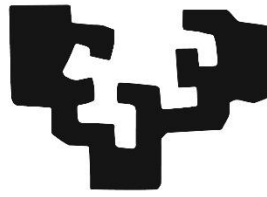eman ta zabal zazu

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AN APPROACH TO THE BOUNDARIES DRAWN BY THE 'PATRIOTIC LEFT' AND THEIR EVOLUTION OVER TIME

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The aim of this research project is to explore the symbolic boundaries drawn by the successive 'Patriotic Left' parties and their social base, taking into consideration the scenario of political violence and subsequent cessation of the armed struggle occurred in the Basque Country, popularly known as the "Basque conflict". Therefore, I analyse the public discourse of the successive 'Patriotic Left' parties and study the attitudes and behaviour of their social base. For the former, 32 opinion articles and chronicles published between 1980 and 2021 have been employed, while for the latter, an index of affective polarisation has been elaborated from the data provided by 26 Basque Sociometers, dated between 1996 and 2022.

Keywords: *Symbolic boundaries, Patriotic Left, political violence, Basque Country, Political Behaviour, Political Sociology, boundary making, boundary variation.*

Ikerketa honen bidez, Ezker Abertzaleko alderdiek eta haien oinarri sozialak eraikitako muga sinbolikoak aztertu nahi dira, Euskal Herrian bizi izandako indarkeria politikoaren eta ondorengo gatazka armatuaren amaieraren testuinguruaren baitan. Helburu horrekin, Ezker Abertzaleko alderdien diskurtso publikoa aztertzen da, baita haren oinarri sozialaren jarrera eta portaerak ere. Horretarako, 1980 eta 2021 urteen bitartean argitaratutako 32 iritzi-artikulu eta kronika erabiltzeaz gain, 1996 eta 2022 urteen bitartean plazaratutako 26 Euskal Soziometroetako datuetan oinarritutako polarizazio afektiboaren indizeaz baliatzen naiz.

Hitz gakoak: *Muga sinbolikoak, Ezker Abertzalea, indarkeria politikoa, Euskal Herria, Portaera Politikoa, Soziologia Politikoa, mugen sorrera, mugen aldaketa.*

Mediante este trabajo de investigación se pretende indagar en las fronteras simbólicas erigidas por parte de los sucesivos partidos de la 'Izquierda Abertzale' así como por su base social, tomando en consideración el escenario de violencia política y posterior cese del conflicto armado vivido en el País Vasco, popularmente conocido como "conflicto vasco". Con este fin, analizo el discurso público de los sucesivos partidos de la 'Izquierda Abertzale' e indago en las actitudes y comportamientos de su base social. Para lo primero, se han empleado 32 artículos de opinión y crónicas publicadas entre 1980 y 2021, mientras que para lo segundo se ha elaborado un índice de polarización afectiva a partir de los datos proporcionados por 26 Sociómetros Vascos, con fecha entre 1996 y 2022.

Palabras clave: *Fronteras simbólicas, Izquierda Abertzale, violencia política, País Vasco, Comportamiento Político, Sociología Política, creación de fronteras, variación de fronteras.*

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I.   INTRODUCTION

We live in an era of complex, unpredictable politics. Political parties are springing up all over the old continent in direct competition with classic parties, old ghosts seem to be returning to hegemonic positions, together with modern wars and new cleavages in the heat of globalisation. In such circumstances, change and evolution do not cease in political systems that seemed rigid, immobile and legitimate. However, human beings always seem to be a couple of steps behind, making our perceptions, ideas and characterisations more immutable over time.

One of many changes that have turned upside down the social and political board in the Basque Country and Spain, is without doubt the ending of the political and armed conflict that has lasted nothing less than 52 years. Just over five decades of political violence, human rights violations and a bloodshed that is hard to forget; even in an accelerated, global world.

The fact is that while in 1996 Herri Batasuna boasted of leaving their seats empty in the Chamber of Deputies in Madrid, today Sortu -within the EH Bildu coalition- approves the general state budgets for PSOE and Unidas Podemos. While in demonstrations called by platforms linked to the "Patriotic Left" (IA), shouts such as "ETA kill them" or "Gora ETA militarra!" were chanted at demonstrators denouncing a murder; today the IA participates in the now traditional annual wreath laying on the Day of Memory, claiming to recognise, respect and empathise with all victims without exception. There is no doubt, then, that in the framework of the IA, the way it sees itself and other political forces and social groups has hugely varied over time, from positions that could be categorised as exclusionary and combative to positions of increasing cooperation. All of this set in a context of political violence and subsequent end of the armed struggle.

As a Basque political scientist in training, this state of affairs provides me with the opportunity to investigate the evolution of the boundaries set up or constructed by the IA, a major player in 52 years of political violence in the Basque Country -as well as in Spain and France-. Allowing me, at the same time, to elaborate a Final Degree Project with which I feel close to and is of clear public interest, as evidenced by the creation of various films, series and books, who try to construct one -or several- narrations of memory.

II.   OBJETIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- The main objective of this project is to explore the drawing of symbolic boundaries by the successive parties of the so-called "Patriotic Left" (IA) and their change over time.

- More specifically, I would like to study what symbolic boundaries have been drawn both by the parties of the IA and by their voters, and how they have evolved over time.

- In addition, I will analyse how violence and the lack of it have influenced (if at all) the configuration of social frontiers between the IA and other social groups.

- To address these questions, I will begin by introducing certain concepts that are indispensable for a correct understanding of the work, such as identity, categorisation or boundaries. Next, I will discuss the most important methodological decisions as a preliminary step to the analysis of the collected data. This will finally lead us to the conclusions with which I hope to end the paper.

III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout the theoretical framework I intend to briefly introduce and contextualise several concepts that have already been addressed by the academia, although some terms have been worked on more extensively than others. For example, the term "identity" is a pilar when it comes to social analysis, and it has been employed since the ancient Greece times, even if its initial diffusion in the social sciences and public discourse dates back to the 1960s, with some anticipations in the second half of the 1950s (Gleason, 1983; mentioned in: Brubaker & Cooper, 2000:2). Thus, the term "identity" has been used in multiple fields of study, with the result that its overuse -often with not only disparate but also contradictory uses- has led to a lack of meaning, as several scholars point out (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Gleason, 1983).

Even if the term bears a multivalent, even contradictory burden which fails to achieve the unambiguity analytical categories for social science require, the overwhelming majority of scholars suggest that the term remains indispensable (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Still, I will stick with the alternative analytical idioms proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), since in this way I will be able to use the alternative meanings which "identity" makes reference to, but without its confusing and contradictory approaches. More precisely, I will rest on the conceptions of "identification and categorization", which are employed as near synonyms, and "groupness", leaving aside the particularistic or "weak" understandings of identity, as this falls outside the scope of my study. The first, invites us to specify the agents that do the identifying; referring to practices such as characterizing oneself or another actor, locating oneself or another actor vis-à-vis known others, situating oneself or another actor in a narrative or placing oneself or another actor in a category. These practices may result in the internal sameness or distinctiveness political actors -or the state- could seek to achieve. "Groupness", on the other hand, refers to the emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group, involving both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even antipathy to specified outsiders (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000:19).

The just mentioned practices of categorization or identification imply, among other things, the drawing of boundaries, as people are separated or grouped together into different categories. Similarly, groupness relies on the existence of boundaries between 'Us' and 'Others'. Accordingly, as Lamont and Molnár (2002:167) point out, the idea of "boundaries" has come to play a key role in important new lines of social science, even if, according to Lamont, Pendergrass

and Pachucki (2015), two of the founding fathers of sociology already played central roles in shaping the literature on symbolic boundaries: Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. In the contemporary literature on symbolic boundaries, both the neo-Weberian and neo-Durkheimian heritage remain strong according to the same authors, and further developments have been brought forth in diverse areas apart from the study of identity through boundary work. For example, Pierre Bourdieu's work regarding the intersection of boundaries with the production of inequality.

Regarding to the notion of boundary I will be employing in this research project; I will rely on the following definition by Lamont and Molnár (2002:168) for the concept of symbolic boundary:

> Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space. They are tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality. Examining them allows us to capture the dynamic dimensions of social relations, as groups compete in the production, diffusion, and institutionalization of alternative systems and principles of classifications. Symbolic boundaries also separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership (Epstein 1992, p. 232). They are an essential medium through which people acquire status and monopolize resources (Lamont & Molnár, 2002:168).

Closely related with this conception is the one of social boundary, which regards to the objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources and social opportunities (Lamont & Molnár, 2002:168). Therefore, authors conclude claiming that only when symbolic boundaries are widely agreed upon can they become social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002:168-169). Wimmer (2008b:975) makes a similar point when he clarifies that social boundaries occur only when ways of seeing the world correspond to ways of acting in the world. In any case, given time constraints and limitations in the availability of data I will not study social boundaries directly in this research. Instead, I focus on symbolic boundaries and assume that they manifest themselves in social boundaries, e.g., in the form of cooperation, competition, lack of interactions, etc.

