

**Nationalism and Political Parties in the Autonomous
Community of the Basque Country.
Strategies and Tensions**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyze briefly some of the most important dimensions that shape the political panorama of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (A.C.B.C.).

My purpose is to limit myself to some aspects relating to the dynamics of the relationship among parties and their changing strategies from one of the main axes of basque political culture that is nationalism, and the elements of identity, social tensions, political differentiation and breakdowns of the proceeding consensus (quiebras del consenso procedimental), that it involved in the Basque Country as well.

1.1. The complexity of basque political scene

I am not going to talk about questions on which some of my colleagues have already done research work, relating to electoral behaviour, the analysis of party system or the political culture rulers. I am going to highlight briefly just that the basque party system, according to what Sartori (1980: 165 and following) says, is pluralist polarized (Llera, 1993 and 1994; Linz, 1986, Gunther, Sani and Shabad, 1986, 312 and following, etc.).

In the ACBC there is a high fragmentation with an average of seven outstanding parliamentary parties, serious social tensions and a great ideological distance, confrontation between identities and symbolic conflict, as well as an antisystem party (Herri Batasuna). I should highlight/underline that, relating to the militants and the location of the electorate, there is an important difference among provinces, which involves a different correlation of forces in every Historical Jurisdiction¹. Therefore, we could say that the basque political scene is very complex, even more complex if we take into account some dimensions of the social and political life such as the existence of a terrorist organisation and some others that help to become more difficult the construction of an articulated society and the creation, and mainly assumption of a common political project that contributes to the appearance of a basic consensus of the society regardless of the practical needs of government.

It is quite known that one of the historical and political features of the Basque Country alluded by J.J. Linz (1986) and F.J. LLera (1993) and some others, is the existence of differences among provinces that touch upon party system and

electoral behaviour and that therefore, generate a different correlation of forces in each province.

1.2. Provincial phenomenons and the breaking up of ACBC

The problematic relationship among the provinces has an unquestionable historical basis: The different positions during civil war, the Historical Jurisdiction Law (HJL)², the confrontation among provinces in different fields such as, for example, the economic field, infrastructures field, development and industrial plans (chambers of commerce, airports, among provincial governments³, etc.) and some others that are more symbolic.

The feeling of exclusion that own political, economic artistic and other sectors -which have an important influence on provinces- generates serious tensions from which get benefit not only those parties settled down in the provinces (Unidad Alavesa, Unidad Vizcaína, Iniciativa Ciudadana Vasca), but the respective scissions that arise into the nationalist parties as well, which notice how their importance becomes limited and located at the sectors named before. The examples of Eusko Alkartasuna and the already extinguished Euskal Ezkerra and Euskadiko Ezkerra, and even the trend towards the becoming of Gipuzkoa the basic space of HB, are very significative and let us understand this dynamic.

I may use as an explanation, among some others, the one that J.R. Recalde gave (1982: 43) and the following) about the difference and consequences of the «quick» and «slow» national constructions... The cultural basque nationalism has not been something homogeneous and, however, it tries to nazionalizate the whole territory defined from its ideology, which takes it to contradictory strategies and internal crisis. The construction of the Basque Country has happened through a «quick» process, so *the ideological chore of national programming accentuates he inventive element. It is about creating a nation from where there was not a political base before. On the oppositte to the slow processes, in which formally autonomous political institutions have made up along the centuries* (431 and following). This is the reason why the centrifugal trends reproduce themselves using different ideological, cultural, localist and other kind of arguments.

1.3. The axes of ideological distance. Violence and Nationalism. Identity longing

In the basque society there are three superposed axes of analysis. The first two axes correspond with the two main dimensions of ideological distance (left/right, nationalism-non nationalism) and the third one places sets the approval or disapproval of ETA's violence in a dichotomized perception.

The nationalism is one of the central axes of basque political culture, which is essential to undertake the analysis of political reality that superposes itself, weakens and, even sometimes fades away the other two analytic dimensions: with regard to the first one because, except for some tactical integrating proposals (that we are going to analyze later) polarizes society around two sectors, dramatizing political life and impregnating with breaks daily life.

On the other hand the insertion of ETA's terrorism in a nationalist «political conflict» makes the importance given to the concept of «basque contentions» persist. With regard to this Ardanza said:

... in the nationalist ideology was very difficult to make a difference clearly, the only reasonable way of classify, from the democratic point of view seemed to lie in proclaiming a clear distance (...) concerning to the means, assuming, however, the identity in the ends (1992b:10).

This has had serious consequences(...): the immediate perception that violence has an authentic political status; the fact that nationalist parties could not withdraw from he suspicion of their excessive coexistence with violents in order to profit end and, finally, the dividing line between democrats and violents could not prevail over the one that divided, and still divides, nationalists and non-nationalist, which weakened, at the same time, and notably, the efficacy that political action opposite to the terrorism needed (1992b:10-11).

The coincidence with valuable ends is something that many times has been supported by different analysts (Aranzadi, 1981, 1994; Mata, 1993; Ibarra, 1987), it is the one that has made -as we will see- PNV and EA focus on the «marxist» component of some of the collectives that make up the MLNV (for example KAS) and that nowadays, they seem to lead the ideological process that «Oldartzen» (attacking, manling, hiting, touching strongly) alludes to, trying to take away the radical movement from its nationalist condition and to place it within the limits of the ideological axis left/right.

The superiority of the nationalist dimension in the Basque Country imposes, at the same time, a trend towards the projection of politics to the field of the values, placed in the conflict of symbolic universe (Cohen, 1985: 98 and

following; Zulaika, 1990), which makes political debate become a discussion on «absolutes». As Ardanza recognized (1992b: 9):

...about abstract categories more than about concrete realities: People opposite to citizens, legitimacy opposite to opportunity, reason opposite to coexistence, freedom opposite to liberties, collective law opposite to majority of wills... To this effect the progressive adaptation of society to the common democratic habits has contributed to the process of clarification enormously.

