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THE BASQUE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

Overview

The Basque nationalist movement took shape in the 1890s. The movement has been dominated fairly continuously since then by the same organization, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). However, a more radical, secessionist stream embodied in the militant Basque Land and Liberty (ETA) has contested the dominant model of regional autonomy within Spain since the 1960s. What distinguishes the Basque conflict is its intractability despite significant concessions granted in the 1978 Spanish constitution and subsequent legislation. While Catalonia has worked within the framework of these devolved powers to strengthen its regional language, culture, and economy, violence persists in the even more autonomous Basque Country.

Orientation

The Basque Country lies in the northern corner of the Iberian peninsula. The origins of the Basques – the only remaining pre-Aryan race in Europe – are unknown. The geographic isolation of the region over the years fostered a degree of xenophobia and insistence on Basque historical, ethnic, and linguistic distinctiveness, even though the link between the region and Spain was largely taken for granted for centuries. The Basque language, Euskadi – which Basques claim is the oldest in Europe – is not directly related to any other known language. Castilian Spanish or a variant of it has been used for official purposes since the 9th or 10th century, but especially since the late 19th century, Euskadi has become a linchpin of Basque national identity. The contemporary Euskadi autonomous community (the Basque Country, officially established in 1979) includes three provinces: Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava. Navarre, historically the most rural and traditionalist of the Basque provinces, is not incorporated within Euskadi[1] (Payne 1971:32, 43; Ben-Ami 1991: 493; Shabad and Gunther 1982:443, 474, n.2; Guibernau 2000:56).

Basque and Catalonian nationalisms are frequently discussed in concert, given that both are in contest with Spain and they share significant characteristics and historical experiences.[2] Both the Basque Country and Catalonia are set off from the rest of Spain by linguistic differences; both were repressed culturally and otherwise under Franco's dictatorship; both are among the more well-off, developed parts of Spain; and both have received significant immigration from other parts of Spain. However, Basque radical, anticapitalist separatism contrasts with more moderate, federalist Catalanism. Díez Medrano (1995) captures the crux of the conflict in stressing the role of intra-regional political, and especially class, struggles to Basque nationalism. The process and

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[1] Survey research by Bollen and Díaz Medrano (1998:612) on sense of Spanish national identity and nationalism finds that respondents from the region of Navarre express the highest degree of sense of belonging and feelings of morale in Spain, even though Basque nationalists have always claimed Navarre to be an integral part of the Basque Country (the residents of which, like those of Catalonia, expressed less sense of belonging and morale than respondents elsewhere).

[2] Some information is thus duplicated in this case study and the one on Catalan nationalism.

timing of development in the Basque Country led to a dual economy. A small capitalist class produced capital goods (especially iron and steel), and was hence dependent upon ties with Spain for protectionist measures, a market, and so forth. Alongside that class was a larger mass still embedded in a traditional economy (agriculturalists, artisans, etc.) and bitter at the capitalists' power. The "invention" of Basque nationalism and cultural-linguistic revival in the late 19th century emphasized tradition and the past, and appealed most strongly to those displaced or marginalized by processes of modernization. Resentful of political centralization and Spanish development policies, this latter class came to prefer secession. Even post-Franco, when the Basque economy was no longer so distinct from that of other regions, a significant degree of support for the ETA and is militant anticapitalist, separationist stance remained due to years of ideological indoctrination and popular participation, as well as admiration for the ETA's resistance against Franco. Still, by that point and at least until recently, with the erosion of the traditional sector in the Basque Country, the most popular strain of Basque nationalism sought autonomy (rather than secession) on grounds of capitalistic economic advancement.

History of the Basque Nationalist Movement

Spain as a united polity did not emerge until the consolidation of Spanish Bourbon rule in the early 18th century. By 1716, the separate constitutional systems of Aragón, Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearics had been eliminated. Hispanic Navarre remained a semi-autonomous kingdom, however, and the Basque Country retained a separate constitutional identity and set of laws or rights (*fueros*) allowing a separate legal and financial administration under a regional aristocratic oligarchy (Payne 1971: 15, 32). Even so, up until 1936, Spanish nationalism remained chronically weak, given the resistance of the national Catholic climate to secularization, the confederal structure of the traditional Spanish monarchy, the lack of genuine threats to Spanish security post-Napoleon, the slow pace of modernization and maintenance of elite liberalism, and so forth. There was a Spanish ideology – a sort of messianic mission for Spain – and Carlism (traditionalist monarchism), but no modern nationalism. All the same, by the early 20th century, "regional micronationalism" had begun to develop in Catalonia and the Basque provinces. The slow pace of modernization and lack of countervailing, centripetal Spanish nationalism left these movements initially largely unchecked (Payne 1991:479-82).