Having so far explained the meaning and part of the path of these concepts, it would be of no use at all to deal with these concepts if we did not have the conceptual tools to be able to analyse different strategies by which boundaries[1] are created and varied. Fortunately, Wimmer (2008a) differentiates in his article between five strategies of boundary making, summarizing: to redraw a boundary by either expanding or limiting the domain of people included in the category, to change the meaning of an existing boundary by challenging its categorization,

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[1] Admittedly, Wimmer focuses on *ethnic* boundaries, defining ethnicity as a subjectively felt sense of belonging based on the belief in a shared culture and common ancestry (2008:973), following the Weberian tradition. Although the ethnic dimension is certainly relevant to understand politics in the Basque Country, not all boundaries that I analyse (e.g. those between parties) are clearly ethnic in nature. Nevertheless, Wimmer's dimensions of variation of ethnic boundaries can be applied to the study of other types of boundaries as well.

changing one's own position, or by emphasizing other forms of belonging. Furthermore, Wimmer (2008b) also analyses the dimensions of boundary variation; that is, transcending earlier debates centred on the ontology of "identity" in order to determine existing boundaries, Wimmer finds that group distinctions can vary greatly in political salience, social closure and exclusion, cultural differentiation between groups and stability over time. Thus, Wimmer finds that group distinctions can be short-lived, blurred and have little social impact as well as being profound, with implications in all areas of life (marriage, hiring, befriending, etc.) and discriminatory.

Even if I am studying the evolution of boundaries in the Basque Country between contending groups, I will not analyse the four dimensions of boundary variation I just mentioned, as the degree of political salience of the boundaries will not be considered. Nevertheless, to the extent that I focus on a political party/movement I can safely assume that the boundaries will be politically salient. Conversely, social closure will really be taken into account and operationalised in the research, as well as the time dimension (even if the latter will mostly be restricted to the questions of how social closure has evolved over time as well as how conceptions of the in-group and the out-groups have evolved). Regarding to the cultural differentiation dimension, even if I will not use the concept itself explicitly, I will refer to it.

Nonetheless, in order to frame changes in symbolic boundaries in a context of political violence[2] and subsequent cessation of hostilities, I find it necessary to review the existing literature on how boundary-making processes are influenced by the existence or absence of violence. Regarding the consequences of ethnic civil wars[3], Chaim Kaufmann (1996) argues that ethnic identities are hardened further by intense conflict between rival competing communities. Thus, with the aim of proposing a solution to ethnic civil wars based on the demographic separation of the confronting communities into defensible enclaves (as opposed to solutions that he considers to be short-lived); Kaufmann argues (1996:137) that in ethnic wars both hypernationalist mobilization rhetoric and real atrocities harden ethnic identities to the point that cross-ethnic political appeals are unlikely to be made and even less likely to be heard.

More recent studies such as that of Guelke (2000) and Shayo and Zussman (2017) reaffirm the position of Kaufmann (1996). The first by exposing how the threat of violence in divided societies, even in ongoing peace processes, is enough to polarize opinion, and thus, attitudes. The second by showing how despite a decrease in the levels of violence in an ethnic conflict (in this case the Palestinian-Israeli conflict after the Second Intifada), there is no evidence of a decrease in the level of inter-group bias, not even among the population that

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2 The term 'political violence' is used in a fairly conventional and narrow way to refer to 'the use or threat of physical harm by groups involved in domestic political conflicts' (Gurr, 2001: 257).

3 Kaufmann (1996:138) differentiates between ethnic civil wars and ideological civil wars as in the first loyalties are almost completely rigid, and opposing communities hold irreconcilable visions of the identity, borders and citizenship of the state; while in ideological civil wars the contest is among members of the same community regarding how that community should be governed. Regarding the Basque conflict, even if mobilization appeals were also based in the ideological aspect (e.g., the building of socialism), the ethnic dispute has been of major importance and salience (Casquete, 2010).

should be more immune to ethnic biases (judges). Similarly, Sambanis and Shayo (2013:318) argue that violence between ethnic groups tends to strengthen ethnic boundaries and to '"switch off" a host of alternative social identities' (based on class, ideology, the urban/rural divide, etc.). Therefore, I dare to confirm that violence between opposing communities tends to reinforce the "groupness" perception I mentioned earlier, creating greater bonds of solidarity between members of the in-group and antipathy towards the out-group. It also erects and reinforces symbolic -and social- boundaries between the contending communities, boundaries that tend to last even longer than the armed conflict may last. Thus, it can be hypothesized that the end of violence did not have any effects, or at most only small and delayed ones, on the boundaries drawn by the IA.

To conclude with the theoretical framework, I will deal in a rather general way with the background of the IA, as well as with the so-called 'Basque conflict' and the strategic evolution of the IA. According to Muro (2009:659-660), radical Basque nationalism is defined as both a political ideology and a social movement. As a doctrine, radical Basque nationalism advocates the political independence of the Basque homeland through violent means. As a social movement, it takes the form of the Basque Movement of National Liberation (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco or MLNV), a self-named network of organisations founded in 1974. This complex system is informally known as the Patriotic Left (Izquierda Abertzale) and it is made up of a number of interconnected political organisations, social agents and NGOs with interests in the fields of feminism, environmentalism, internationalism, Basque culture, youth, students' and prisoners' rights.

According to its own characterisation in a notebook published by Herri Batasuna and quoted by Casquete (2009:65-66), the MLNV would be "the form(s) of expression, the social and political current of broad sectors of the Basque Working People who pursue, as a final objective, the attainment of Full National Sovereignty for the whole of Euskal Herria. These sectors, this Liberation Movement, historically finds its concrete expression in the set of organisations which, from the specificity of each one of them (depending on the specific fields of intervention), contribute to the advancement of the process".

For Casquete (2009), the most clarifying distinctive doctrinal feature between traditional nationalism -represented by the PNV- and radical nationalism -the Patriotic Left - will be that of an open and unrenounceable independentism, without exercises in style that require a permanent hermeneutic, without ambiguity or fissures. Moreover, it should be added that the form of nationalism defended by the IA is particularly committed to socialism and sympathetic to anticolonialism from its origins, distancing itself from the more conservative tenets of Arana's formulation (Julen Zabalo & Onintza Odriozola, 2017:140). As Casquete (2009:66) reports, the political party with which the IA has been contesting elections since 1978 is Herri Batasuna, re-founded in 1998 as Euskal Herritarrok and in 2001 as Batasuna, until its illegalisation two years later forced them to use screen parties, such as EHAK (Communist Party of the Basque Lands) or ANV (Basque Nationalist Action), also successively banned in their activities since the beginning of 2008. The electoral support garnered in the elections in which they have participated, apart from being considerable, has remained relatively stable.

In 2009, the outlawed nationalist left was left out of the Basque Parliament for the first time. In November of the same year, three decades after the birth of HB in Altsasu/Alsasua, the nationalist left once again met in the same town to present the Declaration of Altsasu/Alsasua, in which the outlawed nationalist left made a declaration in which it called for "confrontation by exclusively political and democratic means", while calling for dialogue between ETA and the Spanish government (Gara, 2009). On 5 September 2010, ETA announced a cessation of "offensive armed actions", subsequently (in October 2011) announcing the definitive cessation of armed activity.

This context of renunciation of political violence by the IA and the cessation of hostilities by ETA facilitated, within the framework of the strategy of accumulation of the pro-sovereignty forces to the left of the PNV, the signing in June 2010 of a first strategic agreement between pro-independence political forces, signed by the leadership of Eusko Alkartasuna and former members of the outlawed Batasuna, followed by the "Euskal Herria from the left" agreement in January 2011, which was also joined by Alternatiba. In this way, on April 2011, the electoral coalition Bildu (later EH Bildu) was formed, giving a voice to independent IA candidates.

Nevertheless, it was not until 2012 that the IA would go on to form its own political and legalised organisation, Sortu. Regarding Sortu, it should be mentioned that differentiates itself from previous IA related parties due to the explicit rejection of "violence or threats in any form", including that of ETA and adopt "a clear and unequivocal position of acting exclusively through political and democratic means", according to its statutes (La Vanguardia, 2011). Since then, although studies such as those by Orbegozo, Iturbe and González (2017) identify certain milestones that lead to the renewal of its electoral narrative after the coalition itself, back in 2015, recognised the exhaustion of its political narrative; from the time of the definitive and unilateral ceasefire of ETA no movements or actions appear to point to any change in their way of thinking, according to Julen Zabalo & Onintza Odriozola (2017:144-145).

IV.   METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goals of this research project, I have taken several methodological decisions which can be framed within the methodological approach known as triangulation. Though this approach, I aim to move closer to obtain the "true" picture of the phenomenon I seek to analyse, reducing bias and improving convergent validity based on the use of multiple sources of information (Triangulation, 2009:944).

Therefore, as it can be seen from the research objectives, in attempting to analyse the drawing of symbolic boundaries by the IA, I distinguish two spheres in which the categorisation and identification of both the in-group (us) and the out-group (others) are practised. On the one hand, it is essential to analyse the public discourse of the political party of the IA itself, identifying how different subject positions are construed. On the other hand, we have the voters

of the successive political parties of the "Patriotic Left". These, through their attitudes and patterns of interaction both between members of their own group and others, draw symbolic - and I assume social- boundaries. By considering data covering a sufficiently long period, I expect to observe the effects of both violence and its cessation in the shaping of those boundaries.

From the collective actor, i.e., the party, I will analyse its discourse in order to identify how it has categorised both itself and "the others". How it describes itself, how it describes others, what actions and characteristics it attributes, and even what kind of interactions it has with these "others".

