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Programa de Doctorado en Derechos Humanos: Retos Éticos, Sociales y Políticos

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PhD thesis directed by Dr. Pedro J. Oiarzabal and Dr. María Silvestre Cabrera

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To Mariana Parra, my love, my partner, for always been there for me.

EMIGRANTES

Emigrantes, xentes nuesas,
dexanon la sua tierrina,
sua casa, padres, harmanos,
vecinos, xentes amigas.
Pa un mundu nuevu ya ricu
a trabachar tous diban
medrosos, pero buscando
dineiros ya mechor vida.
¡Muitos, muitos s'embarcaron
ya qué poucos volverían
al valle onde nacienon,
cudntu d'él s'alcordarían.
No puertu de Buenos Aires
si puxeran xuntiquinas
Ilagrimas de tous ellos
regueirinos correrían.

Eva González

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Abstract

My research aims at exploring and analysing in depth the current ideological and political relationships between diasporas and their homelands, through the specific case-study of the Basque diaspora, in this case, in Argentina, and its non-state European homeland. My interest focuses on the pro-independence *Abertzale* (Patriotic or nationalist, in the Basque language) and leftist ideology and its institutionalization as exhibited by a segment of the population in the Basque society as well as by certain groups in the Basque-Latin America diaspora. As observed, certain individuals and groups in the Basque diaspora in Argentina shared a similar ideology as the one present in the Basque Country, and which I can relate to the Basque pro-independence leftist movement, the so-called *Izquierda Abertzale*, understood as a movement that is supporter of Basque nationalism and at the same time is of left-wing ideology (socialist, Marxist, social-democrat, etc).

Particularly, these diaspora groups have a prominent and active presence on cyberspace, forming a sort of ideological online (and networked) communities. Also, these groups gather a large political and ideological spectrum, despite having a bigger penetration among the so-called *Izquierda Abertzale* individuals. My interest lies on understanding the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs), in particular the internet, play in the establishment and development of politically engaged groups within the Basque diaspora in Argentina and the relationships established with similar groups in the Basque Country, understood as the provinces that lie within Spain and France.

This research will deepen the knowledge on the Basque diaspora in Latin America, while seeking to explain or highlight the development and contradictions of a significant part of it, by focusing on the political aspects and actions, as well as the ideological aspects of certain groups, and its relationship with the homeland. It will attempt to go beyond the specific case of the Basque diaspora, and in order to evidence the formation of a new political paradigm between non-state diasporas and their homelands due to the impact of the internet and the politics that the emergent technologies might generate. The study of the Basque diaspora-homeland case will attempt to provide a significant contribution to the fields of international relations, diaspora studies and transnationalism studies as well as internet studies and media or communication studies.

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I. Introduction

Since the publication of the seminal book "Amerikanuak" by William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, in 1975, the Basque diaspora has been studied from many different angles. Oscar Álvarez Gila (1996, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2017), César Arrondo (2012), Gloria Totoricagüena (1999, 2004, 2005), José Miguel Aramburu Zudaire (2002), José Manuel Azcona (1999), Mikel Ezkerro (2003), Jesús Ruiz de Gordejuela and Urquijo (2010), Alberto A. Morales (2002), Fernando Muru Ronda (1999), Joseba Zulaika (2004, 2005) among others have exhaustively researched and written about the subject both from the Basque Country as well as from the diaspora itself (altogether with a very particular understanding of their own realities). In addition, Koldo Díaz Bizkarguenaga (2015, 2016), Pedro J. Oiarzabal (2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013), Iñaki Arzoz and Andoni Alonso (2003) have focused on the 'cyber' aspect of such diaspora, contributing to broaden the understanding of Basques inside and outside the homeland.

The present thesis aims at contributing with the study of the Basque diaspora from an outsider perspective. As a non-Basque, I aim at gathering the different perspectives and points of view of those immersed both in the Basque culture (inside and outside the Basque Country) as well as in Basque studies and use this knowledge to explain how the Basque left-wing nationalists at the diaspora (specifically in Argentina) communicate with their ideological peers in the homeland and how internet is used in general on their daily political lives as well as an identity maintenance instrument/tool.

With an bibliographical review, as well as with the results of a field trip to Argentina in 2015 and interviews collected during the PhD period, I seek to present a thesis that might contribute for the advancement of the study area, highlighting the history of the Basque diaspora towards Argentina, focusing on the conflicts within the Basque clubs (the focus point of the Basque diasporic identity), leaning on different theoretical perspectives, from communication to (ethno)nationalist studies and cyberculture and also relying on comparative study of other diasporas and their use of online communication tools, and debating the role of internet on the constructions/maintenance of a Basque diasporic identity.

All of this in order to pave the way for presenting the history of Basque pro-independence leftist movement, the so-called *Izquierda Abertzale*. Groups such as *Jo Ta Ke Rosario* (Non Stop Rosario), *Askatasunaren Bidea* (Path towards the Independence -*AB*), *Red Independentistak*

(Pro-Independence Network), *Asociación Diaspora Vasca (*Basque Diaspora Association -*ADV), Euskal Herriaren Lagunak (*Friends of the Basque Country -*EHL)*, *Diaspora Borrokan* (Fighting Diaspora -*DB*), *A Casa/Etxera* (Back [to] Home), *Eusko Alkartasuna* (Basque Solidarity -*EA*), *Akelarre Kultur Taldea* (Akelarre Cultural Group) and *Foro de Debate de la Diaspora Vasca en America* (Debate Forum of the Basque Diaspora in America) will be analysed in depth, as well as their discourses, their connection and influence over homeland politics and how internet plays a role on their daily struggle.

> Basque patriots are abertzales, a status not defined by birth but by performance: an abertzale is one who actively participates in the political struggle for an independent Basque nation with its own distinctive culture. You are not born abertzale. You make yourself one (MacClancy, 1988:17)

It is important to note that such groups are inserted in a scenario of Basque (moderate) nationalist hegemony within the associative structures of the diaspora - as it will be shown in Chapter 2. Indeed, the institutional structure of the Basque diaspora, i.e, the *Euskal etxeak*, or Basque Clubs have been hegemonised by members, sympathisers and supporters of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) from the 1930's onward. Consequently, the analysed groups' struggle lies within the limits of the PNV's agenda as they will propose a different and somewhat innovative pro-independence agenda of international solidarity added with Marxist elements. The aforementioned groups add a 'militant component' to the diaspora, bringing an alternative discourse and a new form of engagement on Basque politics and also on the way ethnic identity is perceived - nor only as something a-historical, but as a living phenomenon with constant need of reproduction and political in itself, in other words, they help shaping the Basque identity adding a militant component updating it, bringing it to a real life, posing real problems and questions rather than just allowing it to reproduce inside the home as something static.

To some extent there is a reproduction of some of homeland dynamics of (re)construction of national identity in a tiny country and/or surrounded by other agents of diverse (ethnic) identity(ies) within a clear ideological dispute for the hegemony of the minds of members of said ethnic group and its institutions.

Particularly, these diaspora groups have (or had) a prominent and active presence on cyberspace, forming a sort of ideological networked communities. Groups such as the *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak* are mainly solidarity groups, but with close ties with Basques in the Basque

Country. On the other hand, groups like *Independentistak* focus on more than solidarity related activities, in taking an active part on the discussions and on the desired route for independence. Also these groups gather a large political and ideological spectrum, despite having a bigger penetration among the so-called *Izquierda Abertzale* individuals. Also, diaspora-born-groups like *Jo Ta Ke* from Rosario, Argentina, or the *Asociación Diaspora Vasca* will also play a major role on the analysis proposed on this research as well as other groups and organisations that have used or are currently using social media tools as a way of communication, activism and as an identity tool.

Consequently, I am also interested in understanding the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs), including the internet and the World Wide Web (WWW), play in the establishment of these online communities and the relationships established with similar groups in the Basque Country.

Online communities are symbolical communities where members connect themselves through symbolical exchanges and not by face-to face (physical) interaction. They are also social aggregations or online meeting points that emerge from and at the internet based on common interests rather than fixed boundaries or territorial limits (Lemos, 2002) although in the Basque case have a source that also goes back to the history and culture/traditions of this people. Also, as Recuero (2001, 2002) affirms, virtual or online communities have symbolical frontiers that are not concrete in an abstract space that is, nevertheless, limited, with a sense of place and virtual locus, meaning that it is a limited place on the cyberspace where individuals can meet to establish social relationship.

This thesis lies within the fields of international relations and diaspora studies. The study of the socio-political/ideological relationships established between diasporas with their homelands constitute a fundamental body of literature (see, for example, Connor 1993; Esman 1986; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Koinova 2010; Panossian 1998; Safran 1991; Shain 1999; Shain and Barth 2003; Sheffer 1986a, 1986b, 2003, 2012; Cohen 1997; and Tölölyan 1996). By exploring the Basque case, by also analysing its digital dimension, I attempt to understand the complex relationships between a diaspora and its non-state homeland from a transnational and comparative approach as well as the ways that certain Basque diaspora groups

relate to similar ideological groups in the Basque society, and construct the ideas of a Basque nation and a homeland.

For the achievement of such research we will make use of theories such as those of transnationalism (Vertovec, 2001; Appadurai, 1997, Elkins, 1997), imagined communities (Anderson, 2005), long distance nationalism (Anderson, 1992), deterritorialisation (Ortiz 1999, 2004, Haesbaert, 2002, 2004), among others. This is the first research that explores in deep the study of the Basque diaspora case and its ideological institutionalisation and its projection to the internet, while helping to illuminate other similar cases.

For the fulfilment of the objectives set out I will discuss in depth different concepts of nation, nationalism, (ethnic) identity and diaspora in the first chapter. In the second chapter I will describe the history of the Basque diaspora focusing in Argentina, having as a reference the traditional diaspora institutions, such as the *Euskal etxeak*. In the third chapter I will analyse a set of key concepts related to the internet and the formation of online communities, such as the concept of the digital country and the so-called third space while also giving factual examples of online mobilisations for the Basque cause.

Finally, in the fourth chapter I will present a series of political groups and movements and the result of the interviews I made both in Argentina and the Basque Country, seeking to not only to depict their history and development, but also to insert them into the diaspora's reality and their relevance not only to Basques, but also as an object of study to a wider field of study on politically engaged minorities and diasporas.

II. Methodology

For the present research I predominantly use the qualitative perspective. According to Richardson (1989), the qualitative methodology requires more time and more effort for the goals to remain clear until results can be reached, yet the idea is not to lose the human component, not to just reduce feelings and perceptions (as well as history) to numbers and statistic, but to construct based upon the definition of concepts and not just on data recompilation. The main idea is to, through interviews with selected members of a handful of nationalist groups, be able to reach a conclusion, also through a holistic perspective, having as a goal the understanding of the different phenomenon surrounding the study.

That is why I have proposed a series of open and closed questions, such as "your group use social media tools in order to communicate with similar groups at the homeland"; Or "internet is relevant for political action and identity maintenance in the diaspora"? "Through such usage of social media tools, your group intend to influence on political decisions of the homeland"? "Your organisation has influence over the decisions of similar groups at the homeland"? "How is the relationship between your group and other similar groups at the diaspora"? "How does your group use social media"? Also, "is there a diaspora conscious of its role and acting politically as such"?

The initial proposal was to research left-wing *Abertzale* groups from all over Latin America, but given the time and resources available, I decided to focus on Argentina, a country with not only the largest number of identifiable and identified groups close to the Basque nationalist left-wing ideology, but also with greater political activity linked to the Basque question - as well as possibly the largest community of Basque descendants throughout the region with ancient roots and a notably organised diaspora, with the largest number of Basque associations[1], as well as with a federation, FEVA (Federation of Basque-Argentine Entities), founded in 1955.

The Basque diaspora in Argentina has a remarkable diversity of political organisations, yet some of these organisations continue to be little studied, and from this arose the interest in changing the traditional focus from the diaspora hegemonic institutions, such as the Basque associations, and seek to understand the history of smaller groups, some ephemeral - many no

[1] Also "Basque clubs" will be used indistinctively throughout the thesis.

longer in activity -, their development, relationship and contacts with groups of similar ideology in the homeland. Although large, only a fraction of the Basque diaspora in Argentina effectively participates in the activities of the Basque associations and other hegemonic institutions, and this is reflected in the activity and even in the composition of groups of the Basque nationalist left, whose members often participate in more than one organisation at the same time and political activities are often jointly organised.

For Gil (2008), the case study is a way to outline the research, where a case is studied as a whole inside a context or a period previously defined. I spent a month interviewing Basque activists in Buenos Aires, Rosario and La Plata (all of them in Argentina) from June to July of 2015 in order to perform a deep and exhaustive study of different Basque organisations as to have a more detailed knowledge of them. Also, I have surveyed those individuals that could not be interviewed on site and performed a series of informal interviews with those specific individuals online. A total of 10 representatives of different groups were interviewed or surveyed for this research, representing 11 different organisations, collectives and movements from Argentina and from the Basque Country

As mentioned above, the Basque nationalist left environment in Argentina is reduced, and sometimes individuals who do not necessarily profess such ideology end up participating in such groups or in their activities as a way of politicising the diaspora beyond what is common to traditional institutions. In this way, we speak of perhaps only a few dozens highly engaged individuals plus a universe of few hundred irregular members, although these estimates may be over optimistic. Their quantification is highly difficult as there is no evidence of the existence of any membership list.

Therefore, one might consider that only 10 structured interviews with different members of Basque and Basque-Argentine political organisations are not enough to present a broad picture. However, given the small size of the critical mass effectively engaged in such groups, it is possible to say that I interviewed, even with the scarcity of resources and other difficulties already explained, most of the prominent members of the left-wing nationalist Basque diaspora, reaching nearly 100% of the identified groups and their representatives.

I also counted with the collaboration of other activists and academics, as well as I carried out extensive analysis of bibliography and online material of different groups to be able to

produce the current thesis. For the transcription as well as for most of the bibliographical collection I used Atlas.ti, a qualitative research tool where I was able to use codes or tags in order to map theoretical frameworks, key concepts and highlight important elements of articles read and interviews made.

I encountered some difficulties throughout the process, such as meeting with all the individuals I planned interviewing - it was not possible to go to other cities other than those already mentioned in order to conduct more personal interviews. Another difficulty was to have an initial contact with some groups without the need for third party mediation, because there is still a certain distrust of outsiders given the militancy character of some of the groups that, for example, focus on the release of what they call Basque political prisoners, among other sensitive political issues. In fact, one of the groups, A Casa/Etxera, refused to answer any questions and it took over two years to secure a meeting with a representative from Askapena.

Another great difficulty was often to rely on the memory of the interviewees (sometimes contradictory information was presented), since much of the material (of propaganda, of internal debates, etc) of several groups was found in internet pages that no longer exist. Also, not all groups kept with themselves all the material they produced while active.

Aside from the field trip to Argentina, I lived for four years in the Basque Country, where I attended to, as an observer, various activities of the Basque nationalist left and close-linked groups, as well as held informal conversations with various members of the Basque nationalist left and participated in activities of groups such as Gure Esku Dago or Red Independentistak, as well as participated in the VI Congress of Basque Collectivities Abroad, in 2015, sponsored by the Basque Autonomous Community government.

The first step of the research was the careful revision of the theoretical references, the second was to map all the different groups that would be studied and investigated at the diaspora and which of such groups (or leaders of such groups) would be interviewed and then the next step, the third, was the field research itself, that took place in 2015 in a fieldtrip to Argentina, and subsequent e-mail and social media exchanges for further questions and debate. The fourth step was the long process of sorting and figuring out all the material collected along more careful revision of theoretical references. A fifth step was the process of informal interviews and search for documentation in the Basque Country itself, especially during 2016, in order to support and

clarify the material collected during the field research. To perform all the steps, a thorough review of the bibliographical material was carried out.

III. Choices, delimitations and limitations

The first choice of my doctoral research was to investigate the Latin America Basque diaspora as a whole, but time and financial limitations made it impossible, thereby focusing on Argentina became my central point of study. However, this was not exactly a problem, as most of left wing Basque nationalist groups with known activity are and were active in Argentina with only a handful on other countries of the region, as mentioned before. Such groups are very diverse, but have in common the struggle for the independence of the Basque Country, as well as they express solidarity for the Basque armed group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) prisoners in different degrees.

But aside from such characteristics, they diverge in almost anything, from internal organisation to how they develop their activities and the impacts they expect to have on homeland politics. The chosen groups, collectives and initiatives for this research were *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak/Askapena, Jo Ta Ke* Rosario, *Askatasunaren Bidea*, *Foro Debate Diaspora Vasca, Asociación Diaspora Vasca, A Casa/Etxera, Diaspora Borrokan, Independentistak, Eusko Alkartasuna (Alkartetxe)* and *Akelarre Kultur Taldea*.

As a note, *A Casa/Etxera*, from Buenos Aires, was identified, but all efforts to contact members of the group were not fruitful and I had to rely on the scarce information found online. This brings us to one of the biggest limitations of difficulties of the task imposed, breaking the barrier of mistrust and suspicion, considering that some groups or members of such groups are or were persecuted at some point or were under police vigilance or could face persecution due to their activities, sometimes considered radical, both in Argentina and Spain.

Also, it took over a year to schedule a meeting with a representative from Askapena (Liberation, an internationalist Basque organisation), in the Basque Country, and countless e-mails and phone calls for and from different individuals until an interview could be arranged. The political climate in the Basque Country, despite ETA ceasefire in 2011, is still volatile and political persecutions by the Spanish government are still a reality, meaning that individuals in the Basque Country with connections to the left-wing A*bertzale* groups tend to be very careful and suspicious.

It is also important to note that despite the fact that such a research might be relevant for the diaspora studies field as a whole, it has its limitations, such as the small (but quite significant) sample used to substantiate the research due to the small number not only of groups, but also of members of such groups - *Jo Ta Ke* Rosario never had more than 5-10 active members -, as well as the fact that some groups such as *Askatasunaren Bidea* organise itself not only as a political group, but also work as an alternative *Euskal Etxea* (Basque association or social-cultural club of migrant origin) and groups such as *Independentistak* or Eusko Alkartasuna in the diaspora do not declare themselves as part of the "*Abertzale* left" world, rather they prefer to gather people from different backgrounds, though an important part, if not the majority, of *Independentistak* members belong to such a political field.

A decision was made to analyse not only left-wing *Abertzale* (or patriotic) groups, but also those who could be considered part of the same "environment," also due to the fact that at the diaspora sometimes ideological lines that are clear in the homeland, turn a bit blur, and most of the times there is an overlapping of memberships to different groups with even different main ideological assumptions.

Even knowing the limitations of the small sample of interviewees - although it is not small in itself considering, as explained on the methodology section, the small number of members of such groups overall -, this work is valuable in order to understand the online relationship of diaspora and homeland groups, to extrapolate the dynamics these (and others) groups develop online. The main idea was to interview those individuals who would better represent the aforementioned groups that, even in many cases with a horizontal structure, always had one or two people who would stand out and who can be seen as leaders, even if not officially. However, concerning the sample, it was possible to verify through Oiarzabal's (2010, 2013) extensive research on the Basque diaspora webscape many common points with his findings concerning the general opinions of those interviewed within the large Basque diaspora online.

Chapter 1 - Media and Nation

1. Discussion

Diasporas have historically occupied a secondary role in the study of international relations, despite the fact that international migrations are a subject of great significance - even more now with the massive migration of Syrian refugees towards Europe - though in the past 20 years the subject has gained more relevance. To Varadarajan (2010: 6) “much of this literature has generally tended to converge on understanding and explaining diasporas as disrupting the narrative of ‘politics as usual’.” According to the International Migration Organisation (IMO, 2016), around 3.3% of the world population (224 million people) live in a country different from the one they were born.

But once those migrants settle, create roots and their families develop in a new country - and there is the formation of a diasporic identity that bond together the members of this group -, the focus of study usually shifts towards money remittances and the diaspora as propaganda or pressure groups focused on the hostland. Generally, the political aspects of diasporas, such as active players in homeland politics from abroad, received less attention by scholars. Stuart Hall (1993, 2003), Paul Gilroy (1993), Arjun Appadurai (1997, 1998) or Homi Bhabha (1994) view diasporas as hybrid subjects who challenge the very logic of nation states and state nationalism while considering diasporas the result of trauma (expulsion, forced migration, slavery, exile, etc) within a post-colonial orientation.

Such viewpoint under-emphasise the role of diasporas in reinforcing (state) nationalism and nation-state itself as it disguises or covers the role of states in utilising diasporic communities for nationalistic projects, what Varadarajan (2010) calls “domestic abroad,” where states “are actively involved in constituting sections of their diasporas not just as part of a larger deterritorialised nation, but a new constituency that is connected to, and has claims on, the institutional structures of the state” (2010: 5).

It is possible to affirm that diasporas both reinforce and weakens states and their nationalistic agendas depending on a set of conditions and intentionality. In the case of stateless nations’ diasporas, they tend to weaken states’ nationalist agendas - in some cases even by supporting militant groups, such as the case of the Kurdish (Hassanpour, 1992, 1996, 2003, Can, 2007, Smets and Segul, 2016), the Tamil (Tekwani, 2003; Wayland, 2004) and in some degree

the Basque diasporas -, even though they might reinforce agendas of political and pressure groups, as well as of subnational/sub-state entities.

Also, Cohen (1997) and Sheffer (2003) consider that diasporas have awareness of the capacity for collective political action, while migrants may never reach this notion or simply choose not to act as social actors who politically influence their homeland. Aside from being manipulated by states, diasporas can also act politically towards goals such as the constructions of new states (in the case of diasporas from stateless minorities), both being proxies of political parties or independent from them.

> The sense of belonging to a common homeland, crucial to the formation of diasporas, does not automatically emerge from the fact that members of emigrant communities trace their journey to a common place of origin. Rather, it is socially as well as politically constructed through the interactions among members of a community, through their being marked as different in their host societies, and through the institutionalization of their relationship with the homeland (Varadarajan, 2010: 9).

Ehrkamp (2005) refers to a "transnational belonging," the desire by members of a diaspora to help those back home whose "contacts and networks developed to achieve this goal result in the creation of transnational social spaces" (Can, 2007: 129). Also, Glick Schiller debates on the concept of long-distance nationalism, a "set of identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral homeland" (2005: 570).

This transnational belonging is based on the assumption of the existence of multiple ties and interactions linking individuals (in our case, the Basques) and/or institutions across the borders of states (Vertovec, 1999, 2001) influenced, as well, by new technologies, new medias (from radio and TV to the internet), and the expansion of telecommunication. With the use of such technologies distances are reduced to almost nothing, real time presence becomes a common reality (Virilio, 1997, 1999) and new spaces, transnational spaces are formed in which social, political and economic relationships become borderless, in fact, they transcend borders and encompass both home and host societies (Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc, 1993).

To Elkins, transnationalism can be defined as:

> The ability to add identities rather than being forced to substitute one for another; multiple identities and "cross-pressures" to enhance rather than inhibit one's options; to anchor one's

> uniqueness in the complex constellation of communities to which one chooses to make a commitment; the opportunity to be different people in different settings- these implications of communities in the unbundled world appear to be mutually reinforcing elements of a broad syndrome which fits our current self-image as autonomous individuals and stands in marked contrast to older notions of rank, status, and duty within an overarching community which claims all our loyalties . . . each individual is, in effect, a community of the communities individually accepted or chosen (Elkins, 1997:150).

Whereas to Featherstone, transnationalism:

> "is the capacity to shift the frame, and move between varying range of foci, the capacity to handle a range of symbolic material out of which various identities can be formed and reformed in different situations, which is relevant in the contemporary global situation. (…) There has been an extension of cultural repertoires and an enhancement in the resourcefulness of groups to create new symbolic modes of affiliation and belonging" (Featherstone 1995: 110).

We can find examples of politically engaged diasporas within the Kurds (Hassanpour, 1992, 1996, 2003, Can, 2007, Smets and Segul, 2016), the Tamil (Tekwani, 2003; Wayland, 2004), the Uyghur (Yitzhak, 2012; Nur-Muhammad et al, 2013) and Palestinian (Baeza, 2011, 2014; Aouragh, 2008, 2011, Ben-David, 2012) - among others - communities (of long distance nationalists), as well as the Basque,[2] where individuals living outside their homeland (whether from the first, second or third generations onward) play a political role that goes beyond representing national interests abroad (Varadarajan, 2010). Quite the contrary, they play (or at least try to) a role of influencing homeland and host nation politics with a set of goals from the support of liberation groups, to lobby and political and ideological actions as independent and self-ware groups.

As an example, the Iranian diaspora played a significant role throughout the 20th century over the politics of Iran. According to Heikal (1981), the Sha's return to power led to the formation of the initial diaspora, with over 50 thousand Iranians living outside the country, up to 150 thousand in 1979, the year of the Islamic Revolution, and since then the diaspora has been organising politically. The Mujahiddin-e Khalk, founded in 1965, is a political and armed organisation founded by Iranian exiles that advocates the violent overthrow of the government of

[2] Those are examples of stateless diasporas. Other examples of diasporas with a state are the Armenians (Gevorgyan and Bagiyan, 2015; Akin, 2011), Iranians (Alinejad, 2010; Carlisle and Patton, 2013), among other authors.

Iran, first against the Shah, then against Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, being still active as of 2017 with headquarters in Paris and are an important group within the political Iranian diaspora (Clark, 2007).

The Kurds are a good example of a stateless diaspora, according to Can (2007:120), "due to activities outside Turkey, the Kurdish cause evolved from a domestic Turkish matter to an international cause, thus bringing global attention on the day-to-day lives of Kurds living in Turkey". The Kurdish diaspora, a stateless nation involved in conflicts not only with Turkey, but also with Iraq, Iran and deep into the Syrian conflict, has played an important role in creating awareness as well as lobbying for the Kurdish cause specially through modern media (Hassanpour, 1992, 1996, 2003) and the internet (Can, 2007, Smets and Segul, 2016).

> Internet played a significant role in the mobilization of diasporic Kurds, as the mission to promote the Kurdish cause would not have been as successful without the adaptation of new modes of communication. Aside from the new communication methods used by the population, the geographical location of the diaspora further helped their cause: as Turkey looks towards Europe for a brighter future, diaspora Kurds‟ geo-strategic location in relation to Europe has been helpful in the effort to mobilize at the level of both the European Union and the nation and/or state level throughout Europe itself (Can, 2007: 120).

With internet, such mobilisations become easier and, maybe, more effective in terms of awareness and engagement as internet can be understood as a "new space to express opinions, share ideas and broadcast news" (Can, 2007:130). Donya Alinejad (2010) states that internet challenges boundaries and enables diasporas to have an impact on their host country (as well as on their homeland, I would add) and she argues that blogging and engaging online serves as both political activity itself and as the impetus for political activity.

Internet, as the mass media, creates a sense of global connection (Naghibi, 2009), giving the community a platform for political engagement and action and, according to Can (2007:130), internet "has become the weapon of choice for diasporic communities" and "activist groups, within ethnic diasporas, have the potential to become a strategic asset their home countries and territories can draw upon to help them achieve regional politico-military objectives" (cited in Tekwani, 2003: 175-6).

> The key role of mass media in the imagination and construction of nationhood returns time and again, often in reference to the nation as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) finding its origins in the spread of print capitalism (Smets, 2016: 1).

Internet allows for broader reach of diasporic publications whether newspapers, blogs, Facebook pages, etc, but it is important to note that it also allows for the same disagreements and conflicts found before its widespread use. In other words, the ideological conflicts and disagreements found throughout history, written in newspapers and magazines, just take a new form online, reaching a wider audience, but still reproducing partial views or partial political positions. As mentioned by Heitor Loureiro (2015: 1-2), writing about the newspapers of the Armenian diaspora in Brazil, such media reproduced "divergent ideas" and there was no consensus of a project for Armenia or for the diaspora itself. Such conflicts were and are (re)produced at the Basque diaspora both online and offline on a daily basis as well.

The apparent lack of broader offline discussion spaces and dialogue among different ideological positions seems to be represented in a similar fashion online, as well as the available dialogue windows are indeed reproduced online - with the possibility of reaching wider and even new audiences.

For Romano (2002) and Can (2007), internet allows dispossessed and stateless groups to redefine themselves and challenge dominant states, helping on the process of (re)construction of identities. It goes beyond mass media, as it allows for instantaneous, borderless, multi-dimensional and multi directional connections. On the one hand, internet has the potential to strengthen democracy and democratic processes within and beyond states (Rheinlgond, 1993). On the other hand, it has the potential to threat governments and regimes (Tekwani, 2003), as well as has the potential to impose a state ideology over diasporas (Varadarajan, 2010). In sum, internet provides multiple forms of engagement, multi directional ways of and to pressure, convince, attack and defend states, minorities, governments and ideologies, as well as work as a bridge for diasporas and their homelands.

As an example of online engagement and political struggle, in 2016, in a Reuters article, Isabel Coles (2016) wrote that "Iraq's Kurds have declared independence in cyberspace with a

new domain name that has provoked the ire of a neighbour hostile to their aspirations,"[3] a move that Catalonia had initiated when they obtained their '.cat' domain - a challenge to the Spanish state, which then was coalesced by the top-domain level '.eus' for the Basques.

The Uyghur diaspora, another stateless nation, uses internet (more specifically Facebook) to express "the concerns of diaspora Uyghurs for the political and social issues in motherland" (Nur-Muhammad et al, 2013: 15), such as human rights abuses, oppression, criticism to China's policies towards the Uyghur people, etc, but also as a tool for the (re)construction of their ethnic identity and to demand the independence of "East Turkestan." According to Yitzhak (2012: 302) the websites of the Uyghur diaspora are victims of constant blocking in China and that a "number of these Web sites that existed in 2002 are no longer updated, or accessible, because of routine neglect but probably due to Chinese hacking."

The case of the Tamil diaspora, again a stateless nation, is yet another example of a diaspora playing a key role in supporting homeland groups and institutions (Tekwani, 2003; Wayland, 2004) - in this case the long struggle for the liberation of their nation from Sri Lanka and the support for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelan (LTTE), active from 1976 to 2009 - and, more interestingly, being to a great extent, the result of the conflict itself.

The Palestinian diaspora is well known for its academic and literary production and also uses the internet as a tool for propaganda, identity maintenance and to act politically, for instance, supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) platform (Ben-David, 2012). Also, the Eritrean diaspora appropriate the internet suggesting "new formulations of citizenship and sovereignty and the ways the nation is imagined as community" (Bernal, 2006: 163).

According to Can (2007), subalternised organisations and groups tend to be among the first to appropriate internet as a tool for (re)construction of identity and propaganda in order to be able to tell themselves their own history and not let states dominate every version of it as a way to overcome the hegemonic discourse (Mbembe, 2003; Vitorino, 2016) - of the state or in the Basque case, the hegemonic discourse of the Basque government and its main political party, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV-EAJ), within traditional associative structures.

[3] Coles, I. (2016, April 14). "Iraq's Kurds declare independence in cyberspace with. krd domain name." Reuters. Retrieved from: http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-kurds-internet-idUSKCN0XB1GG

These associative structures are hegemonised not by a political party linked to the structures of a state, but to a nationalist party of a subnational or sub state entity (the PNV and the Basque Autonomous Government respectively; BAC). The present study focuses on the opposition to this hegemonic party that is not (only) another political party, but a set of organisations both created at the homeland and at the diaspora, with different approaches, methodologies and goals. In other words, what we observe is the tension between a political party hegemonising diasporic structures by using the resources of a subnational government and a set of movements and groups both originating from the diaspora itself and by homeland political groups.

> In November of 1995, Gasteiz (Vitoria), the capital city of the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain, hosted the First World Congress of Basque Collectivities. The fourteen different countries sending delegates were as diverse as Canada, with a few thousand Basques and one formal organization in the making, to Argentina, which boasts of three and one-half million Basques, seventy-two separate Basque organizations, and numerous smaller social clubs. […] Curiously these Basques had more in common than not. Comments from interviews, such as those mentioned above, revealed very similar responses whether from fourth generation Uruguayans, fifth generation Argentineans, first generation Australians, or second generation Belgians; "we are Basques who live outside of the homeland but that does not make us any less Basque." A fourth generation Basque from Peru and a second generation immigrant to Chile agreed with a fifth generation Basque from Uruguay regarding tax policy in the Basque country. Three second generation women, from the United States, Argentina, and Venezuela all carried the same definition of which characteristics are important for the maintenance of Basque identity. Until this Congress, these people had not met each other, nor had any of these organizations ever interacted institutionally with the exception of Argentina with Uruguay. (Totoricagüena, 2000: 11-12)

The Basque diaspora is scattered all over the world, as well as Basque clubs or *Euskal etxeak*, that are present in almost 30 countries,[4] but Argentina, with more than 90 of such institutions, is the country where diaspora politics is stronger and has received the largest number of Basque migrants over the past centuries. It is a fact that especially Uruguay, Chile and Venezuela (in Latin America), the United States and Italy also have the presence of more or less

[4] For a comprehensive list, see: https://www.euskaletxeak.net/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=140andItemid=191 and www.euskaldliaspora.eus

active left wing nationalist political groups, nonetheless, their activities have not been as relevant as in Argentina.

For years, groups such *JO TA KE* Rosario[5] (No Stop Rosario), *Asociación Diaspora Vasca*[6] (Basque Diaspora Association - ADV), the *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak*[7] (Friends of the Basque Country - EHL), the *Red Independentistak*[8] (Pro-Independence Network), *Askatasunaren Bidea*[9] (Path towards the Independence), *A Casa/Etxera* (Back [to] Home), *Foro Debate Diaspora Vasca*[10] (Basque Diaspora Debate Forum), *Diaspora Borrokan*[11] (Fighting Diaspora), among others, have both online and offline, been competing for the space and the minds of the Basques in the Diaspora, promoting a more radical nationalistic agenda, maintaining ties with the Basque Nationalist or *Abertzale* left wing parties in the homeland and spreading support for Basque political prisoners.

> Digital social networks explode a number of possibilities of ways of being together. There is a sociability very marked by the logic of coordinating street actions through the internet itself, from social networks. That is, it has a very large role of coordination of action, be it a social mobilisation, a football match or a cultural action. Profile logic has this potential. […] Of course, this sociability has made our gatherings and actions in the real world, in the off-line

[5] It was founded in the city of Rosario in 2000-1 by members of both the *Zazpirak Bat* and the Navarrese centre. The name is a reference to the Basque Abertzale left slogan "Jo Ta Ke Irabazi Arte," or "Hit hard until the victory." Defunct.

[6] Now defunct, it was founded by Daniel Bilbao in 2000, their main activity as was a newsletter to members of the diaspora and discussion groups in different languages to connect the diaspora. On its blog, inactive since 2006, the description of the group can be found: "There is also a diaspora that has been working for several years in the approach and commitment to Euskal Herria, in which the International Basque Diaspora Association (sometimes just Basque Diaspora Association, or ADV) is located, a group that basically works through email groups. Today it has forums for participation and discussion in Basque, Spanish, French, Portuguese and English, it defines itself as independentist and its objectives are to bring together Basques who want freedom and peace for Euskal Herria, organising them both on the internet and at the local level in their countries of residence, and, this way, disseminate the different aspects of the conflict that confronts the Basque people with the Spanish and French States. ADV also fulfils an important work of informing and denouncing in more than 20 countries where it has active members: Every day the newsletter "Berriak" [News] is published with news from Euskal Herria that allow the diaspora to get a little closer to the real situation of this country."
For more information, see: http://diasporavasca.blogspot.com/

[7] It is part of Askapena's international network, founded in 2010. It is important to notice that the EHL do not consider themselves as a "diasporic group" rather an organisation open to non-Basques, i.e. friends, and that also takes part in purely Argentinean political issues.

[8] They do not declare themselves as "Abertzale left" but most of its members belong to this political spectrum.

[9] It is a movement and a project of an alternative Euskal Etxea.

[10] It was founded in March 2008 by members of other different groups, they promoted debates and dialogue on Basque issues and politics. Their founding members were César Arrondo (from *Eusko Alkartasuna* and Diaspora Borrokan), Santiago Bereciartua (Jo Ta Ke Rosario and Diaspora Borrokan), Jose Domingo Ormaechea (PNV), Mariana Fernandez Castelli (Askatasunaren Bidean and Independentistak) and Gloria Zuazola (Independentistak from Uruguay). The group became the Argentinean section of Independentistak.

[11] It was a hort lived group whose leading members were Santiago Bereciartua and César Arrondo.

> world, also accelerated. […] With the role and the entrance of the web and, consequently, its improvement from the technical point of view, with the emergence of means in which users can connect with each other, and no longer live on community islands, activism multiplies and is intensified in the sense of appreciation of minority discourses (Malini, 2017).

This phenomenon of politically engaged groups within the diaspora is not exclusive of Basques, as mentioned earlier. In different levels of the various governments of Europe, says Can (2007), organisations such as the pan-European Confederation of Kurdish Associations in Europe (Kon-Kurd, in Brussels) or Yek-Kom (Association of Kurdish Organisations in Germany) and Kom-Kar (Yetkiya Komelen Kurdli Elmanya), among others have objectives ranging from "support to Kurdish separatism in turkey to the construction of a pan-Kurdish identity to political think tanks that lead projects on Kurdish human rights" (Can, 2007: 127).

Other diasporic groups have similar organisations defending not only the interests of diaspora members, but also acting on homeland politics with "a common interest in their location of origin and a foundational identity that is rooted in that place which defines an in-group, in spite of the fact that people may or may not have ever personally interacted with one another in real time and space" (Hiller and Franz, 2004: 733).

On the next sections I will present a broad analysis on concepts such as nation, identity, affinity and the role of the press and the internet in the formation, production and reproduction of feelings and linkages. From the first conceptions about identity to imagined communities passing through and debating the notion of public sphere ending on the role of (mass) media to the formation of diasporas and on ethnic maintenance and identity shaping focusing on nations without a state (such as is the case of Basques). I will seek to answer a few questions such as how does the conformation of the nation affect the construction of the state or vice-versa? What is the value and the role of media in the development of the nation? What happens to those nations without state? What happens with those who decide to leave the common territory?

1.1. From Linkages to the Nation: Communication and ethnic differentiation

> The ethnic homeland is far more than territory. As evidenced by the near universal use of such emotionally charged terms the motherland, the fatherland, the native land, the ancestral land, land where my fathers died and, not least, the homeland, the territory so identified becomes imbued with an emotional, almost reverential dimension (Connor 1986: 16).

Ernst Renan (2007) proposes that the nation is a daily plebiscite and susceptible of accession through the will of belonging. It is up to the individual to accept and want to participate and not be forcibly entered and above all show its willingness to establish ties and identity and belonging. Thus, homelands are "politically constructed places toward which the population is territorialized" (Conversi, 2002: 230-231), or the outcome of the "national construction of social space" (William and Smith, 1983).

Connor (1994: 42) defines the nation as a self-differentiating ethnic group. The author postulates the continuity between ethnic and national dimensions and gives emphasis to self-identification, to the psychological realm. The nation is both self-defined as it is externally defined, a process of feedbacks based on subjectivity. In the classic sense, "nation" is a generic idea of political community, a group of people united by natural and eternal ties (language, common history, etc.) and usually within a relatively bounded and contiguous territory.

This desire to belong is by exchanging information based on tensions and rituals of linkages, and is what creates society and its different signs. Communication fosters the bonds that unite us, it allows us to identify ourselves with these symbols and signs creating unique linkages between people: The nation, bound by language, the result of communication and interaction. It is the daily communication that creates bonds or linkages.

In a more objective approach, Josef Stalin (1973) would define nation as simply a stable community with common history, language, territory and a common culture, whereas in a subjective approach, Benedict Anderson (2005) will debate the idea of an imagined community. Such definitions, however, are object of long and heated academic and political debates.

Nation would then be the observation of stronger and significant psychological ties, permeated by common symbols and signs within a territory or at the diaspora. These linkages (or bonds) provide the formation of communities and hence nations. It is both based on common or basic objective elements (such as language, culture, territory, etc), as well as based on subjective elements, such as the idea of a political community sharing a set of elements - being through state imposition, against state imposition or any other means.