The Basques never revolted against the Spanish crown, as the economy of the Basque country grew reasonably well, literacy was comparatively high, and the region was staunchly Catholic. The intelligentsia in Basque towns supported nascent Spanish liberalism and the opportunities therein, even at the cost of their foral rights. Even so, the Basque country, together with Navarre and rural Catalonia, was a stronghold of anti-liberalist Carlism (a struggle primarily over questions of male succession and constitutionalism) in the mid-19th century, largely for religious reasons and due to peasant resentment of urban areas. Fueros were abolished and then reconstituted in the 1830s. They were then eliminated again with the democratic constitution of 1869 and its promise of provincial autonomy throughout Spain. Then, the constitution of the restored monarchy in 1876 replaced fueros with a regime of autonomous taxation in Navarre and the three Basque provinces. Despite some degree of hostility toward the restored monarchy, given the rising prosperity and significant tariff and tax privileges of the Basque country at the time, opponents to the regime had only limited support. Indeed, while the abolition of fueros was opposed among traditionalist, rural Basques, many urban Basques saw them as anachronistic

barriers to free trade by that time, and supported their removal (Payne 1971:33, 35; Woodworth 2001:4).

Payne explains that "the myth of supposed historical Basque socio-political egalitarianism was created" by the 16th century. Even so, "It is clear that there has been a Basque culture and language for many centuries, but the concept of the 'Basque nation' was a creation of the 1890s" (Payne 1991:484). The essence of Basque nationalism was to defend Basque traditions and ethnicity (particularly as signified by language) against contamination by the Spanish, with whom the Basques had unsuccessfully fought two wars, and in the face of industrialization, urbanization, and the immigration into the region these processes encouraged. The Basque industrialization process was initially exceptionally rapid, and brought the emergence of urban middle and working classes and internal migration to dilute the homogeneity of the region along with heavy industry and mining (Ben-Ami 1991: 494; Shabad and Gunther 1982:447; Douglass and Zulaika 1990:243; Woodworth 2001:3-4). Hence, "modern Basque nationalism was born as a reaction by traditional Basque society to the challenge of socialism and to the collapse of the old social and cultural order." The movement attracted members of the "traditional pre-industrial Vizcayan society" averse to "the corruption of Basque values by industrialization" (Ben-Ami 1991:494). Given variations in Basque economic and social modernization, therefore, commitments to nationalism (and socialism) varied, too, among Basques. Nonetheless, "Populist mystique succeeded in turning the attachment to Basque traditional values into the hegemonic ideal in Euskadi, the major test of 'belonging' to the Basque nation" (Ben-Ami 1991:495-6).

Basque nationalism took shape under the leadership of Sabino de Arana y Goiri, a young, Catholic, well-off, Vizcayan intellectual. Although influenced by Catalan nationalism and distrust of the Spanish state, Arana was initially ignorant of Basque language and culture. He believed Basque culture, development, and moral and religious salvation depended upon the nationalist enterprise. In 1890, Arana published *Bizcaya por su independencia*, the first formal statement of Basque nationalism. Initially, his movement drew little support and was known as Vizcayanism; support waxed and waned. As it developed, Basque ethnonationalism remained strongly influenced by Catholic clergy and ideologically conservative, appealing to traditional social elites and segments of the bourgeoisie and rural peasantry, and wary of issues of urban class conflict (Payne 1971:35-38; Douglass and Zulaika 1990:243). A similar movement developed in Navarre, although oriented primarily just around recognition of the still primarily-rural region as distinctive (Guibernau 2000:57). The Basque Country defined by Arana and later, by the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV, Basque Nationalist Party) included seven Basque provinces, four then (and now) in Spain and three in France, each of which would be internally autonomous and into which Spanish immigration would be restricted to preserve Basque *puerza de sangre* (Ben-Ami 1991:496).

