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**DISPUTES BETWEEN THE NATIONAL STATES AND
ETHNIC IDENTITIES WITH THE BASQUE EXAMPLE**

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ORCID no. 0000–0001–7197–1670**e-mail:** a.gokhun@hotmail.com**Abstract**

Ethnicity in the historical process has been the main subject of political, economic, military and geographical change. Ethnicity, which was identical to the identity of tribes and clans before empires formed the basis of different phenomena in multi-ethnic national states. In this context, terms such as nation, race, ethnic minority, national minority etc. are used synonymously. The international structure formed after the collapse of the bipolar system. Concepts such as ethnic, ethnic group, minority, national minority, ethnic minority, nation, nation-state, ethnic-state, ethnic problems, ethnic discrimination have been brought to the agenda again and these concepts' qualities and meanings have started to be reconsidered by scholars.

Ethnic issues not only affect internal politics but also external and international politics for countries which have ethnic groups in their society. Therefore, these effects are causing the questioning of the system of national-states which underlies the international system.

The Basque problem is characterised by the nationalist movements of the Basque society which is struggling for independence in Spain from the past to the present (the Basque society has been struggling for independence in Spain since 17th century) or who are working hard to achieve their special status. From the demands for privileges of the Basque separatist movement in Spain, the Basque problem is of great importance for the current Spanish political system.

In order to solve the problem, it is necessary to examine the mutual demands and solutions of Spain and the Basque Country. From this point of view, the Spanish Administration should be directed towards moderate policies and take into account the conditions of the region. The constitution must also guarantee individual and cultural rights. This study aims to observe the problems between the Basques and Spain historically and to understand the Basque ethnic phenomenon better.

Keywords: ethnic groups, minorities, national-state, Spain, Basque problem

Introduction

During the 20th century, the demand for the identity of some national minorities and ethnic groups increased in Western Europe, and ethnic groups showed the will to break with the states in which they live and to establish their own independent states. The problem of why these groups, which are organized for this purpose and do not hesitate to resort to political violence and terrorism in the eyes of the state, gain importance.

Based on the assumption that when the conditions are favourable, no group will want to leave the state in which they live, it is essential to know what are the factors driving these ethnic or national groups to break from the state in which they live. In this context, it is possible to say that these groups have vital reasons for changing their political and cultural status. The reasons in favour of separating from the host state such as the desire to establish a state of its own, the changes in the conditions of life within the state and the socio-political and political-economic conjuncture that make it difficult to live together with the citizens can be considered.

Even though, ethnic issues and ethnic clashes are identifying with Middle Eastern or Balkan countries, these issues and clashes are causing one of the main problems in Western European countries too, like France, Belgium and the United Kingdom. In these countries, ethnic minorities and ethnicities have their specific historical background and historic cultural continuity. These differences are causing cultural requests and separatist groups that are mentioning these requests against national-states. For instance, Spain has too many different ethnicities such as Catalans, Galician, Valencian, Arabic, and Euskarra-Basque.

Despite national minorities and ethnicities are the reality of national states, there is no universal definition of 'minority' in international rules and agreements, because of all ethnic issues have their own identical originalities and differences. Therefore, we can easily say that, about national minority and ethnicities that live in national states, ruling in realist point of view in the international arena. This suggests that all individual nation-states are trying to solve their ethnic problems by following their national interests. In the circumstances, the underlying problem is 'the war of nationalism' for ethnic issues which cause existential conflicts between national-states and politicised ethnic groups.

The aim of this article is to analyse the problems of coexistence between national and ethnic minorities and nation-states in the 20th century by historically examining the struggle of the Basque people, one of such ethnic minority groups, to break with the Spanish nation-state.

Aim and scope

Spain, whose official name is the Kingdom of Spain, is one of the three states in the Iberian Peninsula along with Portugal and Andorra. Spain is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy composed of 17 autonomous regions and two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa) under the 1978 Constitution. Spain is not a federal state; however, it is often treated as a federal state and even presented as an example of asymmetrical federalism.

The reason why Spain is the subject of this study is its unusual administrative and constitutional structure and its search for solutions to national minority problems within this

structure. In Spain, which has existed as a union of different historical regions since the 15th century, the relationship between the centre and the surrounding regions has developed differently from the usual centre-environment relationship. Spain's Basque Country and Catalonia regions draw a portrait that is beyond the definition of a traditionally developed centre and a developing and subordinate surrounding region. In this context, it is noteworthy that the economic prosperity level of the Basque Country and Catalonia, where the national minority problem is intense, is superior to other parts of Spain, including the centre. The struggles of these regions, which have been economic, political, cultural and religious shaped differently from the centre in economic and social terms since the 15th century, with the central power within the central-environment relationship have not lost their vitality, even today. One of the aims of this study is to examine this ongoing struggle in Spain through the course of its emergence and to analyse some of the historical development of Basque identity.

Today, other Spanish regions such as Aragon and Valencia also appear on the political scene with different regional identity claims; however, only Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque Country are recognized as historical nationalities in the Spanish constitution, and the autonomy status of these regions is endowed with broader powers. Moreover, beyond this official acceptance, the identity struggles of these regions have a much more deep-rooted past and, although influenced by current developments, they are not the product of current developments.