On the other hand, we must not forget that not much more than a year ago, the half part of the citizens considered themselves as nationalist (See Table 1).

And that more than a third part of those consider that basque and spanish identities are incompatible (Table 2).

As Aranzadi says:

ETA's violence arises and develops as a selfaffirmative of basque nationalist community authentic ritual...it is not a reaction against the repression of a lasting and oppressed identity, the violence is the expression of the aspiration to reach it, equally as in the «abertzalismo radical» (explicar) of those maladjusted inmigrants there is not an ethnic identity but a will to assume it. Violence is the proclamation of that will (1994: 218-214).

The «identitary will» involves different definitions of the concept of «basque», which contribute to create different social breakdowns when they become clear references of adhesion in the nationalist/non nationalist codes and even as an element that makes the difference among parties' clients (Table 3).

Close to the majority condition of the «will to be basque», a close condition for the nationalist electorate, which make people defend everything considered as basque, fighting, learning basque, voting for nationalist parties, etc., we can find that in HB abound those who think that the necessary condition to be basque is to «defend basque nation» (85%), «speaking Euskera» is necessary for those who vote for HB in a 53%, and for the 44% of the voters for EA and rejected by the 68% and the 71% of the electors for PSOE and PP respectively.

This supposes a reinforcement of subjective reasons at the expense of primordial ones (Llera, 1994: 83), which must not make us forget that basic characteristics underlie in the conditions «of will» and that they are subject to the acquisition of some of these characteristics: «euskera» (basque language), «the 'vasquización' of surnames» (process of translating into basque an spanish

surname), etc., through the ways of the vote, the action, the learning process or the assumption of own models of nationalism (Mata, 1993).

2. THE CONSENSUS. POLITICAL BREAKDOWNS AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

2.1. Types of consensus

If democracy means sharing, linking, and, as Sartori (1988: 121 and following) showed, based on Easton, those objects that are going to be shared will be linked to the basic level of community about the fact that a concrete society has as a whole the same values and ends, from the point of view of the political society.

This is not a necessary condition for democracy, but if it does not exist, we will have an heterogeneous and fragmented political culture (Almond) and democracy will run as a weak democracy and with difficulties. It is a helping condition.

The second type is the proceeding consensus which establishes those rules called game rules (the processes that control the exercise of power) and, mainly, how should conflicts be solved. In democracy the rule is the one of majority. If it does not share this rule, it is the way towards the conflict and civil war. There is not democracy.

The third type will be the political one, about political action of governments. Dissension and opposition as elements that characterize democracy.

2.2. The debate between parties and political conflict. The political impregnation of daily life. The spiral of silence

If we analyze the reality of the Basque Country, we must aim at some breakdowns in the different consensuses.

Certainly, some authors have highlighted the reinforcement of a society of consensus, in which social and political privatisation phenomenons, sometimes apathy and demobilisation, involve a «secularisation» of the political confrontation, more dependent on pragmatic questions and on the resolution of

daily problems than on the ups and downs of the debate among parties. This same analysis is the one that Ardanza made:

The situation of serious disagreement with the basic questions of the Country (statutory consensus, territorial cohesion, language and culture and the front against violence) are located more on the plane of the strictly partidary debate among political representatives than in the bosom of society (...) Basic disagreements and the excessive tension that relationships among parties suffer from, could finish getting in wide sectors of the social body that would involve in controversies that are not of their own (1992a: 22-23).

This call to limit the conflict to the field of the parties and to call consensus was considered necessary because *a wide demand requires respecting the basic consensus of the country, even extending the space of shared values, on which security and the whole society's confidence must settle and limit the political debate to the confrontation of different solutions given to the problems that the society suffers from (1992a: 23).*

However, I think that now that five years have passed since these words were said, a basic consensus, explicitly assumed and expressed, has not been reached by this society. Political groups have not been interested in agreeing about some basic elements, on which construct, and even more, respect game rules and the procedure to solve the conflicts.

The fears of exclusion that some feel and the disrespect to the differences shown by others, the systematic allusions to the past, territorial tensions, almost endemic violence, hatred against the adversary, the conviction that «the more you fight, the more you represent», and at last, that the fact that any side of the debate about institutional policies is directly projected to the breakdown of basic and proceeding consensuses, let us know that the formation of government coalitions is an important fact but it does not have a serious effect on a major integration of political life.

With regard to the statute and citizenship, to territorial cohesion and to the basque and culture are liable to a systematic debate and questioning. The labour of the leaders of political parties and even the «Lehendakari» have helped to it.

In concrete situations of daily life any observer can realize it: looking at the friend groups, reading the letters written to the editors of the newspapers, paying attention to those opinions of local social gatherings, analyzing textbooks and debates about teaching system. Or we go into the conflict or we avoid it assigning

taboo attributes. From this point of view we should highlight that even though the situation is a little different in the cities, nowadays we can consider -in small measure- that the spiral of silence goes on running (Noelle-Neumann). As we can observe in the Tables 4, 5 and 6.

And everything without thinking of the fear for participating in politics (mainly with regard to some options), in which, sometimes, people feel the patent threat of violence.

This general panorama make us propose ourselves to do research work on the relationships among political parties of the Basque Autonomous Community, and regardless of parliamentary agreements or disagreements, it is necessary to introduce inter and intrapartisan debates that look for the suitable strategies to shape a very complex electoral and social space and to get the implementation of their ideas (conceptions according to the nationalist axis through the concrete politics that the reality of the country is looking for).

In this second heading we are going to talk about two aspects that I think they are basic in order to understand the dynamic of partisan strategies: Resetting/mending the nationalist space and struggling for the «non-nationalist» reference.