The first Basque nationalist organization, Centro Vasco, was established in 1893. It later became the formal PNV, which has remained largely stable and the primary representative of Basque nationalism ever since. The Centro Vasco called for an independent republican confederation of seven internally-autonomous Basque provinces on either side (Spanish and French) of the Pyrenees; rejection of Spanish immigration and influence; restoration of the traditional fueros; and subordination of the state to the Catholic church. The movement first entered electoral politics with the election of one individual to the Vizcayan provincial assembly in 1898, but then accomplished little for twenty years. Basque political elites got on well with the regime and other

constituencies were attracted to Carlism and Integrism (devout Catholics) or the Socialist party (workers). Candidates from various regionalist groups, including the PNV, stood for election in 1918. Even though the PNV won seven seats, sentiment in the Basque country and Navarre remained mostly conservative, and the PNV failed to win any seats in 1923 (Payne 1971: 35-38). From 1923-30, during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the nationalist movement was outlawed and forced underground (Douglass and Zulaika 1990:243).

The PNV was weaker than its Catalanist counterparts because of the narrow language base of Basque culture and feeling (and while Basques' claim to uniqueness is based upon language, Castilian was the main language of all but parts of the peasantry and Basque literature is sparse); Basque religiosity and conservatism; the history of successful cooperation with Castile; and the more resourceful leadership of the Spain-oriented Basque economic elite. However, the early success of left Catalanism and establishment of the Republic encouraged regionalist movements in the Basque country and other areas. Basque nationalism grew stronger and more radical in the 1930s. The reunited PNV allied with clerical and traditional forces of Basque country and Navarre (forming the "Vasconavarro" bloc) to win a majority of the region's seats in the 1931 Republican elections. Given Basque nationalists' emphasis on Catholicism and maintenance of the social order, the ruling Republican coalition responded less favorably to the Basques than to Catalanists. However, the PNV under José Antonio de Aguirre saw cooperation with the regime as its most promising strategy and split from the clerical right (Payne 1971:38-39, 42-43).

A first Basque autonomy statute (to include Navarre) was submitted to the municipal governments in 1932, but was rejected by Navarre. A second version for Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava was submitted to a popular referendum the next year and won overwhelming support in all but Alava, which feared domination by the other two, more urban and wealthy regions. As the Spanish Socialists planned their insurrection against the right-led Spanish government, they offered new support for Basque nationalists. The newly formed Basque nationalist trade union movement, STV, grew in size and militancy and supported the general strike called by the socialist unions in 1934. The PNV supported the Catalan government in its attempt to push through agrarian reform, while the Basque regional government tried to reassert its own fiscal independence. Basque alienation and radicalization grew in 1935, in the face of the Spanish left revolutionaries' defeat. In the polarized 1936 elections, the PNV joined neither the Popular Front nor the National Front, kept from the former by its Catholicism and social conservatism and from the latter by its stance on regional nationalism. Basque nationalists won only around one-third of the vote in the three main Basque provinces, but divisions in both the left and right allowed the PNV to win parliamentary majorities in Vizcaya and Guipozcoa. Turmoil persisted under an inept central government until the outbreak of the Civil War five months later, in July 1936, although less severe in the Basque country than in Madrid and elsewhere (Payne 1971:43-45).

As the Spanish state collapsed in the face of military insurgency and the revolutionary left, the conservative Navarre and Alava became Nationalist strongholds, while Vizcaya and Guipozcoa were controlled by PNV-leftist coalitions. An October 1936 Basque autonomy statue created an autonomous Government of Euskadi (Basque region), led by PNV chief Aguirre. However, the Spanish Civil War was also a civil war among Basques, who were divided between supporters of Franco's Spanish Nationalists and Basque nationalists. Under PNV-leftist rule, Vizcaya was the only region of Spain to avoid collectivization or other attempts at radical socio-economic change in the period. Even the autonomous local Communist party cooperated fully with Aguirre's

government. The Basque regime sought to build up its armed forces but lacked trained personnel and equipment; its forces were overwhelmed when the Nationalist army (including conservative Navarrese brigades) attacked. In 1937, Basque nationalists considered an offer from Mussolini's Italy to assist in forging an independent Basque country under Italian protection. (A similar Italian appeal to Catalonia had earlier failed.) The talks resulted in no agreement. Ultimately, Navarre received special treatment under the Franco regime as an anti-Basque nationalist, staunchly pro-Spanish Nationalist region, but Basque nationalism was effectively routed. With the ascendance of Franco, the Basque government (at least the PNV portion of it) under Aguirre reestablished itself in exile in Paris (Payne 1971:45-49; Douglass and Zulaika 1990:243-4).