The most important of the historical elements that have been shown as the basis of the difference between the centre and the environment in Spain is the linguistic difference of the peoples of the region. Given this situation, the fact that the peoples of the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia have their own language makes it easier to understand why these regions are called historical nationalities by the central government. But of course, not only are the different languages of these regions called historical nationalities, but also the national identity struggles that have been going on since the 19th century and differentiate these regions from those of Spain today. In the second part of this study, the historical development of the Basque minority until the 1960s will be analysed with a focus on the Basque national minority in Spain. (Aktoprak 2008, 421–424).

Ethnicity and identity

The word *ethnicity* was created by the old Greek language with originally *ethnos* which means *people* and people who have shared some historical and cultural values and characteristics. The Greek appears to distinguish between tribes and nations, or between bands and races; but the term *genos* appears to have been reserved for kindship-based groups more than *ethnos*, of which the range and connotations are correspondingly broader and less obviously related to any kindship basis (Smith 1986, 21). The term *ethnicity* was used with the meaning of *racial-ethnic* since the middle of 19. Century. In daily language, the term of ethnicity is generally used with the meaning of 'relations of races' (Kalayci 2008, 104).

Theoretically, the reality of *ethnicity* has two different ways of explained: the 'primordial' and the 'instrumentalist' approaches. According to, 'primordial' approach, groups ties to each other are based on language, common culture, religion, values, norms, biological descent, race, ethnicity and territory. Proponents of this view claim that nations and

ethnic communities are the natural units of history and the integral elements of human experience (Smith 1986, 12). These emotional features of ethnicity are, according to primordialism, given and undeniable. Ethnicity has its essence – qualitative ‘core’. It provides individuals with their deepest identity (Bacova 1998, 35–36).

On the other hand, the second approach ‘instrumentalism’, believes that the modern state is built on formal membership and the equal rights of citizens. A deep, horizontal comradeship does not prevail (although it can present itself as such) but vertical economic integration does prevail. The state of today is a modern organisation, and there is nothing natural about it in the sense that, for example, blood relations appear to be natural (Bacova 1998, 35).

According to Smith (1991, 30), an ethnic group is a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories and is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions. Smith (1991, 80) also describes the general typologies of the ethnic community; ethnic distinctiveness remains *a sine qua non* of the nation, and that means shared ancestry myths, shared historical memories, unique cultural markers, and a sense of difference. Consequently, ethnic groups have specific objectives and personal qualifications. From the objective point of view, values, language, culture and religion, which have the power of effect above shared common and separative values, are accepted as primary necessities for creating specific ‘we’ by ethnic group members. On the other hand, from a subjective point of view, ethnic group members have a sense of belonging based on objective qualifications. Otherwise, according to these differences, feeling like ‘other’ can happen (Kurubas 2008, 14).

The ethnic group whose members share a common origin and cultural, historical and regional values but, do not have any political qualification should not mix with the nation, because ethnic groups do not have many of the political qualifications that nations have. A nation can be defined as a named human population sharing a traditional territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a universal economic and common legal rights and duties for all members (Deutsch 1966, Rustow 1967, Smith 1971, Connor 1978). On the other hand, an ethnic group is supposed to be a cultural category, of which there are said to be certain continuing behaviours that are passed on from generation to generation and that are not typically linked in theory to state boundaries (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 77).

Causes of ethnic conflicts

Conceptually, the ethnic conflict covers a wide range of situation. These situations include the social, political and economic conflict between groups of people who identify each other in ethnic terms: by colour, race, religion, language, and national origin. In such cases, ethnic groups, which are different from the dominant or majority nationality, can explain and divide themselves from society as ‘we’ and ‘others’ (Stavenhagen 1998, 434–435). An ethnic conflict could be defined as a protracted social and political confrontation between contenders who define themselves and each other in ethnic terms, such as when national origin, religion, race, language and other markers of cultural identity are used to distinguish the opposing parties (Stavenhagen 1996, 284). In other words, ethnic conflict is a functional problem connected with ethnic identity, and related to the extent of collective ethnic rights or ‘cultural autonomy’ and to participation in power, equal sharing of the

social and economic conditions in the context of which the groups relate to each other (Stanovcic 1992, 363).

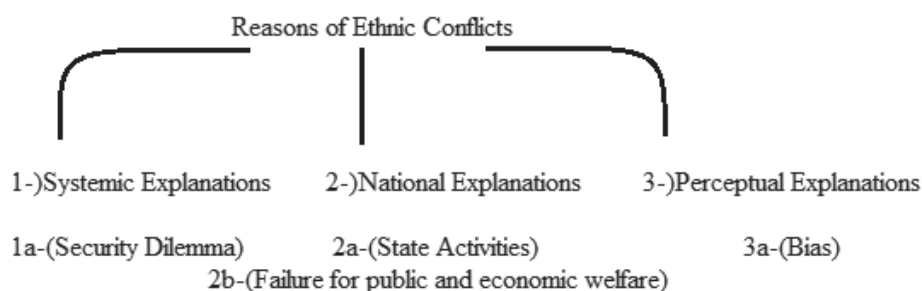
Then, according to Rokkan-Urwin model (Rokkan and Urwin 1983, 14–18) and Rokkan's previous work (Rokkan 1969), criteria of physical, territorial, cultural and political clashes are creating the underlying ethnic conflicts between state and ethnic group. Therefore, the following four dimensions classify the strategy for ethnic conflict resolution:

- Physical – the conflict between state and minority for physical survival.
- Territorial – the conflict between state boundaries and the frontiers of the ethnic minority.
- Cultural – the conflict between the culture, language, institutions and symbols of the state and those of the ethnic minority.
- Political – the conflict between the objectives of the state and the ethnic group in terms of the overall programme for ethnic conflict resolution (Coakley 1992, 344).

