

Terrorism as a means for the radical groups to achieve secession: the cases of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country

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Abstract

Terrorism, which has become an important phenomenon in today's world, has its roots in many historical events that have negatively affected the welfare of certain nations. Throughout many years, several nationalist groups have found terrorist acts and methods useful in order to provoke fear in people and achieve their goals. The examples of such groups include the ones operating in Northern Ireland of the United Kingdom and the Basque Country of Spain. It is remarkable that they have made a significant effort to utilize the terrorist means for the separatist ends.

The purpose of this paper is to study the terrorist acts that were carried out by the radical groups in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country and find out whether they managed to fulfil their intentions on secession by depending on these violent measures. First and foremost, the paper is oriented on the brief description of the two cases and the essence of the thesis in the introduction. After describing research methods and reviewing the scientific sources, the focus is mainly on analyzing the cases in details in order to find out whether the terrorist activities were useful or useless for the secession. Finally, the major findings are discussed in the conclusion.

Keywords

ETA; IRA; Northern Ireland; Terrorism; the Basque Country.

Introduction

The terrorist activities in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country still require a careful in-depth analysis by social and humanitarian scientists. The history of each region shows that both of them were negatively influenced by the precedents of violence on their territories. In case of Northern

Ireland, one of such circumstances was the drastic Irish uprising in 1919 becoming a prerequisite for the territorial divisions. The Basques were afraid of the linguistic and cultural oppression after the end of the Royalist War (1820-1823) and the two Carlist Wars (1833 and 1873-1876) which were the major events of the civil tensions in Spain (Turner, 2015). According to Bartlett and Miller (2012), the radical actions of certain groups/minorities may frequently lead to prevalence of the terrorist tendencies. It appears that these two cases were not the exceptions. The miserable murders of 832 persons were carried out by the ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatusna, meaning “the Basque Homeland and Freedom”) members in the Basque Country between 1968 and 2003. The situation was almost the same in Northern Ireland, as between the years of 1970 and 2000, PIRA (Provisional Irish Republican Army which became independent of Irish Republican Army in 1969 (Turner, 2015)) managed to kill 1 961 civilians with the help of armed groups, sharing the same worldviews (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). In essence, the evident similarity between the two minorities is their radical attitude towards the central authorities, leading to secession.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned facts, it is remarkable that many scientific works have been written on Northern Ireland and the Basque Country but only few authors have analyzed terrorism as a helpful or on the contrary, an inefficient mechanism for the the violent groups of these minorities to reach success in implementing their final plans. Thereafter, it is interesting to study whether the Irish and the Basque ethnic minorities achieved their goals by using such violent and troublesome methods which caused the deaths of dozens of innocent people (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006).

Literature Review

The scientific sources about Northern Ireland and the Basque Country are vitally important to understand the essence of the paper. It is remarkable that many authors describe and analyze the nationalist groups within these regions but the usefulness/uselessness of terrorist acts for their separatist plans is not comprehensively studied.

Rogelio Alonso compares ETA and IRA’s activities and the central governments’ policies towards their radicalism. He reckons that it was hard to cope with Basques’ violence while the situation was different in Northern Ireland. The escalation of tensions by the Basque terrorists spoiled the ground for achieving peace while the Irish case appeared to be opposite. Alonso emphasizes the Basques insufficient political will to reach an agreement and their sympathy towards ETA’s violent