Although the Basque economy flourished compared with most of the rest of the country in the period, regional language and culture fared less well. Francoist policies sought to force national integration through linguistic and cultural homogenization, involving sporadic but severe repression especially of Catalonian and Basque language and culture (Shabad and Gunther 1982:443). Moreover, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and attendant internal migration into the Basque Country by Castilian-speakers in the 1950s fostered Basques' sense of being colonized by Spain and forced to assimilate into Castilian culture (Guibernau 2000:58-59).

Throughout the Franco years, Basque nationalist organizations persisted at home and abroad. Its minority position made Basque nationalism more "shrill and fanatical" than its Catalonian counterpart (Payne 1971:50). Basque nationalists campaigned internationally against Madrid, collaborating with the Allies in WWII, arguing the Basque case before the UN, and establishing networks among Basques in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. However, given Cold War considerations and its desire to set up military bases in Spain, the US put a halt in the early 1950s to international pressure on Spain. In 1959, the most notorious Basque nationalist organization, the revolutionary terrorist Euskadi ta Azkatasuna (ETA, Basque Land and Liberty), formed out of a student study group as an alternative to the too-conservative PNV and insufficiently-Basque local Spanish Socialist and Communist party sections. While the ETA's calls for national liberation were in line with previous Basque ideology, the group broke with tradition by proposing the exclusion of the Catholic church from politics and substituting the idea of *ethnos* as shown through commitment to Basque language and culture for biological race as a basis of Basque identity, and proposed an independent, socialist (Marxist-Leninist), Basque state, given the plight of workers under capitalism. In the early 1960s, calling for rebellion against Spanish "colonization," the ETA launched a campaign of guerilla insurrection, including bombings, bank robberies, and assassinations. They hoped both to raise popular political awareness and resentment in order to boost support for the movement (Douglass and Zulaika 1990:244-5; Payne 1971:50; Woodworth 2001:5).

Overall, Payne argues that by 1975, the extended political dictatorship "had the counterproductive effect of reawakening intense nationalist feeling in the most distinctive regions, and indeed of sparking a more intense nationalist identity in the Basque provinces" (Payne 1991:487). Moreover, indiscriminate repression against Basques since then in response to ETA actions has heightened popular support for the ETA. Woodworth describes "the almost Pavlovian response of the Spanish state to the group's formula of 'action-repression-action,'" under Franco and the democratic regime. He explains, "Nothing radicalizes a people faster than the unleashing of undisciplined security forces on its town and villages. The litany of beatings, torture, and unpunished shootings that follows becomes a recruiting catechism for an armed

resistance group." With continuing indiscriminate repression in response to ETA attacks, "The radicals' thesis that 'nothing has changed here since Franco' became self-fulfilling to those who were already disposed to believe it" (Woodworth 2001:5-6).

As of the transition to democracy and granting of regional autonomy in 1978-79 (see below for details), Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava have come to be known as the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The Basque party system is pluralist and polarized, reflecting social tensions and ideological distances among constituencies. Parties in the region are polarized not only along left/right and nationalist/non-nationalist lines, but also in terms of approval or disapproval of the ETA's violence (Mata 1998:3, 5). More succinctly, the Basques are divided among three blocs with respect to their position on the Spanish state: Spanish parties supportive of the 1978 constitution; Basque nationalists willing to work within existing democratic structures, even if they do not support the constitution; and Basque separatists supportive of the terrorist ETA (Colomer 1998).