3. THE RESETTING OF THE NATIONALIST SPACE

3.1. PNV: From Arriaga's spirit to Elkarri's Conference for peace

As J.C. Vitoria (1995: 79) says, the «quiet nationalism» (X. Aierdi, 1989), derived from the model hold by the Arriaga's spirit, had involved an historical change about the conception that PNV had of the Basque Country and about the implicit identification that could be observed in its discourse, putting on the same level the one that is basque and the nationalist and the PNV; building a country as it wants to and a made-to-measure project (Historic Jurisdictions, Historic Jurisdictions Law; EITB (Basque radio and television); Language normalization Law, etc.) offering no chances to the autonomy of the government in order to achieve consensuses. They look as they were «batzokizing» the country using their headquarters and their social systems as clientelism sources.

The discourse of the Arriaga rejected this implicit dynamic about its political culture, partly in order to make suitable its discourse to the changes that will happen in the basque society, but surely more intending to take over an electoral and sociological space of «vasquistas» sectors or simply the one of the moderate right who felt that they had been excluded. That explicit recognition of all of the basque were non nationalist and the fact that if Euskadi became nationalist it would become because of persuasion, supposed an intention to reach consensus on a basic «basquism» which had to accept concrete definitions and values of the one that it is basque from nationalism's point of view.

The overcoming of exclusive temptations by the democratic nationalism. The trend to identify the nationalist with the basque has had the perverse effect which is that non-nationalists mistook the basque with the nationalist, not letting them accept it as something of their own. The patrimonial sense of nationalism has had a retarding effect on the integration process, and it even has been used by the reticent ones as an alibi not to join it (Ardanza, 1993: 32).

However, in 1997 we can realize that there is a very different strategic way. Some, as J.C. Vitoria (1995: 81 and the following) used to say that the breakdown with Arriaga's spirit was mentioned for the first time in 1993 as a part of the conference that X. Arzallus addressed at Galtzaundi forum/meeting and alluding to the «basque blood», to those from «outside», etc., and, mainly, talking about the unity of «abertzales» and the advance towards «the ownstatus» as it had happened in Slovenia and in the Baltic Countries.

This new strategic design, that is taking shape, acquires/obtains all its dynamic in the conversations for the peace held by Elkarri and, recently, in the document about pacification made by the PNV.

The way called Egibar way (or Ollora way)⁴ contains these following two foundations:

1. The recognition/acknowledgement or the politic nature of the conflict held by ETA and the MLNV and the solution of this one through the dialogue and negotiation from politics and giving/offering political solutions without imposing impossible conditions.

2. The project of national construction based on the integration and unification of the fragmented basque national conscience. The crossbreeding (as the respect to the minorities that do not support the project), political **sovereign** transcending the Estatute (self-determination) and the new values (Ollora: 1995, 91).

As P. Unzueta said, in the turn towards dialogue with the radical movement made by the PNV, this party considered that *«the treatment of self-determination was the key position of pacification»* and that this one might *«involve how right the other one is and put together the model of «abertzale» left and the Pact of Ajuria Enea (1996: 403).*

This tactical movement has involved that the spirit of the Arriaga of 1988 in the field of the solutions given to the problem of violence were put away, I mean, from the previous repudiation towards the «basque contentious» denomination that Ardanza supported because of its manipulator/condition, and from his purpose of showing ETA's violence out of the «territories» of nationalism and political field.

It has gone from the plan to finish with violence: a) Not to political negotiation; b) Going deeply into the legitimacy of the system and c) Improving the efficacy of the system (1992b: 10-20), to the document about pacification of 1997 made by the PNV, in which it aims explicitly, in its first point/question/matter, at the fact that ETA is the non-democratic expression of the basque contentious and even, in its ninth point that:

Taking into account that the Pact of Ajuria Enea, instead of having been developed as an authentic offer towards negotiation, has been used -by somebody- for shaping and projecting a non-terrorist front... If it really wants to help to generate active dynamics of pacification needs a revitalisation and a new updated formulation that make possible to create an enlargement/amplification in the future (1997: 16).

In this process there are some factors that can be concreted in the following:

1st. The design of the postnationalist strategy of PSOE and, later, the resurgence/revival of PP and IU, and the maintenance/support of EA and HB as well.

2nd. The accusations/charges of «españolismo» (pro-spanish), «vendepatrias» (sic: those who sell their country), etc., that come from the setting of the MLNV.

3rd. The impossibility to get a balance between pragmatism and symbolism; values and ends; management and representation.

4th. The danger of promoting and identity crisis among its members or contributing to weaken/debilitate the brightness/clarity of its discourse, leading to internal tensions.

5th. The little electoral profitability got.

6th. Its inability/incapacity to articulate territorial and politically the country, with patent differences in the implantation and increase of provincial tensions.

7th. The stagnant/paralysed support of the practices of social pressure at the «batzokis» with an appearance of clientelism and an increasing breakdown of the spiral of silence, mainly in those cities/towns that have suffered from the loss of social control.

J.C. Vitoria (1995: 81 and following) says that:

... the positions of the PNV ran up against the trenches, the abstention or... because it was not sufficiently valued the phenomenon of violence, nor the deep plurality of basque society, ... at the same time as the strong polarization of HB and EA forced it to look permanently at that direction while the charismatic figure of Arzallus, although it has the cohesion, it has also been a ballast for the reunification and a demotivating factor for a section of the potential voters... reflecting itself the failure about the determination of assimilating non-nationalists to the national project of the PNV.