There are many theoretical approaches that explain the ethnic conflicts and ethnocentric clashes. According to Brown (Brown 1993, 6–12), ethnic conflicts can explain with three core theories: Systemic Explanations, National Explanations and Perceptual Explanations. Systemic Explanations are connected with the nature of security systems. Posen's (1993, 104–111) 'security dilemma' especially explains the behaviours of contending ethnic groups. Different groups in the state which do not have any actual dominant character are going to feel threaten against other groups because of potential danger. One groups' security effort, is going to threaten another group. Therefore the vicious circle is known as 'security dilemma' will occur. According to Posen, this circumstance supervenes upon when empires collapse, because all ethnic groups create self-enclosed geographies for their security.

The National Explanation is related to the relational effects of nationalism, state activity and democratisation between ethnic groups. According to this explanation, the state's failure for public security and economic welfare gives motivation to ethnic nationalism. These factors and reborn of national feelings in one of the ethnic group can cause a domino effect and trigger to other ethnic groups' national feelings.

On the other hand, for the Perceptual Explanation, groups' oral histories initiate some problems. In these circumstances, groups can adopt some biases and discourses against themselves, and this situation can produce an increase in tension between groups (Brown 1993, 8–12).



There are many theoretical approaches that define ethnic conflicts and ethnocentric clashes. Environmental theories, fundamental theories and political theories create three

main categories (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). Environmental theories that approach ethnic conflicts from two different perspectives. Some of these analyses the ethnic-nationalist and ethnoreligious clashes at a level of the international system and define causes of conflicts with systematic variations. Others focus on ethnic conflicts from the individual point. International relations scholars -who focus on individuals- of the realist school (Jervis 1978) posit the existence of a security dilemma under conditions of anarchy in which even nonaggressive moves to enhance one's security, perceived as threatening by others, trigger countermoves that ultimately reduce one's security. While formulated to explain regional wars, the security dilemma has been applied to intrastate ethnic violence as well (Brubaker and Laitin 1998, 437).

Structural theories are a focus on the relations between the elites of ethnic groups and the state. According to fundamental theories, parameters of the probability of the occurrence of ethnic conflicts and violence severity should take form based on the integration of ethnic groups to political systems. For instance, according to Khazanov (1993, 21), after the Cold War a liberal democratic system based on an individual's merit and competence and guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of ethnic membership, began to be considered detrimental to the interests of politically stable but economically disadvantaged ethnic groups. Lastly, psycho-political theories explain ethnic conflicts with psychological analyses of in-groups, out-groups, and environmental factors. These theories that study political psychology of ethnic groups must take into consideration the historical, religious, linguistic, cultural and traditional values of the group.

Galguly and Taras, divide theoretical approaches of the politicisation of ethnicity as direct and indirect (Galguly and Taras 1998, 13–30). Indirect instructions are about problems of modernisation and development. Thus, ethnic nationalism could replace national integrity, in conditions when the social mobilisation precludes the assimilation during the modernisation processes (Connor 1994, 29–57). Otherwise, if high expectations of society in modernisation processes, will not satisfy people, huge disappointments could cause ethnic nationalism. Furthermore, the rise of ethnic feelings in developing and modernising societies could exist when significant socio-cultural, economic and political changes occur. During the modernisation processes, if one of the ethnic societies are going to be excluded from their own society -economic and social isolation-, could politicise the ethnicity.

Direct instructions related to ethnic conflicts includes primordialists and instrumentalist approaches as other approaches that explain ethnicity. Primordialists suggest the ubiquity of ethnocentrism. This view argues that the aggression of in-group towards out-groups is rooted in the primordial urge to link group identity with specific ascriptive characteristics, often ethnicity and race (Henderson 1997, 655). Unlike primordialists, instrumentalists posit that intercultural conflict does not emerge from any natural division of groups intonations. Rather, it is the result of elite manipulation of nationalist appeals in pursuit of their interests (Gagnon 1995).

Ethno-politicisation

Ethnic politicisation especially causes the double loyalty problem (to be loyal to an ethnic group or to be loyal to the state), and this problem creates the essential precipitating cause ethnic conflicts. In this situation, the most important question must be: what kind of

factors makes ethnic groups politicized? First of all, ethnic groups' apprehensions to having physical presence and deterioration or danger of extinction of cultural identity play a key role. If these factors are under threat by someone or something or if ethnic group members begin to feel the rebirth of their own ethnic identity that had been repressed before, ethnic groups could cling to their ethnic identity for support more than ever. Hereat, ethnic identity and feelings are going to be the most important factors for ethnic politisation. Factors such as being threatened by other ethnic groups, economic metathesis and natural disasters make ethnic group members more nervous against others and motivate them to protect their group even more. Anomy has the equivalent value as collapse or dismemberment for ethnic groups. This situation is a psychological fear of death. Waever (1995, 68) argues that culture can be defended 'with culture', and that: 'If some one's identity seems threatened the answer is a strengthening of existing identities'. In more concrete terms, the defence of culture and identity may often manifest itself in ethnic nationalism (Roe 1999, 194). Ethnic nationalism can often produce an intense feeling of self-identification: it will often emphasise the various commonalities such as language, religion and history and downplay other ties which may detract from its unity (Alter 1994, 12 and Hutchinson 1994, 123).