I have decided to use two approaches to do this, the first is to conduct discourse analysis based on the statements of relevant IA figures or the executive committee. For this purpose, I have used opinion articles and chronicles published in the newspapers most sympathetic to the IA (Egin until its closure and Gara afterwards). Even so, since 2008 I have also employed the official website of the IA[4]. The aim of choosing these sources of information has been to avoid mismatches between what was said by the Patriotic Left and what was published. Anyway, for further detail Table 1 in the Appendix shows the articles employed, reaching up to 32 articles, one per year from 1980 to 2021, with the exception of 1991 when I collected two articles published on the same page and on the same context. As it can be seen, I have excluded articles from 1982, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1995, 2004, 2006, 2013, 2015 and 2017. The exclusion has been done randomly in order to reduce the number of articles to be analysed.

In order to make easier to compare the texts by keeping the context of enunciation relatively constant, as well as to limit and facilitate the search, I have focused on a specific event until 2003; in particular, on statements by the IA in the Basque Fatherland Days (Aberri Eguna). Even though, in recent years, due to the illegalisation of their structures, calls for unitary celebrations and the lack of explicit statements, I have also resorted to statements regarding other issues such as electoral appearances or topics of general politics (assessments, replies to other political actors, political stances, etc.)[5]. In any case, the selection has been conceived with the same criteria that I look for in the Aberri Eguna declarations. That is, the articles show relations between and with other agents, as well as evaluations -towards itself and towards others-, and do not deal so much with specific issues of concrete policies. However, in analysing the results, I will take into account the specificity of each article as well, in order to minimise the impact of the specific background and focus on macro trends in case of any anomalous findings (e.g., peaks in the graphs or mention of non-habitual subjects).

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[4] As can be seen in Table 1, for the years 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012 I have made use of the official IA website which is currently unavailable, accessing the articles I used thanks to Internet Archive. Besides, the last three texts analysed were taken from the official website of Sortu, the current political party of the IA.

[5] Table 1 shows the context in which the statements were made or to which they respond, as well as the title of the news release.

Therefore, by using a codebook, I have looked at the most "exclusionary" or "porous" symbolic boundaries, for then comparing how assessments, perceptions and judgements of the IA have evolved over the years. More specifically, the aspects I looked at when coding the texts can be summarised in three: categories or referenced subjects -including oneself-, attributes or actions attributed to them, and interactions between these subjects. In this last aspect I have reduced the range of possible interactions to five: leadership, emulation, cooperation, competition and confrontation.

Each type of interaction refers to different attitudes shown by the subjects, from leadership where the actor seeks to lead, control or reference himself, for example: "KAS calls on all Basque working people to come today, Aberri Eguna to Iruñea (...)". Up to confrontational interactions, which is when a clash arises where there is at least one subject identified as an enemy -and not a legitimate competitor-. For example: "ETB and other media are information manipulators". The latter differs from competition interactions in the sense that here the actor recognises the competitor as a legitimate rival, not an enemy. Moreover, emulation interaction, as the name implies, refers to cases where the actor copies or follows other actors, often so as to achieve what they have already accomplished. Finally, cooperation interaction refers to when the actor cooperates with other actors.

While the evolution of the party rhetoric may be illuminating, the analysis would be rather poor if taking only this aspect into account, as I would take for granted that partisan discourse is directly reflected in the attitudes and behaviours of the social base or electorate, which may not be the case at all. Therefore, as mentioned above, I consider essential to determine the evolution of the attitudes and behaviour of the social base of the IA. For doing so, I have decided to create an index of affective polarisation. By means of this index, I seek to determine how the attitudes of the group that declares to have voted or to vote in the following elections for the IA party have evolved towards other political parties in dispute (EAJ-PNV, PSE-EE, PP, IU/EB and Podemos-Ahal Dugu/Elkarrekin Podemos).

I have created the scale on the basis of the answers given to the Basque Sociometer between 1996 and 2022, Table 2 in the Appendix shows the list of Sociometers considered. As it can be appreciated, from the first year the Basque Government begin with the Sociometers (1996) I have missed just a single year (1999) because none of the three sociometers that were carried out that year included the following question on political sympathy: What degree of sympathy do you feel for each of the following political options, on a scale of 0 to 10, on which 0 means no sympathy and 10 means a great deal of sympathy?

As for the functioning of the affective polarisation index, it works as follows, I had to calculate the difference between the rating given to the preferred party (the IA party) and the rating given to other relevant political parties mentioned above. Thus, the greater the gap between the ratings, the lower the affectivity and the greater the polarisation between IA voters and the party in question; in other words, the sharper the symbolic boundary, with all that this entails, i.e., a felt difference from or even antipathy to outsiders. On the other hand, the lower

the index means that IA voters would not consider this political force to be so hostile, thus leading to less distinctiveness among the voters of the IA as well as a reduction in the social closure.

If the index of affective polarisation is maintained over time, it would mean that boundaries have remained stable between the contending groups, whereas a higher or lower affective polarisation would mean and evolution; either towards greater or lesser social closure, exclusion and differentiation between groups.

As for the dimension of the cultural differentiation, even if in the theoretical framework I stated not using the concept itself explicitly, I will analyse the dimension by studying how conceptions of the 'We', especially conceptions of the Basque people and similar ones (Basque society, Basque nation, EH, etc.) have evolved.

Table 3: Main Theoretical Concepts and Their Operationalisation

Concepts		Indicators Operationalising Concepts	
		At the Discursive Level	Related to Voters
Symbolic Boundaries		Categories used to label 'Us' and 'Others', i.e., practices of categorisation	
Dimensions of Variation of Boundaries	Closure	Attributes & Actions of 'Us' and 'Others' Interactions with 'Others': leadership, emulation, cooperation, competition, confrontation	Affective polarisation index
	Cultural differentiation	Attributes of the in-group(s)	
	Stability over time	Longitudinal analysis of abovementioned indicators	

Source: Own elaboration.

V.   DATA ANALYSIS

I.   PARTY DISCOURSE

Having described the way in which I have proceeded to obtain the data with which I seek to respond to the research objectives, it is time to present the results I have obtained. Beginning

from the analysis of the IA discourses, I will describe below how the characterisation of different subjects and categories by the various political structures of the IA or its leaders and leading figures has evolved.

Thus, I will start with the states, territorial entities and governments that have been the subject of frequent assessments and references. In this respect, it is worth noting that in order to observe the evolution of the attributes used for these subjects, several terminologies have been considered since they refer the same subject. For example, to analyse the cosmovision made towards the Spanish State, its governments and its various institutions, terms such as "Suarez's Government", "its Courts", "the Constitution", "Spanish 'democracy'", "Madrid", "Kingdom of Spain" or "Regime of 78" have been used.

That said, and starting from the categorisation of the French and Spanish states, its global categorisation has not changed much over the years, although there are certain aspects worth mentioning. Beginning with the general features, it is worth mentioning that the French Government is mentioned considerably less than the Spanish Government, and that in all the cases I have found mention of France, it has been accompanied by some reference to Spain and has been in articles written in Basque. As for Spain, since 1980 it has been characterised as a Francoist regime, -although the term "Francoist" is replaced to "fascist" or "authoritarian" over the years- which has undergone merely aesthetic changes but which is anti-democratic in nature. Another adjective that has been maintained over time is oppressive, accompanied by numerous mentions of repression, use of police methods, lack of solutions offered to resolve the conflict it maintains with the Basque Country or rejected by the people. In addition, it has been quite recurrent for the IA to mention the weakness of the state, both in terms of being able to bend its strength and in terms of establishing its model.

So, in general, I can say that the IA's characterisation of the state -especially the Spanish state- is that it is an anti-democratic institution, because it does not allow the Basques to decide their future freely. Faced with this attitude, often labelled as "fascist", the Patriotic Left responds with shows of strength and commitment: they will not be defeated, they will not be able to stifle the Basque people's desire for self-determination, time is no longer on their side, etc. However, both in 1991 and 2010 they called on the state to do its part in order to put an end to the conflict. In 1991, calling on the State to comply with the agreements it committed itself to in Algeria, and in 2010 it called on the State to respond with co-responsibility in order to be able to respond constructively to the new situation (ETA's cessation of armed actions). Thus, it can be said that even while categorising the state as an enemy and non-legitimate actor, the IA does not, at least not entirely, abandon calls for the state to be able to act in ways they deem reasonable or appropriate.

To conclude with the categorisation of Spain and its institutions, I am struck by the distinction drawn between the Spanish political and media consensus and the foreign world, mainly Europe and the United Nations, where IA political representatives are respected,

accepted and protected. Unfortunately, I have only one opinion article from 1997 where this boundary is established.

Moving forward, I will now proceed to analyse similarly how the IA has categorised the Basque legislative and executive institutions. In this case, the categorisation is also negative, as both the Basque Parliament and the Basque Government are categorised as the fruit of reformism, without competences or real possibilities of self-government from the very beginning (1980). Thus, the IA clamours against the autonomous institutions as well as against the Statute and the Amejoramiento of Navarre, classifying them as inoperative and subordinate to Madrid; even labelling them as "an autonomous project directed against Euskadi" (1989). This confrontational attitude continued at least until 2009, with references to the fact that the Parliament of Gasteiz and the Statutes only serve to oxygenate Spanish nationalism (españolismo), and that it will one day become the last link of Spanish nationalism to curb Basque sovereignty (2000).

