

IMAGINING THE BASQUE STATE

OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT
TO A BASQUE STATE IN EUSKAL HERRIA.
A QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE STUDY

Julen Zabalo • Ane Larrinaga • Iker Iraola • Mikel Saratxo
Mila Amurrio • Txoli Mateos • Arkaitz Fullaondo • Uxo Anduaga

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Parte Hartuz Ikerketa taldea
Ipar Hegoa Fundazioa



Euskal Herria, 2016

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Autor: Ipar Hegoa Fundazioa y el grupo de investigación Parte Hartuz

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At a crossroads is how the current political situation in the Basque Country could, once again, be described. Our capacity to define our own path has been caught up in the muddied waters of the historical and political narrative of the Spanish and French States. Clearly, in recent years, there has been a rebirth of political debate, with former contributions being readily accepted. This current period is characterised in the main by political instability due to a variety of factors, and, for those of us who wish for social and political freedom for the Basque Country's future, this instability is considered an opportunity.

In 2012, the Ipar Hegoa Foundation promoted core research on the question of the Basque State. This research has already coloured numerous debates, but has yet to be the focus of political debate. It had, in fact, been the chyrstallisation of a previous work, which had been started 2 or 3 years before, in a more difficult political and repressive context, and finally completed and published in 2012.

Euskal Estatuari Bidea Zabaltzen was the title given to a project that brought together 26 contributions from 33 experts. A large number of aspects was analysed. Most of them were related to the community's daily living. There were, however, two objectives: to analyse the need for, and the feasibility of, a Basque State from each of these aspects. The debate on the Basque State has been going on for a long time and is quite rigorous, and the aim of this particular study was to fill an academic gap in relation to the same (the study is available at the following link:<http://iparhegoa.org/index.php/eu/euskal-estatuari-bidea-zabaltzen-3/8-euskal-estatuari-bidea-zabaltzen2>).

Following on from the Euskal Estatuari Bidea Zabaltzen project, the Ipar Hegoa Foundation and the Parte Hartuz research group from the University of the Basque Country extended their collaboration, and their complicity gave rise to the study in hand. We decided to continue the research and take it beyond the question of the need for and feasibility of the Basque State. As can be appreciated, the result is a study of the opinion and adhesion generated by the issue of a Basque State, as well as an analysis of the different discourses.

As with the previous work, this one aims at contributing to the debate. With this analysis, we seek to offer real and scientific resources for encouraging and reinforcing political and social debate. There is no doubt that a proper knowledge of the reality is essential when drawing up strategies, and it is the aim of this study to provide further assistance in this respect

IPAR HEGOA FOUNDATION AND THE PARTE HARTUZ RESEARCH GROUP (UPV/EHU)

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Many thanks to you all.

INTRODUCTION

A study on the Basque State

In theory, globalisation has weakened the power of Western nation states. A number of scholars of political theory have spoken of the need to reinvent the state, or have referred to the postmodern state or the glocal state (Chevallier, 2011) in their works. Above all, these ideas reflect the changes taking place in the European framework of nation states. These changes include cases where there is a democratic call for the territorial break-up of certain states, such as the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, both of which are nations as political subjects on the European stage requesting their own state.

The impact of the abovementioned pro-sovereignty processes is evident on Basque society: in June, 2013, Gure Esku Dago, the popular movement in favour of Euskal Herria's right to decide, was presented. This initiative has led to numerous popular events in the last two years, and a proposal has recently been put forward to carry out consultations from town to town with an aim to reaching an agreement throughout Euskal Herria, in order to be able to work out, among all those participating, where, what, when and how to decide (Arbelaitz, 2015). Also significant are the measures that have been taken by the institutions concerning the right to decide and/or institutional change, depending on each territory. The Basque Parliament's work committee is currently at the stage of presenting and debating proposals on the change in the political status. In November, 2015, a monographic debate was held on the right to decide,¹ in Navarre's Parliament, and, at around the same time, most town councils in the Basque Country voted in favour of an association of Basque municipalities (Communauté de communes)². All these initiatives have aroused great interest in the academic world, which is reflected in the different opinions and reflections on the processes of building new states published in recent times.

The following questions were posed in the context of these reflections: would you be in favour of carrying out a consultation so that the majority of Euskal Herria's population can decide on their political future? If that were the case, and the result of the consultation were positive, would it be possible to launch a process for the construction of the Basque State. How do you imagine the population of this hypothetical Basque State? What territory would it occupy or what would its official language be?

What relations would there be between the government and citizens of this state? Among others, these types of questions were the starting point for this research.

Therefore, the aim of the research was to analyse the opinions, attitudes and social perceptions that the population of Euskal Herria has with respect to a hypothetical Basque State. Despite it being the first time that this subject of study was tackled, it was decided that it should be done in depth, which is why the researchers' work was aimed not only at gathering the opinions of the population but also those of prominent figures in certain spheres of Basque society; specifically, the business community and those involved in the production and dissemination of culture in the Basque language. The importance that subjects like the economic situation or linguistic policy could have in our society with the launching of a debate on the creation of a Basque State is well known. Indeed, we believe that these two aspects of Basque social life are the ones triggering most mixed reactions; hence the effort to learn the opinion of people involved in these two spheres. In consequence, this study focused on three observation units (citizens and representatives of the business and cultural community), which helped enrich the analysis though making the research process more complex.

With an aim to delineating the subject of study, the subject matter, the Basque State, was defined on the basis of the traditional conceptualisation of the state; namely, as a political organisation emerging in the Modern Age in Western Europe, known first as a modern state and, subsequently, following the French Revolution, as the nation-state. The nation-state claims formal political sovereignty over a given territory, as well as the legitimacy provided by the people or nation residing in it (Mann, 1996). In general, nationalism equates the nation (people) with the state; in other words, it lays down that all nations are entitled to a state. This opinion is shared by all kinds of nationalist movements, those seeking a state as well as those already having

¹ Olano, Jon, "Erabakitze eskubidea. Estatus politikoa berritzeko prozesu bati ekitearen alde egin du Nafarroako Parlamentuak" [The Parliament of Navarre has voted in favour of a process of renewal of the political status. The right to decide] Berria, 2015-11-27, http://www.berria.eus/albisteak/117205/estatus_politiko_berritzeko_prozesu_bati_ekitearen_alde_egin_du_nafarroako_parlamentuak.htm

² "158 herrietatik 113 Euskal Herri Elkargoaren alde agertu dira", [Of 158 municipalities, 113 voted in favour of the Association of Basque Municipalities] Kazeta.eus, 2015-12-02, http://kazeta.naiz.eus/es/info_kz/20151202/158herrietatik113euskalherri elkargoaren alde agertudira

one. There is, however, one difference, which Michael Billig aptly explains: nation-states/established nations (owner of a state) transmit the national identity to the inhabitants of their territory through daily rituals and symbols, either subtly or in an explicit fashion, in order to strengthen the feeling of belonging and adherence to a nation in a natural way without (the need) to use/or stir great passions. This is achieved thanks to the conduct of state nationalism, so-called banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), because it succeeds in expanding and growing in strength in a discreet fashion, almost as if it were common sense. This is precisely how the state achieves its legitimacy: portraying itself as non-nationalist.

This banal nationalism has gained ground in this period of late modernity in which the different identities and nationalisms are becoming blurred. Yet, they remain, often appearing to be a product of common sense. It is also clear that the nation-state, as a political structure, and despite having lost some of its powers, has not been fully superseded. Though the classical characteristics of the state are being questioned, the characteristics of a new model of state cannot be clearly defined (Chevallier, 2011). Society is currently living between the uncertainty of new definitions of the state and the formulation of new convictions and certainties (Granato & Oddone, 2009).

The first line of research tackled an analysis of the population of Euskal Herria, an analysis that aimed at attaining these specific goals:

1. To get to know and measure attitudes with respect to the right to decide.
2. To get to know and measure attitudes with respect to a state taking in the whole of Euskal Herria in the current context of political opportunity.
2. To get to know ideas, feelings and conduct which may be behind these favourable, opposing or intermediate attitudes.
3. To get to know opinions on economic, political and social issues.

As already said, the state is a political organisation of territory. Therefore, the territory indicated by Basque nationalism, namely, the historical territories of Araba, Bizkaia, Navarre Garaia, Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa was used, to define the territory corresponding to the hypothetical Basque State. It was likewise decided that the scope of the research should be similar, despite the difficulties entailed, due to the field work required. As is well known, these territories are divided between two nation-states and three administrative districts, a circumstance which has an undeniable influence on the daily lives of the people residing in them. Furthermore, the differences between the territories, as regards the establishment of Basque nationalism, are remarkable. Keeping in mind all these questions, we consider it pertinent to clarify the terminology used throughout the work:

- Euskal Herria is made up of seven provinces or historical territories: Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Lapurdi, Navarre, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa.
- They belong to three administrative districts: BAC (Basque Autonomous Community), or CAE (Autonomous Community of the Basque Country or Euskadi); FCN (Foral Community of Navarre) and EHN, Northern Basque Country.
- At times we differentiated between southern Euskal Herria (BAC and FCN) and northern Euskal Herria (Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa).

The aim was to get to know the opinions, attitudes and social perceptions of the population with respect to a hypothetical Basque State. As the first two are often considered synonymous, we believe it opportune to clarify the differences between *opinion* and *attitude*. When discussing a subject, an individual has the opportunity to express their opinion rationally in words. However, attitude implies rational and emotional elements at the same time: cognitive, affective and responsive or behavioural. Consequently, it may use forms of expression other than words. In the case of opinions, cognitive elements are more important than affective ones and, in the case of attitudes, the opposite occurs. This means that attitudes are more stable than opinions. What's more, attitude is a dimension expressing a person's alignment in favour or against the object (in our case, the Basque State) of social perception. Having formed an attitude with respect to an object and, depending on the attitude taken, we learn about the object and generate a social perception. Therefore, *if there is no attitude, there is no social perception*.

At this point, it is necessary to define this last concept. Social perceptions are based on people's shared common knowledge. It is a pre-reflexive consciousness from which the social world is perceived and understood, by offering images built on institutions and conducts of said world. In this sense, social perceptions are of a practical nature, and steer the individual's social actions in a given direction.

The line of work of this first part of our research was developed from the following general hypotheses:

1. The administrative organisation of the Basque territories may be influencing the different opinions, attitudes and social perceptions of the population of Euskal Herria.
2. The different levels of adherence to Basque nationalism in the Basque territories may explain the different opinions, attitudes and social perceptions of the population of the Euskal Herria of a hypothetical Basque State.
3. The attitudes towards a Basque State vary depending on the different national identities of the population of Euskal Herria.

The following dimensions were taken into account for operationalising the hypothesis:

- On the nation: Euskal Herria, Navarre, Spain, France
- The way to create the state: the political question and the right to decide
- On the state: Euskal Herria, a region in Spain or France, or a new state
- The state and the referendum: factors helping to bring about a change of opinion on the Basque State
- Other options, apart from a Basque State

We chose the triangulation strategy in order to analyse these dimensions: thus, and with an aim to achieving the abovementioned objectives, surveys were used as a data production technique in the quantitative methodology. Taking into account the limits of this methodology and using a qualitative research strategy, discussion groups were organised in order to generate data. The former were organised on two different occasions during the research process: before actually carrying out the survey, to help design the same, and to be able to deal with problems arising from failure to respond and refusal to participate, and, on a later date, following the analysis of the results of the survey, with an aim to confirming or explaining the results, as well as to go deeper into such questions or relations as were suggested by the quantitative analysis.

In the case of the other research lines used in this study, a different strategy was chosen: in the case of the business people and the Basque culture agents, the case study was used. As already pointed out, the opinions of these two groups are particularly interesting for the present case. Thus, the *intrinsic case study* (Stake, 1995) was developed in an interpretative way (Lijphart, in Kazez, 2009), with the in-depth interview being the data production technique.

La producción de datos

As already mentioned, two techniques were used for data production on the opinions of the Basque population about the subject of study: on the one hand, using qualitative research methodology, group discussion was used; in other words, thirteen interviews were held with groups formed using certain variables. On the other, using a quantitative research methodology technique such as the survey, a representative sample of the Basque population was asked a series of questions.

Discussion groups

Three fundamental issues were taken into account for writing the script for the interview with the groups. They were: international pro-sovereignty processes, the right to decide, and opinions on the viability and the main characteristics assigned to a hypothetical Basque State. The field work was carried out from March to October 2015. In total, thirteen group interviews were held, together with one in-depth interview (the latter with highly significant interviewee due to his strategic position in the research interest area, Vallés, 1997). Four discussion groups met before carrying out the survey, and the other nine, after availing of and analysing data resulting from the same. Of these first four groups, two were formed in Bizkaia, –in Barakaldo and in Bilbao–, one, in San Sebastian and another, in Pamplona. It was decided that the latter would only be made up of three people, as this group type is designed to ensure diversity of attitudes (Vallés, 1997). In order to create the sample, heterogeneity was the criterion used for the different groups and within the groups themselves. As a result, the following variables were used to choose the participants: ideology, employment situation, age and gender. To guarantee heterogeneity between groups, the first variable was used: electoral behaviour. However, in the design of the sample for the other nine groups, and in the light of data from the survey, the criteria used to ensure heterogeneity between the groups was attitude –in favour, against or undecided about– a Basque State, and, in

order to guarantee intra-group heterogeneity, the same variables as in the previous stage were used: age, gender, employment situation and ideology. At this second stage, the discussion groups were held in the following towns and cities: Gasteiz, Arrasate, Portugalete, Iruñea, Baiona, Kanbo and Bilbao (two group interviews were held in the latter and in Pamplona).³

The survey

A survey was structured around the abovementioned dimensions of the concept. Therefore, it took into account the different meanings of the Basque State and the state of Navarre in Navarre itself, and, in order to cater for this particularity, two surveys were used: in one of them, the same survey used in the other territories was used; however, in the other, depending on the situation, the word 'Navarrese' rather than 'Basque' was used.⁴ This decision is reflected in the presentation of the data because the two categories were sometimes differentiated in order to provide a sample of said particularity. In general, both results were given as one because it was felt that both categories coincide in expressing a desire to set up a political reality apart from Spain.

The survey was carried out by telephone. The telephone interviews were held in two stages:

- In the first place, in a systematically random fashion, it was decided which homes to telephone, while keeping in mind the importance of each area within the municipalities and historical territories.
- Then, within the home, a quota system to ensure the balance according to gender and age, was applied.

The universe is made up of citizens over 18 of Euskal Herria (2,604,209). The sample included 2,007 citizens; therefore, 2,007 interviews were held throughout the Basque Country, with an allocation non-proportional to historical territory: that is, though 400 interviews were planned for all the historical territories, the following number were actually held:

Territory	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Araba	400	19.9
Gipuzkoa	402	20.0
Bizkaia	401	20.0
Navarre	401	20.0
Northern Basque Country	403	20.1
Total	2.007	100.0

The sampling error is $\pm 2,2$ on extrapolating the data to the entire universe, namely, the whole of Euskal Herria, with a confidence level of 95.5% and $p = q$.

On generalising the data of the subsamples, the error intervals were greater, but, in these cases, the sample from each territory is enough to enable us to offer significant data. In each territory, the interval data error is ± 5 on extrapolating the data to the universe, with a confidence level of 95.5 %, and $p=q$.

The sample design was multistage and stratified, by creating stratified clusters in each territory (first of all, each territory was divided into regions and then each region, into five strata, taking into account the size of the municipalities; municipalities of 2,000 or fewer inhabitants, between 2,001 and 10,000, between 10,001 and 50,000, between 50,001 and 100,000 and over 100,001). The primary sampling units (the municipalities) were selected proportionately in a random fashion.

The field work was carried out between 1 October 2014 and 20 February 2015. The interviews were held in Basque, Spanish and French, depending on the preferences of those interviewed. In general, nothing worthy of mention occurred during the course of the field work carried out in the southern Basque Country, except for, as was expected, the case of Navarre where doubts about the concepts of a Basque State and Navarrese State surfaced. Among others, perceptions of both concepts would explain the difficulties arising when completing the survey.⁵ In any case, as explained above, they were considered as being equivalent to one other.

³ You can consult the fact sheet of the design of the discussion groups in appendix 1.

⁴ Erramun Baxok and the researchers working with him on the study of identity throughout the Basque Country made these same decisions. See: Baxok et al., 2006: 47.

⁵ See appendices 2 and 3.

The situation in the northern Basque Country was somewhat different. Many of those interviewed were surprised by some of the questions, making the work of the interviewers more difficult. These difficulties are reflected in the time needed to carry out the survey in the northern Basque Country -longer than in the southern Basque Country- and also in the greater number of negative replies received by telephone. Despite the aforesaid, whereas in the southern Basque Country, nine phone calls were necessary in order to complete the survey, in the case of the northern Basque Country, only one more was necessary, that is, ten. Consequently, we believe that the representativeness of the sample was guaranteed.

In-depth interviews: the business community

In the results obtained, from the survey carried out throughout Euskal Herria and from the discussion groups, questions relating to the economy and/the business community were of particular significance; especially those in relation to the viability of a Basque State. For this reason, we decided to approach the Basque business community, and specifically people we felt would be in favour of a Basque State.

The in-depth interviews held with these people from the business world focused on the following subjects:

- Their opinion of the pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and Catalonia, as well as the impact that these processes could have on the Basque Country.
- From the point of view of the economy, the viability of a Basque State, as well as the possible consequences of a newly-created Basque State.
- The economic goals a Basque State should have.
- Their perceptions of the attitudes of other business people.
- The relationship between the Basque State and the European Union.

Non-probability sampling was used in the design of the case study; sampling units were chosen for information, that is, they were chosen for their expected information content (Flyvjerg, 2006). Twenty people were interviewed between December 2014 and October 2015: eleven in the Basque Autonomous Community, four, in Navarre and five, in the northern Basque Country. We approached different business sectors, as well as businesses of varying sizes, from family concerns to companies with over 50 workers. As far as their ownership is concerned, some, as already mentioned, were family businesses but there were also cooperatives, limited liability companies and public limited companies. The interviews were held in Basque (8) and Spanish (12).⁶

The same script was used for all the people interviewed, except for the section referring to the particular characteristics of each territory. The responses were open and free.

The in-depth interviews: Basque-speaking cultural players

From the beginnings of nationalism and, in particular, from the nationalist movement's first formulations in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies, Basque and culture produced in said language have been considered as the core of Basque national identity. Since then the linguistic and cultural cause has been associated with nationalism's claim to independence and, potentially, with the creation of a hypothetical Basque State. For this reason, it is interesting to gain some insight into and analyse the discourse of the people involved in the pro-Euskera movement and of Basque culture players.

This general objective was specified as follows:

- To get to know the opinions that Basque-speaking cultural players have of the pro-sovereignty processes of Scotland and Catalonia, and their influence on Euskal Herria.

⁶ See appendix 4.

- Gather the opinions of Basque-speaking cultural players on the project for the building of a Basque State and their points of view on its feasibility.
- To get to know the cultural policies that Basque-speaking cultural players assign to a hypothetical Basque State.
- Describe the social perceptions drawn up by Basque-speaking cultural players regarding the Basque State

Qualitative techniques were used for producing data. On the one hand, in-depth interviews were held with informants from diverse organisations and sensibilities within the pro-Euskera movement. Following the qualitative approach, strategic sampling was carried out. The selection criteria of the sampling units aimed at obtaining diverse viewpoints. In total, thirteen in-depth interviews were carried out between the months of March and May 2015.

The informants were chosen on the basis of their qualified position within the pro-Euskera movement and the production of Basque culture. All of them had a long career as activists, experts and professionals in some or other of the following spheres: the university, the media, cultural and publishing industries and literature, respectively.⁷

A standardised model was used in the design of the interviews. In other words, the same questions were used for all of the interviewees and their responses were open and free.

On the other hand, written documents from journals and publications related to the pro-Euskera movement and documents from social networks were reviewed and analysed with an aim to completing the information obtained from the interviews. The sample of publications was drawn up in accordance with the relevance that the contents and lists of topics published in them had for the research.

Analysis of the results

The results of the survey

The main results of the survey are classified according to subjects and in five sections.

The data are presented in two ways in the first three sections: on the one hand, citizens are grouped according to the same variables used when presenting their unified responses. These variables are as follows:

Age groups: 18-29; 30-65; 65+.

Level of studies: No schooling or less than primary education. Primary education to secondary school. Higher education (university).

Vote cast in the last elections according to historical territory.

On the other hand, citizens were grouped by the relevance of the variables with respect to the subject treated in each chapter. In the chapter on the nation, *national identity by territory*; in that referring to the right to decide, in the event of a referendum, *who decides? Where is it decided*; when presenting the attitudes to a hypothetical Basque/Navarre State⁸, *origin, national identity, level of familiarity with the Basque language and standard of living*.

The fourth section presents the possibility of a change in attitude of the people interviewed; in other words, under which conditions would those *against* the creation of the Basque State as well as those who are, initially, *in favour* of said state change their mind.

Last of all, the fifth section outlines possible choices made with respect to other forms of relation between the Basque territories in the event that those interviewed fail to see the construction of a Basque State as a hypothesis.

⁷ See appendix 5.

⁸ As explained in the design of the survey.

The data is presented in tables, using vertical percentages and, on occasion, accompanied by graphs to illustrate said data.

The main conclusions of each section are summarised at the end.

The results of the qualitative analysis

The discourses gleaned from the meeting of the discussion groups were organised in three different sections. In the first of these, the discourse in favour of the Basque State is described, in the second, the discourse against its creation, and, in the third section, the opinions of those who are undecided, or have a different view on the matter. The main conclusions are outlined at the end of the chapter.

Case studies

The results of the in-depth interviews held with business people about a possible Basque State were structured around the subjects used for the interview outline. This was likewise the case for the Basque culture agents. In both cases, a summary of the main conclusions is presented at the end of each chapter.

Conclusions

The results obtained in the three lines of work followed in this research project are developed and listed in its final conclusions. It goes without saying that the objective of this final chapter is to offer readers the most complete view possible of this study.

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**OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT TO A BASQUE STATE
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS**

This research aimed at asking people throughout Euskal Herria⁹ if they thought a Basque State possible. There is no doubt that its approach has produced some interesting developments. On the one hand, we believe that it is the first time that people were asked about a *Basque State*, and not about independence. On the other, it was extremely important for the survey to be carried out in all seven territories of the Basque Country.

Clearly, it is not the first work to be published on these subjects. However, its approach is totally different. Among works worthy of particular mention is the now classic research project by Juan José Linz, which, apart from providing data from the end of the nineteen seventies for the whole of Euskal Herria, proposed a scale for measuring national sentiment that has had a long history (Linz, 1986). On the other hand, although limited to the territories of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, the *Euskobarometro*, with its periodic research on public opinion, today, offers us the most systematic data collection on a variety of political subjects to be found. Moving away from the political sphere, the most complete data collection on Basque identity and culture can be found in the research promoted by *Eusko Ikaskuntza*, with data for the whole of Euskal Herria, and, as in our case, with a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Baxok et al., 2006).¹⁰

Considering this research and the fact that our focus is to gather the opinion of the population of Euskal Herria on a Basque State, the complexity of the subject meant that we had to take other data into account too. Given that the study was carried out in the seven historical territories making up Euskal Herria, and its subject matter is precisely this geographical framework, we added the question of national identity, already dealt with in other works (partially, or, on occasion, in all of the territory), with an aim to finding out with which specific territory those interviewed associate this framework. Moreover, we first of all tackled the subject of the right to decide by means of a democratic referendum, the possibility of setting up a Basque State, and, secondly, we asked a direct question in relation to this Basque State. What's more, we wished to somehow measure the variability of this opinion, which is why we linked the answers obtained with another series of variables. In conclusion, one of our premises is that these debates and the different postures that emerge in our society must be understood as processes, variables and as fluctuating, depending on different factors.

With these objectives in mind, between the months of October 2014 and February 2015, 2007 surveys were carried out in Euskal Herria's seven historical regions. The decision to take the whole of the territory as the basis for our research gave rise to certain problems relating to method, such as those already mentioned in the previous chapter, but we believe that the effort made affords greater accuracy and a deeper knowledge to broach this subject.

In this chapter, we shall differentiate five blocks: on the nation, on the right to decide, on the state, on the possibility of changing one's opinion on the state, and on other options for relations between the different Basque territories.

⁹ In this English version, we shall use the term *Euskal Herria* to refer to the Basque Autonomous Community, the Foral Community of Navarre, and the so called Northern Basque Country, including the regions of Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa. We shall do so to avoid misinterpretations in the identification of the territory as a whole or its northern and southern parts (specifically, the northern Basque Country and the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country).

In addition, we shall use the following terminology:

- Euskal Herria, and the seven territories. The seven territories which have traditionally been identified as Euskal Herria: Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Lapurdi, Navarre, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa.
- There are three administrative areas: BAC, Basque Autonomous Community; FCN, Foral Community of Navarre; and NEH or Northern EH, the Northern Basque Country.
- Southern Euskal Herria (BAC + FCN) and northern Euskal Herria (Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa) are sometimes differentiated
- Last of all, at times, the abbreviation EH will be used in the graphs to stand for Euskal Herria.

¹⁰ Linz, Juan Jose (in collaboration with other writers) (1986): *Conflicto en Euskadi*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.

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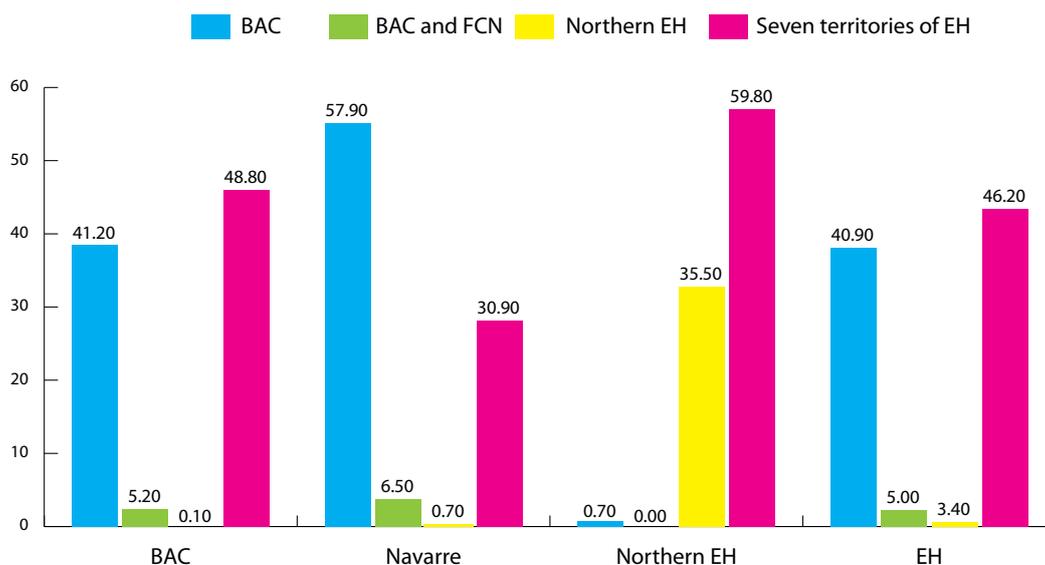
ON THE NATION. EUSKAL HERRIA, NAVARRE, SPAIN, FRANCE: A QUESTION OF IDENTITY AND ADMINISTRATION

There are different administrative frameworks in Euskal Herria, but none of them can be identified by just one national identity, but rather quite the contrary, in each of said frameworks, more than one can be appreciated. Let's see how the concept of Euskal Herria is understood by the people surveyed.

What is Euskal Herria: the territory

1. What is Euskal Herria: general data. The following question was asked in the survey:

When we refer to the Basque Country,¹¹ what exactly does it mean to you?



The responses do not provide us with a clear definition: the most widespread opinion, 46.2%, identified Euskal Herria with the seven Basque provinces; but 40.9% identified Euskal Herria with the BAC; and, in the northern Basque Country, 35.5% of those interviewed there identified it with the actual northern Basque Country. On the other hand, few people identified Euskal Herria with the southern Basque Country (BAC + FCN).

According to territory, the most widespread opinion in the BAC and northern Euskal Herria identified it with the seven traditional territories, but this view was significantly less common in Navarre (30.9%), where, on the other hand, identification of Euskal Herria with the BAC gained in strength, up to 57.9%.

2. What is Euskal Herria: According to age. Using the same question, let's see if age has any effect on the responses.

When we refer to the Basque Country, what exactly does it mean to you? [According to age]

Age	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	Others	Do not know	Total
18-34	32,5	4,3	2,6	58,7	0,0	2,0	100
35-54	44,2	4,8	2,4	45,4	1,3	1,8	100
55+	42,6	5,6	4,9	39,6	1,3	6,0	100
Euskal Herria	40,9	5,0	3,4	46,2	1,0	3,5	100

¹¹ In Basque the term Euskal Herria is used; in Spanish, País Vasco; and in French, Pays Basque.

In general, the youngest members of the population were more likely to identify Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories, with the percentage dropping gradually in the different age brackets. This affected the rest of the possible identifications. For example, identification of Euskal Herria with the BAC was lowest in the 18 to 34-year bracket (32.5%) than in the Euskal Herria average (40.9%).

3. What is Euskal Herria: According to level of studies. *The same question but in relation to the level of studies of those surveyed.*

When we refer to the Basque Country, what exactly does it mean to you? [According to level of studies]

Level of studies	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	DK/DA + Others	Total
No schooling + incomplete primary education	49,7	5,0	2,5	32,8	10,0	100
From primary to secondary education	41,7	5,5	3,5	45,7	3,6	100
Third level education	37,8	4,1	3,4	49,9	4,8	100
Euskal Herria	40,9	5,0	3,4	46,2	4,5	100

The higher the level of studies, the higher the level of identification of Euskal Herria with the seven territories, and vice versa. 49.9% of the people with third level qualifications surveyed did so (whereas 37.8% identified it with the BAC); and, on the contrary, 49.7% of those surveyed with no schooling or having failed to finish primary school identified Euskal Herria with the BAC (whereas 32.8% did so with the seven territories). These were the two main options, while the others (the Southern Basque Country or Northern Basque Country) had fewer adherents.

4. What is Euskal Herria: According to how one voted in the previous elections. *The same question but now depending on how one voted in previous elections.*

When we refer to the Basque Country, what exactly does it mean to you? [According to how one voted in previous elections]

Navarre. According to the vote in Foral elections (2011)

Partidos	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	DK/DA + Others	Total
PPN	85,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	14,3	100
PSN	83,3	8,3	0,0	8,3	0,0	100
NA-BAI 2011	28,9	8,9	2,2	57,8	2,2	100
Bildu	9,1	5,5	0,0	81,8	3,6	100
UPN	95,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	4,3	100
Izquierda-Ezkerra	40,0	0,0	0,0	60,0	0,0	100
Abstention	74,3	6,8	1,4	14,9	2,7	100
Too young to vote	75,0	12,5	0,0	12,5	0,0	100
Does not answer	59,8	7,6	0,0	25,0	7,6	100
Total Navarre	57,9	6,5	0,7	30,9	4,0	100

The tendency to identify Euskal Herria with the BAC in Navarre is striking. This was the case in different sectors: UPN (95.7%), and PPN, PSN, abstention, and those who were too young to vote in previous elections (over 75% all cases). Moreover, the stance of those who voted for the two major parties (UPN and PPN) left no room for other possibilities. In the case of the other main option, where Euskal Herria was identified with the seven historical territories, adherence was

not so strong. In one case, this option clearly dominated: in the case of people who voted for Bildu (81.8%), or Izquierda-Ezkerra and NA-BAI, but here too there was an important percentage that chooses other options. Finally, identification of Euskal Herria with the Southern Basque Country had few adherents: though not significantly, in the case of those who were too young to vote, and, subsequently, NA-Bai, PSN, abstention and Bildu.

BAC. According to vote in Autonomous community elections (2012)

Parties	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	DK/DA + Others	Total
PP	79,7	0,0	0,0	13,9	6,4	100
PSE	76,2	1,9	0,0	19,2	2,8	100
PNV-PNV	32,8	9,7	0,0	53,8	3,7	100
EH Bildu	9,0	3,9	0,0	86,9	0,2	100
Ezker Anitza + EB	72,4	2,5	0,0	25,1	0,0	100
UPyD	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100
Abstention	47,1	4,6	0,0	38,8	9,5	100
Too young to vote	27,6	7,4	0,0	65,0	0,0	100
Does not answer	48,6	3,5	0,4	40,9	6,7	100
Total BAC	41,2	5,2	0,1	48,8	4,7	100

Views in the BAC were not so categorical, but some were clearly in favour of a given option: 86.9% the people surveyed who voted for EH Bildu identify Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories; and three quarters of those who voted for PPE and PSE, on the other hand, identified Euskal Herria with the BAC. However, in the three cases, there was always a smaller group (between 9-19%) who believed the opposite: in the case of EH Bildu, voters identified Euskal Herria with the BAC; and in the case of the PSE and PPE, they identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories. In the case of the other options (except for UPyD), the postures were not so clear: in the case of those who voted for the PNV, 53.8% identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories, but 32.8% identified it with the BAC, and in a smaller proportion were those who identified it with the southern Basque Country. Last of all, the opinion of those who abstained from voting and of those who were too young to vote differed from that of Navarre: 47.1% of those abstaining identified Euskal Herria with the BAC, and 38.8% with the seven historical territories; and, among those who were too young to vote, 65% identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories, and 27.6% with the BAC.

Northern Basque Country. According to the vote in the cantonal elections (2011)

Parties	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	DK/DA + Others	Total
PS	0,0	0,0	28,6	71,4	0,0	100,0
UMP	4,3	0,0	38,3	55,3	2,1	100,0
Les Verts	0,0	0,0	14,3	85,7	0,0	100,0
EH Bai	0,0	0,0	9,1	90,9	0,0	100,0
Modem	10,0	0,0	30,0	60,0	0,0	100,0
Front de Gauche	0,0	0,0	46,2	53,8	0,0	100,0
Abstention	0,0	0,0	40,0	57,5	2,5	100,0
Too young to vote	0,0	0,0	35,0	55,0	10,0	100,0
Does not answer	0,0	0,0	39,5	54,2	5,1	100,0
Total northern Basque Country	0,7	0,0	35,5	59,8	4,0	100

In the northern Basque Country, the main options were limited to two: in their opinion, Euskal Herria was the seven historical territories, or the northern Basque Country itself, namely, Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa. However, it is noteworthy that in all cases priority was given to the first option: in the case of all the parties, the first option was identification of Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories. Those with the greatest doubts were the people surveyed who voted for the Front de Gauche (46.2% considered that Euskal Herria was the northern Basque Country), those who voted for the UMP, Modem, and the PS. Those who abstained and were too young to vote followed the main tendency.

5. What is Euskal Herria: According to the level of familiarity with the Basque language. *The same question as before, but the aim was to analyse if knowledge of Euskera had any relation to how they responded to the questions.*

When we refer to the Basque Country, what exactly is it for you? [According to the level of familiarity with Euskera]

Level of Basque	BAC	Southern Basque Country	Northern Basque Country	Seven territories	DK/DA + Others	Total
Understands and speaks Basque	19,3	5,0	1,3	71,6	2,7	100,0
Understands, but does not speak Basque	47,2	5,8	2,6	39,3	5,1	100,0
Does not understand or speak Basque	55,7	4,4	5,7	28,5	5,7	100,0
Dk/Da	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0
Total	40,9	5,0	3,4	46,2	4,5	100,0

Having a high level of knowledge of Basque can be generally associated with identifying Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories; and having a low level of familiarity with the language, or not knowing it, is associated with identifying Euskal Herria with the BAC. The percentages are clear: 71.6% of those who understand and speak Basque identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories. On the other hand, one out of every two people surveyed, of those who neither speak nor know Basque, identified Euskal Herria with the BAC. However, in both cases, a very significant percentage believed the contrary (for example, 28.5% of those who do not understand or speak Basque felt that Euskal Herria was the seven historical territories). And those whose circumstances regarding the language lie somewhere in between -they understand it but do not speak it-, were likewise in a middle ground with respect to this question: almost one out of every three persons surveyed identified Euskal Herria with the BAC, but more than one out of every three people identified it with the seven historical territories.

On national identity

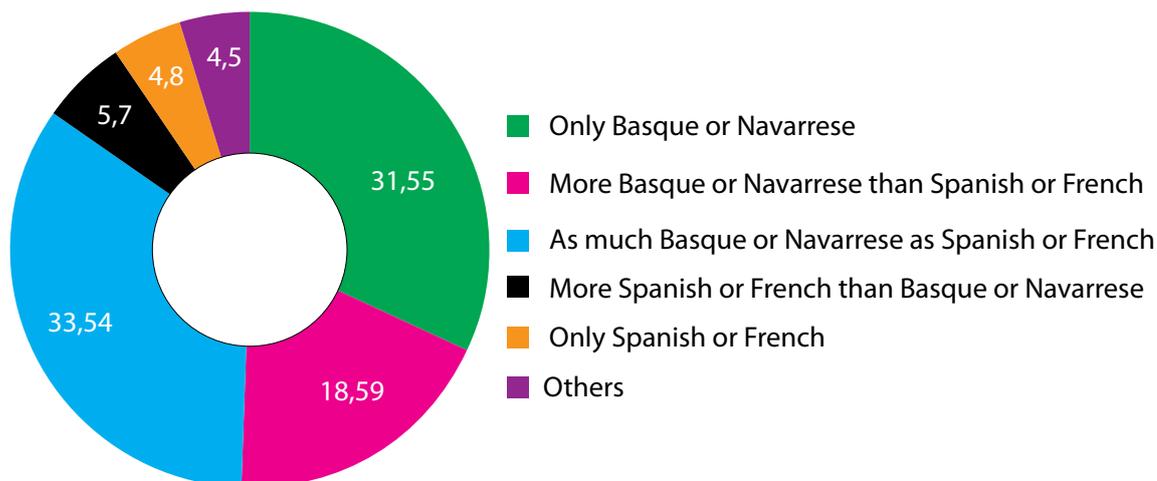
6. National identity, according to the people surveyed. *With the previous questions, the aim was to ascertain with which specific territory Euskal Herria is identified; with the ones that follow, the purpose was to find out which national sentiment predominates among the people surveyed. To this end, they were asked to choose one of the possibilities listed below.¹²*

In relation to the Basque identity and Spanish/French identity, which of these options would you choose to define yourself? Do you feel only Basque; more Basque than Spanish or French; just as much Basque as Spanish or French; more Spanish or French than Basque; or only Spanish or French?

[In Navarre] With which of the following statements do you identify most? You feel only Navarrese; more Navarrese than Spanish; more Spanish than Navarrese; only Spanish; Navarrese and Basque; or only Basque?

¹²As already pointed out in the introduction to methodology, in Navarre, on some occasions, the same question was asked as in the other territories, whereas, on others, and depending on the situation, the category of Navarrese was added, and they were asked the second question mentioned. We unified the results here as well as in other tables.

National identity	%
Only Basque or Navarrese	31,5
More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish or French	18,6
As much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish or French	33,5
More Spanish or French than Basque or Navarrese	5,7
Only Spanish or French	4,8
Others	4,5



Two national sentiments stand out: the main one *As much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish or French* (33.5%); and only *Basque or Navarrese* comes in a close second. A third option should also be kept in mind: *More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish or French* (18.6%).

7. National identity, by territory. *The same question as before, but here taking into account the administrative spheres of the people surveyed (BAC, Navarre, Northern Basque Country).*

In relation to the Basque identity and Spanish/French identity, which of these options would you choose to define yourself? Do you feel only Basque; more Basque than Spanish or French; just as much Basque as Spanish or French; more Spanish or French than Basque; or only Spanish or French?

[In Navarre] With which of the following statements do you identify most? You feel only Navarrese; more Navarrese than Spanish; more Spanish than Navarrese; only Spanish; Navarrese and Basque; or only Basque?

National identity	BAC	Navarre	Northern Basque Country	Total
Only Basque or Navarrese	31,7	42,3	10,8	31,5
More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish or French	22,4	9,6	11,8	18,6
As much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish or French	34,0	34,9	31,7	33,5
More Spanish or French than Basque or Navarrese	4,6	4,6	17,6	5,7
Only Spanish or French	2,5	4,6	24,2	4,8
Others	4,8	4,1	3,8	4,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

The greater number of surveys carried out in the BAC (due to the size of its population) revealed the similarity between the results of this territory and the totals. However, in the other territories, things changed. In Navarre, particularly striking is the fact that two, and not three, options stand out, as in the case of the general data: the main sentiment is the union of *Basque only and Navarrese only*.¹³ In other words, 42.3% of the people surveyed appeared not to feel Spanish, but one out of every three people surveyed felt as *much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish*. On the other hand, the transition between these main categories (*More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish*) was much less than in the BAC (9.6%). As far as the Northern Basque Country is concerned, what is clearly significant is the high proportion of the people surveyed who felt *only French*, one out of four, much greater than the proportion who, in the other two administrative territories, felt *only Spanish*. At all events, it is not the main option, as almost one out of every three people surveyed said they felt as *much Basque as French*. On the other hand, the Basque only option was less common than in the other two administrative territories.

ON THE NATION. We saw that, today, the territory (Euskal Herria) that should form the geographical framework of the Basque State is a controversial concept. The most widespread concept is one originating in a cultural tradition, and subsequently promoted by Basque nationalism, which identifies Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories. Almost one in every two people understand it like this, but it is necessary to keep in mind that almost as many people identify Euskal Herria with the Basque Autonomous Community, made up of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, and, furthermore, in the northern Basque Country, one out of every three people surveyed identifies Euskal Herria the northern Basque Country itself. These opinions are affected by other preceding historical traditions, and, in all likelihood, by the terminology used in each administration.

Euskal Herria is identified with the seven historical territories by the younger sector of the people surveyed, by those with a higher level of studies, by those who are closer to nationalist politics, and by those with a higher level of familiarity with the Basque language.

As far as the national identity of the people surveyed is concerned, that is, their adherence to a nation, something similar to what occurs with the geographical framework happens: there is no unanimity. National identity is usually closely linked to political options, but not entirely so. In general, there is a general tendency to combine the two conflicting national identities, with different nuances, but there is also another tendency which prioritises just one nation, and it is very important in the case of people who consider themselves Basque only.

Were we to quantify it in some way, we could say that one out of every three people surveyed feels only Basque, and this proportion is considerably higher in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, and even in Navarre, if we join the *Basque only or Navarrese only* sentiments. On the other hand, it is significant that one out of every four people surveyed in the northern Basque Country feels only French.

Within these two important extremes, shared identity prevails, as we have already pointed out. One out of every three people surveyed feels as much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish or French, and many people feel more Basque or Navarrese than Spanish or French (almost one out of every five). In total, over half the people surveyed come under these mixed categories.

In Navarre, the negligible percentage of the people surveyed who define themselves as solely Navarrese is striking, 1.3%, despite the fact often it would appear to the contrary. In the northern Basque Country pro-French feeling is evident: 72.5% of the people surveyed feel as *much Basque as French, more French than Basque or only French*.

¹³ As pointed out in the previous note, and in order to make the table comprehensible, we do not differentiate between other specific data on Navarre. To sum up, and with percentages of the total for Euskal Herria: 6.2% feel Navarrese and/or Basque; 3.4% feel Navarrese and/or Spanish; and, last of all, 1.3% feel only Navarrese.

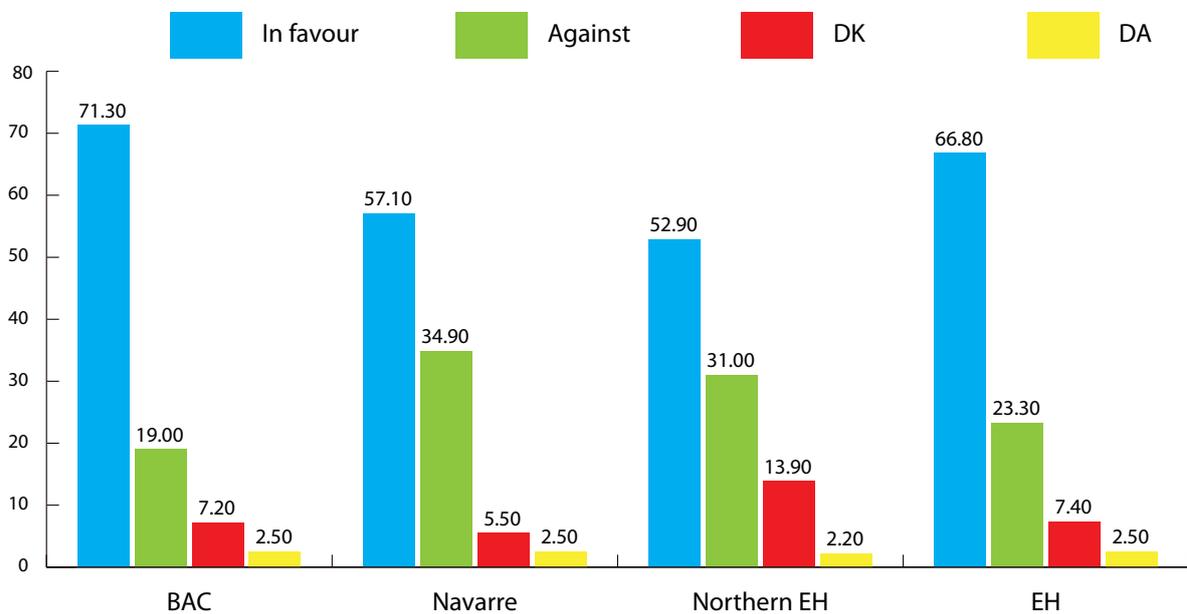
THE POLITICAL QUESTION AND THE RIGHT TO DECIDE: Who decides?