Traditionally the idea of nation depicts defined geographic boundaries (not necessarily the ones of states), while nations tend to have their members in touch. The language of a population is spoken in a particular territory and symbols bind together this population.

There are cases of diaspora and separate people from their original nation that, however, identify themselves as part of this group, but even in this case the foundational idea of national sentiment is the same. Only new group members (those born later) do not have this contact with the original community, but share the same signs and symbols (foundational myths). The distance that may separate "original" groups from the diaspora sometimes impose problems to the maintenance of the diasporic identity that tend to lose their language or some other identitary characteristic.

If, on the one hand, Anderson states that the press is the starting point of the nation,[12] Connor (1973), on the other hand, materialises the nation as a tangible social formation on the latter modernity, with compulsory education and the army as tools to forge civic loyalty/patriotism (i.e. state loyalty) and ethnonationalism (i.e. loyalty to the nation) and define identity. In common, nevertheless, it is the notion that communication spreads nationalism. Such views, nevertheless, fail in explaining phenomenons such as the Hebrew/Jewish ethnic community understood as a nation before the so-called modernity, among other examples.

For Anderson, a nation "occurs" when people see themselves as part of the same community beyond the borders of a simple/single village, Connor would add that the nation demands a "sufficient number of people feel threatened by intergroup contact and become aware of their ethnic identity" (Conversi, 2002: 58).

This desire to belong is by exchanging information based on tensions and rituals of linkages, and is what creates society and its different signs, also, according to Connor, as a defence of the groups own identity from outsiders or foreigners. Communication fosters the bonds that unite us, it allows us to identify ourselves with these symbols and signs creating unique linkages between people: The nation, bound by language, is the result of communication and interaction.

It is important to note, as does Smith (2004) that the nation does not necessarily encompasses an ethnic group, being sometimes the sum of different ethnic groups or a same ethnic group might be divided within different nations. This means that one can identify with a specific ethnic group and not to other, but also believe and feel that they are both members of the same nation. As an example, the German-speaking population of Switzerland might not relate as

[12] Supported to some degree by Habermas and the formation of Public Spheres based on the illustrated elites.

an ethnic group to the French-Speaking community, but seem themselves as part of the same Swiss nation. At the same time, they can both identify as members of their ethnic/linguistic group and of the enlarged nation and have different allegiances. Anderson's study of Indonesia presents the same results.

It is possible to think that even with commerce and with some local mobility of the peasants of the Middle Ages (or even before), that this mobility was generally small, restricted to the majority of the population. Some were born and died in the same villages or in the same regions, usually ethnically homogeneous. It is possible to imagine individuals who have never had contact with people of a language different from theirs in all their life and others who have had only sporadic contacts through commerce? If identity is the sum of culture, language, myths, etc, there is a lack of need for self-awareness as to consider a group as an ethnic one - maybe as a passive (ethnic) identity?

The absence of one or more centralising forces that impose a particular language (as through school, for example) is a factor to explain the lack of national self-awareness of ethnic groups (not all of them, however, as the example of the Jews/Hebrews that usually adopted the languages of their host-nations with minor adaptations while maintaining their specific ethnic identity). Self-identification as a different group was not, maybe, always or even generally necessary. Contrary to this assumption, Barth defends that ethnicity "represents the social organisation of cultural differences." To him, self-awareness was necessary:

> More precisely this means that culture is induced in people through experience - so to identify it, we must be able to point to these experiences. We must also accept the following implications: that culture must be constantly generated by the experiences through which learning takes place. So we have to have a focus - not to state that culture is localized in some place, but as a way of identifying where it is being produced and reproduced (Barth, 2005: 16).

Eriksen agrees, adding that ethnicity is relational and situational, and "a property of a relationship between two or several groups, not a property of a group; it exists between and not within groups" (1993:46). To Smith (2004) ethnicity originates before the advent of modern nations (18th century), yet nationalism is a modern phenomenon, Gellner, on the other hand, "champions the view that nations are entirely modem creations-the progeny of industrialism and the state-that more or less fraudulently invent their past to gain a semblance of antiquity and deep roots" (in Eriksen, 1993: 44-5).

It is true that myths and an ancient history can be and are manipulated by ethnic group leaders in order to fabricate a legitimising background for nationalistic inspirations (Hobsbawm, 1984). Nevertheless, it seems a stretch to simply consider any national enterprise as fraudulently invented. Gellner (1983) supports his claim by stating that nations are defined by the existence of a state with a titular ethnic group or the will of the leaders of this ethnic group to have a state of their own.

One can consider that the idea of a French nation was borne due to the intention of Parisian elites to secure a centralised state within defined borders (Brubaker, 1989; Anderson, 2013). However, such a vision would find problems in explaining the existence of other nations including the Basque, the Occitan or the Corsican previous to the French Revolution that were suffocated by the new French nation and since have struggled to survive - and not always having as the main goal the construction of a new state (Higonet, 1980; McDonald, 1989). The same can be evidenced in states like Germany or Italy, both artificially created based on elites' wishes and good examples of nations built after the advent of modernity.[13] Prior the French Revolution, "identity was determined primarily by religion and locality" (Bora, 2015), and mobility was limited.

Once again debating the issue of "identity," to Bhabha (1994), identities can be found on 'interstitial spaces,' in the differences, processes and moments in which differentiation occur form one group to another. Contrary to Bhabha, Cohen (1997:129-30) states that identities are 'building blocks' (language, culture, race, history, etc) that come together to form the structure of identity.

To some extent, both takes can be assumed correct, as identity can be seen as the tension between differences[14] as well as similarities (building blocks) coming together to create a complex (social) structure. In other words, both differences and similarities play a role on the process of identity creation and maintenance, hence, on the formation of nations, "as no person or group can exist in isolation, the maintenance of their identities takes place in constant interaction with the development of the broader society, as well as the natural setting" (Marketa et al, 2010: 35).

[13] In both states one can find countless minorities with ethnic self-awareness and considering themselves as a nation - some with statehood aspirations - such as Venetians, Genovese or Sicilian in Italy or Sorbians and Bavarians in Germany.
[14] As can be seen in Elias and Scotson (2000).

If it is a fact that one cannot speak of "nation" for relations within the same village, among acquaintances (Anderson, 2005), then there one must be careful to speak of pre-modern nations, or at least before the advance of (more) modern communications, but it is impossible to simply close that door. As noted by Conversi (2002) there is a paradox in the idea of a nation as the result of a process of self-awareness and somewhat perennial, and the denial of even the possibility of such existing before modernity.

Indeed, however, that the professionalization of armies eventually exacerbated tensions, although in many cases these (as in the case of the United Kingdom, UK) were divided into ethnic/national lines (French, 2005). There was patriotism regarding the UK, but a certain nationalism about divided ethnic groups. School and a centralised education will further increase such tensions.

But at the end, the point is to understand how much more or less centralised pressure existed on peasants counting on (more or less) centralised government, army, and so on. Finally, it is customary to consider the Peace of Westphalia and later the French Revolution as milestones in the effective centralisation of new-born States (Croxton, 1999), henceforth existing the suppression of customs and languages of minorities, and thus leading to the creation or even exacerbation of perception of insiders and outsiders, and from there one can consider start to the process of self-awareness of ethnicities and consequent emergence of "peripheral" nationalisms.

That is, the process of ethnic/national self-awareness is partly the result of an objective situation of oppression or restriction of freedom (freely practising their language, culture, etc.) and the attempt of amalgamation which is, in general, of modernity or at least the period immediately preceding it. Capitalism is also an engine of amalgamation, in that it needs a process of centralisation as a means of managing trade, of managing the economy. Curiously, capitalism is also, in a later period, an element of exacerbation of ethnic differences (Rata, 2003) (customisation, diversification, internationalisation, outsourcing, etc.).[15]

When we talk about 'other,' of course, we deal with individuals who are not part of our group that have language, customs, symbols and different signs in 'our,' or even not 'identify'

[15] It is between the 18th and the 20th centuries that all or the main elements (capitalism, centralisation, state, centred education/schools, permanent armies) propitiators or at least facilitators of the emergence of nationalism as resistance are present or take on greater strength and appear together. See: Richmond, 1984; Calhoun, 1993; Benedict Richard, Anderson and Kligman, 1992; Llobera, 1994.

with our symbols and signs. “Symbols live longer than men” (Pross in Baitello, 2005: 106) and, without any doubt, they integrate or attract people around them. The identification of an individual with the symbols and images of their nation is that what, first, form the national bonds (Tsavkko Garcia, 2015a).

The signification of these symbols form linkages between different people, the creation of values that permeate these symbols - in the case of nations, are the heroic battles, the shared suffering and joys, the common history, and furthermore, the language. The symbols, however, need constant updating, i.e., the constant renew aloof its meaning and constant interaction between individuals. Advertisement extolling the historical origin, language and national culture are examples of well-finished updates of national symbolism (Eriksen, 1993; Billig, 1995; Elgenius, 2010; Tsavkko Garcia, 2015).

There is a double movement. On the one hand, elites who so much seek to amalgamate different ethnicities with different levels of self-recognition around the nation-state (be it *uni* or *pluri* or multinational) as well as forge states effectively in ethnonational lines, and on the other of peasants and petty-bourgeoisie who either submit to these arrangements, accepting more or less passively the process of acculturation and amalgamation[16] or revolt, forming the first nationalist (or ethnonationalist) movements in the nineteenth century.[17]

It is important to conduct a detailed bibliographical review work with the presentation and analysis of several key concepts in order to clarify the debate we shall see later on, when dealing with Basque identity and even more with the Basque diasporic identity and how are the tensions and processes of (re)construction of this identity with the contribution of media tools and social media. Therefore, I will also go deeper into concepts that help us better understand the mechanisms by which the national identity of individuals and collectives operate.

For Connor (1994) the ideology of nationalism is borne of the marriage of self-awareness with popular sovereignty, the latter being the offspring of the French Revolution. Therefore, in his opinion, one cannot speak of “nation” before this moment, since not all members of a group, not all individuals, would have the minimum conditions to see themselves as part of a nation, for

[16] The French case is emblematic in the matter of amalgamation and the United Kingdom in resistance even within the state.
[17] Spain is a great example, see Núñez Seixas, 1999.

not existing the thesis of popular sovereignty, but a division between peasants/bourgeoisie and nobility, with religion as a fundamental pillar.

I would debate the thesis of popular sovereignty and the necessity of all (quantitative of majority) to have self-awareness. Italy is a good example, since it became a nation because of the interest of the elites before the people were aware of it. Connor seems to be satisfied with the use of the term 'nation' only for a closed and completed process of self-awareness, discarding or disregarding the process to that end, and the influence of the elites in the process[18] - to what Jürgen Habermas might come in hand.

Perhaps we should not think of the nation as necessarily a mass movement, a massive (process of) self-recognition, not just as a whim of elites, but as a process that carries a little of both, fluid, liquid (Bauman, 2004) and ever-changing.[19] Sometimes revolutionary, other times a swift elitist process, as well as the result of colonial settlement and different historical processes.[20] The reality is that nations matter (Calhoun, 2007), and that "the nation is of continuous relevance" (Smets, 2016: 1).

According to Tajfel (1981, 1982), someone's identity would be the result of less deep personal psychology and more a perception individuals have of themselves in comparison or opposition to others. A process of construction of identity that is more rooted in social relationship(s) rather than on purely ethnic/historical concepts and is based on positive distinctiveness of their own group compared to others, in other words, the (ethic) identification to a group is seen as prestigious, with it comes a status within a specific group.

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[18] Cruset (2011a: 3-4) criticises what she calls a "civilist" take on nationalism: "For the civilist nationalists the precondition to any nation is the 'country.' The national state, which is safeguarding the nation, consolidates the national space and regulates the life of citizens. A final feature of civilian nations is their commitment to impose a public culture and a 'civil religion.' This explains the importance of a generalized, public and unified education system, an education based on the common language, for the internal minority the price to pay is very high: a total assimilation and the loss of ethnic identity in exchange for the benefits of citizenship. It is not simply a crucible ideology. In the civic nation the ideal was the assimilation of the majority culture through acculturation. It was something logically demanded for the equality of all the citizens."

[19] For more on the notion of pre-modern nations, see Conversi (2002: 65-66).

[20] Rubio (2003) argues the thesis of "invention of nations" and "imagined nations,", to her it "refers in excess to the ideas of unreality, falsehood, deception and a national identity is no greater or lesser artifice than any other collective identity, whether gender, religious, citizen." She adds that "There were, in fact, previous identity elements that gave the process of identity construction the necessary foundation so that it would not be an artifice of impossible roots: feelings of local and provincial identity, a certain Basque consciousness among intellectual elites of the 18th century like the father Larramendi, and also a foral culture gestated from end of the 16th century that helped to define and to consolidate a strong legal-political identity in the Basque territories.".

The process of (ethnic) identity maintenance and its (re)production and promotion is far more elaborate than a straight line. It is genuinely a complex process of constant negotiation with oneself and others, of discovery, belonging (to a group or several) as well as (it is) a performance (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015) - i.e., the use of specific clothes, the practice of dances or sports, the learning of a language, a particular behaviour and a set of tastes and practices. In the case of the identity of someone in the diaspora, there is also the issue of assimilation, of the performance of fading, weakened or even disappearing cultural/ethnic elements (such as language), and the equilibrium of the ethnic and the civic identity of one's location.

Linkages, affinities and identity are the cornerstones of the nation, a generic idea of political community, a group of people united by natural and eternal ties (language, common history, etc.) and usually within a relatively bounded and contiguous territory, "a sacred place set aside by God for the nation" (Conversi, 2002: 230).[21]

Considering 'linkage' as the "first base for communication" and the "symbolic link or material in a common space (or territory)" (Baitello, 2005: 86), we can assume that communication processes are "constructions of linkages that aggregate and segregate individuals" (Menezes, 2007: 23-24).

Menezes (2007) goes ahead and treats aggregate as an integration between related individuals linked under the term 'we' while segregate relates to the term 'other,' the 'outside' ones, so we may well draw parallels to the idea of national sentiment, i.e. the 'we' as more or less homogeneous group of similar ethnic origin and language and the 'other,' those who are not part of the group. When we say 'we,' we are talking about individuals connected by linkages, a language, customs and symbols and signs differently from others.

As stated by Norbert Elias (2000), these linkages, understood as webs of relationships, are the genesis of life in society, the formation of groups of insiders and outsiders, and hence the idea of a nation of individuals with similar identities compared to those with for example, different languages. All non-members receive the status of foreigners, outsiders and do not belong to the community or nation (Connor, 1986).

[21] See also Kaiser (1994) and debates on perennialism, a dominant ideology on nations and nationalism previous to the Second World War.

Max Weber will debate on the concept of affinity,[22] stating that "the belief in group affinity [...] can have important consequences [...], we shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent... this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (1978: 389). Also, according to Weber, ethnicity is defined as "a human group that entertains a subjective belief in its common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration. It does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (in Alba, 1985: 17).

Affinity, then, can be seen as a basis for identity, which is something that is acquired, is formed over time, but at the same time is "imposed" by nationality, by the habits of its immediate neighbours, the linkages that form between individuals. Such linkages may be treated as identity formers (see Hall, 2001). Important to note that, according to Weber, the idea/myth of a common descent is more important than reality itself, therefore, affinity does not have to have ancient historical background, despite the fact that 'ancient history' is sometimes used as a legitimacy element on nationalist struggles.

1.2. Public Sphere and microspheres

For Habermas (1984a, 1984b, 1990), the emergence of a national bourgeoisie is related to the emergence of capitalism and the press, stating that the emergence of a new social class, the bourgeoisie, precipitates the emergence of the state, aimed at securing and safeguarding markets and control of the so called national economy. The bourgeoisie, subject to modernity itself, propels the modern state.

> To meet the growing demands of capital and share the increasing risks, these companies soon rise to the status of joint-stock company. But to go further, they need stronger political guarantees. Foreign trade markets are now fairly considered as "institutional products"; Resulting in political efforts and military strength. The former base, the national territory. Then begins that process that Heckscher described as the nationalisation of the city economy. It is

[22] Álvarez Gila (2017: 66) debates on the notion of "affinity" as the "basis for the formation of bonds [or linkages] of solidarity between individuals, both temporary and permanent." Such affinities might be diverse, Álvarez Gila adds, but might range from "the achievement of the same economic objective, a similar core of interests, to ideological or religious coincidence, or ethnic identity."

> true that it is only after this that what has since been called the "nation" - the modern state with its bureaucratic institutions and a growing need for money, which, in turn, rapidly regresses on mercantilist politics (Habermas, 1984b :30-31).

It is worth noting, however, that state borders did not always respect national boundaries. The interests of the bourgeoisie sometimes overcame those of specific communities, causing a visible tension, especially after the French Revolution, in which military force - and especially education- have become even more prevalent in everyday life.[23]

Habermas calls this space "conversational," of interaction, communicative action and even of 'deliberation' between the bourgeoisie of the public sphere, which is inaugurated with the modern state, presupposing a control on the part of this institution of the directions of that nation. There is, however, a clear relationship of interdependence between the state and the bourgeoisie, which is by no means homogeneous, despite the apparent independence of the actors, since, in the end, the conversation usually takes place within the State's milestones.

In order to guarantee space to the multiple interests of the bourgeoisie, the modern press is born (or at least is strengthened and diversifies). Its function is to ensure the publicity of the ideas and ideals of the most diverse groups, to serve as a bridge between emission and reception, giving rise to the practice of public opinion. To ensure broad coverage, therefore, broad reach, the print media needed to "speak" the language of the population, that is, newspapers needed to be written in the most different popular vernacular languages.

Thus, as much as Habermas glimpses an associative public sphere (in a Weberian sense), the role of the press on the emergence of identities closer to the community is also verified. A community of sentiment emerges from the recognition of other individuals as the same human collectivity, sharing common histories and similar values and customs - not to say that such recognition is neither automatic, nor necessarily intentional. In short, just as the press, an instrument of the bourgeoisie for the propagation of its ideals within a state created to ensure

[23] According to Molina and Oiarzabal "state nationalism and even the states that carried out nation-building policies during that century also supported local and regionally based ethnic identities in order to reinforce the roots of national identity among the population" (2009: 703). In other words, if on the one hand the elites, through press in Habermas' terms, tend to impose from above the idea of a nation (and in a more complex way in Anderson);on the other hand Spain and other states are examples of state elites who also promoted during a period local and regional identities, meaning that local languages and culture where also part of the nation-building efforts, therefore "nation-building also implied region and ethnicity-building, to the point that the former may have been very dependent on the latter." See also Núñez Seixas (2001) and Sahlins (1991).

control of markets and the economy, this also serves to form communities that can transcend state borders and that respects absolutely different logic.

Critics (Carey, 1995; Schudson, 1997) have pointed out that even in democracies it is debatable whether all elements of Habermas' public sphere are present, such as open access (and the very present issue of internet divide[24]), equal status of participants, and rational analysis of alternatives, but it is possible to assume that at least to some degree such elements can be found in western democracies - to Poster (1997), internet decentralises communication, but also enhances democracy - and on the internet that:

> can be seen as decentralized, participatory, unregulated, and egalitarian in operation compared to mass media such as newspapers, radio, or television where communication is largely one way and consumers have very little opportunity to be producers of content (Bernal, 2006: 165).

Internet provides a space for critical and free expression (Papacharissi, 2002; Poster, 1995; Gimler, 2001) yet unregulated (or at least less regulated than other means of communication) and sometimes conflictive and exacerbates this ability to form communities, going beyond the delimitations of national borders - that, to the bourgeoisie was a delimitation of state action. Papacharissi concludes that:

> the internet may actually enhance the public sphere, but it does so in a way that is not comparable to our past experiences of public discourse. Perhaps the internet will not become the new public sphere, but something radically different. This will enhance democracy and dialogue, but not in a way that we would expect it to, or in a way that we have experienced in the past. For example, internet activist and hacker groups practice a reappropriated form of activism on the internet, by breaking into and closing down large corporations' websites, or 'bombing' them, so that no more users can enter them. This is a new form of activism, more effective than marching outside a corporation's headquarters, and definitely less innocuous than actually bombing a location. One could argue that the virtual sphere holds a great deal of promise as a political medium, especially in restructuring political processes and rejuvenating

[24] Papacharissi argues that "access to online information is not universal and equal to all. Those who can access online information are equipped with additional tools to be more active citizens and participants of the public sphere. […] online technologies render participation in the political sphere more convenient, but do not guarantee it. Online political discussions are limited to those with access to computers and the internet. Those who do have access to the internet do not necessarily pursue political discussion, and online discussions are frequently dominated by a few. While the internet has the potential to extend the public sphere, at least in terms of the information that is available to citizens, not all of us are able or willing to take on the challenge. Access to more information does not necessarily create more informed citizens, or lead to greater political activity. Even though access to information is a useful tool, the democratizing potential of the internet depends on additional factors" (2002: 15).

> political rituals. In addition, the internet and related technologies invite political discussion and serve as a forum for it (2002: 18).

Contrary to Habermasian assumptions, however, the press also promoted minority languages and groups and the formation of national sentiments - nations - on sub-state level, such as Basques or Catalans and internet came to exacerbate it.

As I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, these fundamental characteristics of the internet, this virtually unregulated space of free speech, are important for the formation and operation of political groups within the Basque diaspora and for the shaping of the diaspora in itself, creating new means of communication between members of the diaspora and a broader and real-time connection between the diaspora and the homeland (and vice-versa).

On the one hand, the press helped the creation of modern (nation)states (Anderson, 2005) and their public spheres, but on the other hand helped on the process of self-awareness of minority groups within such (nation)states by making it even clearer the ethnic differences of titular nations of states and the others. Internet goes beyond the press and promotes virtual or online public spheres of minority groups and their diasporas as gives them the "opportunity for critical expression [that] is also grounded in the experience of diaspora" (Bernal, 2006: 166). Internet offers the possibility for creating public spheres based on equality, access and some degree of rationality and rational discourse in a borderless space virtually free of censorship and state-imposed limitations.

It is not to say that internet is totally free of censorship and state-imposed limitations, especially through popular websites that can, at any time, be forced to obey judicial decisions or even political pressures from states, as well as having their own policies on the use of its platform. However, there are ways to circumvent or escape the maximum of censorship and controls whenever there is a genuine interest in using such tools and escapes. According to Recuero:

> these [social] networks form a public sphere modality because they provide a public space where there is circulation of information, debate and where public opinion is formed (and they are often fierce). Today, we can also talk about public microspheres, because social networks have begun to fragment ideologically, constituting "bubbles" where only some opinions and

> ideas circulate freely. There is an ongoing change that needs to be analysed in terms of impact on society in these bubbles (2017, online).[25]

Social media websites/networks, thus, form a new type of public sphere where people can comment, debate, deliberate, agree and disagree without limitations of national borders - though sometimes with the limit of the language -, a space where we can "observe the constitution and the changes of discourses in a society" (Recuero, 2017, online).

In a sense, diasporas behave like bubbles, or self-contained microspheres (Recuero, 2017) within a larger network or nation and, themselves, divided within fractions, yet sharing some common elements that allow us to call them a diaspora. Social media websites are a microsphere (or a set of microspheres) of social reproduction, in a way exacerbating relationships based on an own logic of creation/maintenance of such relationships.

According to Levy (2009), such virtual relationships are not a carbon copy of offline (or real) relationships, but went through a virtualisation process; virtual, thus is the result of online interactions, of actualisation of offline (real) ones, dynamic, of virtualisation that fluidifies, de-territorialise and reorganise the concept of space-time.

Also, such bubbles or microspheres can be understood as fractions of ideologically aligned individuals debating and discussing with other who mostly agree with their positions and with marginal, yet somewhat in constant contact with other bubbles. In the Basque case such behaviour can be observed in the dynamic of the left wing Abertzale individuals, organised within specific groups, and the PNV-led institutionalised diaspora or *Euskal etxeak,* also a world of themselves. All of these groups act as bubbles, almost as resonance boxes, microspheres of a larger identity that work as "comfort zones, in which we relate to people that have the same tastes and post similar contents" (Amaral, 2017).

1.3. Press and Imagined community: the melting pot of identity

Through Anderson (1989, 2005) and Levy (2003a, 2003b), we understand that the press marks the nation's emergence, when the communication linkage expands from the mere face-to-

[25] All quotes originally in Portuguese and Spanish have been translated into English by me.

face relationships to form bonds through the print media covering great distances and disseminating common symbols throughout a disperse population.

Levy (2003a, 2003b) considers speech as the turning point in the creation of a society. From the moment the people speak and create their own language, create also their first bonds. In using the primary media – the body – people go to live in society. Writing marks, the moment when the people begin to live in villages, in cities, it is still the point of intersection between the primary and secondary media, the principle is the use of tools to communicate. The people, with writing, shall not only live in society, such as organising it, creating boundaries and rules.

Levy (2003a, 2003b) goes on to describe the advent of printing as the nation's forming, for, among others, marks the boundary between those who can understand what was printed (language) and those that can be defined as "other(s)." Anderson agrees with Levy (2005) and relegates to the press the role of forging the nation's idea, by bringing us together, by creating the idea of "us" (not just the language we all understand, but by approaching stories and people in a wide territory).

The links or linkages created by the language, one of the defining elements of the nation (Mignaburu Berho, 2016; Anderson, 2005), and the signs described by this same language give birth of national feeling, the idea of an imagined community, which is nothing more than an "imagined political community – and imagined as implicitly limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even smaller nations will never know most of their fellow countrymen, nor find, not even hear about them, but in the mind of each is alive the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1983: 6).

The press was largely responsible for solidifying and even expanding ties or linkages between individuals, of creating a major source of identification - the language - among individuals who, otherwise, could be disconnected. On the one hand, language was a great unity factor since the beginning of human communication and, today, with the advent of the internet, a connection or re-connection is possible, a social network where other links are created that transcend the traditional relationship between man and a group.

Linkages are nothing but strong ties between individuals that, according to Anderson, can reach great distances through the press, and create the concept of nation that transcends the boundaries of small communities (cities and towns). The press facilitated the process of creating

an (national) identity for strengthening ties, creating a common language and approaching individuals.

> Collective identity should be seen as a set of concentric (emotional) spheres that complement each other while acknowledging that all forms of social identity result from historical processes that can be modified by political and social change (Molina and Oiarzabal, 2009: 703).

Following Anderson (2005) we can understand three key periods of creating a national identity, and the press – understood as press-paper and press-internet – as the main actor, removing the monopoly of the church books and, consequently, of knowledge:

1. 15th century: Embryo national feeling, invention of the (western) press and increasing diffusion of books and knowledge. From that moment the ideas of the elite become easier to access.

2. 18th century: Through various historical processes, nationalism as we know it today emerged as a strong and present ideology. Nationalism, then, is related to various ideologies and political thoughts and begins to permeate our society daily (Billig, 1995).

3. 20th/21st century: With the advent of internet nationalism reaches new heights, becomes transnational (Appadurai, 2004) and breaks physical boundaries adding a real-time component. Lemos (2002) adds the phone, the TV and the radio for the potential to facilitate communication over long distances and by facilitating the spread of information to the masses, to a greater number of people.

As we see today with the invention and popular development of the internet, the formation of linkages is no longer limited to a small group or limited by borders, but shall cover all over the world, opening the possibility of new forms of identification and connection between individuals. The internet presents itself as a large(r) evolution by facilitating the exchange of information not only in real time (Virilio, 1997), but also for turning anyone with a computer in an agent. The internet user is not just a listener/passive player, but an actor/author active and participatory in an open environment and – theoretically – outside state control. As Marketa argues:

> While Benedict Anderson in his famous argument about the formation of modern nations as imagined communities saw in the technology of printing a crucial variable that enabled the creation of affinities among persons otherwise unknown to each other, Appadurai highlights contemporary outbursts of electronic and media technologies producing analogical sense of

> solidarity through de-territorialized international/transnational networks. Technology forms technoscapes in which the "space of identity," through media transmission, is detached from the physical space. In Appadurai's vision, Globalizationand its flows do not homogenize, but rather transform and integrate local identities andthe re-articulation operates through technological networks (2010: 67).

Appadurai's (2003) work on 'landscapes,' helps understand diasporas (ethnoscapes) as articulated with the notion of imaginary (ideoscapes) and the image (mediascapes). There is the imaginary notion of belonging conjugated with the image both of the homeland and of the place of settlement, meaning a relationship between how the members of the diaspora see themselves and how they articulate this particular imagination of identity with the different mediascapes (not only image, but also media.)

It is important also to remind that despite similarities, there are some significant differences on Habermas and Anderson's postulates. They both recognise the importance of the press on the promotion of a public sphere or imagined community, and as sign of the limits of the state. Yet on the one hand Habermas tends to adopt the perspective of the bourgeoisie in a sphere of dialogue and agreement (with the imposition of language and, therefore, of the idea of nation from above), and on the other hand, Anderson sees the nation as more than just the work of elites, but also on the grounds of imagination and not necessarily an imposition from above.

1.4. Media and the making of a (Basque) Diaspora

As Varadarajan (2010) notes, studies of diaspora historically used the Jewish example as an ideal type, then, considering diasporas as the result of trauma. This resonates, as mentioned before, on post-colonial approaches to the same subject, while leaving aside other aspects and reasons for international migration and the subsequent formation of diasporas.

Despite the lack of agreement regarding the precise meaning of the concept, I will work with the idea that "diaspora" can be defined as the "transnational collectivity, brokenapart by, and woven together across, the borders of their own and othernation-states, maintaining cultural and political institutions" (Tötölyan, 1991: 5); also, as a population dispersed from its homeland, with collective memory and idealisation of the homeland, as well as a strong ethnic consciousness and solidarity with co-members of the group (Cohen, 1997: 180); and an

exacerbation of allegedly common and ancestral traits that are periodically reinforced (Billig, 1995; Renan, 2007). Diasporas exist outside the territorial limits of the homeland, but maintain a connection based on the notion of belonging as an extended community, and usually influence politically the homeland (or at least try to) and are politically influenced by it. Demmers defines diasporas as:

> collectives of individuals who identify themselves, and are identified by others as part of an imagined community that has been dispersed (either forced or voluntary) from its original homeland to two or more host countries and that is committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland (2007: 9).

The reasons for migration are less relevant than its result, than the formation of a collective identity that joins together the experiences of both the homeland and the host land with transnational political consciousness, capacity to act politically and the formation of diasporic institutions.

Likewise, transnational communities (Glick Schiler et al, 1992; Basch et al, 1993; Vertovec, 1999, 2001) are those whose "immigrant communities create bonds (or linkages) 'here' and 'there'" (Cruset, 2011b: 122), and where the migrant lives (or imagines to live) simultaneously both in the diaspora and the homeland, creating 'transnational practices' of their own (Cruset, 2011b).

Cohen (1997: 26) categorises diaspora in the following way:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;

2. alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;

3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;

4. an idealisation of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;

5. the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation; 6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;

7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;

8. a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and

9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

In this regards, the Basque diaspora can be understood as the community of ethnic Basques that were born - or descended from those who were born - in the historical territory of the Basque Country or Euskal Herria (Zazpiak Bat, or the seven historical provinces in one single Basque Country), comprising territories now divided by France (Iparralde or Northern Basque Country, part of the New Community of Aquitaine) and Spain (the Basque Autonomous Community and the Foral Community of Navarre) and migrated elsewhere or, in the case of this thesis, to the Americas from the 15th century up to today.[26]

> Basque identity, like all other identities, is no longer semper idem or identical: as it is a social construct, it has been transformed over time. An example of this is the evolution that, from a political perspective, has had the definition of Basque identity. In the same situation, the arrival of Spanish emigrants in search for work in the Basque factories, in a few decades it goes from a discourse that excludes Spanish citizens to one that includes Spanish workers. A matter of classes. Which recalls the importance of having to analyse the Basque identity always taking into account other identities such as labour and, of course, gender. However, if Basque is the person who lives and works in the Basque Country, what happens to the diaspora? What

[26] Concerning the process of identity building of Basques and their relationship with Spain, Molina and Oiarzabal (2009: 705) note: "Within the framework of the liberal revolution, Basque regionalism was a movement of ethnic leaders who attempted to create a dual identity: Ethnic-Basque and Civic-Spanish. The relation between regional and national identities was not immutable; they tended to clash in times of civil wars and revolutions. In fact, the linking of Basque local laws to the traditionalist insurrection during the Second Carlist War (1872-6) brought about the vehement abolition of the Basque autonomous system. The Spanish nationalist elites considered Basque identity an intrinsic element of the peripheral traditionalist revolt that had firmly rejected the democratic State founded by the Revolution of 1868, which ended with the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in 1873." It helps explaining why the first Basque clubs used to have Spanish flags on their facades, for example, and why identifying both as Spanish and Basque posed no problems. It was not until the 1920's that Basque nationalism would politicise the diasporic associations in many Latin American countries and the United States (Álvarez Gila 1996, 2000, 2005).

> happens to those people who due to the Franco regime had to leave their country? The same element, the Francoism, eliminates the Basque language as a possible answer to the question "what is being Basque". During that time many people could not learn or use the language and therefore these people would be excluded from the definition. (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015: 276-277).

I argue that the Basque diaspora is a community (Morales, 2002) of constant construction and re-construction of identities, a "sum of geographies, times, generations, and individual identities, by-products of living experiences and inherit traditions" (Oiarzabal, 2013: 21).

Basques at the diaspora - altogether with Basques in the homeland - form a nation, an ethnonational group (Connor, 1994), a group of people that believe they are related since ancient times, maintaining traditions and heritage and passing it to the next generation, sharing a sense of uniqueness (Smith, 1991) also with the Basques at the homeland. Despite the fact that the Basque diasporic identity is much more than a mere reproduction of the homeland identity, but has added significant elements of the host-nation and also maintained traits long gone or abandoned in the homeland (Oiarzabal, 2013) and maintaining a culture of ethnical separation or even purity (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996).

> The answer is not unique or uniform, and depends on what is the specific content of the question. In the case of the debate on the causes that explain the Basque emigration, for example, an explanatory system predominates in which the reasons are general, almost universal (economic motivations, prospects for social improvement, search for new horizons of personal development, or flight of war episodes or political persecution); And only the way in which these reasons are modulated in their evolution by the particular historical context of the Basque society is sought. However, where these particular modulations are more evident and have left a greater imprint is undoubtedly in the aforementioned formation of the communities or collectivities, generated in the reception spaces, structured around ties of solidarity between the members of the group, consolidated through the formation of institutional structures (associations of all kinds, educational or media undertakings, etc.) and visibilised towards the outside in the form of a social recognition of the group's particular identity (especially through the formation of particular ethnic stereotypes) (Álvarez Gila 2017: 65).

Concerning the Basque identity within Spain and its sate/nation-building, is important to note that during the 19th century the Spanish identity was being built, to little success according to de Pablo, Mees and Rodríguez (1999). For Greenfeld (2017) "Spanish nationalism has failed in its development, we can say that Spanish nationalism does not exist. It is an imperial

framework, based on values accepted by all: democracy, solidarity... but without national consciousness."

In other words, during this period, despite the weak penetration of Spanish institutions in, for example, the Basque Country up to the Carlist Wars (and the abolition of the Fueros[27]), the Spanish identity itself contained local or sub-national identities or even regional identities (Álvarez Gila, 1996: 175; Oiarzabal and Molina, 2009). The idea of a civic Spanish identity carried within the Basque own ethnic identity - as well as a Catalan or Galician ethnic identities.[28]

According to Núñez Seixas (2004: 53) the 19th century Spanish state had a "lack of efficiency in its nationalising process," expressed by an "inefficient educational system, [...] a national army based in a discriminatory and classist military service, a scarce diffusion and a lack of consolidation of its own nationalist symbolism" and an inefficient administration of the state. Due to such problems, adds Núñez Seixas, the "social use of languages different from Castilian persisted with great force" leading to cultural movements for the promotion of regional languages and identities.

The Spanish identity, thus could be initially understood a civic one not opposed to the ethnic Basque, but complimentary, "an ideological synthesis" (Núñez Seixas, 2004: 53), not without moments of tensions and conflicts during the process of nation and sate-building of Spain.

> In historical perspective statebuilding has generally been a coercive and often a violent process. Statebuilding involves imposing a unified, centralised state and subjugating peripheral regions, securing border areas and imposing regulation, institutions, taxation and control. This has been a violent process because it threatens the interests of recalcitrant actors and it encounters outlying resistance which must be suppressed. It is also often accompanied by violent processes of national and ethnic exclusion. The consolidation of national political projects – including national identity – is a related process that has often been accompanied by significant instability as groups with vying political visions compete for control of the agenda (Newman, 2013: 141).

This Basque imagined community (Anderson, 2005), or imagined transnational community (Appadurai, 1997), is made up of individuals that may never meet each other, but

[27] Special set of laws that regulated the relationship of the Basque Country with Spain up to the mid-19th century and the Carlist Wars.
[28] And to lesser extent Aragonese, Andalusian, Leonese and Asturian identities.

they imagine themselves as members of the same ethnogroup or ethnodiasporic group, sharing common traits, despite the differences. “The different Basque diasporic groups preserve their ethnic identities by considering and ‘imagining’ themselves as a part of a global Basque ethnic community” (Totoricagüena, 2004: 10), therefore, they feel like members of the same Basque nation or ethnonational group (Connor, 1994) and it has lasted for centuries and through different migration waves, de-territorialised (Ortiz 1999, 2004, Haesbaert, 2002, 2004).

Despite political and ideological differences, as well as nationalistic points of view, Basques in the diaspora kept seeing themselves as one group, one nation, forming a diaspora (or diasporic) identity (Totoricagüena, 2004: 147; Oiarzabal, 2013: 28) that synthesises or combines both the Basque and the host-country identities in a transnational way (Vertovec, 1999), meaning that relates Basques both socially, economically and culturally within multiple boundaries and societies.

Diasporic identity is the result of the relationship between an original (imagined) culture and amalgam of the host-nation identity hybridised with the own form of identity produced by diaspora members or their self-image as members of a diaspora. Hepp et al argues that:

> Fundamentally, diasporas are a specific form of cultural thickening, on the one hand being related with the (imagined) origin (culture), on the other hand marked by an own form of identity and community living abroad (2011: 19).

To no surprise, the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is carried out (mostly) by the media, from the mass media to other forms of media and the internet.

As Oiarzabal (2013: 92) mentioned, “the self-perpetuation of Basque identity in the diaspora is very much based on the pride and affection for assumed characteristics, such as uniqueness or singularity of such an identity.” Basques are physically connected to their host-countries, yet they remain psychologically and emotionally connected to their homeland. Basques in the diaspora kept, with different degrees, traces of their homeland culture, while shaping it with elements from the country they were born or chose to live in a process Billig (1995) would call “Banal Nationalism,” or a set of ideological habits that allows nations to be reproduced and the idea of nations.

> Banal nationalism also applies to diaspora communities. For example, everyday objects and commodities from “back home,” or from the “old country,” re-create familiar nostalgic images

> while helping to evoke memories of belonging and identity (see Cohen, 2004; Davis, 1999; and Geisler, 2005). They are "unconscious" and "unnoticed" reminders of nationhood, "preventing the danger of collective amnesia" (Billig, 2003: 133). Symbols, particularly national symbols (the flag, the anthem, the language, monuments, clothing, or food), play a role in creating, maintaining, and expressing an individual and collective identity, as well as providing a sentimental or emotional attachment and identification of individuals within the group (Oiarzabal, 2010: 340).

Families with century-old history in Argentina were able, through family and Basque clubs, maintain their Basque identity alive, even if only through children's songs or special celebrations and symbols scattered through their houses., as well as through connections and re-connections with the homeland, being by receiving individuals from the homeland in their clubs or even in their own houses, or through mass media or even by travelling to the homeland; Nowadays, this "travel" ("back to the roots") can also performed through the use of social media tools, one can get in touch with their roots without leaving the house, 'visit' friends using chats on tools like Skype, follow the news on streaming channels, etc.

According to Ehrkamp, both Turkish and Kurdish media is available to their communities abroad, also that "large numbers of travel agencies specialising in travel to Turkey highlight the fact that Turkish immigrants are actively creating ties to Turkey, albeit not necessarily to their actual places of origin" (2005: 346). It is similar (despite scale differences) of the modus operandi of Basques in the diaspora on the different aspects of creating ties and maintaining contacts with relatives and friends from the homeland. The centennial Basque association *Laurak Bat* in Buenos Aires hosts a travel agency on its premises, for example, and the travel agency "Bask in Motion," based in the Basque city of Hernani, focuses on Basques from the diaspora.