From 2003 onwards, references to the outlawing of IA parties came into play. Thus, that same year it was stated that the autonomist government, together with the Spanish government, was responsible for the attempt to stifle the Basque citizens' desire for self-determination, although AuB would still be present at the ballot box. Similarly, since 2005, with the exclusion of the Patriotic Left from the parliament of Navarre, the term illegitimate became used to refer to the different parliaments in which the IA was not allowed to access due to its illegalisation. An example of this is Rafa Díez's declarations in the 2009 post-election period, labelling the parliaments as "treacherously mutilated and, therefore, politically illegitimate". Unfortunately, references to the Basque and Navarrese legislative and executive bodies disappear from the press articles I have collected since then, with a single exception in 2019, when Sortu reproaches the Basque Government for not having made a self-criticism as was demanded after the death of Iñigo Cabacas, as a result of new interventions by the Ertzaintza.

Even so, the decrease in mentions of Basque self-government bodies from 2009 onwards most probably indicates a reduction in the confrontation between the IA and these institutions. As beyond the categorisations that can be made of different subjects and the trends of evolution, the number of appearances of the subjects is also an aspect of primary importance. In this regard, it is necessary to bear in mind that the communication strategy of most political parties make it more common to criticise, confront and show your opposition to other subjects than the opposite. Considering this, and observing how the nationalist left has integrated itself into the Basque representative bodies, I dare to affirm that the way of categorising these institutions and the laws that made them possible, i.e., the Statute of Autonomy, has changed significantly.

If the states, territorial entities and different government bodies have been referred to countless times in the texts I have analysed, the different political parties are by no means left behind, as they could not be otherwise. Therefore, I will now address how the labels that have

been established for the rest of the political parties have evolved, in order to be able to observe how closely or distantly the IA has perceived them.

Before starting to see how the categorisation of different political parties has evolved, I consider it important to assess how the perception of competing political parties has changed when mentioning them as a whole: "them", parties with the exception of the IA on the one hand, and "us", the political party of the IA on the other. Thus, with the knowledge that during the first years of Spanish democratic consolidation the IA acted as an outsider or anti-system party in a context in which a large number of parties that could act in this way gave in or renounced in some aspects (for example the PNV abstaining or the PCE voting in favour of the Spanish Constitution), might be obvious that the confrontation and division between them and the rest of the parties that would come to accept the "rules of the game" would be broad.

However, this trend to differentiate themselves from other political parties is maintained over time. As can be noticed in the articles analysed, the tendency to differentiate itself from the rest of the political parties as such, under different conceptions ranging from "other political groups" to "each and every one of the godfathers of Spanish democracy" has remained, to a certain extent, intact over time. It is worth noting that by 2008 the discourse on "all other political parties" had softened somewhat, although a distinction between "us" and "all others" is indeed maintained.

Moving on, probably the party to which the IA has made the most references -apart from themselves- has been the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). This should come as no surprise, since we can categorise it as the hegemonic party in the Basque Autonomous Community and the most successful in terms of electoral representation. Moreover, it is logical that on the Basque Fatherland Day most references have been made to other nationalist parties, either to criticise them for different reasons, to show a leading position or to open up to cooperation, among others. It is for this reason, and because of the connection in their beginnings and coincidence on certain issues, that many references to the PNV have been accompanied by references to Eusko Alkartasuna (EA).

As for the attributions and actions assigned to the PNV -and also to EA- over time, it is possible to find a certain trend over time, with three turning points coinciding with the Ajuria Enea Pact, the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement and the end of that agreement. All of this being accompanied by a certain ambivalence at specific moments, as in certain statements, in the same paragraph it is possible to find attitudes of competition between the PNV and the IA, while calls are made for cooperation between the nationalist forces and an attempt to lead the nationalist bloc, setting the PNV's agenda, is also found.

I will now proceed to detail the trends of interaction, accompanied by numerous quotations in which figures from the nationalist left discuss about the PNV and EA, in order to better reflect these relations. I will begin with the Agreement for the Normalisation and

Pacification of the Basque Country, better known as the Ajuria Enea Pact, signed on 12 January 1988 by the Lehendakari of the Basque Government and all the political parties represented in the Basque Parliament, with the exception of Herri Batasuna. This pact did not radically change the vision that the nationalist left had towards the more moderate nationalists, since before 1988, the IA already considered the PNV as "incapable of saving its fate beyond the narrow plans of the centralist bourgeoisie" (1983); or described as "homeland sell-outs" those who had betrayed important popular sectors (1985), a reference that even without total certainty can be attributed to the nationalist parties with the exception of themselves. There can also be found descriptions of the PNV mayor of Gernika as "manipulator" (1987) for having given an unrealistic image of the town that hosted the HB event.

Therefore, the image of the PNV and other nationalist parties was already negatively biased from the beginning. Even so, the aforementioned Pact leads to a confrontational tendency from the IA towards the parties that signed the Pact, with particular emphasis on the PNV and EA. Without going any further, in the 1989 opinion article signed by KAS, it is stressed that "the pacts signed in Madrid, Gasteiz and Iruñea are anti-patriotic and serve as a support for the policy of annihilation advocated by the PSOE with regards to the Basque issue". Regarding the PNV and EA, it is said that "they have abandoned the ship of basic demands of our people", in addition to the fact that "they act as fifth columnists in Euskadi".

This trend continues over time, demonstrating the relevance of that particular Pact. In contrast to most political events that are fleeting in terms of their impact and repercussions over time, we can find references to the Pact and the "Pact parties" up to 1991. That year, at the press conference at the end of the Aberri Eguna demonstration, Tasio Erkizia denounced that "the parties of the Pact have never been so empty of content on this date as they are this year", adding that "if other years they have had a content of national demands, this year they have left those approaches to one side and their only message is to attack HB and all its environment". Erkiza also emphasised the "increasingly clear bifurcation between those who advocate a pact with the system, using the Spanish Constitution, rejected by this people, as the only framework; and those who are committed to profoundly modifying this framework and creating a new one that reflects popular and national aspirations".

In addition, beyond mentions to the Pact, the confrontational tendency of the IA towards the political parties to which it could be closest due to its nationalist component -EA and PNV- is maintained. An example of this is the statements made by the spokesman of the National Bureau of Herri Batasuna, Jon Idigoras, at the 1993 event. On that occasion, Idigoras accused the "regionalists" of always being one with the "power from Madrid" and the "financial oligarchy", and of not being concerned about any national construction project, since in his words, the only thing that matters to them is their own profits. Moreover, on that occasion Idigoras criticised even more strongly the PNV's leaders -here excluding EA-, pointing out the lack of legitimacy they have to talk about the economy and the future of the homeland. The spokesman ended his round of references towards the PNV by stating that they "will always be the lowly and shameless servants of the Spanish leaders".

Examples of the maintenance of this confrontational spiral are also Karmelo Landa's comments on the PNV during the Aberri Eguna in 1994, stating that the only reason for the existence of "the gentlemen of the UPN, the PSOE and the PNV" is to "deny Euskal Herria, that of stopping the nationalist left, that is why you put yourselves at the orders of Ruiz de Alegria and the Guardia Civil to prohibit free expression today in Iruñea or to savagely torture young people like those in Berriozar". Later in his speech, he charged again against UPN, PSOE and PNV, declaring that their objective is "to cling to the old, to the outdated, to the Civil Guard and the Bourbons; to Biscayanism or to rancid traditionalism, to the Amejoramiento or to the very Spanish constitutional Statute; to the Spanish Army and the force of their arms".

For 1996 and 1997, I make use of two articles written directly by leading HB figures. In them, one can also observe the confrontation with the PNV and, indirectly, with EA. Jon Idigoras can be interpreted as addressing the latter with the following words: "those who, calling themselves nationalists, adopt an attitude of cowardly submission and collaboration with the strategy of the Spanish state". While questions the patriotism of "Arzallus and his people", since "it is a mockery to call oneself abertzale and feel comfortable in Spain, collaborating in the repression, being insensitive to pain in the face of torture and passive in the face of the crimes committed against the recognition of Basque independence". On the other hand, there is no lack of calls to bring the PNV into their orbit, giving them "one more opportunity to leave aside and abandon the police and repressive adventures, which, together with their 'cipayos', are being carried out against the Basque independentist movement" or more explicitly declaring the following: "we call on the Basque regionalists of the PNV to stop collaborating in the repression and in the strategy of the Spanish state and to join an open process of peace and dialogue". This while declaring to have its "hands outstretched" to "all those who, feeling themselves to be nationalists, are willing to join a process of national construction". Although in the 1997 press release the four signatory members of the National Bureau of Herri Batasuna dedicate most of it to attacking and pointing out the attitudes of the Spanish and French states, they also point out that "all the godfathers of Spanish democracy, starting from PP-UPN and passing through PSOE or IU to PNV or EA" have been exposed after the arrest of the National Bureau of HB.

Therefore, we can affirm that the confrontational tendency of the IA towards the other Basque nationalist parties, reinforced after the Ajuria Enea Pact, remained stable until 1998, by which time it becomes evident the change in the strategy of the "Patriotic Left". In any case, it should be pointed out that -as stated above- in the opinion article written by Jon Idigoras in 1996, while he was a prisoner in Alcala penitentiary, the calls for cooperation between the nationalists are already apparent. Although he harshly criticised the course and strategies of the PNV and EA, he reached out to them to initiate an open process of peace and dialogue. It should be noted that Idigoras shows in that article his "support and applause to the efforts that LAB and ELA-STV unions are doing in order to build a Basque trade union space, thus breaking the influence of and subordination to trade union centralism".

