
found, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that the rise in female labor force participation in
Spain may have helped mitigate economic grievances that could have further fueled Basque
political violence. Additionally, it may have reduced the ability of the public to financial support
the organization, though there is no data to support this conjecture.

That said, ETA’s primary objectives were based around the goal of complete Basque
autonomy and the protection of Basque culture, so it is unlikely that an increased level of
economic grievance in the Basque country would have increased levels of ETA’s activity
through this mechanism.

What about women’s influence at the community level? Civil society plays an important
role in shaping public perception and support for particular political groups. Even though Basque
woman may have had little opportunity to influence the actions of ETA through direct
involvement in the organization, they may have been able to do so through involvement in civil
society groups promoting a peaceful resolution to the Basque conflict. As discussed in the theory
section, economically empowered women increase their involvement and influence in civil
society and political organizations. The role this influence may have played will be discussed
subsequently.

The Ahotsak (“voices”) group was created in the 2000s by female politicians in the
Basque parliament whose goal was to bring Basque women from across the political spectrum
together to find a peaceful solution to the Basque conflict.¹⁷⁹ The group formed as a response to
failures of 1990s peace agreements and a desire to move the peace process forward via dialogue.

Ahotsak not only brought together women from various political groups, but from union and feminist organizations as well. As a group their goals were to emphasize peace as a demand and political priority, as well as the right of Basque citizens to run their own government.\textsuperscript{180} Their efforts were shaped by a desire to incorporate gender into the peace-making process following the historic passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Security, and Peace. The group put together a founding text that outlined a peaceful solution to the Basque conflict and presented it to the public in December 2006.\textsuperscript{181} The initiative garnered 5,000 signatures and a large degree of public support as Ahotsak held many events across the Basque country.\textsuperscript{182} As Ahotsak’s message spread, local groups began to replicate their efforts by organizing their own peace initiatives.\textsuperscript{183}

Ahotsak’s achievements were ultimately cut short when ETA resumed violence in 2007 after a temporary ceasefire.\textsuperscript{184} An ETA attack on December 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2006, killed two Ecuadorian citizens and created a large obstacle for the peace process.\textsuperscript{185} Although Ahotsak leaders continued pushing for peace, negative political and media pressure regarding the ability of ETA to uphold a ceasefire severely curtailed the efforts of the group.\textsuperscript{186} That said, Ahotsak, along with other peace activist groups, helped create the Civil Society Forum in 2013, which met to discuss topics such as ETA’s prisoner policies, ETA’s disarmament and the use of negotiations rather than violence to solve the Basque conflict without undermining Basque nationalism.\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{itemize}
  \item [\textsuperscript{180}] Arintó, Ariño and Arestizábal, 51-52.
  \item [\textsuperscript{181}] Arintó, Ariño and Arestizábal, 21.
  \item [\textsuperscript{182}] Ibid.
  \item [\textsuperscript{183}] Ibid.
  \item [\textsuperscript{184}] Arintó, Ariño and Arestizábal, 9.
  \item [\textsuperscript{185}] Arintó, Ariño and Arestizábal, 23.
  \item [\textsuperscript{186}] Arintó, Ariño and Arestizábal, 23.
\end{itemize}
The case of Ahotsak is an example in which peace efforts by Basque women may be considered a failure. Though at first the peace process seemed optimistic, the actions of ETA and its continued use of violence ruined any prospects for a negotiated peace. As was previously discussed, women had little influence within the organization, which refused to accept compromise over the issue of Basque sovereignty until they were so weakened that continued efforts were unfeasible. By that point, decades of violence and continued violations of ceasefires led the Spanish government under President Rajoy to refuse further negotiations with ETA.

Another notable women’s group is Emakunde, the Basque Institute for Women. It was created via legislation in 1988 as a government entity focused on achieving political, economic, and social gender equality in the Basque country. Their main task is to prepare legislative proposals promoting equality, monitor the implementation of existing legislation, issue updates on the status of gender equality and similar initiatives. One of their biggest roles today is ensuring the implementation of the 2005 Basque gender equality law, which requires 50% of political party membership to be held by women and a minimum of 40% representation in government by each gender.