Collective fears of the future arise when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantees of protection for groups. When central authority declines, groups become fearful for their survival. State weakness, whether it arises incrementally out of competition between groups or from extremist actively seeking to destroy ethnic peace, is a necessary precondition for violent ethnic conflict to erupt (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 43). Barry Posen (1993) refers to this condition (or state weakness) as an 'emerging anarchy', where physical security becomes a paramount concern. Situations of emerging anarchy and violence arise out of the strategic interactions between and within groups. Between groups, three different strategic dilemmas can cause violence to erupt: information failures, problems of credible commitment, and security dilemmas. These dilemmas are the fundamental causes of ethnic conflicts (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 44).

Consequently, fear of losing the identity causes the ethnical impulse hence ethnic group being politicised. The modern, industrial, politicised ethnic group that lives in their historical region with the same awareness can accept nationalist discourse more than other ethnic groups. Therefore, these kinds of movements can transform into nationalistic movements with universal awareness and leader. On the other hand, all ethnic movements cannot transform into nationalistic movements. Therefore, we may distinguish between a purely ethnic discourse and an ethnic-nationalist one. While the former emphasises the cultural links and identity of a given ethnic group, the latter is concerned mainly with state power and territorial sovereignty. In both cases, the ethnic discourse relates to the nationalist ideology of the modern state, and therefore to the various differing and sometimes competing for concepts of the nation (Stavenhagen 1996, 289).

Politicised ethnic groups invariably base their claim on a list of grievances. Their people are exploited economically, ignored politically, treated as cultural inferiors, deprived of fundamental rights, or any combination of these. However, temporary grievances, no matter how strongly felt, cannot plausibly be put forward as a justification for breaking up an existing state (Birch 1989, 63–64). On the other hand, we need to describe what the demands of subordinate ethnic groups typically are. According to Coakley (2003, 7), a request for equality of citizenship, demand for cultural rights, demand for institutional

political recognition, and demand for secession can be a part of ethnic groups' policies. These policies can be changeable based on ethnic groups' demands and expectations from the state.

State building, national state and nationalism

The underlying cause of the emergence of the ethnic problems through the stimulation of ethnic identities, the elements in the fictional nature of the nation-state in the nation-state process and the nature of nationalism. Theoretically, the nation-state is a political structure which tries to homogenise the communities under its control within the boundaries of a designated piece of land by reviving their subordinate identities, their traditions and their origins/myths, within the framework of shared culture, symbols and values (Kurubas 2008, 22).

In this situation, four characteristics of the nation-state can be triggers for ethnic conflicts. The first argument about historical necessity. The second argument is that integration, in the form of social assimilation, would be beneficial to the minorities who were assimilated into the nation-state. The third argument is that a representative government should be based on feelings of national unity, and it would be difficult to operate that government if those feelings had not been developed. The fourth argument in favour of national integration is that it is the only secure basis of political authority (Birch 1989, 37–40). Thus, a nation-state wants to be independent with political unity and homogeneous cultural identity. Even in the United States, a country that promotes the multi-ethnic society, the United States government actively promotes a common language and societal culture (Kymlicka 2000, 13).

In the traditional discipline of political science, the nation is generally regarded as a given and fixed concept such as state and sovereignty, and it is not a research subject unless nation-building processes produce an important foreign policy output (Brown 2001, 117). Such studies not only reduce the discipline of international relations to a state-centred analysis but also ignore that the state is a component of different peoples and that the relationship between the masses and the state is a problem of the discipline of political science (Bloom 1990, 1). However, the transformations in collective identities both diversify the actors of the international system and constantly renew their quest for interests (Hall 1999, 5). Therefore, especially the nation-building, processes are of critical importance.

The primary goal of the nation-states is national integrity, emotional development of the national identity and minimise ethnocultural differences. Assimilation policies are part of the national building process. Nation-building processes are also increasing phases as national unity, standardisation of people and political citizenship. Education, military service, and politic participation are the main factors of the nation-building process. Education creates national awareness, military service creates homeland awareness, and politic participation creates citizenship awareness (Erozden 1997, 124; Birch 1989, 9–10). Creation of symbols of national identities, such as a head of state, a flag and a national anthem, and the establishment of national political institutions which bring all citizens under the same laws can increase the feeling of social characteristics (Birch 1989, 9). Theoretically, assimilation is the shape of integration. According to Coakley (1992, 349), assimilation is the best known and most widely practised of all ethnic management strategies. Expressions such as 'one state, one nation, one language' translate easily from one

culture to another, and find willing supporters in all cultures. Therefore, the unplanned component of integration is commonly called 'social mobilisation'. It is basically by which industrialisation induces workers to leave their native villages to seek work in the new industrial areas, thus eroding the social communities of rural areas and mobilising the workers for absorption into the broader national society. Kinship links become weaker, local languages or dialects give way to the dominant national language, local cultures and customs lose their hold (Birch 1989, 36).

If the nation-building (assimilation) processes are successful, the treatment of ethnic conflicts will be minimum for the nation-state. Creating homogeneous society and loyal citizens are the criteria for success. On the other hand, ethnocultural/ethnic minorities can be the biggest obstacle to nation-building success. Despite all, during history, the existence of ethnic identities has never disappeared. Therefore, oppressive assimilationist politics against ethnic groups cause ethnic conflicts during the processes of the homogeneous nation-state building. Because of these politics, ethnic groups feel under threat for their identities and feel inclined to be more nationalist. The fears of the majority group may well be misplaced in interpreting the nationalism of the minority group as indicating a desire for succession in the nation-state. In other words, societal security requirements and in doing so takes action based on the existence of an illusory incompatibility and it causes an inter-societal security dilemma (Roe 1993, 199).