This situation has probably involved that the tensions in the party have arisen/emerged and have misplaced some sectors of voters that, further from the fidelity owed «to the party», make the relationship between the present strategy of pacification and the perception that there are systematic violent attacks on the PNV a problem. It is obvious that the positions in which Atutxa and other members of the PNV move do not fit properly into the position mentioned. As an example of this let us read the following:

The spirit of the Arriaga is alive but we should not live it fall asleep. It is a plant that should be watered everyday... I would never accept being given that right (of selfdetermination) by the way of imposition and violence... inside the party everyone plays his part, because of that is good that we change periodically, I may be wrong and the following may come and settle another style... Even if there is much understanding, many meetings, much of crossing each other messages with LAB, HB and I do not know who and my party, and I will carry on with the mood of the crime persecution... In order to open dialogue with ETA: 10th point of the Pact of Ajuria Enea (If they declare the truce before) (Atutxa, 1996: 20-21).

On the other hand, we should underline that in PNV's leadership -with that differentiation Party-government that it also have happened in other parties- is the party who determines completely the structures and policies of the government, conceding a minimum manoeuvring margin to its people in authority in order to get the necessary consensuses. The appearance of weakness of the governors

and they total dependence on the EBB -mainly on Arzallus- (maybe, excepting the case of Atutxa) from Garaikoetxea, we should remark what J. Juaristi defines as «the divorce between PNV and the basque intellectuals» in every field:

The divorce between PNV and the prestigious basque intellectuals is obvious/evident/clear... Most of the «euskericos» (those who write in Euskera) writers are completely foreign, and even hostile, to it and we had better not talk about the basque writers that write in Castilian. Neither in institutions, nor in cultural enterprises, university... None of the titans of basque culture, except for L. Mitxelena, who finished his days out of the party, nor prestigious historians, not even a philosopher of recognised worth, not even a scientific who have made stand out in his field are members of the party...and I would say that it is harmful/damaging to the cultural normalisation of the Country (1995: 48 and following).

Certainly, these problems about political leadership and expression towards outside, mainly in the mass media and other expression ways, weaken the impregnation of its discourse in a rationalised way, further from the fidelity to the party and, mainly, the possibility to go beyond the limits of its proposals towards other that generate new values, further from the basic principles of the nationalism and daily pragmatism. It is quite right that the symbols, language and the control of EITB have been important vehicles for the normalised, assumption of concrete key questions of the basque (de lo vasco), in its nationalist version⁵, and also that it seems that nationalism has reached the limit of its potential voters, taking place some basic decantings/pourings inside the parties and balancing itself with the changeable loose ends of the «most nationalist» or the «most right» extremes.

As we have said before, besides, the social and political privatisation influences strongly, mainly on young people and in urban areas, weakening the nationalist sociability nets and turning the symbolic premises of conflict into others that are more pragmatic and realistic. But the most important thing is that the nationalism has lost its capacity/aptitude for social control and it does not appear any more as an hegemonic discourse in the basque society.

The proposal of nationalist unification in the basque case has always been the subject to be retaken for the PNV and, in general and implicitly by all basque nationalists. The positions held by Elkarri and its strategy of the «third space» coinciding with the proposals of PNV tending towards opening «common places» with some sectors of the MLNV (ELA-LAB accord, conferences for peace, declarations and supports to the regroupment of prisoners, proposals to

«transcend the Estatute» and self-determination, going further from the Pact of Ajuria Enea, etc.) together with the purpose of forcing solutions to the subject of violence, criticising the strategy of PP and the supposed stagnation of the Pact of Ajuria Enea, are also inserted in the intention/purpose of leading again the nationalist unity and, at the same time, make smaller the political space of EA.

3.2. EA: the struggle for survival

I agree with Castells (1995: 87 and followings) when he says that EA is the third way which is located between the hegemonic party and the radical one and that it fills the space that EE and ANV had already filled before.

In addition to an image of deideologization and the permanent necessity/need for opening out in an space full of political groups, the secessionist origin of EA and the roots of this origin make this party get a position in a complex attitude.

It is quite known that the birth of EA is located in a different version about the way in which shape the Basque Country institutionally (LTH), the alliance policy, the tensions Party-government, and, the most important thing, reasons about personal incompatibilities. This fact involved the trauma of political and social split of the hegemonic nationalism.

With several ups and downs, it is right that, nowadays, the situation of EA does not seem to be promising, it is politically up the creek between PNV and HB, with a residual participation in government, with serious internal blocking tensions (the unionist from Gipuzkoa, the radicals from Bizkaia), leavings of leaders who are locally important which make this party appoint independent political posts, «asphyxiated» by mass media and depending on Garaikoetxea totally.

These personal disagreements among leaders, the traumas and dramas that the scission involved on rank-and-file members and the different version about the model of institutional joint/articulation will probably be the factors that make unity more difficult, even though the implicit proposals from the PNV to EA are constant in the strategic design of the first one, but these proposals can just be noticed by the rank-and-file members, and never by the party in a formal way.

Trying to bring a relative peace to the democratic nationalist family...and the party that owns more power, more strength and more social settlement is the one

that has to do it with an open disposition/mood/frame of mind.. There is a sector of nationalist family that feels that it is orphan and we must give them an answer (Ardanza, 1994: 19).

3.3. Herri Batasuna: From the «popular unity» to the «socialisation of suffering»

One of the most important elements that do not let the unity of nationalists go is violence, mainly because, besides, the framework/network that supports it and the organisation that practices it have changed to the total breakdown tactic and with the «paramarxists» ingredients of KAS in the direction of the process.

G. Jáuregui (1995: 38 and following) is right when he says that:

If for a long time PNV has supported an ambiguous position towards ETA, reflected in the idea of «yes to ends, not to means», until the definitive breakdown of 1988, is quite right that PNV has always been much more intransigent with the Marxist fickleness of ETA or of the direction of the movement.

Curiously, as history shows, the trunk of ETA till nowadays has been characterised with the most radically nationalist branch, while Marxist, trotskyst, proworkers or other sectors with some type of ideological component of that kind used to split and leave violence. As it happens with the increase of violence, this has always corresponded with the degree of nationalist radically that there exists in ETA.