It is also important to note that what we consider as "diaspora" sometimes represent itself as no more than small to medium groups scattered or dispersed across a large territory (hostland) that form a network of local groups that articulate as well mostly through media (mass, social, etc). Not only members of a diaspora are de-territorialised due to the distance of their homeland, but they are also dispersed abroad (in the same host-nation or among different ones) and they can only articulate as a network through media and being mediatised themselves (Hepp et al, 2011).

> Like Hall spoke earlier of different and interrelated cultures and histories in regards of diaspora politics, Julia Kristeva too speaks of "the foreigner [being] lost in the kaleidoscope of his multiple identities" (1988: 57). Yet, for Kristeva, Hall's *new* diaspora subject, who is placed in

> a permanent state of *inbetweenness* (Said), is not only compelled to inhabit several identities (Hall), often to do so, other languages must also be learnt, and this very process of negotiation and translation between languages becomes a constant source of (dis)enchantment (Garlfarsoro, 2013: 71).

Language, emphasises Kristeva (in Garlfarsoro, 2013) becomes a problem for migrants/foreigners as they are deprived of their mother tongues. Not knowing the local language or having to abandon your own drives the migrant to feel like a half-person (Cohen, 1997), of not being complete.

To some degree Basques faced similar issues (Totoricagüena, 2004; Douglass, 2006), especially during the second wave of their migration towards Argentina, where a considerable number of those migrants were Basque monolinguals with just limited command of the Spanish language; that was even more problematic for Basques coming from the French provinces (Mignaburu Berho, 2016). They had to negotiate and adapt their identities or remain silent. Basque clubs, communal gatherings, hotels (more specifically in Uruguay and in the United States' cases), and dance groups were places for Basques to express freely their identities, speak their own language (or learn their own historical language in some cases), and where they construct(ed) their diasporic identity.

Diasporic identity is a constant negotiation of places of identity in relation to multiple societies and spaces that forms multiple attachments and forges a notion of (transnational) belonging. Yet location is an important element on the negotiation of one's identity (Vertovec, 1999), internet brings us a new element, a (virtual) space where relations occur without the need of a territorial reference (though in the mind of a member of a diaspora, the reference to the homeland is always present).

The maintaining of an identity as a group demands (collective) effort of dealing with a double identity, tensions and setbacks. In an example given by Okan Daher (2017), lecturer in Tatar Language and Culture at the University of Helsinki about his own community:

> What has enabled the building and preserving of this fruitful double identity? The first and the second generation created a strong mental and material basis for building the community through their industriousness, will power and mutual solidarity. The community is centred on the family, the home, which is supported by a well- organised community. Traditions followed within the community provide young persons with a clear awareness of their own roots and

> identity as well as with a strong self-esteem. Close ties with the family and relatives create a sense of togetherness and security, which is reflected positively in the whole of society. The fostering of Tatar cultural heritage has, however, required enormous efforts.

Scholars including Held (1993) and Beck (1999) point out to the "possibility of transnational diasporic political communities simultaneous with membership in one or more place-based political community" (in Staeheli et al, 2002: 992).

> [Transnationalism] is the capacity to shift the frame, and move between varying ranges of foci, the capacity to handle a range of symbolic material out of which various identities can be formed and reformed in different situations, which is relevant in the contemporary global situation... There has been an extension of cultural repertoires and an enhancement in the resourcefulness of groups to create new symbolic modes of affiliation and belonging (Featherstone, 1995: 110).

Diasporic identity, thus, would be the relationship between the "original"/homeland culture and the identity formed at the diaspora (in turn, already an amalgamation of local culture and the ways such culture is appropriated by members of the diaspora and their relationship with each other). This complicated relationship is mediatised, (communicational) linkages are formed and the diasporic culture itself is a "media culture" inasmuch the media is a necessary tool for contacts and reproduction, to what Hepp et al (2011: 3) will call "diasporic media culture" (Georgiou, 2013; Ogunyemi, 2015): "diasporas are a specific form of cultural thickening, on the one hand being related with the (imagined) origin (culture), on the other hand marked by an own form of identity and community living abroad."

If it is true, on the one hand, that diasporic culture is not at all homogeneous - but heavily influenced by media, degree of contact with the homeland and with other members of the diaspora, etc -; on the other hand, contrary to Hepp at al (2011), it does not make Anderson's imagined community concept problematic, rather it simply reinforces Anderson's main idea of a community that even with all the differences, even scattered, still recognises itself as part of a larger group or (imagined) community.

Research on transnationalism finds that immigrants are able, mostly through mass media and social media, to maintain contacts with their home country (Vertovec, 2001; Kivisto, 2001) and such transnational contacts both with their homeland as well as with the societies they are inserted, where they place their identities (Ehrkamp, 2005) or insert their belonging, contribute to

constructions of migrants' identities. According to Ehrkamp (2005: 347), these migrants "engage in multiple public spheres across national borders."

It is important to note, however, that despite the fact that the geographical location in which migrants place their identity plays a role on their transnational practices through the understanding of their engagement with the host society; though identities are still deterritorialised. The insertion of belonging does not nullify the effects of ones deterritorialised identity, quite the contrary, the local linkages are added to the ethnic one promoting tensions and conflicts. As Campbell notes (1996: 31), "everyday life itself becomes transnational," a constant tension of multiple identities.

Basques whose families have settled in Argentina for decades - or even centuries - share common traces with more recent immigrant concerning the (re)production of their identities, though in a much different scale. The homeland seems more mythical and distant than for those who migrated longer or were already born in the diaspora, sometimes the homeland is nothing more a dream filled with bedtime stories and songs, with symbols scattered through the house and also of some cultural elements, such as culinary or language. Nevertheless, the process of construction of identities is also transnational, multiple and full of dilemmas.

Mass media may contribute to the creation of 'virtual neighbourhoods' (Appadurai, 1996), while internet promotes the idea of an imagined community of diasporans such as the Basques from different parts of the world maintaining contacts and sharing in a single virtual space that goes beyond national borders and "cut across fixed notions of belonging" (Dwyer, 2000: 475; Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010).

> For the *new* diaspora subject (Hall, 1993) experiences of displacement, absence, separation and foreignness stir up an irremediable sentiment of nostalgic identification with the traditions, languages and beliefs of a lost space/time *at home* (Garlfarsoro, 2013: 67)

The frustration of immigrants and generations of diasporic individuals from watching TV (or reading newspapers, listening to radio, etc) and being only able to be passive recipients rather than to be actively engaged in homeland politics and issues (Aksoy and Robins, 2002) is a common trace to many different diasporas. However, with internet and the use of social media tools, from being a passive recipient, individuals became active actors, being able to influence,

opinate and engage in homeland politics, as well as they are capable of forming political and pressure groups whose influence can stretch far beyond a fixed territory.

Hepp et al (2011: 1-2) came up with the concept of "mediatized migrants," which dialogues with the idea of a virtual co-presence (Baldassar, 2008; Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010; Bacigalupe and Cámara, 2012; Nedelcu, 2016). According to Hepp et al, this:

> captures the argument that we have to understand the present culture of migrants as media cultures, as we can no longer comprehend them beyond media communication. In this sense, migrants are nowadays mediatised; that means that their articulation of a migrant identity is deeply interwoven with and moulded by different forms of media. However, the diasporic media cultures of mediatized migrants remain highly differentiated, and they are marked by conflicts and contradictions (2011: 1-2).

Following Hepp et al (2011), this media is more than just the mass media, as it also encompasses the internet as well as mobile phones and other "small" medias of personal communication. Migrants (with obviously a telephone line and internet data) are connected. For instance refugees from the Syrian war carry their mobile phones[29] and were able to send constant updates to family and friends. People increasingly use Skype and other synchronic communication and messaging applications (apps) such as WhatsApp or Telegram in order to have a feeling of being home even abroad (or being home abroad). Zara Rahman in a personal account on her experience as migrant, wrote:

> In a way, social media for immigrant families has become a way of creating the life that you wish you had, the one that you gave up familiarity, comfort, and personal relationships for, the one that you want people back home to think you have. It had to be worth the sacrifice, no matter what the reality is. Social media gives us a way of making that true, or at least, as true as it needs to appear. We might not be able to lie over the telephone or using our voices, but we can lie on social media platforms (2017, online).

Can (2007: 136) notes the importance of mass media for the Turkish diaspora by saying that "satellite television constitutes an important vector for ethnicity and favours the process of identity continuation without taking part in the armed conflict," and also for the Kurdish community through the Danish-based Roj TV that "it not only has the ability to address the

[29] See, for instance, "Phones are now indispensable for refugees." (2017, February 11). *The Economist*. Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/news/international/21716637-technology-has-made-migrating-europe-easier-over-time-it-will-also-make-migration and Price, R. (2015, September 9). *Business Insider*. Retrieved from http://uk.businessinsider.com/refugee-crisis-how-syrian-migrants-use-smartphones-avoid-traffickers-2015-9?IR=T

diasporas at large, but it also has the ability to address the Kurds living in Turkey." On mass culture, whereas mass television is included, Martín-Barbero comments that:

> Mass culture is the first to allow communication between the different levels of society. Given that complete cultural unity is impossible, what is important is circulation between the different levels. When has there been more cultural circulation than in mass society? While the book as a medium for a long time maintained and even reinforced cultural segregation between classes, the newspaper allows the flow to begin, and film and radio have strengthened the exchange. (1993: 35)

It is interesting to note the role of mass media (and afterwords of the internet) for the maintenance of a foreign ethnic identity (in case of diasporas) whereas, to Martín-Barbero "the decisive role of the mass media was their ability to convey the challenge and the appeal of populism, which transformed the mass into the people and the people into the nation" (1993: 164). In other words, the mass media helped, in a first stage from 1930's to 1950's, the formation of nations in Latin America.

Therefore, mass media had an important role during the formation of the national identities of several Latin American countries during the first half of the 20th century, but, as Aksoy and Robins (2002), Can (2007), Soğuk (2008) , Siapera (2010), Smets (2016), Smets and Segul (2016) debate, mass media, in particular the television, had and have also an important role in helping diasporas and migrant communities to (re)build and shape their identities and to be in touch with their homeland and nations, strengthening their roots, as well as to the point, one can theorise, of even challenging the notions of identity and nation of the host country.

Hall (1993) and Said (1983, 1984) would agree that being at the diaspora does not mean to be completed clueless, separated or isolated from the homeland. Television, letters, friends from the homeland visiting, newspapers[30], etc, are ways to maintain significant ties with the homeland, nevertheless no other mean or media allows for bi-multi-directional, simultaneous and live contacts as internet that "has become the dominant medium in the creation of transnational spaces" (Can, 2007: 129).

> The internet provides to them a world where almost anyone located in an urban centre can share their message globally with a free blog and a few dollars spent at an Internet café. Access

[30] For an example of the role of newspapers, TV and other traditional media on the Kurdish diaspora, for instance, see Çoban, 2013; Kosnick, 2008; Strohmeier, 2003; Tejel Gorgas, 2014; and Smets, 2015, 2016.

> is generally not a major communications stumbling block for diasporic organizations. Consequently, it becomes important for the diasporas to learn how to appropriate the technologies available in order to bend and mould them so that they can be used more strategically and politically (Can, 2007: 130).

Internet is a space not only for simple communication or identity maintenance, but also a political space for the promotion of ideologies and political agendas that, in themselves, shape the belonging and the identities of those engaging in the space. Physical communities, such as diasporas, "extend themselves into cyberspace and [become] cybercommunities" (Oiarzabal, 2013: 39). This is the case of the Basque diaspora.

In this Chapter I have presented and analysed a series of key concepts to better understand the formation and maintenance of identities, with a deep explanation of what it means and constitutes the nation, how diasporas are formed and the role of media (from the press to the internet) on all of it, in promoting affinity through linkages and in promoting the idea of a nation or nations. In the next chapter I will focus on historically contextualise the Basque diaspora, with particular interest in its development in Argentina, describing in detail the different migration waves towards the country, the formation of the *Euskal etxeak* and the tensions within this associative institution as to pave the way for the analysis of the different groups of the Basque *Abertzale* left that act or acted in the diaspora.

Chapter 2 - Historical Background

2. Brief history of the Basque Diaspora in Latin America

During the Spanish Colonial period, Basques enjoyed leading positions all over the American colonies (Douglass and Bilbao, 1975) constituting themselves a self-aware ethnic group (Douglass, 2006), while forming migration chains (Aramburu Zudaire, 2002: 30-31) that were based on cultural peculiarities and an "ancient and strong tendency towards mutual union of those originated in *Vasconia* [the Basque Country], based in turn on a consciousness of its collective identity and communitarian singularity" (Álvarez Gila and Morales, 2002: 158).

It is important to remind, though, that before the foundation of the first modern Basque migrant associations abroad there were, all over the Basque diaspora, mutual aid associations focused in helping migrants settle, on helping those who fell sick, their families and also, when necessary, to repatriate the bodies of those who died without achieving the desired success. Before the *Euskal etxeak*, Basques tended to organise themselves within the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de Amigos del País*, that served as a mostly economic but also political lobby towards the American colonies and also within religious entities, such as the *Orden Tercera de San Francisco* (Alvarez Gila, 2010) or the brotherhood of *Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu* (Aramburu Zudaire, 2002) and aid and beneficial institutions (Muru Ronda, 1999:100, Cava Mesa, 1996:137-139).

From the early Spanish expeditions overseas Basques were among those that helped establishing and sustaining the Spanish Empire, from being ship captains and crew to run successful trade companies and to rule as Spanish proxies in colonial administrations. Also, Basque explorers took active part in Spanish expeditions and explorations on the Atlantic and Pacific oceans (Douglass, 2015).

The influx of Basques to the Americas before the 19th century was mainly of political and economic leaders of the colonial empire, as well as traders and merchants in many important and key cities such as Havana, Potosí, Buenos Aires, etc and their number might be bigger than what was thought (Aramburu Zudaire, 2002; Morales, 2002; Gordejuela and Urquijo, 2010).

Even before the *New World* (in this case, the Spanish overseas possessions) exploration Basque communities (generally organised among those from the provinces of Bizkaia and

Gipuzkoa) existed and organised as a self-aware ethnic group in Seville and Cádiz, important commercial centres of that period, what opened the doors for the exploration of the Americas on the following centuries (Muru Ronda, 1999).

The factors that led thousands of Basques to migrate towards the Americas afterwards - not only as representatives of the political elites and of the Castilian Crown (Douglass, 2006) - were many, but it is worth mentioning that there was a growing need for labour forces in the colonies. Leaders of colonies in the Americas, such as the *Río de la Plata* (now Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and parts of Bolivia and Peru), searched for men to go deep into the territory in order to fund villages, commercial outposts and to take possession of the land that, up until that point, belonged to various indigenous populations.

> The Basque presence in Argentina goes back to the stages of conquest and colonisation; It is enough to observe the names of the founders of the cities of north-western Argentina, those of the second foundation of Buenos Aires, as well as those of the crews and men who accompanied those founders (Mignaburu Berho, 2015: 15).

Additionally, after the independence of Argentina and Uruguay (but also of Colombia, Venezuela and elsewhere in the Americas), the new leaders sought to assure the rule of the newborn states by populating vast areas such as the Pampas (north-eastern Argentina and most of Uruguay) thus, many Basques migrated there to work with cattle and on agriculture colonies (Douglass, 2006).

It was believed that indigenous territory must be conquered, new land must be colonised (Azcona, 1999), and the new Basque migrants were, now, "peasants from modest rural circumstances or unskilled urban dwellers" (Douglass, 2006: 16). The reasons for migrating were also many. For once, the opportunities in the fast-population-growing Basque Country were limited and the rural areas in the Basque Country were overpopulated, the inheritance laws that privileged the first-born child meant that thousands of predominantly young men sought work in the colonies, as the family property belonged solely to the eldest son (Douglas and Bilbo, 1975).

Amongst other reasons for fleeing the Basque Country were the many conflicts within Spain and France at that time, such as the Napoleonic Wars, the First (1833-39) and the Second (1872-76) Carlist Wars and the 1848 Revolution on the French side as well as, years later, the

Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and the Francoist dictatorship. Furthermore, on the French side, Basques were persecuted for opposing the French Revolution (Goyeneche, 2006).

I propose 4 periods in the history of Basque migration as follows:

- First, the so-called original diaspora from the 16th to 18th century of Basques who were part of the Spanish colonial empire, and already analysed in this first section, possessed the main characteristic of being a wave made up mostly of Basques who took part on the Spanish Empire enterprise as administrative (civil, religious and military) figures or leading traders and merchants.

- The second can be traced to the 19th century, a wave of impoverished Basque migrants seeking jobs, especially in Uruguay and in Argentina, and also of refugees from the Spanish war of independence (1808-1814) and the Carlist wars (the first from 1833 to 1840, the second from 1846 to 1849 and the third from 1872 to 1876).[31] The first and second waves overlap at some point during the independence of the many American countries and the borders of each wave, or phase, cannot be precisely defined as the process of substitution of the migration of Basque elites for peasants and later of Basque refugees as the process took over a century. During this period, the Basque migrant associations[32] began to be founded. These will be further analysed later on.

- The third wave can be described as the one of refugees from the Spanish Civil War in the 1930's and the role of the members of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) which brought some tension to the diaspora while politicising it by adding a new layer of ideology.

- The fourth wave is again a wave of refugees, but now mostly left-wing ones, during the 1960's and 1970's. Members of ETA, families of political prisoners and any left-wing nationalists persecuted back home found a "sanctuary" abroad. It was a wave with less human displacement, but with significant ideological repercussions in the years to follow.

[31] For Mignaburu Berho (2015) the second and third waves can be divided into three main periods, from 1840 to 1880, after the first Carlist war and up to the second, a period of Early Immigration; from 1880 to 1930, after the Carlist wars and the abolition of the *Fueros*, as a period of Massive Immigration; finally, from 1939 to 150 a period of Selective Immigration, during and after the Spanish Civil War.

[32] *Euskal Etxea* is the singular version, while *Euskal Etxeak* the plural and literally mean "Basque homes,"

It is important to have in mind the difficulties of identity maintenance a member of a diaspora faced while dispersed, away from home and with sporadic or even no contact with the homeland. The *Euskal etxeak*, thus, were firstly created as places to aid Basques with health issues, funerals, as well as help with reintegrations to the homeland and, but also as a place to strengthen ethnonational ties, as Eriksen noted, "social identity becomes most important when it becomes threatened, which is often related to some kind of change, such as immigration" (1993: 68).

In the United States Basque clubs or *Euskal etxeak* shared importance with the migrant boardinghouses that, according to Laxalt Mackey, "linked two places: The Old World homeland and the New World host country. Eventually, the immigrant generation merged their Old and New." As mentioned before, language was a barrier for many Basque migrants, so the *Euskal etxea* members and the boardinghouse proprietor "filled the role of helping boarders navigate challenges such as language barrier" (Echeverria, 1999: 155-171) as well as helped on financial and health issues.

The E*uskal etxeak* and the boardinghouses are spaces of sociability or even sociality, understood as set of practices that go beyond the state rigid social control, a being-together that is independent of a goal to be achieved (Maffesoli, 1996). By sociality we understand a process of tribalisation where the sum of daily practices escapes the social rigid control of the state and society where the present is the main reference.

Such institutions can be found among other Iberian diasporic groups in Argentina, such as the *Centro Región Leonesa de Ayuda Mutua, Recreo e Instrucción* in Buenos Aires, founded in 1916, or the *Centro Val de San Lorenzo* also in Buenos Aires (Alonso González and Alvarez Domínguez, 2013), also the *Centro Gallego* of Buenos Aires[33] (Muniain, 2014) among others. Also, diasporic groups outside the Iberian Peninsula have also founded similar institutions such as the hostels or boardinghouses of the Central-American diaspora used as intermediate points in attempts to reach the United States (Vitorino, 2016). Also, there are over 200 Salvadoran organisations in the United States and at least 160 of Guatemalan migrants (Vitorino, 2016)

According to Tápiz Fernandez (2002) and Laxalt Mackey (2015), many Basques migrating from both the Spanish and the French side of the border were incapable of speaking

[33] The first one founded in 1879 and the second one in 1907.

Spanish, though, they tended to seek refugee among other members of the ethnonational groups, creating societies for mutual aid, such as the *Euskal Echea* in Buenos Aires or the *Euskal Erria* in Montevideo.

Despite the mono or bilingualism of first-generation Basque migrants, their Basque language, *Euskera*, was not commonly taught to their children (Mignaburu Berho, 2016), as well as the second generation tended, in general, to seek an immersion on the host nation culture in order to fully integrate, while the third generation is usually the one that tries to retake some of their heritage, but many times the language was lost (Laxalt Mackey, 2015; Mignaburu Berho, 2016), a phenomenon common to many diasporas.

Both the schools in the United States and in Argentina with the education exclusively on English and Spanish respectively posed a threat to the survival of the Basque language among second generation migrants, also, in Argentina, "the need for adaptation and assimilation determined that in many homes the Basque language was not spoken, since this led to difficulties in the schooling of children" (Mignaburu Berho, 2015: 26). Also, the language was sometimes considered as a peasant or lesser language, linked to a rural past.

The main (Ezkerro, 2003) reason for the foundation of the *Laurak Bat* of Buenos Aires (the Four in One, meaning the union of the Basque historical regions of Navarre, Gipuzkoa, Araba and Bizkaia, all of them in the Spanish state) in 1879 was to "manifest from the 'ethnic unity' of the four historical territories of the south of the Pyrenees, the 'protest' against the 'constitutional unity' imposed by the armed violence" or the suppression of the *Fueros*[34] by Spain following the Carlist Wars (Cava Mesa, 1996: 144).

> In America, Basques applied the Old World principle of auzolan[35], which helped them resettle their lives on new soil. The concept of auzolan was foundational to the establishment and maintenance of places that expressed ethnic identity in the New World. (Laxalt Mackey, 2015: 16)

In other words, it was a way in which the Basques in the diaspora could manifest their ethnic identity and oppose what they considered as an aggression. It is important to note, though, that the main idea of the *Laurak Bat* founders was not the one of independence from Spain, but

[34] Legal system that gave special internal powers to the Basque region in its relationship with the Spanish crown and government abolished in 1876.
[35] The principle can be understood as community work among neighbours.

rather of the restoration of the previous legal arrangement of the *Fueros*. It is not a mere curiosity that the official name of the *Laurak Bat* was, at the time of its foundation, *Sociedad Vasco-Española* or Basque-Spanish Society.

2.1 The second wave: Shifting patterns of migration

> And it is that Basque associationism was always in close connection with political movements, specifically with Carlism and nationalism. In their centres, the Basques made active political practice, often being scenarios of bitter disputes. Apart they founded exclusively political entities, in order to spread the nationalist ideas of Sabino Arana among the colony established in Argentina. It was also very important the participation of Basques in the organisation and dissemination of Carlist ideology in the Republic (Ortiz, 1996: 128).

The second wave of Basque migration can be understood as the period during the independence wars against Spain, shifting the pattern of migration and migrants from colonial elites to peasants and impoverished workers, but also of political refugees escaping from wars in Spain and France.

Totoricagüena (2004) considers the period of independence in the Americas as an *interregno*. On the contrary, it is more than that. It is a complete shift in patterns that lasted a century and came together with serious changes within the Basque Country, especially with the abolition of the *Fueros*, as a result not only of state modernisation, but also of two Carlist Wars,[36] as mentioned before. The number of Basques that migrated to the Americas during the 19th century until the 1930's of the following century, in conservative numbers, reached 200.000 people, though it is quite difficult to estimate (Tápiz Fernandez, 2002: 181).

Taking into account not only the perspective from the Americas, but also from the Basque Country, migration became not only an opportunity for many, but also the only chance to survive persecution. The Spanish-American War of 1898 may be a key turning point for Spain, but for most Basques, or at least for the migration waves, there were other more significant turning points (Irianni Zalakain, 2000).

[36] The First Carlist War (1833-1840) and the Third Carlist War (1872-1876), the second one was fought mainly in Catalonia.

It is true that there is an overlap of waves, from the first to the second, as the independence of many countries in America did not happen in the same year, but within a century long period of time. Additionally, refugees from the Carlist War, for instance, started arriving during the first half of the 19th century. We can say, with some degree of certainty that the second wave started while the "old Basques" of the first wave were still acting as protagonists. The tension between these two waves will arise specially in the second half of the century, lasting up to the eve of the 20th century.

What differentiates the first and second migration waves are the political refugee characteristics and the peasant characteristics (Douglass, 2006), much unlike the members of the previous wave that enjoyed some social status and normally went to the Americas willingly.

Although, according to Douglass (2006), many of the Basque refugees from the Carlist wars that were skilled, had professions such as doctors, lawyers, etc., found themselves in better positions within the host societies of Latin America not only due to the long standing presence of Basques that could receive them and make arrangements, but also because of the language, as most of them spoke Spanish. However, the majority of migrants were made up of unskilled and semiskilled peasants "seeking a better future in a new land" (Douglass, 2006: 71) and hoping to "remain peasants against the advance of the big cities and the urban modernisation" (Álvarez Gila and Morales, 2002: 30).

This particular wave (the second one) sets the basis for the future ones in regard to the creation of tensions in the diaspora. By the end of the 19th century Basques founded the *Euskal etxeak* not only as gathering clubs for Basques, but also as institutions to help those in need, especially the newcomers looking for a better life. In the US Basque associations were also an instrument to take care of those who lost their mind while working for months completely alone in the rough mountains of the American West as sheep herders (Douglass, 2006). Such institutions worked as "small homelands" (Lemus, 2002: 164) for those in the diaspora.

As mentioned, despite the conflicts over the *Fueros* issue - that became the starting point of the so-called "Basque Question," according to Molina and Oiarzabal (2009) -, 19th century Basques still adopted the Spanish-civic identity, as it is important to note that the main idea of the *Laurak Bat* founders was not the one of independence from Spain, rather of the restoration of the previous legal laws of the *Fueros.*

Ezkerro (2003), as mentioned, argues that the main or first reason for the foundation of the *Laurak Bat* of Buenos Aires was to manifest against the abolition of the *fueros*. In the following years new tensions will arise with yet another shift within the diaspora, with the pressure of Basque nationalists in favour of an *aranist* approach rather than a purely *foralist* one that would provoke ruptures (see also Cava Mesa, 1996: 146).

In sum, the first *Euskal etxeak* in Argentina maintained the ideology and objectives of previous associations (mutual aid, commercial support, etc) evolving to social clubs, while adding, notably in the case of the *Laurak Bat* from Buenos Aires, a fundamental political component to their time, claiming the return to the former political status of the Basque Country, i.e., the *fueros*.

2.2. Nationalists arrive, the third wave brought a new ideology to the diaspora

From the beginning of the 20th century the ideas of Sabino Arana - the founder of the modern Basque nationalism in the 19th century - arrived in the diaspora by the hands of Basques that were migrating both for economic reasons and also to work as propagandists of the *Aranist* (derivate from Sabino Arana, main ideologist and founder of the PNV) ideology (Tápiz Fernandez, 2002). Basque nationalism became yet another source of tension within the diaspora community and the *Euskal etxeak* led to the creation of fractions, resulting even in the foundation of rival Basque associations in Mexico City and Buenos Aires (Douglass, 2006).

Arana's ideology rescued and combined the *fuerista* and *Calista* traditions along with conservative Christianism (Núñez Seixas, 2004). Furthermore, it recreated the Basque history by adding a set of ancient myths, imposing the idea of race purity and of a complete independence from Spain since immemorial times, ending the historical cohabitation of Spanish and Basque identities (Conversi, 1997; Molina and Oiarzabal, 2009) substituting the previous ethnic historical regionalism for new a nationalist perspective that represented a profound split with the previous political traditions. In 1895 the Basque Nationalist Party is founded in Bilbao.

Additionally, the type of migrants shifted once again, no longer impoverished peasants went to America, instead, they included political refugees from the Spanish Civil War (Álvarez, 2002), many of them with connections to the PNV, but also others with ties to the Spanish

Communist Party which resulted in the formation of a new and political wave of migrants different from the previous two waves, of colonial elites to poor peasants and political refugees that were not at all nationalists, as seeking the independence of an imagined Basque Country.

Through the following years, thousands of Basques flew from the Basque Country to the diaspora, most of them to the Americas, influencing directly the process of identity construction and identity maintenance of the old Basque migrants. The new patterns of migration shifted from ones escaping economic hardship to, in the 20th century, migrants who suffered political oppression greater than the other had experienced at the second half of the previous century.

A struggle for power began, with "old Basques" trying to keep the associations as they were, a safe haven, and the newcomers attempting to turn them into political strongholds for pressuring Spain and the host countries to act against General Francisco Franco and to assure the "ancient rights" of the Basque people.

Not all Basques, however, supported nor the independence of the Basque Country nor the Spanish Republic, but some supported Franco's effort to conquer Spain and subsequently his dictatorship, such as the *Círculo Vasco-Español*, a split of the *Centro Vasco* of Mexico City that supported the Republican side (Martínez, 2011), or the *Centro Vasco* from Santiago, Chile.[37]

As Oiarzabal (2013), noted, "during the 1930's and onward, diaspora associations and communities were influenced by thousands of Basques who were forced into exile as a result of the Spanish Civil War and World War II. This implied a certain degree of Basque nationalist politicisation:"

> homeland politics are found 'embedded' in diaspora discourse or identity, culture, and homeland. The diaspora political discourse is exemplified by means of multiple cultural and folkloric activities and symbols. The so-called diaspora's 'cultural' ethnonationalist dimension makes assertions that are political in nature. In other words, this dimensions disguises to some extent manifestations or expressions of Basque nationalism (2013: 171).

It is interesting that years later during the arrival of left-wing political refugees, many of them of Abertzale ideology, the *Euskal etxeak*, politicised by the PNV leadership years before, changed their statutes to avoid "politicising" the diaspora - as well as to avoid conflicts with host-nations allied to Spain or connected to Spanish interests. As being Basque is already a

[37] For more on the conflicts within the Basque community in Chile, see Lemus (2002).

political statement, it makes no sense that "apolitical" status were brought up with the excuse of avoiding further conflicts within the diaspora.

Nevertheless, as it will be further discussed in the next section, the PNV will maintain its control over the Basque diaspora associations, as well as have other means of maintaining its hegemony over the diaspora, such as the *juntas extraterritoriales*[38] (assemblies abroad), or PNV's political representations in various countries of the Americas created by the then Basque government-in-exile on the Franco years (Mignaburu Berho, 2013; San Sebastián, 2014; Zurdo, 2016), and associations such as *Emakume Abertzale Batza*, or the league of patriot women.

In Argentina the *junta extraterritorial* of the PNV was founded in 1933 as a successor of the *Acción Nacionalista Vasc*a (Basque Nationalist Action), founded 10 years earlier, for legal issues, dubbed as a cultural centre in Buenos Aires (Álvarez Gila and Tápiz Fernandez, 1996).

Daniel Bilbao, leader of *Asociación Diáspora Vasca* (ADV), that will be further analysed on Chapter 4, said in an interview that:

> Several important euskaletxeas arose by necessities of the PNV during World War II and not by local initiative. On the other hand, the political and ideological hegemony of the PNV implies, in practice, a political, social and economic exclusion. [...] Hence his ideological profile is conservative, anti-popular, McCarthyism and in many cases confessional Catholic, in open violation of the rules of the euskaletxeas. [...] Our group "Diáspora Vasca" was a contradictor of this exclusionary and hypocritical vision, which made partisan politics with euskaletxeas.

During the eve of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, not only Basques, but most national groups within the Spanish state formed their own associations at the diaspora, as Lemus (2002:169) notes:

> In fact, the same criterion of favouring group relations and maintaining a sense of community underlies in the political association - delegations, centres, political parties - to which I have referred, and becomes more explicit in a associative tendency markedly social, such as the Spanish Women's Association, Emakume-Abertzale-Batza (Women Patriots), the Basque Youth, the Catalan Patriotic Association, the Catalan Women's Association, the League for the Defence of Human Rights/Spanish Section, the League of War Mutilated and the Ateneo Español Pablo Iglesias: own spaces in which the ideological, social and affective formed an indivisible whole to reaffirm the membership of the fragmented republican Spain.

[38] There are 5 *juntas extraterritoriales* in the world: Argentina, Chile, Madrid (Spain), Mexico and Venezuela.

2.3. New nationalists: The left has arrived

The majority of the third wave migrants were made up mainly of Basque nationalists with connections to the PNV that fought against Franco or fled during the Civil War and that arrived at the diaspora with a few of the Basque institutions abroad already on the hands of sympathisers of the party. For years these members and sympathisers of the PNV clashed with Basques of the previous wave(s) imposing their nationalistic ideals, despite the fact that members of both waves tended to be Christian conservatives.

The fourth wave, on the other hand, was made up almost entirely by left-wing refugees that were generally *Abertzale* with some sort of link to ETA[39] as well as a small percentage of exiles still fleeing from the Francoist regime and a few running from ETA itself (Tsavkko Garcia, 2016a). The group was the result of the radicalisation of a younger generation that would put an end to the PNV monopoly of the Basque society (Granja Sainz, 2002), and that would be successful in creating "a community with a totalising vocation" (Granja Sainz, 2002: 180). The PNV kept its hegemony over the Basque Country population, and the same happened to the diaspora, but it now faced a challenge with a more radical group disputing the same spaces, and, among those spaces, were the *Euskal etxeak*.

One of the main difficulties of ETA exiles and left wing *Abertzales* in general was not only the fact that PNV was already well implanted throughout the diaspora, but, additionally, due to its non-racial ideal of Basqueness (Granja Sainz, 2002) as well as its socialist ideals instead of the catholic/conservative ideology of the PNV. This new nationalist wave had a new discourse: Class struggle, emancipation, workers struggle. The nationalist goal came together with the emancipation of the working class and the idea of the Basque nation was not just of a nation made up by Basques, but of Basque workers. Such groups tended to approach other left-wing groups within the guest nations and organise solidarity committees and join different and local struggles, while the PNV members and supporters were still closer to the political elites and capitalist bourgeoisie.

[39] *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, or Basque Land and Freedom, a group founded by nationalist students in 1958,, which for over 50 years has been struggling for the independence of the Basque Country. Itis considered by Spain and France a terrorist group. ETA ceased its "armed struggle" in October 2011.

In other words, the left-wing nationalists brought to the *Euskal etxeak* a new ideology of class and workers struggle and would be among the first to speak of a nation less in terms of race or blood/heritage or isolationist rhetoric, (though PNV will also drop such "classical" concepts over time) but more as a broad political and social construction built on the basis of emancipation.[40]

Left wing nationalists tended to form ties with local political groups. Rather than just promoting an idea of "Basqueness" through isolation, they tended to seek support for their struggle (from class to ethnic) among host nation groups and individuals and would give support to such groups forming chains of solidarity.

> The Basque diaspora is reifying the Basque nationalist project of building a nation-state based on an imagined ancestral territory formed by seven historical provinces under the nineteenth-century nationalist motto of *Zazpiak Bat* (Oiarzabal, 2015: 154).

During the 1970's some of the *Euskal etxeak* changed their statutes to impose some "non-political" or "apolitical" status to themselves (Totoricagüena, 2004). In other words, to some degree they kept defending the independence of the Basque Country on the lines of the PNV's Aranist ideology, but forbade the political activities of the newcomers, generally left-wing nationalists.

It is interesting to note, however, that the defence of the Basque ethnicity and what was considered basic rights of the Basque population (*fueros* or full independence) was never considered as "political." From the first diaspora newspapers published at the beginning of the 20th century to institutional web pages of *Euskal etxeak* or profiles and pages of members of the Basque diaspora on Facebook, the reclamation of independence seems to be more than just political statements, but part of what it means to be Basque. Such behaviour is not strange to other diasporas as well.[41]

Despite the general ban on left-wing *Abertzale* politics within the Basque clubs, Soldevilla (2013) tells us about the political campaign of the ETA V against ETA VI during the

[40] At the diaspora, according to Totoricagüena (2010: 17), "homeland definitions of nationalism and 'Basqueness' have progressed to a more civic and inclusive nationalism, while diaspora definitions lag behind. They tend to follow the traditional conservativism of the 1900's father of Basque nationalism Sabino Arana y Goiri definitions linked to exclusive race, language, and religion. I propose that as communications and transnational links are intensified and accelerated with the process of globalization, the diaspora definitions of 'Basqueness' will more closely mirror those in Euskal Herria."

[41] See the case of the Armenian diaspora in Brazil in Loureiro (2016).

1970's (the latter was victorious during the 6th ETA Assembly, but due to its positions that some considered too pro-Spain, the split ETA V ended up gaining the support of most *Abertzale* political groups in the Basque Country):

> The propaganda campaign went as far as the Venezuelan exile, from which the most orthodox Aranistas blamed ETA VI for having been seduced by the hated "Spanish" immigrants (Soldevilla, 2013: 95).

During the 1990's one way for homeland political groups such as the *Herri Batasuna* (the radical left wing nationalist party of that time) to communicate with the diaspora was through sending e-mails and publications to the *Euskal etxeak* and for it to then be distributed among members. Yet, there were many times the material was simply deleted or destroyed by the, then, PNV-led clubs (Totoricagüena, 2004: 94). Internet will play a major role in the coming years as a way to bypass the control by the *Euskal etxeak* of the "diaspora ideology," allowing different groups to spread their beliefs freely.

It is important to keep in mind that the migration wave of the 1970's is not as large in number of arrivals as the previous ones, but it was just as impactful because it created visible tensions that even exist today in the *Euskal etxeak* and on the diaspora itself as it imposed a need to take a political stand in otherwise so-called "apolitical" institutions (Oiarzabal, 2007, 2015) - despite the fact that most if not all Basque organisations claim a territorial unity that is part of a nationalistic ideology, an imagined community with nationalist ideals and goals of independence.

> The Basque Movement-in-exile dispatched Delegates around the world to the largest diaspora communities, sending a handful each to France, Belgium, England, United States, Mexico, Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and the Philippines. The PNV was the established Basque nationalist party at the time which enjoyed relatively unified political support in the diaspora and although the Delegates were expected to express administrative undertakings, for most people there was no separation between the PNV and the movement-in-exile. The Basque Government was the PNV and vice versa. (Totoricagüena, 2000: 126)

The *Euskal etxeak* are political institutions *per se* and they have also been used or instrumentalised by consecutive PNV-led Basque governments since the end of the Franco dictatorship (Oiarzabal, 2007, 2015) sometimes as proxies for the spread of the PNV view of Basque nationalism, other times as "ambassadors" of the Basque Country or simply as a tool for

propaganda, to demonstrate, for instance, that Basque Country is more than ETA and that Basques are a peaceful people.

Turks and other ethnic groups tend to take ownership of their spaces, transforming streets and neighbourhoods and creating a visual closer than of the one of their homeland, and creating a new place of belonging (Ehrkamp, 2005: 362). For Basques in Argentina, the main place of belonging outside their own homes are the *Euskal etxeak* and other places directed towards Basque culture and heritage.

Younger members of the Basque associations, refugees (Kurlansky, 2001), and sympathisers of ETA's struggle imposed pressure on the *Euskal etxeak* to support the fight of the Basque group which was considered a fight for the Basque Country and the Basque people. This triggered consistent pressure from local governments, some with ties to the Spanish Francoist regime or the posterior democratic regime. The political activities of some of the "radical" members of the diaspora and of the *Euskal etxeak* embarrassed and created trouble for the directors of the clubs (Totoricagüena, 2004).

> The institutional diaspora is not a community free of tensions and disagreements. This divisiveness, in my understanding, cannot be read in white and black tones. That is to say, it is not much about being in favour or against ETA, but about perceiving to be utilized so overtly for political partisan purposes, which defy, somehow, the defining nature of many of the diaspora associations: inclusiveness, openness, and, in theory, non-partisan allegiances and apolitical principles. These divisions tend to neutralize any preconceived interpretation of the diaspora as a homogeneous and passive entity. It shows that the Basque diaspora is as plural, even politically, as the Basque homeland society itself (Oiarzabal, 2007: 124).