activities. Nevertheless, author does not assess the importance of terrorism for the secession of the regions (Alonso, 2004). Luis de la Calle and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca's paper is also about the terrorist acts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. The Authors pay attention to the ethnic nationalism and provide a broad picture of terrorism in both regions. To their mind, it is hard to obtain the precise information of the murders committed during the activities of ETA, IRA and their different branches. They focus on the separatist goals of the Irish and the Basques and also the number of deaths during the terror. They concentrate on the different kinds of murders and also analyze the terrorists' motivational factors for choosing potential victims but do not much assess the essence of terrorism for secession (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). Jerrold M. Post analyzes the historical aspects and the important factors of both Basque and Irish nationalism, too. His research is dedicated to the flow of events and the final stages of peacemaking in both cases. The significant difference between the two regions, found by the author, is almost the same as Rogelio Alonso's opinion: the peace process was firmer in Northern Ireland than in the Basque Country. Post's work is beneficial as it shows the decrease of dynamics of violence after a certain period of time but the author does not precisely summarize whether terrorism was useful or not for the secessionist groups in both regions (Post, 2007). The Basque Country and the Northern Ireland as well as Corsica are the cases studied by Carl Peter Turner as well. The author pays attention to the fundamental historical aspects of violence and similar to Rogelio Alonso and Jerrold M. Post, presents the change of the dramatic bloodshed by more or less a peaceful process. He analyzes the violent groups' activities in the frames of their secessionist approaches. Turner also reviews diverse researches on terrorist and conflictual issues and looks at the circumstances, approaches and practical steps of actors, involved in the cases. Turner's judgements are one of the few analytical works showing the essence of violence for the separatist perceptions (Turner, 2015). Rogelio Alonso's another study is fully dedicated to ETA. He analyzes the organization's violent attitudes as a means to accomplish the goals and concentrates on the foreign impact on its progress. The author also emphasizes ETA's links with the global terrorist world. To his mind, it alienated from those groups that quit the bloody activities. He sees a huge difference between the legal radical steps of the Spanish government and the Basque terrorists' unjustifiable merciless attitudes. Alonso mentions ETA's plans on secession but terrorism is not analyzed as a facilitator or an obstructive factor for accomplishing these plans (Alonso, 2011). Sezai Özçelik's work is about ETA's radical activities. He describes the Basque violent nationalism and draws readers' attention

to Miguel Angel Blanco's murder. He focuses both on cultural and conflictual aspects of the case and emphasizes the necessity of negotiations between the central government and the Basques. The source is valuable due to its analysis of changing circumstances in the Basque case. However, Özçelik is not oriented on the usefulness of terrorism for separatism, either (Özçelik, 2017). Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller focus on the dramatization of the events that lead to terrorist acts. They argue that radicalism does not a priori foresee bloodshed and killing, as it may only refer to opposing the existing conditions. The authors emphasize tendencies of violence and non-violence and assume that the first has an affiliation with extremism and terrorism which is almost excluded in case of the latter. Although the paper shows the contrast between terrorists and peaceful demonstrators, it is not oriented on analyzing how useful the terrorist acts may be to achieve separatism (Bartlett, & Miller, 2012).

The above-analyzed scientific literature shows that the meaning of terrorist activities for the secessionist groups is not sufficiently studied in the social sciences, despite many works, devoted to the Basque Country and Northern Ireland's cases. Therefore, studying the essence of the terrorist tendencies of the Basque and Irish separatists may provide interesting results.

Methodology

The subject of the research is the use of terrorist attacks as a means for the certain organizations in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country to fulfil their plans to secede. The research question of the paper is: what impact did the terrorist activities, strongly influenced by the historical roots of violence, have on the processes in order to facilitate separatism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country? In other words, I want to analyze if terrorism was a helpful tool in the hands of these groups to accomplish their ends.

According to Van Evera's (1997) explanations, the above analysis and the research question show that the independent variable is the roots of violence on the territories of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, the intervening variable is the influence of terrorist groups and the dependent variable - the secession of the regions.

The research is carried out by both qualitative and quantitative methods. The main emphasis is on the case study method (Babbie, 2016) which provides an opportunity to analyze the situations caused by the terrorist acts in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. The textual analysis (Carley, 1997) is also important to find out the essence of official statements and academic authors'

opinions on the aforementioned cases. The statistical data (Babbie, 2016) is also used in order to find out the numbers of wounded, injured and murdered people during the terrorist acts in the regions.