Many annalists that belong to the PNV have insist on the marxistizing condition of MLNV, a fact not demonstrated absolutely in the ideological components of its voters and members, which has make them establish a separation between leaders and rank-and-file members, among ETA-KAS-HB through which design a strategy for attracting its voters and show the discourse about the manipulation of the rank-and-file members of HB by the «direction».

The ideological orthodoxy of a direction is not as complex as the reality of the «abertzale» left... I cannot think that such a restless movement stays for such a long time kidnapped (Ardanza, 1992b: 21).

Certainly, from the call to the Popular Unity, going through the «process of accumulation of forces», to the point of «socialisation of suffering» in which we are nowadays, derived from Oldartzen report, a long time has passed in which a

tactic change and, probably, of direction of the process, that is quite significant at the time of making an analysis of its connection with the nationalist dimension, has been held.

The terrorist outrages against members of PNV and ELA and the systematic attack against batzokis, leaders and members of the PNV and other parties, etc., is a part of the strategy of total breaking-off designed in the report called «Oldartzen» (1995), which aimed at «the need for struggling for every mean and in every front» in order to get the aims proposed before.

From the «KAS alternative» it has passed to the «Democratic Alternative», that supports the tactic objective of negotiation between ETA and the State in order to get the self-determination, the territorial integration and the freedom for the prisoners of ETA.

Although the electoral implantation of HB and the active rank-and-file members are being restricted more and more to Gipuzkoa and some rural areas of Bizkaia, and less in Araba, and some towns in Navarra as well, and, despite of having left the tactic of «attracting» other sectors of basque society in order to enlarge the forces of MLNV through the strategy of the *accumulation of forces and integration of sectorial struggles* (Mata, 1993), or just because of all we have said, it has happen a centripetal movement in the bosom of MLNV, a call in order to union, even if it is at the expense of leaving or isolating those who are critics, or those from which can be noticed some doubt inside he movement.

Through the called «kale borroka», the inflexible direction of KAS and some concrete actions, but very significative, of ETA, and the reinforcement among the rank-and-file members of the antidemocratic conviction that *the most who fights, the most who represents*, and concrete socializing processes reinforced indirecly by the isolating-polarizing dinamic, as well, we could say that HB-KAS-ETA are able to settle in great measure -unless- the political life at the Basque Country nowadays.

4. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE «NON-NATIONALIST» REFERENCE

4.1. PSOE. From «postnationalism» to the «statutism» of the «left margin»

Probably, the integration of some leaders and significative members that belonged to Euskadiko Ezkerra in the Partido Socialista de Euskadi, and Jáuregui's leadership as well, were determinant elements in the important change produced in the relationships between PSE and the world of the nationalist identifying marks. Certainly, the need for turning with regard to the deeply anti-nationalist tradition of PSE was evident because of this:

-The exhaustion of an electoral basis that used to depend in great measure on the unequal mobilizing ability of different non-nationalist sectors, who used to think that PSE was the «reference» of the defence of the «idea of Spain in the Basque Country».

-The purpose of attracting basquist sectors that did not identify themselves with the nationalism, unless as it was conceived by the different political groups in the Basque Country, and with the electoral basis of the old Euskadiko Ezkerra as well.

-The need for making suitable for the changes that were being held in a society that had integrated, without traumas, some of the elements (mainly cultural and of model of political articulation) defended by the positions of nationalism.

This turn was made concrete on three mainstays: the defence of Statute, the claim for the pending transferences and the assumption of the process of «euskaldunización», that were the guide of those positions called postnationalists, of which M. Onaindía and R. Jáuregui, with other sectors of the party at Gipuzkoa, were their main mentors.

The transfer of the postnationalist formulation (articulated from a theoretic perspective by J. Juaristi⁶ -addressed in a conference organised by the «Aula de Cultura de El Correo»- to the field of the debate and political strategy, involved a hard reaction of the main leaders of PNV, when they understood that this design was the beginning of a «frontist» of the non-nationalists which with it was tried to join those who were not nationalists in order to adopt a position of confrontation towards basque nationalists. Ardanza made the following analysis:

These days it is being incorporated, joined to others of similar sign as «national fact» or «national identity», to the language of a party that appears as «new» and defines itself as «non-nationalist»...they promise more than the suppression of divisions, the continuity of an old confrontation in which a nationalism of different sign -Spanish nationalism- disguises itself tactically as «non-nationalism» in order to combat basque nationalism... (1993a: 31).

If socialists want to be the agglutinants of the antinationalist front again, it would mean that they bet more and more on a social breakdown, because of the division of society...serious and irresponsible.

Apart from the fact that the 40% or 60% of the vote in Euskadi were nationalist, there is a nationalist communion or a collective ownership of sentiment firmly rooted in the essences of this society...that will bring about radicalizations also in the other side... (1994: 18 and 19).

This purpose, let us call it «vasquizante», of the PSE had, among other significative facts, the conference addressed by R. Jáuregui at «Galtzaundi» forum⁷. The political debate acquired a great virulence and M. Onaindía, one of the promoters of the idea, said that:

The problem of the PNV is that the society has assumed the most rational claims of nationalism... Ardanza has understood the postnationalism on the wrong way... the postnationalism just consists on touching upon an evident reality as it is that the great majority of the basque society has assumed the Statute, we all agree on the pending transferences and on «euskaldunización»... Insisting on the split of basque people is not politically operative... it wants to get the voters of EA... The only division happens between democrats and non-democrats (1994: 12).