Increased autonomy for the Basque region under Spain's post-Franco democratic regime has not quelled support for the ETA or its demands for full independence. Especially under Franco, the structure of the ETA – atomized cells of primarily young, male, part-time activists, supported internationally by other national liberation movements, able to capitalize on European (especially French) opposition to Franco, and careful in its selection of targets to force a national state of alert – made the movement difficult for the Spanish police to penetrate or defuse. Both during and after Franco's regime (since Madrid, rather than just Franco, has been the enemy), the ETA has engaged in bombings, assassinations, bank robberies, kidnappings, intimidation, graffiti, and collecting a "revolutionary tax" from Basque businesses (Douglass and Zulaika 1990:238, 245-6). Nearly 800 people have been killed since 1968 in ETA-related violence (Woodworth 2001: 1). While some attacks have been received positively (such as the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco, Franco's intended successor, in 1973), the killing of prominent Basques or civilian bystanders has prompted public demonstrations against the use of violence. Despite harsh repression and internal divides, the ETA has endured, albeit with inconsistent potency (Douglass and Zulaika 1990:245-6, 251; Woodworth 2001:2, 7).

One faction of the ETA has formed the political party Euskadiko Eskerra (EE, Basque Country Left) to work within the system and another faction is represented by the more radical Herri Batasuna (HB, Popular Unity), which contests elections but will not actually assume seats above the local level. The latter averages around 15 percent of the Basque vote. The HB denies being the political wing of the ETA, but does not condemn terrorist acts, organizes in support of ETA "martyrs," and sees limits to what can be achieved within Spain's constitutional framework. The ETA itself has repeatedly denounced the political process and urged Basques not to vote, making support for the ETA hard to gauge from election results (Douglass and Zulaika 1990: 248-52; Woodworth 2001:2, 7).

The ETA's demands include amnesty for all Basque political prisoners, legalization of even separatist political parties, expulsion of Spanish police agencies from the Basque Country, measures to benefit the working class (although many young ETA supporters are themselves middle-class), and recognition of the right to sovereignty for Euskadi and self-determination for the Basque people. While the fate of these negotiations seems dubious, the fact of the ETA lends teeth to more moderate Basques' demands for concessions. However, relations between

democratic Basque nationalist parties and the Spanish regime have deteriorated over time (Douglass and Zulaika 1990:247, 252; Woodworth 2001:1). Indeed, as Woodworth explains of the ETA, "the more democratic Spain became, the more hard-liners within the group accelerated its killing rate," peaking at 91 killings in 1980 (2001: 5-6). The ETA especially targets senior military officers, but caused an increasing number of civilian casualties through recourse to car bombs in the 1980s. Then, in the 1990s, the ETA adopted the slogan, "Socialize the Suffering," including attacks on a wider array of targets such that all of society would share the Basque militants' pain. With this campaign came attacks in 2000 against local politicians, jurists, academics, businesspeople, and journalists, along with the youth-based *kale borroka* ("street struggle") and prevalence of teenage gangs (Woodworth 2001:5-6). Aside from heightening fear and social polarization, the persistence of ETA terrorism has had a deleterious impact on tourism and economic development. This effect is despite a concerted effort in the Basque Country post-Franco to invest in infrastructure and develop new industries and services in order to diversify from the region's steel and metalworking base. Street struggle (political vandalism) and extortion of revolutionary taxes cost the region tens of millions of dollars per year, although the Basque Country is still one of the more prosperous regions of Spain. (*Economist* 2000b:12; Woodworth 2001:1).

Responses from the state

Decentralization

Upon Franco's death in 1975 and Spain's subsequent democratization, Spanish elites made significant concessions to garner support in the regions. Most significantly, the December 1978 constitution established a decentralized polity, supplemented by autonomy statutes for both the Basque Country and Catalonia (designating them Autonomous Communities). However, as Guibernau describes, the central government diminished the claims to full nationhood of these two regions by establishing 15 additional autonomous communities (i.e., seventeen in all), some historically and culturally distinct and others created by fiat. However, all autonomous communities except Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia were subject initially to a five year period of "restricted autonomy." Each autonomous community has a unicameral legislature elected by proportional representation, a president (generally the leader of the majority party or coalition in the regional parliament), a set of regional ministers, and a combination of separate and shared powers vis-à-vis the central government. Alone among Spanish regions, the Basque Country and Navarre collect taxes and pay the central government for services it provides; all other regions rely on handouts from the center. Elections are held separately for different levels of government, which allows voters to express distinct preferences at the regional and national levels. The first of the autonomous communities' parliamentary elections were those of the Basque Country and Catalonia in 1980. This post-1978 devolution has created a more representative structure and ever-increasing functions vested in regional rather than central administrations and bureaucracies. Still, not just those regions with clear nationalist aspirations, but all regions, have sought and accepted additional powers, and the Basques and Catalans in particular have pressed for greater official recognition of their national identity (Guibernau 1997; Colomer 1998; *Economist* 2000a).