In order to get to know the opinion of the people surveyed about a Basque State, they were asked to imagine the possibility of holding a referendum on this question. However, is a referendum on this issue possible? Who would have to organise it and who would be asked to vote? Do people think that something like this could happen? These questions raise different opinions, as we shall see.

On the right to decide

8. Citizens’ opinion on the right to decide on their political future. The possibility of questioning citizens, in a referendum, about deciding on future political structures is challenged, and the opinion that this task should be restricted to parliament or political parties is frequently voiced. In order to find out what people think about all this in Euskal Herria, a concrete question was asked of all the people surveyed about the possibility of holding said referendum. The question was as follows:

Are you in favour or against consulting Basque society in order to decide on their political future?

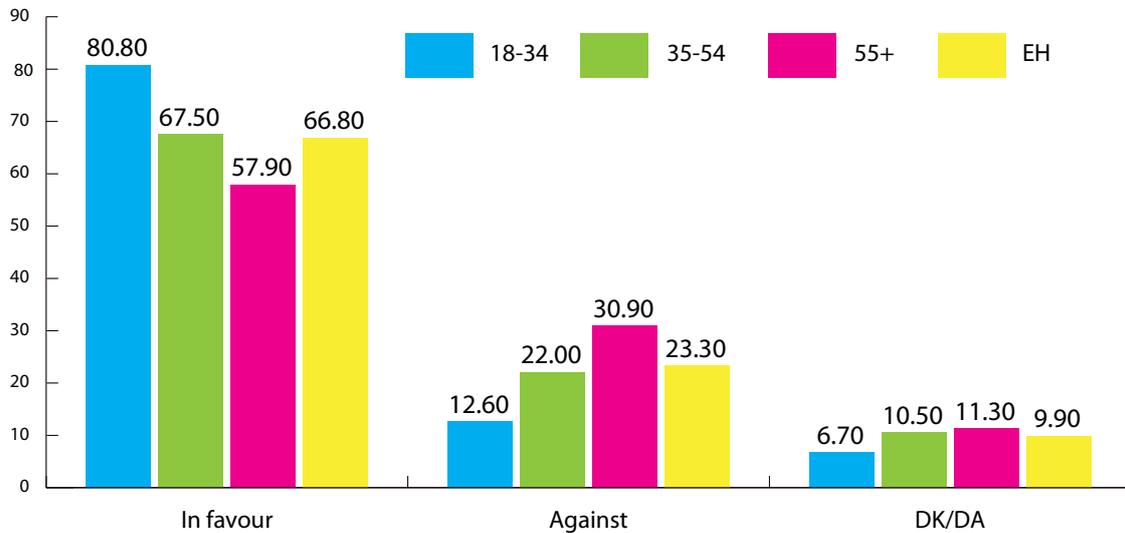


The response is categorical: two thirds of the people surveyed in Euskal Herria, 66.8%, were in favour of consulting the population in order for them to decide on their political future. Far behind, 23.3% thought that this referendum should not take place. Last of all, one out of every ten people did not know or did not answer.

The differences were likewise remarkable in all the administrative territories, although, whereas the difference was even greater in the BAC (50% of a difference), in Navarre and the northern Basque Country, there was a clear drop: in Navarre, 57.1% were in favour of the consultation, and 34.9%, against; and in the northern Basque Country, 52.9% were in favour of the consultation, and 31% against. The greatest number in favour was recorded in the BAC; the greatest number against, in Navarre; and, in the northern Basque Country, 13.9% did not know how to answer this question.

9. Citizens' opinion on the right to decide on their political future. By age. *The same question but analysing the relation that age may have with the replies.*

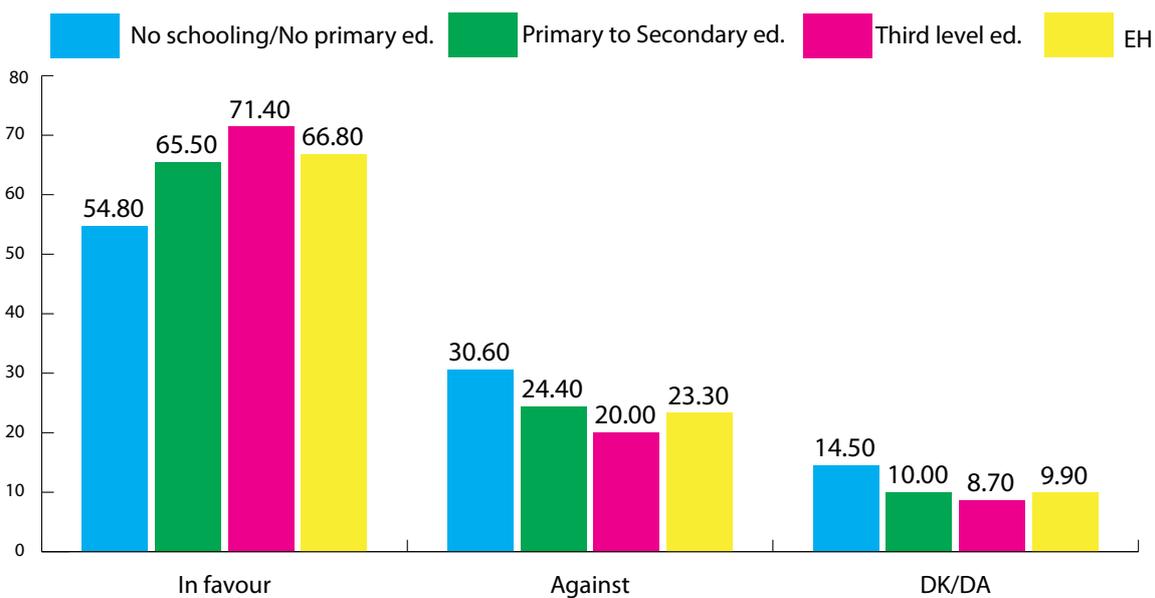
Are you in favour or against consulting Basque society for deciding on their political future? [By age]



Generally speaking, younger people were more predisposed to consulting the population in order to decide on their political future: 80.8% in favour and 12.6% against among the people surveyed between the ages of 18 and 34. The difference, in favour of the consultation, dropped among those surveyed between the ages of 35 and 54, and the least difference was found among people of 55 and over.

10. Citizens' opinion on the right to decide on their political future. By level of studies. *We asked the same question but considered if the level of studies of the people interviewed had any relation with how they answer.*

Are you in favour or against consulting Basque society for deciding on their political future? [By level of studies]



Generally speaking, although there was unanimity of support for the consultation at all levels, acceptance was greater when the level of studies is higher, and the opposite occurred when the level was lower. Thus, whereas 54.8% of people with no schooling or incomplete primary education were in favour of the consultation, in the case of people with third level education, 71.4% defended it. Similarly, opposition to the consultation rose in the case of people with no schooling or incomplete primary education, and dropped in the case of people with higher education.

11. Citizens' opinion on the right to decide on their political future. According to how they voted in previous elections. We still used the question on the right to decide, but now in relation to how one voted in previous elections.

Are you in favour or against consulting Basque society for deciding on their political future? [By how one voted in previous elections]

Navarre. By vote in Foral Elections (2011)

Parties	In favour	Against	DK/DA
PPN	0,5	4,4	0,0
PSN	4,1	8,8	9,4
NA-BAI 2011	18,5	2,2	3,1
Bildu	24,3	0,0	3,1
UPN	3,2	28,7	0,0
Izquierda-Ezkerra	1,4	0,7	3,1
Others	6,3	6,6	9,4
Abstention	18,0	19,1	25,0
Too young to vote	3,2	5,1	6,3
Does not answer	20,7	24,3	40,6
Total	100	100	100

In Navarre, support for the consultation came in the main from the people surveyed who voted for Bildu and NA-BAI, and also from those who abstained from voting. On the other hand, opposition to the consultation came above all from those who voted for UPN and, once again, from those who did not vote; and, to a lesser extent, also from the PSN. Worthy of mention is the existence of two opposing opinions among those surveyed who voted for the PSN or Izquierda-Ezkerra and among those who abstained or were too young to vote. What's more, although most of the UPN voters surveyed were against the consultation some did support it; and the opposite was also true in the case of NA-BAI among whose voters support for the consultation predominated though here too some people expressed their opposition.

BAC. According to voting in Autonomous Community Elections (2012)

Parties	In favour	Against	DK/DA
PP	0,6	8,8	0,0
PSE	6,8	19,2	5,4
PNV-PNV	25,1	15,3	13,1
EH Bildu	23,5	1,1	1,6
Ezker Anitza	4,1	2,4	1,2
UPyD	0,2	1,5	0,4
Others	4,3	7,1	5,5
Abstention	15,8	16,5	35,4
Too young to vote	3,2	1,3	2,2
Does not answer	16,5	26,7	35,3
Total	100	100	100

In the BAC, according to those surveyed, support for the consultation comes from PNV voters (25.1%), followed by EH Bildu voters and finally, from those who abstained. Of those opposed to the consultation, PSE voters stood out, followed by those who abstained and, last of all, those who voted for the PNV. It is important to mention that both opinions were expressed by PNV, Ezker Anitza and PSE voters and by those who abstained: in the case of the first two, support for the

consultation prevailed, with the opposite the case with PSE voters and those abstaining. In the Does not know/Does not answer column, the people who had abstained in previous elections (35.4%) stood out and, though far behind, the 13.1% who voted for the PNV in this column was quite significant. In this last section (in addition to the Abstention and Too young to vote categories) three options were particularly significant: in favour, against and DK/DA.

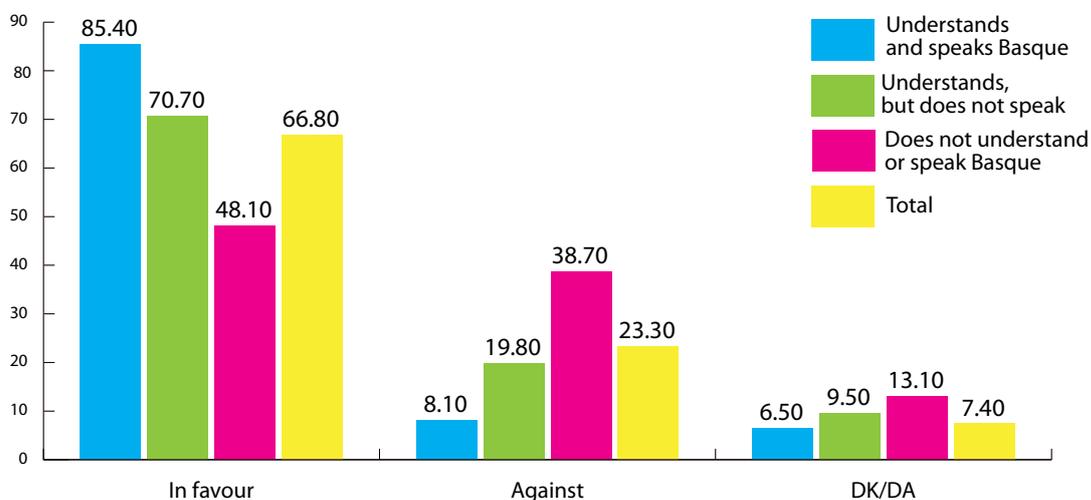
Northern Basque Country. According to vote in Cantonal elections (2011)

Parties	In favour	Against	DK/DA
PS	7,3	12,2	7,8
UMP	7,8	22,0	6,3
Les Verts	3,4	2,4	6,3
EH Bai	9,7	0,0	3,1
Modem	1,5	4,9	1,6
Front de Gauche	2,4	3,3	6,3
Others	1,9	4,9	7,8
Abstention	11,7	8,9	7,8
Too young to vote	7,3	1,6	4,7
Does not answer	47,1	39,8	48,4
Total	100	100	100

In the northern Basque Country, the extremely high number of people in the survey who preferred not to say who they had voted for in previous elections is particularly striking (47.1% of those in favour, for example), which considerably conditioned the results for this question. Support for the consultation came from those who voted for EH Bai, UMP, the PS and from those who were too young to vote, and, above all, from those who had abstained. On the other hand, particularly significant is the opposition among UMP and PS voters as well as those who abstained. Last of all, in the case of those in the Does not know/Does not answer category, opinion varied: PS voters and those who abstained stood out, but only with 7.8%.

12. Citizens' opinion on the right to decide on their political future. According to knowledge of Basque. The same question was used but on this occasion we were interested in knowing if knowledge of Basque has any relation.

Are you in favour or against consulting Basque society for deciding on their political future? [According to their knowledge of Basque]

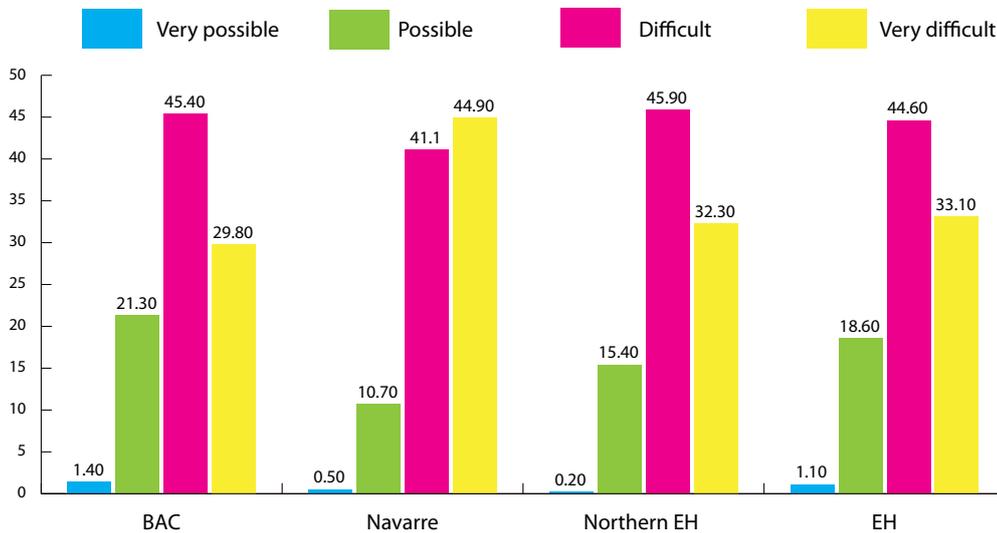


It is clear that, to a large proportion (85.4%), those surveyed with a high level of familiarity with Basque were also in favour of the right to decide, whereas people with a lesser knowledge of Basque were in favour of the consultation, but to a lesser extent. Lastly, most opposition to the consultation came from people with the least knowledge of Basque.

On the referendum

13. Who decides? On the possibility that political parties hold a referendum on the subject. Interviewees were asked to imagine that political parties had arranged for a referendum on the Basque State. However, how much credibility do those surveyed afford to this possibility? Do they see it as viable? The following is the question they were all asked:

To what extent do you believe it is possible for most political parties here to agree on a referendum to decide on our political future? Very possible, possible, difficult, very difficult?

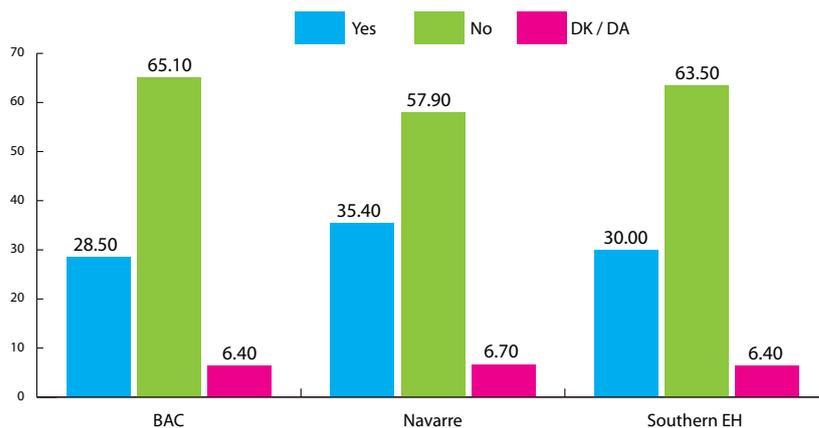


The existing degree of pessimism regarding this issue is significant: people saw the possibility of political parties reaching an agreement on a referendum on the Basque State as difficult or very difficult. In all, three quarters of the people surveyed shared this negative opinion, whereas less than 20% had a positive opinion.

What's more, the data was similar for all the territories: the most positive answers were recorded in the BAC, whereas, in Navarre and the northern Basque Country, they dropped considerably. The most negative opinions were found in Navarre, with 86% of those interviewed seeing the possibility of a referendum being held as difficult or very difficult. In the northern Basque Country and in the BAC too, a high percentage of people likewise expressed a negative opinion.

14. Who decides? If a referendum is held, in what framework should it be held? If a referendum is held, would it be necessary to agree on a decision framework (who to ask)? This is a tricky question as, whereas some people link it directly to the people affected by the issue, others believe that, given the fact that it affects the whole of the Spanish State, the entire population of Spain should be consulted in order to take the final decision. The following question was asked in relation to this issue:

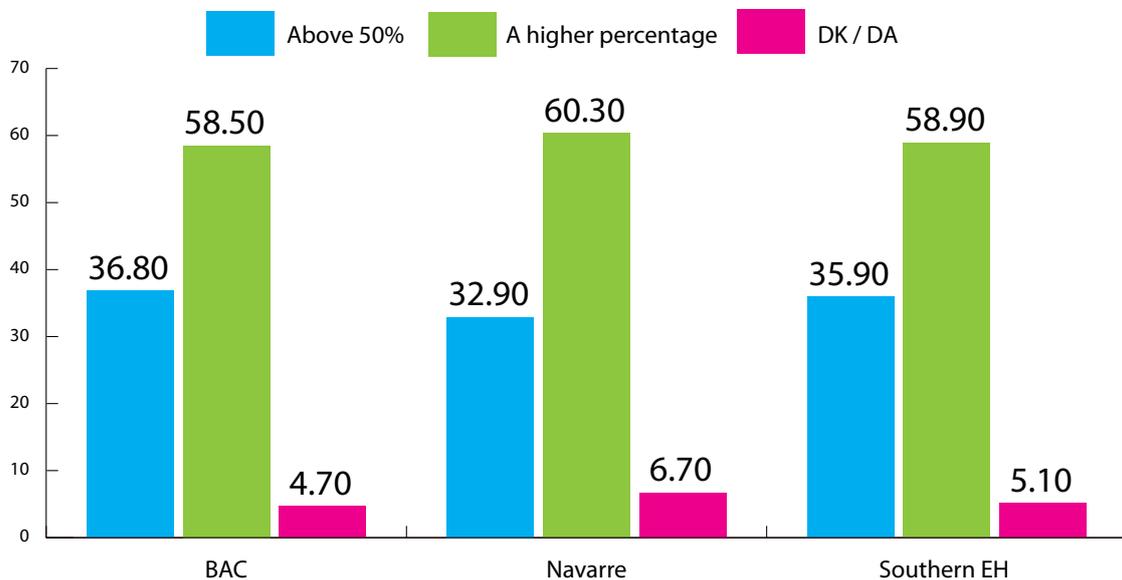
If a referendum is held to decide on the Basque State, should all the citizens of the Spanish State be consulted? (this question was not asked in the northern Basque Country)



The answer is very similar throughout the southern Basque Country: in general, two thirds believed that it should be held where the conflict lies, that is, in Euskal Herria; and the other third, on the other hand, believed that the framework should be Spain. According to territories, in Navarre, the number of people who believed that the referendum should be held in Euskal Herria dropped noticeably, and the number of people who believed that it should be held in Spain rose.

15. Who decides? If a referendum is held, what result would be necessary for it to win? *When a referendum is held with an aim to deciding on the creation of a new state it is usual to talk about the necessary result or the minimum for it to be considered as won, over 50%, or a higher percentage. The following question was asked in order to find out interviewees' opinion on this issue:*

Whatever the result of the hypothetical referendum or consultation, for the result to be acceptable, in your opinion, would it suffice for it to be above 50 % or would a higher percentage be required? (this question was not asked in the northern Basque Country)



There is considerable agreement on this point too in the southern Basque Country, with similar results in both administrative territories. Over half believed that a majority of above 50% would be necessary, and a third felt that if 50% were reached, it would suffice.

ON THE RIGHT TO DECIDE. Just as with other aspects of life, citizens are increasingly calling for greater participation in the decisions taken in society, so, when asked in our survey about the possibility of holding a consultation to decide if people are in favour or against a Basque State, the answers make it moderately clear: those interviewed are, by a strong majority, in favour of the right to decide. Two thirds of those surveyed answered accordingly, with a higher percentage in the BAC, and a lower one in Navarre and the northern Basque Country, though always above 50%.

Support for the right to decide is greater among younger people, among those with higher level of studies, among people close to nationalist political parties, and among those with a greater knowledge of Basque.

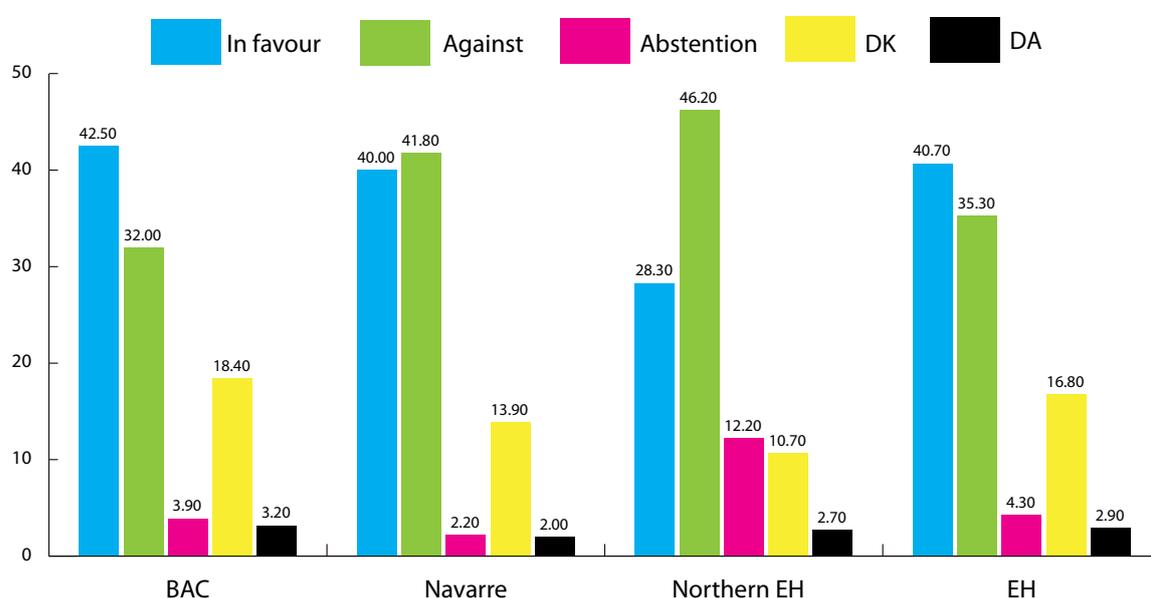
However, most of those surveyed feel that it is difficult or very difficult for a referendum to be held on this subject. If it were held, they believe that the population of Euskal Herria should be consulted (not the entire state), and, in order for the option for a new Basque State to prosper, a majority of above 50% would not suffice, that is, a higher percentage would be required.

ON A POSSIBLE BASQUE STATE: A REGION OF SPAIN/FRANCE, OR A NEW STATE?

It has not been unusual to consult the population in Euskal Herria about the national sentiment, in a way similar to what we have done in this work. However, the pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and Catalonia have had a clear impact, and this led us to formulate a much more direct question. We are not asking people about their national identity but rather what they think about the formation of a hypothetical Basque State.

16. Opinion on a Basque/Navarrese State. A very specific question was asked of the people surveyed in order to find out their stance regarding a hypothetical case in which a referendum is held to decide on the creation of a Basque or Navarrese State, where appropriate. The question was worded as follows:

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/ Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer?

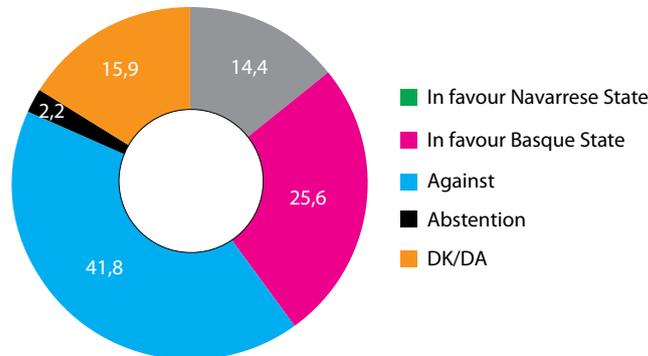


As we can appreciate, if you analyse the data from Euskal Herria as a whole, the results reflect that the majority of those surveyed in Euskal Herria would support the formation of a Basque or Navarrese State, 40,7%, though not far behind would be those opposing it, 35,3%. These general data also reveal the significant fact that one out of every five people questioned does not know what to answer, or does not want to do so, or prefers to abstain. In summary, we could say divide those surveyed into three thirds: the first third (a little more) would be in favour of a Basque or Navarrese State; the second third would be against; and the third (a little less) has not yet decided.

By territory, there is similar support in the BAC and in Navarre, but in Navarre we were obliged to combine those supporting a Basque State and those a Navarrese State (see the following point). There are fewer people in favour in the northern Basque Country, although they account for over a fourth of the total: 28,3%. In any event, what is most striking in this case and in that of Navarre is that, of the people surveyed, more were opposed than in favour of the Basque or Navarrese State. What's more, in the northern Basque Country the difference between those against and those in favour is significant.

Of all the results, the highest percentages are as follows: citizens in favour: 42,5% in the BAC; citizens against: 46,2% in the northern Basque Country; and citizens as yet undecided: 18,4%, once again, in the BAC.

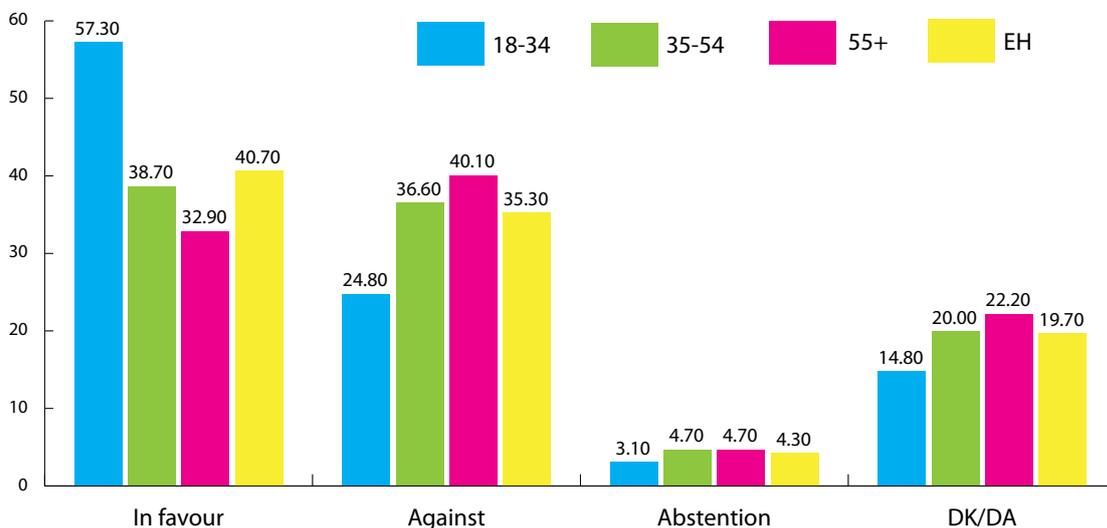
17. Opinion on the Basque/Navarrese State. Data from Navarre. As explained in the introduction, in the case of Navarre, not only were participants questioned about the Basque State, but they were also given the opportunity to give their opinion about a Navarrese State. In the data on the preceding point, the results for both questions were joined, as it was assumed that what they implied was similar.¹⁴ At any rate, below is a chart with greater detail on the specific data on Navarre.



Taking into account the absolute data from Navarre, if a referendum were held on a Basque State or a Navarrese State, 25.6% of those consulted would support a Basque State and 14.4% would support a Navarrese State. If both results are joined, 40% of those surveyed are in favour of a Basque or Navarrese State. Similarly, on the other hand, if the results are combined, 41.8% of those surveyed are against a Basque or Navarrese State, slightly higher than the preceding result.

18. Opinion on a Basque/Navarrese State. According to age. Let's see the effect that age has on a hypothetical referendum. The same question was asked in order to appreciate characteristics marked by age.

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer [according to age]?



Generally speaking, it could be said that younger interviewees are more interested in a Basque State, and vice versa. Thus, in the 18 to 34 age bracket, there is a greater proportion of people in favour of a Basque State, and a greater difference with respect to those opposing it. Moreover, it is the age bracket that seems to have fewest doubts, considering the people who would abstain and those who do not know or do not answer. The next age group supports a Basque State, although with a small difference. Finally, in the case of the last group, opposition to a Basque State predominates. In this age group (and as in the case of the preceding one) more than one out of every four people (26.9%) does not know, does not answer, or would abstain.

¹⁴ In the introduction on the methodology followed in this research, we explained the reasons why, in some cases, we asked about the Basque state, and, in others, about the Navarrese state. Hereinafter, and when it is felt that the distinction is not necessary, we shall refer to the Basque state, in general, and join both results, and assume that the main issue in these answers is the will to establish a state which is independent or not of Spain.

By administrative territory, in Navarre, support for the Basque or Navarrese State was found in those surveyed who had voted for Bildu and NA-BAI in former elections, or who had abstained (although there seems to be some opposition within NA-BAI to a Basque State). Opposition, on the other hand, was found, above all, in people surveyed who had voted for UPN, and, once again, abstentions. Worthy of mention is the fact that there was some support for a Basque or Navarrese State within UPN; nobody in PPN and UPN was in favour of a Basque State but some were in favour of a Navarrese State; and, regarding this subject, logically, many of the people surveyed who would prefer to abstain had not voted in previous elections, but some were also found among PPN, UPN and in a strikingly high proportion, Izquierda-Ezkerra voters.

BAC. According to the vote in Autonomous Community Elections (2012)

Parties	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA
PP	0,0	5,5	0,0	1,4
PSE	0,5	23,1	6,5	5,4
PNV-PNV	28,1	19,2	3,1	18,3
EH Bildu	37,5	0,9	1,9	4,0
Ezker Anitza	1,8	4,1	0,0	5,4
UPyD	0,0	1,2	0,0	0,0
Ezker Batua	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,6
Others	1,4	7,3	2,2	8,5
Abstention	13,1	16,4	52,1	23,3
Too young to vote	4,2	1,9	0,0	1,6
Does not answer	13,2	20,4	34,2	31,6
Total	100	100	100	100

In the data on the BAC, support was found, above all, among the people surveyed, in those who had voted for EH Bildu and the PNV. However, as far as opposition is concerned, this was found among those voting for the PSE and, once again, the PNV. In the case of the latter, there was a significant percentage of people who did not know/did not answer (18.3% of the column's total). Last of all, half of the people surveyed who said they would abstain had abstained in former elections (52.1%).

Northern Basque Country. According to the vote in Cantonal elections (2011)

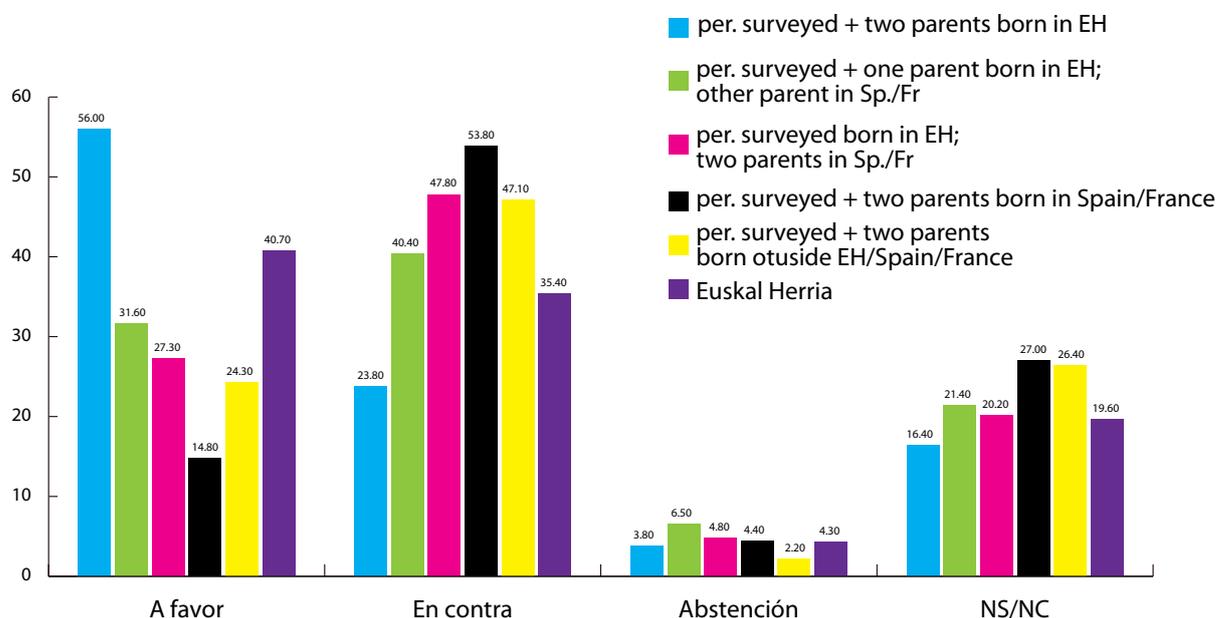
Parties	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA
PS	1,8	15,6	6,1	2,1
UMP	2,7	18,3	10,2	10,4
Les Verts	3,6	3,8	0,0	6,3
EH Bai	17,9	0,0	0,0	4,2
Modem	0,9	4,3	0,0	2,1
Front de Gauche	0,9	4,3	4,1	4,2
Otros	6,3	3,2	4,1	4,2
Abstención	10,7	4,8	20,4	18,8
Sin edad para votar	11,6	1,6	4,1	4,2
No contesta	43,8	44,1	51,0	43,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

As already seen, in the Northern Basque Country, the number of people surveyed who did not wish to answer the ques-

tion relating to who they had voted for in previous elections was significantly high. As for support for a Basque State, it was very clear in the case of those surveyed who had voted for EH Bai. However, the fact that these were followed by those who were too young to vote and those who had abstained is worthy of note. Opposition, on the other hand, was found, above all, among those voting for UMP and PS. However, it is important to point out that, in both cases, there was some support for the Basque State. What's more, the same occurred, although in lower percentages, with the Front de Gauche and Modem. Les Verts supporters too shared both opinions, although, in this case, the percentages were similar. Last of all, a significantly high number of informants were too young to vote and who were in favour of a Basque State.

21. Opinion on a Basque/Navarrese State. According to origin. *We still used the same question, but, in this case, we took into account the origin of the people surveyed, and checked to see if there was a relation between the positions in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State.*

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer? [according to origin]



We shall distinguish 5 categories: 1. The person surveyed and their two parents were born in Euskal Herria; 2. The person surveyed and one of their parents was born in Euskal Herria, and the other parent in Spain or France; 3. The person surveyed was born in Euskal Herria, but both parent were born in Spain or France; 4. The person surveyed and their two parents were born in Spain or France; 5. The person surveyed and their two parents were born outside of Euskal Herria, Spain or France. We shall then relate all of this with the general data obtained on Euskal Herria.

The existing divide between the first category mentioned and the other four is striking, in other words, when the person surveyed and their parents were born in Euskal Herria, support for a Basque State was very high, higher than the average in Euskal Herria: 56% (an average of 40.7% in Euskal Herria). Put more clearly, when the person surveyed and their parents were born in Euskal Herria, more than one out of every two was in favour of a Basque State. Herein lies the great difference: among those in favour, only in this category was the average surpassed (and the other four categories are therefore below average); and, as regards the opposite views, only this first category was below the average for Euskal Herria (whereas the rest of the categories were above).

After this divergent category, the rest are calibrated: there was more support when the person surveyed and a parent were born in Euskal Herria, than when both parents were born in Spain or France. However, there is another break in the grading, as it is the fourth category (the person surveyed and both parents were born in Spain or France) which reveals greatest opposition to, and support for, the Basque State: only 14.8% was in favour; and 53.8% was against. In the fifth category, the one including more recent immigrants, opposition to the Basque State was greater, but it was closer to the already mentioned calibration than to the break typical of the fourth category.

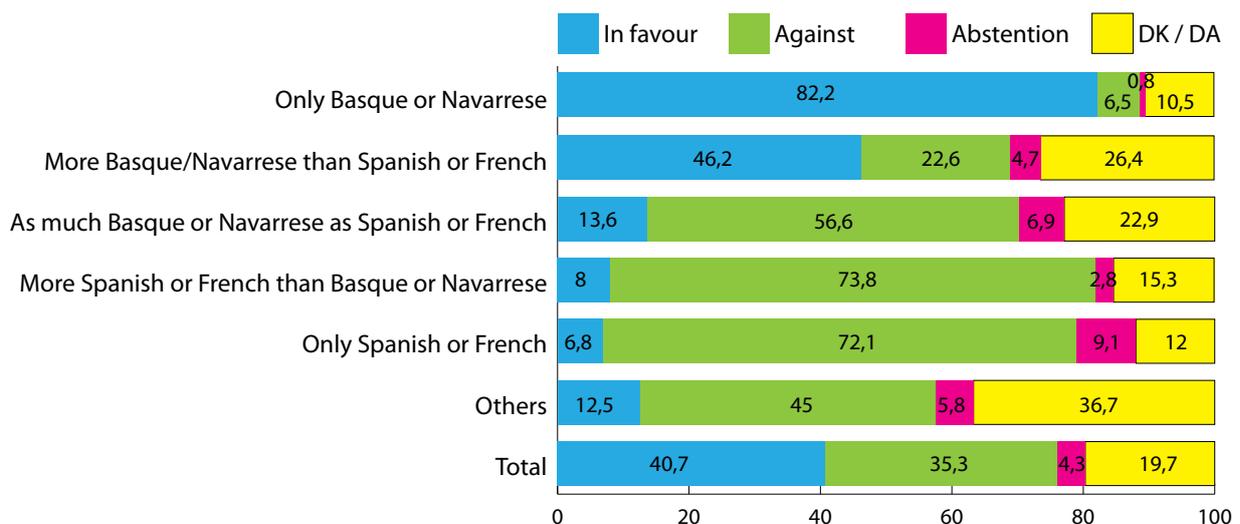
22. Opinion on the Basque/Navarrese State. According to national identity. We now take into consideration the national identity expressed by the people surveyed, to find out how this affected their opinion on a Basque State (the data on a Basque and Navarrese State are unified).

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/ Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer? [according to national identity]

National identity	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA	Total
Únicamente vasco/a o navarro/a	82,2	6,5	0,8	10,5	100,0
Más vasco/a o navarro/a que español/a o francés/a	46,2	22,6	4,7	26,4	100,0
Tan vasca/o o navarro/a como español/a o francés/a	13,6	56,6	6,9	22,9	100,0
Más español/a o francés/a que vasca/o o navarro/a	8,0	73,8	2,8	15,3	100,0
Únicamente español/a o francés/a	6,8	72,1	9,1	12,0	100,0
Otros	12,5	45,0	5,8	36,7	100,0
Total Euskal Herria	40,7	35,3	4,3	19,7	100,0

Particularly striking is the majority of those surveyed who felt *Only Basque or Only Navarrese* or who supported a Basque State (82.2%), and, on the other hand, almost three quarters of the people surveyed who felt *Only Spanish/French and More Spanish/French than Basque/Navarrese* opposed the new state. At all events, it is significant that, in each category, there was always a small percentage that held the opposite view (approximately 6-8%). In between are two categories: the people who felt *More Basque/Navarrese than Spanish/French* were more likely to be in favour of the Basque State than against; and, on the contrary, the people who felt *As much Basque/Navarrese as Spanish/French* tended to be more against the Basque State than in favour.

The table below shows the same data and helps us to appreciate the calibration in favour or against the Basque State, according to national sentiment.



Once again, we can see that support for a Basque State is found mainly among the surveyed who felt *Only Basque or only Navarrese*, and also among those who felt *More Basque/Navarrese than Spanish/French*; and, on the other hand, opposition to the Basque State was found among those surveyed who felt *Only Spanish/French, More Spanish/French than Basque/Navarrese, and as much Basque/Navarrese as Spanish/French*.

23. Opinion on a Basque/Navarrese State. According to national identity and territory. We continue with the subject if national identity expressed by the people surveyed, while analysing it by administrative territory.

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer? [according to national identity and territory]

Basque Autonomous Community (BAC)

National identity	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA	Total
Only Basque	83,1	5,5	0,7	10,7	100,0
More Basque than Spanish	48,9	19,0	4,3	27,9	100,0
As much Basque as Spanish	12,4	55,3	7,2	25,2	100,0
More Spanish than Basque	5,8	77,0	0,0	17,2	100,0
Only Spanish	12,0	76,5	1,5	10,0	100,0
Others	14,6	42,3	5,6	37,5	100,0

The people surveyed in the BAC practically mimic the model of Euskal Herria -analysed in the previous section (22)- given the significance of this community in the survey.

Navarre (CFN)

National identity	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA	Total
Only Basque or Navarrese	79,2	8,9	1,2	10,7	100,0
More Basque/Navarrese than Spanish	21,1	57,9	0,0	21,1	100,0
As much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish	12,3	65,9	2,9	18,8	100,0
More Spanish than Basque or Navarrese	0,0	88,9	5,6	5,6	100,0
Only Spanish	5,6	66,7	5,6	22,2	100,0
Others	6,3	50,0	6,3	37,5	100,0

In this case, the greatest difference with the previous section (22) could lie in the *More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish* category. Indeed, in the whole of Euskal Herria, and in the BAC, this category is more likely to support than oppose the Basque State, and the main division appears in the following *As much Basque or Navarrese as Spanish* category, more opposed than favourable to the Basque State. However, in Navarre, support for the Basque or Navarrese State is only found in the *Only Basque or only Navarrese* category, *More Basque or Navarrese than Spanish* and the next category is more against than in favour of the new state.

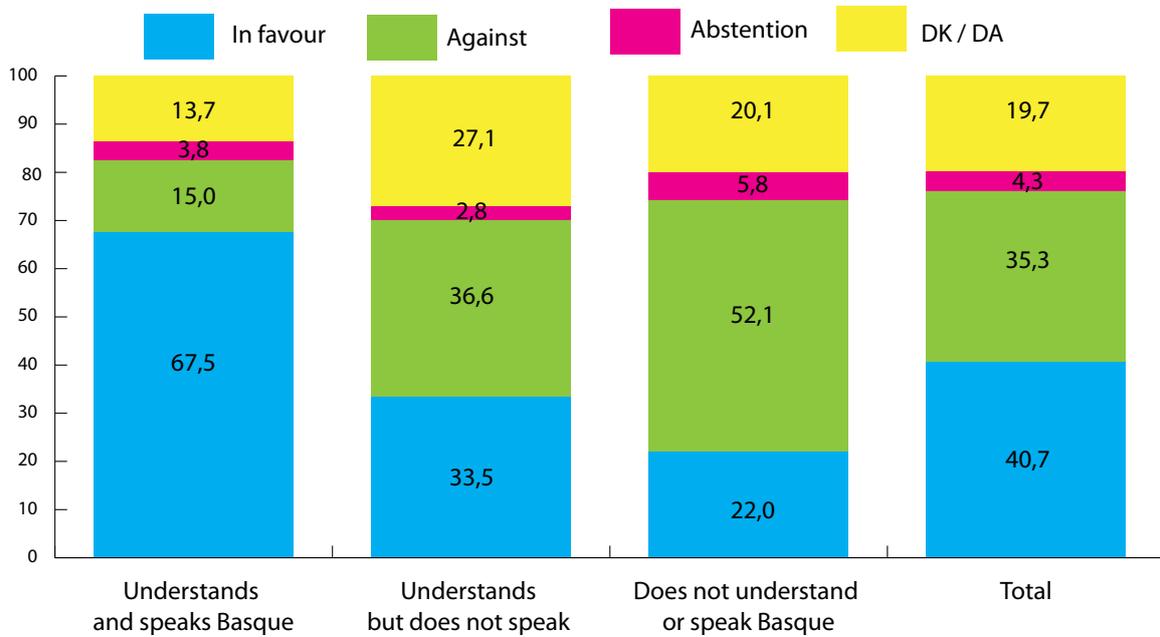
Northern Basque Country

National identity	In favour	Against	Abstention	DK/DA	Total
Only Basque	88,4	9,3	0,0	2,3	100,0
More Basque than French	53,2	12,8	19,1	14,9	100,0
As much Basque as French	27,0	44,4	14,3	14,3	100,0
More French than Basque	17,1	58,6	7,1	17,1	100,0
Only French	3,1	70,8	16,7	9,4	100,0
Others	6,7	60,0	6,7	26,7	100,0

Last of all, in general, the data on the northern Basque Country are a repetition of those for Euskal Herria (and the BAC).