The conceptualization of the main terms, used in variables is important to understand the essence of the thesis (Babbie, 2016). One of such terms is the roots of violence. As discussed above, this term refers to severe events, causing trouble on the territories of the aforementioned regions (e. g. Irish riot in 1919, Royalist War of 1820-1823, the Carlist Wars of 1833 and 1873-1876, etc.) and becoming antecedents of more radical circumstances in future (Turner, 2015). The other concept which is important for the research is terrorism. The most suitable meaning of this term for my paper is the one provided by the researchers of these two cases, De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006): the authors describe terrorism as a form of “...violence which is the outcome of terrorist organizations pursuing certain goals. Terrorists are constrained materially by the resources they have, and ideologically by the preferences of their supporters.” (p. 2). According to them, the bloody attacks and merciless killings were committed “by Republican terrorist organizations in Northern Ireland and by nationalist ones in the Basque Country” (Abstract page). Furthermore, the plans for the secession of the Irish and Basque radical groups also needs to be explained. It is remarkable that the Basques were in favor of establishing a sovereign state and the Irish, living in Northern Ireland, strived towards becoming the part of the Republic of Ireland by leaving the United Kingdom (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006).

The operationalization of the variables is an essential part of the paper as well (Babbie, 2016). The roots of violence are observed through the historical tensions and dramatic circumstances in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country (Turner, 2015). Terrorism is measured by the essence and the results of the terrorist acts which were carried out by the terrorist groups in both regions. The statistical information on the people who suffered from those acts is also a helpful aspect in order to have a perfect understanding of the phenomenon. Concerning the major goals of the minorities, the focus is on the facts which illustrate whether the regions finally achieved the separation from their states or if the bloody steps were taken by the radicals inside the regions in order to fulfil their plans (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). The statements and main messages will also be analyzed to realize the essence of violent activities. All of these indicators help to identify the cause-and-effect relationship between the given variables.

The given methodology is pivotal to analyze the subject of the research. In my view, they are helpful to assess the importance of the terrorist campaign of their separatist groups in both regions.

Analysis

The case of Northern Ireland

The historical roots of violence

“Historical precedents provide the foundations for later conflict and the historical experience of Ireland was domination by the British over centuries...” – says Turner (2015, p. 185). The historical circumstances around the Irish people contributed to the drastic situations that developed later. They had the intrinsic clashes in the Middle Ages, resulting in the separation of the ethnos. This was followed by the spread of English rule on their territory during the second half of the 12th century. Due to the fact that the British did not have a wide impact on the island, they decided to impose their norms on the Irish which became an antecedent to the violent confrontations (Turner, 2015). It seems that the Irish were under a cultural and an ethnic pressure of the British which would most probably result in their protest.

It is remarkable that the Irish Wars lasted till 1603 when Hugh O’Neil’s riot was suppressed by Queen Elizabeth I. The rapid spread of Protestantism between the English and the Scots, facilitated by the Reformation process, did not lead to the same success between the Irish (Turner, 2015). It can be said that such events prepared the ground for serious future tensions. During the struggle of Williamites and Jacobites in the 1600s, the English strived towards increasing their influence on Ireland which resulted in the opposite situation. An important nationalist union, the Society of United Irishmen, was formed which was later linked to a political entity, “the Defenders”, in the 1700s. The activities of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, including the assassination of the Permanent Under-Secretary, the formation of the radical Irish political platform Sinn Fein and the unsuccessful riot campaign of the Irish groups in 1917, resulting in the tragic deaths of their leaders, also made a remarkable impact on the flow of processes. At the beginning of the following century, the Catholic Association stood up for the rights of the followers of Catholicism. The nationalist tendencies were accelerated by the killing of an influential figure, Theobald Wolfe Tone and the Great Potato Famine as the number of people living on the territory of Ireland fell to less than 5 million in the 1910s (Turner, 2015). It is obvious that the Irish feelings of hatred and incompatibility with the English were intensified. The crucial point was the transformation of the

Irish Republican Brotherhood into the Irish Republican army (IRA) which was followed by a fierce uprising against the English in 1919. The island itself was divided into the Northern part with the vast majority of the population, following Protestantism and the Southern one with the adherents of the Catholic religion (Turner, 2015).