While Spain has become one of Europe's most decentralized states, it is not constitutionally a federal state. Spain has incrementally assumed characteristics of "competitive" rather than

“cooperative” federalism. As such, “political regionalisation and state decentralisation have been the result of party strategies, competition, and bargaining within a loose institutional framework” (Colomer 1998:40). The constitution is ambiguous on the issue of decentralization, but the parties involved were willing to negotiate. Regional parties bargained with the center for further decentralization, including in exchange for support for particular national parties. The eventual outcome was maintenance of the fifty provinces established in the 19th century; differing levels of autonomy for the “historic nationalities” (Catalans, Basques, and Galicians) and other regions; and decentralization for the whole country (Colomer 1998).

Nationalist concerns have dominated the Basque political agenda since Franco’s death and the first regional elections in 1980 (Ross 1996:488-9). The Basques sought full reestablishment of the traditional administrative and fiscal fueros, including in Navarre. Woodworth (2001:8) explains that a combination of realpolitik, as Basques knew the “dismemberment” of Spain was unlikely to be countenanced, and rising Spanish nationalism left most Basques feeling excluded (or excluding themselves) from the constitutional consensus. In fact, only in the Basque Country was the constitution rejected, since the nationalists withdrew their support. The abstention rate in the referendum on the constitution was 56 percent in Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya. Although in planning for Basque autonomy, President Suárez negotiated directly with PNV leaders and the party submitted amendments regarding regional rights, the PNV was excluded from the constitutional drafting committee. Unlike the Catalans, the Basques were unwilling to accept equal powers for all autonomous communities, even in the long-term. Still, the PNV subsequently endorsed the Basque statute of autonomy (ratified by referendum in 1979, with 61 percent turnout and 89 percent voting in favor) and has governed ever since, appeased by the extensive powers of the regional government and the right only of the Basque Country and Navarre to collect their own taxes (Guibernau 2000:57; Woodworth 2001:8; Colomer 1998).

While nearly all the powers listed in the Statutes of Autonomy had been transferred by 1987, continuing demands from communities have forced redistribution of fiscal resources and powers (for instance, for education) in favor of the autonomous governments, particularly with the “Autonomic Pacts” of 1992 and 1997 (Colomer 1998; Edwards 1999:669). Guibernau posits, “the system which permits regional nationalisms to play an active part in all-Spanish politics seems to have reduced pro-independence nationalist movements to the status of minority parties in Catalonia and the Basque Country” (Guibernau 1997:30). Conversely, Woodworth argues for a “catastrophist view” among many Basques, who feel certain that “anything less than full independence … would spell the end of their cultural, linguistic, and national identity within a very short time.” In particular, the weakness of Euskera as a regional language and how hard it is for newcomers from elsewhere in Spain to learn it compared with, for instance, Catalan, has added urgency to Basque nationalist demands, as the language (and by extension, Basque identity) seems on the verge of annihiliation by the intruding Spanish (Woodworth 2001:8).

In fact, part of Spain’s concessions to the regions had to do with language, including implementation of an innovative policy of region-specific bilingualism instead of Castilian

monolingualism.[3] Shabad and Gunther explain that the reason for this policy is the strong linkage between linguistic differences and center-periphery tensions in Spain (Shabad and Gunther 1982:443-4). However, given the relatively high degree of internal heterogeneity in the two regions (over one-third are native Castilian speakers, transplanted from other parts of the country), implementation of the bilingual policy "has, in and of itself, significantly polarized Catalan and Basque politics and, in doing so, has made 'objective' linguistic differences in the two regions (especially in Catalunya) more salient politically than they were at the beginning of the post-Franco transition" (Shabad and Gunther 1982:444). Especially since immigrant/native cleavages tend to parallel class lines (with immigrants disproportionately lower-class, although the distinction is less clear in the Basque Country than in Catalonia), language policies may institutionalize forms of discrimination against immigrant minorities in the two regions. However, Euskera is less a prerequisite for, for instance, high-status jobs, than the more thriving Catalán, and the latter (being a Romance language, like Castilian) is also easier for immigrants to learn (Shabad and Gunther 1982:444-6). In the Basque Country, what has developed is a division among "Basque-speaking zones" (Guipozcoa, most of Vizcaya, a few mountainous districts in Alava), where bilingualism was to be implemented immediately and "non-Basque-speaking zones" (the rest of Alava, western Vizcaya), as well as a "special zone" of immigrant-dominated sections of Bilbao, where bilingualism was to be implemented gradually and more selectively (Shabad and Gunther 1982:465).