In the Aberri Eguna of 1998, the calls for cooperation and agreement between the Basque nationalist forces took on a new dimension, breaking with the confrontational spiral that had existed until then, and deepening the cooperative calls that Idigoras had made back in 1996. Although it is not known whether talks were already underway to reach an agreement between

the nationalist political parties in September of that year, which would be verified in October, giving name to the "Lizarra-Garazi Agreement"; the Aberri Eguna held by HB in 1998 was marked by continuous proposals for cooperation, agreement and joint work among the nationalist forces. Evidence of this are the declarations of Arnaldo Otegi, calling on the nationalist and progressive forces to reach a minimum agreement, emulating the agreement that had been reached in the trade union sphere, which Idigoras supported and applauded in 1996. Moreover, the HB spokesman made it a challenge for next year to celebrate the day of the Basque homeland in a unified way.

Although the 1999 event could not be unified, the attacks of the IA were directed towards Madrid and Paris, without a single mention of the nationalist parties in the chronicle of that year. The year 2000, on the other hand, was quite different, as on that occasion the vast majority of the event revolved around PNV and EA. At that time, under the label of "Euskal Herritarrok", the representatives of the IA reaffirmed the commitment to give continuity to the unity of action among the patriotic forces, warning and demanding a real commitment from them at the same time. Although the period of validity of the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement ended in November 1999, and even if Pernando Barrena openly declared their right to use all the instruments at their disposal for the creation of a new framework for the Basque Country; the Euskal Herritarrok event in April 2000 shows commitment for the unity between nationalist forces.

Without going any further, Otegi pointed out that the difference is not between "violents and democrats", but in the limitation of rights suffered by those who are committed to Euskal Herria, in a clear allusion to the unity between nationalists that came about with the Lizarra-Garazi Agreement and in contrast to the dichotomy between democrats and the violent that arose with the Ajuria Enea Pact, in which Herri Batasuna was marginalised. Furthermore, Otegi asked for commitments from the PNV and EA to move forward on the national axis, and declared his hand outstretched to all those wishing to work for the creation of their own Constitution and a new legal-political order. Both Otegi and Barrena harshly criticised the Statute and the Basque Parliament, while they called on the PNV and EA to "adopt a national and democratic strategy" and termed the unity of forces among the nationalists as "necessary"; but "not as an objective in itself, but as a means to achieve political objectives, based on sovereignty and territoriality".

From the year 2000 onwards, there is a noticeable return to confrontational interactions with the PNV in particular and the "regionalists" in general, although we do not know whether EA is included among the "regionalists". At Euskal Herritarrok's own Aberri Eguna event in 2001, Otegi charged against the PNV and Lehendakari Ibarretxe. He blamed them for arrogating to themselves the initiatives of Lizarra-Garazi and Udalbiltza, but remembering them only to "scrape a few miserable votes". For his part, Pernando Barrena was also very critical towards "domesticated nationalism", asking "if they thought they were going to infect us with their cowardice".

By 2002, Otegi welcomed the fact that EA, ELA and many other actors took up the demands of the IA, as he pointed out that they had become aware that the key to overcoming the conflict and making another scenario possible lies in self-determination. From this point onwards, references to EA disappear from the analysed discourses of the IA. References to the PNV, on the other hand, do not. An example of this is Barrena's speech at the Aberri Eguna of 2003, warning that there are PNV leaders who do not want pacts between nationalists, and are only looking to fill their own pockets.

To conclude with the timeline of the attributions and actions attributed by the IA to the PNV, it should be said that from this point onwards I would highlight a notable decrease in mentions of the PNV until 2008, in which the criticisms directed at Lehendakari Ibarretxe and the PNV are in the sphere of political competition, and not so much confrontation. Among others, the IA accuses them of not having the slightest intention of changing the rules of the game, refusing to take any effective steps towards self-determination.

This leap from open confrontation, in which PNV is branded as an enemy and kind of "existential threat", to competition can be said to have remained stable over time until the present day, with the exception of 2009. The exceptionality of that year, however, can be attributed to the context, with Rafa Diez criticising the PNV for "dragging itself politically to unbelievable limits in order to beg for institutional power-management", having, in his words "such a devastating effect on its dignity, principles and signs of identity" in the context of post-electoral declarations in which the IA lists were annulled by the Supreme Court, an annulment subsequently confirmed by the Constitutional Court. It should be recalled that those elections led to the first non-nationalist Basque government, in the hands of Lehendakari Patxi Lopez (PSE-EE).

Since then, the few references made by the IA towards PNV have been in the form of criticism of the Basque government mismanagement. Moreover, it is worth mentioning Otegi's declarations at an interview for NAIZ in the run-up to the 2016 Basque elections, in which he placed his proposal for country agreements, aimed at both PNV and Elkarrekin Podemos, at the centre of the debate. Otegi calls for cooperation between EH Bildu, PNV and Podemos, to move forward on issues such as the social emergency plan, the creation of public employment, pensions at 1080, a minimum wage of 1200, the return of young people, a roadmap for sovereignty and a roadmap for releasing ETA's prisoners. In that interview, Otegi went so far as to state that he saw ideal conditions for a pact between EH Bildu, PNV, Elkarrekin Podemos "and even the PSE".

Turning to other political parties that have been mentioned in the analysed articles, although the number of mentions is significantly lower quantitatively, the information is not qualitatively inferior. As for the Socialist Party and its branch in Euskadi, no major trends can be outlined because of the lack of references, but it is quite clear that the IA's position towards them has elements of continuity and change.

On the one hand, since 1983 accusations have been made against PSOE regarding hypocrisy and incoherence. They are also accused of being "an active element in the institutional dismemberment of southern Euskadi". Accusations in both areas -hypocrisy and responsibility in the conflict- are stable over time, as well as accusations of betraying their past, pointing back to the role of the socialists and republicans during the Spanish Civil War. On the other hand, I find several references in the articles in regards to PSOE's links with GAL. While in 1994 and 2001 it is used to attack the image of the PSOE, the Spanish government and PNV, which seeks to get closer to them by ignoring their involvement in GAL; in 2018 Sortu demands to PSOE to assume as well the damage caused, explicitly mentioning the murders of Santi Brouard and Josu Muguruza. This and Otegi's statements in 2016 declaring his willingness to reach major agreements for the country indicate a decline in confrontational discourse.

Moving on to the last political subject with numerous mentions in the articles, we have the Navarrese and Spanish right wing, in which I include among others the PP and UPN. These and others have often been branded as "ultras", "fascists", etc. Although there are not many references to them either, it is quite clear that there is no radical change in their conceptualisation, just as there was not in the previously mentioned characterisation of the Spanish state. While the PSOE is characterised as an enemy for being a "traitor", the right wing is considered an enemy for being a source of "suffering, division and repression" (1994).

As for UPN, I perceive a certain tendency towards greater delegitimization since 1991, when I find the first direct reference to them, considering them "centralists" and that "they have killed the last remnants of the fueros"; as in 1999 they were already branded as "a cavernicolous and reactionary right wing, which was fed up with filling the ditches of La Ribera with republican corpses, of Navarrese like them, even more Navarrese than they are". As can also be seen a posteriori, there is no shortage of references to the Civil War: "Someone incapable of withdrawing the title of adoptive son to Franco is not a democrat, he is simply a fascist" (2005) or remembering that UPN has refused to condemn the more than 3,500 people murdered in Navarre between 1936 and 1939 (2007). References accompanied by calls for them to act responsibly, and "stop playing at unionism" (2005).

In respect to the Spanish right wing, there are not many references beyond occasional qualifiers of "reactionaries" or "fascists". It is worth noting that the articles for 2012 and 2019 revolve around the PP in the former, and the actions of Ciudadanos, PP and VOX in the Basque Country in the latter, so references to them skyrocket. In both cases, the IA accuses them of being "at the antipodes of the reality of Euskal Herria" (2012), and "trying to revive a past based on denial and authoritarianism" (2019). It should be noted that the 2012 declarations are more constructive as in those, the IA calls on the PP to act responsibly, and "to stop playing a sad and crude role in this new political time that has already opened up in EH, since they are being the standard bearers of suffering"; while in 2019 they claim that "they have come with the sole aim of provoking and seeking a quarrel", accompanied by calls to "fight back, both in the street and in the institutions".

To conclude with the categorisation of different political parties by IA leaders and their evolution over time, I will now briefly describe the self-categorisation that it has given itself. In this aspect, as it could not be otherwise, the praise for its work, its strength and the success of its planning are continuous and typical. It should be noted, as mentioned earlier, that the IA considers itself at all times to be a pro-democratic formation, since it works to fulfil the wishes of the Basque majority, which are impeded by other agents. In the early years there are visible signs of heroism in its commitment and self-proclaimed task of "conquering the emancipation of our people" (1985). This task, which at first can be interpreted as being approached in a vanguard manner, as a leading organisation for the achievement of independence and socialism, and which other organisations must follow, will evolve over time into a goal to be achieved by working together with other political, trade union and social actors. Although the IA will continue to set itself the challenge of "being the ideological, political, social and institutional driving force of the National Democratic Revolution", it will stress the importance of "acting with great breadth", calling it essential to "collaborate with other left-wing and progressive sovereigntist and pro-independence sectors" (2011). To this must also be added the objective of presenting itself as a serious formation, capable of reaching major agreements.