The analyzed facts show that the precedents of violence made a significant contribution to the spread of radicalism between the Irish and to the rise of IRA. It is interesting how the radical tendencies continued and whether they had a beneficial effect on the violent groups to achieve the secession.

The emergence of terrorism

As De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006) reckon, “violence may generate radicalism and support endogenously... Violence may bring about more radical preferences for violence and more support for the terrorists (and therefore more resources)” (p. 7). Thereafter, the terrorist groups may create an environment for the oppressive affairs and may even take the steps which the central government of the country is constrained to take. Such situation was developed in Northern Ireland. It should be noted that various organizations, having links with IRA, were responsible for the terrorist activities in the region: the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) and the Republican Action Force (RAF) were established under PIRA. There also existed the Official IRA which created the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and which had many branches (e. g. Irish People's Liberation Organization (IPLO)). PIRA, for instance, started a campaign of ruthless struggle against the drugs by murdering lots of people, involved in this affair. Despite not being an ultimate aim of the organization, PIRA used this campaign as a means to persuade ordinary citizens in having power to make the critical decisions which the state was inept to make (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). It appears that the terrorists focused on the sensitive issues to increase their popularity and the number of followers.

The emergence of IRA brought the Irish Civil war in the 1920s in which the victory was gained by the group being in favor of the Irish independence. The IRA members had intended to start the political activity under the Fianna Fail party but IRA itself was announced as an outlawed entity in 1936. It became mainly interested in struggling against the English in Northern Ireland and protecting the adherents of Catholicism during the separation of the island by using violent measures (Turner, 2015). It is remarkable that the terrorists in Northern Ireland assassinated the

Protestant citizens in the region at some point by their religious beliefs which actually facilitated the discriminatory violence (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). After the division of the Irish territory into two parts in 1921, the population of the region became skeptical to the English. That's why, IRA focused on using arms against the British in order to achieve its goals but the 1956-1962 violent "Operation Harvest" was so unsuccessful due to the strict response of central and local opposing forces that it even started thinking about changing its style of behavior (Turner, 2015). It can be said that the radicals were moving towards the secession of the region by the bloody means.

It appears that terrorism was at first used by certain groups in Northern Ireland as an instrument against the central government but then they decided to modify their strategies and methods. The reasons and results of this decision are analyzed in the next section.

The profitability of Terrorism for secession

Terrorist attacks made a negative effect on the welfare of many innocent people in Northern Ireland. The paramilitary groups killed citizens in the following order: 1 644 people were killed by PIRA, 24 – by RAF, 49 – by OIRA, 126 – by INLA, 23 – by IPLO, 31 – by the Real IRA, 64 – by the unidentified Republican terrorists. Such murders were committed during the severe activities such as Omagh explosion of machines. Most of the activities were carried out between the 1970s and the 1990s (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). The "Bloody Sunday" was one of the most drastic events in 1972: 13 people were murdered and 27 were severely hurt during the clash of the police and military forces with "Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association" demonstrators in Londonderry. The explosions in Woolwich and Birmingham in 1974 were the continuation of the dramatic period (Turner, 2015). Bearing in mind these facts, the general situation can be emphasized as vulnerable because it gained the violent manner. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the British responded not only by the police forces but by certain peaceful steps, too: one of them was the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement about the Council of Ireland and the conditions for the coalition rule of Social Democratic and Labor and Unionist parties (Turner, 2015). Despite so many drastic cases, the terrorist groups in Northern Ireland did not succeed in achieving their main goal of secession from the British territory by such violent means (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). It was already apparent that the existing horrific environment had to be modified. Therefore, the 1994 peace agreement was initiated which assisted the normalization