Violent secessionism

Spain has pursued multiple options to quell ETA violence, with only limited success. The Spanish Interior Ministry launched a "dirty war" against the ETA in the 1980s, incurring persistent allegations of human rights abuses in the process. Links established through judicial investigations by the late 1990s among the Socialist government, the security forces, and death squads have exacted a cost on Spanish democracy, forced a cleanup of the anti-terrorist high command, and corroborated for impressionable young Basques the oppressive tendencies of the Spanish state. Aside from these extralegal anti-terrorist strategies, Spain has also expanded the definition of "terrorist acts" and increased penalties for minors convicted of these. Overall, though, as described above, repressive crackdowns have generally had the counterproductive effect of spurring antagonism toward the regime and support for the ETA rather than discouraging radical militancy (Woodworth 2001). As radical nationalist leader and HB spokesperson Arnaldo Otegi describes to explain the Basques' resort to violence, "You could say we are the last indigenous people in Europe. We are very deeply attached to our land" (quoted in Woodworth 2001:3).

Spain has also pursued negotiations and has allowed ETA members to "reenter" society if they renounce armed struggle. Hundreds have done so. Nonetheless, while democratic accommodation and an end to violence seem possible, negotiations between the state and the ETA have failed thus far. Most notably, an ETA-initiated 1998 truce modeled on that of the IRA, and centered around the demand that Basques be given "a right to decide" their future, broke

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[3] The 1978 constitution specifies that Castilian is the official language of Spain and requires all citizens to know Castilian. The Basque and Catalan autonomy statutes grant Euskera and Catalán co-official status and ensure the right of residents to learn and use the languages, but do not require knowledge of them (Shabad and Gunther 1982:462).

down after 14 months, to be followed by a rash of shootings and bombings. With the 1998 ceasefire, as part of a deal in which the moderates would commit to pursuing disengagement from Spain in a "pan-nationalist front" if the radicals renounced armed struggle, even the moderate PNV (rather than just the ETA and HB) called openly for self-determination. Moreover, the territory at stake included the three French Basque provinces and Spanish Navarre, despite the small minority nationalists comprise in those provinces. When talks broke down in late 1999, the ETA returned to violence but the PNV continued to pursue Basque sovereignty. In response, the Partido Popular has tried to displace the PNV from its dominant position with a platform of continued affiliation with Spain, discrediting of even nonviolent Basque nationalism, and defeat of the ETA through police and judicial means (Woodworth 2001:1-2, 6-10; Mees 2001:799; Douglass and Zulaika 1990:247).

In discussing the significance and possibilities for resolution of the Basque nationalist conflict, a number of scholars point to the parallel with Northern Ireland for the lessons that ongoing peace process may yield, despite the differences between the cases. Mees (2001:810-11) draws out this comparison particularly systematically, arguing that 1998's ceasefire would be almost unimaginable if not for the example of Northern Ireland and that the need for a coalition of pro-nationalist groups is suggested by the latter as a precursor to peace in the Basque Country. However, the gap between moderate and radical nationalists and between those favoring or opposed to violence has widened since the 1980s, particularly as the ETA has widened the scope of its terror campaign.