24. Opinion on the Basque/Navarrese State. According to the level of familiarity with Basque. We continue with the results obtained regarding people's opinion with respect to a Basque State, while checking to see its possible relation between the level of familiarity with Basque claimed by those in the survey.

Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/ Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer? [According to level of knowledge of Basque]

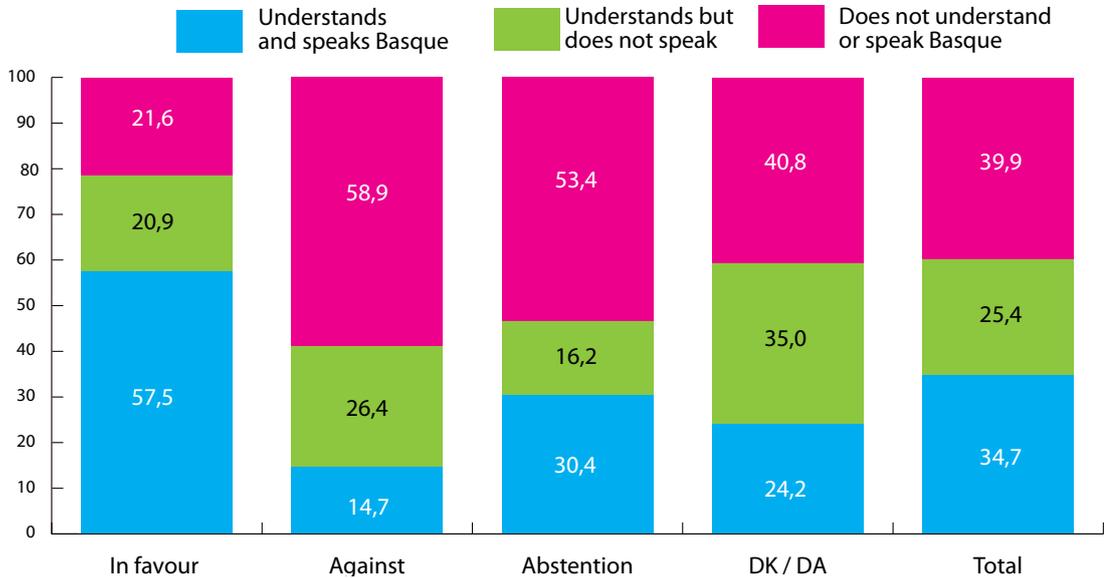


Three levels are distinguished: 1. The person interviewed understands and speaks Basque; 2. Understands, but does not speak Basque; 3. Does not understand or speak Basque. This level is then related to the average results for Euskal Herria.

There seems to be a clear relation: the greater the knowledge of Basque, the greater the support for a Basque State, and vice versa. Thus, when the person surveyed understands and speaks Basque, the support for a Basque State is 67.5%, considerably higher than the average for Euskal Herria (40.7%); and, when they do not understand or speak Basque, opposition to a Basque State is very high, 52.1%, here too, over and above the average for Euskal Herria, 35.3%. In other words, two out of every three people surveyed who understand and speak Basque (2/3) would be in favour of a Basque State, and one out of every two people surveyed who do not understand or speak Basque (1/2) would be opposed. In between is the third category, those who understand but do not speak Basque. Their results are quite similar to the average for Euskal Herria, although there are more people against than in favour.

25. Opinion on the Basque/Navarrese State. According to familiarity with Basque (2). We used the same data, though arranged differently, with the axis being the position in favour or against the Basque State.

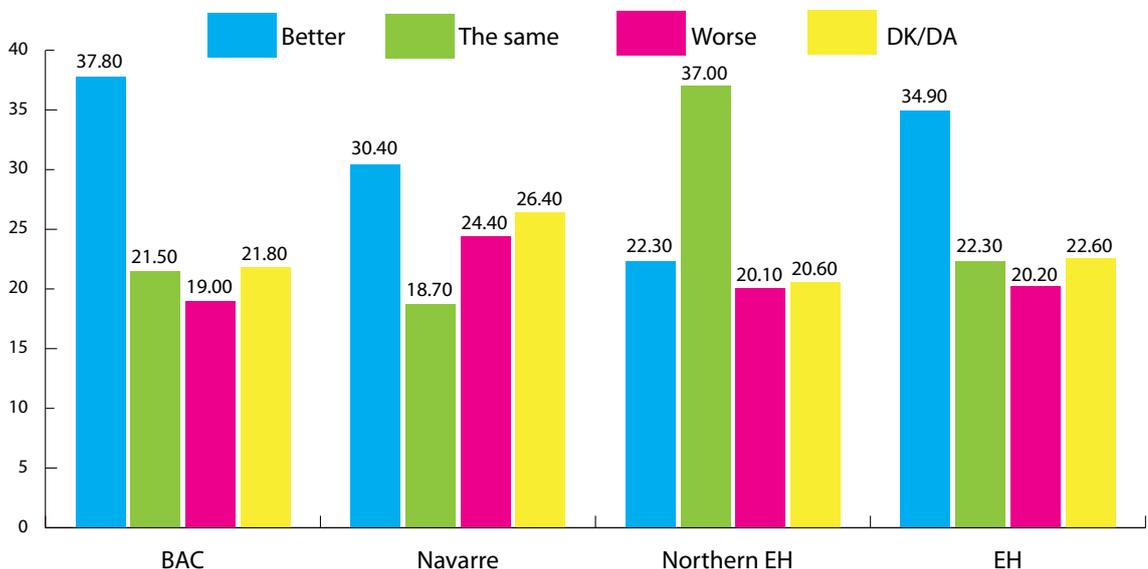
Let's assume that all or the majority of the political parties agree to hold a consultation or referendum on the Basque/Navarrese State. In the referendum you are asked if you are in favour or against a Basque or Navarrese State. How would you answer? [According to level of knowledge of Basque]



A clear relation can be appreciated if we take the three categories used in the preceding point with respect to the Basque language. Worthy of note too is the fact that, in all columns, three categories in relation to the Basque language show significant proportions. For example, regarding support for the Basque State, there is a clear majority who understand and speak Basque (57.5%), but there is too a large percentage from the other categories. Something similar, but the other way around, occurs with the opposite stance: most of them are people who do not understand or speak Basque (58.9%), but the other percentages are by no means negligible. Last of all, to help assess the relation that we are trying to establish with respect to the Basque language, the last column shows the level of knowledge of Basque declared by the people surveyed.

26. In general, how do you think you would live in a Basque/Navarrese State? To complete this series, we wished to find out what the intuitive perception of those surveyed was, as well as their general impression on the Basque State, which is why they were asked about the level of relative wellbeing they believed they would have in the new state:

To sum up the aforesaid, if a Basque/Navarrese State were set up, in general, do you think we would live better, the same or worse?



The opinions are very similar. Generally speaking, those surveyed felt that if a Basque State were set up, they would live better (34.9%), but 22.3% believed that their lives would be the same, 20.2% worse, and 22.6% did not know or did not answer.

By territory, in the southern Basque Country, it was thought that people would live better, but, in the northern Basque Country, people felt their lives would be the same. It is in Navarre where most people felt they would live worse (24.4%).

Finally, it is important to point out the number of people surveyed who did not know or did not answer was greater than in the case of the other questions. In Navarre and in the BAC, it was the second most common choice and the third, in the northern Basque Country.

ON THE BASQUE STATE. Although the existence of different administrative spheres makes the task of quantifying and explaining positions quite difficult, we asked people in the seven territories claimed by Basque nationalism about the option they would choose in the event of a referendum being held on a hypothetical Basque State. Having asked the exact same question in all the cases, most informants would be in favour of a Basque (or Navarrese) State: 40.7%. Though one third of all those surveyed are against, there is still a large percentage (one fourth of all those surveyed) who would abstain, or who, when asked this question, say that they do not know or that they do not wish to respond.

As pointed out in the introduction, in Navarre, people were asked about the Basque State as well as the Navarrese State. The data point to the fact that 5.6% of the people surveyed support a Basque State, and 14.4% are in favour of a Navarrese State. As we have already mentioned, we unified the data, giving us a total of 40.0%. On the other hand, again, unifying both results, we find that 41.8% of the people surveyed are opposed to the Basque State. Lastly, in the northern Basque Country, a considerably higher number of people are opposed rather than in favour: 46.2%, against and 28.3%, in favour.

The younger the person is, the higher their level of studies, the closer they are to Nationalist parties, the greater their familiarity with the Basque language, and, with regard to national identity, the more Basque or Navarrese they feel, the greater their support for the Basque State. In the same sense, there is likewise greater support when the person surveyed and their parents were born in Euskal Herria, and, conversely, less support when the person surveyed and both their parents were born in Spain and France (which does not apply, however, when they were born elsewhere – as in the case of new immigrants).

To conclude, the majority of the people surveyed believe that they would live better in a Basque State: this is what a third of the informants think. On the other hand, in the northern Basque Country, the majority believe that they would have the same standard of living.

ATTITUDE TO A BASQUE STATE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGING: WHY WOULD I CHANGE MY OPINION?

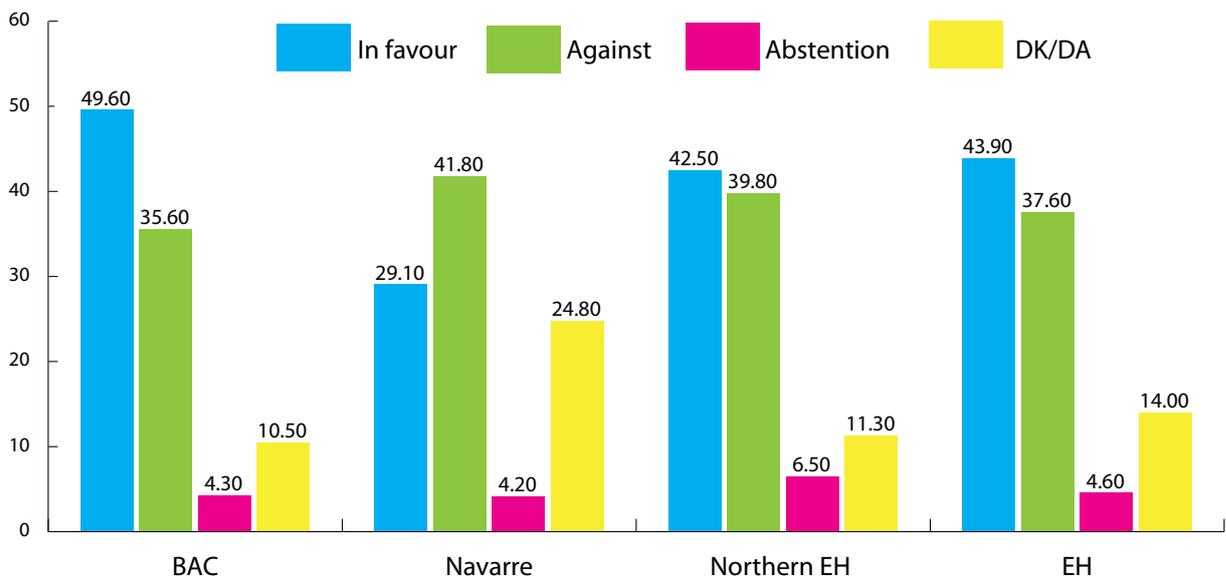
Questions relating to national sentiment or identity are often presented as fixed aspects, as relatively stagnant dimensions, for individuals as well as society, despite the fact that data obtained periodically point to changes over time. This variability is even more apparent when we speak of the Basque State, as it is more than likely that the interests we associate with the latter are more varied than those associated with the Basque nation. For this reason, the people in the survey were asked how steadfast they were regarding their position, and if they felt that there was any way it could vary. In a scale from 1 to 5, 55.8% rated at (5) the impossibility of their changing their opinion, and only 1.5% accepted that there was a great chance of their changing it (1). It is interesting to compare these data with those offered below. The purpose of this chapter is to find out to what extent the stances held in the survey are steadfast, and why, or depending on what, they would change. For a more in-depth analysis of the subject, a variety of options were presented to the people surveyed, and they were asked whether they would change how they voted in accordance.

I am against a Basque State, but my attitude would change if...

In the first place, we shall analyse the views contrary to the Basque State. When they expressed their opposition to the latter in the survey, they were then asked the questions outlined below in order to see if the prospect of certain improvements related to the new state could affect their attitude to it and make them change their vote.

27. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State: if it were to guarantee improved social policies. *This question was only asked of those who expressed their opposition to the Basque State:*

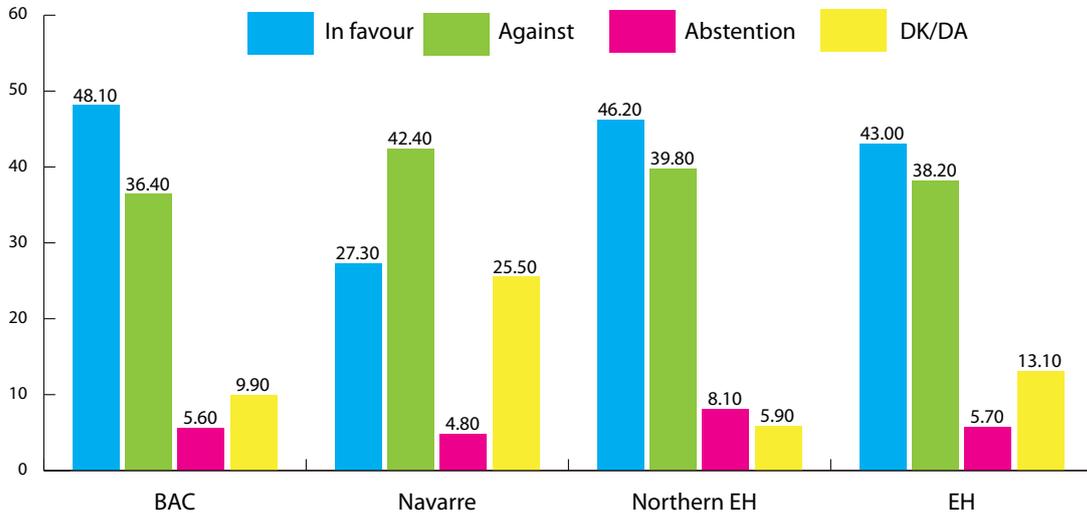
If the creation of a Basque State implied better social policies (in education, health, pensions, etc.) than existing ones, how would you answer in the referendum?



The prospect of improvement in social policies gave those informants who were opposed to a Basque State something to think about. The result was that 43.9% would be willing to change their vote and support the new state if improvements in the sphere of social policy were implied. The highest data in the BAC (almost one out of every two people surveyed would change their vote) are similar to those in the northern Basque Country, with a considerable drop in Navarre where it fails to reach one third. On the other hand, in all cases, 30% to 40% would under no circumstances change their vote and, in the case of Navarre, the number of those unwilling to change is greater than those willing to do so.

28. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State: depending on the level of democracy. *This question was only asked of those who expressed their opposition to the Basque State:*

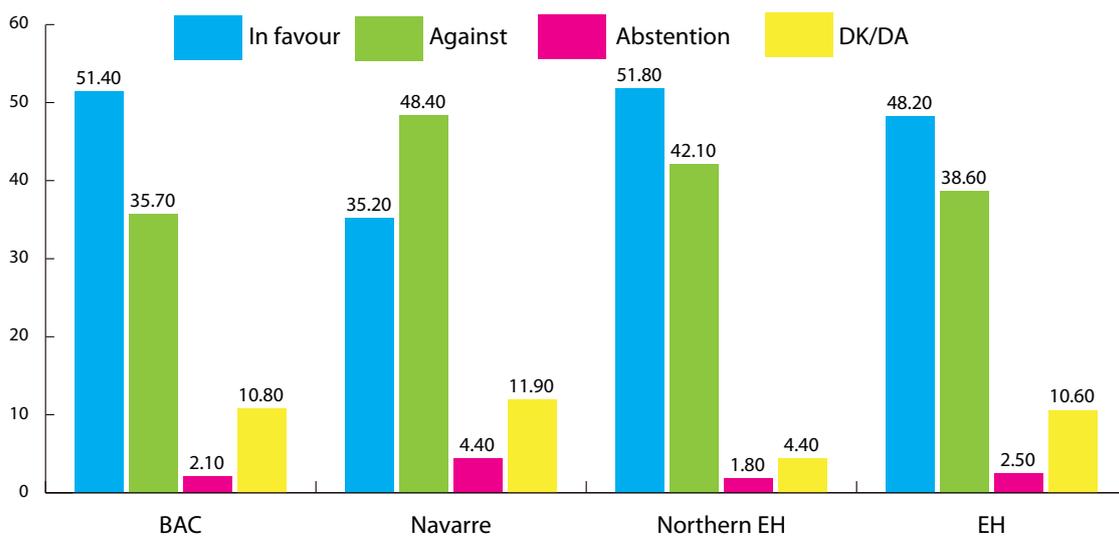
If the Basque State were more democratic than the existing one, in other words, if it were more transparent and participatory in its working than the Spanish/French one, how would you answer in the referendum?



The data are quite similar for this case whereby the new state guarantees a more democratic functioning (more transparency, more participation, etc.). In general, the data are slightly lower than those in the preceding table: 43% would be willing to change their vote (more in the BAC and in the northern Basque Country, and 27.3% in Navarre), and approximately 40% would be unwilling to change (in Navarre, the number of informants willing to change is greater).

29. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State: according to co-existence standards. *This question too was only asked of those who expressed their opposition to the Basque State:*

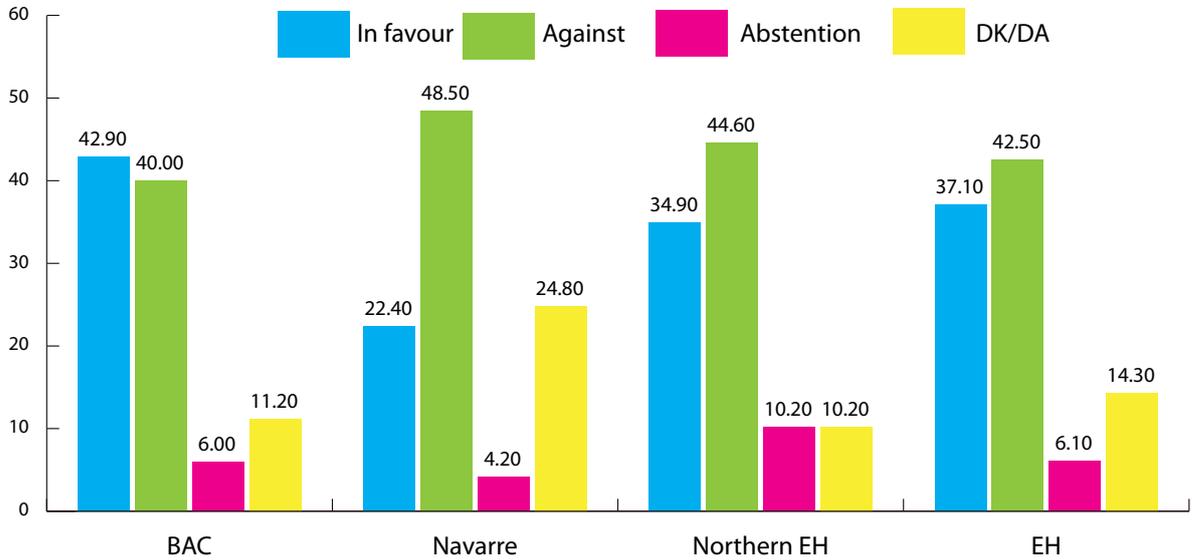
If the Basque State were to guarantee a greater level of social harmony than the current one, how would you answer in the referendum?



Social harmony is also considered important in Euskal Herria, which is why data is similar to the preceding ones, in this case, where the new state promises a greater level of social harmony. In general, the data reveal slightly lower figures than in the two preceding tables: 41.3% would be willing to change their vote (more than in the BAC, similar to the figure for the northern Basque Country, and 29% in Navarre), and approximately 40% would not be willing, in this case either, to change their vote (more people in Navarre and the northern Basque Country would be willing to change it).

30. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State: depending on the economic situation. *This question too was only asked of those who expressed their opposition to the Basque State:*

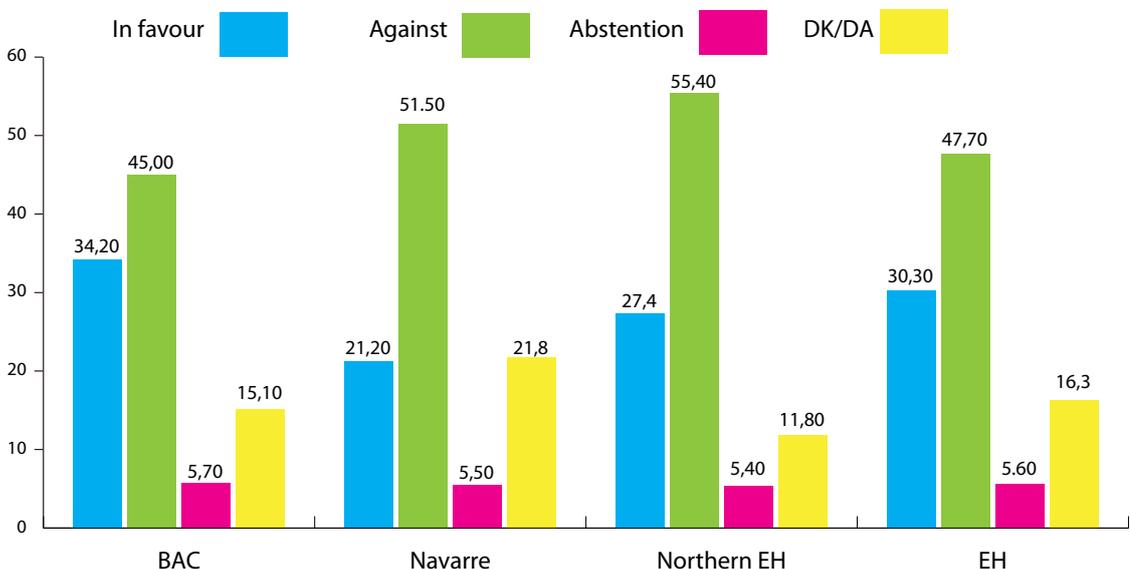
If the Basque State implied an improved economic situation than the one existing in Spain/France, how would you answer in the referendum?



Perhaps contrary to what one might have thought, the prospect of an improved economic situation is not the aspect most highly valued by informants when making their decision to change their vote. In this case, one third (37.1%) would be willing to give their support to a Basque State (more in the BAC, slightly fewer in the northern Basque Country, and considerably fewer, 22.4%, in Navarre). On the other hand, the number who would not change their minds is greater: approximately 40-50% of those who declared themselves against the new state would change their vote.

31. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State: with membership of the European Union guaranteed. *This question too was only asked of those who expressed their opposition to the Basque State:*

If the Basque State had the option to remain in the Europeans Union, how would you answer in the referendum?



Permanence in the European Union commands less interest than the foregoing factors: approximately one third would

be willing to change their vote under this condition, but, in Navarre and the northern Basque Country, this number is considerably lower. Moreover, the decision not to change their vote is much clearer in this case. In fact, one out of every two persons surveyed would not do so.

32. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people opposed to the creation of a Basque State. Summary. *As we can appreciate, informants who opposed a Basque State were asked a series of questions in order to analyse and measure the possibility of a change in their vote. We shall now present a summary of this section, and add another dimension to the study, by relating it with the declared national identity.*

PEOPLE SURVEYED WHO, THOUGH OPPOSED TO THE BASQUE STATE,
WOULD CHANGE THEIR VOTE, IN RELATION TO THE DECLARED NATIONAL IDENTITY

Reason for the change	Only Basque	More Basque than Spanish/ French	As much Basque as Spanish/ French	More Spanish/ French than Basque	Only Spanish/ French	GENERAL DATA
Social policies	47,3	56,9	43,4	46,8	30,1	43,9
Democracy	47,3	55,6	43,2	39,7	32,6	43,0
The economy	42,4	49,3	36,4	44,3	27,3	37,1
European Union	38,3	40,4	31,0	28,3	21,5	30,3

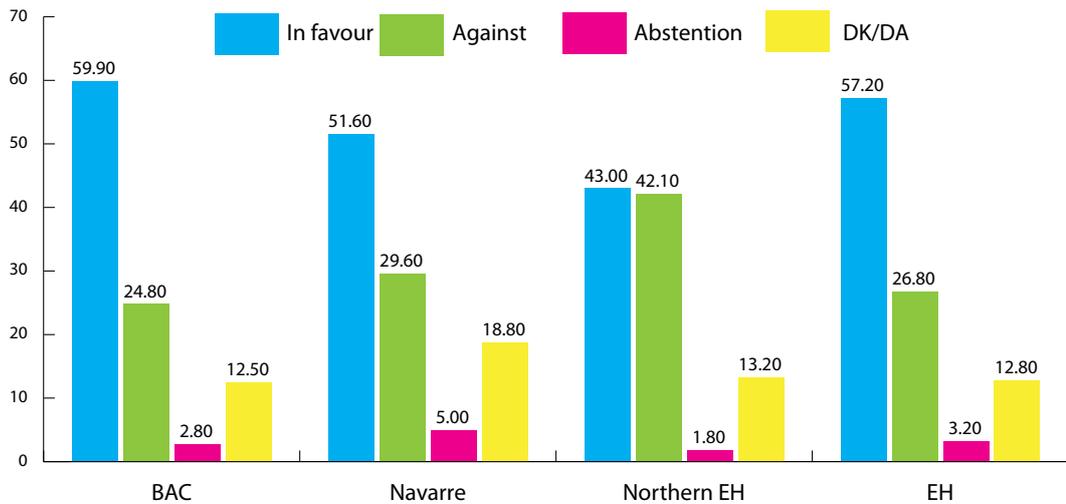
In general, it was found that the main reason for moving from opposition to support for a Basque State is the expectation of improved social policies (43.9%) and a greater level of democracy (43.0%). In general, this is followed by economic reasons, and, last of all, the wish to retain membership of the European Union. At any rate, what is most striking about the cases selected is that the prospect of living in a Basque State influences one out of every three people (in some cases, more) who, initially, were against it. In addition, when we combine it with national identity, we find that the possibility of changing the vote increases in the case of people who feel more Basque (the results shown in green are those above average; and, in red, those below). In other words, when such people initially opposed to the Basque State as feel **Only Basque or More Basque than Spanish or French** are offered an (apparently) significant change, they are more likely to change their vote than those declaring other national identities. At the opposite end, the people who feel **Only Spanish or French** are those who are less likely to change their vote, no matter what significant changes are promised.

I am in favour of a Basque State, but my attitude would change if...

In the following points we shall study positive views of the Basque State. Those in the survey who expressed their agreement with the creation of a Basque State were asked the questions listed below, in order to see if the prospect of worse conditions associated with the new state in relation to the matters proposed would have an impact on their attitude to the same and lead them to change their vote.

33. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people in favour of the formation of a Basque State: being excluded from the European Union. This question was only asked of those who expressed their support for the Basque State:

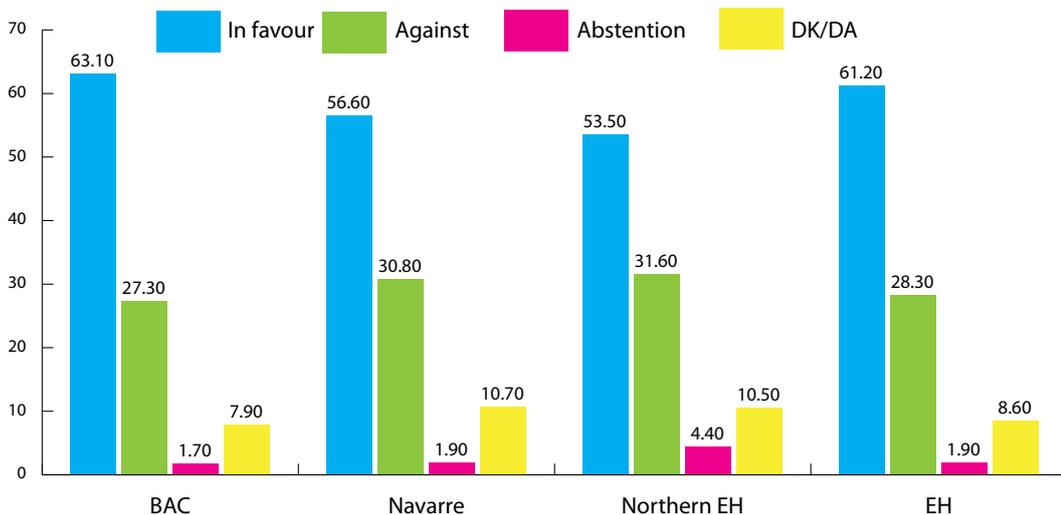
If the Basque State were no longer a member of the European Union, how would you answer in the referendum?



Despite being, in principle, in favour of a Basque State, the people in the survey revealed that they would be willing to change their vote by virtue of a variety of factors. Of these, the one that has the least impact on a possible change is that relating to the European Union. This also occurred in the opposite case. Nevertheless, a fourth of the people surveyed would no longer support a Basque State if it were no longer a member of the European Union (in the northern Basque Country, it would be 42.1%). On the other hand, over half of those in favour would not change despite this circumstance.

34. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people in favour of the formation of a Basque State: depending on the economic situation. This question was only asked of those who expressed their support for the Basque State:

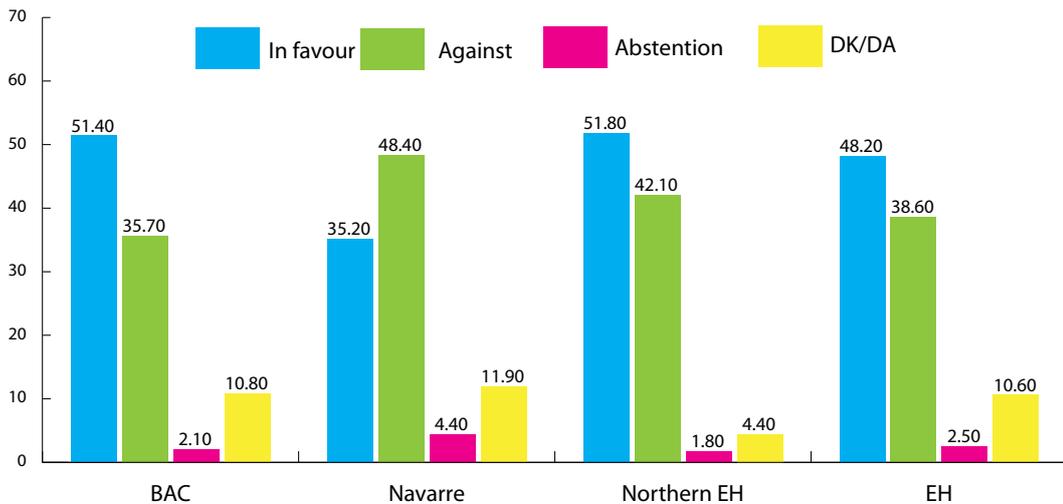
If the Basque State implied an economic situation similar to the one existing nowadays in Spain/France, how would you answer in the referendum?



The prospect of an economic situation failing to improve with a new state does not have an absolute effect on the people who support it: 28.3% would turn against it in this case (slightly less in the BAC, and slightly more in Navarre and the northern Basque Country). However, it is very clear that approximately 60% would not change their vote for this reason.

35. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people in favour of the formation of a Basque State: if social policies failed to improve. *This question was only asked of those who expressed their support for the Basque State:*

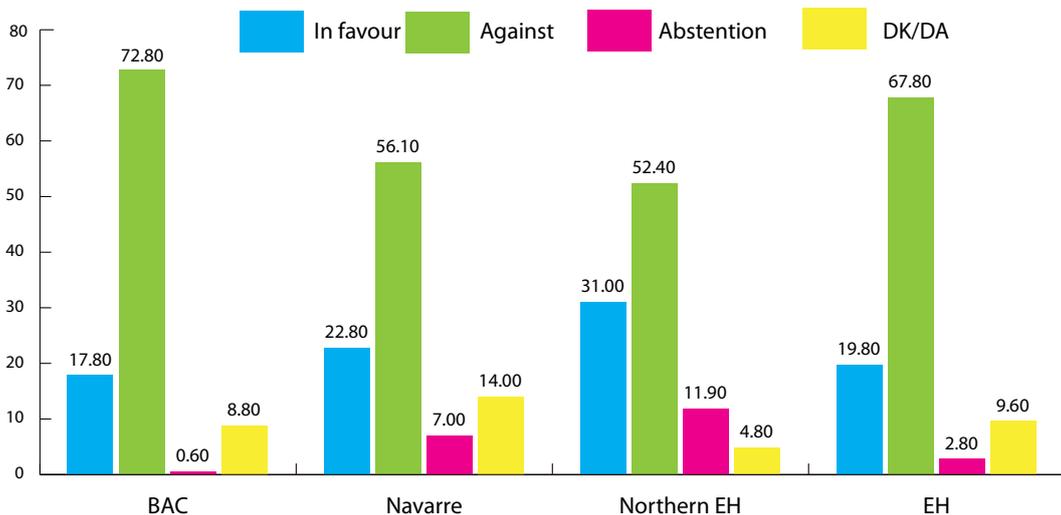
If the creation of the Basque State implied social policies similar to the existing one or even more limited ones, how would you answer in the referendum?



Social policies appear to be a more delicate issue than the previous two, although not to the same extent as far as positive votes becoming negative ones is concerned. Thus, we can appreciate that more than a third of the informants (fewer in the BAC, more in the northern Basque Country and in Navarre) appear to be willing to change their vote if minimum levels of social welfare are not guaranteed. On the other hand, almost one out of every two people would change their vote under these circumstances (that is, more than those who would).

36. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people in favour of the formation of a Basque State: if Spanish/French were put before Basque. *This question was only asked of those who expressed their support for the Basque State:*

If the Basque State were to put Spanish/French before Basque, how would you answer in the referendum?



As can be clearly appreciated from the table, this possibility set off alarm bells for those in the survey who supported the Basque State, and it is the main reason for them to change their vote: two thirds would change their view if they considered that the Basque language were not sufficiently protected in the new state (more than half in the northern Basque Country and in Navarre, and 72.8% in the BAC). On the other hand, only one out of every five people would still support it.

37. Change of attitude. The possibility of a change in vote of the people in favour of the formation of a Basque State. Summary. *As already seen, those supporting a Basque State in the survey were asked a series of questions to analyse and measure the possibility of changing their vote. We shall now present a summary of the same while adding another dimension to the study, by relating it to the declared nation identity.*

PEOPLE SURVEYED WHO, THOUGH SUPPORTING A BASQUE STATE,
WOULD CHANGE THEIR VOTE, IN RELATION TO THE DECLARED NATIONAL IDENTITY

Reason for the change	Only Basque	More Basque than Spanish or French	As much Basque as Spanish or French	More Spanish or French than Basque	Only Spanish or French	GENERAL DATA
Basque	71,4	66,9	49,3	75,0	100,0	67,8
Social policies	31,4	54,4	47,3	45,1	60,1	38,6
European Union	22,2	37,5	47,8	14,7	28,9	28,3
Economy	18,5	36,0	49,8	64,7	63,8	26,8

A comparison of the data reveals that it is more difficult to go from supporting the Basque State to opposing it, than vice versa (as we have seen in the preceding series). At any rate, in general, at least between one fourth and one third of the people in the survey are willing to change their vote, and oppose the new state. However, in this case, a highly significant circumstance arises: when faced with the possibility of pro-Basque policies disimproving, two thirds of the people surveyed are willing to change their vote, and give up on a Basque State. What's more and unlike what happened in the preceding series, the more Spanish or French the person surveyed feels, *the easier* it is for them to change their opinion in favour of a Basque State to opposition to the same, except for where the Basque language is concerned (the results above average are shown in green; and in red, those below).

REASONS FOR CHANGING ONE'S VOTE ON A BASQUE STATE. Despite the fact that the informants claim to have firm and unwavering opinions, reality produces data to the contrary, and leads us to believe that opposition to, or support for, the Basque State can vary depending on a variety of factors.

To be more precise, those surveyed who express their opposition to a Basque State would be willing to change and support the new state if, for example, better social policies or a greater degree of democracy than in the existing Spanish and French States were guaranteed (this is what almost half of the people opposed to the Basque State affirmed). In a lesser proportion (approximately 40%), would likewise be willing to change their vote if the new state were to guarantee a better economic situation than the current one or if it were to guarantee continued membership of the European Union.

On the other hand, those surveyed who admit support for a Basque State would be willing to change and withdraw said support for the new state, particularly in the event that sufficient efforts in pro of the Basque language were not guaranteed. This is what two out of every three people in favour of the Basque State declared. In a lower proportion, if the new state were not to guarantee effective social policies, continued membership of the European Union, or an improved economic situation, between 30-40% would change their vote and oppose it.

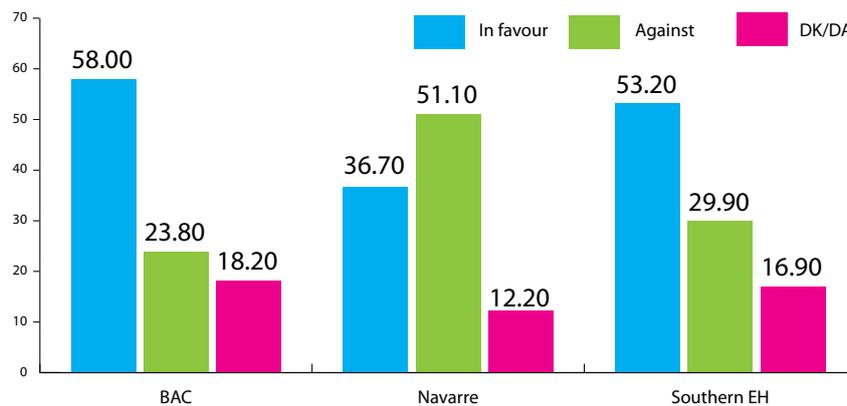
Last of all, it is significant that, in all cases, there is always a sizeable number of people, approximately 25%, who would abstain or do not know or do not wish to answer.

BEYOND THE STATE: OTHER OPTIONS OR RELATIONS

Besides the fear or ignorance that the proposal of a new state provokes, it is also interesting to know which other options for political and administrative organization are contemplated by the people surveyed. These questions are not necessarily incompatible with the wish for a Basque State, which is why all the people who took part in the survey were asked about administrative territories understood as intermediate proposals.

38. The option of a single autonomous community for the southern Basque Country. *Over and above the creation of a Basque or Navarrese State, the people in the survey in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre were asked for their opinion on the option of a single Autonomous Community for the southern Basque Country, within Spain:*

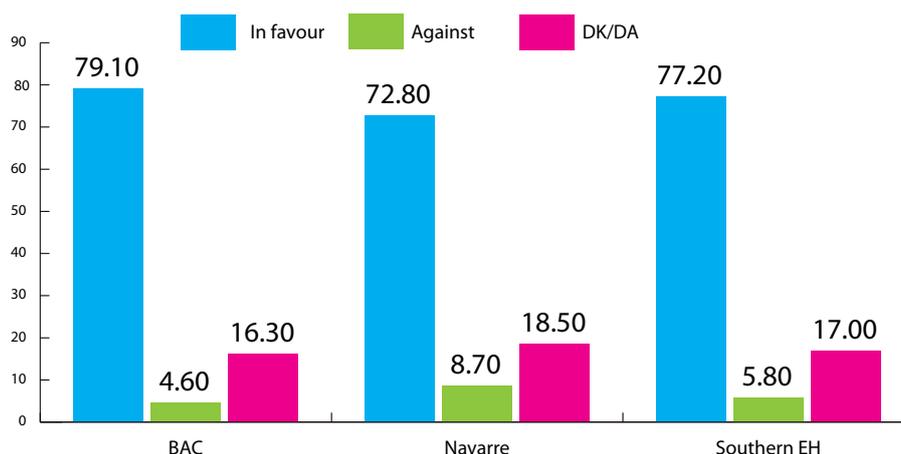
Leaving aside the option of a Basque State, would you be in favour or against creating a single autonomous community for the BAC and the FCN within Spain?



If we consider the absolute data, it is evident that more than half of the people surveyed (53.2%) would be in favour of a single community made up of the current autonomous territories in the southern Basque Country, and with a great difference (23.3 points) with respect to the opposite view, which is supported by 29.9%. However, there is a clear difference between the two communities: in the BAC, 58% are in favour of a single autonomous community, and only 23.8% would be against; on the other hand, in Navarre, the data differ greatly, as opposition to a union with the BAC is 51.1%, despite the fact that support is quite significant (36.7%). The number of people who do not know or do not answer is also lower in Navarre than in the BAC.

39. The option of intensifying relations between the Autonomous Communities in the southern Basque Country. *Continuing with the preceding point, but leaving aside the proposal for a single Autonomous Community, the respondents in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre were asked if they felt that ties should be strengthened between the Autonomous Communities of the southern Basque Country:*

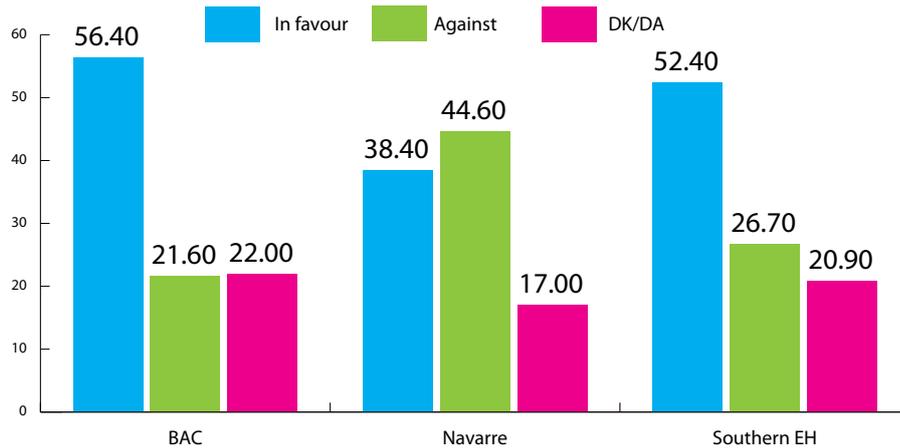
If the BAC and the FCN were to remain two separate autonomous communities as is currently the case, would you be in favour or against their having closer ties?



In this case, the results are similar in both autonomous communities: three out of four people (77.2%) would like to enhance ties (79.1% in the BAC and 72.8% in Navarre), and very few people oppose this possibility (5.8%). On the other hand, the number of people who do not know or do not answer is higher.

40. The option of including all of Euskal Herria in a Euroregion, within the European Union. Respondents in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre were presented with this last formula which would imply fomenting some sort of political union of Euskal Herria, to form a Euroregion within the European Union:

Are you in favour or against creating a Euroregion between the BAC, the FCN and the northern Basque Country? (this question was only asked in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre)



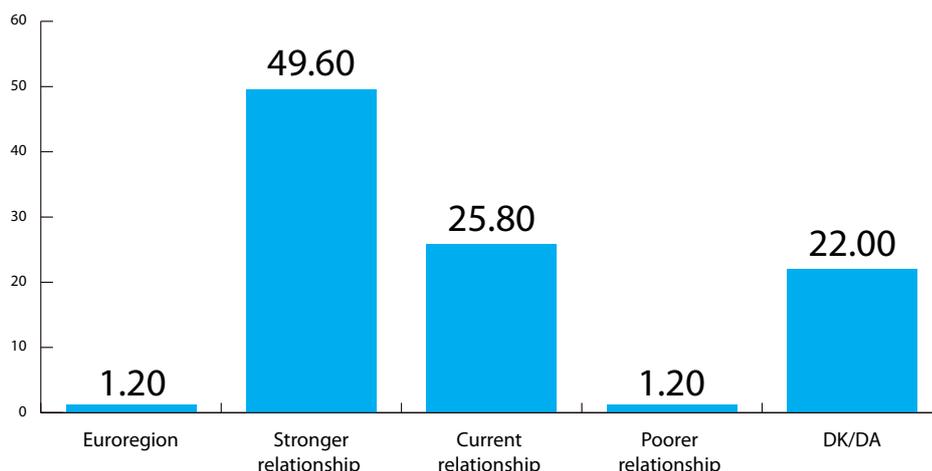
Something similar occurred with this question as with the question on a single autonomy for all of the southern Basque Country: in general, there are more people in favour (52.4%) than against. However, whereas the difference between both opinions is clear in the BAC (35%), in Navarre, the opposite occurs, and opposition to this proposal predominates (44.6%).