Efforts by ethnic groups who want to defend their own identities are perceived as separatist efforts by the state and majority. On the other hand, states' precautions for social security are perceived as the same threat by ethnic groups.

Nationalism, new nation and state-building processes, minority problems that have become an important agenda item in interstate relations and states' relations with international organizations, the search for new democracy that develops through the recognition of differences, cultural conflicts and identity-based increasing in many regions from Asia to America developing social movements raise the identity policy to an important position in the field of international relations. There is an important link between nationalism and national identity through nation-building processes, but national identity and nationalism have no identity. While there are those who say that it is not possible to explain nationalism with a single theory (Hall, A. 1995, 8), nationalism is actually an ideology that can be explained by a single theory. However, this ideology stands out from different qualities in different historical conditions. Nationalism is first and foremost a nation-building project which is based on collective action. This action is nurtured by a sense of partnership built on the basis of the nation and common national consciousness (Oran 1997).

Also, nationalism is one of the initial characteristic values of the nation-building process and includes disruptive and connective functions to show its 'double character' dilemma. This dilemma is the cause of too many ethnic conflicts (Stavenhagen 1996, 3). When states defend their territorial integrities, ethnic groups defend their identities. Even if the nationalism is an important value for nation-state's unity and entity, it also creates ethnic conflicts and unsolvable problems. The most important characteristic of the nationalistic movement which causes clashes is the aim to defend one's own states and see it as a unique state (Oran 1977, 21).

A nation is a political and cultural unit in which a certain group defines itself over one or several common languages, religions, histories, lineages and spaces. The nation, which is a social construction, is not identical with the state, a political unit; but since its' emer-

gence, self-determination is one of the important concepts inherent in the nation and adds a political character to the nation. This principle does not necessarily include the desire to establish a state, of course, but it has a quality that makes it easier to turn to the desire to establish a state. Since the nation, first of all, requires its members to believe that they are a nation, the principle of self-determination is a principle that members apply to in the process of defining themselves.

In this study, the Basque ethnic group, which defines itself as a nation, is accepted as a nation. This acceptance is especially important in terms of minorities; because establishing a state or aiming to establish a state is not a necessary condition for being a nation (Hall, A. 2008, 15–20). Thus, minority groups that identify themselves as a nation are also considered as national minorities. Thus, nationalistic ideology and the right of self-determination are in the vicious circle.

International law has no solution to these conflicts. However, it has some models for issue management (Smootha and Hanf 1992, 28–32; Coakley 1992, 346–354). These models are oppressive assimilationist practices, multicultural practices, ethnic-federation practices, and ethnic statute or cultural autonomy (Kurubas 2008).

Overview of the Basque problem

The Basque Country, which has been an autonomous region since 1978, covering the Alava, Vizcaya and Gupizkoa regions, is considered one of Spain's historical nationalities, along with Catalonia and Galicia. The emergence, revival and renewal of national identity in the Basque regions are similar to those of Catalonia and Galicia. Regional identity in all three regions was transformed into separate national identities during the centralization and nation-building process of Spain in the 19th century; again, all three regions achieved autonomy within the republican policy of indirect administration during the period of the Second Republic and these three periods of autonomy ended with the Spanish Civil War.

These historical nationalities were subjected to political and cultural pressure during the Franco period; this repression regime strengthened national awareness in all three regions. However, the Franco period eliminated the similarity between the forms of historical struggle in these three regions, and violence became a part of Basque politics in this period. This divergence, which was shaped by armed struggle, continued during the transition period to post-Franco democracy.

While Catalonia and Galicia prefer to maintain their relations with the centre on the basis of a legal struggle based on the 1978 Constitution and their own autonomy status, the fact that despite the status of autonomy in Basque Country continues to be used as a political tool by at least a certain part of society differentiates this region from other regions. Therefore, there are three main reasons that make the Basque Country, which has the widest autonomy status in Spain, different from Catalonia and Galicia.

The first is the importance of violence as a political tool in the region. This element, which emerged with ETA after 1959 in the Basque Country and divided Basque nationalism into pro-violent radicals and anti-violent moderates, remains important today.

The second element that makes the Basque Country different from Catalonia and Galicia is the history of the region. Of course, all three regions have different historical processes; but when the relations began to show an alteration between the three regions

with the Kingdom of Spain after the 15th century, it is possible to say that the Basque regions have a more privileged status than Catalonia and Galicia. Of these three regions, the Basque regions were the last regions to lose its autonomy within the centralization policies of the Kingdom of Spain. The main reason for this situation is that the region has a more institutionalized and autonomous history based on the 'foral system'¹ than the other two regions. This past is also the basis for the Basque Country to have greater autonomy powers than Catalonia and Galicia.

The third factor that distinguishes Basque Country and indeed Basque nationalism from Catalan and Galicia is that the ultimate goal of Basque nationalism is not only to make the Basque Country independent, but to establish the Great and Independent Basque Country by including Navarra, one of the three autonomous regions of Spain, and the separate Basque areas in France, to the existing Basque Country regions of Alava, Vizcaya and Gipuzkoa. This ultimate goal is shared by all Basque nationalists, although it is expressed in different tones by moderate and radical nationalists. Therefore, unlike Catalan and Galician nationalists, the Basque nationalists have rhetoric that transcends the borders of Spain and not only opposes Spanish power but also French power (Akto-prak 2008, 615–617).

