

Giving a voice to some conflict's protagonists: a different insight into the Basque separatist movement

If Basque nationalism has emerged several centuries ago, it experienced a global resonance only since the last fifty years with the formation of the armed Basque nationalist and separatist organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). The organization, considered as a terrorist group by the entire international community, has recently announced a "definitive cessation of its armed activity". However, the movement raised a Basque consciousness on the question of belonging to the same people, and nowadays, the conflict for self-determination for the Basque country echoes back in both the Spanish and French territories. The nationalist movement is indissociable between south and north. Despite that the claim for national liberation of the Basque people extends both Spanish and French territories, the fact remains that it is neither expressed at the same time, nor in the same way on both sides of the border. If the Basque nationalism is as a whole associated with political violence, different modes of expression are still observed. The present research work aims at apprehending the "subjective perceptions" of the French Basque population on this political violence. By collecting on site the perceptions of individuals who defend a territorial independence, we were able to take into account their point of view, which is often eclipsed in the analysis of the violence experienced on both sides of the conflict. The reality of some violence from both Spanish and French States was particularly highlighted. The State violence may be a symbolic violence but sometimes leads to physical violence. Moreover, this State violence is strongly contrasted between both States. As a result from the present work, more than the differences in historical and institutional contexts, the actual un-harmonized State violence appears as the distinguishing factor between nationalist violence experienced on either French or Spanish territories.