However, the failure of the hopes entrusted to the autonomic elections of 1994, with the subsequent problems to negotiate its incorporation into the Government of Coalition led by the PNV; the strength of the members that came from «emigration» areas in the internal structure of the party, and the influence of mayors of the «left margin» and of some leaders that are frenzied antinationalists; the patent promotion of PP, which threatened with becoming the reference of «non-nationalists», among others, has made PSE change notoriously in its strategy, in which «other aspects» have been left -or unless, weakening them in its discourse-, fitting it to a «statutist» attitude. They were probably convinced of the fact that the openness made towards «vasquistas» sectors but not «non-nationalists», not only had not had the results desired, but it even had left unprotected the flank of historical supports of basque socialism faced with the threatening presence of PP.

4.2. PP. From the silence to the «reinforcement of the influence». IU and UA. The impossible autarchy

Since, even before, Alianza Popular were constituted, the sections of leaders and supporters/adepts who were in the ideological space of the Partido Popular in the Basque Country have put up with the stigma of the one Spanish and, therefore, of the anti-Basque (coming from the nationalist definition), based on its conservative and even reactionary image, built through its connections with Franco's régime.

This public image was corresponded with a feeling of isolation and selfmargination, in a society in which the dominant vision and discourse were the nationalist and where «being on the right» increased the rejection.

Until the beginning of 90s the adherents to the Basque right were the main «carriers» of the «spiral of silence», they had simply disappeared from the political life, their discourse were understood as marginal and enemy of any project related to the political construction of the Basque society. The conservative option was excluded politically and socially (because of its double condition of «non-nationalist» and «being on the right») in the Basque Autonomous Community, to the extent of appearing always strongly infrarepresented in the opinion polls, it remained in hiding, without any expression and any confirmation of his strength among public opinion. Beforehand it was a beaten option.

At present, however, the PP occupies enviable positions in the three Basque provincial capitals and has achieved important advances in the whole Basque Autonomous Community. Even if the party -in the political space shaped by the left-right and independentism -centralism- dimensions- is still being perceived basically as a force on the right and centralist, we could say that, in same way, it has got to add precision to its ideological profile towards the centre-right. The previous stigma starts to fade away and this image of representant of «sociological franquism» is only supported invariably by the most radical sections of nationalism.

The temperation of this image in the Basque Country is mainly due to the general reorganization that has been held in the Spanish right, to the introduction of a programatic and strategic turn towards the political centre with its approval and full integration in the European centre right and the crisis suffered by the PSOE (Angulo: 1996a, 32).

In the Basque Country this turn has been held, maybe in a clearer way. The rise of some of the ancient members of UCD, among which J. Mayor Oreja

stands out, the generational renewal that has been held among its members/militants and people in authority (Iturgaitz, Peón, Barreda and some others) and, mainly, because new members/militants own some characteristics that belong to the Basque from a nationalist definition (Euskera and others)⁸, has involved an important increase of the public expression of its discourse -mainly in the cities- helping to weaken the social hegemony of the nationalist discourse and to the increase of some sections of the population who define themselves, not as agnostic but as atheists with regard to the nationalism.

The posings in order to group a trend that was broken up before and atomized in different families, involved a bet that the leader Mayor Oreja seems to have made it true and that involved some guidelines as centrism, autonomism, moderation and renewal (Angulo, 1996b, 25). The political tactics of the PP in the Basque Country have always involved two axes: firstly, the purpose to lead the non-nationalist reference in competition against the PSE, and, secondly, the purpose to integrate that part of the electorate of the PNV that, being conservative and simply autonomist, used to vote tactically for the PNV, as a way to prevent the assumption of left parties to the power.

The ascending trend and the increasing prospects in the electoral field have involved a definitive social emergence and the opening to a moderate vision in the ideological field, has allowed an increasing influence on young people, students, new voters and ancient non-participants, with which it has increased their capacity of reproduction and a solid and faithful electoral base.

Although the coming up -from the PP of Alava- of UA as a provincial force involved a serious obstacle for its development, it is truth that the electorate of the force mentioned before is starting vote again for the PP, leaving UA next to disappearance (broken by the internal struggles and with a discourse perceived as unlivable).

Probably, the weakening of the PSOE because of the cases of corruption, the lost of charisma of F. González, internal tensions; the assassination of G. Ordoñez by ETA and the importance of moderate leaders, the intents to approach moderate nationalism (whether in Spain or whether in the Basque Country) and its victory in the last elections for the Spanish Parliament have helped to this recovery.

This approach nationalist forces is the result of the Third Project of Basque Autonomy (Mayor Oreja, 1994: 109-127) and the search for the shape of a new majority of Government (supposedly PNV-PP)⁹.

It is evident, however, that the PNV has had an ambiguous relationship with the PP for years. The shape of accords in Navarra was one of the reasons (although some people considered it as secondary) why PNV's government broke down and, although the formation «of necessity» of government coalitions with the PSOE, X. Arzallus has always been more prepared in order to pact with the PP than with the PSOE, although they share one section (not very important but significative) of the potential electorate, and even though the PP is next to it in the three capitals of the ACBC¹⁰. The words of A. Pastor¹¹ are very significative:

The PNV is anxious about the promotion of the PP in Bilbao... Bilbao has been a «fief» of the PNV... but in this country things are complicated, as it exists terrorism and the threats to every option which is not nationalist involve curbing natural leaders' facing... Y think that the PNV has had a lot of borrowed votes from people who were not nationalist and that they used to think about the transition: «let us vote for PNV, that, after all, they are on the right and they are a party from here».

With regard to IU in the Basque Country, we should highlight just that in the last elections it is more in relation to sections of voters coming from the PSE-EE and other critics with the nationalism on the left than with a settlement of its political space. The discourse of IU, with regard to some aspects of the estatutory development and criterias for pacification, coincides with the nationalist proposals (selfdetermination¹², prisoners, etc.). But on the other hand, the radicality that falls off from nationalism and the hiding and fading away by this of the ideological vector which is left-right, and the internal conflicts that have been held as well, determines and impedes a constant expansion of its project, standing subjected to the moment oscillations of the basque political life.