Despite the so-called "apolitical" status of the *Euskal etxeak* and FEVA,[42] during the 1990's and the first years of the 21st century (Arrondo, 2012), these groups were repeatedly called by the Basque government to stand up against the ETA's violence (Oiarzabal, 2015), meaning that they were supposed to make political declarations towards a homeland political matter in order to improve the image of the homeland and the Basques themselves. During the Third World Congress of Basque Communities the PNV Basque government pressured delegates

[42] According to Muguerza (1999:61) "The Federation of Basque-Argentine Entities, or FEVA, is the institutional synthesis of the organised Basque-Argentine community and the Basque participants in its activity. FEVA is the result of the evolution of the multiple institutions of Basque character, spontaneously emerged throughout Argentine history from the vocation of the Basque immigrants, their Argentine descendants and their friends and supporters to join with a common goal: ' live and transmit the Basque culture forming an essential part of the Argentine people'."

to approve a document condemning ETA's violence, to what many delegates "did not welcome the draft, and some delegates were angered by it" (Oiarzabal, 2013: 111). In fact, this declaration caused tensions within the homeland with the then Basque Nationalist Left party (*Sozialista Abertzaleak*[43] stating that the PNV and the Basque government were "manipulating" the diaspora (Oiarzabal, 2013: 112).

There's a clear dependency relationship on the side of the Basque associations as well as of FEVA, of financing from the Basque government (controlled since its beginning with just a brief hiatus by the PNV, which is often confused with it), what to some extent keeps them somehow "trapped."

On the one hand, the *Euskal etxeak* occasionally made political declarations in order to satisfy the needs of the PNV and the Basque government for support from their 8th "herrialde" or province. On the other hand, most of the solidarity work towards political prisoners was made by organisations and individuals apart from the *Euskal etxeak*, meaning that the sensitive political issues, especially those that are not of the interest of the PNV leaders, are left outside the Basque clubs, as mentioned by Santiago Bereciartua and Carlos Aznarez in interviews for the present work.

Varadarajan's (2010:6) "domestic abroad" theory, a "widespread form of transnationalism, produced through state policies and initiatives aimed at institutionalising the relationship between nation-states and their diasporas," falls short when applied to the *Euskal etxeak* and the politics of the Basque diaspora as they do not represent the interests of a state, rather of a subnational/sub state entity/group with the goal of the formation of a state. The actions of groups and movements that both undermine state control (in the case of the Spanish state), while reinforcing the pledge of a new state (a Basque one), means that both classical theories of diaspora and Varadajaran's approach are insufficient to explain the complex reality of the Basque diaspora.

Today, with internet, the relationship between the Basque homeland and the diaspora deepens. Not only political parties, but the Basque government itself, promote initiatives to bring

[43] *Sozialista Abertzaleak, Herri Batasuna, Batasuna, Euskal Herritarrok* are the different names of basically the same political party or coalition by which the left-wing *abertzale* political movement was known over the years in the Spanish side of the Basque Country. Once one party was illegalized by the Spanish justice system, another came to life.

these two worlds together. Also, the phenomenon of those who returned to the homeland and how the process of forming a diasporic identity is ever-present. Identity is given by a complex process, as mentioned in previous sections, but "memory" is an important component: The memory of the homeland and the memory of the diaspora. Also social/group cohesion is an important element in the process and institutions such as the *Euskal etxeak* or any other ethnic-diasporic institution work as a bridge between the different places (as well as serves as a place of identity).

Even though returning, the feeling of "being exiled" remains, (particularly for the Basque nationalist-left members) the feeling of inbetweenness due to a process of hybridisation and juxtaposition of identities, personal and collective memories and social relationships build along the time (Lemus, 2002).

In this chapter, I have analysed the history of the Basque diaspora focusing in Argentina and the tensions within their main associative institutions which, to a large extent, explains the emergence of political alternatives to the hegemony of the PNV (hegemony that is also present in the homeland with regard to the institutionality, that is, the Basque government) that will be further analysed in Chapter 4. In the next chapter I will explore internet and social media in depth, focusing on the formation of online communities, the promotion of political agendas and politically engaged groups as well as I will debate the concept of the Digital Country.

Chapter 3 - Internet

3. Internet as media and the formation of online communities

Mass media works as a one-way identity maintenance tool, whilst internet provides a two-multiple-way tool and a space for identity shaping and (re)construction, a "hybrid space" (Bhabha, 1994) and even a "third space" (Karim, 2003) where uneven identities and those shaped by different realities (such as of Basques in the homeland and in Argentina, with all the influences of neighbouring identities and politics and a particular process of identity construction) coexist and influence each other. A space situated somewhere between the local and the global (Sassen, 2006, 2008), "[t]his zone of multiple borders is a frontier of modernity, where new ways of addressing the problems of contemporary social relations are sought" (Karim, 2003: 16).

Harry Pross, in 1972, defined three groups in which the media can be divided (see also Menezes, 2007). The primary media would be the one that comes down to the body and natural languages, relationships face to face; the secondary, as a more particularly binding, in which the person uses artefacts to communicate, from paintings to writing, press and books. It is from this stage when humans begin to forge national ties, when they move away from their small community of primary relationships and start to communicate - and link up with a larger society that, though, maintains significant similarities to their local settings.

People move beyond from family identification, micro-identification with their city to another form of binding or linkage, the identification of common features in communities that are not necessarily located in their corner, but perhaps hundreds of kilometres away. Through the press people start to see themselves as part of a much larger group and at the same time, recognises the presence of others who share different values, different languages.

Tertiary media already gives us an exacerbation of these ties or linkages encountered in secondary media. The support becomes the internet and the press itself is re-signified. We no longer limit ourselves to information in our country or region (or in our language), but we are led to the world and, of course, we can create links that overflow physical boundaries.

> New media, especially the internet, are giving rise to novel communicative spaces and practices and creating new discursive communities that, while they may as in the case of

> Eritreans, build upon existing social networks on the ground, bring them together and extend their membership and significance in novel ways (Bernal, 2006: 163).

The internet, understood as "a community-forming device, where users meet and interact, thereby constituting social networks and online communities - placeless, deterritorialised and without face-to-face interaction" (Oiarzabal, 2012: 1469), surpasses the mere printed paper and the geographical and territorial boundaries and begins to encompass the entire world population, without physical barriers, that has an internet connection, thus allowing the existence of consciousness of other people, groups, languages and ideas while the creation of a common identity in the midst of diversity.[44]

Internet is where one can feel at home, immersed in a community based on affinity and mutual recognition of one's identity, something that you cannot have with unidimensional medias such as television or radio. Internet both reinforces and challenges borders, thus it has the potential of territorialisation and deterritorialisation (Lambach, 2014; Herrera, 2007; Amaral, 2016), while fostering virtual returns to the homeland as a surrogate for actual return (Eriksen, 2006; Kang, 2009)[45].

> The territory of the internet is an immense network, where the user's places are created by himself, based on the symbolic exchanges that (s)he makes with other individuals and with the space. In this sense, de-territoriality, immateriality, real-time and interactivity summarise the main characteristics of cyberspace, which is affirmed as the de-territorialisation of sociability. In the virtual universe, the concept of territory is synonymous with systems of representation/signification that attribute sense/identity to space. Cyberspace, as a space of fluxes and a timeless time (Castells, 1996), reformulates the traditional notions of space, place, network and community (Amaral, 2016: 60).

Everyday life is already transnational (Campbell, 1996), with internet and the formation of an online imagined community, the juxtaposition of local and transnational becomes undeniable in a complex process of identity construction. Internet is the sound box of multiple public spheres (Trinta and Nogueira, 2013) - in itself a sound box of different debates and communicational exchanges - and a "virtual public sphere" as well (Staeheli et al, 2002: 990), a

[44] See also Wellman and Gulia, 1999; Wellman, 2001; Postmes and Brunstig, 2002; Lemos, 2002; Tubella, 2005.
[45] Note that diasporic institutions might have the same effect of allowing for a virtual return to the homeland even before the use of internet.

space in which people come together to discuss, listen, and debate political ideas (Staeheli et al, 2002: 993).

It is known that Habermas' public sphere tends to be somewhat idealised and even over-optimistic, while focusing only on deliberation and obscuring inequalities, as Staeheli (et al, 2002: 994) notes that "[i]n a material sense, if people simply cannot get to a place where issues are deliberated [...] then the polity is similarly unrepresentative of the people who live in the territory associated with it." Internet, as the author also notes, might be the forum to overcome such difficulties and limitations by the creation of "virtual political spaces" (Staeheli et al, 2002: 994), or a virtual public sphere.

> Within this space, many kinds of 'virtual' community have arisen. The word 'virtual' is in inverted commas to indicate that the communities are real, but the space in which they take place is virtual (Everard, 2000: 124).

Yet, location is an important element on the negotiation of one's identity (Vertovec, 1999), internet brings us a new element, a (virtual) space where relations occur without the need of a territory for relations to take place. Take the case of the Sindhis ethnic minority in Pakistan and India. They were displaced and dispersed during India's partition and internet works as a re-creation of their community in the virtual world (Tekwani, 2003). Kurds, Macedonians and Armenians, according to Bakker (2001) use websites to (re)construct their nations, a meeting point for all the diaspora without the restrictions of borders and state regulations.

In the Basque case, individuals and groups from different parts of the world can deliberate in a single virtual space, creating a virtual public sphere of Basques both from the diaspora and the homeland. As a communicational tool, as well as a space for propaganda, the dissemination of ideas and political agendas, internet seems to work as intended.

Bakker (2001) notes that communities, diasporas or even nationalisms (of any kind or Basque specifically) predates internet as it simply works as a third space (Karim, 2003), more than just be a mirror, where communities get together and have discussions that are as real as those of "real life," or better saying, offline lives. Bakker wrote his paper in 2001, when internet was still on its 1.0 phase, before social media tools such as Facebook or Twitter were even invented. Yet, Bakker points out the importance of the so-called online world for minority groups and that "Online discussions in mailing lists, chats and newsgroups have the same topics

as ‘real’ life discussions” (2001: 4). Also, Rheingold, in 1993, already pointed out for the early stages of the formation of online or virtual communities. Malini argues that,

> Undoubtedly, [internet] diversify voices. Internet is a minority production machine. It creates this possibility of granting communities that are based on their own interests, and this creates a dynamic of implication of a set of publics that are also based on a logic of identity. It is also based on a perspective of diffusion of minority voices. Internet is undoubtedly the most important device for minorities […]. However, internet has also become a very low cost medium for the production of news that explains the political, cultural and social differences of a group or of a small or even large population. And that implies new types of politics (2017, online).

Taking into account that the internet became generally available to the public in the early 1990’s and in less than 30 years, it has become an indivisible part of the daily lives of diasporic groups, Oiarzabal notes that internet “might facilitate the formation of a diaspora, because it might help to regain and/or increase its consciousness of belonging to the same human group as such” (2013: 31). In other words, diasporas predate internet, yet, internet might help on the formation of new ones as well as internet potencialises identities and relationships that already exist in the concrete world (Amaral, 2017).

Online social networks (such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo Groups, etc) are a suitable place to analyse the contact between individuals of a community. In the Basque case, one can verify the ample usage of such platforms as a way to maintain contacts as well as forming linkages (Tsavkko Garcia, 2012) in an environment full of symbols that leads to a search to comprehend the surrounding. Individuals who share common symbols and see themselves as part of a broad ethnic/national community - with different intensities, though - tend to connect in virtual communities and create links while sharing experiences and reinforcing ethnic ties (Díaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko, 2015) recreating existential spaces (Zahar and Elhajji, 2011) without the need of a (physical) territory.

> Contemporary growth in worldwide international migration begs the question of whether or not ethnic groups will eventually assimilate completely into their new host state’s culture, lifestyle, religion, traditions, etc., or, will continue to safeguard their own ethnic identity and basically lead two lives, one in the privacy of their own home with family ethnic traditions, and another separate public life outside the home which reflects more the common culture of the host country environment, although influenced by their own ethnicity. Different Basque migrants

> have selected each path. Many have assimilated, and incorporated the host culture or a different aspect of identity, and no longer define themselves as Basque. Others have preserved and/or reconstructed a Basque identity, and continue, even after five or six generations, to define themselves as Basques and maintain ties to the homeland (Totoricagüena, 2010: 36).

As noted by Oiarzabal (2013: 73), "internet has the potential to maintain Basque identity abroad," also to assist on the resistant of assimilation, as well as to help on the re-discovering of a lost or fading identity and to build/rebuild ties with the homeland. Nevertheless, it has a less relevant role in the process of identity maintenance on the homeland due to banal nationalism, (subnational) state-sponsored activities and programs, etc, though until the Basque Country can be constituted as a nation-state that "shelters and objectifies the Basque national identity" (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015: 278), the definition over this identity will always be an object of heated discussion and debates.

3.1. Virtual community and the Digital Country: The online construction of national identity

Virtual communities are symbolic communities where individuals connect through symbolic exchanges mediated by internet and not by face to face relations, based on "common interest and not frontiers or fixed territorial delimitations" (Lemos, 2002) - though, as will be explained in this chapter, in the Basque case the physical territory is constantly reminded and invoked. It should be noted, however, that "not every virtual aggregation can be called or considered as a (virtual) community, for this there must be a degree of relationship between its members in which there is affinity, the sharing of emotions, symbolic exchanges and a sense of community, of belonging among individuals" (Tsavkko Garcia, 2015b: 5). The virtual community, therefore, is a "network-territory" (Haesbaert, 2004), where distance is not relevant in a space of collective sharing, of interaction, with virtual mobility (Lemos, 2002) or symbolic territorialities.

> Social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook and the Dutch Hyves allow users to publish hyperlinks on their personal profile pages; they can list preferences, join groups, and express affiliations with interest-based communities. […] Hypertext becomes a discursive space of encounter (Leurs and Ponsanezi, 2014: 638-9)

Virtual contacts or connections are added to face to face contacts that alters and broadens our (traditional) perceptions of belonging (Gordo and Megías, 2006), virtually elimination frontiers and time/space barriers through appropriations of cyberspace (Recuero, 2009) turning websites and social media tools into a conversational space where individuals represent themselves, form networks and, therefore, build online imagined communities (Anderson, 2005) - or, in its case, virtualise pre-existent imagined communities I draw attention to the fact that, virtual, for Levy (2009), is not the opposite of real, but its continuity through a process of virtualisation.

Online communities are placeless territories where identity is negotiated, symbols and myths are reproduced, even reinvented and reinterpreted, where the individual is reterritorialised. On the one hand, internet exacerbates the already present identity fragmentation brought or facilitated by globalisation, transatlantic migration and international commerce, allowing or forcing individuals to live in a different and borderless (spatial, temporal and geographical) reality (Hall, 2001). On the other hand, also promotes (re)territorialisation as allows for the construction of a virtual world (Levy, 2009), amplifying reality in a process of simultaneity and virtualisation uniting the physical and digital spaces reducing the world to almost nothing through process of immediacy, instantaneity and interactivity (Virilio, 1997, 1999).

In other words, just like living outside the homeland, internet can dilute or reinforce identity references (Ward, 2008).

> As Karim (2002) has noted, a number of post-colonial diaspora groups, as well as older groups such as Europe's Roma, are using online networks to communicate. The content of their messaging consists largely of cultural, heritage, genealogical, and religious information, as the sites contain discussions of traditional lore, festivals, and recipes and worldwide locations of community members and institutions to community publications, local activities, news from home, or the home country. Current events and developments in the diaspora are discussed regularly on online news groups. Individuals from respective diasporas use the Net to create online resources about their cultures, often in collaboration with cross-cultural research teams, as well as using the internet to create directories of community members and services (Tekwani, 2003:178).

Today, one can be in several places and witness different experiences at the same time, and keep in touch with thousands of people as if they were on the doorstep, or closer, thanks to changing technology of transport and instant communication that tends to lead us to a world

polluted by ‘dromos’ (race). This view is supported by Gulia (1999) and Wellman (1997, 2000) who claim that the changes brought about by the development of transportation and the media contribute to the expansion of social networks by allowing social ties to be created and kept even from a distance and, in many cases, overcoming the geographical territory. Lemos (2002) supports Virilio’s vision of immediacy and instantaneity stating that the new digital technologies allow us to escape the linear time and geographical space. We are therefore transported to a reality based tele-presence and instantaneous time (not timeless), of ubiquity and that lacks synchronicity (Oiarzabal, 2013) where we have virtual control over space and time.

> Inside the digital space it is possible to see the time in a clock in which its pieces are not all in the same place. In the real world we would be before a disassembled clock and, therefore, useless; but not in the digital. The property of de-localisation frees the components of having to reside in the same space; The parts of a machine can remain in remote places and that it works, because the relations between the parts are maintained (Alonso and Arzoz, 2002: 16).

Such digital technologies allow us to escape lineal time and the limits of geographical space (Lemos, 2002). Internet promotes a “time sharing,” as it promotes an approach, in the same national soil, of acts and actors who do not necessarily need to be connected by ethnic, cultural and national ties (Anderson, 2005). However, the sense of belonging of an individual to a community is a result of the moment this individual, together with others recognises and is recognised as a community.

It is to say that internet allows the formation of linkages between individuals, whether they are in the same territory – “soil” – or in different territories but connected by internet itself. Space can be understood as communication networks or a tangle of the previous, where the dissemination of information ends up reducing distances and bring together individuals from various places on the globe in a single virtual territory marked by virtual presence and online interactivity that subverts spatial and temporal perception.

Díaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko Garcia propose the concept of “Digital Country:”

> Formed by a territory in which the geographic influences of the map and the online construction of the national identity coexist. This is a third dimension between the cloud and the map, where both realities inhabit and influence each other. The administrative reality of a country influences the online construction of a national identity and the result of this relationship is framed in a third dimension, which is neither the offline place nor the online

> space: the construction of offline and online identity is framed in the territory of the digital country. This dimension, therefore, supposes that the country, as of its territorial limits is concerned, expands. It encompasses no more land than it hitherto had, for that is the dimension of the map; Rather, like the augmented realities, it draws and traces another dimension (2015: 61).

The proposed "Digital Country" is a set of concepts; the "Map," that refers to the "administrative reality (social, political, economic or cultural) of a country within geographical limits", the "cloud", that "alludes to the online construction of the national identity and to the non-geographic space in which these relations inhabit", and the "territory", not only physical, as mentioned, but also comprehending political and cultural dimensions (Haesbaert, 2002), in which "the geographic influences of the map and the online construction of the national identity coexist" (Diaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko Garcia, 2015: 60-61).

"The map, though, is not exceeded, but blurred" (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015: 283), and internet is influenced by the notions of territory and geographical place of a given community and the localisation of individuals, yet it does not occupy a geographical place, working as a space of convergence with the "online world" with its own logic.

> Computer-mediated communication does not exist independently from face-to-face patterns of communication. The hybrid space is both physical and online simultaneously, as there is a symbiotic, reflexive, and inextricably woven relationship between online experiences and physical experiences. Cyberspace helps to maintain the networks of social ties existing within the wider physical community" (Oiarzabal, 2013: 39).

The websites, blogs, mailing lists, Facebook communities, institutional websites, etc, would form, together, this digital country, where Basques meet, both from the diaspora and the homeland, and expand their sense of belonging in a process of (re)creation and maintenance of their own identity. A meeting point, online, of different territories in a third space known as the internet. (Re)creation as such contacts are bound to bring new elements from the contacts of individuals from different backgrounds and immersed in different cultures worldwide - as well as from different migration waves -, and maintenance (Oiarzabal, 2013) as the core of their identities (such as symbols, history, etc) remain the same and is shared online.

Internet presents itself as a third space, not physical, but one of flows (Castells, 2012), the one of socialisation (Maffesoli, 1996), where local and global (Robertson, 1995; Sassen, 2006,

2008), offline and online converge and cohabitate (Castells, 2012) and whereas the notion of territory is not just of a physical one, but understood as well as virtual, as a continuation of flows on cyberspace mediated by technologies of information and communication. According to Scolari (2009), cyberspace can be understood as a world, a space and a place where social relations occur and take place, and where linkages are formed and (re)signified.

This third space is somewhere in between the homeland and the diaspora, as well as hovering over and interacting at the same time. Internet can be understood as well as a (virtual) place that, according to Ehrkamp (2005: 349), "lies at the intersection of different spaces and moments in time," being more than "simply a container that serve as platforms for the construction of subject positions and identities; nor are places static" (Ehrkamp, 2005: 349). Therefore, online communities can be understood as communal places that promote and reinforce identities that, nevertheless, are not contained or restrained by the limits of such communities. In a sense, internet is more than a mere extension or appendage of face-to-face relations, but an integral part of the complicated and intricate process of identity negotiation and political mobilization, an integral part of reality.

3.2. Basques and internet for political engagement

> The Egungoak [third generation of Basques], descendants of Basque immigrants led an ethnic revival, using educational tools to move it along. They worked hard to reestablish cultural identity through learning Euskara, dance, music, and history. The Egungoak also instituted the blurring of geographic boundaries, sharing education among Basques outside their cities and states. Improved automobiles, air travel, and technology greatly aided the transformation of ethnic identity, and local place was no longer the sphere of influence for ethnic expression (Laxalt Mackey, 2015: 62).

One cannot underestimate issues such as digital divide and the fact that many Basques for different reasons would not access the internet with the purpose of deliberating, discussing ideas or just of keeping in touch with others through social media tools, but at the same time no one expects every Basque to engage politically or even to be fully aware of its identity as member of a diaspora. Different from recent immigrants, for whom integration with the new society can be more difficult and full of obstacles (Kuo, 2014; Titzmann and Fuligni, 2015), members of the Basque diaspora are generally integrated within the large local community in part because it is a

historical migration with ancient and deep roots, and also because of the cultural similarities in the case of Argentina.

Also, political offline fragmentation often generates and even exacerbates online fragmentation, meaning that sometimes internet has more potential to create alternative political spaces (Staeheli et al, 2002: 944) than it can actually be perceived. As the interviews made with Basque activists will show,[46] each group will have a different approach regarding the use of interne and will use appropriate it in very diverse ways. Through informal conversations I was able to realise that there are clear connections among members of different groups, from personal to political ones, though such connections are not always that clear online. The common political goals, however, contribute to less fragmentation and many times joint political action takes place.

Despite the fragmentation, the process that Spicer (1971) will call the persistent identity system based on the opposition of "us" in relation to the "other" creates a sense of internal or inter-group solidarity that helps the group to survive longer. This solidarity is the basis of a series of political actions joining different individuals and groups from the diaspora. Examples of joint online political actions that can be mentioned are the statement made by several bloggers and activists from the Basque Country and the diaspora upon the death of Pete Cenarrusa in 2013[47] a Basque-American politician, subscribed by Basque activists and bloggers (and sympathisers of the cause) from the USA, Spain, France and Brazil; and two petitions in defence of the Basque organisations *Askapena* and *Etxerat* in 2015[48] (organised by activists from 6 different countries of the diaspora through Facebook and published in online platforms and on *Askapena's*

[46] For more on the usage of internet by the Basque diaspora and institutions see Oiarzabal 2012, 2013; Alonso and Arzoz, 2003; Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2016; and Díaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko Garcia, 2015.

[47] See: A Basque in Boise. (October 8, 2015). "In Defence of Pete Cenarrusa: In Memorian (1917-2013)." [Blog Post]. Retrieved from www.blogseitb.us/basqueboise/2013/10/08/in-defense-of-pete-cenarrusa-in-memorian-1917-2013

[48] See: Bereciartua, S. (2015). "Petition: Terminar con la persecución política judicial contra la organización Askapena y sus militantes." Retrieved from https://www.change.org/p/consejo-general-del-poder-judicial-espa%C3%B1ol-presidente-del-gobierno-espa%C3%B1ol-mariano-rajoy-terminar-con-la-persecuci%C3%B3n-pol%C3%ADtica-judicial-contra-la-organizaci%C3%B3n-askapena-y-sus-militantes?recruiter=18972201andutm_source=share_petitionandutm_medium=facebookandutm_campaign=share_facebook_responsiveandutm_term=des-lg-no_src-no_msg and Santiago, B. (June 3, 2015). "Petition: Presidente Gobierno Español y Consejo General del Poder Judicial Español: Terminar con la persecución política judicial contra la Asociación Etxerat." Retrieved from https://secure.avaaz.org/es/petition/Presidente_Gobierno_Espanol_y_Consejo_General_del_Poder_Judicial_Espanol_Terminar_con_la_persecucion_politica_judicial_c/?pv=0andrc=taggingandfb_action_ids=10153333743380449andfb_action_types=og.shares)

website).[49]In both cases, members of the Basque diaspora worldwide (and supporters) heavily relied on social media tools to discuss the general idea, to produce the written material, to publish and to publicise it. In other words, internet was fundamental in the making of both political statements in all of its phases.

In sum, offline and online are often complementary, fragmentation in one side tends to repeat itself on the other, issues and problems as well, but internet allows for broader connections, for virtual borderless attachment, sharing and mobilisation, and it has potential to be explored. It is worth mentioning that social networks may be the engine of some changes, but there are limits to the size of the changes, just as, depending on the case, it does not replace "old" mobilisations such as street demonstrations and face-to-face discussions. For instance, the Filtro Hospital massacre[50] is a good example of political mobilisation of members of the Basque diaspora before the use of social media tools. However, the internet adds a new value to traditional forms of mobilization, becoming part of a new form of political and social action (Tsavkko Garcia, 2016a). Therefore, internet adds rather than substitutes traditional spaces, relationships, encounters, processes, etc, it is a third space that does not substitute, but complements life itself.

One must bear in mind the different realities, not only social ones, but also of penetration of the internet, the proportion, scope and even the capacity to raise awareness of the subject in order to understand the limits of its effectiveness and how it can shape a diaspora's reality. Here, we focus on those actively engaged in political activities/groups as well as active online, using internet as a space for identity maintenance/construction and as a political tool.

> '[e]ven as diasporic identity is shaped by engagement with constant manoeuvring to reconnect (and disconnect) with home, it also undergoes complex negotiations as a result of interactions with the host society' (Yeoh and Huang 2000: 414).

As it will be shown in the next chapter, there is a widespread use of social media tools across the analysed groups. Although with different weights, with different strategic visions, it seems impossible to separate oneself from the internet or take it for granted. From the simplest

[49] See: Desde la Diáspora Vasca solidaridad ante el juicio de Askapena. (June 11, 2015). Retrieved from http://askapena.org/eu/content/desde-la-di%C3%A1spora-vasca-solidaridad-ante-el-juicio-de-askapena

[50] In 1992-94, a series of demonstrations in Uruguay in support for seven alleged ETA members living in the country, who were subject to an extradition request by Spain, resulted in fights with the local military police and the death of one demonstrator and the serious injury of over 100, amidst a huge demonstration near the Filtro Hospital, where three of the political prisoners had been taken due to a hunger strike (Mintegiaga, 2009).

uses, as a mere tool to pass on information and news, to use as effective means of recruitment and the main vehicle of intra-group relations, it is a fundamental tool that, little by little, is no longer just a tool to became an integral part of everyday life, inseparable from any other space of militancy, engagement or (re)production of identity.

Chapter 4: Abertzale and Left-Wing Abertzale groups

4. Overview: From Udalbiltza and the international solidarity to the political mobilisation in Argentina

This chapter will deal with groups, collectives, initiatives and networks that identify ideologically in different - and sometimes contradictory - ways and whose members many times were also affiliated or supporters of two or more organisations over time and at the same time. As aforementioned, the number of Basques that actively committed themselves to the struggle for creating awareness of the Basque reality in the Argentinian diaspora within ideological and organised institutions, as well as for solidarity of Basque prisoners or for the independence of their homeland, country is small compared to the larger diaspora. Cultural activities, and also sportive ones within the *Euskal etxeak* have historically gathered more adherents. We divided such groups into four clusters:

Abertzale Left/Diaspora:

- Jo Ta Ke Rosario
- A Casa/Etxera
- Diaspora Borrokan

Abertzale Left/Non-Diaspora

- *Askapena*:
    - Euskal Herriaren Lagunak (EHL)

Abertzale/Diaspora

- *EA* (Alkartetxe)
    - Akelarre Kultur Taldea

Abertzale/Abertzale Left/Diaspora

- Asociación Diáspora Vasca (ADV)
- Red Independentistak
- Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca en América

- Askatasunaren Bidea

Some groups identify themselves as being part of the pro-independence nationalist left or nationalist ideology, while others have (and have had) members identified as such, but that do not officially claim such ideology, but that constantly took part in activities with other Left Wing Abertzale groups and individuals, and that, in a way, belong to its ideological environment such as EA's Alkartetxe in Argentina, Akelarrre or ADV. Also, all but one group identify as being part of the diaspora, EHL, that do not, yet it acts as Askapena's wing in Argentina, Uruguay, etc…

I travelled to Argentina in 2015 in order to interview some of the aforementioned groups' members and most representative individuals in person. In addition, I conducted interviews through e-mail messages and through other means of communication as well as in-person interviews in the Basque Country.[51] The interviewees conducted were:

Santiago Bereciartua (*Jo Ta Ke*, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* and *Diaspora Borrokan*); Daniel Bilbao (ADV, *Diaspora Borrokan*); Carlos Aznarez (EHL); Gabi Basañez (Askapena); Txutxi Ariznabarreta (Independentistak); Mariana Fernández Castelli (*Independentistak*, *Askatasunaren Bidea*, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca*); Horacio Marotto Etxezahar (*Askatasunaren Bidea*, *Independentistak*); Mariano Silva-Torrea (*Akelarre Kultur Taldea*); César Arrondo (EA, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca*) and Mikel Ezkerro (EA).

The *Gure Esku Dago*[52] homeland-based "dynamic" was not considered for this thesis as it works more as a gathering point of different ideological sensitivities within and outside the diaspora, as a network that hangs over other groups or even as an informal umbrella. It advocates for the independence of the Basque Country through massive demonstrations and activities and, also, through a popular consultation in Basque cities - and in the diaspora - for the exercise of the right of self-determination However, it lacks relationship with other movements in the diaspora, working as a catch-all movement and remains isolated from other issues and specificities of the Basque diaspora.

[51] All interviews were conducted in the Spanish language.
[52] *Gure Esku Dago* means "It is in our hands". For more information, see: "La iniciativa 'Gure Esku Dago' llega a la Diáspora y convoca en apoyo a la Cadena Humana del 8 de junio." (April 3, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/la-convocatoria-de-2018gure-esku-dago2019-llega-tambien-a-la-diaspora-y-convoca-a-la-cadena-humana-del-8-de-junio

There is also in the city of Rosario a group claiming the name of *Geroa Bai* (Yes to the Future), a coalition of *Abertzale* political parties and movements from the Community of Navarre such as the PNV, Atarrabia Taldea and the association Zabaltzen that was born after the disappearance of another coalition, the *Nafarroa Bai*, where Eusko Alkartasuna, Batzarre and Aralar (this one now integrated into the EH Bai coalition of the Basque *Abertzale* left) also were members. The group is coordinated by Fernando Lizarbe, a member of the PNV.

As both the *Geroa Bai* coalition and the homonymous Argentinian group do not claim to be part of the *Abertzale* left ideology its members were not interviewed for the present research. Nevertheless, it is important to mention the diversity of the political forces acting in Argentina showing solidarity and support towards the Basque Country. On its website, *Geroa Bai* Argentina describes itself as:

> An initiative of a team from Rosario, created with the objective of introducing Geroa Bai, the Government of Change led by Uxue Barkos, and the political situation of Nafarroa (in Basque), or Navarre (in Spanish). From an abertzale and progressive point of view, this project is directed in the first place to the Navarrese diaspora and the other territories that make up Euskal Herria, but also to all Argentines interested in the political reality of Navarra.[...] Through the dissemination of the actions of Geroa Bai, interviews with personalities from Navarra and Argentina, articles of our own production and organization of events, we hope to make the Navarrese abertzale and progressive sentiments reach Argentines and Navarreses.[53]

Fernando Lizarbe, the group's coordinator and a member of PNV (being part of the Geroa Bai coalition in Navarre), in a short e-mail message, explained that:

> Geroa Bai Argentina was born in 2013 as a blog set up by me to collaborate since Argentina with information and communicating [with the homeland]. Soon in 2016, with a group, we set up a website. Today I am in charge of publishing news from [the homeland] and the Navarrese diaspora in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. I have been in permanent contact with Geroa Bai from [the homeland] since it is important to act politically from this country with more Navarrese there are abroad, there is Argentina.

The aforementioned analysed groups can also be loosely divided into two main categories according to their main objectives and focus: Firstly, some groups focused more on culture and divulgation of an idea of Basqueness (as well as of the independence of their homeland).

[53] For more information, see: https://geroabaiargentina.com/

Secondly, other groups focus more on political action, mainly on the cause of ETA's political prisoners - though it is not uncommon to see an overlapping of both agendas from time to time.

Jo Ta Ke Rosario, for example, had two main agendas depending on the context they were inserted. Inside the Rosario Basque association *Zazpirak Bat* they promoted more cultural events, talks with representatives from the homeland and promoted the idea of an independent Basque Country, whereas outside the *Zazpirak Bat* they focused more on the defence of Basque prisoners and more proactive left-wing agendas with other groups and political parties from Argentina. According to Santiago Bereciartua:

> In 2003, […] we have participated in other struggles, other mobilisations and so on. One of them was the war with Iraq. 'No' to the imperialist war against Iraq. I remember that we participated here in a weekend, of activities. I remember that there was a demonstration, I remember that the demonstration was going to pass through the Plaza Gernika. By the way, when we passed the Plaza Gernika, we climbed a monolith that was there and we talked to the people, putting the Basque issue in solidarity with Iraq.

It is not to say that there were several conflicts with the board of directors of the Basque Centre for *Jo Ta Ke*'s political activities within *Zazpirak Bat* due to their leftist orientation adopted by the group in its activities.

A common reference to many of the groups founded during the 1990's and the beginning of the 21st century is the Basque homeland organisation *Udalbiltza*. Founded in 1999 as part of the Estella-Lizarra Agreement signed by different nationalist political parties from both the Basque Country Autonomous Community, Foral Community of Navarre and representatives of the so-called French Basque Country and social movements alike, Udalbiltza was a private association of municipal elected representatives that soon broke down into two different organisations, one hegemonised by PNV and Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) - that soon adopted the name Udalbiltza-Udalbide - and the other, more dynamic, hegemonised by the left-wing Abertzale groups and movements called Udalbiltza-Kursaal, or simply Udalbiltza. This organisation was responsible for the creation of the "*Euskal Herriko Naziotasun Aitormena-Declaración de Nacionalidad de Euskal Herria*" (EHNA, the Basque Country Declaration of

Nationality) that will be further analysed, and played a significant role within the diaspora. In the words of Loren Arkotxa,[54] former president of the organisation:

> Udalbiltza fitted in very well because the diaspora - although not first generation, but second or third - retains some nostalgia. I myself have lived in the diaspora. You always remember Euskal Herria, your town, how things are here, even if you went out to improve your life at an economic level, but the values you have been acquired here and in the diaspora are transmitted from generation to generation. When Udalbiltza went to explain again these values of Euskal Herria, the diaspora has not had to make any effort to understand it, they already carried it inside. The only thing that Udalbiltza has done is to remove a little the dust of that feeling that existed already in the diaspora.

Udalbiltza was shut down by the Spanish Judicial National Court (*Audiencia Nacional*) after a request by Judge Baltasar Garzón in 2003, for allegedly being controlled by ETA, though it continued to operate unofficially.[55] It is not a surprise that those groups in Argentina whose struggle focus more on the rights of Basque prisoners have in Garzón their main target of *escraches* (street demonstrations) and political actions. According to Santiago Bereciartua from *Jo Ta Ke* Rosario:

> This was, perhaps, one of the most important things that remained, because Rosario still remembers. We did an *escrache* against Baltasar Garzón during the whole weekend that the guy came, and a week too, with which the university here gave him - this was in 2003 - the doctor *honoris causa* title. To think that, in Argentina, more than anything, we know well that it has collaborated in part to justice - if you will - of those responsible for the military regime. In 2003 criticising Garzón was unthinkable (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

Carlos Aznarez, from the *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak* group (EHL), present in Argentina since 2010,[56] in an interview, mentions that they joined the demonstrations against Garzón around 2012-13, though they have joined demonstrations against the judge in a committee in solidarity with the Basque Country:

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[54] "Asociación Diáspora Vasca y Udalbiltza firman un acuerdo para dar a conocer la situación vasca internacionalmente." (October 1, 2005,). Retrieved from: http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/asociacion-diaspora-vasca-y-udalbiltza-firman-un-acuerdo-para-dar-a-conocer-la-situacion-vasca-internacionalmente?p=971

[55] For example, aforementioned Loren Arkotxa signed an agreement on behalf of *Udalbiltza* with *Asociación Diáspora Vasca*'s president Daniel Bilbao in 2005.

[56] "Se presenta en Buenos Aires la asociación Amigas y Amigos del Pueblo Vasco (Euskal Herriaren Lagunak)." (June 14, 2010). Retrieved from: http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/se-presenta-en-buenos-aires-el-capitulo-argentino-de-la-asociacion-amigas-y-amigos-del-pueblo-vasco-euskal-herriaren-lagunak

> We joined, two, three years ago, the *escraches* against Garzón, we organised ourselves, and from there more people joined, denouncing someone that here was very dear, [but] is now less loved, […] but here he was seen as a hero, he was the main figure of the repression in Euskal Herria. And this, of all, with some diaspora companions, we also participate in the, of a day that celebrates the collectivities, then there are the Syrians, the Russians, and included the Basques, recently. And there we go to all the Basque centres, it is a very gastronomic event and of a lot of dances, we are there but we are in a table, with a photo of the prisoners, claiming the thing of the prisoners. We are like the annoying fly, which always remembers that there is a beautiful geography in Euskal Herria, there are beautiful geographies, nice meals, nice dances, but there is a fight and this fight costs a lot of sacrifices, a lot of death, much torture, and that this is not a matter of passing, it is on the present, and there we are.

Mentioned by many interviewees is the case of the ETA's Basque refugee Josu Lariz Iriondo whose situation was a starting point for greater unity between different groups that had a common goal. According to César Arrondo, one of the ideas behind the formation of the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* was the outcome of Iriondo's case. According to Arrondo, from the broad mobilisation for Iriondo in 2004, an idea of a network or a common space for different political, yet nationalist, sensitivities of the Basque diaspora was born, as well as to propose a debate within and outside the Basque clubs on the Basque conflict, to which Iriondo was just one of many examples.

Iriondo, considered by Judge Baltasar Garzón ETA's representative in Uruguay, and of participating in a terrorist attack in the Basque city of Eibar, in 1984, where three police officers were injured, was arrested for the first time in Montevideo in November 2001 and once again in August 2002 and later expelled from the country to Argentina in November 2002 and

consequently arrested awaiting his extradition.[57] However, in May 2005 his extradition to Spain was denied by the Argentinean justice.[58]

Iriondo's case was of great relevance for the Basque diaspora in Argentina, as was the Filtro Hospital case in Uruguay roughly ten years before.

As aforementioned, Basques from all over the country, as well as from Uruguay and elsewhere started a campaign for Iriondo's release. During his trial he resembled the judge of the fact that Basque prisoners were constantly tortured in Spain, demanding not to be extradited. [59] Iriondo also received the support of different left wing organisations from Argentina, political parties and of the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (Mother of May Square, the leading historical and most well-known human rights movement in Argentina).