Historical background of the Basque problem in Spain

The Basque problem, the secessionist question of Spain, is expressed as the nationalist movement of Basque society, which has struggled for independence from 17. century to today. Basque identity, unlike other ethnic identities, is based on a broad historical background. The Basque community has struggled with different strategies and policies for their independence in various periods of history. Most of the time, they have taken necessary steps towards independence by placing their demands on historical rights by political way in the government of Spain. In order to better understand the Basque separatist movement living in the region, it is necessary to touch on the historical background of the problem.

The emergence of Basque nationalism in Spain is undoubtedly dependent on the characteristics of the construction of the Spanish unitary state structure. Industrialisation, which has been influential in Spain since the second half of the 19th century, has given rise to what we might call proto-nationalists in the country. The first political reaction that emerged in this context was 'Carlism'², which manifested itself against socio-economic changes. The separatist ideas between the liberals and the conservatives led Spain into civil war over time. In this civil war, the Basque community supported the Carlist movement. The Basque community had lost administrative rights and privileges when they lost the 1. (1833–1839) and 2. (1870–1876) Carlist wars.

As a result of the lost rights and privileges, the Basque society was directed towards guerrilla warfare after Franco's era. Following these developments, the Spanish army

1 It is a system of autonomy of the Iberian Peninsula. The system stands between the state structure and the independent state structure.

2 Carlism (Carlist Movements): Upon the death of King Ferdinand of Spain II Isabella became queen. However, King Ferdinand's brother Don Carlos made himself king. Queen Isabella has a more reformist stance, while Carlos has a more conservative stance. In the Spanish political history, this war is called the 'Carlist', which means the war of the frontiers of Carlos.

headed towards the Basque Country, and an extensive assimilation process began in the Basque region. When we look at this aspect, the anger over the central government has come to light with the influence of the racist structures of the Basques. As a result of all these factors, the seeds of separatist Basque nationalism were laid (Cokmez 2008, 357).

Spain's geography throughout history has seen different kingdoms and ethnic groups co-existed with each other. In addition to the Castilian who make up the most significant ethnic identity in Spain, Galatians, Catalans and Basques are other critical ethnic groups. Apart from these groups, the geography of Spain, which contains many other small ethnic groups, has a complex ethnic structure. Another problem experienced by Spain is regionalism. The reason for this problem in Spain is that the historical regions formed a political unit during the Middle Ages and that the historical political past created a sense of belonging among the people of that region.

Spanish political entities have tried to reduce the effects of regionalism and ethnic nationalism by using various methods. One of these is the method of separating ethnic groups into different administrative regions, which is also applied in France. While the administrative sub-units were formed in this framework, the language and ethnicity were not taken into account, and the borders of the historical regions were not observed.

The partial autonomy given to the Basques under the Fuegos Law in the Spanish Constitution has been completely abolished, with the Basque community falling into a disadvantaged position as a result of the conflicts (Gurses 2000, 51). The loss of the concessions of the people of the region ignited the wick of the Basque separatist movement, which would rapidly rise. 'Regionalism' is a concept that is frequently encountered when dealing with issues of nationalism. Regionalism should not be confused with nationalism. Regionalism is the defence of people living in a piece of land with rooted feudal rights from the past. In regionalism, the common denominator is a piece of land and the historical privileges of those who rule it. In regionalism, there are no denominations such as language, religion or ethnic origin.

There is a critical regional tradition in the Basque Country. Starting from the 15th and 16th centuries, various regions in the Basque Country have had their privileges. In Spanish history, such historical territorial rights are called Fuero (Larrea and Mieg 1985, 14). The Fuegos give the cities a legal personality and, accordingly, give themselves the right to self-govern and put on taxes. On the other hand, after the end of Carlista war, the central government made a law for annihilating the Fuegos in 1876 with the Somorrostro Declaration.

With the abolition of the Fuegos in 1876, foreign capital, especially British capital, began to enter the Basque Country. These developments led to the growth of mining operations in the region and the related industries, particularly the rapid progress of the ship and railway industries. Political conflicts in Spain have also been reflected in the economic field. Factors such as the extremely archaic structures, where agriculture continued to play a central role, and the industrial network, which were almost negligible, led to the division of Spain. Some dynamic regions, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, which were industrialised in the 19th century by a very active local bourgeoisie, completely cut off their relationship with backward regions.

Since there was no bourgeois revolution in Spain to create a capitalist market, liberal Spanish nationalism could not find its place and the country began to take all its power from the economy. However, the economic factors required for the formation of a Spanish

national feeling were not sufficiently achieved. The society was very heterogeneous, divided both at the regions and the level of the states.

Besides, Spanish centralist nationalism in the 19th century did not have the time to spread throughout the country. In Spain, nationalist rhetoric took place after the establishment of a state structure which was not based on a unifying and mobilising basis. The rhetoric served oppositely by covering different regions at first and then trying to achieve a union. The liberal state was inadequate to overcome the differences within the population, and therefore Spain turned out to be a highly hierarchical and internally divisive state. The concept of universal nationalism has not been useful in Spain and has made no sense for most people. As a result, regional nationalisms have begun to develop in the two regions which are Catalonia and the Basque Country where the bourgeoisie had a power (Recalde 1984, 84). Unsuccessful nationalism and statism have led to objections against the poorly governed nation-state by the Castilian centre. This is precisely what is happening in the Basque Country (Izquierdo 2000, 35).