Mees (2001:811-14) then sketches out the bases for a pro-nationalist rapprochement and new structure of opportunity for political change. Among the factors encouraging change are:

- Devolution (which undercuts arguments about Spanish and French "genocide" against the Basque nation) as a means of conflict de-escalation.
- The military and political weakness of the ETA and radical nationalism, as the movement's abandonment of any political strategy for heightened armed struggle, plus military, financial, and judicial strikes by Spain against the ETA, have made radicalism an increasingly marginal position.
- Increasing mobilization of a grassroots Basque peace movement, including mass protests against violence, since the late 1980s.
- The break-up of traditional political alignments as moderate nationalists decided neither socialists nor conservatives were reliable partners for launching a peace process, HB espoused a less militant and more political strategy, and the ETA saw the possibility for a "new majority" in favor of Basque self-determination. September 1998's Agreement of Lizarra (which included an analysis of Northern Ireland's peace process) brought together all nationalist parties, the two nationalist unions, and other organizations.
- Political negotiations with the ETA that began secretly among nationalist parties months before the Agreement of Lizarra. The ETA, PNV, and moderate nationalist Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) agreed upon establishment of an institution including representatives of all seven Basque provinces, cooperation of organizations favoring self-determination and non-cooperation with forces averse to that goal, and an ETA-declared truce to support this process.

Mees (2001:814-7) concludes that the peace process of the late 1990s broke down because neither the conservative government (which failed to build confidence in its commitment to peaceful change) nor the ETA (which remained unyielding in its aims) seemed truly willing to embark upon a peace process; moderate nationalists overly legitimated the paramilitaries by accepting their monitoring of the process, such that (unlike in Northern Ireland), moderates did not gain political autonomy from and ascendancy over militant radicals; and the reluctance of the PNV simply to follow ETA edicts regarding dissolving existing autonomous institutions (controlled by the PNV) to prepare the way for self-determination.

Overall then, neither Basque Catalan demands for self-determination, including recognition as nations and special treatment (rather than the relatively symmetrical system of autonomous communities[4]), have been fully met by current arrangements. In July 1998, the main nationalist parties in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia signed the joint *Declaració de Barcelona*, calling for Spain to be redefined as a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-national state rather than so unitary as it is now. The Declaration demands that these historic regions be recognized as nations. While the 1978 Spanish constitution asserts that Spain contains "nationalities and regions," it still deems Spain a single nation and intends eventual parity among historical and newly-created autonomous communities. Hence, acceptance of the Declaration would require revision of Spain's constitutional framework. The main Spanish parties opposed the Declaration. Moreover, the creation of the non-historical autonomous communities has generated a sense of common regional identity, furthered by an increasingly dynamic civil society and shared regional symbols (flags, anthems, etc.). In short, regional institutions have fostered and strengthened regional identities, and not just in the historical regions. Moreover, political decentralization may strengthen democracy by devolving decisions to a level closer to the people and by encouraging local initiatives for cultural, social, and economic projects to use regional allocations of resources. Hence, there are benefits to and stakes in the current system. Furthermore, it is not clear that meeting the demands of the Declaration would prove sufficient; the historical regions – certainly the Basques – may press for full independence, regardless (Guibernau 2000:62-66).

Key issues

- Ending ETA violence (which will probably require quelling demands for secession, most commonly pursued thus far via repression).
- Reaching a negotiated settlement on Basque autonomy, since Spain is unlikely to concede independence to the region.
- Reviewing and possibly renegotiating the autonomy statutes for both the historical regions and those created at the time of the democratic transition.

The primary, but intractable, issues facing Spain and the Basques are how best to put an end to violence in the region and reach some sort of negotiated settlement on devolution of sufficient powers to the Basque Country to appease nationalists. However, Basque nationalism has from the outset been primordial in character, with regular allusions to Basque race and blood, and with Spain defined as an illegitimate occupying force (Guibernau 2000:58-59). Hence, Basque

[4] The British model of differing levels of political autonomy given Scotland and Wales based on their nationalist claims and resurgent national identities has been held up as a possible model for Spain.

nationalist demands for independence may prove non-negotiable, especially now that even moderate nationalists in the PNV have come to demand independence. Ultimately, some sort of referendum on autonomy or independence may be necessary, though this approach would pose a dangerous (for Spain) example for Catalonia and other regions. Indeed, in a more general sense, as set forth in the Declaració de Barcelona, the key issues in terms of both Catalan and Basque nationalism concern the extent of devolution to both historical nations and non-historical regions. Decisions along these lines impact upon the nature and performance of Spanish democracy and quasi-federalism, possible future demands from even newly-created regions, and the tenacity of claims to independent nationhood by the Basques and perhaps Catalans.

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