In any case, here, the number of people who do not know or do not answer is more significant as it is greater than in the case of the preceding questions. In total, 20.9% are not sure about their stance.

41. On institutional relations that the northern Basque Country should have with the southern Basque Country.

Taking into account their situation in two different states, respondents in the northern Basque Country were asked about the institutional relations they would like to have with the southern Basque Country:

The northern Basque Country borders on the one hand with the Landes and Bearn, and on the other, with the BAC and Navarre. What institutional relations would you like to have with these last two communities? (this question was only asked in the northern Basque Country)



The answer leaves no doubt. The people in the survey would like to strengthen relations with the southern Basque Country. On the other hand, a quarter of them believe that the current relationship is sufficient, and almost nobody seeks a poorer relationship (1.2%). In addition, a large number of people do not know or do not answer (22%), and the option of a Euroregion has little appeal.

OTHER OPTIONS OTHER THAN A STATE. To conclude, the people in the survey were asked about other alternatives to the current situation, besides that of a Basque State, as regards relations between the different territories as well as new forms of political structuring. The results are as follows.

A single autonomous community in the southern Basque Country. It has been a long-standing claim throughout the twentieth century among Basque nationalists. The answers to this option provide us with conflicting results: in the BAC it is a highly sought-after objective (well over half of the people interviewed are in favour). However, in Navarre, half are against and one third in favour. Nevertheless, if, rather than proposing this option of a single autonomous community, stronger relations between the two autonomous communities in the southern Basque Country is proposed, three thirds of each of the communities are in favour.

Euroregion. When asked about this option in the southern Basque Country, the answer was affirmative in the BAC and negative in Navarre.

Last of all, in the northern Basque Country, people were asked about the nature of the relations they wished for with the southern Basque Country and almost half stated that they would like closer relations than the current ones.

OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES ON THE BASQUE STATE.

RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In the section corresponding to quantitative analysis, we were given an insight into existing attitudes in Basque society regarding a hypothetical Basque State. We shall now try to carry out an in-depth study of the opinions gleaned from the hundreds of surveys, and we shall do so using qualitative analysis, with an aim to gaining a more complete knowledge of these attitudes. It is known that the purpose of so-called qualitative techniques is to analyse more deeply people's perceptions, opinions and attitudes; and, consequently, they do not aim at reflecting their quantitative composition. In other words, what we are interested in is what citizens think or feel about this subject, the Basque State, and not in the number of people behind these opinions and feelings.

We divided the opinions on the Basque State into three groups. In the first place are those citizens who are in favour of a process which could result in the building of a Basque State. In the second group are those who are clearly against; and, last of all, in the third, are those whose opinions could be considered as somewhere in between, and whose main characteristic is that they are easily swayed, depending on the issue brought to the table. Indeed, it must be remembered that, in the quantitative analysis, we were able to detect a significant number of people in the survey who would be willing to change their opinion if certain conditions were met.

We raised two questions which most frequently cropped up in the discussion groups, grouping them according to the abovementioned criteria. With regard to these subjects, we gave an account of each group of opinions. Thus, it could be said that those in favour of a Basque State have a clearly defined political stance and are basically pro-independence or in favour of the construction of a new political status for Basque society; that is, they are citizens from groups with differing views that are close to Basque nationalism. In general, these are the ones whose discourse on a possible Basque State has been well thought out. In the second group, the reasons generating opposition to a Basque State are either a certain detachment from the subject, or adherence to a national identity (Spanish or French). Last of all is the group which has little to do with the abovementioned profiles. Their fundamental characteristic is a lack of interest in the subject together with other vaguer, undefined opinions. In general, they are content with the existing political and administrative organisation and do not feel that the creation of a Basque State is something that need concern them.

At any rate, it is important to underline that the three groups of stances and opinions are not totally fixed and stable. In other words, in our opinion, they are citizens whose positions are liable to change depending on the social or political situation. In fact, the opinions expressed to justify certain attitudes clearly reflect the arguments used in the social and political debate, which leads us to believe that the discourse lines used by citizens in favour as well as against the Basque State could change considerably if support (or opposition to) said process were seen as socially plausible in a given situation.

OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES IN FAVOUR OF A BASQUE STATE

Opinions expressing citizens' agreement with a pro-sovereignty process in Euskal Herria were included in this section. This was done, as has already been mentioned in the section on method, on the basis of the contributions from four discussion groups and an in-depth interview.

Which characteristics are shared by participants? Fundamentally, and because of their national identity, they reveal deep attachment to Euskal Herria, over and above France or Spain, and identify themselves as such, and, generally speaking, with the political policies of Basque nationalist parties. However, this does not imply that they are unconditionally willing to support a Basque State. Indeed, it is often hard for them to imagine what this would consist in and, in some cases, they are unwilling to foment social discussion on the subject, for the time being, at least. They share dissatisfaction with Euskal Herria's current political status, and, although it may be no more than a wish, they would like to move ahead with self-government, though this can be understood in a variety of ways. Thus, for some, the only possible solution is independence, and they categorically claim the need for a Basque State. However, others believe that what is most urgent for now is to raise the level of autonomous community competences or obtain certain recognition as an administrative institution. Both views see the attainment of a Basque State as a long term objective. However, a number of people express views that are somewhere in between. The fact of the matter is that what can appreciate herein are the political viewpoints that have been developed in Basque nationalist tradition. There is no doubt that our interviewees speak as *patriots*; some of them *conservative*, others, *left-wing*; that is how we called them; all of them were considered to support the building of a Basque State, with the corresponding nuances. In fact,

the purpose of this section it to provide a detailed explanation of these nuances. How do patriotic citizens imagine the future of Euskal Herria, seen from different points of view?

Until sovereignty is reached: the characteristics of a process

Many of the people in favour of a hypothetical Basque State have closely followed the pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and, particularly, Catalonia. They speak with envy of the achievements of the Catalan pro-independence movement and its broad social base, but, at the same time, a certain mistrust of what is happening there is also apparent. The reason is that they believe that many people have been drawn to the pro-independence movement for financial reasons and, they do not think that these reasons are deep-rooted or stable. *"The majority in Catalonia is not nationalist. However, a combination of several factors has led people to choose independence"* (3.T-Donostia).¹⁵ What's more, this option can change if the social or economic situation changes. Indeed, some doubt whether *"... they are doing that in order to be able to negotiate with Spain for a greater degree of autonomy"* (3.T-Donostia).

Envy with regard to the Catalan process is more apparent when they speak of Catalans' political and social evolution. It is said that what is happening in Catalonia sprang from society, because it was Catalan society that forged ahead of the autonomous community institutions and political parties, and, even more importantly, managed to attract people who were not actually pro-independence. *"In my opinion, in Catalonia, they have succeeded in generating enthusiasm even in sectors which are not Catalan... they have managed to call a National Assembly and attract everybody, people with no political label"* (6.T-Zarautz).

Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, we need to qualify this envy because, in some people's opinion, the process underway in Euskal Herria is more profound if we compare it with Scotland or Catalonia. For better or for worse. For better, because it is thought that it is more unlikely for people to give up before certain obstacles; and for worse, because it will not be easy to attract people who are against sovereignty,

"... What the Catalans have has nothing to do with what we have. Ours is much stronger. Ours has nothing to do with folklore... I was watching when the referendum was held in Scotland and, just a few hours before, they were worried that about which way the votes would go... That would never happen here." (6.T-Zarautz)

As far as Euskal Herria is concerned, they think it is risky to place all the force in the argument that "we shall have a better life", as appears to have been the case in Catalonia and Scotland; but, at the same time, *"(...) it is encouraging that somebody might think they will live better if we gain independence"* (6.T-Zarautz).

In fact, enthusiasm and hope are the consequences most often mentioned, particularly in the southern Basque Country. This is therefore somewhat subjective, and evidently, something to do with emotions. In this respect, they do not believe that said secessionist processes are directly or objectively reflected in Basque society in general or in the political sphere in particular. To a certain extent, the feeling that Euskal Herria has a long way to go, in comparison with Catalonia and Scotland, is widespread among those in favour of the Basque State. What's more, in some parts of Euskal Herria, the way is considered longer than in others. Let's see what a nationalist from the northern Basque Country has to say about this: *"I believe that if something is achieved in Scotland or in Catalonia, sooner or later, something will be achieved in the southern Basque Country. A number of years may be needed, but something is bound to happen there. In the northern Basque Country, on the other hand, the situation is different and I have little hope."* (13.T-Kanbo).

As we shall see, numerous hurdles are imagined on the road to sovereignty: the political past and, above all, the lack of unity among nationalist political parties are the ones most often mentioned.

This is not the case when the matter in question is the right to decide. The degree of legitimacy afforded to said right in all the discussion groups is truly striking. Citizens in favour of a Basque State speak openly of it and openly declare that it is a democratic right of the Basque people and, moreover, it is a simple matter of time before it is actually implemented: *"that*

¹⁵ All the statements from the group members are in English in this version. In appendix 1, you can check the language used by the groups.

is what people want in the end" (14.T-Bilbo). Unanimity is absolute with regard to the same, throughout the full spectrum of Basque nationalism. This is stated by a PNV voter: "Spain should concede the right to be what we want and it fails to do so. That's not democracy! This is how I see it: they are against democracy, from head to toe. For me, at this time, there is no democracy in Spain" (14.T-Bilbo); and a citizen close to the nationalist left: "Nowadays, speaking in terms of democracy, we do not have the right to decide" (6.T-Zarautz).

They used similar emphasis to assert that it is something that must be achieved *among us here*, and that we should not expect any solution from the Spanish political sphere, "I believe that no state-wide political party will allow us to decide for ourselves" (14.T-Bilbo).

An any rate, it must be pointed out that the right to decide is very often mistaken for achieving independence; in other words, it is taken for granted that if people attained this right, the result would undoubtedly be in favour of those voting yes. The possibility of a different result is not contemplated. In this respect, the right to decide is seen as a step towards the Basque State, with all types of obstacles being disregarded "When you do not have a state, what is the first objective? First of all, the right to decide and later we'll tackle the social model" (3.T-Donostia).

On the other hand, the future represented among nationalists in the northern Basque Country is that they are, to a certain extent, exercising the right to decide through the broad social consensus achieved in recent years on the territory's political status: "(...) this process is already under way" (E.1-Hazparne), explained a member of the nationalist left.

Opinions on the Basque State

Returning to what was previously said, although it may seem paradoxical, citizens in favour of a process for the construction of a Basque State are often hard put to specify what it would actually mean. This is something that we shall repeat over and over again in this section, as we can consider it one of the main conclusions to be drawn. Despite the aforesaid, they were asked if they considered the creation of a Basque State possible and where they believe the main obstacles would lie. They did their best to answer.

Is it seen as a real option?

People are sometimes optimistic when speaking about the future, without being overly specific about the possible consequences of a given political structure "I think we have acquired the right to independence down through so many years, as a nation. And for better or for worse, we shall get ahead..." (14.T-Bilbo). Independence is a theme frequently spoken of and quite naturally and, although the world is today divided into nation-states, they fail to assign a given political and administrative structure to the concept of independence. Evidently, this is a sign that the concept of a Basque State is still not widely considered by Basque citizenry. Similarly, more than once, the terms independence, self-determination and the Basque State are interchanged as if they were synonyms because, at heart, what they want is freedom for the Basque people but are incapable of giving political meaning to this wish. At all events, it must be said that it is in sectors close to the PNV where this difficulty is more apparent, whereas, for the followers of the nationalist left, the concept appears to be more familiar. There is no doubt that many of them are capable of imagining a *classical* state, with all that it implies. According to this rational and highly politicised view, the future state will not be a paradise, but rather the precondition in order to survive as a nation. "Simply put, I want a state like they have everywhere else, because we have the right to it." (6.T-Zarautz). And they are fully aware that a Basque State could have undesired consequences: "What I would ask of a Basque State is that it not have an army." (6.T-Zarautz).

Due to the fact that it is difficult for them to imagine the end of a hypothetical pro-sovereignty process, Basque nationalists speak of the path towards the finishing line and see it as something of long duration and costly, with many obstacles, because, among other things, different stages will have to be overcome. "I believe that we have to fight hard; first of all, in order to attain these competences and then to achieve self-determination or independence" (14.T-Bilbo). Furthermore, in the case of some PNV followers, the obstacles in the Spanish political sphere are an insurmountable obstacle, not only for the construction of a state, but also in order to be able to exercise the right to self-determination. "I have my doubts, but I believe that we are dependent on the Spanish constitution in order to be able to decide, and what is currently happening in Catalonia is very complicated

because, to start with, it is unconstitutional..." (14.T-Bilbo). Nevertheless, this is not the greatest obstacle mentioned by most citizens close to Basque nationalism, however real and objective it may be. Much more *sophisticated*, let's say, more meditated, doubts are often raised. Generally speaking, the level of ideologization or politization is a definitive variable when becoming aware of certain obstacles. Put another way, the greater the political reflection on the subject, the more aware citizens are of the possible difficulties in the process of construction of a Basque State.

An impossibility with all seven provinces at the same time

Which territories would make up a hypothetical Basque State? When asked this question, nationalists respond without hesitation that the Basque State would be made up of the *seven provinces*; but, according as the discussion progresses, the doubts arise. The first refers to the fact that it is not very clear who would be able to exercise this right to self-determination. "... well, at this juncture, it is not very realistic. We don't even know who the subject is: is the subject the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country? And what would happen with Navarre? Not to mention the northern Basque Country!" (3.T-Donostia).

Insofar as the Basque national identity and Basque nationalism itself is not considered as dominant in Navarre and in the northern Basque Country, the Basque Autonomous Community is the only territory not questioned. The path leading to the Basque State necessarily starts in the BAC. The following is an example, part of a discussion among PNV followers in the Bilbao discussion group;

"-Yes, with the seven provinces. /-And if the seven cannot be included, then the four in the south. /-That's right, the four here. /-But there must be seven because the seven are Basque. /-That's true but they belong to another state. /-I mean if you fight for the Basque Country's independence... the Basque Country has seven provinces, not four. /-Once we are independent we can fight for.../-And we leave the others for then, right? /-No, when they want to decide. Navarrese society will also decide. The right to decide must be for everybody" (14.T-Bilbo).

It goes without saying that the greatest difficulty resides in the possibility of the northern Basque Country joining this process. The idea that, in the northern Basque Country, a *different speed* is required would appear to be a firm opinion among Basque nationalists in this territory. They are satisfied with recently attained achievements and with the growing number of people who adhere to their proposals – among them, those relating to the Basque language and the Laborantza Ganbara (Chamber of Agriculture)– but they are quite clear that Basque nationalists are a minority and, consequently, the majority of the population would not be in favour of independence, if they were given the option. *"Perhaps we should start with small objectives in order to attract the majority."* (13.T-Kanbo). In the words of a member of the nationalist left in the northern Basque Country, the process will not be possible in the short term: *"... the political and institutional structure is important, but it is not everything, and, in my opinion, in the northern Basque Country, we have not reached the state stage..."* (E.1-Hazparne). This person even considers it inopportune to foment discussion on the subject, as, in their opinion, first of all, one will have to clarify throughout Euskal Herria what kind of relation should exist, within the pro-sovereignty process, between the different territories.

Therefore, while nationalists have a very clear idea about which territories would make up a hypothetical Basque State, they are also very much aware of the characteristics of the different political and social situations in each territory. Moreover, although it is not clearly stated, it is suggested that the only way to ensure the success of the process is to carry it out *in stages*, though this may not be to their complete satisfaction. In our opinion, worthy of mention is the place this idea holds today in the discourse of some nationalists. This undoubtedly reflects the internal evolution of recent years within some sectors of Basque nationalism; even if it means, and it must be said once again, a sort of concession on the part of many nationalists *"...they [the Catalans] have capitulated in the case of Valencia... We can do nothing without Navarre and we do not dare."* (3.T- Donostia).

An impossibility with a divided nationalist world.

The idea of unity among all nationalists is not, in fact, something new. It does, however, gain strength or weaken depending on the different circumstances.

As far as the creation of a hypothetical Basque State is concerned, this unity is considered a *sine que non*. In fact, the lack of unity among the nationalist political options is mentioned over and over again, particularly in sectors close to the nationalist left. The existing conflict between this branch of nationalism and that represented by the PNV is considered detrimental. Nevertheless, the influence of the past is understood, "...our burden is the prisoners, and the armed struggle is out there, awaiting closure..." (3.T-Donostia). With a tone denoting a certain degree of hopelessness, they question the fact that, in the political arena, political leaders are taking these new possibilities seriously. Some citizens point out that Catalonia has shown us the way, because they were able to overcome the conflict between the left and the right. "There may be contradictions but they are currently supporting [Artur] Mas. Here no." (3.T-Donostia). Moreover, we need to learn an important lesson from the Catalan process, according to some Basque citizens, because the Catalans were able to attract non-pro-independence sectors in society. This idea repeatedly crops up, together with the following: success in the Catalan process lies in social mobilisation, above and beyond political activity. They worked on making a homeland, they built the *demos*, they have a strong civil society, and this does not happen in Basque society whose political representatives fail to reach the Catalans' positive rating.

Nevertheless, certain sectors fiercely argue that the key lies in the political arena:

"In my opinion, the parties in Catalonia knew when the right moment had arrived. It is true that the movement goes beyond the political parties and that, I believe, is an advantage, as regards the discourse. However, in my view, play is in the political arena, just like here and in Scotland." (6.T-Zarautz).

In this way, not only does unity between the nationalist political parties become inevitable but also indispensable if the objective is to attract citizens who are not nationalists; that is, if one wants to bring around those who are not completely convinced. "How are we to attract... those who may be on the fence if we are incapable of unity among ourselves, if we ourselves are not clear about things?" (3.T-Donostia).

In favour of the Basque State? Based on what?

Such nationalists as support a Basque State were asked to be more precise about this stance: Why a Basque State? In other words, they were asked to imagine if, in their view, the economic situation would be better, if the state would be more transparent and democratic, if fairer social policies would be implemented, if the Basque language would have more safeguards, or, generally speaking, if citizens would live in greater harmony in a hypothetical Basque State. Below are their opinions.

No great changes in the economic sphere

Generally speaking, we cannot say that the economic argument was an important topic in the discussion groups. It was most prominent among nationalists in the northern Basque Country, which goes to show, in our opinion, that this is the one of the features currently used to win people over in this territory in the quest for a new political and administrative status. So much so that it would seem as if the political dimension of a hypothetical process of national liberation were in the background, that is, behind its social and economic dimension. "... for me, the state is not a totem; for me, the true concept is sovereignty and it seems to me that this subject has some valuable derivations in the social and economic sphere." (E.5-Hazparne).

They believe that by presenting a programme offering an improved economic situation they will increase allegiance to a Basque State: "A programme that speaks of the local economy and development. It can be explained to citizens that if we had a state, there would be an end to the relocation of jobs implied by the French State. Civil servants would not need to move away from our town, they would be close to their families; and, on the other hand, it would help the economic development of our people... health and education policies would be reinforced..." (13.T-Kanbo).

However, in the southern Basque Country, the economic question does not receive so much attention, despite the fact that there are different social and economic levels within the groups, as well as some unemployed people. On the one hand, the citizens of the Basque Autonomous Community, and particularly those belonging to sectors close to the PNV, are firmly convinced that the economic crisis and political corruption (they frequently equate the two) are not so serious as in Spain. They

are happy, and even proud, of *what has been achieved here*, which can be seen as a clear example of the level of legitimacy reached by the autonomous community administration in this territory. They do not say that the economy will improve but neither do they say the contrary. When they are asked whether a Basque State could be detrimental for economic relations, their response is as follows, *"I do not think so. Which doors are closed to us? I am currently working with Belarus. And my colleague could be working with the United States, or another country. And I have nothing to do with them, but that's not a problem"* (14.T-Bilbo).

They believe that *we live well* in the Basque Country, *we do things properly*, so why would things be worse if we were to become a state? They are aware that there could be social and economic differences in a Basque State too, but they afford said state little capacity to actually have any power over the future of the economic situation; that is, in order to be able to remedy its vagaries: *"(...) this is determined by the economy and the capital each of us has in their pocket, the neighbourhood we live in..."* (14.T-Bilbo).

In sectors close to the nationalist left, there is no passionate reaction when issues which are strictly economic are mentioned. The reaction is different when, for example, questions relating to social policy are raised, in other words, when the economy and social justice are related; which will be discussed later. In short, these citizens share the idea that *we live well*, and therefore, to *live better* is not considered a fundamental reason for creating a Basque State, not, at least, from the merely economic point of view: *"... [a Basque State] should guarantee the happiness of all"* (6.T-Zarautz).

Having said that, it must be said that what we called the economic argument was likewise mentioned by certain people of nationalist left ideology, but this was not the general trend in these groups. It is those who express the greatest mistrust regarding the feasibility of the Basque State who mention the possible *collateral consequences*, in our opinion, directly related to the economic sphere. Moreover, this fear is sometimes expressed loud and clear: *"... Independence as such... I fail to see it at the moment, because I think it would cause more harm than good"* (14.T-Bilbo).

No revolution in social policy

Some of the people supporting the creation of a Basque State, particularly those close to the PNV, do not consider it fundamental for said state to implement more just and efficient social policies. As already pointed out, they are fully convinced that in the southern Basque Country (and, above all, in the Basque Autonomous Community) a highly significant degree of development and social welfare has been reached, in education and in health care. Let it be said once more, they are happy with what, in their view, has been achieved in Basque society *"(...) we have worked hard and well here"* (14.T-Bilbo); and, therefore, the design of new social policies is not an argument for justifying a new political structure.

Their way of thinking is clearly different from that of sectors close to the nationalist left. On the one hand, it is generally accepted that the creation of the Basque State will not be the result of socialist revolution nor will it have a socialist nature. *"In the Basque Country, we are not going to carry out a revolution and the social model... I am left wing and that's where I am coming from... but if we fix something it will be as a result of what we agree among ourselves. We are not going to carry out the socialist revolution... ours will necessarily be the European model"* (3.T-Donostia). The Basque State will therefore inevitably have to adjust itself to the characteristics of the rest of the European states. *We live in Europe* and the Basque State will have to conform to this type of social policy.

However, we do encounter people who highlight differences with respect to the ideological opinions of the nationalist left world and, in this sense, make the following demand: for us to be in favour of the Basque State there must necessarily be a different type of management. In this case, there is no chance of agreement between the different Basque nationalist movements

"One thing is to unify the national strategy and in this case I am convinced that it is vital that all nationalist parties come to an agreement. However, in the case of management, and in our country, many institutions take decisions every day on public policy... for management, the PNV's model is very different from that of the Nationalist Left" (3.T-Donostia).

However, in all cases, there seems to be a sort of wish or conviction that, in the Basque State, *things will be done better*. And

this will require the sacrifice of citizens: *"I am willing. I do not like the concept of socialism, but I believe in social justice and I believe that Basque society can be organised differently."* (6.T-Zarautz). Moreover, on occasions, great importance is attached to this question, but the idea of a new model of social policy in a future Basque State appears not have been greatly theorised as yet. The unease generated by this possible shortfall is evident in the words of this nationalist *"I do not want to spend the whole day talking about the national question, because I believe that the social question is much more important. And, in relation to this matter, I want us to be an alternative..."* (3.T-Donostia).

Language, a cause for concern

The people in favour of the Basque State show no lack of criteria when asked about which language would be spoken in this future political structure. In fact, it could be said that the question leaves no-one *indifferent*. This undoubtedly reflects the prominence acquired by the Basque language in Basque society and even more so in the nationalist world. Concern for the language's sorry situation is a subject that frequently crops up in the discussion groups, although no specific question was asked in this regard. Once it is raised, it immediately turns into a subject for discussion.

If we relate the Basque State and the language, we need to differentiate the two ways of understanding this relation. At the same time, within these two ways, there are striking differences between sectors close to the nationalist left and sectors who sympathise with the PNV. First of all, let's see what the first discourse consists of.

The main cause for concern is the current situation of the Basque language and to what extent having one's own state would be effective. Left-wing nationalists are convinced, with no reservations, that the Basque State will be effective in protecting the Basque language, because it is what makes Euskal Herria different; and, therefore, it will curb the current situation of the language *"... what differentiates us, above all, is language and identity. The only thing that will stop it from dying out altogether is the Basque State."* (6.T-Zarautz). Therefore, it is taken for granted that a new political structure will necessarily bring with it a new linguistic situation, although in what it will consist it is not explained in detail. So much so that... *"I am not worried about a national identity card once the Basque State is created; that is not going to make me more of a Basque, but I am concerned about being able to live as a Basque"* (6.T-Zarautz).

The main theme of the second set of reflections is the official status of the languages in a hypothetical Basque State. A substantial change is apparent as, leaving aside their desires, nationalists seem to be aware of the *true* reality of the Basque language. *"[They need to be official] the three languages spoken in Euskal Herria... One thing is what we would like and another is the reality"* (6.T-Zarautz).

One must abide by the current circumstances and, therefore, they imagine different stages in the linguistic policies of a possible Basque State, as *"... public workers who do not speak Basque will need time to learn it, we are not going to expel them because they do not speak it, right?"* (3.T-Donostia).

In the group discussions held in the northern Basque Country, the opinions are similar. Although great importance is attached to the language *"... for a people to exist, the people need to share their language and culture..."* (13.T-Kanbo), they believe that Basque could not be the sole official language, but would be so together with French. What's more, they are particularly concerned that in this respect one language is not seen to be an imposition over the other *"... I believe that we cannot do what the French have done with us; namely, impose a language"* (13.T-Kanbo).

Besides being aware of the reality, they often question the fact that Basque is Euskal Herria's only language, but they consider it inevitable that the Basque State give priority to its own, that is, Basque. That is what all states do.

"In principle, all three [official], necessarily. Spanish is also ours. French, not so much, but Spanish yes. At first, all three, but states tend to integrate them and standardise them... and for that you will need to support your own. I believe that French and Spanish are part of our heritage, but, in the end, you will support what is yours" (3.T-Donostia).

A sort of tension between reality and desire is often perceptible, which is reflected in the way people speak about the possible future relations that should exist between the different languages of the Basque State. In the opinion of some, the fact

that all three languages are official is seen as a risk for the survival of Basque. And not only that, on whose behalf must the future Basque State look out for the situation of Spanish and French speakers? One gets the impression that *we have to be cooler than anyone else... if we do have a state one day, its language will be Basque. It is not my wish to oppress anyone, I want a Basque State like all the other states*" (6.T-Zarautz).

The opinions and postures regarding this subject are quite different when people are close to the PNV. Not to mention the fact that nobody expresses their opposition to Basque; but personal obligation is relativized to a great extent, and, of course, the obligations of a possible Basque State. In this respect, the same concern as shown by sectors close to the Nationalist Left when imagining the language's future is not apparent: *"I probably don't feel like going to a Basque language school at my age. Maybe I'd prefer to do something else in my free time. And I'm not going to feel less Basque than others"* (14.T-Bilbo).

Due to the fact that the Basque language is not considered an indispensable element of Basque identity, the transmission of *Basque values*, namely, love for Euskal Herria, in a language other than Basque, is seen as something possible:

"I think it is unfair that someone who does not speak Basque for some reason or other and is an excellent professional is denied access to employment in the public sector because they do not speak Basque, when people fully transmit Basque values without knowing the language" (14.T-Bilbo).

However, this discourse is not the most frequent, as can be expected. Many nationalists in line with the PNV and in favour of the Basque State consider that Basque is the main characteristic of Basque identity and agree with *applying pressure* in favour of the language. This attitude is particularly clear in the case of the nationalists in the northern Basque Country: *"Language is what has to be defended... Yes, because language affords us identity."* (13.T-Kanbo). Otherwise, there could be a repetition of the Irish case: despite gaining Independence and Irish being an official language, they have failed to revive it. Despite everything, it is generally felt that the question of the language is thorny, to say the least: *"I believe that this is the most complicated matter with regard to independence... The question is that one of the things that marks a people's identity is language, so..."* (14.T-Bilbo).

It is particularly striking that, in the groups in the southern Basque Country, bilingualism, or the idea that both Basque and Spanish may be official, is mentioned as if it were wishful thinking, and fail to mention the linguistic rules existing in the Basque Autonomous Community, despite frequently mentioning the fact that pupils in this territory's educational system actually manage to learn Basque. And, once again, when speaking of the official language of a possible Basque State, they often have in mind only the territory of the southern Basque Country: *"Everybody would be able to speak Spanish. Basque is what identifies us, we will have to know it"* (14.T-Bilbo).

It will be more democratic

Conservative nationalists find it hard to answer the question about whether the Basque State will be more transparent and, in general, they mention that future politicians will be different; there will be less corruption... etc. Corruption is set to disappear eventually; it is not, therefore, a characteristic that is associated *per se* with the Basque State.

However, those in the Nationalist Left see a close relation between the Basque State and democracy; among other reasons because they consider the Spanish State to be deeply anti-democratic, *a consequence of an empire*. This is not the case of Basque society, they state. *"Here, people participate and are involved in the community and... there is political culture... it is a tradition."* (3.T-Donostia). Moreover, as Euskal Herria is a small country, the conditions are excellent for democracy to function.

Consequently, it can be said that, for this sector, to a certain extent, the Basque State will necessarily be more democratic, irrespective of its political policy or the different structures it may have in the future, because the starting point is an anti-democratic situation and there is already a high degree of citizen participation in Basque society. People are fully convinced that the future Basque State will be democratic and that it will be created by democratic means:

"... My thinking is democratic and I am a democrat; therefore, I believe that the Basque State will be attained by means of democracy and, as democracy will guarantee democratic functioning among us, we shall live well... on

creating a Basque State, de facto, we shall have reached a much more democratic situation, we shall have a greater chance of living together in harmony" (6.T-Zarautz).

State and national: who will the Basque citizens be?

This subject matter helped us analyse two things. First of all, with what is Basque identity identified besides the Basque language? Secondly, how do those who are in favour of the Basque State imagine the coexistence of different national identities? They were asked to try and differentiate nation and state; in other words, to try and imagine the place of a citizen who feels Spanish or French in a hypothetical Basque State.

The nationalists in the northern Basque Country were probably the ones who responded most directly to the question. Who would the Basque citizen be? *"The same question as always... in my opinion, the ones living here" (13.T-Kanbo).*

However, in general, nationalists cite aspects related to identity to justify their adherence to the Basque State. They mention, for example, the fact of belonging to the Basque nation, that is, a feeling of being Basque which they fail to clarify: *"What I have always thought is that I am not Spanish, and I want independence because I am Basque..." (6.T-Zarautz).*

It is clear that the followers of the nationalist left are very familiar with the subject and that they have thought about it, and have developed a political discourse on it. However, their explanations reveal two postures. The first links sentiment – that is, national identity – to citizenry, in the classic nation state style: *"I believe that identity gives Euskal Herria the right to organise itself as a state. So, everybody who feels Basque should be a member of the Basque State..." (6.T-Zarautz).* In our opinion, they do not expect there to be citizens who do not feel Basque, among other reasons, because they do not want to place obstacles in the path of the process. In this way, the conflict is bypassed by resorting to a purported open attitude. This equation is also made between territory and national identity: *"(...) for now, I am convinced that the seven provinces have the right (to form a state), because their identity is Basque" (6.T-Zarautz).*

This type of approach is striking when at other moments during the discussion, the interviewees seem to be totally aware of the fact that the strength of national sentiment is not the same in all the territories and, on the basis of that, the impossibility of all seven provinces joining the process *at the same time* is argued. Nevertheless, when asked what they would be willing to do, for example, to win people from the Ribera region in Navarre over, this is how they reply: *"We need to explain to them that in a Basque State they will be free to choose their identity, a freedom they currently do not enjoy." (6.T-Zarautz).* This line of thought based on national identity is firm and leaves no room for doubt, as it assigns Basque identity to all citizens and all territories, without exception.

Traditionally, the most powerful arguments within Basque nationalist thinking have been those relating to identity. One of the members of a discussion group reflected on the same and demonstrated to perfection the tendencies that have been developing lately in the heart of left-wing nationalism. We cite their words:

"up to very recently, there were two ways to identify the state: The German one, linked to identity; and the other, the French one, which is the expression of a contract. Ours has always been associated with the German one and only lately have we considered combining the two types of arguments" (6.T-Zarautz).

We have already pointed out that two currents can be distinguished regarding citizenry and national identity. The informants who we place in the second group are fully aware that there could be different national identities in a hypothetical Basque State, and they are somehow capable of distinguishing between national identity and citizenry. At any rate, we can find numerous perceptions of these stances. One attitude is understanding it as something *natural*: the political conflict has been settled, and relations between all the citizens will develop without any problems. Possible conflict between identities is thus toned down, by arguing that said conflict has existed only in the political sphere, and not in society as a whole. *"Two communities do not exist here. ... There is no conflict in society, the conflict is political, it is with the State... And, in my opinion, that's where our conflict is. Not with people, not socially... that's why I see no problem" (3.T-Donostia).*

Nevertheless, in the opinion of some, it would also be part of the situation's *normality* for people who do not share national identity to have to adjust to the Basque State's political functioning, just like what occurs today with those who feel Basque

nationalists. *"you see it is the same as what happens with us. We do not feel Spanish and... we live in a state that is not ours."* (3.T-Donostia). Thus, without giving it much thought, they apply the current situation to the future: *"If the majority want to be independent, then the others will have to accept it. On the contrary too, even though I am pro-independence, I would have to hold my tongue and accept it"* (14.T-Bilbo). In this way, although there are different national sentiments, *we would all be equal* in a Basque State. Therefore, the Basque citizen will be the *one who wishes it to be like that*, state some Basque nationalists in the northern Basque Country and, put more clearly *"(...) two nationalities could be accepted"* (13.T-Kanbo).

Coexistence will improve. The idea of two different national identities living side by side is no cause for despair. *"The Spanish will go on being Spanish in Euskal Herria, and the French, French, etc. This, in my opinion, is the discourse to develop, the Spanish will definitely be happier in an independent Euskal Herria"* (6.T-Zarautz).

However, some see the future and this matter as complex and generating conflict. Those sharing this opinion are worried about the possibility of repeating what happens today. *"All I hope for is that if one day we can govern, we do not do what the French and Spanish have done with us"* (3.T-Donostia).

More than once we have said that it is difficult to imagine the Basque State and, consequently, it is also hard to imagine the political status corresponding to an organisation of this kind; namely, the citizenry, separate from national identity. Said mental exercise is so complex that, when asked who the Basque citizens will be, some members of the conservative nationalist movement speak of immigration because, as we understand it, they appear to be unable to imagine different political statuses among the Basque population. And, once the subject is mentioned, their stance is categorical: immigrants are welcome in Euskal Herria; so in the future too. *"My family came from Extremadura in 1959 and they came because they had nothing there. They've lived here all their life and... my parents vote for the PNV. They have always been made welcome..."* (14.T-Bilbo). Euskal Herria (Euskadi, in their own words) is made up of people from different origins but they live in harmony. They criticise political organisations linked to Spanish nationalism for using immigration for political purposes: *"The only people who strive to perpetuate the idea that migrants will be ignored are the state-wide parties. We do not turn anyone away here"* (14.T-Bilbo).

OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS AGAINST A BASQUE STATE

We shall now analyse the opinions and perceptions that we gathered in opposition to the creation of a Basque State. To this end, we based ourselves on eight discussion groups, made up of people against this project for building a state as well as others who do not have a clear position with regards to the same. Therefore, the opinions are diverse; and, among these views, we focused on the most common discourses that were opposed to a Basque State. Generally speaking, we are referring to informants who are not overly concerned about the question under discussion. They are happy with the current political and administrative organisation, or, at least, they are not particularly interested in, or even show a certain mistrust for, the idea of a Basque State. For these people, the Basque State is not viable, and, as a hypothetical option, they see it as being fraught with problems; among the most important are those relating to difficulties of an economic nature. Along with these key factors concerning non-viability and economic instability, questions relating to national identity and the Basque language are likewise highlighted. In short, in this section we shall analyse aspects that are underlined – or may be crucial depending on the context – against the idea of the Basque State.

Opinions on pro-sovereignty processes in the world

Among our interviewees, the case of Catalonia is unanimously cited as an example of the new pro-sovereignty processes. On fewer occasions, Scotland or other examples (Crimea, Corsica, etc.) are mentioned. In the discourses opposed to the Basque State, the Spanish perspective predominates –in the case of the southern Basque Country–, and that is why Catalonia is mentioned; the case of Scotland –frequently mentioned in the media during the course of the research– is seen as being very distant. In the case of the northern Basque Country, the opposite occurs, and Scotland is mentioned more often than Catalonia.

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Nevertheless, when they speak of Scotland, they are more positive than when they speak of Catalonia “because they were independent in the past”. On the other hand, when they speak of Catalonia, the view is predominantly negative, and links the Catalan pro-independence movement to a somewhat false and tactical nature. Thus, Scotland is linked to history, and Catalonia, to the economy.

Similarly, among the informants opposed to the Basque State, the view contrary to these pro-sovereignty processes developed in other countries prevails. This point of view is expressed in different ways, depending on the informants’ knowledge of politics, their ideologization or social and cultural level, among other questions. As far as Catalonia is concerned, some base their discourse on the perspective of identity, and state that Spain cannot be divided, while others defend a *federal model*, etc. Nevertheless, above and beyond the different readings on Catalonia, the idea that Catalan independence would imply a certain “absence of solidarity” prevails: “*I think it all boils down to the question of economics, and in the Catalan case, even more so. When all is said and done, they are looking for a tax system like ours*” (2.T-Barakaldo).

Consequently, and as we shall see later on, for informants opposed to independence, the Scottish and Catalan cases are scarcely relevant; and, when regarding the same, they suggest that they only bring conflict and problems. Thus, by way of example, and perhaps to belittle the Catalan pro-sovereignty process, they highlight the origin of many members of the pro-independence movement:

“... as for Catalonia, I lived in Barcelona for a year and I have to say that there is a syndrome of maladjustment because in Catalonia, Catalans make up 10%, most of them are Galicians, Andalusians and from Murcia. The thing is that a lot of people that come here to integrate are the most Catalan and the most radical” (8.T-Iruñea).

At the same time, and linking these processes with presumed *manipulation* of the population, they point out the Catalan pro-independence movement’s capacity to win people with Spanish national sentiment over to their project, while mentioning aspects like deceit and a certain amount of confusion around the project itself:

“pro-independence groups are creating certain confusion. They are confusing this majority who do not feel very Catalan. I believe that they are confusing people, and that’s why a large majority voted in favour of independence... so I do not think it is real, I think they are confusing people regarding what is Catalan and Spanish and independence” (9.T-Bilbo).

A final point in relation to the reactions which pro-sovereignty processes of other territories generate among informants opposed to the Basque State is that concerning the relevance too of other kinds of more qualified opinions. For example, some informants, from a left-wing position, underline the differences with these processes, rather than expressing a contrary opinion; and, at the same time, they link these processes – together with pro-independence movements and *nationalism*, in general – to the interests of the *ruling classes*:

“... the process in Catalonia does not greatly interest me. They want to be independent? Well, let them be independent! It’s all the same to me! They are not going to be allowed! Because we live in a world where it is not allowed. And I don’t see it as possible in economic terms, as viable... (...) I think that these processes are... in this case and this one here [concerning Navarre or the southern Basque Country] ... I think that they are very close to the middle class, very class-related, that’s why they do not interest me much.” (4.T-Iruñea)

Parallels with Euskal Herria.

As far as the relation between the abovementioned pro-sovereignty processes or the process that could develop in Euskal Herria

is concerned, those in the survey opposed to the Basque State affirm that the process in Catalonia would, in any case, be more relevant than the Basque one (either because of Catalonia's economic clout, or because of how far advanced they see the pro-independence process there, among other reasons). This was the main opinion in these groups, with the exception of the case of Navarre. In this case, they see greater similarity between the Scottish case, in all probability for the importance of the historical arguments and the historicism in the discourse against the Basque State in Navarre. Thus, the Scottish case is highlighted from a historicist view, and the opinion is that a referendum on independence can be carried out in said territory because Scotland was a sovereign state in the past.

On the right to decide

Among the groups in the survey opposed to the Basque State, the right to decide was not considered an issue of priority and failed to arouse any great interest: *"For me it is a right, but it is a secondary right, there are other more important ones."* (7.T-Gasteiz). Nevertheless, in general, people were in favour of this right to decide, although it may not have been expressed in so many words. One could say it is an abstract favourable stance, as it is accepted as a general principle but, when specified, doubts as well as contrary opinions arise. Thus, on some occasions, a positive view of the right to decide is qualified when they reject the possibility of implementing it: *"I think all peoples have the right to decide, but with certain connotations: you can't go to a referendum and tell people to vote for independence without telling them the effects that independence could have (...)"* (8.T-Iruñea). Consequently, it would appear that even those against the right to decide would find it hard to show their opposition to a concept which, in itself, is accepted by the majority of society; or, at least, it is as though there were no clear social discourse opposing the right to decide.

In general, those opposed to the Basque State underline the need to define the right to decide:

"... I would like them to tell me what more they have to say about the right to decide apart from that... which I think is nothing more than a marketing slogan... I would like to know what they want to decide and what kind of a relationship with Europe they want and why the need to leave Spain" (2.T-Barakaldo).

And, at the same time, this person states – and it appears to be an important idea for these informants – that there is no need for a referendum in Euskal Herria; and, in the event of it being held, the result would not be favourable for a Basque State:

"I think that it is fair. If, with this right, in a referendum, a majority voted in favour of being independent, together with the Basque Country, I would have to be silent and put up with it. However, I doubt that would happen here in Navarre..." (8.T-Iruñea).

Nonetheless, hypothetical results aside, a significant idea shared by the groups opposed to a Basque State is the fact that the law prevents the exercise of the right to decide, and this argument is decisive when specifying the initial position in favour of the right in question: *attempting to apply the right to decide without amending the Constitution is non-viable.*" (8.T-Iruñea). Therefore, they argue that a change in Spanish legal framework is necessary in order to implement this right. Last of all, and particularly in the case of the groups in Navarre, history is used as an argument to support this opposition to the right to decide. Thus, they say that, above and beyond citizens' right or decision, there are other reasons:

"... on mere will, and I am not questioning will, creating something on voluntarism... is not the same as recovering something which in the past would have been very familiar [in relation to Catalonia in the first case, and, Scotland, in the second one]. This is important because if we are going to found it solely on the will of the people, defining majorities and the territorial boundaries will need to be tackled" (4.T-Iruñea).

On opinions about a Basque State

Among the groups studied herein, opposition to a Basque State is general, with different arguments used to justify this

stance. Some are based on ideology, that is, they state that pro-sovereignty or nationalist processes – in reference to stateless nationalism – are by definition negative realities: *“Do you know what happens with pro-sovereignty movements? Apart from generating segregation, borders, they discriminate against people...”* (7.T-Gasteiz). Apart from these categorical opinions, other arguments, as we shall see, are likewise put forward.

A Basque State is not possible

Among our informants, the main argument in the discourse opposed to the Basque State is the poor success expected of said project. This opinion is supported by different aspects; for example, there is no social demand, a referendum on this issue would not be won, or the state is not viable due to a variety of reasons: due to the European Union's refusal or its impossibility under the French or Spanish legal framework, among others. *“I would like to know the manner in which the referendum would be held, to ensure it is fully constitutional and have a legal basis, so that this nation can be acknowledged internationally and nationally.”* (12.T-Baiona). Similarly, in general terms, citizens opposed to the Basque State do not see this project as being possible: *“For me [a Basque State] is political fiction!”* (9.T-Bilbo).

It is not feasible to defend a Basque State. The idea that Basque society does not want this project is central among our informants, even though, at the same time, they claim that there is great demand for a referendum on this question: *“as for an independent Basque State... I do see a referendum being held. Another thing is... what would the outcome be? I think that the no vote would lead”* (2.T-Barakaldo). Therefore, among these groups, the proposal for a Basque State is seen as a question of “nationalist” people, and not of “non-nationalist” people; and, therefore, they see it as an impossible project: *“I believe that at this time it has little potential, I don't see it as being viable”* (7.T-Gasteiz). The Basque State is seen as a project pertaining to some people with a specific ideology (they mention Basque nationalists, *abertzales*, or some of them), but not to ordinary people.

