Diaspora Basques and Online Social Networks: An Analysis of Users of Basque Institutional Diaspora Groups on Facebook

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of an original user-based research regarding the Basque diaspora presence on social network sites (SNSs). It is the first academic investigation on the users of Basque diaspora associations’ groups on Facebook, the largest SNS on the Internet. The study presented here is part of a much larger quantitative, qualitative, and comparative research that took place between 2002 and 2006, which focused on the online and offline dimensions of the Basque institutional diaspora presence on the World Wide Web (Web) (Oiarzabal, 2006, 2010a, and forthcoming). This longitudinal research was complemented by studying new online platforms that had been created by Basque diaspora institutions since 2006 up to May 2010, with particular emphasis on SNSs (Oiarzabal, 2010b).

I designed an online self-administered survey for Basque migrants and their descendants as users of seventy-five Basque diaspora institutions’ groups on Facebook. The goals of the research were to study their reasons for using SNSs and for joining those groups as well as to find out the potential effect on their “offline” lives in terms of identity maintenance, community formation, migrant associationism, communication exchange, and information and knowledge
transfer. In addition, the study aimed at knowing who the users are as well as at understanding their role and degree of involvement on the analyzed social network groups.

By focusing on the Basque diaspora case, I attempt to draw attention to the implications that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have on international migrant diasporas such as of the Basque (Alonso and Oiarzabal, eds. 2010). The present work opens new venues for future multi and inter-disciplinary analysis that could clearly be of interest to researchers, scholars, and students of migration and ICTs.

**Keywords:** Basque Diaspora, Associationism, Users, Social Network Sites, Facebook

**References**