In this change of strategy that the IA admits to making together with ETA's cessation of armed activity, although it changes its openness to reach broader consensus, it does not discuss -or at least does not do so openly- its relationship with Basque society as a whole. The fact is that the characterisation of Basque society over the years is that it is in tune with the IA, i.e., the IA defends what 'the overwhelming majority of the Basque people' claims and demands, and vice versa. I have found a single exception in 1999, in which Otegi recognises the plurality of Basque society, although he emphasises that "what is really democratic is that all the cultures included in this plurality can be treated equally and, above all, that we also have the necessary mechanisms to be able to make our political project operative".

In this aspect, I consider Zabalo and Odriozola (2017:134) contribution to be worth taking into account, since they affirm that "though nationalist elites claim it to be otherwise, nations are not usually homogeneous, and it could be said that, to a large extent, nations take on a different shape and meaning depending on the political interests of each nationalist movement (…)". On the basis of this statement, I believe that a move away from an 'orthodox' nationalist stance in the past, in which the IA considered "Basque society" only a part of it (the nationalist community, at most), towards a greater recognition of the plurality of Basque society, can be seen. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the IA conveys its vision of society through its own lens, and as such, it declares itself the spokesperson of the 'overwhelming majority of the Basque people' it claims to represent.

To conclude, although it is impossible to analyse each and every one of the subjects that have been mentioned over time and to describe their evolution, I would like to mention some that have been repeated on several occasions and whose evolution over time is worthy of mention. For example, the police, the workers and trade unions and the employers or bourgeoisie. Regarding the former, all the mentions found are confrontational in tone, highlighting episodes of repression and occupation -regarding Spanish police this last one especially-; the only post-violence mention towards law enforcement authorities regards the

Ertzaintza, being also critical of their actions and calling for a debate on its democratisation. However, this critique can be labelled as less confrontational than previous ones, as it shows a willingness to transform the police in addition to its respective critique.

As far as the capital-labour confrontation is concerned, the IA discourse is mostly focused on the national axis, but always linking both axes. An example of this is the subject "Pueblo Trabajador Vasco" used until 1985 -and which later disappeared-. Although the calls for cooperation and leadership are more abundant on the workers, the IA discourse also mentions the petty bourgeoisie, students or pensioners as part of its target group. In a direct and ground-breaking way, the Basque businessmen are mentioned in 2011, under the proposal to promote economic sovereignty and stressing the need for independence for them as well. In general, however, it can be said that there are no major changes in this aspect over time.

Figure 1: Evolution of the main relations of the IA towards institutions and political parties.
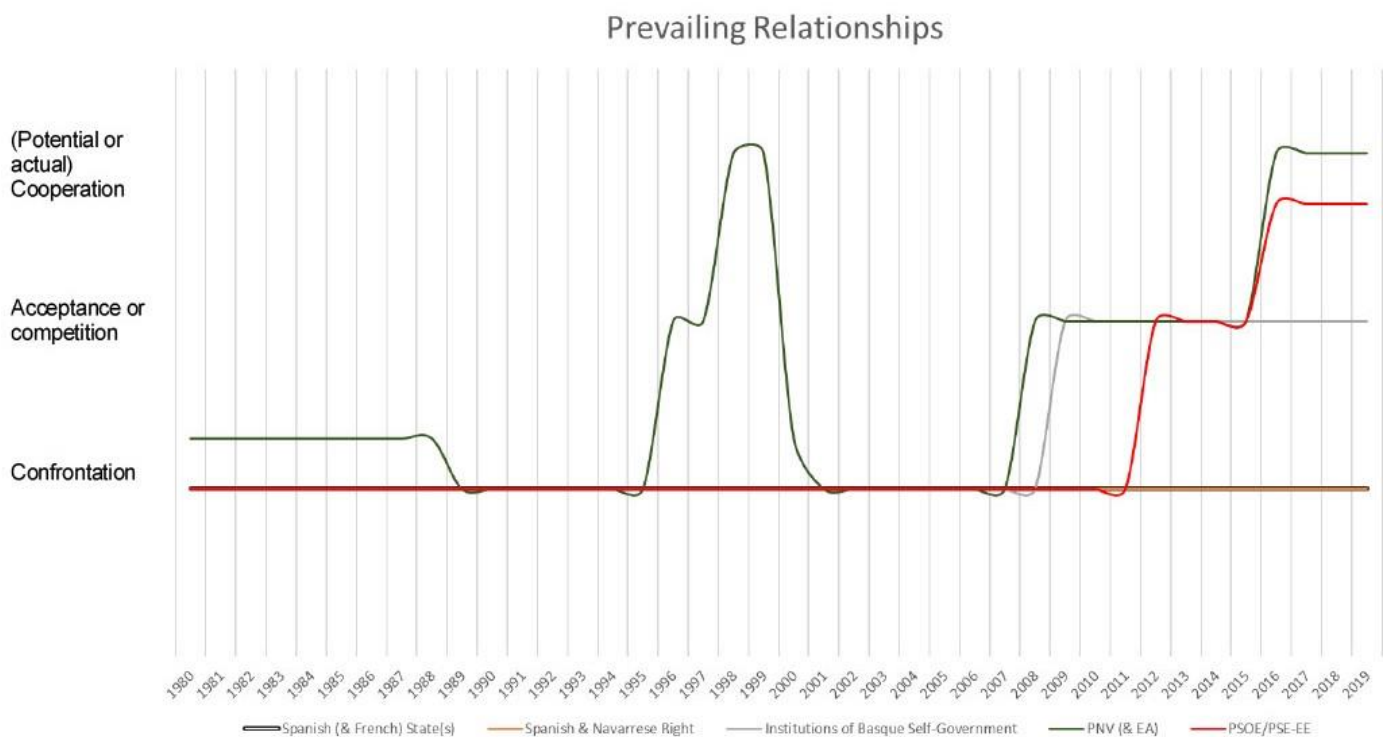
Source: Own elaboration.

II.   ATTITUDES OF THE SOCIAL BASE

As mentioned in the methodological section, apart from the party rhetoric, it is also revealing to determine the evolution of the attitudes and behaviours of the IA's social base, for which I have elaborated the following graphs which I will analyse in this section. In the Figure 2, we can observe how the ratings made by the social base of the IA (those who declare that they vote or have voted in the last elections for the IA party) towards their party and the rest of the parties have evolved through time, measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 10; while in Figure 3,

I show the values of the affectivity index. It should be noted that the main indicator showing the degree of permeability or closure of the border between "us" and "them" is the affective polarisation index (Figure 3). Additionally, Figure 2 provides further information for interpreting affective polarisation (e.g., by indicating whether lower polarisation is due to a better valuation of "other" parties or a worse valuation of "our" party or both).

The first trend I would like to highlight is the increase in affinity towards the PSOE, more visibly from 2018 onwards (Figure 2). However, there is a more general tendency to rate PSOE, PNV and Aralar more positively from 2011 onwards, after a tendency to rate them more negatively in previous years, as is shown in Figure 2. Moreover, it is worth noting that the tendency to rate these parties more positively coincides with a lower rating of the IA party -now under the acronym EH Bildu- than the rating given to HB or Batasuna, always above 7 points. The less positive assessment of EH Bildu by its own voters in its first years may be due to several factors, one possible explanation being that the traditional voters of IA, EA or those from Alternatiba and Aralar did not feel as close to the coalition as they did to their parties.

As for the increase in affinity towards the PSOE, this occurred after the censure motion against Rajoy and coincided with the PSOE's role in the state government, forming minority governments. Therefore, this relative opening of boundary towards the PSOE might be due to the incipient need of both parties to cooperate, to present themselves as a reliable partner to wrest power from the right-wing at the state level. Another plausible explanation is that of the compositional mechanism; that is, the group of voters that fall into the category 'IA' is likely to encompass voters of EA and Aralar since 2012-2013. Hence, changes in the affective polarisation index between 2011-2013 might be due to voters' change of attitudes or to the fact that the group of voters of the IA has expanded (or to both factors). Even in the case that changes are exclusively traced back to this compositional mechanism, the conclusion that boundaries have become more permeable still holds, for it is the boundaries drawn by the *collective* actor that matter to us -whether they result from people changing their minds or changes in the constituency of the collective actor is another question-.

Secondly, the interruption of the Podemos phenomenon, which is now rated approximately 1 point better than Izquierda Unida or Ezker Anitza (Figure 2), is also striking. In this respect, it is worth noting that Podemos differs -albeit in part- from what Ezker Batua and Ezker Anitza had been, offering a new discourse and without the connotations that the Spanish left-wing carried among the IA electorate, part of which welcomed their speech.

Finally, I would also note the consistency towards the PP and PNV evaluations. While the ratings of the PNV oscillate more, the very poor ratings of IA voters towards the PP are stable over time (Figure 2). As for the PNV, as can be seen in both Figure 2 and Figure 3, there are two turning points where the trend shifts towards less affinity first (2000) and closer affinity later (2011). The trend towards greater antipathy that begins in 2000 coincides with the end of ETA's truce and subsequent end of the Lizarra-Garazi Accords between nationalist parties. This trend came to an end in 2011, when the opposite trend, towards greater affinity, began. This change

coincided with ETA's last ceasefire and subsequent cessation of armed activity, as well as the emergence of Sortu, the new IA party that was legalised a year later by the Constitutional Court.