Alongside this opinion is the view among the informants in Navarre of the Basque State as something foreign to Navarre (the Navarrese State, except for a few exceptions, was mentioned only when certain questions were asked by the researcher). According to this view, the debate on the Basque State is a question that is incumbent on the citizens of the Basque Autonomous Community; and, if the question is raised in Navarre, it is clearly stated that it would have little potential in the Foral Community: *“I would happily bet my life on it that if a referendum were held in Navarre on whether we want to create a state together with the Basque Country, the answer would be no, and by absolute majority”* (8.T-Iruñea). However, and despite the fact that some of them state that the debate on the state itself is unrelated to Navarre, there is significant debate on the importance of Basque nationalism in this territory in the groups.

In the case of the northern Basque Country, this type of argument is not so common. They cite democratic reasons, above all, when they affirm that a Basque State is impossible. To be precise, they emphasize the fact that, if a referendum were ever held on the question, it should be based on the French constitution, so that the result is binding and legitimate; and, consequently, they say all the citizens of the Republic should take part: *“My opinion is clear in this respect. I believe that the process is something that concerns everybody. I am referring to all the French. And according to the constitution, this referendum and this decision should be the result of engagements made by the citizens, citizens' votes, those of all French citizens.”* (12.T-Baiona). In this case, the Basque State is presented as a totally unrealistic project.

Therefore, one line of opinion underlines the fact that society does not support a project for a Basque State, or expressed in democratic terms, the majority of society would not be in favour of said project. Furthermore, the very idea of a Basque State seemed strange to some of those interviewed. However, above all, the most common opinion among these groups is that said project has no chance of succeeding.

Political as well economic arguments are used to explain that the actual structure that would be created under the name of Basque State, not to mention the political project, would not be viable. The latter are important, as are the grounds of their discourse: *“I believe that Scotland, Catalonia or the Basque Country would not be viable because investors do not support you, and if they fail to support you, you are lost, like Greece.”* (9.T-Bilbo). As for political reasons, some groups cite the lack of unity among Basque nationalists, and others, the fact that the PNV will not promote such a project, among other ideas.

At the same time, another relevant question is the European Union, and more precisely, the believe that a hypothetical

Basque State would be expelled from the Union, or Spain would stand in the way of their becoming a member, "... because from the moment when you become an independent state, you leave the European Union, with all the advantages and disadvantages of leaving the EU" (8.T-Iruñea). This opinion is general among informants opposed to a Basque State, and also among those who do not have a clear opinion in this respect:

"... but as I understand it, if you create a new state you go to the back of the queue of countries wishing to join the European Union. That is, today you cannot be an automatic member of the European Union if you become independent" (10.T-Portugaleta).

"if it's a question of deciding, we can decide whatever we wish. The problem is what happens after, with the consequences it may have. If we separate from Spain, then how do we join the European Union? Because if we are not a member of the European Union, we cannot do anything" (11.T-Arrasate).

In short, it would appear that the idea of the non-viability of a Basque State predominates due to objective authorities acting above the will of Basque citizens: The European Union, French and Spanish laws, etc. Once you have dismembered the French nation, once you have harmed territorial integrity guaranteed by the Constitution, I see no legal basis for legitimising a referendum which is only held in the Basque Country." (12.T-Baiona).

The Basque State, a source of problems: a worsened economy

Informants opposed to a Basque State give great importance to the economic question. Thus, two lines of argument can be differentiated in this respect. On the one hand is a view according to which a new state in Euskal Herria would not bring any significant changes relating to the economic sphere. For example, in the group in Baiona, in the northern Basque Country, some people underline the fact that a Basque State would not guarantee that it would be economically independent or sovereign, because this idea is considered utopian; among other questions, due to the current financial interdependence: "... when it is known that nowadays banks depend on American banks, any subject here seems rather utopian, you understand what I mean..." (12.T-Baiona). Therefore, considering that a Basque State would not give rise to any economic improvements on the current situation leads many informants to express their opposition to the idea of their own state.

On the other hand, there is a second line of discourse according to which the economic situation would not be similar, but rather would significantly worsen. The fact of the matter is that the view that the economic situation would worsen in a Basque State is widespread in these groups: *"I am convinced that it would be an economic disaster."* (7.T-Gasteiz). This idea is put forward without further elaboration, in a simple fashion; but it does appear to be an important idea, as a hypothetical Basque State is associated with lack of stability and a situation affected by the conflict, all of which accompanied by a worsening economy: *"It is true that money is short, it is evident, it flees conflict zones and then..."* (9.T-Bilbo).

It is a widespread opinion among informants opposed to a Basque State, and it is a crucial argument against independence. Thus, this idea prevails over sentiment (in reference to the national identity): *"In my opinion with Europe the way it is (...) this is not a good time for fragmentation. Emotionally speaking, yes, but in the economic and political spheres it is rather like playing Russian roulette"* (9.T-Bilbo).

What's more, within this overall view, more concrete questions, such as pensions, are specified. Thus, some informants appear to be convinced that, in a pro-independence process, pensions would be negatively affected or at risk (often citing the importance of this debate in the Scottish referendum): *"But if there is a segregation, the Social Security system might collapse. And all those drawing a pension here may not be able to do so. (...) In other words, the economy would suffer with this idea [the Basque State]"* (9.T-Bilbo). Consequently, the economy is central to the discourse on a Basque State, and, linked to the economic downturn is the decline in the population's standard of living, although the lack of information in this respect is likewise underlined: *"Euskadi too exports a lot, but I think they should clarify in economic terms how we would provision ourselves, etc. For me, a lot more data is necessary"* (9.T-Bilbo).

Therefore, most people in these groups share the view that the economy would disimprove in a Basque State. However, paradoxically, when faced with the hypothesis that a better economy would be guaranteed in a Basque State, opinion changes. Moreover, they stress the fact that, if they change their opinion with respect to a pro-independence process, they would do so

only for economic reasons, without further explanation. The truth is that, in general, they consider the matter of a Basque State as a question pertaining to *nationalists*:

"(...) if someone is really capable of convincing us with the idea that a new, different and original productive system will be created, well, maybe we shall all be happy with the flag, me included. If they show me that I am going to live better than I do..." (9.T-Bilbo).

"If they can assure me, which I doubt, that, by voting pro-independence, we are going to have a better social and economic future, I shall be the first to vote yes" (7.T-Gasteiz).

If things are going well, why change?

Another predominant argument when taking up a stance in opposition to a hypothetical Basque State, apart from the opinion that the economic situation would worsen, is the positive assessment of the current social situation. In other words, although views differ regarding the living conditions of the population (the idea that *people live better* in Euskal Herria predominates), in the group discussions held in the southern Basque Country, it is frequently stated that *here* people live better than in Spain. However, this opinion is not linked to a desire for independence; on the contrary, the positive assessment of the current social situation in the Basque Country becomes a central argument against a Basque State: if we are alright now, why change?

On the basis of this positive view, the benefits of the existing autonomous community structure, both in the Foral Community of Navarre and in the Basque Autonomous Community, are underlined. The large number of devolved competences in the aforementioned territories, particularly in the economic terrain. Therefore, it is affirmed that the Basque State is not necessary, because no benefit is appreciated and, in this way, the need for the project is rejected. The following paragraphs are a sample of this discourse:

"I think that [Navarre] should be in Spain because in Spain it works more or less well, with its own code of laws, etc." (8.T-Iruñea).

"If we are saying that we, with our own money, cannot do in our own Foral Community what we like, other than that I do not know what independence means" (8.T-Iruñea).

"[The BAC] It is one of the most independent autonomous communities in the world" (9.T-Bilbo).

In this respect, among other ideas, the view that people lead better lives in the BAC than in Spain, that there is less corruption, political matters are better managed, etc. is widespread. These opinions are expressed in many groups, but, in the case of people opposed to a Basque State, they do not relate them to a need for independence, but, instead, praise the current autonomic framework in order to reject the need for a new state: *"... I am proud to be here, to be born here and to see that things are going better here than elsewhere, but, I do not see the feasibility outside this context of an autonomous community."* (9.T-Bilbo).

With respect to the question of a hypothetical Basque State being more democratic, in most cases, informants only respond when a question is raised by the researcher; that is, it cannot be considered an important subject. The fact is that informants do not believe that, in a hypothetical Basque State, there will be substantial changes regarding the democratisation of politics: *"I do not believe that the distance between politicians and citizens will close to any degree"* (2.T-Barakaldo). What's more, when the question of its possible democratic working is mentioned, the subject of the political conflicts or expected problems in relation to coexistence arise, as we shall see below.

The Basque language: between normality and mistrust

Among the informants opposed to a Basque State, we can appreciate different views on the Basque language or on the future situation regarding language. These views can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, we have those for whom the

Basque language is not important and, therefore, they believe that the sociolinguistic situation of Basque in a Basque State will simply be a prolongation of the current one. On the other hand, we have those for whom Basque is related to the notion of *imposition*, either as something currently imposed, or with future problems foreseen in an independent state.

Most of the groups state the view that, in a Basque State, both languages – Basque and Spanish – would be official; French, on the other hand, is not mentioned among the groups in the southern Basque Country, in all probability because these informants' reference is the BAC or the FCN. In the northern Basque Country, on the other hand, both French and Basque are mentioned, while emphasising the fact that it would be difficult to reach a balance between both languages. On the one hand, some believe that French would still be the predominant language in an independent state; however, on the other hand, other informants assume that, in a Basque State, Basque would be imposed and French speakers would lose some of their rights.

In this context, bilingualism is defended as a characteristic of Euskal Herria –or of the Basque Autonomous Community and, to a lesser degree of the Foral Community of Navarre–; and the view of Euskal Herria as a monolingual, solely Basque-speaking country is rejected: “... I believe, as you say, that my country is bilingual and has always been so, except in prehistoric times. (...) That's not a major problem” (9.T-Bilbo). It would seem that this view predominates in these groups, where priority is not given to Basque and relations between the different languages does not become a problem.

On the other hand, some people in other groups express the idea that, in a Basque State, Basque would be the only official language and they declare themselves totally opposed to this situation. There are some who believe that the tendency to use only Basque in the administration will become more widespread but, at the same time, in society in general, Spanish will continue to predominate: “Spanish would not be lost as an everyday language or language used at home. But it would no longer be an official language” (2.T-Barakaldo).

Some informants do not go so far but they do believe that the *problems* related to language would be aggravated (because Basque would be given greater impetus than at present, for example), but they fail to elaborate on the nature of these problems. In this respect, the fact that Catalonia is often mentioned by those opposed to a Basque State is significant. In fact, in their view Catalan is *imposed* in this territory. When compared to Euskal Herria, they say that this is not the case in the BAC (9.T-Bilbo), though other informants do speak of the danger of imposing Basque, and, at the same time, question the utility of Basque: “if you do not speak Basque and they oblige you to ... Now if it were English, which is spoken by 800 million people... but Basque does not open many doors to employment outside this country...” (8.T-Iruñea).

In short, the negative view with respect to Basque, rather than to perceptions of the Basque State, is linked to debates on the current situation (they mention or complain that you need to speak Basque in order to be able to work in the Administration, for example). At the same time, though it cannot be considered a general discourse, there are some informants who mistrust the role that the Basque language would supposedly play in a future Basque State: “[Basque nationalists] They would draw up their constitution, impose Basque as an official language and... democratically, as is the case for some matters, they play to the gallery (...) and if you don't like it then off with you and the rest of Spain” (2.T-Barakaldo).

Identities and social cohesion, weaknesses of the Basque State

Continuing with the reactions that the idea of a Basque State generates among our interviewees, it is clear that the demand for this state is seen as a matter for Basque nationalists and as a question of identity (these two being considered negative aspects), and not as a relevant subject for them or for those who are not Basque nationalists. Thus, they state that the only arguments in favour of independence are nationalism and national identity, giving no other reasons. Given the importance in these groups of the economic question as well as the subject of social coexistence, it would seem that, with this opinion, they seek to underline the weakness of the claim to a Basque State. In other words, the claim to a Basque State is seen as something unrelated to the matters which, for these informants, are crucial to their way of thinking. In some cases, this position is based on Spanish or French identity (the latter is not mentioned); whereas others do so without highlighting national identity –while not denying it either- and use the same force against independence. For example: “... I have never considered myself Spanish (...) Then, what I would like is for those who share a (Basque) nationalist sentiment to provide me with enough arguments to be able to think in a like fashion” (8.T-Iruñea).

In short, the claim to a Basque State is linked to sentiments and questions associated with identity; on the other hand, instead of being based on the Spanish identity, the discourse opposed to the independent state is frequently based on its differences with respect to *nationalisms* (the link this view has with Spanish nationalisms, albeit in its *banal* aspects, is something entirely different). In this respect, when speaking of the feeling of belonging, some informants stress their Spanish sentiment, and others their local identity: *"I do not consider myself Spanish, I consider myself a native of Bilbao, (...) and I consider myself European. But I personally do not see the middle ground between being Basque and Spanish"* (9.T-Bilbo). However, all roads lead to a discourse opposed to the Basque State.

Nevertheless, and although they speak of identity and the feeling of belonging, it must be stressed that the subject of citizenship is not a decisive one for informants. In general, they do not doubt that the current citizens of the Basque territories would likewise be citizens of a Basque State. The matter was discussed only following questions raised by the researcher, but only general doubts were heard in relation to the fact that the citizenship of a state is usually linked to the place of birth: *"I am from here because I was born here, but my parents were born in Salamanca. Would they be immigrants?"* (11.T-Arrasate). What's more, they underline the fact that there are many Basque nationalists who were born outside of Euskal Herria, *"many Bildu voters have surnames from the south [of Spain]"* (8.T-Iruñea); and, therefore, unlike what happens with the Basque language, in this section, we find fewer signs of mistrust.

The fact of the matter is that mistrust can be appreciated but not in relation to citizenship in a Basque State but in relation to coexistence in said state. As already mentioned, one of the keys in the discourse opposed to the Basque State is that this project is related to the conflict and the emergence of problems and, therefore, a significant opinion in this respect is a Basque State would have a negative effect on coexistence. For some, the conflict concerning what is national would not terminate with the creation of the Basque State, *"if, in the future, there could be a hypothetical Basque State, (...) some might start demanding annexation to Spain"* (9.T-Bilbo); whereas, for other, the risk of social divide would be extremely high:

"In principle, I am not against the people in Navarre having the right to decide but we could be faced with a Navarre being divided in two. (...) If citizens decide that we should be in an independent state, we will be an independent state, but if that day arrives, we shall have a serious problem in Navarre. We would be leaving dialectics behind to move onto another dimension" (8.T-Iruñea)

On Navarre

As far as Navarre is concerned, discourses and perceptions related to its political status and its relation with the Basque Country were analysed. The opinion that Navarre would be different from the Basque State was widespread among the abovementioned groups of informants in Navarre, although diverse arguments were used to support this. Among them, arguments based on history were highly significant, unlike in other territories: *"Navarre existed long before Spain and I do not think that Navarre should be the Basque Country"* (8.T-Iruñea).

During our quantitative research the people surveyed in Navarre were asked what they thought about strengthening ties with their territory and the BAC and if they would approve of the creation of a single administration for the southern Basque Country. Opposition to such an autonomous structure was apparent in these groups. They mentioned historical reasons as well as the fact that, in Navarre, demand for this autonomous structure is negligible or the fact that Navarre would be watered down in a structure made up by the four territories:

"I think that in the main people in Navarre do not want it [an autonomous community made up of four southern territories]. Secondly, because it is better (...) to be alone than having decisions made between four more, even though they're your first cousins. Therefore, that path would make things worse as far as competences and the like are concerned. It would also complicate even more the situation of the institutions" (4.T-Iruñea).

Apart from their opposition to an autonomous community formed by Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa and Navarre, these groups likewise showed little interest in strengthening ties with the BAC. Thus, the idea of improving relations with the territories in the southern Basque Country is linked to political, even pro-independence, interests, and this foments clear opposition: *"I think it would be a good thing to have a good relationship but let's leave the question of independence out of it"* (8.T-Iruñea). At the same time, when expressing support for increasing these relations, the BAC is likened to other territories bordering on Navarre,

and the concept of *Euskal Herria* –or its political meaning– is constantly denied: *“Having good relations with them [la BAC] ... why not? And with Aragon, why not?”* (8.T-Iruñea).

Having confirmed their rejection of the idea of a Basque State, we analysed their stance regarding a Navarrese State. The concept was put forward by the researcher, and only once was it mentioned spontaneously by an informant. In this case, the Navarrese State was referred to as a synonym of Basque State, a sort of Navarrese-style interpretation of *Euskal Herria*. However, the informants opposed to their own state understood the idea as a proposal for the creation of an independent state in Navarre. The most common view was that in Navarre there is no social demand for it, and, downplaying Basque nationalist proposals, it was affirmed *“The thing is here in Navarre nobody is talking about holding referendums or anything like that”* (8.T-Iruñea).

Moreover, in these groups, the development of a pro-independence process in the BAC is seen as something negative for Navarre. It is believed that it would destabilise the situation in the territory and different problems would arise, such as the risk of cantonisation (for example, if some Navarrese municipalities were to seek to join this independent state): *“I think it would affect us if they were to create it [a state with what is currently the BAC], although I think it is impossible if they are not subject to a decision. However, if they did manage to create it, it would generate major instability”* (4.T-Iruñea).

INTERMEDIATE GROUP: VARIABLE OPINIONS ON A BASQUE STATE

Having analysed opinions, perceptions and discourses developed in favour and against a Basque State, we shall now move on to a third group. This is plural and hard to define; in fact, its quality is its unspecific nature. We are referring to the opinions of informants on the Basque State who cannot be strictly categorised under those in favour or under those against; they make up the intermediate group of opinions regarding an independent state.

In the quantitative part of our research, this group was significant, which is why went on to analyse these sectors whose opinions were more dubitative or less strong in this qualitative section too. To this end, at first, informants who did not respond to a defined political identity participated; and, then informants with no defined opinion on a Basque State. A lack of interest in politics was evident among those interviewed. They see political questions from a distance, and show little interest in matters relating to the Basque national question. It must be pointed out that, in our opinion, the social status of those interviewed is closely related to their lack of interest or ignorance with respect to the abovementioned questions. In other words, the lower the social and cultural level, the greater the indifference shown and the greater too the ignorance with respect to the political world. This must be kept in mind in order to understand the opinions analysed below. Last of all, the high number of informants in these groups who gave no opinion is very significant. It was higher than that of the other profiles, which, once again, reveals the great distance with respect to the matter under discussion.

In short, we are referring to a group who has no strong arguments in favour or against a Basque State, and could change their opinion and hypothetical decision depending on the prevailing views in society in a given context. Nevertheless, some informants did reveal an interest in questions and debates, and these will be analysed below.

Lack of interest and indifference with respect to the question

Among the participants in these groups, there is a general lack of knowledge of other pro-sovereignty processes, which is not the case with the other discussion groups. They are not familiar with the cases, and Catalonia is only mentioned in a general sense. What's more, lack of interest and indifference with respect to politics is typical of this profile and they show no interest in a possible referendum or in other countries' demands for independence: *“It's all the same to me, let them do what they like, I won't be getting involved. I don't give a damn about them or anybody. I have no political opinion”* (10.T-Portugalete). Logically, they have no clear opinion about the consequences that the Catalan or Scottish processes could have on *Euskal Herria*. However, when they define their attitude, the opinions on Basque society are negative in the main: *“...what is being left in the background. I don't see any great desire for independence, not like before. Things have cooled down a lot here.”* (11.T-Arrasate). We believe the reason for this is they relate demands for independence with the political conflict, and as they see that this has lowered in intensity, it can be interpreted as a drop in the force of the former.

There was general support for the right to decide, which is understood as a democratic principle. It is understood that the majority of society is in favour, so they express no opposition: *"I believe that the majority of people are in favour of the right to self-determination. I don't know if I would vote for independence or not (...)"* (1.T-Bilbo). Although they ascribe to ideas accepted to a greater or lesser extent socially, their views differ when it comes to being specific regarding the right to decide. Some say that it is up to Spain and others believe that it is a right pertaining to the seven historical territories. It is defended as a general principal, but there is no agreement as to who should exercise this right.

Outlooks on a Basque State

As already mentioned, among these informants, the question of a Basque State is seen as a distant topic. They show no great interest, or have no fixed, or defined position. Therefore, it would seem that the opinions they express regarding an independent state are of a variable nature: their points of view are those that prevail in society –or in their social environment–, but in most cases there is little conviction.

In principle, they do not see a Basque State as a realistic option; that is, they do not believe that said independent state is possible. In a certain sense, in this respect, this group is closer to the discourse opposed to the Basque State, as they question the viability of the project: *"I don't see it as viable here, because it would be like closing the market. (...) we can't live on what we have here, we have to go abroad and if they turn off the tap... farewell! The first thing to do is clarify the economic question and then we can fight"* (10.T-Portugalete). Though not general, this line of argument reveals the importance that these informants grant the economic question. In these groups, when taking a stance in favour or against the question studied, key aspects are the economy, social policies and views on the standard of living.

Opinions in favour of a Basque State

In this section, we shall deal with the groups who have no clear opinion as regards a Basque State; similarly, they do not consider themselves *abertzale* or pro-independent. They are indifferent to the question of the Basque State, and, as we have pointed out, their lack of interest in political affairs is evident.

Despite the aforesaid, among these groups too, opinions in favour of an independent state were also voiced; but, they were not based on national identity, ideology, language or other types of questions. Their reasons were mainly of a pragmatic nature and, in this respect, the economic question was key. A similar tendency could be appreciated in the groups opposed to the Basque State, except for the fact that, in this case, the economic reasons are not clearly pointing in the same direction.

Those in favour argued that a Basque State would imply a more proximate management of the country's resources: *"I believe that yes [we would live a better life] because more money would stay here. More jobs would be created"* (1.T-Bilbo). However, they did not clarify why they believe that, in a Basque State, the economy, or standard of living, would improve; and they seemed to find it difficult to enlarge on this discourse.

However, as we have already mentioned, the economic question takes precedence over national identity in these groups, and it does so in a clear fashion:

"For me, the economy is fundamental. Because if what you are saying is that instead of holding an ID with the Spanish flag, I will have one with the Basque flag, then that's all the same to me. But if you are telling me that I am going to have more work, I would sign right now" (10.T-Portugalete).

"If somebody feels they can live a better life in an independent Basque Country, they will stay even if they are Spanish" (10.T-Portugalete).

"I assume culture and traditions will be upheld. But I believe people's wallets are what is most important" (11.T-Iruñea).

Therefore, in this group, a variable, poorly defined opinion predominated; and it was affirmed that if in this new state the economy and people's standard of living were to improve, the social majority would defend the project for building a new state. If, however the standard of living were to worsen, then they would be opposed to a Basque State: *"If I were told that there would be jobs, I would obviously sign up, in my interest. Otherwise, I would say that it is something that does not interest me"* (11.T-Arrasate). It was likewise significant that the same issues were central in the discourse opposed to a Basque State; and that, if the situation in Spain – in the case of the southern Basque Country– were to worsen, they would be in favour of independence: *"If Spain were to go completely under, I would not be interested in staying in Spain"* (8.T-Iruñea).

Along with the economic question, these informants rate the current framework of Autonomous Community highly, in the case of the southern Basque Country. The social services in this community were viewed positively and they distanced themselves from Spanish institutions: *"the best hospitals are here (...) The only thing you do with Spain is renew your Spanish identity card"* (10.T-Portugalete). This idea, in the case of the groups who were in favour of a Basque State, reinforced the pro-independence position, whereas, among those opposed, it was used to underline the need to change the current political and administrative system. In the case of those in between, the positive view of the existing autonomous community framework was significant, but it was not clearly linked with a stance with respect to an independent state.

In short, in these groups with no clearly defined opinion, what could be called a pragmatic point of view prevailed. The economic question was key and, above all, the standard of living; and then, other issues were mentioned though not elaborated on. Among them, the fact that the Basque State would be smaller was considered positive, and the proximity of political institutions was mentioned: *"I believe that, in a smaller state, things would be more familiar"* (1.T-Bilbo). They likewise affirmed that the Basque State would be a republic: *"if we were to gain independence, there would be no monarchy, that's one good thing"* (11.T-Arrasate).

Points of view opposed to a Basque State

In these groups, the lack of interest in politics, and, by extension, in the project for an independent state was generalised: *"If I were told to vote in this referendum, I would flip a coin"* (11.T-Arrasate). The question did not interest them and, as it implies a change (for some, a break) in the current situation, opposition to a Basque State predominates. The fact of the matter is those who want to change the *status quo* (and, to a certain extent, defending a Basque State is declaring yourself against *normality*) must convey their reasons to society, unlike those who want to leave things as they are. Thus, *"what really interests people is to have a good life. They are not interested in (...) Spain or the Basque Country or Catalonia..."* (1.T-Bilbo). Therefore, pursuing a new state is seen as a political act, even nationalist. On the other hand, this is not the perception they have of those wishing to remain in their current territory: in this case, there is no national project or nationalist sentiment.

Apart from their general indifference, these groups likewise voiced opinions contrary to an independent state. They were, above all, related to a worsening of the economic situation in the event of independence. In this case, the lines of opinion of the discourse opposed to the Basque State were reiterated, but with less intensity and greater doubts. Thus, the Basque State is associated with economic problems: *"at first, things will, of course, be difficult [in reference to the economy]. So I think that's what's keeping people back"* (10.T-Portugalete), with this perception being align with being opposed to an independent state: *"I believe that, in an independent state, it would take years for us to reach minimum welfare. (...) If I were told to vote, I would be in a damned awkward position"* (11.T-Arrasate).

Together with a worsened economy and a lower standard of living, another argument used to oppose a Basque State, and stressed by these groups, was that things would not change in the daily lives of ordinary people in an independent state. It would appear that they link this project exclusively to the political sphere and to the interests of people who have little to do with ordinary people like them. Thus, as this project for building a state would bring few significant changes, they fail to express their support and, in practice, side with those who are opposed to a Basque State: *"What's clear is that we [in reference to ordinary people] have no say in the matter. Nowadays, as regards what is laid down by the EU, which is a load of rubbish, and as regards independence, more of the same. In other words, we have no say"* (11.T-Arrasate). Something similar occurs regarding the level of democracy or the organisation of this new state: *"Democracy will be the same. It depends on the political parties in power, but, in the end, I believe they are all thieves."* (10.T-Portugalete).

Therefore, for these informants, a Basque State would bring with it few significant changes, and, in this respect, they do not believe that the different identities would clash. When asked about problems relating to co-existence in this new state: "... really, what changes [in a Basque State]? The fact that you belong to the Spanish State or not changes nothing" (10.T-Portugalete). In this respect, though very little importance is granted to the Basque language, neither is it seen as a problem, unlike certain lines of argument opposed to an independent state. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that Basque would be the sole official language of the new state, but this forecast did not entail any particular problem for them, because one thing is the official language and another, the socio-linguistic reality: "[in a Basque State] the official language would be Basque, but the official language for the population would be Spanish" (1.T-Bilbo). Moreover, although this was the predominant view, a certain amount of mistrust with respect to the role of the Basque language could likewise be felt:

"- (...) if Basque is already imposed to a certain extent, if the country were independent it would practically be ... I wouldn't say compulsory, as it would be a democracy, but it would be one of the questions to keep in mind

-And, eventually, it would only become more important.

(...)

-I do not think so; we are still speaking Spanish here" (10.T-Portugalete).

It would seem that the opinions on this aspect change according to the situation of the Basque language in the corresponding region; and, in regions with a greater number of Basque speakers, we found very different opinions. In this case, Basque was linked to discrimination: "*If there were independence here, we would speak Basque here all day, and, what if you can't speak it?"*" (11.T-Arrasate). However, as we have already pointed out, in these groups, opposition to a Basque State is not based primarily on language or on identity.

IN SUMMARY: CITIZENS' OPINIONS ON THE BASQUE STATE

We shall now give a brief summary of the main lines of thought expressed by citizens – with differing ideologies and with a different social condition- with regard to the creation of a Basque State.

Our informants frequently mentioned independence and the right to decide, but rarely referred to the concept of state. It could be said that, generally speaking, it is extremely difficult for people to imagine a hypothetical Basque State, except in the case of those who are close to left-wing nationalism.

The importance attributed to the right to decide in the opinions of our informants is striking. It seems that this right has acquired a high degree of legitimacy in Basque society, as there was significant unanimity among the different discussion groups as regards the democratic nature of this right. Among those in favour of the construction of the Basque State, the right to decide is considered the first step in this process. It was likewise referred to as a democratic right by some of those opposed to the creation of a Basque State, but, in this case, it was not clear who the subject of said right would be; in other words, who should have the right to vote in a hypothetical referendum and certain grievance was apparent regarding the lack of clarity on this issue when discussed in society.

The building of a Basque State was presented, in general, as a long-term process; like a road filled with obstacles. Those in favour of the process attribute the greatest difficulties to the political sphere. Among them, the most commonly mentioned was the lack of unity between Basque nationalists, insofar as the Basque State is a project promoted by Basque nationalist movements. Nonetheless, this is not the only difficulty foreseen. Prevailing Spanish laws and, in general, the French and Spanish governments are considered a barrier that will take a lot of time to negotiate. Logically, those opposed to the Basque State shared this pessimism, except that they saw no point in objecting to prevailing law.

As for the feasibility of the Basque State, those in favour, mostly nationalists, did not appear to be overly concerned about the economic consequences implied by its creation. They did not question the viability of the Basque State, just like that of other states in the world. They did not seem to feel the need to draw up a sophisticated discourse on the subject, because, in their view, having a state is a *logical* right.

On the other hand, those who questioned the viability of a Basque State, in the main, used economic reasons as an argument. They seemed fearful of what could happen in the future: we would not be members of the European Union, or we would not have sufficient resources to ensure a given level of welfare for the Basque population. This latter idea was a recurrent theme in the opinions of those opposed to the Basque State and it was also significant among those with a clear opinion on the issue and, moreover, many doubts were expressed in this respect. In short, for these two groups of opinion, the Basque State is no more than a source of problems, and their opposition stems from this feeling.

Why and what for a Basque State? Our Basque nationalist informants perceive the Basque State as a logical step in the survival of the Basque nation. They base their right on identity: *we are a nation, therefore, we have the right to have a state*. The Basque State is a guarantee of their survival as a people. Moreover, they add that this demand is completely democratic. Therefore, justification for a Basque State is based on identity and democracy.

The arguments used by those opposed to and in favour of a Basque State are quite similar on both sides of the French-Spanish border, but there is one difference: Basque nationalists in the northern Basque Country are convinced that it is not a good idea to have this kind of debate today in this part of Euskal Herria. They believe that, in the first place, certain political stages prior to this debate need to be consolidated.

The question of identity, in this case, Spanish or French, must likewise be taken into account with respect to opinions opposed to the Basque State. What's more, in the case of Navarre, the reference to the historical past is used to deny the Basque nature of this territory and its relation to the Basque Autonomous Community. Nevertheless, what undoubtedly stands out about opinions expressing opposition to the Basque State is a fear concerning the economic future: *our lives will be worse*. And, last of all, an insurmountable obstacle, prevailing legislation is cited: *they won't allow us to*.

Under what circumstances would there be a change of opinion? It appears that an improved economic situation and a better standard of living would be elements to be considered by sectors still in doubt regarding a Basque State. Although this group of citizens is the one who is the most indifferent to policy-making, the prospect of an improved economy would give rise to a change in attitude. Similarly, those who are currently opposed to a hypothetical Basque State argue that only the prospect of an improved economic situation and better living conditions would make them change their opinion and express their support for the new state.

Except for a few exceptions, the majority of the informants tend to apply the social and cultural situation they are currently living in to a hypothetical Basque State. In other words, the new state is not imagined as a consequence of a radical change. In the first place and regarding the Basque language, though, in some sectors, Basque is given absolute priority and, in others, support for Basque is considered a potential threat, it can be said that it is generally felt that the three languages currently spoken in Basque territory, namely, Basque, Spanish and French, would be official, because the situation so requires. In this respect, co-existence is not seen as a fundamental problem in the future.

How will citizens of different national identities co-exist? In general terms, this aspect was not considered a possible cause of conflict either. The entire population is recognized as Basque citizenry and no great changes are foreseen for daily living. In this case too, as previously pointed out, a characteristic pertaining to the present is projected to the future and the new state is perceived as functioning in a way similar to surrounding ones. From the point of view of the Basque nationalists, those who feel Spanish or French would be fully-fledged citizens, but it is not very clear what the political consequences of this situation would be. On the other hand, those expressing their contrary opinion of the Basque State, argue that the social situation could be conflictive. However, we repeat that the arguments used by this sector to question the opportuneness of a Basque State are related to an expected weakened economy rather than social or political factors.

Indeed, we could say that the reading of the current situation of Basque society is more often than not positive. In the Basque Autonomous Community and in Navarre, the level of welfare achieved is used as an argument to ascribe legitimacy to the viability of the Basque State or to strip it of the same. It is a common feeling among citizens that the residents of the Basque

Autonomous Community and Navarre have a better life than those in Spain. For some, this is a clear guarantee that, in the event of becoming a state, our lives would be just as good. For others, on the other hand, it is precisely this high level of welfare that makes demands for a state nonsensical.

Together with this argument relating to the high level of welfare achieved, another set of opinions, which likewise seek to justify the leading role of the Basque Autonomous Community, is the support given to the Basque nationalist movement in this territory. Thus, in the opinion of many informants, the Basque State will necessarily have its starting point in the BAC. It is particularly in the northern Basque Country where it is categorically stated that *they cannot move at the same pace*. To a certain extent, such citizens as are favourable to the creation of a Basque State imagine this process as something that will come about in stages and will get underway in the Basque Autonomous Community. For those sectors opposed to this process who live in Navarre or in the northern Basque Country, the role of the Basque Autonomous Community is even more prominent, as anything related to the Basque State is considered an exclusive problem of the BAC.

**THE OPINIONS OF BUSINESS PEOPLE
FAVOURABLE TO THE IDEA OF A BASQUE STATE**

From what is set forth in the quantitative analysis, we can appreciate that, among respondents, the creation of a Basque State is not considered a very viable option (particularly from the political point of view). According to the data gathered in the study, those opposing the creation of a Basque State believe that said state would give rise to economic chaos and, therefore, would have little or no future. Those taking the opposite view, in favour of the idea of a Basque State, attach little importance to the economic question and tend to focus on the creation of the state itself. Further data on the subject of economic viability is offered in a survey carried out with the collaboration of several experts in economy in the BAC and which coincided with this research. 58.9% of them considered that, in a Basque Country (understood as the three provinces in the BAC) independent of Spain, the economic situation would worsen with respect to the current one¹⁶.

It is clear, as demonstrated by the cases of Scotland and Catalonia, the economic question is usually at the forefront of the political debate on the creation of new states. In fact, both the economic question in general terms and the specific stance that the business sector would adopt in a hypothetical scenario involving the creation of a new state usually generate a variety of opinions and hypotheses in this respect, often without knowing what the key stakeholders, namely, the business sector, really feel about it.

Aware of the above, and knowing that the business sector, in all aspects, is a highly heterogeneous group, we met with some of their members in order to hear their opinion on these subjects. The sample chosen was very specific: *business people who would likely be in favour of the creation of a Basque State*, with an aim to hearing the reasons on which they base their view. Evidently, with a sample of these characteristics, the results are, quantitatively speaking, of no value whatsoever, nor do they imply that this is the general view of Basque business people on the subject in question. However, having seen the importance attached to the economic and business variables, in both the quantitative analysis and in the discussion groups corresponding to the qualitative analysis, we felt that an analysis of these characteristics was necessary.

Thus, we interviewed business people throughout Euskal Herria (all of them, senior management, and, in some cases, the owners of their corresponding companies), with an aim to gathering their opinions on the hypothetical creation of a Basque State and the consequences that said state could have on the business sector. Generally speaking, they were favourable to the creation of an independent Basque State, but not on the grounds that it would generate a specific benefit for their companies, but rather because it was something required by their political position. Nevertheless, in general, they considered that the economic situation would improve with the creation of a Basque State and, therefore, it would raise its population's standard of living. We shall now go on to examine these questions more thoroughly.

Methodology

Between December, 2014, and October, 2015, twenty surveys were carried out on business people who were considered likely to support a Basque State: eleven of them were from the Basque Autonomous Community, four from the Foral Community of Navarre and five from the northern Basque Country. The selected sample was representative of the different economic sectors as well as of a variety of business sizes: from family concerns to others with over 50 employees. As far as ownership is concerned, they included family businesses, cooperatives, private limited companies and corporations.

Eight of the interviews were held in Basque and twelve, in Spanish. The questionnaire was the same for all of them, except for the section on aspects specific to each administrative territory; and the answers were free and open. The following were the main issues broached:

- The possible influence of the pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and Catalonia on Euskal Herria.
- The economic viability of a hypothetical Basque State and its consequences from the point of view of business.
- The objectives which they as business people would set for the creation of a Basque State, and their possible stance with respect to other business people in their sector.
- The Basque State and the European Union.

¹⁶ 25.2% considered that the economic situation would improve, and 15.9%, that it would not change. (Survey carried out in 2014 to members of the Basque Association of Certified Economists. *Ekonometroa*, December, 2014, in *Ekonomista*, Basque Association of Certified Economists.)

KNOWLEDGE OF AND OPINION ON THE PRO-SOVEREIGNTY/PRO-INDEPENDENCE PROCESSES IN SCOTLAND AND CATALONIA. ARE THEY COMPARABLE TO THE BASQUE CASE?

The people in the survey were familiar with the pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and Catalonia and expressed their interest in the same as they considered them an experience from which Euskal Herria can learn. One of those interviewed assured that the Scottish process *is an example of how to do things properly*, whereas, in relation to the Catalan case, they observed that it was a *process that sprang from the people* (EE-1)¹⁷. Another, on the other hand, mentioned the problem which the Catalan process had with respect to the European Union, and pointed out that the process would cause the ruin of Catalonia in the event that no agreement is reached with Spain (EE-9). In reference to Catalonia, many people mentioned the problem resulting from the failure to come to an agreement, due, principally, to the Spanish government's *obduracy*. They call for more democracy in the face of this situation, as they consider that the Spanish government is determined to shut off all possible channels for consulting the population.

What influence can these processes have on Euskal Herria? We gathered a variety of opinions in this respect, although, in all cases, it was acknowledged that the current socio-political reality of Euskal Herria differs from that of Scotland and of Catalonia, which is why even those who believe that said pro-independence processes may have some influence on the Basque Country think that great caution must be exercised. Therefore, the business people interviewed expressed doubts of a varying nature with regard to this question. Some of these doubts centred on the economic aspect. For instance, one of the business people interviewed considered that the Catalan process is very much linked to the economic situation: *"... not because of an anti-Spanish sentiment, but rather because of the feeling that they will be better off on their own"* (EE-11). In this person's opinion, this feeling is not so generalised in Euskal Herria, among other reasons *"because we already avail of nearly all the tools as far as the economic question is concerned: we have the Economic Agreement with the central government, our own tax department..."* (EE-11). Another business person likewise mentioned the economic variable in order to assert that a Basque State is currently not possible: *"To be honest, from the point of view of the economy, I doubt that it can be done here as it would have a major impact; (...) in a hypothetically ideal scenario, it would be wonderful, but I don't believe that is going to happen"* (EE-9).

Apart from the economic factor, there are several political reasons why several of the business people interviewed expressed doubts about the possible influence of the Scottish and Catalan processes on the Basque case. For one of them (EE-6), the armed struggle that lasted 50 years in Euskal Herria generated a widespread lack of trust throughout Basque society, among those in favour of the right to decide too. For this reason, this person considered it impossible for workers and management to publicly appear to be jointly in favour of this or any other type of political claim, whereas it was felt that the political and social environment in Scotland and Catalonia has been much more favourable for achieving said objective (EE-6). Another business person referred to the different level of discontent with respect to the current political situation in Catalonia and Euskal Herria in order to pinpoint the main differences between both cases. In their opinion, a certain degree of political anger is required to undertake a process of these characteristics, and they did not doubt that the level of anger is greater in Catalonia, whereas, in Euskal Herria, we are at a previous stage (EE-10).

Main obstacles for a process of these characteristics to be carried out in Euskal Herria

Although we heard different opinions in this respect among those surveyed, we were able to identify two main obstacles: internally, the lack of interest of the political parties in Euskal Herria in carrying out a joint project; and, externally, the lack of political will on the part of the Spanish State to tackle the situation, as summed up by one of the business people surveyed: *"In the Spanish State (...) lies the main obstacle"* (EE-15). This last factor is key for most of the people surveyed, some of whom cited economic reasons or interests to explain this stance: *"The rest of Spain definitely does not want you to achieve independence (...) I believe that the economic factor is by far the main condition for this pro-independence process to get underway"* (EE-9). Coinciding with the previous argument, a business person from the energy sector considered that the Basque and Catalan industrial networks are extremely important for Spain, which, in their opinion, clearly conditions its position (EE-5).

¹⁷ With an aim to ensuring the anonymity of the people surveyed, we shall not identify them specifically. In some cases, we mention the business sector or the territory to which they belong. All the contributions made by those in the survey are included in Spanish in this version. Appendix 4 specifies the language in which each interview was carried out.

Besides the economic factor, several of the business people referred to Spanish political culture, as well as Spain's legal framework, to explain the government's refusal to deal with the territorial issue. When the attitudes of the Spanish and British governments were compared, several people coincided in pointing out how it would be virtually impossible for the Spanish government to emulate the stance taken by the British government in relation to the Scottish process, and apply it to the Catalan and Basque cases. One of the business people surveyed stated that *"Spain's political senselessness" is centuries old, and is further enhanced by the "poor quality of democracy appreciable in Europe"* (EE-13).

In relation to the obstacles of an internal nature, Euskal Herria's armed struggle is one of the most commented factors. A business person from the food industry pointed out that: *"we have a history that has not been fully erased, there are still some people who are quite reluctant"* (EE-13), whereas another one observed: *"I think this will not be tackled until ETA disbands"* (EE-7). On the other hand, in some interviews, the PNV was reproached for its lack of interest in getting involved in a process directed at creating a Basque State.

The influence of the ideology of the different political parties would appear to be key when this subject is broached. Thus, one of those interviewed believed that: *"the impact of the processes will depend on the impulse of the political parties. Considering the current situation, this is still very distant"* (EE-7). This consideration was shared by the people surveyed, and many of them felt that, if a serious and consolidated pro-independence project were put forward, the political parties should give up centre stage to certain social movements outside party logistics, and emulate what occurred in the Catalan process. In other words, they believed that the political parties and the social movements supporting the creation of a Basque State should join forces for this objective, and, between them, design a real, common project forming the basis of the process for the creation of the new state. Three of those interviewed (EE-3; EE-1; EE-12), however, coincide in pointing out that, currently, the main obstacle to undertaking a pro-independence process in Euskal Herria is none other than Basque society's lack of will and current lack of interest in this respect. In other words, they felt that the current social demand is insufficient to help move political parties in this direction.

Another obstacle mentioned was the question of territory. A business person from the northern Basque Country considered that a process of these characteristics could be undertaken in the BAC; they expressed their doubts on whether the same could be currently proposed in Navarre, and felt that it would be almost impossible to propound something similar in the northern Basque Country. Nevertheless, they considered it positive that such a process be initiated as a first stage in the southern Basque Country, as they believed that *"this would have a great impact on the northern Basque Country"*.

ON THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE BASQUE STATE

As we have been able to appreciate in the Scottish and Catalan processes, the question of the economic viability of a new state usually generates discussion, although it may often be based on certain prejudices and particular interests. For this reason, we felt it necessary to enquire about this issue in a sector which is surely qualified to speak of the same, is directly interested, and may possibly be one of the ones with most to gain or lose in a hypothetical scenario of a newly created Basque State. Therefore, when broaching the subject of the viability of a Basque State, and fully aware that it was not possible to totally isolate it from other more general factors, particularly those of a political or ideological nature, the interviewees were asked to try and focus on the economic aspect, and try to steer clear of other types of factors.

In general terms, those surveyed concurred in stating that a Basque State would be economically viable: *"not only viable, I believe that it would be an excellent solution"* (EE-13). The reason for their opinion is based mainly on the fact that Euskal Herria (although they often referred explicitly to the BAC) has a consolidated economic and business framework, making a Basque State economically viable: *"... perfectly viable. We have the capacity to be one of the wealthiest countries in Europe, due to our business acumen, people's capacity, etc."* (EE-11). As we shall now see, objective as well as subjective arguments are used to support this opinion.