Nationalism in Basque Country

It is possible to say that, since the 19th century, the economic and social foundations of the Basque Country have changed at a high pace. The rapid development of industrialisation, especially in the cities of Biscaya and later Guipuzcoa, has led to the rapid transformation of the traditional economy and the old social cadres, and this process has caused severe conflicts among the public. The denial of industrialisation and the rebellion of the royalists were manifested in reaction to a dominant understanding of modernity. Consequently, a conservatism with a regional and essentialist character began to develop in the Basque Country.

During the 18th century, the Basques persisted in preserving their local powers and traditional politics. However, the Basques began to question their belonging to the Spanish state in the 19th century, after the rapid industrialisation of Bilbao. Therefore, Sabino Arana Goiri³ called for a new independent state after the influx of workers from other parts of Spain to Basque country.

After 1880, the Basque Country realised its industrial revolution. The rapid industrialisation of the region brought with it an intense wave of internal migration from the rest of Spain to the region. This new working class was the main reason for a new conflict between the urban and the traditional agricultural society. The industrialisation of the Basque Country had two social consequences. The first is the increased urbanisation of the local elites. However, this sudden industrialisation brought with it a great need for labour. In this context, and the second significant consequence, internal migration was seen as a remedy for many workers in the Basque country.

3 Sabino Arana Goiri, the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), introduced the basic elements of Basque Nationalism in the 1880–1890s. According to Arana, the basis of Basque nationalism was the protection of the Basque race (Coverdale, 1979; 150). The starting point of Basque nationalism can be summarized as the protection of the Basque race and the isolation of the Basques from the Spaniards and not interfere with them in any way. In addition, Arana, in his book *Biskaya*, published in 1893, mentions the three Basque regions of France and a federal whole of Alava, Guipuzcoa, Vizcaya and Navarre in the north of Spain. This would be ideal for fanatical nationalists in the future (Cokmez 2008, 357).

As a result of the rapid industrialisation, it is possible to say that two new social classes emerged in the Basque Country: an industrial elite which is specifically Basque and the non-Basque and non-urban proletarian class from other parts of Spain (Heiberg 1982, 364). This significant number of people who came to the Basque country through internal migration had been subjected to challenging living conditions and discriminatory practices by the Basque foremen in industrial areas. This situation led to the development of a kind of racism against the new proletarian class in the Basque Country. These newcomers and workers with a very heterogeneous structure have created a sense of 'invasion' in some parts of the Basque community. Thus, a serious disintegration began between the Basque-origin workers and the 'lower' class, the latter which came to the region and were called 'nasty foreigners'. In this context, there is an opposition against foreigners, immigrants and socialism in the region. In this opposition, it is possible to find the negative consequences of industrialisation and the expression of a newly formed Basque political identity and the ideology of Basque nationalism (Elorza 1984, 150–170).

In the areas of occupation of foreigners, the Basque language, 'Euskara', gradually decreased, and reactive and nationalistic feelings grew in response. Thus, in the Basque Country, the Spanish, that is, the 'dirty foreigner', and the 'supporters of Spain', that is, the big industrial bourgeoisie, have been held responsible for the dissolution of the traditional society (Letamendia 1987, 70–80). Nationalism in the Basque Country has taken its origin from this system of representation, and it has been the ideological expression of resistance to this change, which dissipates the traditional balance of patriarchal society (Izquierdo 2000, 41). Basically, it is possible to define Basque nationalism as the result of the change of society from rural tradition. The industrial revolution has distorted the vision and structure of a region based on agriculture. Large internal migration movements have increased this dissatisfaction. The socio-economic changes have led to the emergence of some concerns in the most conservative and most reflexive sectors. The threat of socialism has stimulated the instincts of these groups to protect their identities. Thus, Carlism, which is not a nationalist movement, has settled in this opposition line against modernity.

In this context, Carlism can be seen as a refusal of modernity. Carlism, which is mentioned by the Basque people who are under threat by liberalism, has clearly adopted the principle of protecting the interests of the Basque people. Carlism has made a significant impact on the Basque people hoping to violence and frequent military uprisings and has also embodied the socio-economic divide caused by the industrial revolution. From then, three groups of society will be faced: liberals with large owners, merchants and artisans, and conservatives of Basque origin, craftsmen, farmers and clergy, and after socialists which created by immigrants as a third power get involved to this division.

Under these circumstances, the period in which the violence in Basque society began to be preferred as the solution to conflicts increased with time. 'Rejection violence' (Braud 1993, 20) began to be seen as the object of opposition against this accepted political system. In the political conjuncture of the period, Arana left the concept of 'Basque people' and moved to the concept of 'Basque nation' (Corcuera 1980, 51). Thus, the idea of the difference of the Basques began to be constructed in a way not to be assimilated within the liberal state. The rediscovery of regional characteristics in the emergence of Basque nationalism served this idea of the difference. This importance gained by cultural rebirth

has also been extremely beneficial in defining the nation. With the movement of 'foralist'⁴, the Basque Country differed from the rest of Spain (Arakon 2013, 76).

Another characteristic of Basque nationalism is that it is very close to Catholic mysticism until the emergence of ETA. One of the reasons behind the fact that some of the independent militants were ready to kill for their cases is portrayed as religious fanaticism. During the period from the beginning up to a significant part of the 20th century, the Basques lived as highly religious Catholics, and the common life awareness built on the use of the Basque language 'Euskara' between the lower clergy and the Basque nationalists was highly developed (Loyer 1997, 31).