Figure 2: Evolution of the ratings given by the electorate of the IA towards different political parties (including its own), measured on a scale of 0 to 10, on which 0 means no sympathy and 10 means a great deal of sympathy
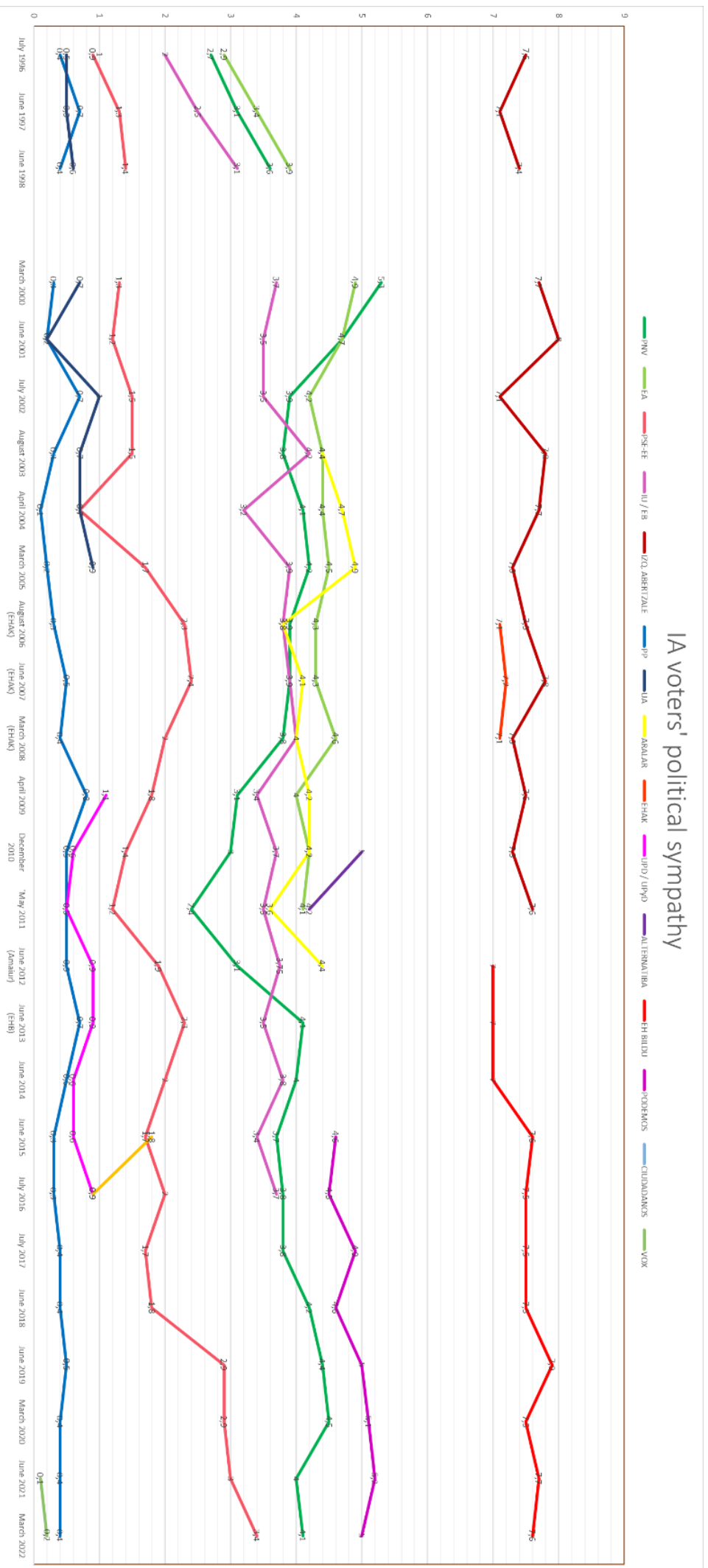
Source: Own elaboration. Data: Basque Sociometers (1996-2022), Table 2 in the Appendix shows the list of Sociometers employed.

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Affective Polarisation

IA-PNV
IA-PSE-EE
IA-PP
IA-IU/EB
IA-POD
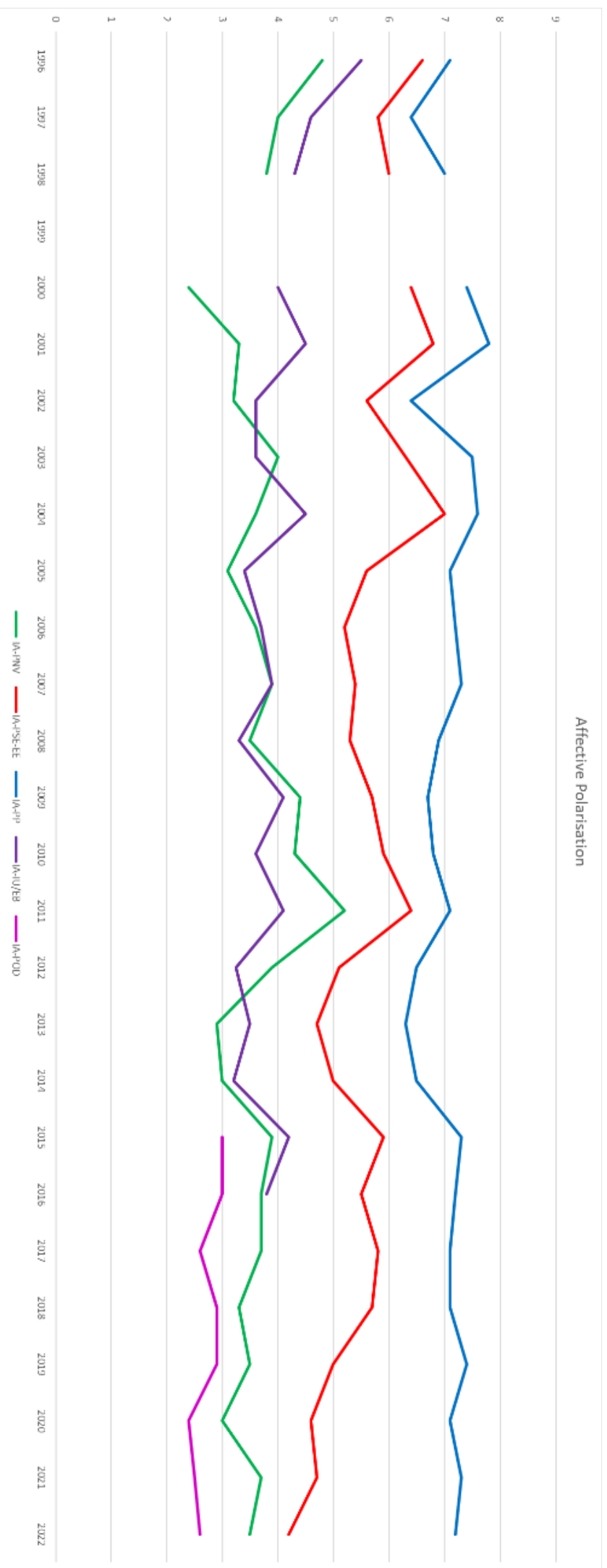
Source: Own elaboration. Data: Basque Sociometer (1996-2022), Table 2 in the Appendix shows the list of Sociometers employed.

VI.   CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, in this section I will present the main results, respond to the hypotheses put forward and make a general assessment of my work, highlighting the obstacles and difficulties I have encountered. I will also propose new lines of research in order to continue and complete the work I have done.

With regard to the hypotheses and objectives of the research, I briefly restate them. Firstly, I sought to explore the drawing of symbolic boundaries by the successive parties of the so-called "Patriotic Left" (IA) and their change over time. Secondly, I aimed to study how the boundaries have been drawn also by their social base, together with its evolution over time. Finally, I looked forward to analyse how violence and the lack of it have influenced (if at all) the configuration of social frontiers between the IA and other social groups. Regarding the hypotheses raised, I stated that the end of violence did not have any effects, or at most only small and delayed ones, on the boundaries drawn by the IA.

Therefore, as far as the primary objective of the research project is concerned, I can deduce that the symbolic boundaries (and the social ones, as I assume symbolic boundaries manifest themselves in social boundaries), have evolved both on the part of the successive parties of the IA and on the part of its social base. However, not all the subjects to which the IA as a party has referred have undergone changes in their conception. For example, I cannot demonstrate that there has been a conceptual distinction in the definition of the Spanish state, in that its categorisation or identification continues being "authoritarian" or "anti-democratic", making the boundary between "constitutionalists" or "Spanish nationalist" and "left-wing pro-independence" a deep boundary irrespective of the existence of violence between parties. The same can be said of the categorisation of right-wing parties such as the UPN or the PP, since the categorisation made towards them has continued to be one of seeking distinctiveness, lumping them into categories antagonistic to those they seek to represent, thus establishing widely agreed symbolic boundaries.

The opposite can be said about the Basque and Navarrese legislative and executive institutions and the other political parties. With regard to the former, as I have made clear in the analysis of the IA's discourse, it can be said that the confrontational rhetoric has disappeared as such, a sign that the borders that once existed have dissipated or that their confrontational tone is no longer such.