As for objective factors, the people interviewed referred to the existing economic indicators, which, in view of the majority, would prove the economic viability of a hypothetical Basque State. Among them, the standard of living was mentioned in particular. In this respect, Euskal Herria would rank top of the scale in Europe and even in the world (EE-10). Among the other

indicators that could justify the existence of a sound starting position from which to create a Basque State is that mentioned by a representative of the financial and business advisory services sector, namely, industrial development and employment indicators, on the basis of which the new state would start from a favourable position with respect to Spain. Another business person from the financial sector highlighted the fact that, in the case of Euskal Herria (understood as the BAC) direct economic aid from the European Union accounts for no more than 5% of total budget revenue, which goes to show that a Basque State would be economically viable, as it does not depend on external financial aid (EE-10). This same argument was used by another business person in the survey: *"we do not depend on aid from Europe or from Spain to survive. What's more, in an independent state, we would earn more money because we would not need to pay the quota. (...) In terms of the economy, we would never be worse off, we would be slightly better off. We would have more resources and fewer expenses. The only unknown variable would be how others would react"* (EE-11).

But, what indeed would the reaction of other states be? There are two particularly significant variables in this regard. On the one hand, the ongoing globalisation process would need to be taken into account, as it could favourably affect the creation of new states. The truth is that what has become known as the "globalisation era" has brought with it certain changes and has a certain impact on world order which has overstepped the political borders of states and their effective decision-making power in state territory. For this reason, most of the people interviewed believed that the foreseen negative pressure that Spain and France would bring to bear in order to isolate a hypothetical Basque State would be offset by possible economic, commercial and political agreements reached with other states in Europe and the world and the new state.

Based on this idea, a qualified member of the Basque tax structure affirmed that: *"I see no objective reason why Euskadi cannot be viable in the medium term"* (EE-11). Another of those interviewed referred to simple business logic to defend the same idea: *"if you are in a position to develop products that are economically advantageous, there is no reason why other countries in your geographical area, even those close by, should not buy them from you"* (EE-2).

Another variable to keep in mind, and one often mentioned, is the size of the state. One of those participating in the survey felt that it should imply no problem in the case of the Basque Country as there *"already are many countries of the same size or even smaller than Euskal Herria"* (EE-16). Another interviewee supported the previous statement with the fact that the wealthiest societies in Europe are found in small states (EE-13). Examples like Holland were likewise mentioned, as its demographic characteristics could be compared with those of Euskal Herria (EE-1). In this respect, the same business person pointed out that small states usually have greater control over their economic and business potential, which, in their opinion, is highly important.

Yet another important factor in the opinion of those surveyed is the training (academic, professional, etc.) of Basque society, which they believed was a positive element when setting up a Basque State. Occasionally, they referred to the effectiveness of the Basque public policies implemented to this end, and, in general, they praised the efforts made by many business people in this respect. As a result, according to one of those interviewed (EE-6), Basque society is adequately prepared, and shows a great capacity to create new projects, all of which would demonstrate Euskal Herria's sound position from which to set out on its own, attract external investment and even reach a competitive position internationally.

To complement the aforesaid, we shall now see some other indicators of a subjective nature, which were mentioned by the people in the survey to support their opinions. One of the reasons repeated most often is that the capacity to do so exists: *"we are sufficiently organised to be able to create an independent country in which we would be better off than now"* (EE-13), because of a different way of doing things: *"here things have been done in a different way, and it is obvious we are financially better off than they are in Spain; (...) our view has always been long-term, and that is fundamental for the economy and the business world"* (EE-8). In this sense, several of the business people concurred when they stated that the Basque Country brand is well known and highly valued by foreign companies, particularly in Europe and in the industrial and technological sectors. Concerning this question, a representative from the energy sector had the following to say: *"the current situation does not benefit us (...) when we do business abroad (...) one of the things we sell is the fact that we are Basque (...) in industry at least they consider us as comparable to the Germans: serious, hardworking people, who deal in high technology and who are reliable..."* (EE-5)

However, let's not assume that this positive view is the result of non-judgemental reflection or simply over-confidence; most of the people in the survey spoke of the need to work from a realistic approach, while placing special emphasis on politics. In other words, when asked about the economic feasibility of a hypothetical Basque State, they almost unanimously responded in

the affirmative, but revealed doubts in relation to the political aspects. Some of those surveyed asked what kind of a state we were talking about. The majority opinion was that this Basque State should follow current schemes, and to this end, the majority (there were a few who failed to mention it) considered it indispensable that the process for establishing the state develop in an orderly fashion, that is, following an agreement with Spain (or France, whatever the case be), and in a similar way to that developed in Scotland.

In this respect, the right to decide was implicitly mentioned (EE-6). One of those participating placed special emphasis on the need to obtain international support, in order to reach a position of strength so as to get Spain and France to accept the new state as well as to gain international recognition (EE-7). Obviously, Spain's opposition to the new state was taken for granted, and which, in the view of one of the business people interviewed, would generate a sensation of mistrust and, consequently, entail greater difficulties for other states and foreign companies to enter into political or economic agreements with the Basque State, which would, logically, be detrimental to its viability (EE-9).

Lastly, if, despite all the possible obstacles, this Basque State were created, respondents mentioned several matters they considered would need to be updated or transformed. One of them was the Basque public sector, which they felt needs to be reformed in order to be more efficient (EE-10). Finally, another business person alluded to the need to develop major infrastructure, a subject which, in their opinion, should be immediately addressed if the Basque State were created (EE-6).

THE LAUNCH OF THE BASQUE STATE: REASONS, OBSTACLES AND CONSEQUENCES

Even if it were considered viable, what interest has the business sector in an independent Basque State? Would there be anything to gain or anything to lose? However, first of all, let's focus on the following question. They were asked if belonging to Spain or France currently afforded them any particular benefit in terms of business.

Does currently belonging to Spain/France imply an advantage or drawback in terms of business?

Although the affirmation is not unanimous and practically everybody qualified it in some way or another, most people believed that the current situation was detrimental or, at best, it implied no advantages or disadvantages. A business person from the catering sector (EE-15) considered that, as far as his business was concerned, belonging to Spain implied no advantage whatsoever, as specific economic policies have not been implemented for their sector or for the size of their business (small enterprise). Another unfavourable factor mentioned on several occasions was the feeling of being far-removed from decision-making related to economic and political affairs. In this respect, one of the business people felt that, if they were independent: *"the Basque Country would generate greater wealth and wellbeing than it currently has. There would be greater proximity, a greater capacity to develop certain policies, less interferences in certain economic proposals"* (EE-1). The current lack of reliability of the Spain brand internationally only goes to reinforce the aforesaid (EE-2, EE-13). In contrast, Euskal Herria was considered to be a reference for quality and reliability. (EE-2).

Concerning its influence in economic terms, this business person considered that clearly disadvantageous was: *"the fact of having to pay the quota every year.... Not having full powers for decision-making in economic and business matters is a clear drawback"* (EE-8).

On the other hand, among those who considered that it had no effect were those referring to Spain: *"in my sector and in my company, it implies no impediment, none, I think, but it doesn't benefit it either"* (EE-14), and to France: *"in the case of my company, I do not know if it implies any benefit. The matter of subsidies is now regulated at European level, which is why one is not allowed to have different subsidies to others"* (EE-16).

Another of the business people felt that the key to the matter was to be found outside the business world, specifically: *"the truth is that I believe that business does not care if it is in one state or another. The real issue is what is often mentioned: what will happen with pensions, what will the social security be like and things like that"* (EE-19).

Nevertheless, we likewise came across those who believed that belonging to Spain or France implied certain advantages. One of them felt that, thanks to Spain's position, they were able to obtain major funding whereas, if a Basque State were created, market confidence would drop with respect to the current situation (EE-9). Another business person from the northern Basque Country was able to appreciate certain advantages in belonging to France, for obtaining job contracts, for example. Another one from the southern Basque Country clearly explained where the key lies to whether belonging implies an advantage or not: *"if you sell abroad, it is not, [but] if you sell mainly in Spain, you, it [the Basque State] may have a negative impact, at first at least"* (EE-4). Another business person considered that belonging to France implied certain advantages in the social sphere, but that: *"if Euskal Herria were independent, it could implement some of these advantages. It may be difficult at first, because Euskal Herria would be a small state, but I believe that after a period of time, it could be done"* (EE-20).

Among the business people interviewed in the FCN, we came across another argument: the one relating to the positive influence concerning the BAC and not Spain. Moreover, they admitted to the close economic relationship they had with companies and clients from the BAC, which is why they would consider the creation of a Basque State as positive: *"I have sold very little in Spain, so from experience I can say that personally the Basque Country is what has given me life"* (a business person from Navarre).

What sort of obstacles could arise from the point of view of the economy?

In general, the people interviewed did not believe that difficulties would arise in their international relations if, in the end, a Basque State were to be created, and, if they did arise, they would be created by Spain or France, in their view.

More specifically, in reference to the business sector, they believed that those who might have more problems are such companies as have most of their clientele in Spain or France, but, in any case, the majority of those interviewed did not believe that the Basque State would be detrimental for their business, due in the main to their negligible dependency on Spain or France: *"we sell between 80% and 90% abroad, so in our case, it would mean more opportunities. We have nothing to lose"* (EE-4).

Similarly, they mentioned several reasons for not believing that there would be more problems in the economic sphere (although they admit to greater doubts with regard to the political sphere). One of the main reasons cited was business logic, which, they said, was based on terms of efficiency and efficacy, and not so much on ideological matters. One of the people interviewed, from the automobile sector and a supplier for large brands, thought that: *"these brands are not concerned about things like that (about the Basque State) (...) what they are interested in is the price, quality and the service offered"* (EE-3). In this respect, the same person pointed out the real interests of large companies: *"they do not really care if we are independent or not. If we offer them better service, better prices or better products than other countries, then they will buy from us, because we will also buy from them"* (EE-8). It can therefore be appreciated that they do not believe that large multinationals are going to apply pressure to impede the creation of a Basque State.

Another of the reasons mentioned focuses on the very nature of the state, which has changed over time. One of those surveyed explained that sovereign states no longer exist, what is important today is economic interdependence (EE-2). Last of all is an argument of a more subjective nature: the specifically small size of Euskal Herria on the world stage, in which it is not a key country, although we may often believe the contrary: *"people throughout the world do not know what or where Euskal Herria is. Therefore, what Euskal Herria is or is not for the world implies no problem or particular concern"* (EE-5).

Conversely, there are business people who did acknowledge the fact that the creation of a Basque State would have negative consequences for their business, at least at first; particularly in those cases where most of their clients are in Spain or France. A clear example was given by a business person from the northern Basque Country: *"it would certainly not be positive for my company, as several clients of mine are members of the French administration. So, if we were no longer French, we would not be awarded any new orders"* (EE-17). The prospect of the possible loss of clientele was logically decisive, particularly, if said loss were significant: *"if you go to somebody involved in business and tell them that being independent implies an approximate 20% loss of their share in the market, the Spanish market, for example, they will tell you they are not interested"* (EE-7).

Continuing with this line of argument, it can be assumed that the greatest obstacle would be political in nature, and it would

be created by Spain and France. Spain is in a strong position with respect to Euskal Herria, and it is logical to think that it would use this position to have the upper hand in the debate on a Basque State (EE-11). In this respect, the possibility of some Spanish sectors fomenting a boycott of Basque products and companies in the event of the creation of a Basque State was mentioned in several of the interviews. In one of these cases, a business person from the BAC mentioned having had experienced a similar experience in the past. Said boycott could be applied in a variety of ways: directly, by rejecting Basque products on the market; with clients cutting off trade relations with Basque companies; or relocating companies set up in Euskal Herria (be they multinational or not) elsewhere (EE-1; EE-8; EE-11). In contrast, some of the people surveyed questioned the real possibility of said boycott actually happening (EE-15; EE-19), and, in any case, they believed that, if it did occur, it would be for a brief period of time.

Last of all, the importance of the emotional variable was likewise mentioned: *"I can understand that at first it would be a shock for the Spanish and for the Basque"* (EE-15). Nevertheless, the same business person stated that this situation, just like in the hypothetical case of a boycott of Basque products and companies, would eventually return to normality.

On the economic consequences of creating a Basque State

What opportunities and dangers are implied by a Basque State? Among the opportunities put forward by those interviewed, one of the most often repeated is that already mentioned: proximity. Proximity in relation to the capacity to share out resources, to offer public services, and, at the same time, as a way to avoid external interference in this respect (EE-10; EE-2). They believe that, in terms of business effectiveness, it would be better if strategic decisions relating to the economy and the business world were taken in Euskal Herria instead of in Spain or France.

In addition to the abovementioned advantage, other specific opportunities were pinpointed in each sector. Thus, a business person from the financial sector highlighted the fact that the relation between budget revenue and expenditure in the BAC is considerably better than its equivalent in Spain. Similarly, in their view, Euskal Herria has a powerful and well-developed industrial sector, which is why it is already well-established as one of the fundamental forces driving the economy (EE-10). Opportunities could be appreciated for the agricultural sector too, as, in the opinion of a business person from this sector, if a Basque State were created, specific policies to encourage consumption of local products could be promoted (EE-12). Another of the business people surveyed added by way of conclusion that, in their opinion, with their own state, the wealth and welfare of Basque society would increase (EE-2), a similar view to that expressed by another interviewee: *"there would only be one change, we would be wealthier (...) There would be greater opportunities for making the company richer, in terms of technology and human resources as well"* (EE-3). Some people were even able to identify the specific benefits that their sector would obtain if a Basque State were created: *"in this new situation we would surely have a new market niche, as we would have to sell the Basque Country's image abroad. Therefore, in truth, I believe that for the sector I belong to, the situation would be positive, because it would imply a lot of work"* (EE-8). Another business person coincided with the previous hypothesis and added that this positive influence would have a greater effect on small companies than on large ones, because of their greater stability (EE-12).

Others, on the other hand, did not believe that a Basque State would have significant, positive or negative, consequences. This opinion is based on the fact that the market logic surpasses the limits of the power and influence of states: *"we may lose a client in Spain, I don't think so (...) I don't think that business will be greatly affected"* (EE-6). In the specific case of Euskal Herria, they felt that as things have been done properly so far, in a hypothetical future, with a Basque State, this will also be the case (EE-7), which is why they considered that the new state did not imply in itself a great opportunity or any great danger for the business world: *"I wouldn't say it would be the same, but neither would it imply great advantages. What I mean is that we would not be far better off if we were independent, but neither would we be far worse off"* (EE-5).

Some people also felt that the creation of a Basque State would have negative consequences. It is logical to think, and many of those surveyed coincided in this affirmation, that business people require stability and any change jeopardises that (EE-8). Yet another element about which the interviewees were in doubt was the capacity of the Basque State to pay for social welfare and pensions. Likewise mentioned was the reduced importance of this state within Europe with respect to that which Spain or France currently have, and this circumstance was considered significant, particularly in a world in constant movement (EE-10).

Partly due to these possible negative consequences, most of those in the survey were sure that the Basque State should

continue to be a member of the European Union and use the euro as a currency, which is why it was vital that at all costs the process of creation of the state should follow from an agreement with Spain and France. Uncertainty could be generated internationally in the absence of this agreement, which would lead to difficulties in the quest for investment and foreign funding: *"nobody buys 10,000 million barrels of oil in cash. This is where the negotiation done by each country comes into play. So, it may cost you four times what it costs Spain, because you offer less security than them"* (EE-9). It could even lead to the relocation of a country (EE-11). Aware of this risk, many of those in the survey attached great importance to consolidating external alliances in order to undertake this process for the creation of a Basque State.

In summary, in the opinion of the business people involved in the survey, the setting up of a Basque State could imply certain economic opportunities, but it could also entail a certain threat. Among the most often cited opportunities is the possibility of greater proximity in decision-making than is currently the case, particularly in matters relating to the economy and business development. Conversely, among the threats named is the possibility that Spain and France instigate a boycott of Basque products and companies, as well as the uncertainty that could be created internationally with respect to a Basque State.

WHY A BASQUE STATE?

Generally speaking, the people who were surveyed mentioned no particular business interest as a grounds for their support of a Basque State. In most cases, when they were asked about this matter, they thought for a bit as if the main reason for said support lay in factors not directly related to business objectives. Thus, when they began to consider possible business interests, they did so in relation to general economic concepts, at times even in a comprehensive manner. However, they did mention other arguments of a more emotional, political, ideological or identitarian nature to justify their posture. It could be said that, as a group, they have not elaborated on, or reached a definitive decision about, the subject, which is why we were able to identify few common ideas on the issue. Let's see the main arguments put forward.

Objectives of the Basque State: regarding the economic aspect, in the business sector and in the Company itself

One of the people surveyed (EE-8) set forth some economic goals for a hypothetical Basque State: that it would promote tax incentives for businesses and guarantee pensions and public services. This person also stressed the need for this state to be created on the basis of a viable economic plan taking into account strategic economic sectors, particularly energy and raw materials. Another of those interviewed likewise spoke of general objectives and entrusted the new state with a specific objective: *"I believe that there should be a balance between the different sectors in a country and work should be fairly paid (...) The interests of the whole of society must be defended, and, to this end, an important issue is fair payment for work, among other things"* (EE-20).

On the other hand, as already pointed out, the most often cited argument among the people participating in the survey is proximity. Said proximity would have several components. On the one hand, they mentioned the geographical component: a business person from the catering industry believed that a Basque State would identify more efficiently with the sector's specific needs, as this person felt that the only thing Spain offers internationally is the beach and sunshine (EE-15). The concept of proximity was mentioned too as it would facilitate the promotion of the country's own products and services: a business person from the metal industry, for example, alluded to the fact that, in France, quality certificates are required in many economic sectors, which helps reduce foreign competition (EE-15). In this person's opinion, this type of measure would help prevent companies that offer low quality products and services at cheaper prices from dominating the market. Last of all, importance was attached to proximity as a means to get people to value their own work over that of others, that is, to ensure some sort of recognition of a job well done (EE-14), and, moreover, so that existing companies have a real chance of staying in Euskal Herria (EE-4).

We also came across arguments of a personal nature, which were expressed individually or, in some cases, shared by two of those interviewed. They are listed below for their interest and not presented as generalised opinions.

For example, it was mentioned that the public sector would play a smaller part in the economy and, to this end, a reorganisation

of the same was called for, to make it more up-to-date and efficient (EE-10). Another of the interviews proposed the creation of a single tax department, as they considered that it was not efficient for each historical territory to have its own (EE-11). Similarly, a restructuring of municipal organisation was suggested as the current one was considered outdated, and because there saw no sense in the fact that the same historical territory offered different public services depending on the municipality in which one resided (EE-11). Another business person felt that the question of a fairer distribution of revenue should be tackled, for which reason they believed that it was necessary to implement new tax policies in this respect (EE-2). The problem of how the characteristics of the Basque Country's current population would have a negative effect on future pensions was also mentioned. Another doubt arose in relation to this issue. They wondered about what would happen if Spain refused to pay the pensions of the people who, although they may have made their social security payments to the Spanish social welfare department, were now citizens of the Basque State (EE-8). The subject of social security also came up as a possible problem, taking into account that, in the Basque case, they are in a loss-making situation. As for public debt management, one of the people in the survey felt that the Basque State should negotiate the proportional part of the debt corresponding to them with Spain, as they are capable of managing this financial burden (EE-11). A final aspect relates to the important references offered by Euskal Herria in the economic sphere, such as the cooperative model, considering that, nowadays, enough is not done to take them to the international stage. To this end, the person believed that the Basque State should tackle the issue as a strategic matter: *"I would launch a major campaign to market these elements, and, as a result, I believe that all the businesses in the Basque Country would benefit"* (EE-13). Complementing the above, the same business person felt it necessary to strengthen and learn how to sell the *Basque Country* brand abroad.

Another opinion, one shared by the majority of the business people in the survey, would be the need for further investment together with a strategic view in relation to research and development and innovation. Despite a positive appraisal of the current approach to the same, with investment which is proportionately greater than the average in Spain, Stockholm was mentioned as the example to follow, as it was the place in Europe with the greatest proportion of GDP invested in research and development, which is double the percentage currently invested in the Basque case (EE-10).

What would you ask of the Basque State?

As mentioned above, the business people were asked to reflect on the consequences that the creation of a Basque State could have from the point of view of the economy and business. However, from what could be gathered from their observations, often indirectly, these were reflections on other matters, over and above economic and corporate questions. At times, it appeared that the reasons that led them to support the creation of a Basque State were not directly related to the economic question. Let's see some of those reasons.

Directly or indirectly (often at the end of the interview), many of those interviewed granted a special function to the Basque State: to work in favour of the Basque language. Some of them referred to its being a mere instrument: spreading knowledge of Basque and fomenting its use, etc. Others, on the other hand, understood it as a way of building *community*, in the words of one of these people: *"it should demonstrate that we make up a homogeneous community, different to the Spanish or French one"* (EE-6).

To be precise, the concepts of community, people and identity were often mentioned in the different interviews, possibly with the same idea in mind: the state must work to strengthen bonds between its citizens. As one of those interviewed said: *"we must create a credible project (...) in my opinion, the Basque State must be a means to procuring our own survival"* (EE-16). It is an argument which is similar to another one defended by another respondent, who also believed that the state must influence economic policy because: *"this helps a country to move forward"* (EE-4). Basing themselves on this idea of the building of a community or people, many informants defended economic solidarity between the different territories of Euskal Herria. One of them (a business person from the BAC) proposed a joint project combining the interests of the three Basque administrations (BAC, FCN and the northern Basque Country): *"I think we have a lot of elements that can be boosted together with the others. It would give us more substance and critical mass and we would have a global view"*.

To achieve this, education was one of the most important and most often cited elements for respondents. One of the main objectives set for education would be to help us establish ourselves as a *people*. Another would be to prepare society adequately, particularly to help young people join the labour market. In this respect, one of the informants considered that it was indispensable for the Basque State to implement new models of collaboration between Euskal Herria's different universities, laboratories, training

centres and companies (EE-10). Another pointed to Scandinavia as an example of the model that the Basque State should follow in relation to educational and research matters, and wondered: "Why does Scandinavia have so many important technology brands? It may not be because of its industry, but with independence, they fomented education, which, for me, is one of the key factors. Then, their own way of being turned them into an innovative people" (EE-5). As we have already mentioned, several respondents attached great importance to investment in research as a complement to education (EE-13; EE-19).

Returning to the subject of education, one of the interviewees summed up the different objectives they assign to it: "We need our own model of education which is sustainable in the future and which forms people with the capacity for international immersion, with the capacity to create wealth... and, when I say "wealth" I am not only referring to financial wealth, but also cultural, social wealth, etc." (EE-6). They argued in favour of the creation of a new educational system "other than the Spanish one" (EE-6). In this way, in another respondent's view, we would not need to apply the LOMCE (the prevailing law on education in Spain), and the education that our children would receive would take a different course, which is why, in 25 years, they would have the capabilities which, with the current system, are difficult to attain (EE-5). In relation to the subject of education, but more specifically, some informants believed that special importance should be attached to vocational training, as it is indispensable for industrial development (EE-14; EE-18).

Last of all, in relation to the proximity that was mentioned at the start of this section, they advocated greater democracy in the Basque State than that in Spain and France these days: "in my opinion, Basque society would profit from a Basque State. I think that in a smaller state (than the current one) democracy would be stronger" (EE-19).

BUSINESS PEOPLE IN FAVOUR OF THE BASQUE STATE

Almost all the business informants expressed their support, though, on occasions, qualified support, for the creation of a Basque State. It was not our intention to design the research sample as what we were interested in knowing were the reasons on which these people base their support. However, despite this support, they did not believe that they, as business people, should play a given role in the creation process, although as citizens, in some cases it could be possible. Some explained that their position was determined by their wish to remain anonymous while others were of the opinion that they lacked the necessary qualifications for such a task (as their strong point is business), and there are people who are predisposed to active participation, some of whom are even willing to lose something on the way.

In other cases, certain conditions were mentioned for getting personally involved. Remaining a member of the European Union is an indispensable condition for many, and, although to a lesser degree, the use of the euro as the currency. Most people also required the separation to be negotiated for them to get implicated in any dynamics in favour of the Basque State. Similarly, some demanded a proper and detailed plan on the proposal to be drawn up for the desired state as a condition sine qua non for their participation. On the other hand, a Navarrese business person requested that the process take a slower pace, as this person believed that carrying out a similar process in Navarre could entail a greater number of problems. There were also those who, despite being in favour of their own state, for the time being, preferred a third option, similar to the proposals which were once set forth in the *Ibarretxe Plan*. The idea would be to create an *associated state*, under the hypothesis that, as it does not imply total separation, Spain could agree to it. One respondent was in favour of this option (EE-11) and believed that it would be economically beneficial. On the other hand, they believed that the term *independence* still produced a certain degree of fear in Basque society, and even more so if we take into account that there are some Basque people who feel Spanish.

Despite the aforesaid, the opinion of those interviewed does not represent the general opinion of the Basque business sector, which is why we asked them the opinion of the rest of the business people in their sector on this issue.

Possible stance of other business people in the sector with regard to the Basque State

During the course of the interviews we were able to appreciate that the subject of a hypothetical Basque State is not a frequent topic of debate among business people. Even so, the people in the survey believed that, generally speaking, the majority of

the business people in their sector did not support a hypothetical Basque State, although they could not say so with complete certainty: *"I think that the majority are against"* (EE-16); *"I think there are probably more against than in favour"* (EE-19); *"maybe not everybody, but the vast majority would not welcome such a process"* (EE-20).

It is usual for business people to show courage and be cautious at the same time, despite the fact that these requests would appear to be contradictory. The first is necessary in order to move forward and follow new paths, whereas the second is required for them to maintain their position and not lose what they have already achieved. In this case, concerning commitment to a Basque State, business people tend more towards precaution than bravery (EE-4). To be precise, with regard to political matters: *"they prefer things to remain the same. Business people normally shun politics, they prefer to ignore it and are content with just being left alone"* (EE-13). In this respect, a business person from the southern Basque Country believed that young business people are more courageous than previous generations, in part because the latter had gone through hard times.

Another reason why business people are cautious may be the uncertainty created by this type of process, which is wholly understandable. Nonetheless, as pointed out by one of the respondents, if we take this caution into account, their rejection of a constituent process may not be definitive (EE-14). At the same time, they mentioned the need to be realistic when dealing with matters that could have economic consequences: *"I think that the first reaction would be one of caution. Money, investment and monetary flows marry with no one, they have no soul or sentiments, money moves for reasons of profitability, opportunity, improvement, etc."* (EE-10).

On the basis of the aforesaid, the respondents were not optimistic about the possible favourable implication of the rest of the business people. They believed that the business sector holds little sway in this regard, and, adherence would, in any case, be personal, based more on sentiments than on economic reasons, as pointed out by one of the respondents: *"certainly, anyone who feels Spanish will get the jitters when there is talk of independence, but I don't believe they are thinking that their business is at risk in that situation"* (EE-15).

ALTERNATIVES TO THE BASQUE STATE

When asked if it would be necessary to increase the powers of their respective administrative territories in the event that the Basque State were not created, in most cases, the answer was concise and in the affirmative, as summed up by one of the informants: *"the greater the power or sovereignty we have, the greater our capacity to implement policies we consider are in our own interest"* (EE-4). Nevertheless, this affirmation is, to a certain extent, qualified in accordance with the administrative territory of the speaker.

Basque Autonomous Community

Some people considered that it would be a positive step towards an independent state if the Basque government were to take charge of all the competences included in the Statute of Guernica: *"I am aware of the fact that we may require a stage in which self-government is strengthened and reach what I said about a shared project for a country"*; *"in overall terms, the Basque self-government needs to be fully attained"*. Others, on the other hand, although they did not consider the previous proposal as something negative, did feel that any intermediate course other than independence would have few consequences, at least as far as economic matters are concerned: *"I am not against (taking full charge of the State's competences) but I do not think that is our goal"*. Some of them welcomed the steps taken in recent decades by the BAC institutions, and highlighted the positive aspects of political autonomy as a positive starting point towards an independent state.

Foral Community of Navarre

All the Navarrese business people in the survey considered that the political and economic ties between the BAC and the FCN should be strengthened. In the opinion of one of them, although nowadays there is no institutional unity between both

autonomous communities, in the business world, this separation between the different administrations has been overcome: *"I believe there is one (a relation), at the institutional level no, but we do have one between the companies. It's very easy for us to do business in Gipuzkoa, because it's very near."* When we asked about the hypothetical option of a pro-independence process taking place, first of all, exclusively in the BAC, we heard a variety of opinions. For instance, one of them disliked the fact that distinctions were made between the BAC and the FCN, as this person understood Euskal Herria as a sole political entity, so they did not support this option. Another one, on the other hand, felt that Navarre would need more time to undertake this process for the construction of an independent state, which is why they supported the idea of a preliminary stage of the pro-independence process being carried out in the BAC alone: *"leaving Navarre out of it, I think it could be done now. Navarre would be more complex. Navarre is currently undergoing changes, but it is a little soon to start broaching the subject in Navarre... I think it would need more time."* In this person's opinion, a similar process would not be negative for Navarre, and if it had any effect on Navarrese companies, it would be positive. Another one felt that the autonomous community's effectiveness depends largely on the central government at any given time, and this is where they set its limitations: *"if we were in a serious country, with a respectful central government, the autonomous community would be quite satisfactory as a way of a life. It would not be as ideal as an independent country which creates its own image, but it would be quite good."*

Northern Basque Country

In general, the respondents in the northern Basque Country would welcome the creation of their own political and administrative structures in this territory, although we heard a range of opinions about the functions said structures should perform. For example, one of those interviewed believed that ties with the southern Basque Country could be strengthened by means of these structures, which would, in their view, have positive political and economic consequences for the northern Basque Country. Others stressed the limitations these structures would have, particularly in the economic sphere: *"I do not think that what is being demanded would change things much in the economic sphere. This may be the case in the cultural sphere, but economically no"*. This same business person considered that the pro-independence process in the BAC would imply no substantial change as far as their company was concerned. We also met with intermediate stances regarding the setting up of autonomous structures; for example, a business person from the engineering sector believed that these structures would be beneficial in a preliminary stage, but questioned their effective influence in the long term. On the other hand, and with some qualifications, the majority believed that the current situation regarding the administration was not beneficial for companies in the northern Basque Country, as summed up by one of the respondents: *"if we continue as now, I do not think there is going to be any great developments here. For them (France), we are just a green belt, there has been little investment here"*.

BASQUE STATE AND EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union took centre stage in many of the interviews carried out, and, in some cases, it was clearly stated that continued membership was an indispensable condition to support a project for an independent state. Another question is the stance that the European Union itself would take in the face of the newly-created state, something we shall now broach.

On the European Union's possible stance

We need to distinguish the different observations made with respect to this question, those made from the business point of view and those which are limited to the political sphere. Those whose observations were made from the business perspective saw no significant problems, as they believed that the European Union would take no specific stance with respect to a Basque State, which is why they believed that the European institutions would accept the new state if the democratic minimum is guaranteed. Those who hold this opinion believed that it is mainly economic interests that govern the European Union, which is why, in their view, the stance with respect to a Basque State would be determined on the basis of those interests.

On the other hand, while acknowledging the previous arguments, some people believed that the pressure that Spain and

France would likely exert on European institutions would need to be taken into account. For this reason, they believed that, at first, there could be a certain reluctance on the part of the European Union to recognize the Basque State, but they also added that the prevailing logic of the economy would mean that it would be recognized in the end: *"time eventually cures things"* (EE-3). They believed that, even in the worst case scenario, companies' capacity to do business would be ensured: *"they might support Spain politically, but if, in economic terms, our companies offer better prices than others and some good products, I am sure that we would do business"* (EE-8).

Others, on the other hand, foresaw difficulties, as they attached greater importance to the political variable than the aforementioned business people. According to these people, in the event that Spain and France opposed the Basque State's EU membership, the latter would accept this decision, in order to avoid internal stability risks (EE-13). Moreover, they considered this to be a highly convenient position for the EU, as it is stipulated in the different European agreements. For this reason and others already mentioned, for many of the respondents, the course to follow would be to seek an agreement with Spain and France to enable this hypothetical Basque State to continue to be a member of the EU.

Yet another opinion points to the virtual impossibility of Spain and France giving their go-ahead, which is why the creation of external alliances with countries sharing Euskal Herria's characteristics, such as Finland, Denmark, Scotland or other small countries, was favoured. The objective of this alliance would not be to create any kind of association between member states but rather to foment solidarity among them (EE-6). This proposal for an alliance was also defended by another of the respondents, in this case, with other stateless nations, with an aim to making a joint plea to the EU (EE-13).

On the importance of membership of the European Union

Only one of the respondents said that, as far as their company was concerned, it was all the same if they were a member of the EU or not (EE-15). The others, on the other hand, did attach great importance to membership and argued as follows: *"I have no doubt whatsoever that we should be a member of the EU"* (EE-19), and even spoke of it as something indispensable: *"I believe that, for Euskal Herria as well as for Catalonia, it would not be feasible to leave the EU"* (EE-20).

The need for EU membership was justified in the main from the political perspective, as they felt that if one wants to build a viable state, it must be recognized by the international community: by the UN and the EU, among other international bodies. This argument was often accompanied by a more subjective component, when they considered that the European Union or other international organisations could afford Euskal Herria state prestige: *"I would feel more at ease within, but not under their authority, but as a member. My dream is an Euskal Herria within the European Union"* (EE-5).

From the economic point of view, the majority of respondents considered it indispensable that the new state not be isolated from the world market, and this, they believed, would not happen with EU membership, whereas, outside it, they felt that there would be few opportunities to compete with it. In such a case, in the opinion of several of the business people: *"this would cause the Basque State to be rejected in many economic and business sectors, as well in society itself"* (EE-8); *"generally speaking, I believe that leaving the EU would cause a sensation of fear and insecurity, which would not be beneficial for us"* (EE-4).

No such urgency was appreciated in the case of the currency. Some of the respondents would even be willing to leave the euro zone if the situation so required. In general, however, although not afforded the same importance as that attached to EU membership, the majority considered it convenient (necessary, in some cases) to keep the euro as the official currency, as they thought that creating a new one would lower the current standard of life, as well as create problems for exporting due to an increase in custom duties (EE-9), an opinion likewise expressed by another business person from the financial sector: *"I believe that leaving the euro or any other similar venture would be too risky"* (EE-10).

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

The main reason why most of the business people in the survey expressed their support for the creation of a hypothetical Basque State responds more to a feeling of identity than a specific economic interest. In other words, they are in favour of the creation of a Basque State because, from the political point of view, they would like to be part of an independent state, and not because they believe that it would be of benefit to their companies. Even so, other than this argument relating to politics and sentiment, other reasons of an economic nature were also cited.

Indeed, all those interviewed coincided in stating that the Basque business world was in very good health. This would seem to indicate that a hypothetical Basque State would be economically viable, and that its companies would stay strong in such a scenario. On the other hand, they believed that an independent state would have no difficulty in being recognised and accepted by the international community, due, in their opinion, to the fact that current world interdependence deriving from economic globalisation is more important, and outstrips the dependence that this new state may have with respect to Spain, France and even Europe. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the respondents believed that a process negotiated with Spain and France would be preferable (necessary, for some) to a unilateral declaration of independence, as they considered this last option too risky.

Therefore, they believed that a Basque State would be viable, although the main reason for their favourable position would be of a political nature, as, in general, they did not think that an independent state would have any major impact (positive or negative) on their respective business sectors, despite the fact that they admitted that there could be certain difficulties initially. Said difficulties were to be found internally and externally. In relation to the external difficulties, they emphasized Spain and France's unwillingness to tackle a process of these characteristics whereas, internally, they identified difficulties stemming from the incapacity of the political parties in favour of creating the Basque State to reach an agreement, as well as the absence in Basque society of a significant sector of the population seeking the creation of an independent state.

How do the business people in the survey justify their support for the creation of a Basque State? In general, they believed that having their own state would be a more efficient option than belonging to Spain and France for identifying Basque society's real needs, particularly in relation to development and innovation. They mentioned several advantages: on the one hand, the proximity of the state, or, to put it another way, they believed that it would result in a more real and direct democracy. On the other hand, they considered that great progress could be made in education and training with a new state. Moreover, they believed that it would be an efficient way to strengthen the feeling of community or people.

On the other hand, it seems that the business people in favour of the creation of a Basque State experienced a certain isolation with respect to the other business people in their respective sectors in relation to this topic, although, from their observations, it did not appear to be a subject that was often discussed. Neither did they feel that the business sector would get directly involved in a process of this type, as they considered that the business world would remain in the background, even though some of the respondents expressed their willingness to personally get involved if a prior agreement were reached between the political parties.

The majority believed that the Basque State should be a member of the European Union and keep the euro as its currency, although they did admit that, at first, there would likely be some uncertainty in this respect, largely due to the expected opposition of Spain and France. Nevertheless, they thought that in time the logic of the market would prevail over this opposition.

Last of all, most of the people interviewed in Navarre and the northern Basque Country believed that the process of creation of the Basque State would get underway in the BAC, something which they considered positive, as they believed that ties with the other territories could then be strengthened.

OPINIONS IN THE SPHERE OF BASQUE CULTURE

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the opinions and attitudes of social players working in favour of Basque and Basque culture in relation to a virtual Basque State. Indeed, these culture agents were considered a significant sector within Basque society for this research project. Their importance does not only derive from the privileged place occupied in any society by culture and those involved in culture production, but also from the permanent ties between culture in Basque and Basque politics in matters relating to the Basque language.

Certainly, since the inception of the Basque nationalist movement and, in particular, with the new formulations of the nationalist movement in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies, Basque and culture produced in said language were recognised as the core of Basque national identity. Subsequently, the linguistic and cultural cause were traditionally associated with the pro-independence claim of nationalist movements and, potentially, the creation of a hypothetical Basque State. In the last fifty years, a major social movement has developed around Basque, and is manifested in a variety of ways. This work in Basque is known as *euskalgintza*, which literally means action in and in favour of Basque. The actions and discourses developed in favour of Basque and culture in Basque, and some of the steps taken by Basque nationalism in its path towards the construction of a nation were on the same wavelength and, on more than one occasion, they intertwined. Consequently, cultural production in Basque and nationalist political action have been converging for a long period of time.

Taking all these considerations as a starting point, special attention was paid to *euskalgintza* players in this study of the Basque State. The following pages contain the results of the interviews held with some members of *euskalgintza* and those producing culture in Basque.

Methodology

This chapter aims, in the main, at gathering and analysing the discourses drawn up by members of the pro-Euskera and Basque culture movement. This general objective was developed on these specific objectives:

- To gather the opinions that Basque-speaking cultural players have of pro-sovereignty processes in Scotland and Catalonia, as well as their impact on Euskal Herria.
- To gather the opinions of Basque-speaking cultural players on the project for the construction of a Basque State, and their points of view of the viability of said state. Do they consider the construction of a state possible? Which conditions and means would be indispensable to this end? What would its aim be?
- To get to know the tasks assigned by Basque-speaking cultural players to a virtual Basque State. What objectives should the state have from the point of view and interests of culture? What policies should necessarily be implemented? What should its priorities be?
- Describe the social perceptions of Basque-speaking cultural players of a hypothetical Basque State. What is the ideal state imagined by the representatives of Basque-speaking culture? In their opinion, which state models should be taken as a reference? How should the cultural measures taken so far be integrated into the context of the new political structure?

In short, when questioned about this series of questions, Basque-speaking cultural players were asked to try to project and analyse the meanings attributed to a possible Basque State, taking their concerns about language and culture as a starting point.

Qualitative techniques were used to generate data. On the one hand, in-depth interviews were held with informants from a variety of organisations and with a range of sensitivities in the pro-Basque language movement. The qualitative perspective was used in a strategic sample for the design of the research sample. The selection criteria for the sample units aimed at achieving the greatest possible diversity in points of view. 13 in-depth interviews were carried out between March and May 2015. The respondents were selected according to their qualified position within the *euskalgintza* movement and in the production of culture in Basque. All of them had a long experience as activists and in work in the following fields: the university, communication, the cultural industry and publishing and literature, respectively.

A standard open model was used for the design of the interviews, that is, the same list of questions was asked of all the

people in the survey, and their answers were free and open. The questions asked of the participants were classified in four subject groups: first of all, the role of language and culture in recent pro-sovereignty processes deployed in Europe (Scotland and Catalonia), secondly, the task of language and culture in the building of the state, thirdly, the role of the state in culture development and, lastly, linguistic policies to be developed by a hypothetical state.

On the other hand, in order to complete the information gathered during the course of the interviews, written documents from a variety of magazines and publications of the pro-Basque movement were reviewed and analysed. The sample of publications was taken according to the importance for the research of the information and the subjects dealt in each of them, as the research itself received wide coverage from members of the *euskalgintza* movement, giving rise to controversy in the public sphere in Basque. In this respect, debates were aired in some prestigious publications in the Basque-speaking cultural world, and conferences and seminars were organised to analyse the subject from the point of view of *euskalgintza*¹⁸. The aim was to outline the particulars of the debate on a virtual Basque State by analysing the documents gathered.

THE STARTING POINT: DIAGNOSTICS/CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Time of crisis

Culture agents set their ideas and opinions in a very specific social and political context. In this respect, the ideas of the different cultural players coincided: they saw that Basque society is experiencing the end of a stage. However, the causes for the conclusion of this cycle were attributed to highly diverse factors. In the political sphere, several questions were mentioned as a symptom of the end of an era; among others, the new situation arising after ETA, the exhaustion of the autonomous community period in the southern Basque Country, and the serious downturn being experienced in Spain, which is not only financial and social, but also implies a decline in the Spanish national project. Together with this, a desire for emancipation on the part of society can likewise be appreciated. On the other hand, on the international stage, the political processes developed in Scotland and Catalonia are taken as precedents, and considered to have consequences in the development of the new pro-sovereignty channels that are beginning to be tested in Euskal Herria.

However, it is not only in the political sphere but also in the cultural sphere in Basque that this phase of work in favour of the Basque language is considered to be over. A sign of this chapter end would be the exhaustion of the language policies implemented so far. In the opinion of the cultural players, these policies have done all they can and are no longer efficient. Consequently, they considered it vital to open up new political and cultural channels. On the other hand, over and above the development of certain language policies, the idea that the *euskalgintza* movement itself and culture in Basque are currently undergoing a crisis was widespread among those interviewed. In this aspect, the *euskalgintza* movement is considered not to have the ideal instruments to face new times. Mobilisation and active participation of society typical of the past have dwindled in recent years. It would seem that the discourse has not been updated in order to move forward. The fact of the matter is that the general feeling is one of being adrift at the end of this political and linguistic cycle.

"In euskalgintza, people often say that the cycle of the last 50 years has come to an end. Because unified Basque (Batua) was created fifty years ago. As were the all-Basque schools (ikastola), etc. As far as politics is concerned, a thirty-year cycle has also probably come to an end, since the autonomous community institutions were set up. These cycles have proved to have been quite fruitful, though their limits are equally obvious. A floor was set, but the ceiling is visible every day. I believe it is time to revise it, in the parliament (Basque), the change in Navarre... I think that there are symptoms that make that possible. There are many symptoms allowing us to see that something different is taking shape. And I think it coincides, on the one hand, with the awakening of society following the recession, that is, "if we leave things as they are, we could actually fall into the abyss". And it also coincides with the fact that the Spain project is at a low ebb, the lowest in a long time (E-13)".¹⁹

Despite the fact that there are similarities in the diagnoses of the crisis, there is not, however, a unanimous opinion as to its

¹⁸ On 25 June 2015, the University of the Basque Country (UEU) and the review JAKIN held a seminar entitled "The Basque language at the heart of the construction of the state and national construction", during the university's summer courses. In addition, JAKIN, the journal, published a special issue (n° 208) under the heading of: "People, nation, state. And what happens with Basque?".

¹⁹ All those participating in the interviews spoke in Basque, and their contributions were translated for this version.

consequences. Some culture agents see opportunity in the crisis, particularly for political transformation. More specifically, in the wake of Scotland and Catalonia, they see an opportunity for social and political change which would lead to the formation of a Basque State through secessionist channels. In the same sense, they underline the palpable yearning for liberation in civil society. Nevertheless, others fail to see an opportunity for change, still less for stemming the gradual loss of the Basque language. More extreme opinions consider the degeneration of the linguistic and cultural situation irreversible.

Two discourses among Basque-speaking cultural players

The opposing views expressed help draw up two lines of discourse. Both discourses consider the Basque language as a basic component of Basque identity and, consequently, see the objectives related to the recovery of Basque and the revival of culture in Basque as priority areas. Nonetheless, significant differences can likewise be appreciated between them. Thus, one discourse has a more political nuance and can be linked, on the one hand, with the interest groups' linguistic and cultural project—and, with it, defence of the "cultural nation"²⁰—and, on the other, with pro-sovereignty political aspirations, however specified: independence, state, etc.... In other words, this line of thought sees as compatible concepts the linguistic purpose of interest groups and the projects for independence and a state, that is, the construction of the cultural nation and the construction of the political state. To give a more graphic example, the respondents expressing this opinion reveal a great interest in initiatives like the *Gure Esku Dago* movement in favour of the right to decide; some of them are even actively involved in the abovementioned initiative. By participating, they hope that Basque and the Basque identity will be given maximum importance in future political projects.