of the dramatic conditions and led to talks involving various parties. In comparison with the 1990s, IRA and its followers were more radicals in the 1970s in spite of not being confident in the usefulness of coercive measures. In the 1960s, the central British government's agenda to Northern Ireland comprised of the following criteria: 1. Integration of Northern Ireland with South in case the population of the region was in favor of this process; 2. Foreseeing the Ireland's position about the rule of Northern Ireland; 3. Efficient local coalition government of the Northern Ireland. Those principles were actually envisaged during the peace talks in the 1990s (Alonso, 2004). Most members of IRA's Army Council and its Chief of Staff found their traditional methods useless and instead started thinking of setting up workers' unions with Protestants and Catholics working together (Turner, 2015). Therefore, the 1998 Belfast Agreement, acceptable for IRA as well as Sinn Fein, facilitated the process (Alonso, 2004), despite RIRA's protests towards it (Post, 2007). This was followed by the critical decision of IRA on rejecting the violent measures in 2001. In essence, peace gained victory on terrorism, as the radicals understood that violence was no longer a reliable tool for the realization of their plans (Alonso, 2004).

In sum, the change of events in Northern Ireland proved that the terrorist acts were useless for the radical groups in order to achieve the secession of the region. In my opinion, the essence of this section can best be described by Alonso's (2004) words:

“In fact, the redefinition of traditional Irish nationalism experienced by the main nationalist formations in the island has been a key factor in the IRA's decision to abandon its terrorist campaign. Previous to the IRA's 1994 ceasefire and contrary to what the Irish terrorist group would have desired, constitutional nationalism in the North and the South of Ireland rejected a pan-nationalist front which would have included Sinn Fein as an exchange for the IRA's cessation. Had republicans been successful in their attempts, a peace process with the Unionist community would have been impossible to develop. This factor, together with the defeat of the IRA, is the basis of the peace process in Northern Ireland. ...Many academics and politicians have defined the Northern Ireland peace process as a model in conflict resolution that should be used around the world...” (p. 708).

The case of the Basque Country

The historical roots of violence

The Basques represent the ethnos which was frequently involved in battles and became familiar with the military affairs. The Spanish well-off tradesmen discriminated against the Basque lower class. After the penetration of the French into the Basque territory in the 19th century, they gained control on several lands but had to overcome the severe attacks from Basques in Navarra. After the French were driven out of the territory in 1813, the civil unrest burst in Spain, having phases of the Royalist War of 1820-1823) and the two Carlist Wars of 1833 and 1873-1876 (Turner, 2015). Presumably, such a national disorder prepared the ground for the violent circumstances in the state, concerning the Basques as well.

After the end of the Carlist Wars, the Basques were worried about the possible oppression from First Republic of Spain. Sabino de Arana y Goiri, who founded the party “Centro Vasco” (then “Partido Nacionalista Vasco” – PNV), came up with fundamental principles of the Basque Nationalism in the 19th century. He developed the radical approach by concentrating on the chauvinist aspects. The Basque Country achieved huge success under PNV before General Primo de Rivera’s rule. PNV regained power after the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic and assisted in obtaining the Basque autonomy. After the Civil War ended in 1939 and General Franco’s regime was established, the Basques suffered from the serious pressure by the central authorities of the state. The Basques’ nationalist perceptions were created by their struggle against the conquerors and the oppressors. This made an important psychological impact on them to blame the Spanish for violence. The activities of PNV against the Franco rule led to a stricter pressure on Basques. As a result, several leaders of PNV had to leave Spain in the 1950s which caused the weakening of the organization. Many Basques were murdered and arrested, many – fled from the country. The active Basque youth unions were founded during the 1940s and the 1950s. Such was the organization “To begin” (Ekin) which started lobbying radicalism together with the PNV youngsters’ platform, EGI and set up ETA in 1959 (Turner, 2015). “The nationalism of Arana, whose idea is to consider Euskadi an occupied country, and Francoism, which makes that occupation real”, - Turner’s (2015) description of the ETA’s primary views shows that it was a nationalist group created during the Basques’ major political drawbacks (p. 242). It was the initiator of the violent campaign against the dictatorial central government and committed its initial murder in 1960. Thus, it began the terrorist activities which it saw as a mechanism to achieve its