The Iriondo's case mobilised EA's *Alkartetxe* that repudiated any attempts to extradite him to Spain while comparing his case to the famous Burgos Trials, in 1970; ADV that also demanded his release accusing the Spanish government of persecution,; and *Jo Ta Ke* that demanded the Argentinean government to grant Iriondo the refugee status.[60] Carlos Aznarez

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[57] For more information see: "Detenido el director de la sucesora de 'Ardi Beltza' por su presunta integración en ETA." (September 29, 2003). *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/elpais/2003/09/29/actualidad/1064823419_850215.html; "Josu Lariz negó las acusaciones de Garzón, afirmó ser objeto de persecución política y mostró temor a ser torturado en caso de ser extraditado." (June 9, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/copy_of_josu-lariz-nego-las-acusaciones-de-garzon-afirmo-ser-objeto-de-persecucion-politica-y-mostro-temor-a-ser-torturado-en-caso-de-ser-extraditado?p=1159; "Encarcelado en Uruguay el presunto etarra Lariz Iriondo." (November 15, 2001). *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/diario/2001/11/15/espana/1005778816_850215.html; "Detenido en Uruguay uno de los etarras más buscados en Latinoamérica." (August 1, 2002). *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/diario/2002/08/01/espana/1028152804_850215.html; and "Detenido en Buenos Aires un presunto etarra tras ser expulsado de Uruguay." (November 22, 2002). *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/diario/2002/11/23/espana/1038006028_850215.html;

[58] Argentina deniega la extradición de un etarra por haber prescrito sus delitos. (2005, May 11). *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/diario/2005/05/11/espana/1115762414_850215.html

[59] Josu Lariz negó las acusaciones de Garzón, afirmó ser objeto de persecución política y mostró temor a ser torturado en caso de ser extraditado. (2004, June 9). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/copy_of_josu-lariz-nego-las-acusaciones-de-garzon-afirmo-ser-objeto-de-persecucion-politica-y-mostro-temor-a-ser-torturado-en-caso-de-ser-extraditado?p=1159

[60] Alkartetxe Argentina. (May 29, 2004). "Solidaridad con Josu Lariz [blog post]." Retrieved from http://eaargentina.blogspot.com/2004/05/solidaridad-con-josu-lariz-los.html; Alkartetxe Argentina. (May 29, 2004). "Solidaridad con Josu Lariz [blog post]." Retrieved from http://eaargentina.blogspot.com/2004/05/solidaridad-con-josu-lariz-los.html and Alkartetxe Argentina. (May 25, 2004). "Burgos II para Josu Lariz Iriondo [blog post]." Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espa%C3%B1ol/noticias/la-asociacion-diaspora-vasca-solicita-la-libertad-y-el-otorgamiento-de-refugio-del-refugiado-vasco-josu-lariz-iriondo; and Jo Ta Ke (November 10, 2003). "Solidaridad con represaliados políticos vascos en América latina." Retrieved from http://argentina.indymedia.org/news/2003/11/149158.php

notes that before the EHL, during the period of activity of solidarity committees with the Basque Country, they have also joined the campaigns for the release of Iriondo:

> We here started with solidarity [towards the Basque Country] well before EHL. And, above all, we strengthened that campaign when we fought for Josu Lariz Iriondo's freedom (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

But, why such groups were founded? The reasons vary, but it is possible to affirm the they were founded during and at least inspired by the period of internationalisation[61] of the Basque conflict through the *abertzale* left movement,*Herri Batasuna*[62] as its main political coalition, and ETA[63] (Alonso, 2010; Maskaliunaite, 2007) in particular, and most notably with the foundation of *Askapena* in the late 1980's and *Udalbiltza* in the late 1990's, and then with the creation of the EHNA as a culmination point of such strategy. The document "Herri Batasuna a las 3 aportaciones al Foro Alt. 94"[64] gives us an insight into the political strategy of the organization that combined a strongly Marxist discourse with the need for solidarity of Peoples through a new international order and the need to defend identity in the midst of a world in a frank process of globalization.

This internationalist ideology of worldwide solidarity was the engine of organisations linked to or close to the *Herri Batasuna* structure for the creation of political pressure groups and of maintenance of Basque identity outside of the homeland (adding a degree of politicisation), notably in Argentina, but also in other countries such as Venezuela, Uruguay and Chile. It is also part of the debate on the internationalization of the Basque conflict as a way of generating external solidarity and political pressure, not a surprise that this is one of the bases and foundations of Askapena's strategy, to provide solidarity, but also to embrace it in order to achieve its objectives, as explained by Gabi Basañez, Askapena's member interviewed for the current thesis. According to Oiarzabal,

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[61] The process of internationalising political conflicts is not uncommon, see for instance Feron and Beauzamy (2009), Jimenez (1992), Saikia and Stepanova (2009), Gun (2014).

[62] Political coalition and later political party founded in 1978 and dissolved in 2001 that gathered a large portion of the *Abertzale left* movements and political organisations of the time.

[63] Organizations such as *Kanporako Harremanak Komitea* or Committee on External Relations (KHK) from 1991 to 1994, *Kanporako Eraketa Amankomunatua* or Joint Structure of the Exterior (KEA) from 1994 to 1996 or *Xaki*, from 1996 to 2007 when it was illegalized by judge Baltazar Garzón accused of being part of ETA (Heiberg, 2007), had less effect on diasporic organisations, though they worked as diplomatic bodies of the armed organisation.

[64] Document presented at the Foro Alternativo, in Madrid (1994). See: http://www.spunk.org/texts/groups/taragona/index.html

> The government's calls for the diaspora to play the role of the Basque Country's ambassadors of promoting a peaceful and positive image of the Basque Country have been answered on multiple occasions as diaspora Basques are confronted by news that almost exclusively associate Basques with violence. That is, there is a common interest for both homeland and diaspora to overcome such a negative identification and stereotype by promoting a collective positive image (2007:117).

It is not to say, though, that the groups analysed in this theses were mere proxies of *Herri Batasuna* (and its successors), *Askapena* or even *Udalbiltza*, in fact they maintained different degrees of connections and synergy, generally would agree in a set of agendas and work together, but, according to the interviews, there was a considerable degree of autonomy/independence between the groups and, in their case, the mother organizations in the Basque Country - this is true even in the case of *Eusko Alkartasuna*'s *Alkartetxe* in Argentina.

When questioned the interviewees were not able to remember cases in which they had an open conflict regarding the position of their "mother organizations" in the homeland, that is, the affirmation that the Argentine groups always acted with total freedom was not, at least on a large scale, tested in the face of some great controversy. For instance, according to Arrondo,[65] the policy of the Argentine EA's Alkartetxe was to move away from conflicting issues internal to the party in the Basque Country and that at most the Argentine section of EA did not disclose some material that they did not necessarily agree, but were always willing to discuss any issues when invited to do so. *Eusko Alkartasuna*'s activity in Argentina also fits into a strategy of internationalisation of the party in the Basque Country that found the willingness of some individuals to form a group to promote political agendas and impose new debates on the diaspora. The same goes with the EHL, born as part of a strategy of *Askapena* and the *Abertzale* left, as Aznarez explains:

> So the EHL is this, our reference, not our conduction, our reference is Askapena. In other words, we consulted with them a lot of things, [we consulted] the annual campaign that Askapena proposes to us, [that] we will defend to death (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

[65] From his interview: "Likewise, we always kept a little distance [from internal affairs of the party in the Basque Country]. […] I never asked the party if it could do those things that I wanted to do, or not. The party has never told me it was wrong. We really were in a good direction."

It is obvious that EHL was founded as part as *Askapena's* international strategy to create awareness over the issue of Basque political prisoners and the independence of the Basque Country.

Akelarre Kultur Taldea, though, was founded as a project to promote the idea of Basqueness in a particular region of Argentina. The *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* is, yet, another group formed in the Basque Country and then exported towards the diaspora, as well as its successor, the *Independentistak* network. ADV is the oldest group of the Basque *abertzale* left in Argentina, founded as a meeting point for members of the diaspora in several countries and then active especially in Argentina with ties to several other organisations, their activity was impacted by *Udalbiltza's* guidelines and presence, yet they precede such organisation.

According to Bereciartua, *Jo Ta Ke*'s birth relates to the particular situation of the Basque diaspora in the city of Rosario, with the divide between the *Zazpirak Bat* and the *Centro Navarro*, and also due to the lack of room for broader political discussions within the same institutions. The influence of *Udalbiltza* on *Jo Ta Ke*'s inception and development as a group is clear, as well as over other groups who were founded taking the organization as a form of inspiration or at least a model to be followed - also collaborating and putting forth its agenda. The case of *Askatasunaren Bide* is paradigmatic, as it functions as an unofficial Basque migrant association, while maintaining a strong online presence with opinionated, political and historical texts and maintaining contacts with other groups in the Basque leftist diaspora.

One thing that is clear is that to a certain extent, the Basque diaspora groups ended and were largely conditioned to certain actions and campaigns mirroring the politics of the homeland, by adopting campaigns linked to the political calendar and political temperature of the Basque Country; adopting agendas of solidarity with the *Abertzale left* in its diverse processes of illegalization; and accompanying and demonstrating to every truce of the armed group ETA.

In sum, either as unprecedented initiatives created exclusively within the diaspora or as groups created since the homeland to amplify specific political agendas, the groups studied played a fundamental role in creating alternative debates within the Basque diaspora in Argentina, seeking to impose a more radical agendas and even more clear positions around ETA prisoners or the very idea of the independence of the Basque Country by creating a broad

network of contacts and activism with left-wing groups in Argentina and across Latin America directly impacting the diaspora.

As a final note, one must remind that the post-Franco Basque government (led almost uninterruptedly by the PNV) also had its internationalisation strategies, as shown by Oiarzabal (2007), with magazines, website sections dedicated to the diaspora, a department within the government dedicated to diasporic relations, and a TV channel, among other initiatives.

4.1. Asociación Diáspora Vasca (ADV)

The *Asociación Diaspora Vasca*[66] (ADV), or Basque Diaspora Association, was the first group formed outside the *Euskal etxeak* to use internet as a mean for political engagement within members of the diaspora. At its peak the group gathered over 200 members from all over the world. According to Daniel Bilbao, ADV's founder, the idea was to "summon other Basques, defenders of human rights, ecology, and women's rights, to make them aware of the struggle of the Basques for their independence and add them to that project" (Interview with Daniel Bilbao). By "other Basques" Bilbao means those that are not part of *Euskal etxeak* or that are not satisfied with the "fierce" PNV's "hegemony and ideological control" (Interview with Daniel Bilbao).

Bilbao founded ADV in Argentina as the "culmination of a process that began in 1996, with a radio show about Basque issues" (Interview with Daniel Bilbao) and a book with interviews with different members of the diaspora. Soon the group gained online presence with a website and a news bulletin called *Berriak* sent through e-mail to subscribers. Then, a mailing list was created to gather those who subscribed to the news bulletin and the group started spreading all over the Basque diaspora worldwide.

ADV's objectives, in Bilbao's words, were:

> We are looking for Basques who are committed to Euskal Herria, who want to work, do specific things in favour of the independence, organise ourselves, meet periodically and take care of telling the world about the state of exception that Basques live.

According to Bilbao the group was born due to his initiative. He even owned the mailing list, meaning that it was a rather personal project. Based on Bilbao's view of the Basque issue

[66] Sometimes also called *Associación Internacional Diáspora Vasca*.

that, then, expanded, but without ever departing from its idealiser's control. To some degree it would promote what Anderson (1983, 2005) called an "e-mail nationalism," or the process of participating in homeland politics without actually being there or having common obligations (such as paying taxes) of its citizens (Apter, 1999; Conversi, 2002).

As the list grow, meetings took place to discuss Basque issues on a face-to-face basis and, according to Bilbao, the group at some point shifted from plain *Abertzale* (nationalist) positions to a more leftist *Abertzale* one. For ADV and similar groups "being Basque equates to being politically committed to the Basque 'cause' for independence" (Oiarzabal, 2013: 183):

> At one point, a member of the list, a resident of a South American country who had publicly expressed Pinochet sympathies […] proposed that we publish a statement in defence of a refugee in Chile that was to be delivered to Spain. It was our first public pronouncement. From there came other positions and the most influential members of the list, came closer to the nationalist left as a product of the dynamics that opened up. This position had a strong impact in Argentina. However, the activity on the list was not relevant. The constitution of Udalbiltza began to strengthen our role as a reference of a different vision within the community, where up to now, only the exclusive and excludent opinion of the "officialism" of the euskaletxeas reigned (Interview with Daniel Bilbao).

ADV's stance on the *Euskal etxeak* is not uncommon. For instance, members of other groups interviewed for the present dissertation denounced pressure, censorship and even the expulsion of individuals and groups that identify with the Basque *Abertzale* left or that did not comply with the official line of PNV. Oiarzabal (2013) recalls the resignation of the representatives of the *Euskal Etxea* of Laprida, in the Buenos Aires province, of FEVA (the federation of Basque clubs) due to political disagreements or the alleged reasons for the split between the Editorial Ekin, *Eusketxe*, *Euskatzaleak* and the Basque club *Laurak Bat* in 2004-5.

The *Eusketxe*, an umbrella organisation for the Ekin editorial house and the *Euskaltzaleak* (Basque-language school), was evicted from the *Laurak Bat* in Buenos Aires after decades, because of its support for left wing 'radical' nationalist ideology and Basque political prisoners (ETA and alleged ETA members).

> Dictatorial regimes in Argentina and Uruguay supplied daily reminders to Basques in those countries of how life in homeland continued. Worldwide attention to the plight of the Basques as an oppressed people lent credence and justification for ETA actions. However, soon media coverage focused on ETA activities themselves, not the rationale or objectives behind them,

> leading host-country populations to equate Basques with violence and terrorism, a burden that diaspora Basques everywhere have had to carry (Totoricagüena, 2004: 77).

César Arrondo, one of the founders of the *Eusko Alkartasuna*'s *Alkartetxe* in Argentina and of the Arturo Campión Studies Centre at Laprida's Euskal Etxea, mentioned briefly the tensions that led to his resignation from FEVA:

> From 2002, when EA was, a little, co-governing with the PNV [in the Basque Country] we had a lot of adherents. A lot of EA counsellors came [to Argentina]. This affected FEVA a little also, that of EA. Many did not like it, because the PNV people had a monopoly of the politics. They said things like: "politics have entered FEVA". Because PNV was not politics, PNV was the homeland and we were what would be politics (Interview with César Arrondo).

ADV lasted until 2005 when Bilbao decided to shut down the list and deactivate the group after, he considered, it suffered from fatigue, both from the presence of people infiltrated as well as, to him, the objectives also:

> Began to wear out when it was noticed that it was not easy to understand from Euskal Herria what the diaspora was and its possible role. As the possibilities for autonomously developing the planned work became blurred, I decided to close the list and deactivate the group (Interview with Daniel Bilbao).

ADV's ideology was initially *Abertzale* with the objective of promoting awareness over the Basque Country among members of the diaspora as well as supporting the idea of an independent Basque Country. Over time the group began to approach *Udalbiltza-Kursaal*, and even signed an agreement in 2005, as mentioned in the previous section. In 2003 a member of both *Udalbiltza* and ADV, Xarlo Etxezaharreta, was arrested by orders of Judge Baltasar Garzón.[67]

Bilbao, also, joined other leaders of the Basque political diaspora, such as Santiago Bereciartua (*Jo Ta Ke* Rosario), Mariana Fernández (*Independentistak/Askatasunaren Bidea*), César Arrondo (EA), all of them interviewed for this thesis, among others, at the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca/Diaspora Borrokan* initiative that will be further analysed in this chapter.

[67] "La Asociación Diáspora Vasca denuncia la detención de su miembro Xarlo Etxezaharreta (September 30, 2003)." Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/copy_of_la-asociacion-diaspora-vasca-denuncia-la-detencion-de-su-miembro-xarlo-etxezaharreta

4.2. Jo Ta Ke Rosario

Founded around the year 2000-1, *Jo Ta Ke* Rosario began as a group of friends, members of the *Zazpirak Bat*, the local Euskal *etxea*, and of the *Centro Navarro* (Navarrese Centre) of the city of Rosario - across the street. Among *Jo Ta Ke*'s objectives were the defence of the rights of Basque prisoners, while creating awareness in Rosario and in Argentina about the situation of such prisoners and of the Basque Country that, to them, was under Spanish occupation. The group focused more on political instances and were critical of purely cultural activities, the main focus of *Zazpirak Bat* and the *Centro Navarro*. According to Santiago Bereciartua, *Jo Ta Ke* founder and most prominent leader:

> That is, as a group, [we were] in some National [Basque] Week, and we share this [a pamphlet in defence of Euskal Herria]. Going to your question, […] we were a group of friends who almost all came from the Basque Centre. I say almost all because, I stress, a fact that was quite important, was that when we ourselves began to talk to each other about the Basque question and we started with (our) history, we read, we began to see that the institution that stands in front of the Basque Centre is the Navarre Centre of Rosario […].
>
> Then, we began to review what we did and we went to the history of the Basque Centre *Zazpirak Bat*. We wrote for the Centre's magazine the history of the Basque Centre. An article that we wrote at the time, because we wanted to know a little more about the birth of the Basque Centre. In that birth of the Basque Centre, we found out that a year or two years of - this in 2002. This, for me, is earlier. That is, in 2002, we have written material. Here is another from Jo Ta Ke ..., from 2002, as Jo Ta Ke. And this was later than this. This was May. National weeks are usually in October, November. Therefore, this, at least, is from 2001 or 2000 (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

The *Centro Navarro* was founded in 1913 by former members of *Zazpirak Bat* - founded a year before - not satisfied with the politics (Basque nationalist) of the Basque club and, according to Bereciartua, due to the presence of an *Ikurriña* (Basque flag) in front of the club. One of the first actions of the group of friends that latter would found *Jo Ta Ke* was to create bridges among the two centres:

> So, we, what did we do there? We said: 'Let's try to keep trying to unite [us] a little, which unfortunately had been years and years of differences'." I say ten, eleven, twelve years ago. There was a confrontation, say, with the youth of the Navarrese Centre. We threw stones at them and all that. It was like a rivalry. They were the enemies, we grew up like this, that's all.

> Then, I tell you, we realised, while we were going there, […] that they were Basques. We managed to understand that the Basque Navarrese of the Navarrese Centre of Rosario were the ones who were wrong. If we, at that moment, out of ignorance, believed that perhaps they were the enemies; […] we learned that, even so, perhaps, they too began to think differently. We started to frequent the centre with the young people, the time for physical altercation had already passed.
>
> We started to play the mus [a typical card game] in their centre, only for being in the Navarrese Centre, because we had a table to play at the Basque Centre. But, since this time they were there, we went to play there.
>
> Then, two members of the Navarrese Centre are also part of *Jo Ta Ke* (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

The issue of the political prisoners is pivotal for *Jo Ta Ke*, as well as for other groups such as EHL and *A Casa/Etxera* and a relevant issue for initiatives such as ADV or the *Foro de Debate* and *Diaspora Borrokan*. *Jo Ta Ke*, and also the EHL, not only focus (or focused in the case of the former) on Basque-related issues, but also play(ed) a role in Argentinian politics, joining forces with local political parties and collectives and supporting struggles from the Palestinian one or the Sarahui in Western Sahara, to the rights of Mapuche prisoners in Argentina and Chile.

According to Bereciartua, the group also acted as a pressure and even a lobbyist group in Rosario:

> We began, also, to try, always, to make a political lobby in Rosario on the right of self-determination. In fact, we have achieved quite a few things. In fact, the municipality here, last year, or the previous one [2013-14], did, unanimously, a statement in favour of the self-determination of the Basque people (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

Despite, as aforementioned, some attempt to adopt different discourses, or at least perspectives, inside and outside the *Zazpirak Bat*, tensions arose between the management, the board of directors, of the club and *Jo Ta Ke* members. Oiarzabal notes:

> The 2007 Basque National Week (Rosario, Argentina, October 1-7, 2007) was characterised by bitter protests and tensions between the host local club *Zazpirak Bat*, and certain elements of its membership and homeland guests. The club's board of directors of the club announced the cancellation of a talk by representative of Batasuna, Josetxo Ibazeta. The talk as scheduled to take place at the *Zazpirak Bat*'s clubhouse at the same time the President Ibarretxe was delivering a speech to nearly one thousand people at the local theatre, Fundación. […]

> Sympathisers of Batasuna, including the Basque-Argentinean group from Rosario, JO TA KE, decided to protest the cancellation of the talk by holding a street demonstration in front of the theatre. In addition, the *Zazpirak Bat* dancers refused to perform the following day (2013: 182).

Bereciartua gave his account of the events and that at the end he and other Jo Ta Ke members were suspended of membership by the Basque Centre:

> The talk was suspended by the Board of Directors of the Basque Centre. Then, there were people from the Basque [centre] and they suspended it and we all went to the door of the theatre, where the people that were inside the theatre were leaving [...], including the people of the Basque government, the lehendakari and etc. When we left, we had some masks against censorship and we made an act in response to the suspension. They did not admit that when they found out that this [talk] was on the official schedule, they called the Basque country, already threatening that the lehendakari would not come if the talk took place. We […] did not dance like a group, we did not dance Sunday in the square, in Rosario. Because Sunday, in the square, in Rosario, in front of where the stage was, with the Basque government and etc. We did not dance and asked the Basque Centre not to occupy that place, to leave it empty. Suddenly, we were suspended from the Basque Centre for five years. We were seven the suspended for five years […]. The suspension said: suspended for political activities and to carry out any activity with the young people of the Basque Centre, with those who were younger. We were already big there. Big for what was the dance group. So the fear was that we kept talking about politics in the Basque Centre, and that we had contact with the young people so as not to contaminate them, say. We were suspended for five years (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

Jo Ta Ke was born in the diaspora, by the joint efforts of a few members of *Zazpirak Bat* and the Navarrese Centre, unlike other groups such as the previously mentioned EHL, that was created as the Argentinean wing of *Askapena* or unlike EA's *Alkartetxe*, part of the homeland EA political party or even the *Red Independentistak*, also part of a homeland group. Also, "the majority of initiatives were our own, maybe that's our differential," says Bereciartua. The group lasted until around 2010:

> In 2010 we were already dying. There was no date (to the end). We were a group of friends, then, there were times that we got together and when one began to see that certain issues end up losing preponderance in the conversation, is not so clear the death of Jo Ta Ke. Surely for 2010 we are not as firm as in the beginning of the decade of 2000. We were not something permanent, regular (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

As a final note, it is important to have in mind that even Bereciartua has a problem determining the exact date (or even the year) when *Jo Ta Ke* was founded. As aforementioned, it started as a group of friends and their first official document dates back to 2001, but their activity started sometime before. However, it is hard to pinpoint the exact date with certainty previous to that first official document (see Annexes section).

4.3. Eusko Alkartasuna/Alkartetxe (EA)

Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity) is an Abertzale and social-democratic political party founded in the Basque Country in 1986 after a split from the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) led by former *lehendakari* (Basque president) Carlos Garaikoetxea. The party once formed electoral alliances with the PNV itself and later, from 2011 onward, with other left-wing *Abertzale* political parties. In a way the party functions as a dynamiser between two worlds, between the one of PNV and the one of the *Abertzale* left, dialoguing with both.

In Argentina the first *Alkartetxe*[68] was founded in 2002[69] by Mikel Ezkerro (from Buenos Aires), César Arrondo (from La Plata) and Guillermo Canut Garramiola (from Rosario), proposing a national *Abertzale* front based on dialogue with other political organisations at the time claiming a free Basque Country and denouncing violence as a method of solving the Basque conflict - something that clearly separates Argentina's EA from other groups and initiatives from or within the Argentinean diaspora, such as *Jo Ta Ke*, ADV or *Diaspora Borrokan* who had no clear stance on ETA's violence, rather focusing on solidarity with Basque prisoners.

Curiously enough one of EA's *Alkartetxe* founders, Mikel Ezkerro, a historical figure of the Basque diaspora in Argentina, had close ties with the historical ETA during the 1960's and 1970's. ETA founded a delegation in Argentina in 1965 led by José Manuel Aguirre Bilbao, former delegate in Mexico and one of the group's founders. According to Ezkerro, he was the one who "stick up for years and until 1975 for ETA" (Interview with Mikel Ezkerro). Ezkerro wrote about and for ETA at *Tierra Vasca* magazine,[70] It was according to him, the only medium

[68] Alkartetxes are social headquarters of Eusko Alkartasuna.
[69] Alkartetxe Argentina. (March 3, 2004). "Documento fundacional del Alkartetxe de la República Argentina [Blog Post]." Retrieved from http://eaargentina.blogspot.com/2004/03/documento-fundacional-del-alkartetxe.html
[70] "Tierra Vasca. Un hito en el periodismo político del exilio vasco en Argentina." (October, 16-23, 2009). Retrieved from http://www.euskonews.com/0504zbk/gaia50403es.html

of the Basque diaspora, which was mainly controlled by the PNV, to publish pictures of all ETA's dead members, since Txabi Etxebarrieta until Txiki Paredes, in 1975.

Ezkerro adds that except for *Tierra Vasca* other publications and political spaces were under a "consignment of silence" imposed by PNV's strong man Juan de Ajuriaguerra, president of the party from 1951 to 1977, "which consisted in that ETA did not exist for the diaspora. Any acronyms did not exist. And this was followed scrupulously in the Basque publications of the diaspora. Except in one, which was *Tierra Vasca*" (Interview with Mikel Ezkerro).

> While other publications of the diaspora maintained an exclusively partisan line ... Tierra Vasca opened from the beginning with [Jose Olivares Larrondo] Tellagorri, [founder of left-wing nationalist political party EAE-ANV[71]] and even more broadly since 1960 when the great journalist algorteño [from Algorta, Bizkaia] died of a "fucking diabetes" as writes with tears in the eyes Pello Mari in his obituary note, opened its pages to the entire Basque political landscape, with the exception of the Communist Party.
>
> This positioning that differentiates it from the other publications of diasporic exile was the cause of hard attacks and strong pressures originating from opposing sectors that the director of *Tierra Vasca* faced decidedly and sometimes publicly, if necessary (Interview with Mikel Ezkerro).

The history of EA's *Alkartetxe* in Argentina, the only one in the world, according to Arrondo, begins a year before its official foundation:

> Came for campaigning, or to make a visit to the diaspora, Gorka Knorr, who was from EA. We ate at the Laurak Bat and he was also received by historical PNV people. But, since he was from EA, he stayed right next to me and we started talking to Gorka about the country's politics and what do I know?
>
> I told him: 'here I'm in the Radical Civic Union, which is a Social-Democratic party.' EA is also a social-democratic party, and Gorka was interested. I asked him if he does not want to make something with the party here. […] I told him to go see Guillermo Canut. That Canut has traversed the reverse direction a little closer to the Abertzale left, then ends up in EA. So we began to talk and I told him that we had to endure what was coming, because the PNV was the hegemonic party in Argentina, historically. The Abertzale left had some elements, it has always been, somehow, disjointed. It has not had a structure.
>
> Then he says, "Come on. What's going to happen?" Then we invited Mikel [Ezkerro] […]. He was on the sidelines too, from the PNV. He's a guy who could serve us. And we added it. And

[71] *Acción Nacionalista Vasca* or Basque Nationalist Action, party founded in 1930 and illegalised in 2008.

> the following year, in 2002, we were invited to visit Euskal Herria, in September, and we went all three of us. We made some protocol visits to some institutions, we were with some councillors, some mayors […] On the way back, we came with the idea of founding the party, which we did in December of the same year [2002], […] at the French Basque Centre.
>
> An unprecedented thing, because I had to make a petition, asking the room to do an EA meeting and the president, who is already deceased, Michel Iriart, who was a Basque political figure, was not interested in people talking about Basque politics. He was quite French, a man who had participated in the Wars, fighting for France. Imagine, he went there from here, as a volunteer. But, yes, he gave us the room and we had a meeting. We would be ten, twelve and we invited friends, even if only to accompany us. There was conformed the Eusko Alkartasuna (Interview with César Arrondo).

Ezkerro adds, "And we started with a web page on the internet. We started, Guillermo Canut, if you will, as the promoter core, César Arrondo and I. And we started to incorporate people" (Interview with Mikel Ezkerro).

According to both Ezkerro and Arrondo, at that time EA was part of the Basque government with the PNV, therefore they saw a boom on members, despite the fact that EA's foundation affected FEVA (the federation of Basque clubs in Argentina), according to Arrondo, PNV had the monopoly of what politics were, therefore saying that "politics has entered FEVA" (Interview with César Arrondo). Due to this rapid growth in number of affiliates, EA in Argentina created two autonomous *Alkartetxe*, one representing Buenos Aires and other the rest of the country, with Mikel as the president of the former and César Arrondo of the later. Arrondo explains:

> First we had a single Alkartetxe. We named Mikel its President, EA's first president. […] After the institutional we had an annual meeting. […] Then Guillermo became the president, after five or six years, because it had to be renewed a little. Shortly after Guillermo, Mikel made a proposal that we were many and why we did not divide into two Alkartetxe. Then there was a federal Alkartetxe, with people who were from the interior, and an Alkartetxe in Buenos Aires. That is to say, Mikel returned to be president of Buenos Aires and I was president of the federal one (Interview with César Arrondo).
>
> At first, I tell you, we had many adherents, I would say almost fifty adhesions. Some were presidents of Basque Centres that, in order to protect them, we did not make the affiliation public, to protect them from the PNV or whoever it was (Interview with César Arrondo).

But some time later EA and PNV broke up their alliance and EA started to shrink in the diaspora and as well in the homeland with a marked loss of votes and internal conflicts. Concerning EA's role on homeland politics, on the one hand Arrondo says that he indeed tried to influence the politics of the homeland through EA, making political proposals and debating them with members of the party in the Basque Country and on the other hand Ezkerro states that:

> We do not intend to insert ourselves in the politics of there. We simply intend to [insert] our feeling, our knowledge [and] projecting them there and our desire [is] that the Basques remain Basques, keep speaking Euskara (Interview with Mikel Ezkerro).

Until today there are two active, yet small *Alkartetxeak* in Argentina, with around 3-4 persons each, according to Ezkerro and Arrondo. EA's Argentinean *Alkartetxe* maintained an active blog from 2004 until 2014.[72] According to Arrondo internet was an important mean of communication (and still is), but they tended to prefer face-to-face contacts and meetings whenever possible, even trips to the homeland to discuss issues in person.

To both EA and *Jo Ta Ke* it is possible to note a certain degree of disillusion with the relationship among the diaspora and the homeland. That those in the homeland, whether politically engaged or not, do not understand the reality of the diaspora – or do not make any effort to understand it. It was noticeable during the interviews recorded in Argentina, that this feeling of not being fully understood was an important element to guide some aspects of the political activism of many of the groups – also it explains the hesitation in taking active part in many of the debates concerning specifically the homeland.

I would argue that such hesitation is due to the fact that those in the diaspora would feel like intruders, since not only they do not live this reality, but are still misunderstood as part of an enlarged Basque nation. In many cases the diaspora is seen as something exotic, lost in space and time, not as an integral part of this enlarged Basque nation.

4.4. Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca en América/Nazio Eztabaida Gunea

The forum was founded in the Basque Country in 2003[73] as a space for discussion among different political actors, groups and individuals, within the homeland political sphere to deal

[72] See http://eaargentina.blogspot.com
[73] La Haine. (October 3, 2009). "Informe de Nazio Eztabaida Gunea ante su próximo debate nacional [Blog Post]." Retrieved from https://www.lahaine.org/informe-de-nazio-eztabaida-gunea-ante-su

with different aspects of the political and social reality of Euskal Herria, such as repression, armed struggle, bridges among citizens from both sides of the Spanish-French border, unified *Aberri Eguna*(National Day) and pathways towards independence.

Although defending unity, most of the organisations that made up the Forum belonged to the left *Abertzale* spectrum. The PNV did not join the initiative, preferring to follow a different path and organise its own separate *Aberri Eguna*. In the diaspora, however, Francisco Ormaetxea, a member of PNV, was among those who not only joined, but was also among the first to constitute the Forum, despite the fact that the PNV did neither officially joined it in the diaspora.[74]

The initiative reached Argentina in 2006, but it was only in 2007, July, that it was constituted the "*Mesa Americana del Foro de Debate Nacional*" (American Committee of the National Debate Forum) and, then, the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca en América* (Debate Forum of the Basque Diaspora in America) itself in Buenos Aires[75]:

> Members of different Basque groups on 8 July agreed to form the basis of the American Forum of the National Debate Forum, which will participate from September in the Nazio Eztabaida Gunea or Forum of National Debate of the Basque Country. Compose the initial group, César Arrondo, Member of EA of Argentina; Gloria Zuazola, by the Basque Left of Uruguay; Santiago Bereciartua, by the Basque Left of Argentina; José Francisco Domingo Ormaetxea, affiliate of EAJ-PNV in Errenteria; And Mariana Fernández Castelli, Basque-Argentine cultural agent.

Among the group's main goals were:

> 1) To implement a debate in the Basque diaspora of America, to enable the Basques and friends of the Basques to become aware of the origin of the political conflict, as well as to evaluate the different alternatives to approach a definitive solution [for the conflict];
>
> 2) To give testimony of Basque nationality in all areas of debate and in the mass media available to them, in the Basque American diaspora, and;

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http://www.lahaine.org/mm_ss_est_esp.php/informe-de-nazio-eztabaida-gunea-ante-su

[74] "Reunido en José C. Paz, Argentina, el Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca, demanda más información y debate." (December 1, 2008). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/reunido-en-jose-c-paz-el-foro-de-debate-de-la-diaspora-vasca-demanda-mas-informacion-y-debate

[75] "Nazio Eztabaida Gunea o el 'Foro de Debate Nacional' de Euskal Herria constituyen un espacio propio en la Diáspora americana." (August 2, 2007). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/nazio-eztabaida-gunea-o-el-foro-de-debate-nacional-de-euskal-herria-constituyen-un-espacio-propio-en-la-diaspora-americana

> 3) To develop a favourable opinion on the Basque dispute and the rights that assist the Basque Nation, among them, to its self-determination.

Basques from both Argentina and Uruguay joined the initiative to create a plural space for debate and reflexion among citizens of both aforementioned countries and other groups that would later joint the Forum. According to them, the only way to overcome the Basque conflict was through dialogue and understanding, as well as by building bridges towards an *Abertzale* unity and the full respect for human rights. As usual, the cause for the release and "acercamiento"[76] of Basque political prisoners was among the main goals of the Forum.

The initiative lasted until 2010 and the members have maintained a blog,[77] active since 2008 up to 2010 (and still online) and a Facebook profile no longer updated.[78] The blog's first post was a calling for a unified *Aberri Eguna* in 2008, signed by César Arrondo (EA), Santiago Bereciartua (*Jo Ta Ke*), Jose Domingo Ormaechea/Ormaetxea (PNV), Mariana Fernández Castelli (*Independentistak, Izquierda Abertzale* of Argentina) and Gloria Zuazola (*Independentistak, Izquierda Abertzale* of Uruguay).[79] And the final message, posted on October 2010, was a statement written in September showing solidarity for seven members of *Askapena* detained a day earlier by the order of Judge Pablo Ruíz, Baltasar Garzón's substitute.[80] Five of those original seven people were prosecuted and later absolved, as mentioned in a previous section. This document did not include the signature of José Ormaetxea. Later on, according to Bereciartua, the *Nazio Eztabaida Gunea* became the *Red Independentistak* and the diaspora soon followed and the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* became *Independentistak Diaspora* in 2010.

4.5. Diaspora Borrokan

[76] The end of the dispersion, an official policy of the Spanish government that would incarcerate Basque prisoners in jails far from the Basque Country, which in turn make more difficult for the prisioners' families to visit them.
[77] See: http://forodebatediasporavasca.blogspot.com
[78] See: https://www.facebook.com/forodebate.diasporavasca
[79] Foro Debate Diaspora Vasca en América. (2008, Ma6rch 20). Manifiesto del Aberri Eguna de 2008 [Blog Post]. Retrieved from http://forodebatediasporavasca.blogspot.com/2008/03/manifiesto-del-aberri-eguna-de-2008.html
[80] Foro Debate Diaspora Vasca en América. (2010, October 1). El Foro de Debate de la Diaspora Vasca en América comunica. Retrieved from http://forodebatediasporavasca.blogspot.com/2010/10/el-foro-de-debate-de-la-diaspora-vasca.html

Diaspora Borrokan [Fighting Diaspora] was a short-lived initiative by left-wing Abertzale groups such as *Jo Ta Ke*, *Eusketxe*, and individuals including Gloria Zuazola (from Uruguay and currently in *Independentistak*) and Santiago Bereciartua, among others, in 2006, during the Basque National Week,[81] in Córdoba, Argentina, to join together different actors from the left-wing diaspora. In Santiago Bereciartua's words:

> A short-lived space, in which we tried to join forces [...] it was an attempt to do a couple of activities together. We formed this space for some activities, but ended up with the same people taking part as always (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

The initiative, with the support of *Udalbiltza* and Basque political party *Batasuna* (that would soon be illegalised) and other members of different political sensitivities of the diaspora organised[82] a series of debates and demonstrations parallel to the National Week, but still, mentions to the initiative, "Diaspora Borrokan: Another diaspora is possible", are scarce. In fact, to both Santiago Bereciartua and Gloria Zuazola it was just a name adopted to show some unity of different political actors during specific events at the National Week in Córdoba, but that never went as far as too actually forming a coherent and last-longing group. According to Daniel Bilbao, it was also the name of a newsletter he published together with a small group of left-wing *Abertzale* individuals.

4.6. Akelarre Kultur Taldea

According to one of the group's founder, Mariano Silva-Torrea, the group was created:

> For the need to spread the history, culture and politics of Euskal Herria in the so-called Salto Grande Region (north-eastern Argentina) in a more profound way, in order to get the Basque Centre of Concordia out of its indifference to the current situation of Euskal Herria (Interview with Mariano Silva-Torrea).

The group's ideologically affiliated to *Eusko Alkartasuna*, though completely independent and was born as a local initiative influenced by the many and diverse groups within

[81] "La Semana Nacional Vasca 2006 se celebrará por fin en la ciudad de Córdoba, en la homónima provincia Argentina." (January 1, 2006). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/la-semana-nacional-vasca-2006-se-celebrara-por-fin-en-la-ciudad-de-cordoba-en-la-homonima-provincia-argentina?p=939

[82] "Miembros de la Izquierda Abertzale y de Udalbiltza de esa sensibilidad participaron de una Euskal Astea alternativa." (November 7, 2006). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/miembros-de-la-izquierda-abertzale-y-de-udalbiltza-de-esa-sensibilidad-participaron-de-una-euskal-astea-alternativa

the diaspora and the homeland to work horizontally in informing the local diaspora about current issues of the homeland, generate an "opinion and learning forum" and to spread culture and Basqueness (Interview with Mariano Silva-Torrea). The group, however, has no intentions of influencing in any way homeland politics, but only to create awareness about the opinions members of the diaspora concerning the Basque Country. *Akelarre Kultur Taldea* has a blog[83] since 2008, though it has not been updated since 2013, but according to Silva-Torrea, the groups might return.

4.7. Askatasunaren Bidea

The *Agrupación Vasco Argentina Askatasunaren Bidea* (Basque Argentinean Group Path Towards the Independence), not to be confused with the collective with similar name, *Askatasunaren Bidean*, in the homeland[84] and critical of the official line of the Basque Abertzale left[85] is a cultural collective from the city of San Miguel, in the region of Buenos Aires, Argentina, founded in 2009. It focuses on acting as an alternative space to the *Euskal etxeak*, promoting cultural activities, movie screenings and debates with individuals from all political sensitivities within the so-called *Abertzale* world. They have an active blog,[86] Facebook[87] and Twitter[88] profiles. In Horacio Marotto Etxezahar's words, *Askatasunaren Bidea* is a structure "for the diffusion of the Basque culture in Argentina, but mainly in place where we act, that is San Miguel" (Interview with Horacio Etxezahar and Mariana Castelli).