"We can appreciate that creating a state is nothing exceptional in Europe (...) A yearning for liberation has grown in society in recent years (...) The development of the cultural nation takes longer (...) it moves at a different pace. In my opinion, the question is to realize that there are two risks. The first is to subordinate one process to the other. The second, to place them in opposition. In my opinion, they are neither subordinate to one another or in opposition. They must follow parallel paths, while being complementary. The standardisation of Basque and the development of our cultural nation should not be subordinate to independence. Saying "Independence now, and then, come what may" is not good. It is not good for us to condition cultural objectives with political objectives. Neither can we say that those in favour of independence is against Basque and such like. I believe that independence can help the development of Basque. It is not certain but it can help Basque. Then, let's do it in a parallel fashion, and we will coincide in actions that complement one another." (E-13).

On the other hand, other culture agents are sceptical, and often, even mistrustful, of these kinds of initiatives organised in recent years in Euskal Herria. In fact, according to the second discourse, political projects -political independence and a virtual Basque State, among others-, should be subordinate to the cultural process. According to this line of argument, if the goals set are the recovery and standardisation of Basque and culture in Basque, priority must be granted to the building of a cultural nation, and to it alone. In consequence, the construction of the Basque State, should it be undertaken, ought to be done on the basis of the Basque cultural nation, with an aim to protecting it, and not for other ends. However, as is known, due to the current socio-linguistic situation, nowadays, the state could not be built on the basis of the cultural nation. Moreover, the matter of territoriality, which has yet to be settled, is highlighted by all interest groups. Moreover, a state that does not include all Basque-speaking territories would bring about a divide in the Basque-speaking community. Thus, the interest groups sharing this point of view conclude that, first of all, efforts must be focused on the process of making people literate in the Basque language and on the construction of the Basque nation, as they consider that linguistic demands run the risk of becoming blurred among other diverse goals.

"Gure Esku Dago and those involved in political parties are responsible for placing the Basque-speaking community at the heart (...) However, the question is to what do we give priority. What is our subject or object? I am sure that at this time it is not the state. It is the cultural nation. Before the state." (E-12).

"Gure Esku Dago's approach has gained momentum. They would probably say: "We are pre-political, let's leave aside the question of identity, and join together". Gure Esku Dago expresses this very well. They have realised that here the

²⁰ The concept of "cultural nation" is regularly used by the culture agents in the interviews. They basically refer to the nation based on language (Basque): the Basque-speaking community would make up said nation. However, they also include the element of territoriality in this concept. In other words, the concept of "cultural nation" includes the territories in which Basque speakers reside, in the sense attributed by the culture agents. Hereinafter, the notion of "cultural nation" is mentioned in the text with the meaning assigned by the people interviewed.

only way to join forces is to do so at a folk-political level.” (E-6).

The lesson from Scotland and Catalonia

Although both cases are very different, the pro-sovereignty experience in Scotland and Catalonia have taught us the same thing, in the opinion of the interest groups. On the one hand, they have shown that the point of view on questions of identity has changed in pro-sovereignty processes, and that the importance formerly held by language as an identity symbol has weakened. Some culture agents who do not hold leading roles in the *euskalgintza* movement have a flexible view of the concept of identity. From their perspective, identity is not necessarily linked to language. They consider that the ways to understand identity have changed in the globalisation era. They believe that there are currently ways of forming identities which need not be exclusively linguistic: instead of cultural and linguistic elements, political, economic and also historical characteristics have become relevant. The actual claim for independence can be a form of identity construction at any given time. Despite the aforesaid, these culture agents clearly state that, as far as Basque society is concerned, they are in favour of an identity based on language and culture. Why does this weakening of culture occur in the construction of current identities? They respond that cultures undergo changes, they are no longer closed systems, as was formerly the case. There can be many languages and diverse cultural flows in a society. And it is more and more difficult to build consistent identities based on a language and a culture. Despite this, they believe that, although globalisation tends to blur cultural identities, it also generates movements and actions in favour of these identities.

On the other hand, the processes in Scotland and Catalonia have largely revealed the fact that discourses on democracy have taken over from identity discourses, and, in current pro-sovereignty processes, rather than the idea of national identity, what is sought is democratic legitimisation. According to some culture agents, this shift is merely a cosmetic change. By way of example, they state that, in Catalonia, language and culture have had greater importance than pro-sovereignty politics. However, in the opinion of the respondents, the change that has occurred is structural in nature. What's more, said change has also arrived in Euskal Herria, with *Gure Esku Dago* and similar initiatives. They point out that this change clashes with the objectives which have so far predominated in the world of culture in Basque. Moreover, culture agents consider that the conduct of some nationalist politicians is conditioned by a fear of missing this train [the Scottish and Catalan one]. In consequence, they feel that these politicians are trying to do things too quickly.

In fact, as pointed out by some culture agents, the experience of Scotland and Catalonia has broken with the model of political change that prevailed in the previous political stage in Euskal Herria. Indeed, up to very recent times, it was believed that, with the pressure of the armed struggle, political negotiation would take place, and hence the opportunity for self-determination and, thus, it would be possible to transform the legal status of the different territories (or of some territories) in Euskal Herria. However, with the Catalan experience, it was seen that, on the one hand, attempts to gain independence with the use of democratic channels could end up in a failure to form a state. This has affected the discourse on the right to decide in Euskal Herria. In addition, it was observed that, in pro-independence processes, greater importance is attached to matters like welfare, economic advantages, and the will of the people and their rights than to identity factors. Interest groups are aware of this turn of affairs and, at the same time, are convinced that the reason they are calling for a state is to protect Basque and culture in Basque. However, they are convinced that this is currently not the discourse of the majority and that the change that has occurred, namely, a change in favour of democratic principles, is deep-rooted. In this new perspective, the subject is no longer a nation with given cultural, ethnic or racial characteristics but rather a society expressing its will. Moreover, this new approach implies a grave risk for the interests of the culture agents; they fear that Basque speakers will be a minority in a virtual Basque State and, consequently, the situation would open up opportunities for an independent non-Basque-speaking Euskal Herria.

“On the one hand, due to tactical questions and for the sake of convenience, I approve of this change in perspective. However, I do realise that the change is not simply tactical, but is something deeper. Indeed, it is linked to the right the decide that we spoke of previously. In other words, it is a democratic principle. Therefore, the leading character is no longer an abstract nation, possessing cultural, racial or ethnic features, and because it possesses them, but is rather a society and its wishes which become the guidelines. I would say that I agree with it, not only tactically speaking but also regarding the fundamentals. Nevertheless, it implies a risk from my point of view and interests. And the risk is that I would not be interested in an independent Euskal Herria speaking languages other than Basque (...) Fundamentally, I repeat, based on my interests, independence is not formal independence, it is not the will or welfare of a society, but

rather (an independence) working to guarantee the survival of culture in Basque and Basque itself.” (E-8).

The matter of the political subject: The Basque language removed from the pro-state project

We have already pointed out the two differentiated discourses among Basque-speaking interest groups. Generally speaking, the actors defending the first discourse accept the change in favour of the democratic principle that has taken place in pro-sovereignty discourses. What's more, they believe that independence and the state can contribute to the progress of the Basque language. To a certain extent, their stance is qualified. They make it clear that the standardisation of Basque must not be subordinate to independence, and that cultural objectives must not conform to political ones. However, they do not consider that the democratic project in favour of the state goes against Basque. On the contrary, they support the active presence of interest groups in certain initiatives (for instance, in the *Gure Esku Dago* initiative), to ensure that Basque and culture in Basque play a leading role in them. Though in an indirect fashion, the democratic subject is accepted in this discourse. This line of discourse corresponds to culture agents who, even though they may be involved in cultural production in Basque, deploy their activity on the periphery of the *euskalgintza* movement (for example, in the university), and to players who, apart from having a role in culture, are involved in other more *political* activities, such as the *Gure Esku Dago* initiative.

On the other hand, the culture agents defending the second discourse do not question the fact that the subject of the construction of a state should be the Basque cultural nation. In their opinion, the proposals for a state that are currently being made lack any content relating to nation. In consequence, in opposition to the current debate, they consider that some thought should be given to the question, *why a state?* And they believe that it does not suffice to respond that this state would be more democratic. They think that these observations are used to avoid the central issue, that pertaining to language. What's more, Basque-speakers are left aside, in order to bring a majority around to the idea of a pro-state project. They claim that, previously, the language was at the heart of the matter. Now, this is not the case. And these culture agents do not want a state at any price and for any reason other than for promoting the Basque language.

“Where do you think hope is to be found for culture production in Basque? (...) From the linguistic or cultural nation or from the political state? I have no doubt. I give priority to the cultural nation.” (E-12).

“They tell us that we have to win people over, as if to say that they are others, and we must sacrifice ourselves. At the same time, those who work in favour of Basque are assumed to be in favour of independence under any conditions. And this may not be so (...) Previously, language was at the heart of the matter, and now, not at all. And these changes are surprising for me.” (E-5).

Statements made by quite a number of culture agents run along the same lines, despite the fact that, occasionally, they use different concepts. In the words of one social actor, a *nation of the Basque language* must be built, in the political as well cultural sense. A statement by another culture agent concluded that the community of speakers must take the initiative and the political parties [nationalists] should follow their orders. Consequently, the first task is to organise the community of speakers, and then build the future of the language. The cultural nation must be a priority. The more extreme opinions question the fact that a state could be beneficial to the Basque-speaking community in the short term. Rather, it is felt that, in times when it had less political power, the linguistic community had made greater strides, and, on the contrary, the consequences of political institutionalisation have, to a certain extent, been unfavourable because they have implied the deactivation of society.

“I give priority to the cultural nation and the other (the state) will help. Therefore, for me, the state is an instrument, and the subject is the linguistic community. And, what I can see is that, according to the different approaches, the state is becoming the subject, and the linguistic community is like the economy or any other variable. I don't see it like that.” (E-12).

The culture agents who support this second discourse are members of core organisations and institutions of the *euskalgintza* movement, and consider themselves legitimate spokespersons of the movement. As their activity is developed within the same network of relations and social circles, their declarations are highly consistent and very similar as regards their lines of argument. The characteristics of their discourse are evident: the argument in this case is more inflexible than the former in its understanding of identity (Basque identity is basically supported by language, and not by other features), in how it attaches central importance

to the Basque language, and in the way it strictly differentiates cultural action and political action, among other questions.

Mistrust of nationalist political forces

The sceptical, even negative view of the new political strategies emerging in Euskal Herria cannot be understood if we do not consider the predominantly critical opinion of politics held by members of the Basque cultural scene. Indeed, there is great mistrust of politics and, particularly, of politicians in the Basque cultural community. If possible, the mistrust of nationalist politicians is even greater.

On the one hand, in Basque culture's discourses, Basque society is perceived as a model of society subjected to politics and politicians, due mainly to the violent political conflict which existed until recent times. Of the characteristics differentiating Basque society from the Scottish or Catalan ones, the one most often mentioned is political culture. In Euskal Herria, political debate is still tainted by the conflict. Unlike what occurs in Euskal Herria, there is a strong civil society in Catalonia, with considerable autonomy with respect to political parties. On the contrary, in Euskal Herria, civil society is a satellite of political parties, many people being subordinate to the parties, society is highly politicised (in the partisan sense of the word), and aligned with parties. Political parties are endogamous. Whereas the parties defend their action, the Basque cultural community proposes an independent, self-managed civil society, and one that is organised around popular initiatives. Moreover, a central position is claimed for culture within this model of society.

As far as the Basque nationalist forces are concerned, from the statements of those participating in the survey, it can be appreciated that, at one time, the Basque cultural community did share some of their objectives, among others, defence of the Basque language and Basque culture. Thus, they both coincided in their claim for a Basque nation based on the language. However, interest groups point out that a change has come about in recent years; they are concerned about the fact that nationalist forces have, in fact, failed to grant central importance to the language in their objectives. In the same sense, they feel that the rift opening up between *euskalgintza* and Basque culture and nationalist political forces is widening. Some point out that the debate that took place fifty years ago is being reproduced today in Euskal Herria, and recall the words of Txillardegui (*"We do not know if Basque will survive with a state, but it definitely will not without one"*). At any rate, unlike today's politicians, the politicians of that time were as certain as interest groups that politics and the linguistic struggle went hand in hand. Moreover, the state was a mutual objective. Nowadays, this is not the case.

"I believe that the ambivalent practical attitude held by Basque nationalists with respect to the Basque language is patent (...), central importance is not always given to Basque." (E-4).

Occasionally, this critical discourse with regard to Basque nationalism is more bluntly expressed, as can be appreciated in some of the statements made by spokespersons belonging to *euskalgintza's* core structure. In the view of said culture agents, a compact core of people clearly exists in relation to Basque culture production, and these people are firmly committed to Basque culture and activities related to identity. Nevertheless, they consider that the political élite is indifferent to this movement. They feel that culture has always had a negligible role in the political debate. The nationalist political élite has failed to attach the necessary importance to the linguistic movement and to Basque culture. Currently, politicians are considering stripping national construction of its identitarian and cultural basis. This would place Euskal Herria on the path followed by Gaelic culture, since there was an explicit renunciation of the language and culture in Ireland (and in other territories where Gaelic was spoken). In this context, some consider that it is incumbent on the *euskalgintza* movement to reinstate Basque and the Basque-speaking community as something central, over and above the political parties and political choices, because they believe that party politics and the conflicts between the different political parties has serious consequences for the Basque language.

"I believe that the Basque nationalist political élite has not attached sufficient importance and given sufficient muscle to culture. Consequently, if, at one point, it is proposed that national construction should be stripped of its identity and linguistic basis, I doubt that they will make any objection" (E-1).

While targeting Basque nationalist political forces, interest groups are severe in their judgement of the conservative nationalist party as well as the nationalist left-wing party. More than one respondent equates both political forces because,

among other things, they have developed similar linguistic policies in their related media. This has given rise to doubts and suspicions regarding the attitude that they would have with respect to the language in an eventual Basque State. At any rate, the criticism directed at the nationalist left-wing movement and Sortu by some culture agents at *euskalgintza*'s core reveals even greater animosity, because they claim that these forces have made concessions with respect to the defence of the language in favour of a political project. What's more, they interpret this shift as a breaking up of an implicit historical alliance, which has left the *euskalgintza* movement on its own.

"Formerly too [in the sixties and seventies] attitudes of this kind existed, but they were pro-Spain and this is not the case today, although they may be in their linguistic and cultural practice (...) This new movement is worrying. The nationalist movement itself has come up with the idea that Basque may be an obstacle in the quest for a Basque State. This is something new! It may be expected from the PNV but from Sortu! (...) What should we, as defenders of the Basque language, do in the face of this latest trend? In other words, those of us who wish to live in Basque and for whom Basque is vital?" (E-6).

Scotland and Catalonia cannot be models for Euskal Herria

In the same critical vein, some culture agents fail to understand how Scotland and Catalonia can be considered models for Euskal Herria to follow. In their view, the Scottish process has become an example to follow because it was democratic and unfolded without any confrontation. What's more, it was a success in formal terms. However, as, at the same time, it was a process which granted little importance to identity [cultural identity], they do not see how it can be considered a model for Euskal Herria, even less so from the point of view of *euskalgintza* and Basque culture.

"It is paradoxical for me. It is an idea that originates in Scotland and Catalonia: to be pro-independence, one does not need to be nationalist. You can be pro-independence without being nationalist (...) I still understand this dissociation..., but I don't see it as a stable dissociation (...) In the end, the nationalists and those with a link to culture will wave the flag of independence. A state without nationalism? Perhaps circumstantially, at a given time..." (E-5).

Euskalgintza and Basque culture production players use numerous lines of argument in their efforts to differentiate the experience in Catalonia and Scotland and the situation in Euskal Herria. It is significant that a culture agent alludes to the concept of *utilitarian nationalism* to describe the strategy promoted by the nationalist left in Euskal Herria, following in the wake of the experience in Scotland and Catalonia. Indeed, in this person's opinion, we are witnessing the initiatives of an economic, pragmatic and instrumental nationalism in Basque society. This is a form of nationalism that wishes to attract people who see independence as a means of improving their financial situation. However, it is felt that the attitude of those who have been won over in this way is both unstable and passing, and their opinions and votes can vary quickly. The reason is that, in this person's opinion, this form of nationalism lacks the consistency of nationalism based on identity. This pragmatic point of view merely subordinates the national question to the social question and replaces the main objective of interest groups, namely, the recovery of the Basque language, as a political goal.

According to some of the people in the survey, although some politicians are attempting to apply the Scottish and Catalan experience to Euskal Herria, no similar process exists in Basque society. The attempt is merely simulation on the part of the politicians. Some of the respondents consider that the nationalist political parties lack a true pro-independence discourse in Euskal Herria. They do not know what to do about the question of territoriality. In the nationalist sphere, party politics holds sway, and the parties succumb to their own interests: increasing their share of power in the elections. As a result, their conclusion is that there are few similarities with Catalonia. In Euskal Herria, the project for a state is an initiative of a given political party. In Catalonia, on the contrary, it was a project fomented by civil society. In addition, cultural associations like *Omnium* played a leading role and were a huge reference in Catalan civil society. Consequently, it was Catalonia's civil society that managed to win the political parties over, and not vice versa. Lastly, for the most part, Catalan society is in favour of Catalan and, the majority speak Catalan. A member of a society of said characteristics led the pro-sovereignty process.

"[Here] there is nothing similar. There is nothing of the like in Euskal Herria. There may be a sort of pretence, but the situation here has nothing to do with the situation in Catalonia. In my opinion, there is no such thing as a pro-independence movement in Euskal Herria (...) there are [some pro-independence players], who are a cover for the nationalist left. "Independentistak Sarea" [Pro-independence network] or "Gure Esku Dago", I think. But I do not think

that either of them has any particular plan for independence. They are instruments to conceal political power, as if to say "we are doing something". "Pretence." (E-10).

"I believe that, conceptually speaking, there has been a direct transfer. The thing is that the reasons differ. The reasons are, on the one hand, impotence. That is, here, no other way out can be seen (...) When these ideas arrived, there was a feeling of powerlessness, the possibility of forming a pro-sovereignty majority could not be seen. And, moreover, people wanted things to be done quickly. In my opinion, herein lies the error, because political processes cannot be done quickly, and the metaphor of the missed train cannot be used. Because we come from where we come from. And where we come from is a violent conflict." (E-1).

"In Scotland (...) they have a very dynamic society which is, among other things, culturally and professionally powerful. In Catalonia too, society has traditionally been a powerful one (...) And this civil society has always been independent, separate from the political parties. In our case, civil society is a mere satellite. Of the political parties. And it is a victim of these parties." (E-9).

PERCEPTIONS OF THE STATE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CULTURE

Social perceptions reveal the manner in which people and social groups perceive and understand the events of daily life and the characteristics of their social environment. Social perceptions are based on common knowledge shared by people in the same society. On the basis of this pre-reflexive knowledge, the social world is perceived and understood, with images of the institutions and social behaviour of said world being shaped. In this sense, social perceptions have a practical dimension, and steer people's social action in a given direction.

What is interest groups' perception of the state? More precisely, how do interest groups imagine a virtual Basque State? What kind of characteristics and content do they attribute to it? And, what place do they reserve for themselves in said state?

Language and culture at the heart: the state as a political instrument to protect the cultural nation

The viewpoint and, particularly, the sentiment of the interest groups tends towards a type of state in which ethnic obligations are uppermost. More specifically, from the point of view of Basque culture, the primary goal of a virtual Basque State would be to offer political and institutional protection to a cultural nation based on the language. However, numerous points of view and meanings are put forward in the surveys with respect to the scope of said protection.

Generally speaking, for the Basque-speaking cultural players, the state is a means to working in favour of Basque and culture in Basque. Many of them emphasise the idea that the Basque State should be built on identity, that is, language. Indeed, they do not see the future of the minority language outside this political structure. The Basque language would not be able to survive without a state. Once the state structure is guaranteed, said culture agents would be willing to put up with the same defects of other states in a virtual Basque State. However, the need for a state does not make the latter an end in itself in the eyes of culture agents. In this sense, they consider that the state should be a mere political instrument for protecting Basque identity, in short, a powerful means of resistance. Taking this point of view to an extreme, some openly declare that they have no interest whatsoever in a project for a state that is not aimed at developing a Basque-speaking society. The state should only be instrumental. Therefore, the interest groups do not defend the state as such. On the contrary, they are opposed to any state like ideology, and in no way share the political perspectives which rank language on the same level as the economy or other matters, and consider the state as a goal in itself. Along the same vein, signs of a fear which could be called the *Irish syndrome* are often detected during the course of the interviews, as an example of what could occur in Euskal Herria if priority is not granted to the objectives of a linguistic and cultural nature.

"Yes to a Basque state. The state is necessary, because the state guarantees a cultural nation's heritage (...) The question is we need a state, but we need one that is in favour of the Basque nation. We need it to organise a national

society which will function in Basque, and this capacity will be provided by the state, although sovereignty is relative (...) But the Basque nation must always be placed in the centre, nationality must be given central importance (...) Nevertheless, the opposite is being done here.” (E-6).

“For those of my generation, for those with the same intellectual heritage as I, what gives us most cause for concern in a similar situation is Ireland. In other words, achieving independence, but a situation in which the language is not strong only gets worse rather than improving.” (E-8).

A “reduced” state

Although it is considered an indispensable institution, mistrust with regards the state is a constant in statements made by the respondents. The tasks assigned to the state institution regarding the development of the Basque language and culture in Basque are very important. Nevertheless, a “minimum” state is called for which, as far as administrative infrastructure is concerned, would play a limited role in other social spheres. The interest groups do not wish for an all-powerful state, or a macro-state. In their view, full responsibility should not be left in the hands of the state. Delegation to the state should have clear limits.

It is worth highlighting that, in some way or another, all the interest groups in the survey share this same point of view. On the one hand, we can appreciate a patent *anti-institutionalist* attitude as well as a predisposition to social or popular initiatives, which can be justified by the prolonged history of collective struggle in favour of Basque and culture in Basque. In this sense, popular initiative should be a containment factor with respect to the state. What’s more, in the opinion of some, the state itself should promote this type of initiative. On the other hand, mistrust of the state is likewise linked to a wariness of politicians. Because they are not convinced that politicians are capable of building a model of state consistent with the interests of interest groups (namely, a Basque State), if the entire process is left in their hands.

“I do not wish for an all-powerful state, nor to leave it all up to the state, even if it is a Basque State.” (E-4).

“I am not really pro-state; I concede a subsidiary function to the state. The state does not need to do everything.” (E-13).

On the other hand, reflections on globalisation likewise sustain the inevitability of a reduced state. It is acknowledged that many powers are currently above and beyond the state. Nevertheless, the state is still a valid instrument in the face of globalisation because it offers society opportunities to develop its culture. Even so, the current state is weaker than that of former times, and should act within its limitations.

“We must maintain [the idea of] of this potential, small, state. From the pragmatic point of view, I consider that small states are more interesting and viable.” (E-11).

“States have instruments, but they are weaker than before. And I think that if we wish to build a state, we should be aware of that. We cannot imagine that we are going to build a nineteenth century state. Conditions have changed a lot, with regard to cultural policy, language policy, the economy, etc. Yes, in this respect, looking back, we have lost some very important decades. That is, when the state had a lot of power, we did not have a state to lead and organise culture (...) Now the instruments are not the same as before.” (E-2).

The state as a complement to popular action

Perceptions of the “reduced” state are deeply rooted in interest groups’ experience as activists. Basque interest groups feel a part of collective action, of a movement: they constantly speak of cultural action and linguistic action [kulturgintza and euskalgintza]. And they consider themselves the subject of that action. In their opinion, the activation and participation of sectors in favour of Basque is a guarantee that the construction of a state can be steered in their interests. On the other hand, they consider that the power of the state and its laws lack viability in the absence of a linguistically aware society. Deactivation of society can only lead to a repetition of the case of Ireland. What’s more, innovations and transformation rarely spring from the state itself but rather

from society. Consequently, the action of the state should always be accompanied by the participation of society with regard to actions in favour of Basque. Both, social action and action by the state, can be complementary through the implementation of formulae such as new forms of governance. The initiatives must be in society in participatory processes. In this way, the state's decision-making capacity will be apparent at all levels in a more direct and *non-delegating* democracy, including the cultural sphere. Leaving room for the participatory experience of social movements is a complement to the state's minimum presence, and implies not only asking interest groups for their opinion but also taking decision-making out of the state institutions.

"There are people theorising on this and practising new forms of governance. To ensure that initiative lies in civil society, through participatory processes, this power of decision should be implemented through a more participatory and non-delegating democracy. At all levels. However, as far as culture is concerned, at times, I may seem pro-state, or pro-soviet, but, in certain aspects, the presence of the state should be reduced to a minimum. It [the state] should let social movements do their job, and help them by providing infrastructure, funding... But, through participatory processes, in which it is decided where and in what that money is to be invested. Let it be more than just asking for opinions, take decision-making out of the institutions. I like this kind of model." (E-5).

"I come from a self-managing ideology, and my social activity has developed above all in cooperatives and social movements (...). I still think that our future will be an overlapping of action in society and the power of the institutions, [the future] is there. Moreover, it is a peculiarity that strengthens us as a society (...). Therefore, a state yes, but if it is done like that, in other words, it helps instil new life into popular initiative, and the cultural nation (...) with all that has been done in favour of Basque in the last thirty years without a state, nothing is indispensable. Another thing is that it [the state] can help. That carries a risk, and it is that, if we have our own institution, and in this institution, there are people whose ideology is highly pro-state, we could be led to believe that they can do everything. I think that could be one of the dangers." (E-13).

Active participation of interest groups

Culture agents place themselves and their duties within the abovementioned context of cooperation with the state. Basque-speaking cultural players defend the autonomy of culture. Even so, they believe they should actively participate in the actual building of the state ("even if they are walking on a side lane") and in the subsequent situation in which the state has already been established. This is to ensure that the interests of culture are taken into account because cultural and linguistic policies are going to affect the work of the interest groups. For this reason, the state's cultural policies would have to be designed with the participation of all sectors involved in culture production. On the other hand, as interest groups wish to express their political interests, and because, according to one of them, they aim at "transmitting the state construction of the nation". Some of the respondents mention the need to decentralise state action and the need for self-management of the culture agents themselves, regarding both the management of money and the design of public policies. In addition, when interest groups call for this active participation, they are defending the continuity in culture in Basque of the tradition of popular initiatives which has prevailed to date. For these people, the state is still nothing more than a project. And, up to its creation, and even if it is not actually created, they believe that one cannot be dependent on something that is a mere project. One needs to act here and now.

"I am an activist. I am not caught up in reflections on the long-term (...). Moreover, I am not waiting for a hypothetical Basque State, and, that is why I am not thinking about that state (...). I am involved in managing organisations related to culture in Basque, and I am happy to see that people are not waiting for anything, they are taking action, dealing with what we have here and now." (E-4).

The participation of interest groups would likewise have another purpose. Interest groups work so that culture in Basque is recognised as a legitimate culture, something that has yet to happen, as a consequence of the memorisation of culture in Basque. They are also working to ensure the visibility of this culture and its culture agents, just as other cultures and culture producers in the Spanish-speaking world are supported. The aim to overcome the invisibility of Basque culture resulting from its minorisation is precisely one of the objectives of the new state.

"Culture in Basque should be recognised as culture. Because nowadays somebody who writes in Basque is not a writer. They are somebody who acts in favour of Basque. And the director who makes a film in Basque is not a director... This

is a great fallacy, and a serious example of minorisation. Basque-speaking cultural players have enough on their plate with making culture, which is no small feat. And they do it all with no form of protection, and with a certain invisibility. This situation attributes interest groups with the characteristic of being resistant, and that is very noticeable later on (...) they are far from the places of power... However, if a state were achieved, perverse dynamics would arise, like what happens in Germany or in the USA (...) In any state in the world, they have symbolic power, they accumulate symbolic capital, and those exploiting this symbolic capital is not the state, but rather the nation. In our case, this relation has been broken. In our case, creators live apart. Precisely because they have not been granted the place they are due. If a state were achieved, like it or not, the state would have to parade its interest groups. At full liberty, but it would be obliged to parade them.” (E-1).

Cultural and language policies for attaining central importance for Basque

In the view of interest groups, one of the state's main duties would be the recovery and standardisation of Basque. For the respondents (with one exception) said recovery does not imply the implementation of monolingualism. It does, however, entail achieving the social supremacy of the Basque language. Some interest groups highlight the fact that the concept of standardisation has undergone variations down through the years. The former model which defended “one state, one language” is no longer valid. Nowadays, one language can no longer be used in all spheres and for every function. Nonetheless, the already mentioned condition of supremacy of the Basque language is used with little precision in the different discourses. In this respect, during the course of the interviews, two concepts were mentioned to describe the predominant position that Basque should be granted: the concepts of “centrality” and “hegemony”. At any rate, most of the opinions expressed underlined the fact that, taking the current socio-linguistic situation as a starting point, Spanish and French would continue to be the languages in many people's social life, even after the creation of the state. As a result, the individual rights of the Spanish speaker (or, where appropriate, the French speaker) would be upheld, in the main, in relations with the administration and in their personal life. Similarly, some culture agents stress the need for Spanish to be relegated to second place in certain spheres of society, in favour of English. In this respect, the objective would be to grant priority to the social use of Basque and English in the new political situation.

“I believe that the message should be that the monolingual individual is an endangered species and, to a greater extent, the imperialist monolingual individual.” (E-13)

“Seeing how society is becoming increasingly plural, I find it hard to imagine a Euskal Herria where Basque is fully hegemonic, like national languages thirty years ago. I can almost rule that out. The other day I said to someone that I could not imagine a town in Euskal Herria where 100% of the population know and speak Basque. I find that difficult in the face of our social reality.” (E-2).

In general, interest groups see objective conditions for Basque to be made a central language. They point out that the socio-linguistic situation has varied in recent years. Proof of this is that half of the population in the BAC now understands Basque. Consequently, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of passive bilingual people. The main lines of the language policy to be developed by a Basque State would be aimed at achieving the social dominance of Basque: with the drawing up of a long-term plan for the universalisation of knowledge of Basque (timelines of 20 and 30 years are mentioned in the interviews) and the promotion of measures for supporting the same (free education is imperative), providing experts and efficient scientific and technical means to support this objectives, and differentiating the different socio-linguistic centres in order to develop specific projects to suit their characteristics. The ultimate goal would be to broaden the language's geographical and functional space, for Basque to be a practical language for daily activity, at work, in business, the administration, and culture, etc.

“I would like experts to advise us on what to do in the different scenarios.” (E-9).

“Many spheres need to be won over for Basque, spheres that work in Basque, namely geographical spheres (like what the UEMA municipalities do) and spaces which, though not geographical, are functional.” (E-8).

“I agree with some of the things said by Txepetx. He said that we need to base ourselves on the towns making up the UEMA, and take Tolosa as an example. Though, it could be Markina or any other. He said that these spaces should be taken as a starting point (“arnas gunek”) (...) It would have to be approached as a community effort, to spread the use

of Basque among the community, that is, in social space. First of all, we would have to ensure that everybody in Tolosa can speak Basque, San Sebastian, etc. before attempting to do so in Bilbao (...) We shall have to start like this someday (...) If we start by applying Telex's plan, Basque should be used for all functions in Tolosa, not only in the family and in the home, but also in industry, at the office, in all spheres." (E-6).

Despite the fact that there is wide agreement on the idea of Basque's centrality, it is hard to find a unanimous opinion on the legal situation required to achieve said centrality. A variety of legal categories were mentioned during the interviews; a *real* co-official status for the two languages, the state language status (only for Basque, or for both languages), the concept of *official language(s)*, etc. Nevertheless, some of the respondents played down the importance of formal (or legal) official status and stated that, given the results of the language's current official status, it was more important for the language policy to be actually developed in the future state. On the other hand, likewise mentioned was the advisability of a confederate state which would provide a satisfactory political solution to the different sociolinguistic situations of the Basque territories, if we take into account that the dominant languages in the north and south of Euskal Herria are different. In this respect, the need to create regional decentralised structures was also pointed out, as the sociolinguistic conditions of the different territories and regions call for differentiated linguistic policies. At any rate, all culture agents agreed that the transition stage would be complicated, that the new state would be faced with conflictive management, and that, in said conditions, the need for a mobilised society promoting social initiatives was stressed, since it would not be possible to spread Basque "from top to bottom" if it were not sustained by active social agreements. Last of all, the need to unify the state's cultural policy and language policy was pointed out, with special mention to the fact that any action in favour of culture in Basque should be across-the-board. In this way, with the aid of a state, the culture produced in Basque would not be placed under the category of Basque, as has occurred to date, but rather under the culture category, in the same way as that produced in other languages.

"A language policy will have to be developed in the administration, at school, etc. But I think that the social aspect is more important than this dimension. What I mean is fostering people's adherence to the language, and providing the means to reinforce it. In other words, getting society to spread Basque in the administration. Provide help from above by all means, but you must not imagine that you are going to spread Basque from top to bottom. It will require collaboration from both." (E-2).

Strategic sectors in cultural initiative

Almost total agreement can be appreciated in the statements made by interest groups with regard to the identification of strategic spheres of language policy. Three spheres were named as priority; in the first place, education; in the second place, mass media and culture industries; and, last of all, the administration. They considered education a strategic space because it is a means for social integration and offers the opportunity for new generations to be reared in a natural fashion in Basque. Given the choice made to date by most parents with regard to linguistic models, culture agents expressed their opposition to the system of differentiated models, and declared themselves to be, almost unanimously, in favour of linguistic and cultural immersion in the educational system.

"I would use the approach they used in Catalonia. Efficient linguistic immersion is nothing new. In 40 years, Catalonia (...) has managed to get 100% of the population to understand a conversation in Catalan, it has managed to turn them into passive bilinguals. Therefore, this is the path to take (...) So, during the transition stage, we would have to do that. And not only that, we would have to implement it like they did in Flanders a long time ago (...), they took English directly as a second language." (E-1).

"What we need to do is open up channels for integration, with the conviction that education must be in Basque. And not only education. I mean leisure activities, the media, and strategic sectors should be in Basque. Or, at least, they should be in Basque as well, so that coming generations will grow up and live the language in a natural fashion." (E-8).

There was also a high degree of consensus regarding the second of the strategic sectors. A Basque State would have to regulate the sphere of communications and, particularly, mass media activity. It would be important to have control over radio and television licenses. If the state had control over the radio frequencies, it would also have the same chance to set up linguistic conditions under which public and private television channels operate, and, therefore, the power to require them to broadcast in Basque. This measure is not considered excessive given that the number of passive bilingual people is quite high in Basque

society. On the other hand, the state should also regulate cultural flows of a global nature. Among other issues, it would have to specify the amount of content from Europe and other places, and act as a filter with an aim to promoting and improving production from Euskal Herria and the autochthonous cultural tradition as opposed to global flows. In the opinion of Basque interest groups in general, the state should promote and protect culture industries in favour of culture in Basque created by popular initiative, and implement economic and political policies which are indispensable for this end.

"The state is not only responsible, for example, for mass media, public media, radio frequencies are also regulated by the state. So, I believe that it has some responsibility in this aspect, and may have the power and the competence to regulate this aspect too. How are private television channels going to broadcast? I think that Discovery Channel has two channels for the peninsula. One is based in Barcelona and it broadcasts in Spanish for Spain. There is another for Portugal, in Portuguese. I don't know if is the state that requires it, but if you have the competence, these international channels can be required to broadcast in Basque here (...) Therefore, in the public sphere, yes. But [the state] also has the power to regulate private space [communication]. Otherwise, we are acting in vain. They could be in English, with subtitles in Basque..., and let's see if, in five or ten years, Spanish drops from 90% to 60% on television, and it catches up with other languages." (E-3).

Lastly, the state would have to guarantee that the administration works in Basque. Generally speaking, the respondents specified that Basque should be the dominant language at all levels and in all spheres of the administration, but, at the same time, they added that the rights of Spanish speakers in their relations with the administration would have to be respected, at least until the socio-linguistic situation changed.

"I believe that this is a key factor, Euskal Herria should have a Basque-speaking administration. Logically, having a constitution or a state is not going to change the socio-linguistic reality overnight, and the state cannot go against its citizens. If 60% of the population is unfamiliar with the language..., it is clear that these people have rights. But the fact remains that the centre lane must be in Basque, and, certainly, we will have to adapt to the needs of the citizens, with the conviction that the general administration must develop its activities in Basque (...) On the one hand, a fully Basque administration, that is, the administration must work in Basque and, at the same time, the citizens will use the language they master." (E-3).

"A service cannot be top quality if the linguistic choice of the person for whom it is intended is not taken into account. I believe that the administration should do that. However, to this end, there must be proper planning." (E-13).

In the opinion of interest groups, the purpose of regulating all the spheres mentioned would be to create, through the state's own authority, a geographical, symbolic and cognitive space in favour of Basque. Nevertheless, it is expected that, outside these spaces regulated by the state, in all probability, both Spanish and French will be used socially for a long time, as well as, and increasingly more habitually, English.

"Spanish is here to stay for a long time and I don't think we should go against it. In my view, the person who chooses Spanish should be given the opportunity to express themselves in Spanish, that is, linguistic symmetry must be respected. If I respect their choice, they should equally respect mine. Otherwise, there is no living together. However, I don't believe the state should impose the language that a person speaks in an informal and personal sphere. That cannot be done! In regulated areas, on the other hand, it can." (E-13).

Favour linguistic integration, allay fears, facilitate citizenship for the entire population

The majority of the interest groups interviewed were concerned about the fears that could arise as a result of the language policies set up by the emerging state. For this reason, they insisted on the need to allay these fears and mistrust. The state should be inclusive, clearly, a state for everybody. The state's linguistic policies would initially generate passive bilingual people and, it must be expected that, in two or three generations, there would be Spanish speakers in Basque society. In this respect, the majority of the people in the survey considered that it would not be fair to associate citizenship with the knowledge of

Basque, as the actual construction of the state would have been the consequence of a democratic exercise of the social majority made up of Basque and Spanish speakers. Consequently, all the people living in Euskal Herria at the time of the establishment of the state would be citizens, and so familiarity with the language as a condition for attaining citizenship should be left for a later date. However, other respondents consider knowledge of Basque as indispensable to be granted citizenship. The two attitudes differ to a greater extent in matters relating to the timelines in their outlook concerning the need for regulating knowledge of the language. In general, they feel knowledge and use of the language needs to be regulated in certain social spheres, to a greater or less standard, with greater or less rigour, although this language requirement is not strictly associated with the granting of citizenship.

"Of course, we must regulate. Every state regulates, some more, others less. But they all regulate. Nowadays, of the 28 states in the European Union, I think that 24 require knowledge of the official language to have minimum rights. In some cases, in order to exercise your right to vote, in others, in order to be granted residency, in other cases, in order to be granted citizenship, etc. However, of the 28, 24 have regulated this right to citizenship. And, on other occasions, they do not require an exam, but you do have to attend a course, etc. And here, in some cases, there is controversy about [the requirement to speak] the language in order to obtain a position in Osakidetza (Basque health service) (...) I mean that here we have more complexes about setting up these policies, and we desist or it embarrasses us." (E-2).

At all events, constant references were made in the interviews to the need for consensus and persuasion, in order for the standards and policies that are to be implemented not to be traumatic. The importance of taking things step by step was often repeated. If education were in Basque, it would open up a *natural* path for integration which would allow coming generations to grow up in Basque in a natural way. Moreover, if other spheres are added to that of education, such as mass media, the administration, leisure time and other strategic fields, it was felt that in a relatively short period of time we will have reached the minimum knowledge of Basque necessary to guarantee real bilingualism. In the opinion of interest groups, it is necessary to take advantage of the adherence to Basque existing in society, at times motivated by identity, at others, by pragmatism. This adherence is apparent today in the choice of linguistic models in education. This social support must likewise be sought when implementing linguistic policies. The process of standardisation of Basque cannot be solely managed from top to bottom. Collaboration between society and the administration must be sought. In addition, progressive measures must be implemented.

"We often wonder what means we as Basque speakers should use as an alternative to improve the situation of our language and to spread Basque throughout this society, whether it should be seduction or imposition. And I think that we cannot choose one or the other, but rather we should use both. In other words, we must use persuasion. And the instruments of persuasion are sweet seduction. However, on other occasions, more efficient instruments will be necessary, a legal requirement in education or in other fields. There are means for this. Nevertheless, taking into account minorisation, these measures will always have to be progressive, and fully agreed by consensus." (E-8).

"The fear of people in Bilbao, let alone other areas, may be real: "If I have a state, will they force me to learn Basque? will I have to leave?" (...) And I think that we need to work at assuaging fears and reassuring, and retaliating by saying that the state is there to defend you. The state will be there for everybody, for all of us who are in it. The state must be committed to Basque, because it (Basque) does not exist anywhere else. If it is not done here, it cannot be done anywhere else (...) But knowing full well that we will still have Spanish speakers in two or three generations, and, that at least the state will be able to turn most of the population into passive bilingual people." (E-3).

"The language's presence will have to be covered by very specific laws. Particularly because, otherwise, how are we going to get people to attain a certain knowledge of the language, minimum though it may be, without turning it into a traumatic experience. Among other things, so that we can live in bilingualism, that is, everybody can speak two languages, three languages, so that each can choose which language they are going to use." (E-5).

"The problem lies in the transition." (E-1).

"If we are capable of offering the majority of citizens a positive message, one that is inclusive, respectful and democratic, ours will be the dominant language in a short period of time." (E-9).

The state models of today

The model of state which was most often mentioned by interest groups was France, although the positive as well as negative aspects were qualified (particularly, the imposition of a single hegemonic culture) of said model of state. Despite this qualification, they considered the protection offered by the French state to the dominant French culture and French a model, in the face of homogenising tendencies of globalisation: as a result of which its culture industries were considered strategic, that is, the support given to culture creators and the aid given to the cinema, theatre and publishing were often mentioned by the interest groups during the course of the interviews. Likewise chosen as paths to follow in language recovery and standardisation were other processes developed in countries like the Czech Republic and Finland. Similarly, Iceland was mentioned on more than one occasion due to the circumstances of Icelandic, a state language with a small number of speakers which has, nonetheless, been safeguarded by the state from the onslaught of globalisation. The example of Iceland was also taken as a reference for other reasons, apart from the protection afforded by the state to Icelandic. Specifically, because the state foments decentralised policies in the field of culture, thereby opening up the possibility of self-management by culture producers, for example, the management of budgets.

"The market has swallowed up culture. So a large part of culture production, distribution too, is in the hands of large companies. But states still have a series of instruments to regulate this aspect to a certain extent. When, in 1995, the major world trade regulations were negotiated, when the World Trade Organisation was created, France defended the exceptional nature of culture. And this defence consisted in the following: "Ok, we accept that capital and goods can circulate freely throughout the world. However, there is an area where the state must keep its capacity to condition this free flow and, at certain times, to stem it. And this area is culture". This demand was accepted during the negotiations held at that time, and, in 2010, UNESCO embraced the demand. So, internationally, it is accepted that a state has the authority to limit cultural flow. It may not be capable of stopping cars from Japan entering the market, or capital from Brussels. But it can prevent films from Hollywood, for example, or set a quota for the same, as is the case in France (...) There is no protection of this kind in Spain. There are no limits for the English-speaking model. No limits (...) So, what is left to us, as a society, to create and develop our culture? (...) If we are the subject, this subject seeks to have the right to develop their culture. And this implies availing of certain instruments. And the instrument is cultural policy." (E-2).

CONCLUSIONS

In principle, in the *Euskalgintza* movement and culture in Basque, the need for a Basque State is not questioned. There is no debate in terms of *yes or no* regarding the state. However, in the light of the proposals arising in the nationalist political sphere, the objectives of this state, the nature of the political subject that should promote it, and the adequacy of the actual project for a state at the present time, as defined in said political plans are all questioned.

Interest groups aim at a Basque State with an ethnic base. In their opinion, the main task of the hypothetical Basque State is the recovery of the Basque language and culture in Basque, over and above other possible targets.

Interest groups and defenders of the Basque language use the concept of *cultural nation* to describe the starting point from which the grounds of said state must be built. When they speak of the concept of cultural nation, they are referring to the Basque-speaking community. From their point of view, the construction of the Basque State should start from that community and their main objective would be, precisely, the enlargement and safeguarding of the linguistic community. In the same sense, they consider that the state would include the territory in which the Basque-speaking community is established.