goal (Alonso, 2011). “There is perhaps no Biscayan of pure race that deep down does not sympathize with the separatist doctrine”, - the careful observation of Arana’s words creates an impression that the Basque nationalists mainly strived towards secession (Post, 2007, p. 57).

It can be assumed that at the early stage of their nationalist approaches Basques were willing to depend on the violent measure. Thus, at first the ETA policy strongly depended on the violent measures. Therefore, it is important to look at the development of circumstances after the 1960s.

The emergence of terrorism

As Alonso (2011) expresses, “International Perceptions of ETA’s violence have also decisively influenced its campaign in parallel with the evolution of the most recent wave of international terrorism.” (p. 184). Thereafter, the increasing terrorist tendencies of ETA is an interesting topic to analyze. It is true that the organization undertook many troublesome steps during the 1960s but in 1968 it resolved to be mainly oriented on killing the people. Such approach was strongly influenced by the Basques’ perceptions of radicalism and Franco’s brutal regime. The nationalist wave, driven by ETA, generated the violent background and gathered many adherents (Alonso, 2011). It can be emphasized that violence became a pivotal part of the group’s activities but still it has to be studied how the organization gained popularity and what kind of damage it caused.

The Basque nationalist attitudes were linked to coercion and provided the justifications for ETA towards murders and terrorist acts. All this bred in Basque’s the desire to combat the Spanish which itself became a motivational factor for their secessionist beliefs (Alonso, 2011). Keeping in mind the fact that Franco oppressed the Basque identity by banning their language, depriving them of their basic rights and blaming them for betrayal, it might not be surprising that the Basque ethnic nationalists were drowned in a terrorist whirlpool (Post, 2007). This can best be seen in Dodeca Salegi’s words: “Franco made us nationalists by his persecution” (Post, 2007, p. 57). The functional characteristics and development history of ETA also have an important meaning to realize all the aforementioned circumstances. Its followers’ number grew from 70 to 300 in the 1959-1960 period (Turner, 2015). The men would join the group more because of ideology and the women – because of social factors. The ordinary social demonstrators became the radicals in the 1960s and started the campaign of mass murders (Post, 2007). ETA’s violent tactics was disguised by the short-term goal of manipulating the Franco’s regime to strengthen the pressure on the Basques which would be a good reason to start fulfilling the long-term aim of secession.

Nevertheless, it was really hard to resist the central authorities, as the dictatorial police and military forces were powerful enough to stop the ETA followers (Turner, 2015). One of the most drastic circumstances was the explosion of the Prime Minister of the state, Admiral Luis Carerro Blanco in 1973. All this, in fact, demonstrates the wicked nature of the Basque radicals that step by step were flaring the fire of terror. After Franco's rule was changed by the democratic system, the new central government increased the Basques' self-governing rights. However, ETA continued striving towards separatism (Post, 2007). It is also important that during the 6th of the several ETA assemblies the intrinsic fragmentation bred three different branches – ETA-V, ETA-VI and the Red Cells – that became ideologically distant from each other. Afterwards, two separate fractions were created from ETA-V: ETA-pm (arms race and politics intertwined) and ETA-m (denying political change and supporting radicalization). The terrorists appeared to be more impulsive (Turner, 2015).

The given analysis portrays terrorism as a reliable tool for the Basques in the beginning. Therefore, it is interesting to find out how helpful the violent campaign was for ETA to achieve the major goal of secession.