This law drastically changed the composition of Basque politics. As of 2015, there are 31 women in the Basque parliament and 44 men. Separately in 2018, women outnumbered men in the prime minister’s cabinet for the first time in history. Of important note is the

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189 Potter, 6.
appointment of a Catalan, Meritxell Batet, to the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Civil Service (MPTFP), in charge of managing the relationships between Spain’s various regions, particularly those with separatist movements.\textsuperscript{193} While this specific change did not impact the reduction of ETA’s violence, as it occurred after the 2011 declaration of ceasefire, it does indicate that gender equality and the status of women continues to improve in both the Basque country and in Spain at large. It also provides hope for the resolution of historically antagonistic relationships between the central Spanish government and certain autonomous regions, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Others have argued that the decline of political violence, especially in the case of ETA, has been due to a combination of effective police tactics and widespread acceptance of democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{194} Overtime, the rights and freedoms granting the Basques a high degree of political autonomy diminished ETA’s popular support and political legitimacy, as Basque citizens saw a democratic path toward achieving their political objectives.\textsuperscript{195} These developments, combined with ETA’s killings of civilians, reduced support for ETA among Basque citizens.

In conclusion, any role women may have had in reducing ETA’s violence would have occurred at the household and civil society level, as women had little influence within ETA itself. Part of ETA’s demise was the result of loss of public support. In this sense the role of women becomes more plausible, as many women were involved in peace activism and advocating for a non-violent resolution to the Basque conflict.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Alonso, 205.
Conclusion

The predictions of this study were two-fold. First, as women entered the workforce the added income brought to their households would reduce economic grievances that could generate political violence. Second, broader improvements in gender equality resulting from women’s economic empowerment would generate liberal normative shifts that would reject the use of violence.

The findings of this study cannot clearly corroborate the first prediction. Though increases in female labor force participation did coincide with unemployment in sectors dominated by men, it is unclear whether this had an impact on resolving economic grievances. What’s more, ETA was an organization primarily driven by political concerns regarding the preservation of Basque identity, not a response to economic grievances. Hence, any improvements in the well-being of Basque households that could have occurred as a result of increased female labor force participation are unlikely to have had an effect on Basque political violence.

The findings are more optimistic about the second prediction. The increased influence of women in civil society and their active participation in promoting peaceful conflict resolution may have both encouraged the use of democratic processes to resolve the conflict as well as turned public support away from ETA. In this sense, the role of women’s economic empowerment in reducing political violence becomes clearer. Though a definitive conclusion is impossible, it is likely that if women’s economic empowerment did have an effect on political violence it would be through women’s influence on civil society, rather than through a direct influence on organized political violence.
As was previously discussed, there are three major causes of political violence: economic development, political institutions and cultural modernization. By isolating the years studied in this thesis from 1980 to 2017, it was possible to avoid major economic development and regime change as perturbing variables that could have affected Spanish political violence. What was seen in this study, though, was that cultural modernization did play an important role in shifting public attitudes and discourse concerning the ways of resolving the Basque conflict. As Spain transitioned into a post-industrial economy and consolidated its democracy it saw liberal normative shifts in its socio-political culture. These included tangible improvements in the status of women as well as improved democratic dialogue between Basques and the Spanish government.

The limitations of this study are found in the lack of more concrete evidence that could be used to link women’s economic empowerment to political violence. This is in part due to time constraints and resources available for conducting research. For a clearer understanding of the relationship between the two variables it would be necessary to find polling data surveying varying attitudes pertaining to the role that activist groups such as Ahotsak played in changing public discourse regarding the Basque conflict.

Additionally, whether the households affected by unemployment were also households occupied by ETA members, and whether that condition influenced their decision to join the organization, would help better determine whether economic grievances bolstered ETA recruitment.

Finally, only conducting in-depth research into one country presents problems concerning the generalizability of the results. Though in the case of Spain women’s involvement in civil
society may have helped diminish ETA’s public support, that may not be the case for all incidents of domestic political violence.

Further research should look at how the prevalence of gender violence in a society may relate to political violence. A society in which an individual is more likely to use political violence to resolve political conflict may also be a society in which individuals are likely to use violence more generally to resolve any conflict. It would be interesting to see if there is a correlation between gender violence and political violence in a society.

All in all, the findings of this study suggest that as a society becomes more democratic and inclusive, there is a reduction in its people's tolerance for the use of violence as a way to resolve grievances. As citizens realize the effectiveness of non-violent democratic mechanisms as a means to express grievances and achieve political objectives, they stop supporting the use of violence to do the same. By definition and in practice, gender equality is a fundamental and necessary stepping stone in a country’s democratic process. Without improving gender equality, a country cannot truly be called democratic in the modern context. If gender equality is fundamental for democracy, and well-run democratic institutions help reduce political violence, then it is safe to say that gender equality is a necessary, though not sufficient, step to ending political violence. Perhaps the most important result of this research is to establish the need to further examine the foundational role gender equity plays in democratization and its corresponding influence on reducing political violence.
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