As for the other political parties, in the IA's own discourse, the differences can be seen in terms of the treatment and the adjectives used over time, an attitude that is reflected in the political sympathy directed towards the same parties by the social base of the 'Patriotic Left'. Although it is beyond the scope of this research whether the party's discourse has changed due to the attitude of its social base or vice versa, what is clear is that both have evolved, meaning that the boundaries once drawn by the party and the social base are no longer the same.

Anyway, and according to the collected data, discursive changes predated changes in voters' attitudes. Whether the latter were caused by the former or by other factors cannot be determined, but it seems to be the case that voters' attitudes were not the driving factor of changes at the rhetorical level. Conversely, it is the case that discursive changes from the IA towards other political parties were replicated by voters' attitudes years later, although as I have already pointed out, a direct cause-effect relationship cannot be established (the values shown by the IA's social base could have been conditioned by external factors, such as a change in the composition of the IA voters).

In general terms, the evolution has been from more disruptive/confrontational strategies to competitive and even cooperative ones, leaving aside the leadership interactions that were more frequent in the past. As for the IA's self-perception, although the EH Bildu coalition generated less sympathy in its beginnings, its voters have come to value EH Bildu as positively as they did other IA parties in the past.

As regards to the concept of 'cultural differentiation', I analysed the dimension by studying how conceptions such as the Basque society or the Basque Country were conceived. In this aspect, I perceive an openness when it comes to defining Basque society, as considering it plural and not always in accordance with the postulates of the IA. Even though, they rely on their popular support when arguing with the Spanish right wing, insofar they consider them not representative of the Basque society. This partial acknowledgement of the inner pluralism of Basque society implies that the boundary around it cannot rely to the same extent as in the past on the idea that Basque society is the result of the quasi-natural, homogeneous, cultural distinctiveness of this group. There is also a noticeable blurring of boundaries when dealing with the bourgeoisie or the police.

As for the influence of violence and its cessation on the configuration of social boundaries or patterns of interaction between the IA and other social groups; on the one hand, it is worth mentioning that at the discursive level some changes predated the end of political violence. On the other hand, I would say that it is closely linked. As I have analysed in terms of the characterisation of the PNV, ETA's different decisions and their interpretation by the IA - especially the definitive cessation of its armed activity- have been decisive in determining whether its social base sympathises to a greater or lesser extent with the rest of the political parties.

Besides, it is worth mentioning that contrary to what exposed in my theorical framework, some evidence does suggest that in a specific post-political violence scenario, such as the Basque one, the analysed side shows a rapprochement and greater sympathy towards a party representative of the opposing community in the identitarian field and used to be branded as a "traitor" in the social field, such as the PSOE. Thus, proving the possibility to soften ethnic identities and end violent ethnic conflicts without the demographic separation of confronting communities into defensible enclaves. This deviation of the Basque case from the theoretical expectation may be due to many factors. Among them, I speculate that the fact that at the

rhetorical level some changes predated the official end of violence suggests that a wider dynamic of change was already in motion, perhaps partly due to this gradual decline of violence since the mid-1980s and especially in the 1990s, and that the official end of ETA's armed struggle further contributed to this change. Besides, it might be that levels of violence have never been as dramatic as in other countries (e.g., former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland or Israel/Palestine) or that the intensity of violence declined long ago. Another hypothesis could be that the official ending of the political violence happened in the midst of a financial crisis that eventually led to Podemos, softening the ethnic boundaries while reinforcing other alternative social identities (based on the economic situation, globalization, age, etc.).

Finally, and with the intention of highlighting the obstacles and difficulties encountered during the research process, I have to admit, on the one hand, the lack of continuous and uniform assessments by the IA leadership, having to resort to articles of different lengths and characteristics. Likewise, I have to admit that I have had to limit myself to analysing the boundary-making on the part of one of the contending parties in the Basque Conflict, leaving aside how the assessments and perceptions of other parties and social sectors towards the 'Patriotic Left' and its social base have evolved. While this does not invalidate the description of how the boundaries drawn by the IA have evolved, a full-fledged explanation of this process of change needs to take into account other actors, as boundaries are often the result of interaction, not just the result of one party imposing a set of symbolic boundaries on others.

In addition, I would also like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that I intended to add a methodological approach based on posters and other visual elements such as stickers, essential for understanding political agitation and propaganda. Though the graphic material I collected, I intended to visualise symbolic boundaries and the way they are presented. This approach, less mainstream and more innovative in the social sciences, could not be carried out due to the scarce bibliography to carry out a simple and comprehensive visual analysis of symbolic boundaries.

Therefore, this could be a new line of research in order to complete the research, as well as to complete it by studying the boundary-making of the rest of the parties towards the IA.

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VIII. APPENDIX

Table 1: List of the opinion articles and chronicles employed

Date	Media	Context	Title
06/04/1980	Egin	Aberri Eguna	«La prohibicion es la imposicion de una minoria a una mayoría, por las armas»
21/04/1981	Egin	Aberri Eguna	«El Aberri Eguna de hoy parecido al primero del franquismo»
03/04/1983	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Aberri Eguna - Borroka eguna (por la independencia y el socialismo) - KAS
22/04/1984	Egin	Aberri Eguna	el abertzalismo tiene cita en Iruñea - Mesa Nacional de HB
07/04/1985	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Gora aberri eguna! - KAS
20/04/1987	Egin	Aberri Eguna	«Gernika debe ser el símbolo de unidad de todos los vascos que creemos en una Euskadi soberana y libre»
04/04/1988	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Jon Idigoras: «Este Aberri Eguna es un nuevo punto de reflexión para el Gobierno del Estado»
26/03/1989	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Independentzia eta sozialismoaren bidean: Autodeterminazioa -KAS
01/04/1991	Egin	Aberri Eguna	1) HB: «La participación masiva respalda el peso de las reivindicaciones» 2) Patxi Zabaletak egitura politikoak aldatzea demokraziaren betebeharra dela aldarrikatu
12/04/1993	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Askapen soziala eta askapen nazionala uztarturik daude, Idigorasen ustez
04/04/1994	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Landa: «El proyecto de futuro es nuestro»
07/04/1996	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Yo también estaré - Jon Idigoras (Portavoz de HB preso)
30/03/1997	Egin	Aberri Eguna	Euskal Herria jaioko da mundura - HBren Mahai Nazionalekoak
13/04/1998	Egin	Aberri Eguna	«Aberi Egun bateratua, aurrean dugun erronka» - Otegi
05/04/1999	Gara	Aberri Eguna	Otegi advierte a París y Madrid que «nos vamos ya»

24/04/2000	Gara	Aberri Eguna	La izquierda abertzale pidió ambición a PNV y EA para ir a un nuevo escenario
16/04/2001	Gara	Aberri Eguna	Otegi compromete el impulso de EH para lograr un Parlamento Nacional
01/04/2002	Gara	Aberri Eguna	Otegi llama a «trabajar como pueblo por encima de intereses partidistas»
21/04/2003	Gara	Aberri Eguna	Cerca de 14.000 personas secundan la marcha de Iruñea contra el fascismo
17/04/2005	Gara	Election campaign event. Basque elections 2005 in Iruña	Batasuna indica a Zapatero que «sin Nafarroa no hay solución»
26/05/2007	Gara	Election campaign event. Municipal elections and elections to the General Councils 2007	ANV critica en un abarrotado Labrit a quienes «sólo piensan en poltronas»
05/07/2008	Ezkerabertzalea.info	Failed 'Plan Ibarretxe'	Comparecencia masiva de la Izquierda Abertzale el 5 de Julio
12/03/2009	Gara	Post-election	Díez dice que el mapa postelectoral debe acelerar la apuesta soberanista
07/09/2010	Ezkerabertzalea.info	Assessment by the IA of ETA's announcement of the cessation of its armed actions	Valoración de la Izquierda Abertzale del anuncio de ETA de cese de sus acciones armadas
29/10/2011	Ezkerabertzalea.info	Political event	Gehiengo independentista eta ezkertiarraren uholdea dator
07/03/2012	Ezkerabertzalea.info	Response to statements made by Basagoiti (PP)	La Izquierda Abertzale considera que las declaraciones de ayer de Basagoiti están fuera de lugar
14/05/2014	Gara	Electoral event (European elections 2014)	Juaristi anima a un «voto rupturista» con el Estado
24/09/2016	Gara	Electoral event (Basque Government 2016)	Otegi: «El asalto a los cielos se va a construir aquí en estos cuatro años»
20/11/2018	Sortu.eus	Demonstration, anniversary of the assassinations of Santi Brouard and Josu Muguruza	El PSOE debe reconocer el daño causado
15/04/2019	Sortu.eus	Response to the demonstrations by	Provocación ultra

		Ciudadanos, PP and Vox in the Basque Country	
04/01/2021	Sortu.eus	Response for being charged with crimes against the crown, for the 12 October action	Vamos a tumbar el régimen del 78

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2: List of Sociometers employed

Year	Month	Edition of the Basque Sociometer
1996	July	2
1997	June	4
1998	June	7
2000	March	12
2001	June	16
2002	July	19
2003	August	22
2004	April	24
2005	March	27
2006	August	31
2007	June	34
2008	March	36
2009	April	40
2010	December	44
2011	May	45
2012	June	49
2013	June	52
2014	June	55
2015	June	58
2016	July	61
2017	July	64
2018	June	67
2019	June	70
2020	March	72
2021	June	73
2022	March	76

Source: Own elaboration.