The profitability of Terrorism for secession

“We want a Basque Country that is free, united and socialist”; “we will not lay down arms and achieve it” - These words of two different distinguished figures of ETA of 1973 paved the way for violence (Post, 2007, p. 60). More than 600 people were killed by ETA in the 1968-1991 period. Surprisingly, a vast majority of these deaths were committed after the end of the dictatorial regime in Spain (Post, 2007). From the nowadays' perspective, the organization murdered more than 850 people (Alonso, 2011). Influenced by such famous Basque figures as Txillardegi, the Basque nationalists carried on the militant activities more dynamically and they even attacked the train which was transporting the former Civil War warriors (Turner, 2015). The attack on the Basque statesman, Miguel Angel Blanco, who was then severely murdered, was also the illustration of ETA's cruel face. In general, ETA was involved in explosions, attacks, captivities, tortures and killings (Özçelik, 2017).

One might argue that such activities would contribute to the serious rise of ETA's authority. Nevertheless, the state's response (Turner, 2015) and counter-terrorist measures (Post, 2007) as

well as the organization's above-mentioned internal fragmentations (Turner, 2015) and the Basque political parties' unified antagonism towards ETA in the 1980s (Özçelik, 2017) showed the other results. The jailing of ETA's leader Santacristina in 1992 and the youngsters' joining of the organization led to softening of attitudes. Santacristina himself wrote a letter from the prison to his followers, emphasizing the need for the rejection of violence. Due to the failure of 1998 agreement, the Spanish central government outlawed ETA's political unit Herri Batasuna's activities and strengthened foreign and domestic measures against the terrorists (Post, 2007). It would be logical if many separatists did not see the prospects for fulfilling their plans. The evolving civic engagement against ETA's violent approaches led to the decrease of its followers. The general situation altered the opinion of those people who were in favor of the secession. Instead, they started advocating the broad self-governing rights for Basques within the Spanish state. As Post (2007) says, ETA itself expressed readiness to establish peace in 2006:

“We call on the Spanish and French authorities to respond in a positive way to this new situation and to remove the obstacles or limitations in the way of the democratic process, by ceasing their repression and attitude of denial, and by displaying a willingness to resolve the conflict through negotiation.” (p. 64).

It can be assumed that the majority of Basques found terrorism as an insufficient tool for the realization of their plans. Although ETA carried out several violent activities even after this agreement (e. g. 2 murdered and 19 traumatized people in the airport in 2006), separatism was no longer a popular idea in Basques (Post, 2007).

Conclusion

The findings of the analysis show that the main research question of the paper may be responded by the following theory: The terrorist acts did not become a catalyst of separatism in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. As a result, the representatives of both regions significantly decreased the violent actions and almost abandoned the idea of secession.

The research shows that due to the historical precedents, the Basques as well as the Irish were engaged in the wave of violence. IRA's terrorist acts dramatized the environment in Northern Ireland and made a negative influence on health and life of many innocent citizens (De la Calle

and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). The situation appeared to be the same in ETA's case, as it also had a traumatic effect on each people, suffering from its radical actions (Alonso, 2011). However, the above analysis shows that the circumstances started changing as the terrorist groups were fragmented and also after a specific period of time certain radicals realized the lack of prospects in their methods. In spite of some disagreement between diverse units on establishing peace (e. g. RIRA's protests towards the Belfast Agreement (Post, 2007) and the ETA's split up into several subsets, having different worldviews (Turner, 2015)), the central government managed to agree with peripheral actors on certain criteria. It is true that peaceful situation appeared to be more stable in Northern Ireland in comparison with the Basque Country (as ETA members post factum continued violence in 2006 (Post, 2007)) but separatism turned out to be an unreachable dream for the radicals in both cases.

In sum, it seems that terrorism was not a useful tool for the Basque and the Irish nationalists to separate their regions from the states. It is evident that the violent campaigns of the radical groups, involving murders and severe attacks, did not deliver the applicable results for them

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