Sabino de Arana Goiri, one of the leading figures of the Basque nationalists, played an important role in the emergence of Basque nationalism. Arana presented radical ideas and a Basque nationalism framework based on the Basque race and religion. In this respect, Arana made intense efforts to use and spread the Basque language. Arana benefited from some of the myths and legends to create Basque nationalism. The basis of Basque nationalism can be summarised as the preservation of the Basque race, the continuation of the free Basque race, and for Basques to free themselves from Spanish assimilation processes and politics (Cokmez 2008, 357).

The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) was founded in 1895 to identify the Basques as a separate nation. It aimed to be recognised by the church, to combat the irreligion of the socialist workers and to reign the Church in the Basque Country. (Johns 2004, 13). Prior to the Spanish Civil War, the PNV succeeded in recovering the partial autonomies lost due to its display as a political movement. On the other hand, Arana, the leader of the Basque nationalists, believed that religious power should come ahead of civil power. According to Arana, the Catholic religion represents one of the characteristics of the Basque race (Loyer 1997, 31). In this context, the support of the clergy to Basque nationalism is not surprising.

At the end of the 19th century, many Basques could not speak their native language, Euskara. Euskara's threat of extinction came into play as an important factor in creating the Basque national identity and culture. During its industrialisation in the late 19th and early 20th century, the Basque Country took a major blow from the Spanish immigrants, and the Spanish-speaking population in the region increased and, from this point, the process of 'un-Basquefication' has begun (Arakon 2013, 76). This situation fed the racist character of Basque nationalism in this period. In the northern part of the country, Euskara was unspoken and was replaced by Spanish. Thus, the population living in the region is divided between the speakers of Basque and Spanish speakers (Letamendia 1987, 86). Some intellectuals called for the revival of Euskara in order to preserve the Basque identity. From that point on, Euskara has been described as a continuation of a line rather than a language.

During the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939, many new developments took place. The Basque society, which was the opposite side of General Franco, entered into a troubled period when Franco came to power. Due to the Franco administration's opposition to regionalism, the Basque community lost its autonomy rights again during this period (Lee 2004, 275). Franco, who adopted the idea of unitary Spain, tried to control the

4 Foralism is the system that requires the continuity of the *Fueoras*. In Foralism, each Basque region was connected to a particular political system. Foralism advocated the protection of farmers who had Basque blood via traditional ideas. In this context, it was believed that the continuity of the *Fuerolar* would ensure the continuity of a harmonious and stable society.

Basque region after the civil war. The ruling power, which banned the regions which are supporters of autonomy, also banned Euskara and declared the Basque society as a 'traitor'.

As a result of the increasing pressure of power in the period of the Second World War, the Basque students produced a magazine called 'Ekin'. After the beginning of this organised resistance in 1959, the secessionists joined together and founded ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna).

Conclusion

The solution to disputes between nation-states and ethnic minorities in the democratic understanding and equality for all citizens without any identical discrimination is also a defence of the ethnic minorities' identities and its states' national unity. In other words, the solution is the protection of the states' unity, development of democracy, protection for diversity, fair economic welfare and social interaction, as well as equal democracy for all citizens, sustain and protect the state as well as diversity. In this way, neither state feels the threat for separation nor ethnic groups feels the danger of extinction. The idea of national unity only could happen when all citizens feel equal and as a part of an 'us'.

It is possible to say that the political and economic dimensions of globalisation are gradually developing and that the states under the roof of regional organisations such as the EU have exceeded the nation-state system from the 19th century. The political histories of various countries of Europe have been in a state of struggle against the political, religious, linguistic and identity demands of the national minorities in question. In many of these struggles, it is seen that there is a policy of assimilation and oppression applied by nation-states against the national minority which are demanding identity.

Especially in the 20th century, state terror against the Basque Country created terrorism and the ETA was perceived as the liberation organisation of the Basque people in this political conjuncture. On the other hand, the path that Spain has covered over the last 30 years with regards to national minorities offers a very important opening for today's democracies. While the plural Spanish supremacy that emerged after the great struggles became an example for many central governments, the gains of rising nationalisms in the surrounding regions of Spain inspire different environmental nationalisms. The past of this portrait is deeply rooted. Understanding today's plural Spanish identity and the solution processes for national minority issues will be a very important guideline for the future.

As a result, Spain's strategy for the ETA has marginalized the armed wing of the ETA and accelerated approaches to solving the problem on a purely political basis. In this sense, the political wing of the ETA, which aims to find a solution to the Basque problem through peaceful means, has made a significant contribution to this process as a part of the solution policies offered by the socialist power. In a political environment where even the division of Spain could be discussed in the context of freedom of opinion in an environment where the weapons were not in operation, there was no reason to incline to violence. The lack of international support of the ETA's armed wing, the loss of its influence on Basque politics, the view that the desired result cannot be achieved an armed struggle

and the effort to find a middle way with Zapatero⁵ to discuss the Basque problem, has led this problem to evolve into a peaceful environment where the weapons are left behind.

The international system and state structure in the 21st century make it necessary to change the model of the nation-state that was built in the 19th century. One of the best examples of such structures to be confronted with political and identity inequalities and congestions may be the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, creating democratic solution processes is the only way to solve the political and identity demands of nation-states with their national minorities. On the other hand, historical and cultural differences are solved only with democracy? In the future, democratic countries are going to show if this is possible.

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