As a group they do not have any political affiliation, though they do support an *Abertzale*/nationalist ideology; on the individual level there are members of multiple political sensitivities. According to Mariana Castelli, a member of both *Askatasunaren Bidea* and *Red Independentistak* and a left-wing *Abertzale* political activist:

> Anyway, national politics yes! Because through the activities, then, yes you do [politics], the history of the Basques as a nation, we are like pioneers, say, through Horacio, in the idea of the

[83] See: http://akelarreconcordia.blogspot.com/
[84] "Medio centenar de expresos presenta "Askatasunaren bidean"." (May 21, 2016). *Naiz*. Retrieved from http://www.naiz.eus/es/actualidad/noticia/20160521/medio-centenar-de-expresos-presentan-askatasunaren-bidean
[85] "Askatasunaren Bidean reprocha a Otegi su "viraje" y a Sortu de "desvergüenza y el descrédito"." (May 25, 2016). *Deia*. Retrieved from http://www.deia.com/2016/05/25/politica/euskadi/askatasunaren-bidean-reprocha-a-otegi-su-viraje-y-a-sortu-de-desvergenza-y-el-descredito-
[86] See: http://askatasunaren-bidea.blogspot.com/
[87] See: https://www.facebook.com/askatasunaren.bidea?fref=ts
[88] See: https://twitter.com/askatasunarenb

> Navarre state, the existence of the Navarre State, which, in general, does not exists here, if not, you notice, the logo of the institution has the shield of Navarre and the shield with the Ikurriña (Interview with Horacio Etxezahar and Mariana Castelli).

According to both Castelli and Etxezahar, *Askatasunaren Bidea* focus on the idea of a Navarre state, adopting a "navarrista" approach to the Basque cause as a memory of the ancient Kingdom of Navarre, that would comprise the historical territory of the Basque Country. The group lies somewhere between a Basque club (though without a permanent headquarter) and a structure to promote Basque culture and awareness, working as a bridge between individuals from multiple backgrounds and ideologies, as well as serving as an alternative meeting point away from political/ideological pressure from traditional institutions.

> All the activities we do, as well as talks or cinema cycles, workshop of Euskera […] are absolutely free. And the activities we do in places that lend us the municipality. […] This also helped us to integrate more with the community, because before when there was no Basque institution or something for the Basques [nearby]. People went in other times not very distant in the centres from [Buenos Aires], they came to the Laurak Bat, they went to the Vasco-Frances, those were the places where these activities were done. But it was not our place, not in San Miguel, so in some way to have us attached to the library, for example, allow us to be in closer to other people whom we would cost us much more to reach, if we were in a Basque centre (Interview with Horacio Etxezahar and Mariana Castelli).

During the 1990s one way for homeland political groups such as the *Herri Batasuna* (the historical radical left wing coalition) to communicate with the diaspora was through sending e-mails and publications to the *Euskal etxeak* and for it to then be distributed among members. Yet, as mentioned before, there were many times the material was simply deleted or destroyed by the then PNV-led clubs.

> Excluding Australia, the PNV had the advantage of a developed network and established communications with diaspora Basque centres, and the majority of Civil War exiles were familiar with PNV names, strategy and goals. The ETA disagreement with the PNV, and subsequent splits within ETA, confounded an already extremely complex nationalist movement. The change in rhetoric of the New Left to class struggle and class identity rather than ethnic and cultural struggle and identity was not well received by Basques who had not lived in the provinces perhaps for decades (Totoricagüena, 2004: 75).

Castelli comments that there is no "democratic culture" within the *Euskal etxeak*, something Bereciartua would support, since him and some friends, as aforementioned, were

suspended of membership from the *Zazpirak Bat* of Rosario due to their political activities as *Jo Ta Ke*.

> Is that there is not a democratic culture in the country [Argentina], then suddenly the one [who gets the e-mail], I do not know, read the email and is capable not to send it to the rest. Instead, we, by having to communicate between us, forces us to participate (Interview with Horacio Etxezahar and Mariana Castelli).

4.8. Euskal Herriaren Lagunak (EHL) and Askapena

Askapena identify itself as a "Basque internationalist organisation founded in 1987"[89] that:

> [Understands] Euskal Herria as a people in struggle for their liberation, social liberation and national liberation. In this sense we are a part of the struggle to conquer independence and socialism for our people. Moreover, in order to build a truly internationalist Euskal Herria we see it absolutely necessary to take steps forward in socialism and political sovereignty.

Askapena is part of the so-called historical National Movement for Basque Liberation (MNLV in its Spanish acronym), a term used to identify the political movement formed by different organisations of many social and political areas having in common the left-wing *Abertzale* ideology. Its main goal is to achieve the independence of the Basque Country while organising national and international solidarity for its people and Basque political prisoners. With strong presence within the diaspora in Latin America, *Askapena* joined forces with different initiatives - such as *Jo Ta Ke* - as well as giving support to the *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak* (Friends of the Basque Country) in Argentina (among other countries such as Uruguay, Chile, Italy and France).

According to Gabi Basañez, one of *Askapena's* historical members, prosecuted[90] in 2015 and later absolved[91] with other four members of the organisation (Aritz Ganboa, Walter

[89] See: http://askapena.org/es/content/zer-da-askapena
[90] See: Aznarez, C. (September 8, 2015). "Gabi Basañez, dirigente de la Organización vasca Askapena, a punto de ser juzgado. Tenemos que pegarle un zapatazo en la cara al Estado Español". *Resumen Latinoamericano*. Retrieved from http://kaosenlared.net/gabi-basanez-dirigente-de-la-organizacion-vasca-askapena-a-punto-de-ser-juzgado-tenemos-que-pegarle-un-zapatazo-en-la-cara-al-estado-espanol/
[91] See: "Absueltos cinco miembros de Askapena por ser "una organización de solidaridad"." (February 3, 2016). *Noticias de Gipuzkoa*. Retrieved from http://www.noticiasdegipuzkoa.com/2016/02/03/politica/euskadi/absueltos-cinco-miembros-de-askapena-por-ser-una-organizacion-de-solidaridad-

Wendelin, Unai Vázquez and David Soto, of the original group of seven that were detained in 2010 of the charge of being part of ETA's structure[92]), *Askapena* began to be discussed and gestated in the beginning of the 1980's "on the brink of relationship with the *Sandinista* Revolution". He follows:

> That produced in Europe a wave of revolutionary solidarity with the Nicaraguan process, with the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front], this lead to the creation of solidarity committees [all over the world] and here in Euskal Herria as well, as they started to be created together with those of the Spanish State […]. And at that time the committees of solidarity of Euskal Herria were part of the committees of the Spanish State. [Then] there is a debate within the committees of Euskal Herria, Euskadi, that the Euskal Herria committees must be independent that there must be a different dynamic (Interview with Gabi Basañez).

In other words, solidarity committees were formed in solidarity with the struggle in Nicaragua all over the world, as well as in the Spanish state and in the Basque Country itself, integrated within the Spanish structure. After a period of internal debate, the Basque section decided that they should not be part of a Spanish structure, as well as decided to broaden their scope of action towards other struggles and the Basque one for independence.

A group of militants, then, decided to form *Askapena* whose philosophy is the same since its first days and to them, it is not necessary to be a member of a specific *Abertzale* left political party nor they are subordinated to any specific organisation, but do have a constant dialogue with *Batasuna* and later *Sortu* - the main political coalitions of the *Abertzale* left movement. According to Basañez, there is, historically:

> A kind of solidarity that is more of "going," there are many people who at that moment understood that, perhaps for a complex of guilt, or perhaps a unilateral vision, that you have to go to other countries and help other processes [...], It seems to us that this is one of the parts of solidarity, but it is one, we always say that for us our idea of solidarity is of "back and forth," we give solidarity but we also need it. That is where the need for solidarity that Askapena does a job from the beginning of those sectors outside of Euskal Herria who are sympathetic, who understand a bit of the process of the Basque revolutionary left, so well, [we try to] get in touch, try to have a constant relationship (Interview with Gabi Basañez).

Consequently, groups called *Comités de Solidaridad con Euskal Herria* (Committees for the Solidarity with Euskal Herria) were founded in different countries as a way to achieve this

[92] *Askapena* was also accused of being the successor of the organisation *Xaki*.

"back and forth" relationship around 2002-2003 (or in the case of Argentina, 2003-2004). At some point *Askapena* found that a new strategy was needed and the committees were replaced by the *Euskal Herriaren Lagunak* (Friends of the Basque Country), with a novel dynamic.

According to Carlos Aznarez, EHL's coordinator in Argentina and editor of the newsletter *Resumen Latinoamericano* (Latin American Summary), the group was founded as "part of a strategy that was born there [in the homeland] to strengthen solidarity and is closely linked to Askapena" in Argentina in 2010[93] - though there were EHL in Milan, Italy and in México City since 2009. But, according to Aznarez, even before the EHL there was a committee for the solidarity with Euskal Herria, as mentioned previously, also part of Askapena's umbrella, founded around 2003-4 during the campaign for the release of Josu Lariz Iriondo.

Significantly, the Friends of Euskal Herria (EHL) do not consider themselves as part of the diaspora, rather a group of people - some with Basque background, like Carlos Aznarez - that promotes the agenda of Basque solidarity outside the traditional diasporic spaces,[94] such as the *Euskal etxeak* that, to Basañez, are

> A more institutionalist, more bourgeois space in general. What we were trying to do is to impose this new vision, if we are to create an independent space where it is not only a revolutionary tendency, a rupturist left tendency, if we can talk to other more social democratic areas, if we go there, we have to try a way to influence inside the diaspora to create - not outside, can be inside -, then we realised that it was impossible, with the people we were in contact, well we were told that the Basque associations saw us as a very distant thing - not all of them, there were people like Jo Ta Ke who acted from within (Interview with Gabi Basañez).

After debates between *Askapena* and other Basque Abertzale left organisations the committees were founded and they tried to create a network to influence the diaspora on the lines of *Jo Ta Ke*'s work and having *Udalbiltza* as an example and aid (as mentioned, *Udalbiltza* was hegemonised by members of the Basque *Abertzale* left). After years of activity, the committees were replaced by the EHL whose proposal was to go beyond the simple solidarity for the Basque prisoners and organising *escraches* against prominent figures such as Baltasar Garzón, but also

[93] "Se presenta en Buenos Aires la asociación Amigas y Amigos del Pueblo Vasco (Euskal Herriaren Lagunak)." (June 14, 2010). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/se-presenta-en-buenos-aires-el-capitulo-argentino-de-la-asociacion-amigas-y-amigos-del-pueblo-vasco-euskal-herriaren-lagunak

[94] The formation of ties among diaspora and non-diaspora actors, however, is not unprecedented, as shows Ben-David, 2013.

to "work not only with organisations, but with personalities, whether from politics or cultural areas […] to expand as well the spectrum of social organisations [joining the struggle]" (Interview with Gabi Basañez). Such organisations were not only focused on the Basque cause, but left-wing organisations within Argentina as well as those fighting for the Mapuche and of internationalist ideology. Aznarez recalls that,

> At this moment, as they [Askapena] knew that there was a base here, after what had happened with Josu Lariz Iriondo, they asked us if we were willing to take this forward, and what we did was summon to a meeting to all the companions that we believed to have been mobilised for Euskal Herria and that they were ready to mobilise for the independence of Euskal Herria, and for the issue of the prisoners. And there, people came who had nothing to do with each other. And then we said, all the internal differences remain on from the door to outside, here we come to fight for the cause and the Basque people, then if we want to be together is what counts. And that was fulfilled, and in addition, in this nucleus were the companions who were lawyers of Josu and also were the companions who sometimes received and receive the Brigade of Askapena when they come here (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

It is worth mentioning that EHL's structure is fairy horizontal and, above all, they have a significant degree of independence from *Askapena*:

> There are campaigns coming now, lately, of the Abertzale left, regarding some issues, for example, issues linked to Aiete, but to that we do not participate, because we do not agree. We do not agree with the discussion of Aiete here. […] If to them it serves a purpose, perfect, here there's enough people to do this [support Aiete], in the diaspora there are many people that get caught up in that […]. We do not oppose, but we do not participate (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

EHL's relationship with the *Euskal etxeak*, or the institutionalised diaspora, according to Aznarez, is from bad to non-existent. He recalls that

> When the liberty of Josu came out, as we had created a relationship with Laurak Bat, which is the traditional Basque centre here, the oldest I believe, we celebrated there, and it was the last time we could enter because then they would throw us all out (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

Criticising the Basque centres, he adds that

> We are not Basques to eat, we are not Basques to dance the Basque dance, but it seems fundamental to us that in each country where we are we commit ourselves to the struggle of this country, which is the same with the struggle of the Basque people. Here we are militants for local causes, for the left, for everything [...] We are Basque independentists and we are also

> Argentine independentists, because we propose that here there is an independence that has not yet materialised, here and in all Latin America (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

EHL has a blog since September 2010 (last updated on July 2016) and a *taberna*[95] (an open-to the public bar) called the *Taberna Popular Vasca* (*Herriko Taberna* de San Telmo) in the neighbourhood of San Telmo, Buenos Aires, where they promote debates, musical presentations and any sort of political activities. The website and newsletter *Resumen Latinoamericano*,[96] edited by Aznarez works as their official medium of communication as well. EHL's Facebook page is inactive.[97]

4.9. Independentistak

As mentioned in a previous section, the *Red Independentistak* (Network of Independentists) can be considered as a successor of, on the one hand, the *Nazio Eztabaida Gunea* in the homeland, and of the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* in Argentina. Despite being plural, draws its basis from both the *Abertzale* Left and EA.

It is not a surprise that *Independentistak* and *Foro de Debate*'s blog was the same in 2010 and from November of the same year a new blog was created specifically for *Independentistak Diaspora* that was updated until October 2011.[98] A Facebook profile of *Independentistak Diaspora* was created in October 2011 and is still active as of this writing[99]

On the first post of Independentistak Diaspora's blog, in 2011, one can read the group's objective[100]

> We believe that the construction of Euskal Herria is a task that requires everyone, as well as the diffusion that independence is the most direct way to guarantee our identity and everything that goes with it. As Americans we feel and are aware that the same right to self-determination that led many of our peoples of America to independence, two centuries ago, assists the Basque people. That is why, from the Basque diaspora of Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay, we

[95] See: http://ehlargentina.blogspot.com/search/label/EHL_taberna16_9
[96] See: http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/
[97] See: https://www.facebook.com/euskalherriaren.lagunakargentinan/
[98] See: http://independentistakdiaspora.blogspot.com/
[99] See: https://www.facebook.com/Independentistak-Diaspora-524032904427653/
[100] Independentistak Diaspora. (November 11, 2010). "Adhesión de Independentistak de la diáspora vasca de la Argentina, Chile, México y Uruguay a la marcha verde [Blog Post]." Retrieved from http://independentistakdiaspora.blogspot.com/2010/11/adhesion-de-independentistak-de-la.html

> commit ourselves to continue working to achieve these goals together with the rest of the Basques and Basques and all the peoples of the world who are fighting for them and we call for the diaspora independentists to join the great tide of independence.

According to Txutxi Ariznabarreta, the current coordinator of the network at the time of this writing, they have no official affiliation with a particular ideology, though a considerable amount of members does identify themselves with the ideals of the *Abertzale* left, as does himself and its former coordinator, Floren Aoiz Monreal, who reached out the diaspora. According to Mariana Castelli, Aoiz was the main promoter of the process that ended up in the formation of the group in Argentina (and also in Uruguay).

Focused on the goal of the independence, the group found less resistance from *Euskal etxeak* to promote events and political demonstrations than previous initiatives and groups that would challenge PNV's hegemony, although, as both Etxezahar and Castelli note, within the diaspora is easier and more common to see initiatives joining together members of parties that, in the homeland, would be in opposite sides. Also, *Independentistak* is a network of individuals, not of groups or collectivities, thereby allowing for a broader space of debates, as well as for bigger participation of the diaspora in decision processes and activities. As they state on their foundation document, "Ari Gara,"[101]

> We are going to launch a movement shaped as a network based on participation. A space composed of people, an independent movement, which will be out of the game of parties and electoral competition, plural, which will prioritise what unites us, a movement that preserves the identity, culture and thoughts of each.

4.10. A Casa/Etxera

The collectivity *A Casa/Etxera* [Back to home] is a rather obscure left-wing *Abertzale* political group with ties to *Etxera* and *Sare*, homeland organisations dedicated to the rights of Basque political prisoners, founded in 2014,[102] which describes itself as

> A collective under construction and therefore open to anyone who wants to join, composed of members of the Basque diaspora in Argentina, and colleagues who without being [Basques] are

[101] See: http://gara.naiz.eus/agiriak/20100227_arigara_es.pdf
[102] See: "Proyección del documental 'Barrura begiratzeko leihoak' y presentación del colectivo A casa/Etxera." (March 19, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/agenda/proyeccion-del-documental-barrura-begiratzeko-leihoak-y-presentacion-del-colectivo-a-casa-etxera

> committed to solidarity with the struggle of the Basque people, companions with militant experience and others who begin to follow this path. Also former Argentine political prisoners, exiled at some point during the dark night of the dictatorship, and other younger people who fortunately have not had to go through that. *A Casa/Etxera*, therefore, it is a group with a deep respect for diversity, which has its roots in the struggle for human rights and for those of prisoners in particular, and who decided to work with Basque prisoners and their families due to the harsh conditions of detention that they endure, constitute a paradigmatic example as victims of the permanent violation of human rights by the Spanish and French States.

Among the group's objectives are the release of those ETA prisoners with poor health condition and the support of the prisoners' families. They promote and take part in demonstrations and debates both in Argentina and in the Basque Country about such issues.

> Reaffirming its foundational motives, the collective *A Casa/Etxera* unconditionally supports the right to self-determination of the peoples and the Basque people in particular; Puts forward the slogans of "The prisoners back home / End to the dispersion / Immediate freedom for sick prisoners / End of the policy of exception for our Basque prisoners / Unrestricted respect for the rights of Basque prisoner / Baltazar Garzón Out de Argentina."[103]

The organisation functions as a horizontal group and its representatives have refused to give an interview for the present research. According to members of other Basque diaspora groups in Argentina, they are not open to contacts and joint activities, rather than joining forces with Argentinean and non-diasporic groups, despite having similar goals with diasporic groups, such as the defence of the independence of the Basque Country; a clear repudiation for the figure of Baltasar Garzón;[104] and solidarity with Basque prisoners. Their online presence is scarce and their website is no longer online.

4.11. EHNA and national identity

Díaz Bizkarguenaga (2015:278) argues that "the Basque Country lacks a nation-state that protects and objectifies the national identity, whether in the form of a national identity document or in the form of a citizenship examination," (although initiatives such as of the *Euskal Herriko*

[103] "Los presos a casa." (March 21, 2014). *Agencia para la Libertad.* Retrieved from https://agenciaparalalibertad.org/article/los-presos-a-casa/

[104] Colectivo a Casa/Etxera. (February 15, 2014). "Desde la Diáspora en Argentina los miembros del "Colectivo a Casa/Etxera" manifestamos." *Tercera Información*. Retrieved from http://www.tercerainformacion.es/antigua/spip.php?article64187

Naziotasun Aitormena-Declaración de Nacionalidad de Euskal Herria (EHNA) were attempts of creating such a national identity document.

The EHNA initiative was created by *Udalbiltza* in 2001 as a form of citizenship declaration of being Basque and not Spanish or French.[105] It had relative success at the diaspora and, according to Daniel Bilbao[106] some Basques at the diaspora even set fire to their French or Spanish documents as a protest.

> The phrase *We are not Spanish or French, we are Basques* that various social and political movements have used in recent years is a clear example of a way to build identity by means of opposition to other groups. [...] It is possible to think that the Basque identity is gradually moving from the political to the social dimension, going from this way of being a vindication to an interiorised feeling. Like the Spanish or French identity, the construction of this national identity becomes every day and is a practice internalised by society (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015: 279).

The EHNA consisted in an identification document as well as a declaration of (Basque) nationality. In order to acquire such a document one had to present proof of their residence in the Basque Country or any document proving a blood connection to the homeland (in the case of the diaspora) with no limit of generations. In other words, the EHNA both allowed Basques by blood from the diaspora and anyone living in the Basque Country to identify through a document recognised by a relevant regional institution as Basque. It was also a political statement as the nationality declaration stated the existence of a Basque people, the Euskera as their language and their right of self-determination.

That is to say, the documents that comprised the EHNA "package" raises some important issues regarding Basque identity, joining two distinct visions of nationality and heritage. First, the diasporic one that mostly focus on blood heritage and lineage, i.e., a Basque is someone with a Basque family and history, the diaspora is held together by blood ties and cultural maintenance but the language factor is less relevant or even irrelevant (Totoricagüena, 2004).[107] On the other

[105] A Basque institution of municipalities and municipal representatives with close ties to the Basque left-wing nationalist ideology comprising all the regions of the historical territory of the Basque Country (n France and Spain) founded in 1998.
[106] Alesku. (July 2, 2006). "Todo sobre el EHNA [Blog Post]." Retrieved from http://kaixo.blogspot.com/2006/07/todo-sobre-el-ehna.html
[107] "Euskera as a factor of individual Basque ethnic identity has lost much of its importance among these diaspora populations. In Euskal Herria itself, various areas were totally Hispanicised by the mid-1800s, and later, during the Franco era, Basque was outlawed as a means of communication. Consequently, many emigrants of the political-

hand, at the homeland, the language and living/working in the Basque Country tend to be more important or relevant than blood ties for someone to be considered Basque.[108]

> The source of nationality is the people to whom we belong by birth, ascription or election. It is the culture, the language, the customs, the projects of that people to which we feel or declare that we belong, the source of our nationality (Bilbao, 2006).

It is interesting that blood and heritage were an important part of EHNA's "package" as these elements were subject of criticism for the ethnicised vision of the PNV in relation to the Basques, whereas the Abertzale left adopted and adopts a more civic vision of identity or at least focuses more on the process of construction (someone who lives, grows up, adopts the Basque Country as a home of feel like Basque can call oneself a Basque) and not on the one of blood and heritage.

Castells (2008) proposes three forms and origins of identity construction, being the one of "Legitimacy", the one of "Resistance," and the one of "Project." The first is introduced by the dominant institutions of society, or - among others - by the State, imposed by birth. The second is that of which one is born as resistance to identity imposed by the state or by the dominant actors, is not imposed, but developed in a historical and dialectical process. Finally, the third is a new identity that is no longer merely resistant.

What one can see within the Basque society is sometimes an identity of resistance that emerges against the Spanish *conquistador* (clearly during Franco's dictatorship) to finally become a project identity that, in addition to purely resisting, acquires its own characteristics and develops in parallel. Identity, then, is a duty, an action, is active versus passive (Bauman, 2004), is resistance and /or opposition to the other, to the other identity.

As already mentioned by Rubio (2003), and Molina and Oiarzabal (2009), the Basque identity originally developed side by side with the Spanish one (at least that was the Spanish

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exile era did not themselves speak Basque. Though Basques are extremely proud of their unique language and its complexity, most do not consider it an important factor in their own personal ethnicity." (Totoricagüena, 2004: 134).

[108] "While homeland nationalism has shifted its emphasis from race, language, and religion when defining and categorizing "Basqueness" to a more inclusive civic nationalism determined by living and working in Euskal Herria and by a person's desire to work for Basque culture, the diaspora has maintained traditional Aranist definitions of who and what is Basque" (Totoricagüena, 2014: 54).

state-building project that ultimately failed, according to Greenfeld).[109] The idea of a Basque community arises from resistance after a failed state-building project and begins to resist culturally expanding national consciousness to the point of seeking to transform society, to reinvent itself and to reproduce constantly.

Castells (2008) proposes that the identity of the subjects is formed not from a process of disintegration of civil societies, but from an "extension of communal resistance," thus, through the resistance of a group/community that ultimately extends itself to the internet.

In the case of the Basque community it is possible to verify that while there is a strong resistance of the society to be amalgamated or even swallowed up by the Spanish - even if there has been close contact between both - individuals or subjects of this community seek to broaden their sense of belonging, and strengthen their culture through the internet. There is a process of resistance occurring both online and offline, one strengthening and nourishing the other.

One can even speak of a *relational identity*, that is, constructed based on daily practices and banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), subordinated to different mechanisms, structures and institutions, as well as the bombardment of information brought about by the internet, but also by the mass media within a conflicted setting that, nonetheless cannot be considered as pure resistance as found in Castells.

> In the case of Basque identity, this collective identity is built by endogrupal relations and by opposition to other groups, but it is also constructed by an external agent. By law other groups limit identity referents that influence the ways of constructing Basque identity. In this way, construction goes from being Basque nationalists to being a matter of all Basque citizenship. But it is also in the hands of the Spanish and French nationalists (Díaz Bizkarguenaga, 2015: 280).

Relational identity can also be understood as the negotiation of symbols and sentiments in front of others and within the environment in which one lives, with the presence of others and the influence, as well as the understanding of limits of action, of its collective. Relational identity, thus, is a daily negotiation in which one asserts oneself before the other, or a social and relational

[109] Greenfeld, L. (January 16, 2017). "Liah Greenfeld: "Es imposible que los españoles entiendan a los catalanes"." (Vidal, M. Interviewer). *Ara*. Retrieved from http://www.ara.cat/es/marc-vidal-liah-greenfeld-imposible-espanoles-entiendan-catalanes_0_1726027583.html

process that occurs in the identification of common elements between a group and that differentiates it from other(s), it is at the same time the resistance, the sum, and the hybridisation.

Bizkarguenaga (2015: 281) gives the example of the young people interviewed by him for his PhD thesis that "could not register themselves on Facebook as Basques, but only as citizens of Spain and France" and that "the administrative limitations for the construction of the Basque identity are also found online," meaning that despite the degree of development and the "project" behind such Basque identity, the process of resistance is still an important part of the Basque identity, as well as self-censorship and the constant looking over their shoulders - in part due to the trauma of the Franco dictatorship and its persistent legacy.

Internet, though, despite not being a completely free space (in the sense of vigilantism, lack of privacy and limitations such as the one mentioned of the impossibility of the self-identification as Basque or any other minority), is a privileged one that helps individuals to overcome frontiers and spatial/geographical limitations, as mentioned in previous sections of the present thesis. At the same time, internet allows for multiple identifications and ascription to multiple groups, a process of (de)territorialisation in constant shaping and reshaping that, at the same time, allows the deepening of one's national or ethnic identity.

The relational identity model might be also applied to other minorities with a certain degree of historical and political development/autonomy, and to its diaspora, as the result of a previous struggle that ended up in a project of a nation and of an independent identity while still part of a larger state entity and not fully in control of its destiny.

As an identity fully developed, it has its own project, but constantly struggles with the nation that holds or shares control of the state. In a sense, internet helps this process by promoting a sense of sharing and belonging that goes beyond geographical limitations, including, for instance, the diaspora in real time, blurring the notions of space and time (Virilio, 1997). In other words, there is a process of identity construction taking place beyond geographical borders/limitations, on the internet.

4.12. Internet and the Basque Diaspora

One of the specific research questions of this thesis was how to understand the use of internet and social media tools by the aforementioned groups, collectives and initiatives. To achieve such goal a few questions were made to the interviewees concerning if they actually use internet and social media tools on their daily political militancy and how important was and is internet for them and their groups. From this two basic questions others, more specific, came up in this section I will present the results of the questions.

The responses varied enormously from group to group, from those who view the internet only as a means of communication, to others who considered it essential for their daily work. But in general terms, most of the groups (based on the opinion of individuals, members of such groups) see the internet as an important yet complementary tool. As mentioned, it helped during the 1990's to bypass the control by the e*uskal etxeak* of the "diaspora ideology," allowing different groups to spread their beliefs freely. No group or individual within them was immune to the presence of internet and social media tools. They all saw internet as necessary, yet some, like *Askapena*, had a more cautious approach due to the sensitivity of their political situation in the Basque Country.

An undisputable fact however is, as stated by Eriksen (2007: 1), "in a 'global era' of movement and deterritorialisation, the Internet is used to strengthen, rather than weaken, national identities." And so it does in the Basque case. If used as a simple means of communication, as a meeting point or as a tool for propaganda, internet has a significant role in the (re)shaping of the Basque identity and on spreading the discourses not only of an elite, but also of "regular citizens" through blogs, personal websites and social media.

Asociación Diáspora Vasca, according to Daniel Bilbao, was, above all, a virtual organisation and internet was their main means of communication - with over 200 members in 20 different countries. According to him it was the fastest and easiest tool available. It was impossible for the group to be formed without internet, though they relied more on mailing lists in a period before internet 2.0 (a period before the boom of social media websites such as Myspace, Orkut or even Facebook) and maintained their activity during the period of internet 2.0. He adds that internet was fundamental as was used to debate a large range of issues and topics relevant to both the diaspora and the homeland:

> What we were and what we did was thanks to this new tool. I used it as an organisational tool and to try to develop projects. My knowledge of the environment was rather precarious, but I was convinced of its extraordinary potential. That was not the general understanding of the group, heterogeneous, with dissimilar and varied interests. The strategic vision ran counter to these difficulties (Interview with Daniel Bilbao).

Even though seeing internet as important for the Basque diaspora itself (or any diaspora), Santiago Bereciartua, from *Jo Ta Ke*, admits that it had not great importance for his group because it was originally a group made of friends from the same city, therefore, easier for face-to-face interactions:

> I think totally necessary it [internet] is not. I [think] that our beginning internet collaborated, but it was not decisive. Perhaps we would not be so in touch with the Basques there [at the homeland] without the internet or so connected with the small letters of the fight there, say [...], but we have done it anyway.
>
> Yes, it collaborated a lot to be able to go outside, with a clearer message, to our group it was important - the books at the Basque centre were not up to date, and a few about the left. That is, for training it was important, but no more than that.
>
> In Jo Ta Ke [internet] was not transcendental, but for other forms of organisation is crucial. For any diaspora, no matter what country, for any diaspora and their relationship, instantaneous, what generates internet, because by letter would be difficult (Interview with Santiago Bereciartua).

Despite leading an organisation that heavily relied on the internet, Bilbao also had issues and criticism when asked if he thinks internet is important for Basque identity maintenance:

> It is like asking if we believe that radio or television helps maintaining the Basque identity. What can be the answer? Look, does the hammer help maintaining the carpenter's idiosyncrasy? We could say yes, but it is only a small part. Identity is not the consequence of the diffusion of the ethnic or folkloric characteristics of a community (although it may be a part). There are philosophical definitions, ethics, traditions and modernities that make identity a construction of a form of consciousness, which corresponds first and foremost to the Basques who live in Euskal Herria, work, suffer, enjoy and struggle there. The more or less virtual relationship we have with that identity is relativized in networks and only strengthened in other types of more direct and personal commitments. Networks have a lot of fiction. If their function is not organisational and formative, they can only be like a simple television screen with less power of penetration (Interview with Daniel Bilbao).

Bilbao's opinion contrasts with the ones of Nur-Muhammad et al (2013), Ben-David (2012), Can (2007), Douglass (1999), Oiarzabal (2010, 2012, 2013), Díaz Bizkarguenaga (2015, 2016), Díaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko Garcia (2015), Tsavkko Garcia (2012, 2013, 2015a, 2015b), Eriksen (2007) among others, but it is not unprecedented, as one can verify in Oiarzabal's work on the Basque institutional online diaspora's webmasters:

> There are two conflicting views of the internet's role in empowering identity maintenance in the diaspora. Of the webmasters, 7.4 percent believed that internet does not help to maintain Basque identity in the diaspora. Over 22 percent of the webmasters were sceptical about the internet's role in maintaining Basque identity in the diaspora because the internet is just a tool, a medium that cannot compete against offline cultural manifestations, such as dancing or singing. The webmasters understood the tangible elements of the Basque culture and face to face interaction to be prerequisites for identity formation and maintenance (2013: 72).

But, at the end, the majority of webmasters interviewed by Oiarzabal agreed that internet played a role on identity maintenance in the diaspora. The issue here is of the uncountable, in other words, the virtual impossibility to properly quantify the weight of internet in shaping one's identity in opposition to the process of identity construction based on face to face relationships. It seems more fruitful not to deal with face to face relationships and online relationships in terms of an opposition, but as a sum or juxtaposition of different aspects of identity construction based on a set of different types of bonds or linkages and relationships that, together, shape one's identities in a process of constant reproduction of social relationships.

As Eriksen notes

> Chatrooms, newsgroups and blogs mime direct interaction and can, given some time, create a sense of familiarity and intimacy among regular users which bears some resemblance to real-life interaction (2007: 10).

Consequently, internet is, yet, another space of (re)construction of identities and note the sole space or even the main space of such, nevertheless and important one, especially for displaced diasporas and also in the absence of other means of identity maintenance. Also, identity or identities, as mentioned before, are both the result of similarities and building blocks (Cohen, 1997) and tensions and differences (Bhabha, 1994; Elias and Scotson, 2000) building up together a complex structure that is added to both online and offline relationships.

The Basque identity, thus, is the result of a constant tension between the ethnic and the civic (Spanish), the building blocks of a historical construction permeated with differences and tensions (both internal and external), charged with symbols, that has been transported to an online environment and meets a diasporic identity within the diaspora adding more tension to the melting pot and new elements to a complex construction of a unified, yet diverse identity.

Oiarzabal (2010, 2013) points out to the ever-present symbols of Basque identity (*Ikurriñas, Lauburus*, greetings and short phrases in Euskera, downloadable songs, etc) within diasporic websites; i.e., a "sort of digital banal nationalism that portrays and reinforces certain Basque national representations of identity, nationhood, and homeland" (Oiarzabal, 2010: 341). According to the author, over 95% of the symbols researched "are banal assertions of identity" (2010: 341), which reinforce the ability of such websites, groups, discussion lists, Facebook pages, etc of reproducing and maintaining Basque identity online. César Arrondo calls the attention to the irony of internet helping political militancy but still the limitations of being away from the homeland.

> The computer media supply a little some militancy. I sometimes get to chat with EA friends I say, "ours is a bit Felinesque." Being from a Basque political party 12 thousand km and not even having the right to vote (Interview with César Arrondo).

Concerning the more militant aspect of the internet - or its usage as a tool for political action and long distance nationalism (Anderson, 1992; Demmers, 2002; Eriksen, 2007) - Basques tend to follow the trend of the other diasporas mentioned in Chapter 1, for instance, the Turkish and Kurdish groups (Can, 2007). Basque left-wing nationalist groups tend to get less involved in current homeland politics, focusing more on the different aspects of the nationalist movement, pressing for specific issues (such as the right to decide, the amnesty of political prisoners, etc), as do Kurds with their plight for independence and for freedom of speech.

Akelarre Kultur Taldea, for example, maintained a website with current news concerning homeland politics, but mostly as a curator, rather than giving broader opinion or even with the intention of influencing homeland politics. EHL, ADV, *Jo Ta Ke*, among others, also preferred to pinpoint specific issues - such as the political prisoners, amnesty, the broader idea of independence, etc - to intervene politically, but they rarely interfered in the homeland's daily politics. It is to say that even though with internet and social media tools and with the possibility

of knowing the reality of the Basque Country, individuals and groups tend to focus their efforts on specific agendas, in using internet to organise, to call for meetings and demonstrations, as a tool for communication and propaganda. Carlos Aznarez, for example, is critical of the purely online militancy:

> We, who are of the old militancy, we value that the street is the most important thing. The internet serves, but if the internet paralyses you in your house, and you do not go out on the street […], what's best in mobilisation, which hurts those who oppose to our discourse is to see us in the street (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

Gabi Basañez, from *Askapena*, has a similar take on the issue, adding that due to the climate of persecution against the *Abertzale* left political organisations, they tend and tended to use internet much more as a propaganda tool rather than a space for conversation and debates, preferring face-to-face meetings, in order to "send some concrete, ideological work, but soon also for concrete things, but ideological work is essentially face to face" (Interview with Gabi Basañez). He adds that "there is a culture provoked by the situation of repression. On the internet you give many details because you are exposed, the debates must be in another way. It is used for concrete things, not debates" (Interview with Gabi Basañez).

To Horacio Etxezahar, on the other hand, *Askatasunaren Bidea*'s blog is a "window to the world" and "before everything was absorbed by a single route, what arrived, arrived through a single route, and everybody consumed all that […]. Internet allowed to communicate with other people, with whom one would never communicate" (Interview with Horacio Etxezahar).

Other organisations, such as the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* or *Independentistak* heavily rely or relied on the internet as to forward policies, propositions, manifestos and propaganda. In the case of the later, internet became a tool for debates both to and from the diaspora, as a network, in a process of constant construction and dialogue.

As evidenced, different groups have or had different approaches concerning the use of social media tools. To some it had relative importance, to others they would never exist without or at least would have a much smaller role and relevance. Mariano Silva-Torrea, for example, stresses that,

> Before the popularisation of social networks, most of the Basque centres had only a cultural and political identity born of the experiences of our elders from Euskal Herria, from the popularisation of digital media, descendants and members of diaspora we can be aware of the

> current situation of Euskal Herria and that allows us to further strengthen our identity as members of a country [Argentina], but recognising our Basque ethnicity (Interview with Mariano Silva-Torrea).

It is worth noting that aside from *Jo Ta Ke* Rosario and ADV, more due to their specific characteristics, non-Basques are and were welcomed to join and support the cause. It is interesting comparing such a data with Totoricagüena's (2004) question if "A person must have Basque ancestors to be a Basque." The majority of Basques in Argentina interviewed by her (62%) answered that one has to have a Basque ancestor to be considered as such, but as it seems, being Basque or identifying as such was and is not a problem or even relevant to support the cause.

> As a result of the widespread activity on the Internet among scattered diasporas like Kurdish and Tamil refugees, many peoples have developed a sense of belonging to a community which would otherwise have been difficult to achieve (Eriksen, 2007: 10).

Both ADV and *Jo Ta Ke* do find interesting and important the participation of non-Basques on their activities and on the Basque cause (whether the independence of the Basque Country or the solidarity with political prisoners), but the former is a specific diasporic organisation and the latter, as mentioned, was born as a group of friends.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Fighting hegemony

The study presented here has been clearly under-researched, constituting the first systematic full research on the ideological relationship between a stateless diaspora and its homeland, by focusing on the Basque nationalist left presence and influence on the Basque community in Argentina, unknown until your academic exploration; while adding the value of the usage of ICTs in such a relationship. The majority of the studies have traditionally focused on the PNV's historical influence on the diaspora, neglecting the study of other homeland ideologies' influence.

The study uncovers a good number of groups and individuals (understudied until the present thesis), mainly in Argentina, who for their own initiative or for influence of their ideological homeland (primordially, the Basque nationalist left) peers have established themselves for the last decade or so to promote alternative discursive spaces (physically and virtually through the implementation of a strong presence on the Web) to the one controlled by the hegemonic PNV, i.e., the Basque migrant clubs.

The *Euskal etxeak*, Basque diasporic organisations or Basque clubs, are hegemonised by the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and internet was among the few ways for left-wing nationalist groups to reach the diaspora without having to go through or being censored by those who were proxies or financially dependent of the Basque government (run by the PNV, almost uninterruptedly since the end of Franco's dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in Spain). The challenge to the hegemonic cultural and political discourse within the Basque clubs (a dynamic further explained in Chapter 2) posed by the left-wing nationalist individuals arriving from the 1970's onward is also reflected online.

As mentioned by Oiarzabal (2013) and Totoricagüena (2005), before internet diaspora Basques had to rely on their clubs to receive news and updates from the homeland, but some clubs would not allow material and information coming from political parties such as *Herri Batasuna* (the historical left-wing *Abertzale* homeland political coalition) to reach the members of such clubs. Even on the eve of the internet, the club's webmaster or any other person in charge with the dissemination of information would not allow any material divergent from PNV-approved ideology to reach club's members. In a way they would impose a censorship to any

material that did not fit their ideological standards. However, with the widespread use of social media and other online tools, diaspora Basques have to rely less and less on their club's good will, thus opening up a space for broader contestation.

It does not come as a surprise that individuals and groups who would challenge the single discourse imposed within the *Euskal etxeak* was fiercely opposed, as the suspension of members of *Jo Ta Ke* from Rosario's *Zazpirak Bat* or the case of *Eusketxe* have shown. Also, the process of internationalisation of the Basque *abertzale* left was going full-back during the late 1990s and early 2000s, as mentioned in the previous chapter and the emergence of a series of political groups with a strong ideological load is part of this reality.

Carlos Aznarez, also, remembers when, before the foundation of the EHL, he and others were prohibited to enter the Buenos Aires *Laurak Bat* club after Josu Lariz Iriondo's public defence campaign:

> Even in the case of Josu, when several partners joined the way, because they are always the same partners, we all know each other, and I remember that we went to Laurak Bat at the time, put together a petition, and they saw us as like Martians. In fact, when Josu was released, as we had done the relationship with Laurak Bat, which is the traditional Basque centre here, the oldest I believed, we celebrated there, and it was the last time we could enter because then they threw us out (Interview with Carlos Aznarez).

