

Abstract

Terrorism was a subject of concern that loomed large in the Spanish territory for a protracted period of time. Although at an exclusively domestic level, this master's thesis investigates the evolution of ethnic identity and the evolution of the understanding of violence in ETA's discourse through a critical analysis of six key statements issued between 1998 and 2018. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis, the study examines the linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions of ETA's rhetoric in each statement with the ultimate purpose of addressing two main research questions: (RQ1) How does the notion of ethnic identity evolve over time and relate to violent conduct and ideology in the statements produced by ETA? and (RQ2) derived from RQ1, how is the understanding of violence embedded in ETA's discourse?

The findings reveal a complex interplay between ethnic identity, violence, and political ideology in ETA's discourse, which at the same time are determined by strategic shifts in response to internal and external pressures. Likewise, the approaches of Primordialism, Instrumentalism and Constructivism provided a theoretical framework that served to identify key themes in the statements: the organization's emphasis on historical grievances, the right to self-determination, as well as the framing of violence as a necessary and legitimate means to achieve political goals in the name of the defense of an ethnic identity. Hence, this thesis provides understanding of ethnic identity, violence, and ideology by showcasing how those notions are incorporated into ETA's discourse considering the statements being analyzed. Conclusively, this thesis aims to contribute to the broader literature on ethnonationalism movements by specializing in an isolated case and the specificities found while exploring it and by, hopefully, paving the way to future and potential avenues of research in the topic of terrorism and identity.