Table1

Table 1			
Nationalist feeling			
	1995/1 st	1995/2nd	1997
	%	%	%
Nationalist	49	39	43
Non-nationalist	41	51	45
No answer	10	10	12

Source: Euskobarómetro. February and Decembre 1995 and March 1997. F.J.Llera, J.M. Mata and Alfredo Retortillo. n=1400

Table2

TABLE 2 Structure of the Catalan administration	
GOVERNMENT ELITES	
Head of the Administration	PRESIDENT
Department Head	MINISTERS
POLITICAL ELITES IN THE ADMINISTRATION	
politically assigned positions	SECRETARIES GENERAL
	GENERAL DIRECTORS
PUBLIC SERVICE ELITES	
freely assigned positions	UNDER GENERAL DIRECTORS
members of the public service	HEADS OF THE SERVICES
	HEADS OF THE SECTION
	HEADS OF DEPARTMENT SECTORS

Table3

Table 3		
Necessary conditions to feel basque		
	YES	NO
	%	%
The will to be basque	79	8
The defence of Basque nation	57	23
Living and working in the Basque Country	54	31
Having been born in the Basque Country	41	44
Descending from a basque family	36	49
Speaking Euskera	30	53

Source: CIS n.1795 1989. Dir. F.J.Llera. n=1400

Table4

Table 4	
Feeling of fear of taking part in politics	
	1995 %
Much or enough	52
Little or nothing	39
No answer	9

Source: Euskobarómetro. February and Decembre 1995 and March 1997. F.J.Llera, J.M.Mata and Alfredo Retortillo. n=1400

Table5

Table 5	
Fear in relation to the one felt five years ago	
	1995
	%
Nowadays more fear	24
The same fearl	28
Less fear	39
No answer	9

Source: Euskobarómetro. February and Decembre 1995 and March 1997. F.J.Llera, J.M. Mata and Alfredo Retortillo. n=1400

Table6

Table 6		
Freedom to talk about politics		
	1995	1997
	%	%
With everybody	33	35
With somebody	40	40
With nobody or almost nobody	23	24
No answer	4	1

Source: Euskobarómetro. February and Decembre 1995 and March 1997. F.J.Liera, J.M. Mata and Alfredo Retortillo. n=1400

NOTES

1. Historical Jurisdiction: Territorios Históricos.
2. Historical Jurisdiction Law: Ley de Territorios Históricos (LTH).
3. Provincial Government: Diputación Foral.
4. This article begins with an ingushian proverb that does not show the spirit of the ethic of responsibility: «Those who think about consequences cannot be valiant».
5. «Nothing classifies more to one than his own classifications», «saying with authority is doing» (Bourdieu).
6. J. Juaristi criticized the use of those analytic elements by the PSOE in public, when he understood that it had been banalized extremely and that it had broke with the spirit of that formulation.
7. In the same place where Arzalluz had adressed another breaking-off talk with the «Spirit of the Arriaga» before. R. Jáuregui was harshly criticized and even discredited with allusions as «that he did not know enough Euskera», «that it was an insult to the Euskera and euskladunes», etc., etc., which involved that some members of the PSE thought that the nationalists annoyed that «non-nationalists» used the Euskera, because they really thought that it was their heritage and, besides, they could not accept that there were also basques who were «non-nationalists».
8. It is elucidating the outline of T. Montero (ancient member of HB) about the changes that have been held in the PP: «...maybe because of an excess ideologization, the changes that are being held in this country are not always valued as they should be valued... Y also spoke to the representant of the PP. The office in which Y was received was decorated with an «ikurriña» which was as big as the spanish flag and there was a councillor of not much more than 20 years old with a look of unsubmitive, who spoke a very worthy Euskera. Better than mine. Those who go on thinking that this is just a political make-up are keeping out of sight the reality of those deep social and political changes... a change on the spanish right which is not trivial: accepting all these symbols by political (formaciones) that have mainly stand out in an almost religious cult to the spanish national system of symbols, it is something significant.
9. This «Third Project of Basque Autonomy» (after the project of autonomic construction and the project of pacification and normalization of Ajuria Enea) is conctrcted on the following:
 - 1st. Focusing on the contents (quality of teaching, real problems, etc.) and not on the frameworks and continents (teaching models, territorial dimension, etc.).
 - 2nd. Focusing on the real problems and not on abstract, theoretical and ethereal discourses.
 - 3rd. Reforming Basque Public Administration: reducing it, simplifying it, and rationalizing it.
 - 4th. Giving a new projection to the basque out from the Community and a bigger influence, mainly in the economic and industrial policy of Spain.
 - 5th. Revitalizing autonomy and recouping the role of the Basque Parliament.
 - 6th. Generating a political climate based on the estabily, the certainty and the desdramatization.
10. The PP is the first local political force en San Sebastián, and the second one in Bilbao and Vitoria in a short-distance (10,000 votes) from the PNV.
11. Deputy Major in the city council of Bilbao, which is a symbolically key city for the PNV, where this party has won all the elections in the democratic period (1977: 18).
12. Cfr. with «Towards the federalization of the State». Cap. 4, p. 221-231. Programa marco. General elections, March 1996.

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Abertzale left: (Patriotic left) MLNV selfdenomination.

Ardanza, J.A.: PNV's President (Lehendakari) of the Basc Government during the last three terms.

Arriaga: Bilbao's theatre where some of the most important acts of the PNV's cycle *2,000 Nationalism* have been holden, one of them, the conference read by Xavier Arzallus, President of the Euskadi Buru Batzar.

Atutxa, J.M.: Interior Minister of the Basc Government.

Aula de Cultura de El Correo: (Culture lecture hall of El Correo) Series of cultural events organiced by *El Correo* newspaper, the most read in the CAV.