It is not to say that all or even any of such movements had the intention to become an alternative to the traditional spaces of the diaspora, such as the Basque clubs, though *Askatasunaren Bidea* works as an alternative Basque club in a city without any other clubs. However, they rather wanted to influence positively the diaspora in order to present a different political approach to the mainstream one and, sometimes, act as a complimentary tool to the traditional spaces. It was all about imposing an alternative discourse, rather than substituting or even demolishing traditional discursive spaces.

Nevertheless, for many diasporans, such traditional spaces such as the e*uskal etxeak*, are inseparable from PNV's conservative nationalism, viewing groups like JO TA KE or ADV a threat to the diaspora itself. At the end, some, if not all of such groups, ended up forming alternative spaces of their own, and an ever bigger alternative left-wing space that is at the same time complementary to the traditional ones and new, bringing new elements, creating new spaces, both offline and online, for discussion, meeting and (re)production of (diasporic) identity.

Lacking ideological space inside the Basque clubs, individuals and groups found online a space to build networks and enhance specific struggles and demands.

5.2. Internet as a tool for political engagement

Internet, then, became a space for propaganda, dissemination of (new) ideas and alternative agendas of a section of the Basque diaspora that, many times, would still be part and attend to the old institutions, but had, many times, to promote activities in alternative spaces or find other locations to express freely. Working as a two-multiple-way tool and space for identity shaping, internet allows for more than just communication, but for a real time political action and also break through blockades imposed by the institutions of the diaspora.

It is not to say that those unhappy with the politics inside the e*uskal etxeak* needed internet or just organise themselves due to the advent of the Web, but to point out that internet had indeed a positive and sometimes pivotal (depending on the group and type of political action) role on the process as a whole as a complimentary tool and space within a fragmented environment.

Despite the many differences between the groups analysed, they all have in common the goal of spreading an idea of Basqueness throughout the diaspora, as well as to promote debates, whether political, cultural or on identity itself, within particular spheres of the diaspora. To most of the analysed groups, the agenda for the release of what they consider political prisoners and the awareness of an agenda promoting the independence of the Basque Country are another important, if not crucial, part of their activities and *raison d'être*.

Influenced by homeland organisations, they all keep (or kept) a degree of independence. According to César Arrondo, when mentioning EA's activities in Argentina, they were very independent from any control from EA's homeland structure, and the same works for other groups such as the EHL, part of *Askapena's* international structure.

It seems obvious that such independence lies within certain ideological lines, but all interviewees guaranteed that their organisations ran with little to no external interference. In fact, they were the ones (at least some of the groups) that from time to time would propose initiatives and engage in debates. In general, most of the studied groups tended not to intervene in

homeland issues, rather focusing on issues concerning the diaspora itself - to some extent it might explain the virtual independence even of groups that were part of larger homeland structures, most of the relevant topics in the homeland would not be as important for the diaspora and vice versa.

Traumatic events, such as the expulsion from *Euskal etxeak* or the felt need to act against what they considered abuses (as the case of Josu Lariz Iriondo), and the difficulty in communicating with other members - or the difficulty of communicating ideological positions -, the scarce space for debates beyond the imposed barriers and limits by club's leaderships that are ideologically committed to the PNV or at least refractory to ideas of the left, are the main reasons behind the creation of some of the groups, which remained active, in some cases, for over a decade.

In other words, traumatic or ideologically and emotionally charged events and a tight control of information within associative structures are, in part, what explain the emergence and consolidation of militant extra-institutional groups. The lack of political action of both the PNV and the main associative institutions in several mentioned cases also contributed to the fragmentation of the Basque political diaspora – leading to the creation of alternative political spaces (Staeheli et al, 2002).

Despite the preference for face-to-face meetings, internet, as shown, played an important role for the development of the groups analysed, as it enhanced their reach, allowed for the construction of a broader network and to reach other members of the diaspora that are geographically apart. As mentioned before, internet is a tool that helps politically engaged diasporas to enhance reach and penetration. Moreover, it helps the diaspora as a whole to safeguard their identity and to maintain close(r) ties to the homeland and even to intervene politically - the Kurds are a vibrant expression of such, as was the Tamil diaspora and their crucial support to the LTTE guerrilla.

5.3. Internet for political action of minorities

Though the current research focused on the Basques, it became contextualized within a broad panorama of similarities and differences in the political action, specifically online, of different ethnic minority and diasporic groups. Itis fundamental for the continuity of the field of

study by exploring and analysing in a comprehensive and detailed manner the social dynamics of a minority diasporic group and their relationship with its homeland that it can and should be extrapolated to other groups and understood as a broad, global phenomenon, which shows no signs of yielding, on the contrary.

Stateless nations, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and diasporas have increasingly turned to social network tools for a variety of purposes (see Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010). In general terms, they seek to create alternative spaces (whether to traditional organisations, to states, governments or sub-national entities), with greater freedom of expression, with greater freedom of action in order to communicate, organise and reproduce symbols, myths, share emotions and strengthen ethnic and identity ties, constructing linkages among individuals and building (online) communities.

From ADV, who relied heavily on the internet as their main tool of communication and activity to *Askapena*, who, for a series of reasons, has a more cautious relationship with the internet, they all have or had a consistent online presence and relied on social media tools as a way to promote agendas, debates, opinion or at least to communicate and reach a broader audience. In other words, none of the groups analysed took the internet for granted and learned how to use it in a way they could amplify their voices.

Such groups were tools of political propaganda to influence the diaspora and break PNV's hegemony over the Basque clubs by imposing a different narrative, a different reading of the Basque conflict, proposing a path of solidarity towards Basque prisoners and a greater politicisation of Basque issues, rather than the simple reproduction of cultural manifestations. More than just give voice to the voiceless, their main goal was to empower the diaspora to use the voice they already had - but was mostly kept silent within traditional structures hegemonised by a single political ideology incorporated by a single party, the PNV - and engage politically. They were initiatives for the diaspora to find their voice and to speak up not only on Basque-related issues, but also to show solidarity for the struggles of other peoples.

The creation of the EiTB[110] (Basque Public Television and Radio) in the Basque Country, was, according to Totoricagüena (2004: 178), utilised to "achieve positive results for Basque ethnic identity as Basques are becoming more and more interconnected with each other around

[110] A channel for Basques in Latin America, the *Canal Vasco*, was created by EiTB in 2000 (Oiarzabal, 2007).

the globe." Run by the Basque government, though, complaints of the proximity of the network with the ruling PNV party are a constant (Felici, 2015), leaving the internet as a more neutral and preferential medium for communication with and from the diaspora - also, a bi-multi-directional medium, contrary to the mass media outlets that are mostly uni-directional.

Also, the creation, in 2016, by the Basque government of the Basque Global Network[111] is one of such initiatives to promote dialogue within the diaspora and the homeland and throughout ideological lines - though further study is needed to evaluate if the network will be able to reach such goal. Meanwhile, Basques organise on Facebook, through blogs, forums, mailing lists, and, evidently, offline in clubs, *tabernas*, *Euskal etxeak*, etc

The Basque case has many similarities, as evidence by the data collected, with other stateless diasporas (from the usage of social media to the formation of a diasporic identity and its politicisation). Nevertheless, it has also enough differences to demand a study of its own. The present study focused on counter-hegemonic groups struggling not for power, but for agendas, at the margin of associative structures, seeking on the internet a space of communication to spread their ideas. The analysed Basque diaspora groups were never in a "bubble," but kept regular contacts with other political organisations in Argentina and Latin America (and elsewhere in the world). They built a strong network of allies and normally signed petitions, manifests and political declarations supporting different struggles, as well as took part in demonstrations and activities of other political organisations.[112]

Despite the fact that homeland and diaspora politics intertwine, in the Basque case, there are, as demonstrated, groups who act independently from the homeland, that were born purely by the wishes of members of the diaspora and that just later would get in touch with organisations of similar ideology or goals in the homeland. On the other hand, there are groups that were born as diasporic wings, say, of well-established organisations already present in the Basque Country.

The evidence shows that the internet was and is an important tool for communication, propaganda and political action, and even pivotal for some of the groups analysed (in particular ADV, whose founder Daniel Bilbao clearly stated as such). However yet, most of the groups interviewed favour (in different degrees) face-to-face contacts for more pressing and important

[111] A Facebook-like social media website to join together Basques from the diaspora and the homeland and spread news and (re)produce cultural elements of the Basque people. See: https://basqueglobalnetwork.eus/eu/
[112] This is noticeable in the cases of *Jo Ta Ke*, EHL, ADV and the *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca*.

questions. In some cases, (specially concerning EHL and *Askapena*) due to the fear of persecution and external interference in their communications or, as is the case of *Jo Ta Ke*, internet was not as important for the daily activities of its members as they were all form the same city and from basically two centres, the Basque and the Navarrese, on the same street - a particular case indeed.

> The question is, how can traditional Basque culture avoid a transformation into simple folklore? How can it avoid becoming yet another mass-media commodity of the international tourism trade? Is it possible to have Bertso-singers online? (After all, they already exist on TV, on the Euskal Telebista Network.) The deepest problem is that the balance between tradition and innovation is changing, with innovation overwhelming tradition (Alonso, 1998).

Yet, internet remained an important tool of propaganda and to reach a broader audience and to facilitate the communication between different groups. Andoni Alonso was, in 1998, worried about what would happen to Basque culture with the rapid advancement of technologies and globalisation. To the author, it would end up in the loss of tradition (Alonso, 1998). What we have seen and evidenced, however, 20 years after, is quite the opposite. New technologies of communication, in particular the internet, helped flourishing Basque culture and tradition, both in the homeland and abroad. It has straightened contacts between them, helped on the dissemination of cultural elements and traditions online, in exchange of experiences and avid debates on politics and the future of the very Basque people.

Bertso-singers (Basque language poetry improvisers) are still on television,[113] but now they are also online for the diaspora to watch and enjoy. Internet helped on the spreading of Basque culture worldwide, it made possible for those in the diaspora to be closer to their homeland, to share in real time feelings, impressions and also to intervene and participate.

5.4. Hubs, nodes and clusters: The formation of the Digital Country

As aforementioned, we can argue on the formation of a "Digital Country" (Diaz Bizkarguenaga and Tsavkko Garcia, 2015): a concept that deals with both the geographical references of a stateless nation and a diaspora (the tension between the homeland and the place

[113] For example, see: Lujanbio, M. (January 20, 2018). "La mujer que enseñó poesía en euskera a Leo Messi." *El Español*. Retrieved from https://www.elespanol.com/cultura/20180120/mujer-enseno-poesia-euskera-leo-messi/278473070_0.html

of current residence or displacement), the cloud (or the virtual real time presence) and the territory (understood also in its political and cultural dimensions) in the case of Basques, but it can also be extrapolated to other minorities and stateless nations (as well as diasporas) where internet is the meeting point of a set of tensions where one's identity is re-territorialised.

Going even further, internet allows for a "distributive political voice" through the diversification and intensification of movements (Malini, 2017) making it possible for a message to reach broader and diversified audience(s) and, also, giving voice to those that were silent of being silenced, promoting the discourse of minorities without the need of a single leader but substituting it for nodes, for a set of different leaders with equal or similar importance in a network mediated by social media tools, a distributive logic of leadership or, in the Basque case, a distributive logic of groups acting politically over the diaspora but within an ideological umbrella (i.e. the Basque left-wing *Abertzale* ideology).

> ICTs and cyberspace tend to promote the creation of networked cultures without the homogenized identities assumed by the mass media; they foster routes for the circulation of ideas that are not so subject to centralized controls, and the irruption of sub-cultures that are aware of the need to re-invent social and political orders (Escobar, 2017).

This concept works as well for other stateless minorities and diasporas as internet promotes a distributive logic where every voice is a node that may act independently or together with other nodes forming clusters or communities, amplifying a collective message – therefore, amplifying a political agenda. Different groups can be understood as hubs, or a gathering of nodes, acting independently but joining forces (forming clusters) and acting politically over specific agendas and issues, thus forming a politically engaged cluster.[114]

Kurds (Hassanpour, 1992, 1996, 2003; Can, 2007; Smets and Segul, 2016), Tamil (Tekwani, 2003; Wayland, 2004), Palestinian (Aouragh, 2008, 2011; Baeza, 2011, 2014; Ben-David, 2012), Basques, among other stateless minorities seek internet for a series of reasons already debated at length on previous chapters. Individuals (or nodes) communicate with others forming hubs or groups to intervene politically and influence homeland and hostland politics, resulting in the creation of clusters of different groups (that can be both from the same diaspora/minority or form different ones depending on the political objectives or goals), and

[114] For a general idea of nodes, hubs and clusters see Scott (2000), Barabasi (2003), and Recuero (2009).

communities of politically engaged individuals and organisations that can form or emerge from a Digital Country.

This collective of nodes (hubs that form clusters) amplifying political messages (political clusters) - or being agents of political action - perforate barriers imposed by states or other entities and institutions (such as media blocks and censorship) through the internet and the distributive political voice (seeking to acquire centrality[115]), breaking the one-dimensional logic of the media and subverting notions of space and time.Objectives and even the choice of political action among groups of different diasporic collectivities may vary, but the online engagement and the ever-present use of social media tools for communication and propaganda is constant – as is the formation of bonds and linkages and the sharing that leads to the formation of a Digital Country. For a visual interpretation of the concepts mentioned above, please refer to the appendix.

In sum, for a different set of reasons, among which the maintenance of ethnic identity, individuals at the diaspora join into associative institutions and tend to form politically engaged groups that can operate inside or outside such traditional institutions (as it is the case of Basques). They appropriate the internet and its social networks in order to facilitate communication and political action and flourishing in a distributive environment laden with symbols that are constantly reproduced and reinforced, while also strengthening the identity bonds or linkages between individuals consolidating the feeling that they are indeed part of a (larger) community and actively contribute to its perpetuation.

[115] See, for instance, Olesen, 2005.

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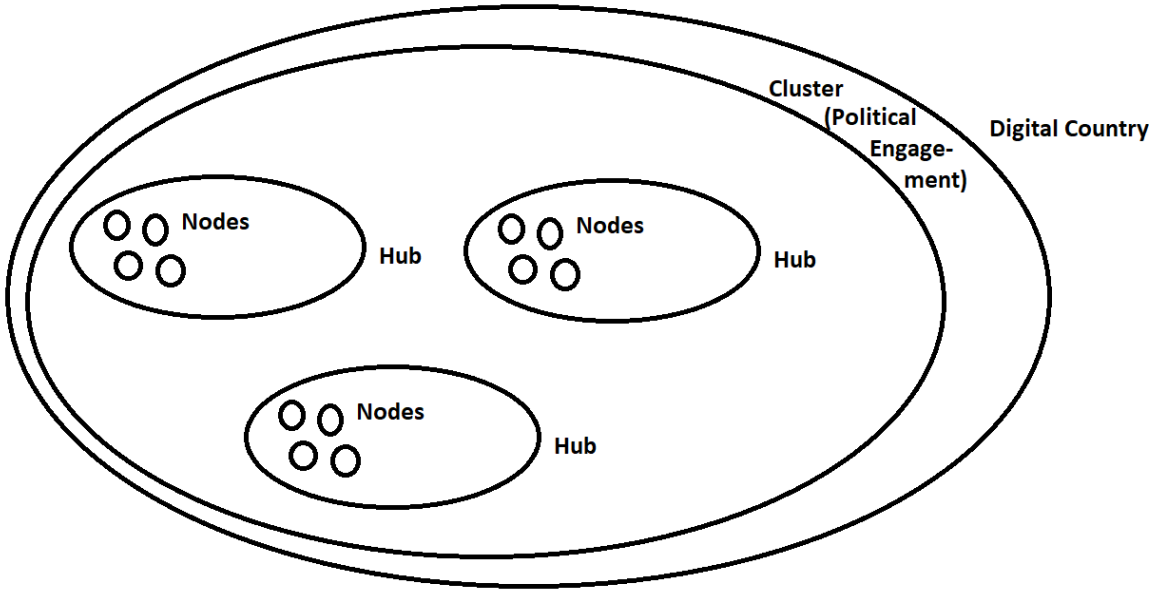
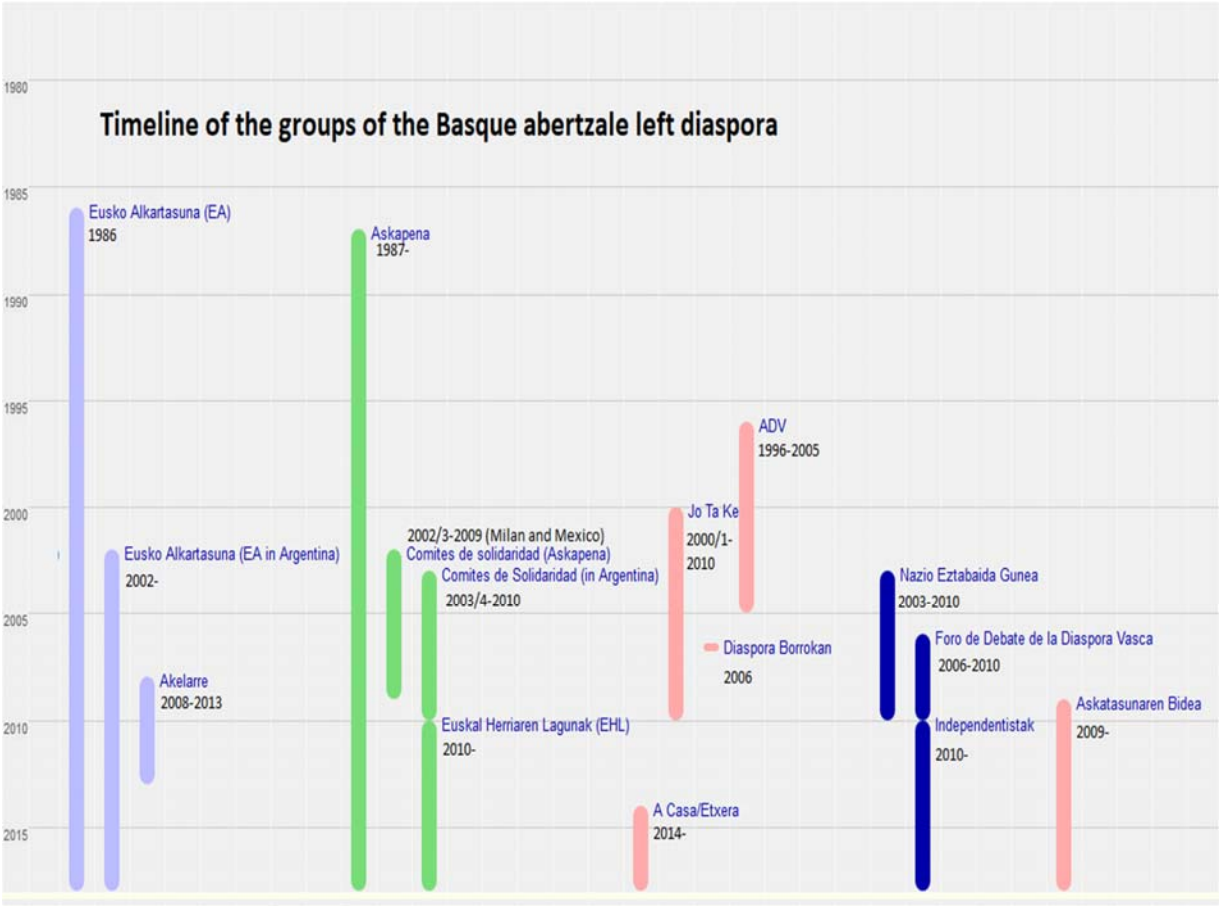
7. Appendix

7.1. List of interviewees with local and dates of interviews:

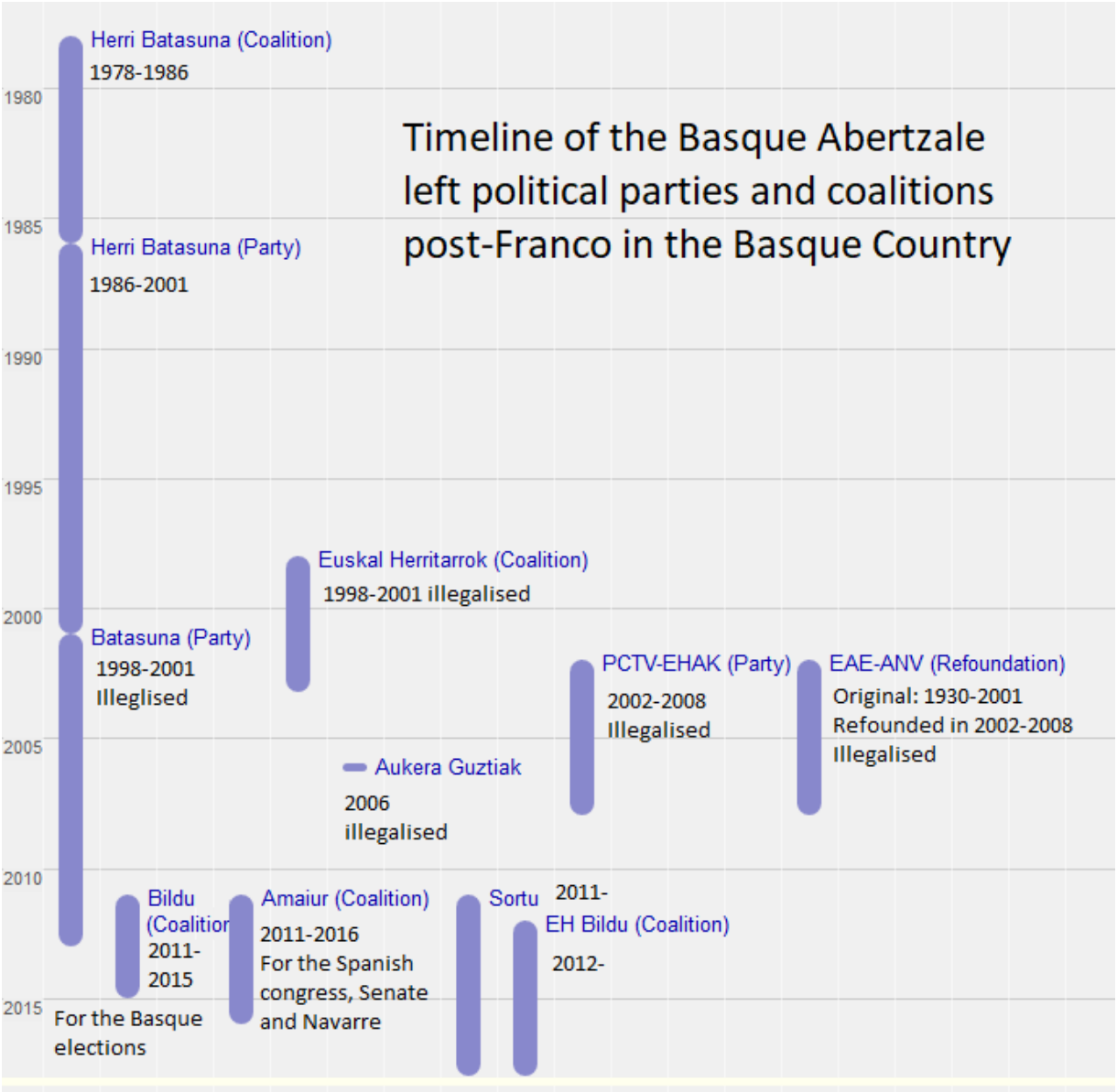
- Santiago Bereciartua (*Jo Ta Ke*, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca* and *Diaspora Borrokan*). Interview took place in Rosario, Argentina, on June 22, 2015;
- Daniel Bilbao (ADV, *Diaspora Borrokan*). A series of online interviews took place between January 30, 2017 and February 7, 2017;
- Carlos Aznarez (EHL). Interview took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 18, 2015;
- Gabi Basañez (*Askapena*). Interview took place in Barakaldo, Basque Country, on April 26, 2016;
- Txutxi Ariznabarreta (*Independentistak*). Informal interview took place in Vitoria-Gasteiz and Basauri, Basque Country, on October 9, 2015;
- Mariana Fernández Castelli (*Independentistak*, *Askatasunaren Bidea*, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca*). Interview took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 13, 2015;
- Horacio Marotto Etxezahar (*Askatasunaren Bidea*, *Independentistak*). Interview took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 13, 2015;
- Mariano Silva-Torrea (*Akelarre Kultur Taldea*). Interview took place online on September 19, 2016;
- César Arrondo (EA, *Foro de Debate de la Diáspora Vasca*). Interview took place in La Plata, Argentina, on June 23, 2015;
- Mikel Ezkerro (EA). Interview took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 12, 2015;
- Susana Etchegoyen (*A Casa/Etxera*) refused to be interviewed on December 11, 2016;
- Fernando Lizarbe (*Geroa Bai Argentina*). Short e-mail exchange during the months of January and February, 2018.



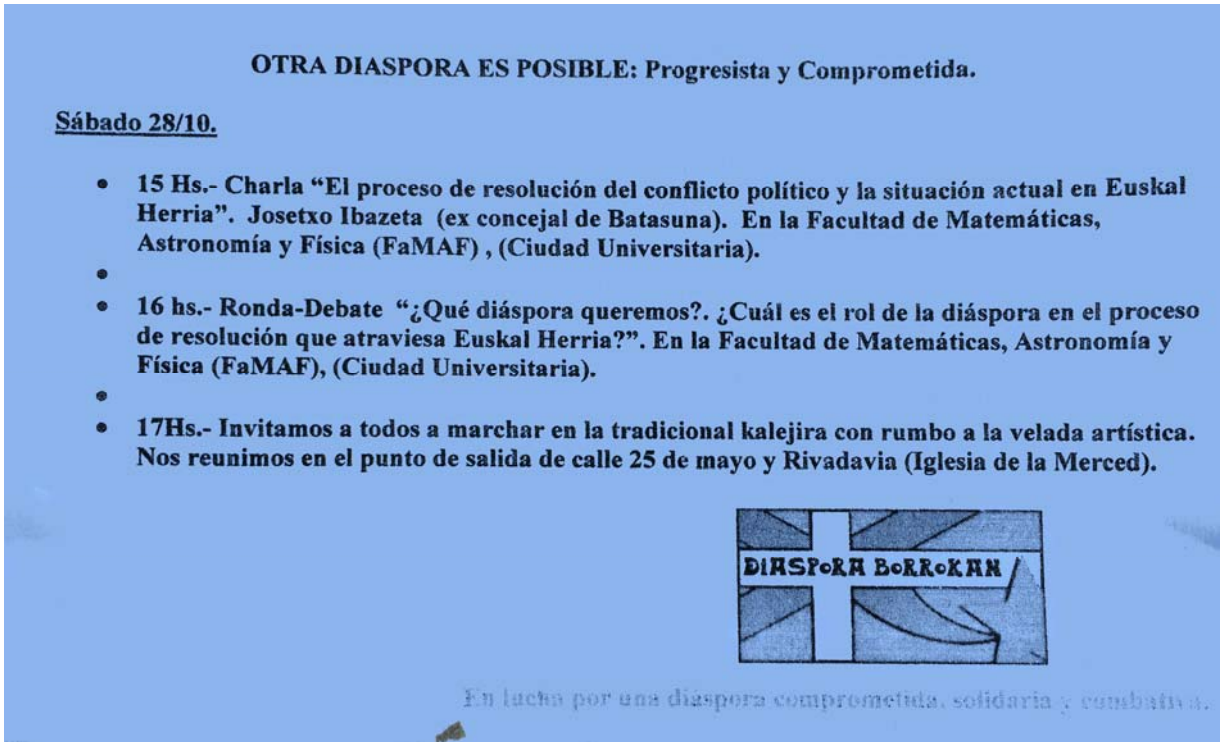
7.2. Nodes, Hubs, Clusters and the Digital Country



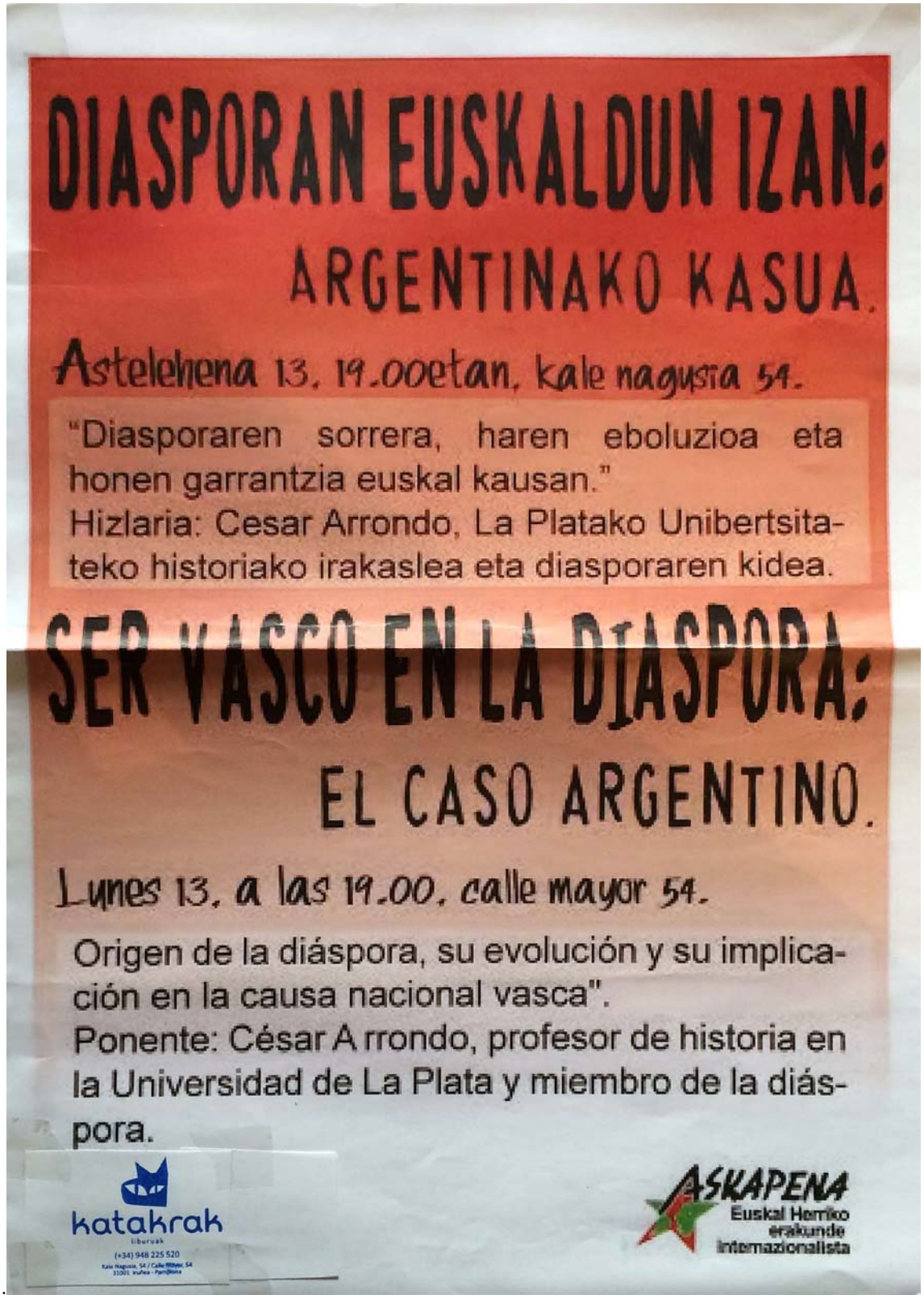
7.3. Timeline of the groups of the Basque Abertzale left in the diaspora



7.4.Timeline of the Basque Abertzale left political parties and coalitions post-Franco in the Basque Country



7.5. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan: Another diaspora is possible: progressive and committed (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).

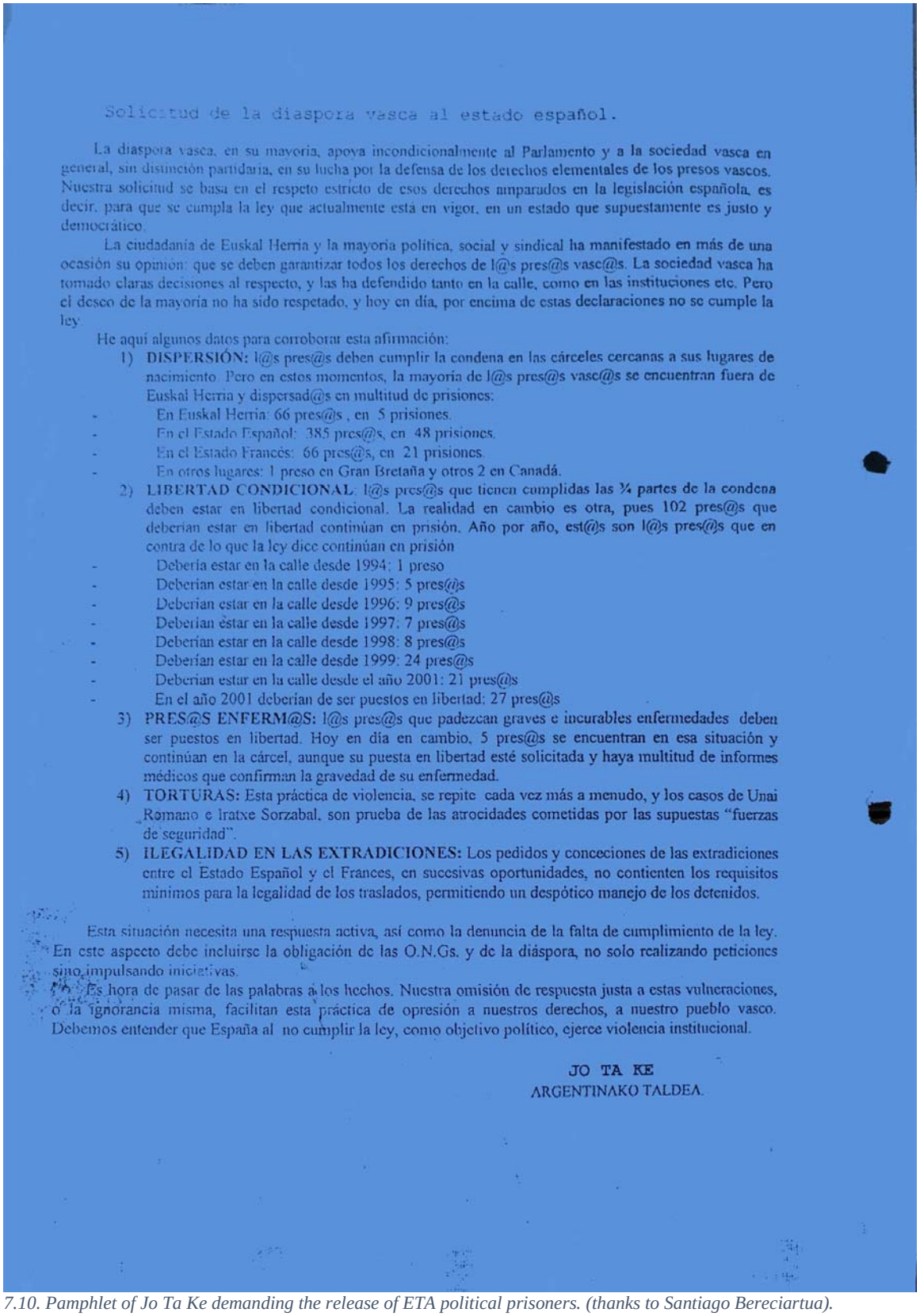


7.6. Pamphlet of Askapena inviting for a talk on "being Basque in the diaspora: the case of Argentina" (thanks to César Arrondo).

7.7. Askapena's pamphlet demanding the independence of the Basque Country (thanks to César Arrondo)

7.8. 2nd meeting (in Montevideo, Uruguay) of the Foro de Debate de la Diasóra Vasca en América, 2008. In the Picture: Santiago Bereciartua (Jo Ta Ke), Mariana Fernandez (Independentistak, Askatasunaren Bidea), Gloria Zazuola (Independentistak Uruguay) and César Arrondo (EA). (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).

7.9. Activity of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



Solicitud de la diaspora vasca al estado español.

La diaspora vasca, en su mayoría, apoya incondicionalmente al Parlamento y a la sociedad vasca en general, sin distinción partidaria, en su lucha por la defensa de los derechos elementales de los presos vascos. Nuestra solicitud se basa en el respeto estricto de esos derechos amparados en la legislación española, es decir, para que se cumpla la ley que actualmente está en vigor, en un estado que supuestamente es justo y democrático.

La ciudadanía de Euskal Herria y la mayoría política, social y sindical ha manifestado en más de una ocasión su opinión: que se deben garantizar todos los derechos de l@s pres@s vasc@s. La sociedad vasca ha tomado claras decisiones al respecto, y las ha defendido tanto en la calle, como en las instituciones etc. Pero el deseo de la mayoría no ha sido respetado, y hoy en día, por encima de estas declaraciones no se cumple la ley.

He aquí algunos datos para corroborar esta afirmación:

1) **DISPERSIÓN:** l@s pres@s deben cumplir la condena en las cárceles cercanas a sus lugares de nacimiento. Pero en estos momentos, la mayoría de l@s pres@s vasc@s se encuentran fuera de Euskal Herria y dispersad@s en multitud de prisiones:
   - En Euskal Herria: 66 pres@s , en 5 prisiones.
   - En el Estado Español: 385 pres@s, en 48 prisiones.
   - En el Estado Francés: 66 pres@s, en 21 prisiones.
   - En otros lugares: 1 preso en Gran Bretaña y otros 2 en Canadá.
2) **LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL**: l@s pres@s que tienen cumplidas las ¾ partes de la condena deben estar en libertad condicional. La realidad en cambio es otra, pues 102 pres@s que deberían estar en libertad continúan en prisión. Año por año, est@s son l@s pres@s que en contra de lo que la ley dice continúan en prisión
   - Debería estar en la calle desde 1994: 1 preso
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde 1995: 5 pres@s
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde 1996: 9 pres@s
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde 1997: 7 pres@s
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde 1998: 8 pres@s
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde 1999: 24 pres@s
   - Deberían estar en la calle desde el año 2001: 21 pres@s
   - En el año 2001 deberían de ser puestos en libertad: 27 pres@s
3) **PRES@S ENFERM@S:** l@s pres@s que padezcan graves e incurables enfermedades deben ser puestos en libertad. Hoy en día en cambio, 5 pres@s se encuentran en esa situación y continúan en la cárcel, aunque su puesta en libertad esté solicitada y haya multitud de informes médicos que confirman la gravedad de su enfermedad.
4) **TORTURAS:** Esta práctica de violencia, se repite cada vez más a menudo, y los casos de Unai Romano e Iratxe Sorzabal, son prueba de las atrocidades cometidas por las supuestas "fuerzas de seguridad".
5) **ILEGALIDAD EN LAS EXTRADICIONES:** Los pedidos y concesiones de las extradiciones entre el Estado Español y el Frances, en sucesivas oportunidades, no contienen los requisitos mínimos para la legalidad de los traslados, permitiendo un despótico manejo de los detenidos.