Although these premises are shared by all the interest groups interviewed, two discourses can be appreciated in all of the statements gathered. A *first discourse* is of a more political nature and considers the interest groups' linguistic and cultural project (and, linked to it, their defence of the cultural nation) and, on the other hand, the pro-sovereignty political projects emerging nowadays, no matter their specification: independence, state, etc. as compatible. Thus, from this perspective, the cultural project of language recovery promoted by interest groups and the pro-independence project and the claim for a Basque State on the part of some nationalist political élites are compatible in the short term. In other words, they believe that the construction of a cultural nation and the construction of a political state can be reconciled. There is a tacit acceptance of the democratic subject in this discourse, although it may be indirect and qualified.

In the terms of the *second discourse*, taking the recovery of the language and culture in Basque as a goal, it is considered that, at the present moment, the priority should be solely and exclusively the construction of the cultural nation. Thus, the interest groups defending this outlook give precedence to the construction of the cultural nation over the construction of the state that is currently being proposed by some nationalist political forces. They feel that, if it were created, the state should satisfy the needs of the nation (the Basque-speaking nation). In this respect, in the more radical ethnolinguistic discourse, the cultural nation must be the political subject of the construction of the state, and not any other kind of social majority of speakers of other language(s). Indeed, it is possible that the majorities existing today in Basque society base their commitment to the state on preferences other than language or culture, for example, on economic reasons. However, improving the economy or society is not the main task assigned by interest groups to the state.

The two discourses mentioned are closely linked to interest groups' cultural and political positions. The first line of discourse corresponds to culture agents on the periphery of the *Euskalgintza* movement (such as the university), and also to culture agents who, apart from their activities in culture, also take part in more political activities, for example, in the *Gure Esku Dago* initiative. On the other hand, the culture agents defending the second discourse belong to core institutions and associations of *Euskalgintza*, and consider themselves legitimate spokespersons of the movement. As their activity is developed within the same network of relations and social circles, their declarations are highly consistent and very similar as regards their lines of argument. The characteristics of this more radical discourse are easy to identify: it is more inflexible than the former in its understanding of identity (Basque identity is understood as solely supported by language, and not by other elements), in how it attaches central importance to the Basque language, and in the way it strictly differentiates cultural action and political action.

The dominant opinions in the Basque cultural sphere must be placed and understood within a given social context. According to statements made by culture agents, some of the factors that could help describe this context are as follows. One: defenders of the Basque language feel that the language policies developed to date have reached their limits and have run out of steam and, at the same time, the *Euskalgintza* movement is weakened and is finding it hard to adapt to the changed times (it has *no discourse*, is how respondents put it in the interviews). Two: interest groups fear that the proposals on the state currently being made in the nationalist political sphere may replace the project for the recovery of Basque at the heart of nationalist political ideals. And three: They are aware of the fact that, at the present time, the socio-linguistic and cultural conditions of Basque society do not actually allow for the construction of a state based on the *Basque cultural nation*. This circumstance has generated a feeling of frustration in the world of Basque culture and, consequently, has led to the intensification of the culture agents' critical and sceptical view of projects for a state.

In the opinion of interest groups, the outlook held in the past by members of the Basque cultural movement and the nationalist forces with regard to Basque, that is, priority for the defence of a Basque nation based on language, no longer prevails in the current projects promoted by the nationalist forces. Culture agents accuse the nationalist forces, particularly the nationalist left, of having given up on the building of a *cultural nation* in favour of a political pro-sovereignty project. And they interpret this shift as the breaking up of an implicit historical alliance, leaving the *Euskalgintza* movement on its own.

Thus, Basque culture agents admit the need for a state, confirm the indispensable nature of this institution for developing Basque and Basque culture, but they do not give it strategic priority. The state is a means, not an end. The state is a means for safeguarding the Basque nation. And they attribute no other meaning to it than this function.

On the basis of this perspective, and in relation to their position in society as well as in culture, the social perception of Basque culture agents of a virtual Basque State has the following characteristics. The first is that the state needs to be small. Indeed, they are clearly anti-institution in their attitude, something which is deeply instilled in the world of culture, and which can be largely explained by the history of struggle in favour of Basque, which was supported by popular initiative. Secondly, in the same vein, the state needs to be a complement of collective action or popular initiative. Because, in the opinion of interest groups, the action of the hypothetical state would not be viable without the participation of a mobilised society, at least in order to reach goals relating to language recovery. Thirdly, culture agents would play a significant role in the design and implementation of cultural and linguistic policies, through a system of governance or other similar participatory formulae. Fourthly, Basque would need to be central together with the other language(s) of the state. The concept of centrality was not precisely defined. Although somewhat vague, the statements made by the respondents suggest that some kind of coexistence of Basque with Spanish (or French) is foreseen, with the hegemony of the former guaranteed at all times. Fifthly, the sectors identified as strategic for developing the state's cultural policy were the educational system, mass media, the culture industry and the administration.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

It was not easy for many of the people in the survey or interviews to reflect on the possibility of a Basque State, perhaps because traditionally what was discussed was the independence of Euskal Herria, and because they appear not know how to differentiate between both concepts. In other words, so far, independence has been understood in terms of identity and politics, which falls only under the responsibility of nationalists. Therefore, with this different framework of the Basque State, which does not coincide with the former, it is difficult to understand the new concept properly. In this regard, it was our intention to speak of the Basque State rather than independence in the abstract in this research, as we felt that to speak of independence would be to repeat the traditional scheme of things that implies identifying independence with feeling nationalist or not, a classical objective of Basque nationalism. On the other hand, to speak of the Basque State is to emphasise the political structure, and if this structure can meet the goals of its citizens (regarding services, the economy, culture, etc.) or not. The final decision to support or reject the state will be based on an assessment of these objectives, and not on a prior ideological stance, as is the case with independence.

On methodology and the political subject

It is not easy to define Euskal Herria. From the nationalist point of view, it is the area covering the seven historical territories and, what's more, it is the most generalised opinion, though not the only one, since, as we have been able to appreciate, for many of those participating in the survey, it is confined to the three western territories (Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa); that is, Euskal Herria is equivalent to the Basque Autonomous Community. There are further proposals. In the northern Basque Country, for many people, it means their three territories (Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa), or, in other words, for them, Euskal Herria is the Northern Basque Country. Last of all, in Navarre, it is identified with the western territories (namely, Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa), or with a hazily defined Navarre (the historical Navarre, contemporary Navarre?). Therefore, the data reveal that, in our society, there are different ways to identify Euskal Herria. This plurality is largely linked to ideology, but not only so, as our research clearly shows. To give an example, apart from ideology, age can also have an effect: the younger you are, the greater the identification with the seven territories; or the level of studies: the greater the level of studies, the greater the identification with the seven territories. Naturally, the different administrative spheres that exist in Euskal Herria have a clear impact.

For this research, we took the Euskal Herria comprising the seven territories as the subject of study, as this is the framework of a conflict between three different national projects (Spanish, Basque and French). Though aware of the fact that, although this is the preferred option in Euskal Herria, there is currently no clear majority in favour of any specific option. Of course, the question is important and must be considered, as a state is a political subject established in a specific territory. To this end, when any demands are made with respect to a state, a clear and precise definition of the territory claimed must be made, and the data we have been able to gather goes to show that this is not currently the case.

All that has been said to date on the Basque State and on Euskal Herria clearly made our attempts at developing and defining our work more difficult. The problems arose because the people in the surveys and those interviewed may have been confused about the different administrative spheres: when the term Euskal Herria is used, someone could have been thinking of the Basque Autonomous Community or, in the northern Basque Country; the difference between a Navarrese State and a Basque State was not very clear either, etc. As we have said, we took Euskal Herria comprising the seven territories as a reference, and we believe that it is the first research project to be carried out in our country to use this framework to study matters related to identity and politics. It is true that a variety of studies have been made on the whole of the seven territories, and data are regularly presented on this framework. However, we believe that this is the first time that the subject of identity, political future and a hypothetical Basque State is broached, and done so in the seven territories themselves. We would like to underline the importance of doing it in this way, as it provides us with unified data, without the need to join the data from different spheres, times and subjects, as is often the case, in order to offer an image of this whole.

In fact, we did face some difficulty, but we think that this has been overcome, although, in some cases, it may have given rise to some confusion. The most obvious case is that referring to the need to mention a Basque/Navarrese State. We chose to do so because, by limiting ourselves to a Basque State, in our view, we were limiting reality itself, especially in Navarre. This is why we

introduced the category of the Navarrese State. However, when analysing the data, and though we do recognise that they are not fully synonymous, we decided to take them together, as we believe that, in both cases, the desire to form their own state, independent of the states of Spain and France, predominates. Moreover, we considered that, acting differently would imply giving priority to the main current of Basque nationalism, the Basque current, to the detriment of its other current, the Navarrese one.

The Basque State and the right to decide

Moving onto political results, the importance currently attached to participation and decision-making processes in public matters is evident, with the result that when asked if a consultation should be held to decide on our political future, two thirds of respondents answered in the affirmative. This favourable position was repeated in all administrative spheres, in all age groups and in all levels of study, and with absolute majority. This same attitude was clearly reflected in the discussion groups organised, as the right to decide is understood as a democratic principle, irrespective of whether subsequently one is in favour or against the Basque State. At any rate, though understood as a general principle, several qualifications need to be made with regard to two aspects: who must decide is not clearly specified (namely, who the political subject is who takes this decision); and different opinions arise when deciding what is to be consulted (that is, if, there is a right to decide on matters other than the administrative political structure).

Together with the preceding question on the right to decide, the main purpose of the research was to measure any support or opposition generated by the Basque State. We wanted to ask a specific question, as if it were a proper referendum on the issue, and without any interference from other options as regards the question, which is what usually occurs in other research projects. To this end, having presented the possibility of a Basque State, when asked in the survey if they were in favour or against, the majority of those participating responded that they would be in favour (40.7%); though a significant percentage of people expressed their opposition to the state (35.3%); and worthy of special mention is the fact that one out of every four people (24%) either did not answer or abstained. Obviously, these figures would make total sense if it were a question of a referendum held in the seven territories, with just one constituency. As this is not the case, we must take into account the three administrative spheres, and as we shall later see, in the Basque Autonomous Community, the opinion favourable to the Basque State would win; in Navarre, the contrary opinion would win (but with a result slightly lower than the favourable opinion); and, in the northern Basque Country, the opposing view would clearly win.

It must be made very clear that the preceding data refer to the possibility of a Basque State, and not to the independence of Euskal Herria. We have already mentioned in this study that they are not one and the same, and this made further sense in the questions subsequently asked, as, whereas being in favour or against independence may be a relatively fixed and stable stance, the position in relation to a Basque State can vary. It must be kept in mind that a state is a political structure set up in a specific territory, and as long as the state helps citizens to fulfil their objectives, the latter will express their satisfaction to the state, but in no other way. This does not imply that citizens, whenever they so wish, cannot show their dissatisfaction with the state (through the administration), but it does mean that, if the construction of a new state is proposed, citizens will respond to this new option in accordance with the degree of fulfilment of their particular expectations.

Taking the aforesaid into account, the aim was to ascertain the degree of certainty or firmness of the answers given by those taking part in the surveys and interviews. In general, and perhaps because it was not a very popular subject, we could appreciate a widespread tendency to change opinions. To be more precise, in the survey, those who expressed a favourable opinion of the new state were asked to think about the possibility of some major aspect not going well in this newly-created state (social policies, Basque, the economy, etc.), and if, in this case too, they would uphold their favourable vote. The opposite was done in the case of those expressing opposition to the new state (that is, they were asked to think of a scenario in which the new state led to an improvement on the current situation with respect to an important issue). In general, it was found that one out of every three persons in the survey (at least, one out of every four people, and sometimes, one out of every two) admitted they would change their stance, depending on a variety of reasons: in the case of people who were initially in favour of the state, if Basque (above all) and social policies were to disimprove or not progress at an acceptable pace; and, in the case of people initially against, if the new state were to bring about improvements in social policies and in the level of democracy.

However, let us use the data offered by the discussion groups organised for the qualitative research to shed some light

on these changes of heart. Let us take a closer look at the reasoning and discourses used by those defending or opposing the Basque State. Generally speaking, those in favour of the Basque State declared themselves nationalists who understood Euskal Herria as a nation. They largely felt that attaining a state was a logical step as they understood that it is a democratic right of all nations. Put another way, the need for a Basque State is above all justified by identity (we are a nation) and by democracy (it is our right). There were, likewise, other important reasons to justify the claim for a state, such as the continued existence of Basque culture, the quest for social justice or enjoying more transparent administrative structures.

Those in the opposite corner justified their opposition to a Basque State by the fact that there was clearly no need to change; what's more, the setting up of a new state was associated with problems, and, particularly, with economic uncertainty. Generally speaking, those with these views saw no need for a Basque State, and neither did they think that it would entail any benefits. What's more, the Basque State was understood as an issue pertaining solely to nationalists, and not something affecting the whole of society. To tell the truth, opposition to the Basque State was often seen to be based on Spanish or French national identity, which goes to prove the strength of nationalism as an ideology –in the shape of what has been called banal nationalism. Indeed, those who are in favour of the already existing nation state do not necessarily need to proclaim it or take an active stance in this respect, as the national project linked to said state is already present in everyday life, without the majority of people seeming nationalist. This explains why there were very few Spanish or French nationalist arguments against the Basque State.

At any rate, in addition to the two foregoing stances with regard to a Basque State, a qualitative analysis allowing us to go into details which are not clearly visible in the quantitative analysis led us to a third position, that of those who, to a certain extent, are willing to change their former opinion. This was detected above all among those opposed to the Basque State (not to the same extent among those who were favourable) and implied that, if the new state were to result in a better economic situation or more effective social policies, they would change their stance. In other words, the economic situation (and social policies) are important arguments for changing one's opposition to a Basque State to full support for it.

Opinions on the Basque State: from business people in favour and the culture world in Basque

We have already seen that the main reasons for changing a former opinion on the Basque State were welfare, the economy, and Basque and Basque culture. In one way or another, they were a constant cause for concern for citizens, and, aware of the fact, we carried out two complementary lines of research, with an aim to going more deeply into these matters. On the one hand, and given the fact that the business world is often cited as being totally against a Basque State, we decided to set up some in-depth interviews with business people throughout Euskal Herria who were in favour of a Basque State. In addition, we held in-depth interviews with different representatives of culture in Basque, where it seemed the influence of nationalism would not be so apparent, with an aim to getting to know their opinion of a Basque State. The results are extremely interesting.

With regard to the first issue, we started from the premise that, for many people, an independent Basque State would not be viable. Indeed, in the qualitative research, the main argument for opposing the Basque State was the association of the new state with economic uncertainty. We also started from the premise that many people would be willing to change their opinion in this respect depending on the existence or not of changes brought about by the Basque State in matters relating to society, politics or the economy. However, oddly enough, the business people in favour of the Basque State who were interviewed expressed no doubt as to the viability of the new state. Moreover, they were convinced that separation from Spain or France would have no serious economic repercussions, in general or in relation to their particular businesses. In order to understand this shift in focus, it is important to keep in mind the high degree of globalisation of the current economy, which explains why the majority of the sales of the business people interviewed are no longer made in Spain or France, but rather, on the contrary, their business is done thousands of miles away, and this has led to a drop in their possible former dependence on the state.

Having clearly stated the viability of the Basque State, and, on the basis of the same reasons mentioned concerning global economy, the business people interviewed did not believe that there would be any special economic benefit from setting up this new state. In other words, the business people in favour of a Basque State did not appear to be seeking a given business

objective with their commitment to the new state. Why, then were they in favour? Ideologically speaking, they shared a generally nationalistic point of view, but, in addition, they see the attainment of a Basque State as something feasible today, and they want it for the same reason that any other state is desired, namely, for objectives other than those of their own business: development, coexistence, a more complete democracy, investment in education and training, and, above all, to preserve the community's sustainability.

As for Basque, it is quite a controversial subject as far as its relation with a Basque State is concerned, for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, in the survey carried out, we were able to appreciate that those in favour would change their minds if the new state failed to do enough to promote Basque, or to if it failed to reach the primacy they felt it should have in society. However, on the other hand, we saw that, in the different discussion groups, in the opinion of many Spanish-speakers, attempts to give priority to Basque triggered unqualified rejection, as it implied stripping duly qualified people of jobs. It can be said that, in the qualitative research, we came across highly diverse opinions: from those who felt that, in a Basque State, and in relation to Basque, things would not change greatly (this often being interpreted in a positive way), to those who felt, as we have said, that a Basque State would promote Basque excessively, which would give rise to mistrust.

As for the analysis made on the basis of the opinions of several representatives of Basque culture in Euskal Herria, the latter categorically stated that the main reason for setting up a Basque State is to promote Basque, which, on the other hand, they were not sure could be done with today's methods. Basque culture representatives did indeed express their support for a Basque State, and acknowledged that it is a necessary instrument if the development of Basque and Basque culture is what is being sought. However, in the current situation, they did not give strategic priority to the project for a state. The state is an instrument rather than an objective for these people. It is an instrument whose main task should be to protect the Basque-speaking community. For this reason, and without questioning the need for a state, and, with regard to the proposals currently being made with respect to a state in the nationalist political sphere, the representatives of Basque culture questioned the objectives of the project as well as the characteristics of the political subject supporting it, and, are now even questioning the actual opportuneness of the project itself.

The Basque State: territory by territory

In this study, the data we present need to be treated with great caution, referring as they do to Basque society as a whole. They give us an overall view, the main tendencies, but they do not take into consideration the fact that, for this study, we had to deal with three different administrative areas. At times, the results and data obtained were very similar in the three areas, but this was not always the case, and it would make no sense whatsoever to draw averages from these results, as we were dealing with, as already said, three different administrative areas. That is why, to conclude, we shall present the main characteristics of each territory.

As far as the Basque Autonomous Community is concerned, important to mention are the two ways of understanding Euskal Herria: almost one out of every two people in the survey identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories, but there were many close to the other opinion, which associates Euskal Herria with the BAC itself. On the other hand, in relation to national identity, it is significant that almost one out of every three people in the survey felt only Basque. Moreover, it could be appreciated that most support for the Basque nationalist parties is concentrated in these territories, as there was greater support here than in the others for the right to decide and for a Basque State. What's more, among those opposed to the Basque State, a greater predisposition to a change of opinion was appreciated than in the rest of the territories, (and, consequently, under certain conditions, they would be willing to express their support for a new state). Lastly, and leaving aside the question of the state, they were very willing to establish institutional relations with the other Basque territories.

As far as Navarre is concerned, particularly striking was the fact that, to a large extent, Euskal Herria was identified with the BAC. It is true that we believe that the question asked of those participating in the survey in Spanish (*¿qué es para Vd. el País Vasco?* what does the Basque Country mean to you?) could have had an impact on the answers. On the other hand, if we take into account the fact that one out of every three people identified Euskal Herria with the seven historical territories, we could imagine that the majority of the Navarrese population took the territory of Navarre as a reference rather than that of Euskal Herria (we have no reliable data, as no question was asked in this respect). However, the next piece of data we provide leaves

room for doubt: only 1.3% of the people in the survey declared themselves to be only Navarrese. How are we to interpret this? The *essential nature of Navarre* is a recurring theme of the people of Navarre, but we believe that the data obtained does not allow us to make conclusive statements, at least for the time being.

Continuing with Navarre, and leaving aside matters of identity, we can appreciate a clear stance in favour of the right to decide, and stances with quite similar support of those in favour and against setting up a new state, the latter having the edge. On the other hand, the predisposition of those against the Basque or Navarrese State to change their opinion is less than in the BAC and the northern Basque Country. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the predisposition of those in favour of changing their minds was very similar to that recorded in these territories. Regarding relations with other Basque territories, highly significant is the fact that the people involved in the survey in Navarre would like to strengthen ties with the BAC, but not to set up a single autonomous community. At any rate, in the groups formed in this territory, the great importance attached to this matter by those opposed to a Basque State was clearly evident. Indeed, they always took the opportunity to downplay or deny the relation between the territories or even the Basque essence of Navarre. Last of all, particularly noteworthy was the existence of business people in Navarre who would look favourably on the idea of a Basque State, as they felt that it would not harm their business, among other reasons, because some of the people interviewed admitted to having an intense business relationship with the other territories of Euskal Herria. They had the sensation that the BAC would be at the helm of the process towards a new state, and they viewed this as something positive.

As for the northern Basque Country, it is where Euskal Herria was most often identified with the seven historical territories, as more than half the people in the survey did so. Moreover, a third identified it with the northern Basque Country itself. On the other hand, in relation to national identity, the fact that almost three quarters of the people surveyed felt as much Basque as French, more French than Basque, or only French is significant, as it implies that the French sentiment is deeply instilled in those participating in the survey. Certainly, all of this had an impact on their answers regarding a Basque State.

At all events, the people in the survey did express their support for the right to decide: one out of every two was in favour. It could be concluded that they understood it as a democratic exercise, as, when asked about the possibility of a Basque State, one out of every two people was against it (and one out of every four, in favour). It must be pointed out that it was in this territory that the questions asked were considered strangest for the people interviewed, and as can be clearly appreciated in the qualitative analysis, those who considered themselves as well as those failing to consider themselves Basque nationalists thought that now was not the proper time to enter into a discussion of this kind, as they understood that, first of all, more fundamental political steps had to be taken. Perhaps due to the distance from which this subject is viewed, there was a high degree of predisposition to change their minds, among those who initially expressed support as well as among those who were against. As for relations with other territories, they would like there to be a stronger relationship between their institutions and those of the southern Basque Country, something which is attached great importance in the qualitative analysis. Last of all, the business people taking part in the interviews, just as in Navarre, were not concerned about the possibility of there being a Basque State, and this despite the fact that the French State was mentioned as an important client for some. Nonetheless, they expressed their willingness to support a Basque State, and would be pleased if the process were to get underway in the Basque Autonomous Community.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. FOCUS GROUPS FACT SHEET

Id.	Place	Vote	Attitude towards the Basque State	Gender	Age	Employment situation	Ideology + Notes
1 T	Bilbao (1st stage)	Abstention		4M + 5F	2 (18-29) 5 (30-65) 2 (+65)	3 Unemployed 3 Stable employment 3 Irregular employment	2 Abstention, always 2 Abstention not always 3 Non-Basque nationalist vote 2 Basque nationalist changing vote
2 T	Barakaldo (1st stage)	Non Basque nationalist		2M + 2F	4 30-65)	4 Stable employment	4 PSOE
3 T	San Sebastian (1st stage)	Basque nationalist		4M + 3F	3 (18-29) 4 (30-65)		4 Basque nationalist left community 3 PNV community
4 T	Pamplona (1st stage: tailored group, mixed)	Non Basque nationalist + Basque nationalist		2M + 1F	1 (18-29) 2 (30-65)		1 Non-Basque nationalist left 2 Non-Basque nationalist 3 Pro-Navarrese, Basque nationalist
E1	Hazparne (1st stage: interview)	Basque nationalist		1M			Basque nationalist left
6 T	Zarautz (2nd stage)	Basque nationalist	In favour	6M + 2F	1 (18-29) 4 (30-65) 3 (+65)	1 Unemployed 4 Stable employment 3 Retired	8 Basque nationalist left
7 T	Gasteiz (2nd stage)	Mixed	Against In the middle	4M+ 3F	3 (18-29) 3 (30-65) 1 (+65)	3 Unemployed 3 Stable employment 1 Retired	1 PSOE 2 EAJ 2 Podemos 2 Changing vote
8 T	Iruñea (2nd stage)		Against	6M + 4F	4 (18-29) 4 (30-65) 2 (+65)	5 Unemployed 5 Stable employment	2 PP 3 PSOE 1 Others 4 Changing vote
9 T	Bilbo (2nd stage)		Against	5M + 5F	2 (18-29) 6 (30-65) 2 (+65)	7 Unemployed 3 Stable employment	1 PP 1 PSOE 2 EAJ 2 Others: IU 3 Changing vote
10 T	Portugalete (2nd stage)		In the middle	4M + 6F	3 (18-29) 7 (30-65)	6 Unemployed 4 Stable employment	Origin: Parents born in Euskal Herria
11 T	Arrasate (2nd stage)		In the middle	5M + 2F	2 (18-29) 5 (30-65)	3 Unemployed 4 Stable employment	Origin: Parents born outside Euskal Herria, diverse Spanish cities
12 T	Baiona (2nd stage)		In favour + Against	2M + 6F	3 (18-29) 5 (30-65)	7 Stable employment 1 Retired	4 Basque nationalist 4 Non-Basque nationalist
13 T	Kanbo (2nd stage)	Basque nationalist	In favour	2M + 3F	1 (18-29) 4 (30-65)	1 Unemployed 3 Stable employment 1 Retired	5 Basque nationalist left
14 T	Bilbo (2nd stage)		In favour + In the middle	4M + 4F	2 (18-29) 4 (30-65) 2 (+65)	1 Unemployed 2 Student 2 Retired 3 Stable employment	5 PNV-pro-independence 3 PNV pro-autonomy

APPENDIX 2. NAVARRE AND THE POLITICAL SUBJECT

When carrying out the survey in Navarre, aware of the bias that the concept of a Basque State could create, those interviewed were offered another option as a hypothesis. This option was the possibility of a Navarrese State, which hypothetically would have greater support. When all is said and done, the aim of this project was to measure attitudes to a new state, other than the Spanish State, be it Basque, or Navarrese. Thus, when adapting the common survey to the reality of Navarre, two key questions were asked:

First of all, they were asked what they understood by Navarre:

“In your view, which term best defines the Foral Community of Navarre” (and they were offered four possible answers to choose from)

- It is a region in Spain
- It is a province of Euskal Herria
- It is a nation, neither Spain nor Euskal Herria
- None of these three

In a second question, they were offered the option to choose between the citizenship of three different states (the Spanish State including the FCN, an independent Navarrese State, or a Basque State including the FCN).

Depending on the answers made to these two questions, the next questions were asked. Therefore, those who answered the first question with “a region in Spain” were asked about the Navarrese State instead of asking them about the Basque State. Those who answered with “an independent Navarrese State”, the same. The rest were asked about a Basque State.

The distribution of the answers can be appreciated in the table below:

		If you could choose your state, which would you choose from the following?					
			Spanish State including the FCN	Independent Navarrese State	Basque State including the FCN	DK	NA
BASQUE	In your view, what is the best term for the Foral Community of Navarre?"	It is a region in Spain	7 ¹		8	4	3
		A province of Euskal Herria	6		74	4	1
		It is a nation, neither Spain nor Euskal Herria	7		13	3	0
		None of these three	10		5	5	4
		Does not know	2		2	3	0
		Does not answer	0		0	0	1
		Total		32		102	19
NAVARRESE	In your view, what is the best term for the Foral Community of Navarre?"	It is a region in Spain	206	14			
		A province of Euskal Herria		5			
		It is a nation, neither Spain nor Euskal Herria		16			
		None of these three		6			
		Does not know		1			
		Does not answer		1			
Total		206	43				

¹These seven replies are a consequence of the mishandling of the filters at the start of the survey. In fact, they should have been classified under the “Navarrese state” category.

APPENDIX 3. OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT TO THE BASQUE STATE. EUSKAL HERRIA, 2014. SURVEY

(The survey was carried out in Basque, Spanish and French. The questionnaire is shown in Spanish)

ELEGIR IDIOMA DE LA ENTREVISTA

-

1. SEXO (escribir, no preguntar)

- Mujer 1
- Hombre 2

2. ¿CUÁNTOS AÑOS HA CUMPLIDO O VA A CUMPLIR ESTE AÑO?

-

COMENZAR LA ENTREVISTA

SI LE PARECE, VAMOS A EMPEZAR CON LA ENTREVISTA

3. ¿La política le interesa mucho, bastante, poco o nada?

- Mucho 1
- Bastante 2
- Poco 3
- Nada 4
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

-- [CFN-1] [sólo en CFN] Para Ud. ¿cuál es el término adecuado para la Comunidad Foral de Navarra?:

- Es una región de España 1
- Es una provincia de Euskal Herria 2
- Es una nación, ni España ni Euskal Herria 3
- Ninguna de las tres 4
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

INTRODUCCIÓN: EL PASADO 18 DE SEPTIEMBRE SE CELEBRÓ UN REFERENDUM SOBRE LA INDEPENDENCIA EN ESCOCIA. EN NOVIEMBRE TAMBIÉN SE CELEBRARÁ UNA CONSULTA EN CATALUÑA EN EL QUE LOS/LAS CATALANES/AS DECIDIRÁN SI QUIEREN CREAR UN NUEVO ESTADO O NO.

4. Está Ud. a favor o en contra de realizar una consulta a la sociedad vasca/navarra para decidir su futuro político?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

-- [CFN-2] [sólo en CFN] Si pudiera elegir de qué Estado ser ciudadano, entre las siguientes tres posibilidades, cuál elegiría: el Estado Español que incluya la Comunidad Foral de Navarra, un Estado Navarro independiente o un Estado Vasco que incluya la Comunidad Foral de Navarra?

- Estado Español que incluya la CFN 1
- Estado Navarro independiente 2
- Estado Vasco que incluya la CFN 3
- NS 88
- NC 99

-- [CFN-3] [sólo en CFN] Supongamos que todos o la mayoría de partidos políticos de la CFN acuerdan realizar una consulta o un referéndum sobre el Estado Navarro. En la consulta se le pregunta si está Ud. a favor o en contra de un Estado Navarro. ¿Qué respondería?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

5. A. [CAV] Supongamos que todos o la mayoría de partidos políticos de la CAV acuerdan realizar una consulta o un referéndum sobre el Estado Vasco. En la consulta se le pregunta si está Ud. a favor o en contra de un Estado Vasco. ¿Qué respondería?

-

5. B. [EHNorte] Y supongamos que la consulta o referéndum se refiere a un Estado Vasco que incluye EH Norte. En la consulta se le pregunta si está Ud. a favor o en contra de un Estado Vasco. ¿Qué respondería?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

6. Me gustaría que me dijera, en una escala del 1 al 5, qué nivel de certeza tiene con su voto a favor / en contra. El 1 quiere decir que podría cambiar el voto y el 5 quiere decir que no cambiará su voto de ninguna manera

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5
- NS 88
- NC 99

7. ¿A condición de qué cambiaría Su opinión?

-

8. ¿En qué medida cree Ud. que es posible que la mayoría de los partidos políticos de aquí acuerden un referéndum para decidir sobre nuestro futuro político?

- Muy posible 1
- Posible 2
- Difícil 3
- Muy difícil 4
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

9. IMAGINESE AHORA LO QUE RESPONDERÍA EN LOS CASOS QUE LE MENCIONARÉ A CONTINUACIÓN:

9.1. Economía

A. Si la creación del Estado Vasco/Navarro trajera consigo una situación económica mejor que la que existe hoy en España (Francia), QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- NS..... 88
- NC 99

B. Si la creación del Estado Vasco/Navarro traiera consigo una situación económica parecida a la que existe hoy en España (Francia), QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- NS..... 88
- NC 99

9.2. Unión Europea

A. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro tuviese la opción de estar dentro de la Unión Europea, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- NS..... 88
- NC 99

B. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro quedara fuera de la Unión Europea, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

9.3. Políticas sociales

A. Si la creación del Estado Vasco/Navarro traería consigo mejores políticas sociales (en educación, salud, pensiones...) que las actuales, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

B. Si la creación del Estado Vasco/Navarro trajera consigo políticas sociales parecidas a las actuales o aún más limitadas, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1

- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

9.4. Idioma

A. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro antepusiera el euskara al castellano (francés), QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

B. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro antepusiera el castellano (francés) al euskara, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

C. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro diese el mismo trato al castellano (francés) y al euskara, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

9.5. Convivencia

A. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro garantizara un mejor nivel de convivencia que el actual, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

B. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro garantizara un nivel de convivencia en la sociedad vasca parecido al actual que el actual, QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

9.6. Modelo democrático y de participación

A. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro fuese más democrático que el actual, es decir, si tuviese un funcionamiento más transparente y participativo que el español (francés), QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

B. Si el Estado Vasco/Navarro tuviese un nivel democrático parecido al que tiene el Estado español (francés) QUÉ RESPONDERÍA EN EL REFERENDUM?

- A favor de crear el Estado Vasco 1
- En contra de crear el Estado Vasco 2
- Abstención 3
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

10. Cualquiera que sea el resultado del hipotético referendun o consulta, para que el resultado sea aceptable, en su opinión ¿sería suficiente superar el 50 % o se necesitaría más?

- Superar el 50 % 1
- Más mayoría 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

11. Si mediante referendun se decidiera crear el Estado Vasco/Navarro, ¿Qué grado de viabilidad cree que tendría en el futuro? Entre 1 y 5, donde el 1 quiere decir que no sería nada viable y el 5 que sería totalmente viable.

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5
- NS 88
- NC 99

12. Entre la identidad vasca/navarra y la identidad española (francesa), ¿Cómo se definiría entre las siguientes opciones? Se siente únicamente vasco/a, más vasco/a que español/a (francés/a), tan vasco/o como español/a (francés/a), más español/a (francés/a) que vasca/o o únicamente español/a (francés/a)?

- Únicamente vasco/a 1
- Más vasco/a que español/a 2
- Tan vasca/o como español/a 3
- Más español/a que vasca/o 4
- Únicamente español/a 5
- [Nafarroa Garaia] Navarro/a y vasco/a 6
- [Nafarroa Garaia] Únicamente navarro/a 7
- Otro 8

- NS 88
- NC 99

13. Cuando nos referimos al País Vasco, ¿qué es para ti el País Vasco?

- CAV 1
- CAV y CFN 2
- Iparralde 3
- Los siete territorios del País Vasco 4
- Otro 5
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

14.A. Si dejásemos a un lado la opción del Estado Vasco/Navarro, ¿estaría Ud. a favor o en contra de crear una única comunidad autónoma entre la CAV y la CFN dentro de España?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

14.B. Siguiendo, la CAV y la CFN siendo comunidades autónomas separadas como hasta ahora, ¿está a favor o en contra de que tengan mayor relación?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

14.C. ¿Está Ud. a favor o en contra de crear una Euro-Región entre la CAV, CFN e Iparralde?

- A favor 1
- En contra 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

15. Si se realiza un referendun para decidir sobre el Estado Vasco/Navarro, ¿se debería preguntar a todos/as los/as ciudadanos/as del Estado español (francés)?

- Si 1
- No 2
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

16. Resumiendo lo mencionado anteriormente, si se creara el Estado Vasco/Navarro, en general, ¿cree que viviríamos mejor, igual o peor?

- Mejor 1
- Igual 2
- Peor 3
- No sabe 88
- No contesta 99

FALTA POCO. AHORA LE PREGUNTARÉ SOBRE SUS HÁBITOS

17.A. Ha leído algún periódico durante los últimos siete días (papel u online)?

- Si..... 1
- No 2
- NS..... 88
- NC..... 99

17.B. ¿Que periódico ha leído?

- Diario Vasco-El Correo- Diario de Navarra 1
- Noticias de Gipuzkoa-Noticias de Navarra- Noticias de Alava 2
- Gara / Naiz 3
- Berria..... 4
- Deia..... 5
- El Mundo..... 6
- Publico.es..... 7
- Eldiario.es..... 8
- El País 9
- Local en euskara (Goiena, Pulunpe, Kronika...)..... 10
- Kazeta..... 11
- Sud-Ouest 12
- Figaro 13
- Liberation 14
- LeMonde 15
- Otro..... 16
- NS..... 88
- NC..... 99

18.A. ¿A visto la televisión durante los últimos siete días?

- Si..... 1
- No 2
- NS..... 88
- NC..... 99

18.B. ¿Qué cadena de TV?

- ETB1 1
- ETB2..... 2
- ETB3..... 3
- Hamaika TB 4
- TVE1 5
- TVE2..... 6
- T5 7
- A3..... 8
- Cuatro 9
- LaSexta..... 10

- Canal 6 11
- DIGITALES EN GENERAL..... 12
- TV LOCALES (Goiena, Vitoria TV, Bizkaia TV...) 13
- TF1 14
- FR2..... 15
- FR3 16
- Arte 17
- TVPI..... 18
- Kanaldude 19
- Otro..... 20
- NS..... 88
- NC..... 99

19.A. ¿Ha escuchado la radio durante los últimos siete días?

- Si..... 1
- No 2
- NS..... 88
- NC..... 99

19.B. ¿Que emisora de radio?

- Euskadi Irratia..... 1
- Radio Euskadi..... 2
- Euskadi Gaztea..... 3
- EITB Irratia..... 4
- Info 7 irratia 5
- Onda Vasca 6
- Radio Nacional de España 7
- Onda Cero 8
- SER..... 9
- Radios locales en euskara (Hala Bedi2, EH irratia, Xorroxin ...) 10
- Radio popular..... 11
- Euskal Irratiak 12
- France BleuPB..... 13
- Lapurdi 14
- Inter/Info 15
- Europe1 16
- RTL1 17
- Otro..... 18
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

20. ¿Utiliza alguna red social (twitter, facebook...) para recibir información?

- Si..... 1
- No 2
- No sabe..... 88
- No contesta..... 99

21. ¿Cuál?

-

22. Vamos a cambiar de tema. Cuando se habla de política se utilizan normalmente las expresiones izquierda y derecha. En una escala del 0 al 10, ¿dónde se colocaría usted? Considerando que 0 es derecha y 10 izquierda.

- 0	0
- 1	1
- 2	2
- 3	3
- 4	4
- 5	5
- 6	6
- 7	7
- 8	8
- 9	9
- 10	10
- NS.....	88
- NC.....	99

23. [CAV] ¿Me podría decir a qué partido o coalición votó Ud. en las elecciones al Parlamento Vasco del 2012?

-

[CFN] ¿Me podría decir a qué partido o coalición votó Ud. en las elecciones Forales de 2011?

- PP	1
- PSE.....	2
- EAJ-PNV.....	3
- EH Bildu	4
- IU.....	5
- UPyD	6
- Ezker Batua	7
- EQUO.....	8
- Otro.....	9
- Abstención	10
- Voto blanco	11
- No tenía edad para votar.....	12
- No contesta.....	99

24. [EH Sur] ¿Me podría decir a qué partido o coalición votó Ud. en las últimas elecciones generales de España de 2011?

- PP	1
- PSOE.....	2
- EAJ-PNV.....	3
- Amaiur.....	4
- Geroa Bai (Naf.).....	5
- UPN.....	6

- IU	7
- Izquierda-Ezkerra (Naf.).....	8
- UPyD	9
- Otro.....	10
- Abstención	11
- Voto blanco	12
- No tenía edad para votar.....	13
- No contesta.....	14

25. (EH Norte) ¿Me podría decir a qué partido o coalición votó Ud. en las últimas elecciones cantonales de 2011?

- PS	1
- UMP	2
- Les Verts.....	3
- EH Bai.....	4
- Modem.....	5
- UDF	6
- UDI	7
- Front National, FN	8
- PNB	9
- Front de Gauche	10
- NPA	11
- Zerrenda irekiak	12
- Besterik	13
- Ez daki.....	88
- Erantzunik ez.....	99

26. (EH Norte) ¿Me podría decir a qué partido o coalición votó Ud. en las últimas elecciones presidenciales de 2012?

- PS	1
- UMP	2
- Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts.....	3
- Modem.....	4
- Front National, FN	5
- PNB	6
- Front de Gauche (komunistak eta Melenchón barne) .	7
- Besterik	8
- Ez daki.....	88
- Erantzunik ez.....	100

27. ¿Dónde nació Ud.? ¿Y su padre? ¿Y su madre?

	Araba	Bizkaia	Gipuzkoa	Nafarroa	Lapurdi	Baxe Nafarroa	Zuberoa	Espainiako Estatua	Beste estatu bat	EE
Ud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	99
Padre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	99
Madre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	99

27.B. En otro Estado, ¿cuál? – NS..... 88
 – NC..... 99

28. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva viviendo aquí?

– Desde que nació 1
 – Menos de 2 años..... 2
 – Entre 2 y 5 años..... 3
 – Entre 6 y 10 años..... 4
 – Entre 11 y 15 años..... 5
 – Entre 16 y 30 años..... 6
 – Más de 30 años..... 7
 – NS..... 88
 – NC..... 99

29. ¿Podría decirme cuál es su nivel de conocimiento del euskara? Lo entiende y lo habla, lo entiende pero no lo habla, no lo entiende

– Lo entiende y lo habla..... 1
 – Lo entiende pero no lo habla..... 2
 – No lo entiende 3
 – NS..... 88
 – NC..... 99

30. Me podría indicar, en la siguiente escala, dónde se sitúan sus ingresos mensuales?

– Sin ingresos 1
 – Entre 1 y 600 euros 2
 – Entre 601 y 1.200 euros 3
 – Entre 1.201 y 1.800 euros 4
 – Entre 1.801 y 2.400 euros 5
 – Más de 2.400 euros..... 6
 – No sabe..... 88
 – No contesta..... 99

31. ¿Qué estudios acabados tiene Ud.?

– Ninguno, inferiores a estudios primarios..... 1
 – Estudios primarios, bachillerato básico 2
 – Estudios de segundo grado: ESO, FP1..... 3
 – Bachillerato superior, FP2, BUP, COU..... 4
 – Estudios superiores (diplomatura, licenciatura, posgrado)..... 5

32. ¿Cuál es su situación laboral?

– Trabaja por cuenta propia..... 1
 – Trabaja por cuenta ajena..... 2
 – Desempleado/a, en busca del primer trabajo 3
 – Desempleado/a, ha trabajado anteriormente 4
 – Tareas del hogar..... 5
 – Estudiante 6
 – Estudiante que trabaja..... 7
 – Jubilado, pensionista 8
 – Otra situación..... 9
 – NS..... 88
 – NC..... 99

32.B. ¿Cuál?

–

33. [A los que trabajan] ¿Cuál es su actual trabajo? ¿En qué consiste? (Especificar)

–

HEMOS TERMINADO. SI DESEA AÑADIR ALGÚN COMENTARIO RESPECTO A LOS TEMAS QUE HEMOS TRATADO EN LA ENCUESTA, AHORA LO PUEDE HACER

APPENDIX 4. BUSINESS PEOPLE: PROFILE OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

Identification	Sector	Size	Company ownership	Position of the person interviewed	Language
EE-1	Technology	+ 50	Limited company	Chairperson of the Board of Directors	Spanish
EE-2	Technology	+ 50	Corporation	Senior management	Spanish
EE-3	Automotion-1-suppliers	+ 50	Limited liability company	Owner / Director	Basque
EE-4	Automotion-2-suppliers	+ 50	Limited liability company	Owner / Senior management	Basque
EE-5	Energy-Collaborators	+ 50	Cooperative	Senior management	Basque
EE-6	Advisory services	+ 6	Limited liability company	Owner/ Senior management	Spanish
EE-7	Business associations		-----	Director	Spanish
EE-8	Marketing	+ 50	Limited liability company	Owner / Senior management	Spanish
EE-9	Finance-1	+ 50	Limited company	Senior management	Spanish
EE-10	Finance-2	+ 50	Limited company	Senior management	Spanish
EE-11	Tax department		Public	Inspector	Spanish
EE-12	Food industry-1	+ 6	Sole proprietorship	Owner	Spanish
EE-13	Food industry-2	+ 50	Limited company	Senior management	Spanish
EE-14	Metal-Collaborators	+ 6	Limited company	Shareholder / Senior management	Spanish
EE-15	Catering	- 6	Sole proprietorship	Owner	Spanish
EE-16	Recycling	+ 6	Cooperative	Senior management	Basque
EE-17	Furniture	+ 50	Corporation	Senior management	Basque
EE-18	Collaborators -Mechanics	+ 6	Cooperative	Senior management	Basque
EE-19	Engineering	+ 6	Limited liability company	Senior management	Basque
EE-20	Construction	+ 6	Cooperative	Senior management	Basque

APPENDIX 5. BASQUE-SPEAKING CULTURAL PLAYERS: PROFILE OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

IDENTIFICATION	GENDER	CULTURAL SPHERE
E1	MALE	Literature, university(UPV/EHU)
E2	MALE	Communications, university (UPV/EHU)
E3	MALE	Communications, Gure Esku Dago (culture + politics)
E4	FEMALE	Institutions working in and for Basque, university (UPV/EHU)
E5	FEMALE	Cultural industry, publications
E6	MALE	Cultural movement in and in favour of Basque
E7	MALE	University (UPV/EHU), Gure Esku Dago (culture + politics)
E8	MALE	Cultural industry, publications
E9	MALE	Communications, journalism
E10	MALE	Euskalgintza, TIC
E11	FEMALE	University (Mondragón), education
E12	MALE	Cultural movement in and in favour of Basque, university (Mondragón)
E13	MALE	Cultural movement in and in favour of Basque, local media, Gure Esku Dago, politics (culture + politics)