Basquism: Recognition of the identity differential signs of the Basque Country. It implies the attempt to develop such differencied signs. Its recognition does not implie having nationalist ideology.

Batzoki: Meeting and social club for PNV activists and supporters.

CAV: The three Basque provinces recognize in the Autonomous Statute.

Countrysale and hispanicism: To adopt anti-Basque positions, in general, or to appear as betrayers to the *basque cause* from the perception of the nationalists and, more often, of the MLNV.

Democratic alternative: ETA minimum bases to stop their violent actions.

EA: Eusko Alkartasuna: (Basque Solidarity). Party lead by C. Garaikoetxea.

EE: Euskadiko Ezquerria: (Basque Left) party integrarted in the PNV. General Secretary R. Jáuregui.
Egibar, J.: Euskadi Buru Batzar spokesman. The EBB is the main representative organ of the PNV.

EITB (Euskal Irrati Telebista): Basque radio and television: Main organism of the Basque public radio and television channels.

ELA: Euskal Langileen Alkartasuna: (Common cause of Basque workers) General Secretary J. Elorrieta.

Elkarri: Organization for Basque Country peace process. General Coordinator J. Fernández.

Elkarri's conference for peace: Meetings lead by Elkarri's organization in which only PSE-EE and PP did not participate.

Ertzaintza: Autonomous Basque police.

ETA: Euskadi Ta Askatasuna: (Basque Country and freedom). Terrorist organization which is part of the MLNV.

EuE: Euskal Ezquerria: (Basque Left). Party born from a splitting of Euskadiko Ezkerra and lately united to Eusko Alkartasuna. Nowadays some of its most important members are in the PNV.

Euskera: Basque language and process of basque language recuperation.

Euskobarómetro: Investigation team in the Department of Political Science and Administration of the Basque Country University.

Galtzaundi: Cultural forum in Tolosa (Guipúzcoa) which organize conferences.

Garaikoetxea, C.: EA's President and former PNV's Lehendakari of the Basque Government.

HB: Herri Batasuna: (Popular Unity). Political coalition that articulates the MLNV colectives. It is a legal organization.

Historical Jurisdiction and LTH: Each one of the three provinces which constitute the CAV. The LTH is the law that concerns the three provinces granting to them a high level of fiscal autonomy, etc.

ICV: Iniciativa Ciudadana Vasca: (Basque Citizen Initiative) Organization splitted from the PNV. It is promoted by the Bilbao's former mayor, J.M. Gorordo, and some personalities of the Vizcaya province. ICV is established exclusively in Bilbao and the Vizcayan area.

IU-EB: Izquierda Unida-Euskal Berdeak: Coalition between Unit Left and the ecologist. General Secretary, J. Madrazo.

Jáuregui, R.: General Secretary of PSE-EE. At the present he is Minister of Justice, Economic and Labour of the Basque Government.

Kale borroka: (Street fighting). Destabilization strategy designed by the MLNV. It consists in the intensification of public disorders and all kind of attacks on people, institutions and goods that do not agree with the MLNV positions.

KAS: Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista: (Patriot Socialist Coordinator) It is the organism that coordinates the theory and tactics of the MLNV. ETA is a part of it.

KAS Alternative: Former alternative proposed by ETA.

LAB: Langile Abertzaleen Batzordea: (Patriot Workers Assembly) Labor union part of the MLNV and KAS. General Secretary R. Díez.

Left Side: Industrial area formed by several towns beside Bilbao. Its population is mainly immigrants arrived to the Basque Country.

Lehendakari: President of the Basque Autonomous Community.

Mayor Oreja, J.: Former Popular Party President of the Basque Country, Minister of the Interior of the Spanish Government.

MLNV: Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco: Movement of Basque National Liberation. Contents all the parties framework, trends, etc. who are found around ETA and HB.

Oldartzen: (Attacking, beating, harshly determining) Report passed by HB. The MLNV has been carrying it out in the last years.

Ollora, J.M.: Member of the PNV's Euskadi Buru Batzar. Together with Egibar he is the forerunner of a new PNV's strategy on peace process and territorial definition of the Basque Country.

Onaindía, M.: PSE-EE leader, former General Secretary of the extinguish Euskadiko Eskerra. He is with Jáuregui one of the forerunners of the Postnationalist thought and a change in the image of PSE-EE to basquism.

Pact of Ajuria Enea: (Ajuria-Enea's agreement) Strategic design for the pacification of the Basque Country through an agreement of all the politic forces except HB.

PNV: Partido Nacionalista Vasco: (Nationalist Basque Party) President of the Euskadi Buru Batzar: Xavier Arzallus.

Postnationalism: Theory that holds the end of the nationalism due to changes in socio-cultural relations, etc.

PP: Partido Popular: Popular Party of the Basque Country. President C. Iturgaitz.

PSE-EE: Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra: (Socialist Party of Euskadi-Left of Basque country) Party created by the union of the old PSOE and EE. General Secretary: R. Jáuregui.

Strength accumulation: Tactical process carried on by the MLNV to get close and to assimilate into its logic of radical nationalism other organizations which hold sectorial conflicts in other fields of social, political, cultural and economic life in the Basque Country.

Suffering socialization: Slogan of the MLNV, according which if the prisoners and their families and in general the organizations of the MLNV hold the suffering imposed by the violence of the State, the same suffering has to be holden by all those who were againsts the MLNV.

Third space: Elkarrri's postulates to situate itself in a middle position between ETA and the MLNV, on one hand, and the democratic politic forces, on the other.

UA: Unidad Alavesa: (Alavese Unity) Arising party born form a splitting of the PP organization in Alava.
General Secretary: Mosquera.

Viloria J.C.: Political correspondent of *El Correo* newspaper and one of the experts in the basque politic reality.