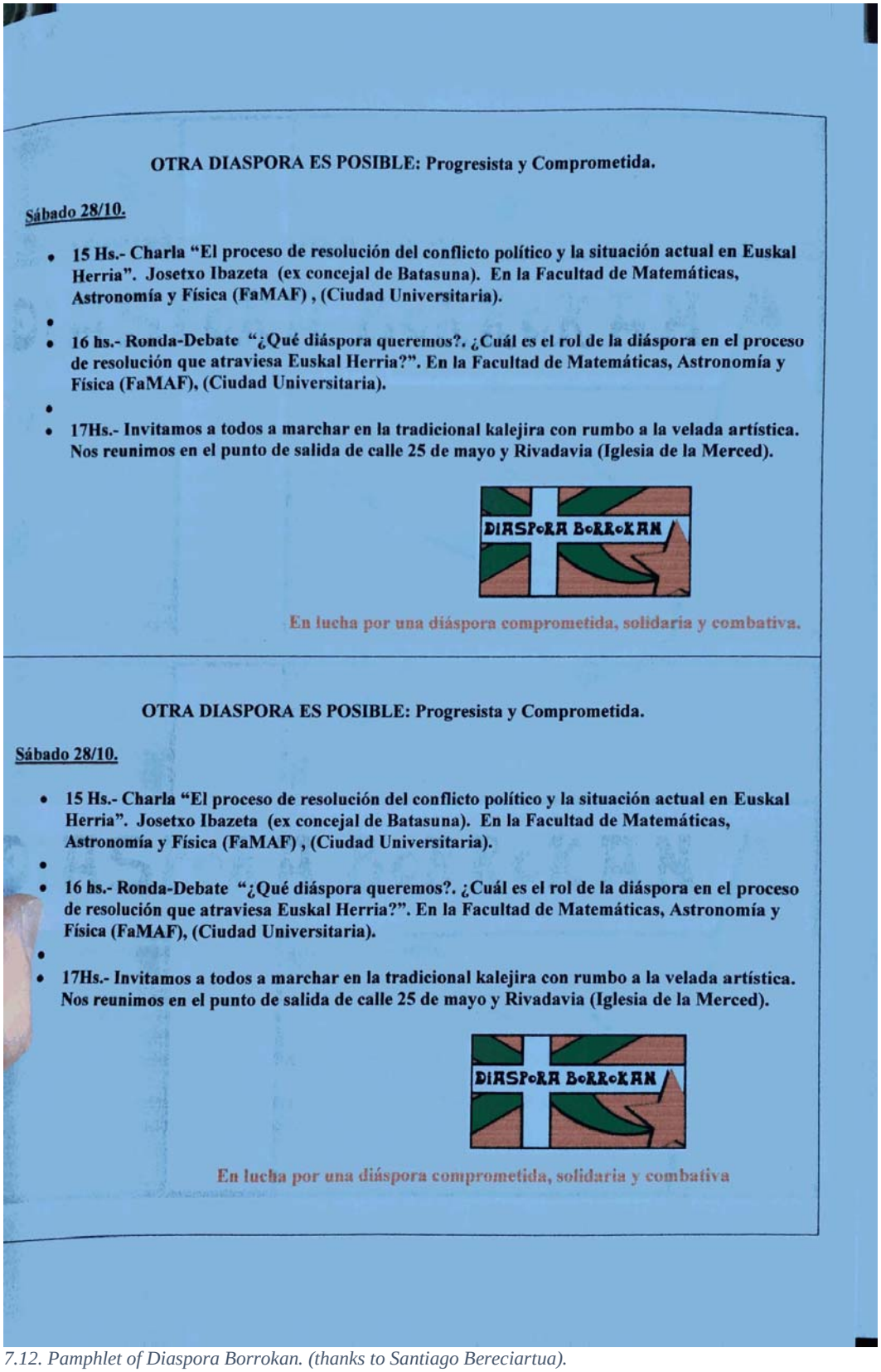
Esta situación necesita una respuesta activa, así como la denuncia de la falta de cumplimiento de la ley. En este aspecto debe incluirse la obligación de las O.N.Gs. y de la diáspora, no solo realizando peticiones sino impulsando iniciativas.

Es hora de pasar de las palabras a los hechos. Nuestra omisión de respuesta justa a estas vulneraciones, o la ignorancia misma, facilitan esta práctica de opresión a nuestros derechos, a nuestro pueblo vasco. Debemos entender que España al no cumplir la ley, como objetivo político, ejerce violencia institucional.

JO TA KE
ARGENTINAKO TALDEA.

7.10. Pamphlet of Jo Ta Ke demanding the release of ETA political prisoners. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).

7.11. Another pamhlet of Jo Ta Ke in defense of ETA's political prisoners. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



OTRA DIASPORA ES POSIBLE: Progresista y Comprometida.

Sábado 28/10.

- **15 Hs.- Charla "El proceso de resolución del conflicto político y la situación actual en Euskal Herria". Josetxo Ibazeta (ex concejal de Batasuna). En la Facultad de Matemáticas, Astronomía y Física (FaMAF) , (Ciudad Universitaria).**
- **16 hs.- Ronda-Debate "¿Qué diáspora queremos?. ¿Cuál es el rol de la diáspora en el proceso de resolución que atraviesa Euskal Herria?". En la Facultad de Matemáticas, Astronomía y Física (FaMAF), (Ciudad Universitaria).**
- **17Hs.- Invitamos a todos a marchar en la tradicional kalejira con rumbo a la velada artística. Nos reunimos en el punto de salida de calle 25 de mayo y Rivadavia (Iglesia de la Merced).**

DIASPORA BORROKAN

En lucha por una diáspora comprometida, solidaria y combativa.

OTRA DIASPORA ES POSIBLE: Progresista y Comprometida.

Sábado 28/10.

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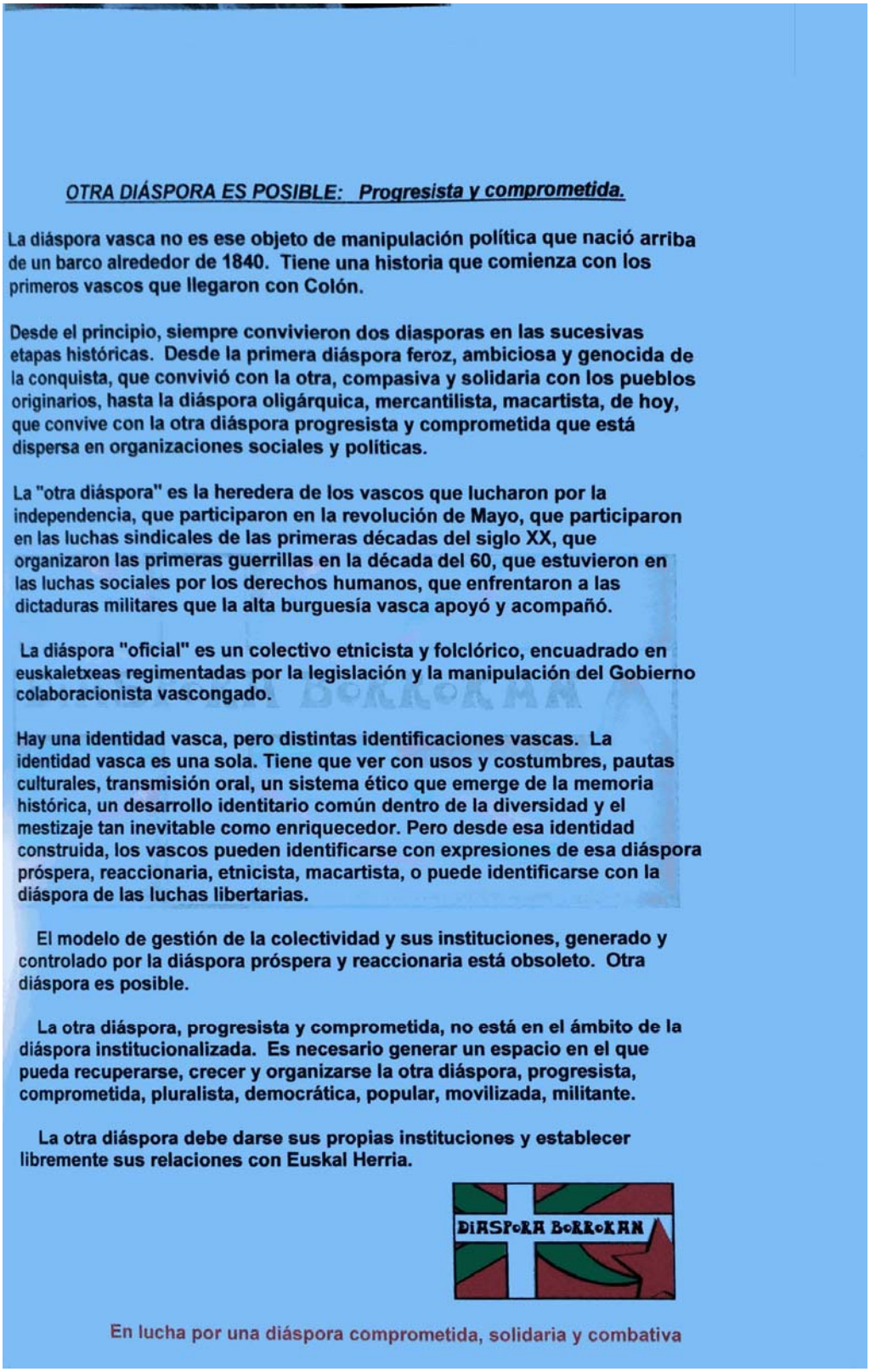
DIASPORA BORROKAN

En lucha por una diáspora comprometida, solidaria y combativa

7.12. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



OTRA DIÁSPORA ES POSIBLE: Progresista y comprometida.

La diáspora vasca no es ese objeto de manipulación política que nació arriba de un barco alrededor de 1840. Tiene una historia que comienza con los primeros vascos que llegaron con Colón.

Desde el principio, siempre convivieron dos diasporas en las sucesivas etapas históricas. Desde la primera diáspora feroz, ambiciosa y genocida de la conquista, que convivió con la otra, compasiva y solidaria con los pueblos originarios, hasta la diáspora oligárquica, mercantilista, macartista, de hoy, que convive con la otra diáspora progresista y comprometida que está dispersa en organizaciones sociales y políticas.

La "otra diáspora" es la heredera de los vascos que lucharon por la independencia, que participaron en la revolución de Mayo, que participaron en las luchas sindicales de las primeras décadas del siglo XX, que organizaron las primeras guerrillas en la década del 60, que estuvieron en las luchas sociales por los derechos humanos, que enfrentaron a las dictaduras militares que la alta burguesía vasca apoyó y acompañó.

La diáspora "oficial" es un colectivo etnicista y folclórico, encuadrado en euskaletxeas regimentadas por la legislación y la manipulación del Gobierno colaboracionista vascongado.

Hay una identidad vasca, pero distintas identificaciones vascas. La identidad vasca es una sola. Tiene que ver con usos y costumbres, pautas culturales, transmisión oral, un sistema ético que emerge de la memoria histórica, un desarrollo identitario común dentro de la diversidad y el mestizaje tan inevitable como enriquecedor. Pero desde esa identidad construida, los vascos pueden identificarse con expresiones de esa diáspora próspera, reaccionaria, etnicista, macartista, o puede identificarse con la diáspora de las luchas libertarias.

El modelo de gestión de la colectividad y sus instituciones, generado y controlado por la diáspora próspera y reaccionaria está obsoleto. Otra diáspora es posible.

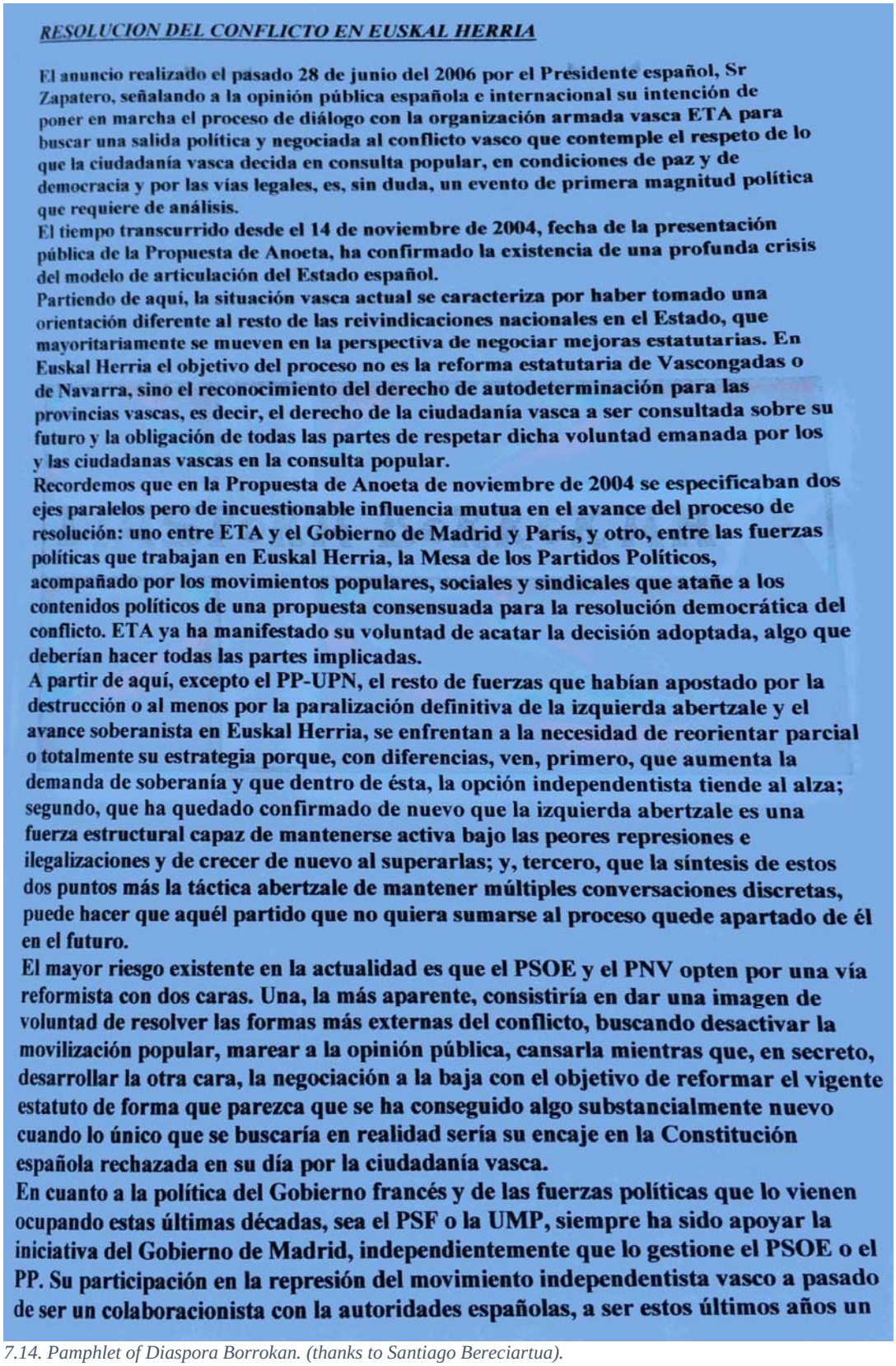
La otra diáspora, progresista y comprometida, no está en el ámbito de la diáspora institucionalizada. Es necesario generar un espacio en el que pueda recuperarse, crecer y organizarse la otra diáspora, progresista, comprometida, pluralista, democrática, popular, movilizada, militante.

La otra diáspora debe darse sus propias instituciones y establecer libremente sus relaciones con Euskal Herria.

DiASPoRA BoRRoKAN

En lucha por una diáspora comprometida, solidaria y combativa

7.13. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



RESOLUCION DEL CONFLICTO EN EUSKAL HERRIA

El anuncio realizado el pasado 28 de junio del 2006 por el Presidente español, Sr Zapatero, señalando a la opinión pública española e internacional su intención de poner en marcha el proceso de diálogo con la organización armada vasca ETA para buscar una salida política y negociada al conflicto vasco que contemple el respeto de lo que la ciudadanía vasca decida en consulta popular, en condiciones de paz y de democracia y por las vías legales, es, sin duda, un evento de primera magnitud política que requiere de análisis.

El tiempo transcurrido desde el 14 de noviembre de 2004, fecha de la presentación pública de la Propuesta de Anoeta, ha confirmado la existencia de una profunda crisis del modelo de articulación del Estado español.

Partiendo de aquí, la situación vasca actual se caracteriza por haber tomado una orientación diferente al resto de las reivindicaciones nacionales en el Estado, que mayoritariamente se mueven en la perspectiva de negociar mejoras estatutarias. En Euskal Herria el objetivo del proceso no es la reforma estatutaria de Vascongadas o de Navarra, sino el reconocimiento del derecho de autodeterminación para las provincias vascas, es decir, el derecho de la ciudadanía vasca a ser consultada sobre su futuro y la obligación de todas las partes de respetar dicha voluntad emanada por los y las ciudadanas vascas en la consulta popular.

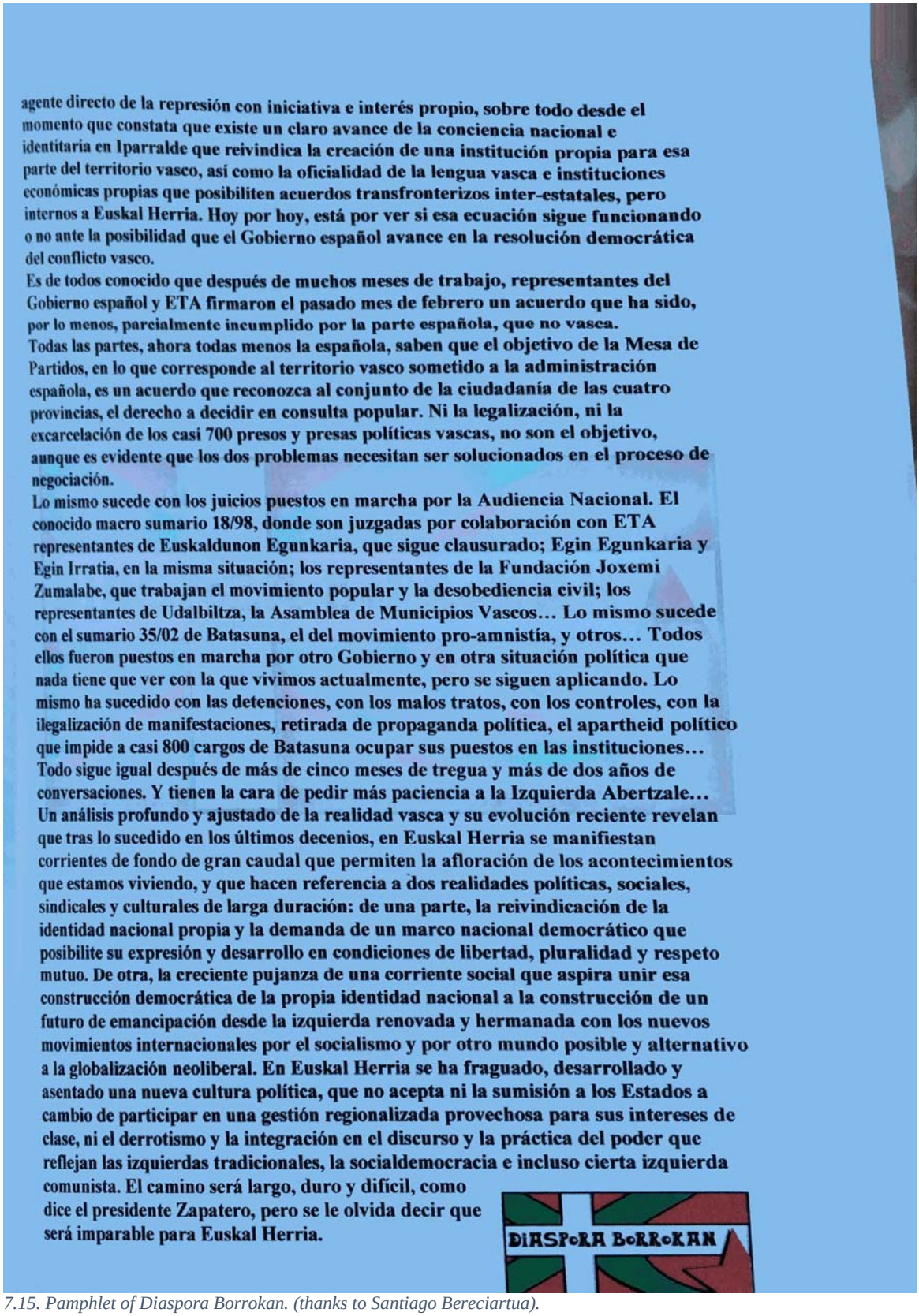
Recordemos que en la Propuesta de Anoeta de noviembre de 2004 se especificaban dos ejes paralelos pero de incuestionable influencia mutua en el avance del proceso de resolución: uno entre ETA y el Gobierno de Madrid y París, y otro, entre las fuerzas políticas que trabajan en Euskal Herria, la Mesa de los Partidos Políticos, acompañado por los movimientos populares, sociales y sindicales que atañe a los contenidos políticos de una propuesta consensuada para la resolución democrática del conflicto. ETA ya ha manifestado su voluntad de acatar la decisión adoptada, algo que deberían hacer todas las partes implicadas.

A partir de aquí, excepto el PP-UPN, el resto de fuerzas que habían apostado por la destrucción o al menos por la paralización definitiva de la izquierda abertzale y el avance soberanista en Euskal Herria, se enfrentan a la necesidad de reorientar parcial o totalmente su estrategia porque, con diferencias, ven, primero, que aumenta la demanda de soberanía y que dentro de ésta, la opción independentista tiende al alza; segundo, que ha quedado confirmado de nuevo que la izquierda abertzale es una fuerza estructural capaz de mantenerse activa bajo las peores represiones e ilegalizaciones y de crecer de nuevo al superarlas; y, tercero, que la síntesis de estos dos puntos más la táctica abertzale de mantener múltiples conversaciones discretas, puede hacer que aquél partido que no quiera sumarse al proceso quede apartado de él en el futuro.

El mayor riesgo existente en la actualidad es que el PSOE y el PNV opten por una vía reformista con dos caras. Una, la más aparente, consistiría en dar una imagen de voluntad de resolver las formas más externas del conflicto, buscando desactivar la movilización popular, marear a la opinión pública, cansarla mientras que, en secreto, desarrollar la otra cara, la negociación a la baja con el objetivo de reformar el vigente estatuto de forma que parezca que se ha conseguido algo substancialmente nuevo cuando lo único que se buscaría en realidad sería su encaje en la Constitución española rechazada en su día por la ciudadanía vasca.

En cuanto a la política del Gobierno francés y de las fuerzas políticas que lo vienen ocupando estas últimas décadas, sea el PSF o la UMP, siempre ha sido apoyar la iniciativa del Gobierno de Madrid, independientemente que lo gestione el PSOE o el PP. Su participación en la represión del movimiento independentista vasco a pasado de ser un colaboracionista con la autoridades españolas, a ser estos últimos años un

7.14. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



agente directo de la represión con iniciativa e interés propio, sobre todo desde el momento que constata que existe un claro avance de la conciencia nacional e identitaria en Iparralde que reivindica la creación de una institución propia para esa parte del territorio vasco, así como la oficialidad de la lengua vasca e instituciones económicas propias que posibiliten acuerdos transfronterizos inter-estatales, pero internos a Euskal Herria. Hoy por hoy, está por ver si esa ecuación sigue funcionando o no ante la posibilidad que el Gobierno español avance en la resolución democrática del conflicto vasco.

Es de todos conocido que después de muchos meses de trabajo, representantes del Gobierno español y ETA firmaron el pasado mes de febrero un acuerdo que ha sido, por lo menos, parcialmente incumplido por la parte española, que no vasca.

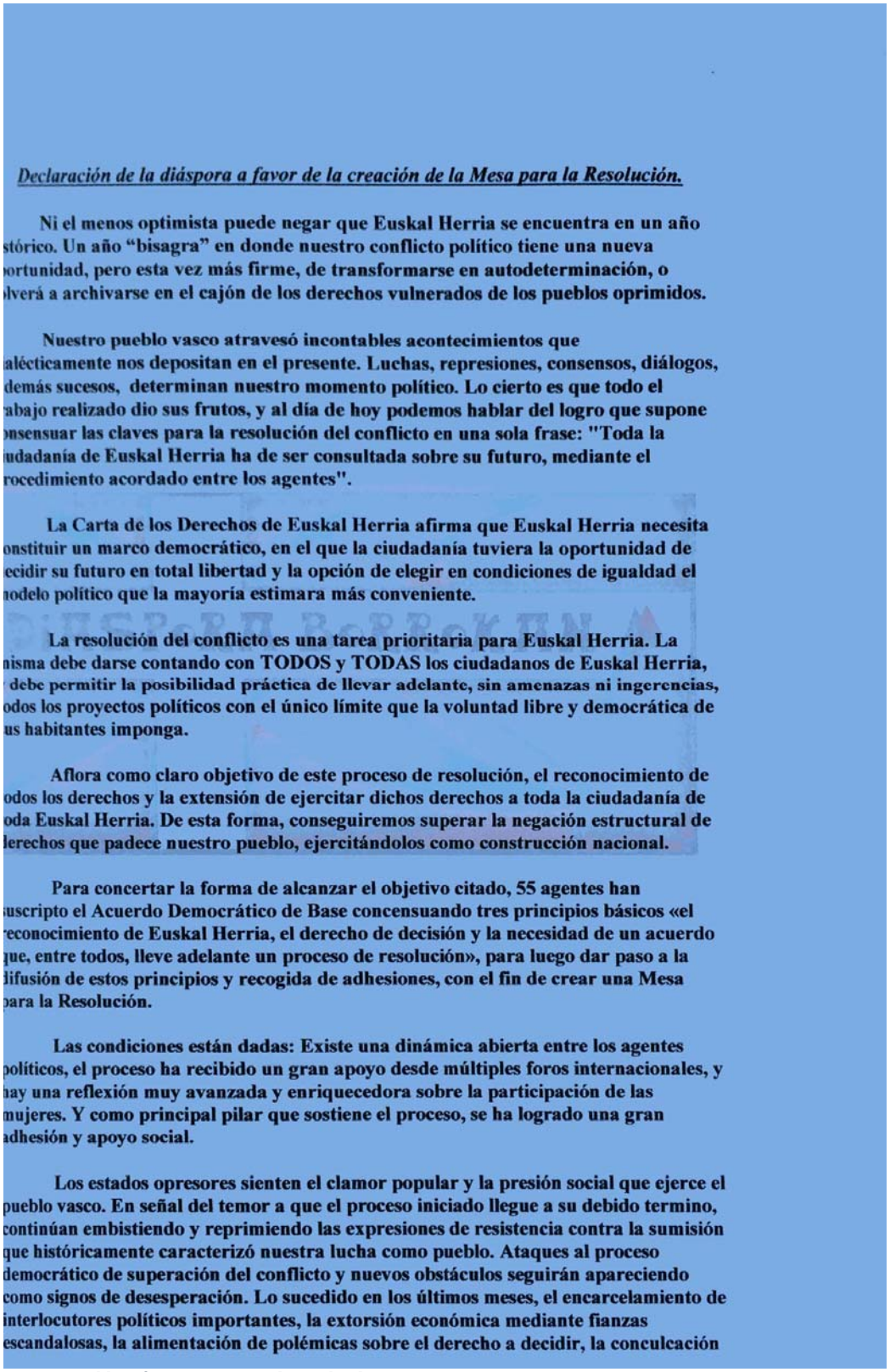
Todas las partes, ahora todas menos la española, saben que el objetivo de la Mesa de Partidos, en lo que corresponde al territorio vasco sometido a la administración española, es un acuerdo que reconozca al conjunto de la ciudadanía de las cuatro provincias, el derecho a decidir en consulta popular. Ni la legalización, ni la excarcelación de los casi 700 presos y presas políticas vascas, no son el objetivo, aunque es evidente que los dos problemas necesitan ser solucionados en el proceso de negociación.

Lo mismo sucede con los juicios puestos en marcha por la Audiencia Nacional. El conocido macro sumario 18/98, donde son juzgadas por colaboración con ETA representantes de Euskaldunon Egunkaria, que sigue clausurado; Egin Egunkaria y Egin Irratia, en la misma situación; los representantes de la Fundación Joxemi Zumalabe, que trabajan el movimiento popular y la desobediencia civil; los representantes de Udalbiltza, la Asamblea de Municipios Vascos… Lo mismo sucede con el sumario 35/02 de Batasuna, el del movimiento pro-amnistía, y otros… Todos ellos fueron puestos en marcha por otro Gobierno y en otra situación política que nada tiene que ver con la que vivimos actualmente, pero se siguen aplicando. Lo mismo ha sucedido con las detenciones, con los malos tratos, con los controles, con la ilegalización de manifestaciones, retirada de propaganda política, el apartheid político que impide a casi 800 cargos de Batasuna ocupar sus puestos en las instituciones… Todo sigue igual después de más de cinco meses de tregua y más de dos años de conversaciones. Y tienen la cara de pedir más paciencia a la Izquierda Abertzale…

Un análisis profundo y ajustado de la realidad vasca y su evolución reciente revelan que tras lo sucedido en los últimos decenios, en Euskal Herria se manifiestan corrientes de fondo de gran caudal que permiten la afloración de los acontecimientos que estamos viviendo, y que hacen referencia a dos realidades políticas, sociales, sindicales y culturales de larga duración: de una parte, la reivindicación de la identidad nacional propia y la demanda de un marco nacional democrático que posibilite su expresión y desarrollo en condiciones de libertad, pluralidad y respeto mutuo. De otra, la creciente pujanza de una corriente social que aspira unir esa construcción democrática de la propia identidad nacional a la construcción de un futuro de emancipación desde la izquierda renovada y hermanada con los nuevos movimientos internacionales por el socialismo y por otro mundo posible y alternativo a la globalización neoliberal. En Euskal Herria se ha fraguado, desarrollado y asentado una nueva cultura política, que no acepta ni la sumisión a los Estados a cambio de participar en una gestión regionalizada provechosa para sus intereses de clase, ni el derrotismo y la integración en el discurso y la práctica del poder que reflejan las izquierdas tradicionales, la socialdemocracia e incluso cierta izquierda comunista. El camino será largo, duro y difícil, como dice el presidente Zapatero, pero se le olvida decir que será imparable para Euskal Herria.

DIASPORA BORROKAN

7.15. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).



Declaración de la diáspora a favor de la creación de la Mesa para la Resolución.

Ni el menos optimista puede negar que Euskal Herria se encuentra en un año stórico. Un año "bisagra" en donde nuestro conflicto político tiene una nueva ortunidad, pero esta vez más firme, de transformarse en autodeterminación, o lverá a archivarse en el cajón de los derechos vulnerados de los pueblos oprimidos.

Nuestro pueblo vasco atravesó incontables acontecimientos que alécticamente nos depositan en el presente. Luchas, represiones, consensos, diálogos, demás sucesos, determinan nuestro momento político. Lo cierto es que todo el abajo realizado dio sus frutos, y al día de hoy podemos hablar del logro que supone nsensuar las claves para la resolución del conflicto en una sola frase: "Toda la udadanía de Euskal Herria ha de ser consultada sobre su futuro, mediante el rocedimiento acordado entre los agentes".

La Carta de los Derechos de Euskal Herria afirma que Euskal Herria necesita onstituir un marco democrático, en el que la ciudadanía tuviera la oportunidad de ecidir su futuro en total libertad y la opción de elegir en condiciones de igualdad el nodelo político que la mayoría estimara más conveniente.

La resolución del conflicto es una tarea prioritaria para Euskal Herria. La nisma debe darse contando con TODOS y TODAS los ciudadanos de Euskal Herria, debe permitir la posibilidad práctica de llevar adelante, sin amenazas ni ingerencias, odos los proyectos políticos con el único límite que la voluntad libre y democrática de us habitantes imponga.

Aflora como claro objetivo de este proceso de resolución, el reconocimiento de odos los derechos y la extensión de ejercitar dichos derechos a toda la ciudadanía de oda Euskal Herria. De esta forma, conseguiremos superar la negación estructural de derechos que padece nuestro pueblo, ejercitándolos como construcción nacional.

Para concertar la forma de alcanzar el objetivo citado, 55 agentes han uscripto el Acuerdo Democrático de Base concensuando tres principios básicos «el reconocimiento de Euskal Herria, el derecho de decisión y la necesidad de un acuerdo que, entre todos, lleve adelante un proceso de resolución», para luego dar paso a la difusión de estos principios y recogida de adhesiones, con el fin de crear una Mesa para la Resolución.

Las condiciones están dadas: Existe una dinámica abierta entre los agentes políticos, el proceso ha recibido un gran apoyo desde múltiples foros internacionales, y hay una reflexión muy avanzada y enriquecedora sobre la participación de las mujeres. Y como principal pilar que sostiene el proceso, se ha logrado una gran adhesión y apoyo social.

Los estados opresores sienten el clamor popular y la presión social que ejerce el pueblo vasco. En señal del temor a que el proceso iniciado llegue a su debido termino, continúan embistiendo y reprimiendo las expresiones de resistencia contra la sumisión que históricamente caracterizó nuestra lucha como pueblo. Ataques al proceso democrático de superación del conflicto y nuevos obstáculos seguirán apareciendo como signos de desesperación. Lo sucedido en los últimos meses, el encarcelamiento de interlocutores políticos importantes, la extorsión económica mediante fianzas escandalosas, la alimentación de polémicas sobre el derecho a decidir, la conculcación

7.16. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).

erecho de expresión y participación de todas las ciudadanas y ciudadanos, ... es muestra de ello.

Volviendo al inicio estamos en un momento en donde nuestro accionar como blo determinará si llegamos al fin real del conflicto, con el reconocimiento de chos que eso conlleva, o si permitimos enfriar la situación regalándole un respiro ranquilidad a los estados opresores. Para conseguir el fin que buscamos los vascos de antaño, debemos todos y todas tomar cartas en el asunto. Debemos multiplicar rabajo, contagiar al vecino, sentirnos participes, propagar las proclamas, plemente sumarnos para presionar todos juntos con la fuerza de un puño. De esta ma lograremos que el presente proceso sea el último, sin desaprovechar la ortunidad histórica, haciéndolo irreversible.

Así lo entiende la Mesa para el Acuerdo, «un proceso de resolución necesita de ta disposición activa de la ciudadanía que sea garantía del propio proceso, que sea a presión para que no se produzcan intenciones de abandonar y que sea 'fuerza', en sentido de que los partidos sepan y tengan una conciencia clara de cuál es la oluntad popular y cuál será la presión que la ciudadanía ejercerá, o incluso cuál será castigo posible que pueda existir en caso de que reculen en la dirección de esolución del conflicto»(Santamaría).

Por eso debemos lograr la implicación de todos los ciudadanos y ciudadanas en a creación de una mesa para la resolución del conflicto, que sirva para impulsar la puesta en marcha del propio proceso. Movilizar a la ciudadanía a hacer de la población un agente activo que defienda la necesidad de la constitución de la mesa, y el comienzo ya del proceso en sí mismo.

Se hace mas que nunca necesaria la implicación de todas y todos los vascos. Y cuando hablamos de todos y todas incluimos necesariamente a la diáspora, principal motor y generador del apoyo internacional que presiona vigorosamente por el reconocimiento del derecho de autodeterminación. Cada vasco y vasca, desde su país, debe participar y colaborar en la construcción nacional.

Desde aquí, Argentina, pedimos a todos los agentes políticos y sociales un esfuerzo para crear cuanto antes la Mesa y llegar a las claves que están en las raíces del conflicto. Así mismo, les planteamos la necesidad de respetar la base democrática que inevitablemente debe tener el proceso: Reconocer a Euskal Herria y respetar el derecho a decidir de la ciudadanía vasca.

DIASPORA BORROKAN

En lucha por una diáspora comprometida, solidaria y combativa

7.17. Pamphlet of Diaspora Borrokan. (thanks to Santiago Bereciartua).

7.18. Invitation to an event by the EHL. (Thanks to Carlos Aznarez).

7.19. Invitation for an event with Independentistak's coordinator Txutxi Ariznabarreta in Argentina.

7.20. Screenshot of EHL's blog homepage (ehlargentina.blogspot.ar)

7.21. Screenshot of Independentistak's homepage, former Foro de Ddebate de la Diaspora Vasca's blog. (forodebatediasporavasca.blogspot.ar)

7.22. Askapena's homepage (www.askapena.org)

ASKATASUNAREN BIDEA

AGRUPACIÓN VASCO ARGENTINA
CIUDAD DE SAN MIGUEL, BUENOS AIRES

SOSTÉN ACTIVO Y CREATIVO DE LA CULTURA VASCA EN LA DIÁSPORA
askatasunarenbidea@gmail.com / askatasunaren-bidea.blogspot.com

Elegimos el nombre ASKATASUNAREN BIDEA por ser el de la libertad un valor fundamental para el pueblo vasco, que compartimos plenamente. Valor fundado en el respeto, la solidaridad, el diálogo y el compromiso surgido del amor hacia el pueblo del que nos reconocemos parte.

San Miguel, provincia de Buenos Aires, República Argentina.

Para comunicarte con Askatasunaren Bidea podés escribirnos a askatasunarenbidea@gmail.com

PARA ACCEDER A LAS NOTAS ANTERIORES , bastará con clickear en "entradas antiguas", seleccionar un mes, y a partir de allí la nota que se desea leer.

martes, 30 de enero de 2018

ARTÍCULO DE OPINIÓN

IRUÑA CAPITAL VASCA

Por Josemari Esparza Zabalegi
Editor

Perdonen los lectores y lectoras, pero otra vez toca escribir perogrulladas. UPN y PP han solicitado la declaración de "persona no grata" para Arantxa Tapia, consejera del Gobierno Vasco, por haber dicho que Pamplona es una "capital vasca". Así que vuelta la burra al trigo. ¿Qué hemos hecho en Navarra para padecer semejante grado de estulticia en nuestra clase política? ¿Por qué nos obligan a discutir al nivel del borrico si a esa altura todos tenemos las de perder? ¿Qué gana la derecha con ello? ¿Por qué para defender la separación institucional de Navarra del resto de provincias vascas –algo totalmente legítimo- tienen que recurrir a decir memeces? Iñaki Iriarte, parlamentario de UPN y conspicuo autor de Tramas de identidad, que tan a gusto leímos en su día, debería sentar a sus correligionarios y darles unas clases elementales de historia de Navarra e historia de la propia derecha navarra que, para defender lo mismo, bien lo sabe Iriarte, no recurrían a semejantes majaderías.

Que alguien les explique cómo Iruna, o Iruñea, era la Civitas de los vascones por antonomasia y la misma Pompeluna, la ciudad de Pompeyo, tiene igual raíz. Que toda la toponimia de la ciudad y de muchos kilómetros a la redonda es totalmente vasca y esa es la matriz del Reino de Navarra. Gaztanbide, Pérez Goyena, Iturralde, Caro Baroja, Jimeno Jurío ¿alguien lo ha puesto en duda en toda en toda nuestra bibliografía? ¿Cuántos documentos municipales de los siglos XVII y XVIII, a la hora de designar párrocos, capellanes, predicadores, escribanos o médicos, consideran "que el lenguaje primero y natural de la Ciudad es el Basquence"? Quizás en 1645 el vicario de San Cernin estaba haciendo política para Bildu o Geroa Bai cuando afirmaba que "la lengua bascónica es la lengua natural y materna de esta Ciudad de Pamplona y su Montaña, y la accidental y advenediza es la Castellana". Si en Iruña "de cien personas que confiesan, noventa son en lengua bascongada" ¿no hablamos de una ciudad vasca? ¿No dijo Juan de Beriain en su Doctrina Christiana que escribía en el euskera de Pamplona "Cabeza deste Reyno, que es el que se habla en la mayor parte del y el que mejor se entiende en todas las partes"? ¿No dijo el padre Moret en los Anales del Reino de Navarra que los naturales de Pamplona llaman en su lengua Jaun done Saturdi, a San Cernín?" ¿Era nacionalista el doctor Joanes de Etcheberri cuando en 1712 escribió Iruña eskualdunen hiri buruzagia, Pamplona capital de los vascos?

A partir de entonces ¿ha habido un solo escritor, un intelectual, un artista, un viajero, una enciclopedia, un periódico, un político navarro, ¡uno solo, jobar!, que haya negado que Pamplona sea una capital vasca? Desde las primera guías de la ciudad publicadas por el militar Emilio Valverde (1886) hasta la de Pío Baroja en 1956, todas reconocen a Navarra como centro de Vasconia y a Iruñea como su capital. En la de 1926, Pamplona-Navarra. Guía del Turista, el alcalde de Pamplona Joaquín Ilundain escribía: "Lo que hoy es provincia foral de Navarra fue, desde los orígenes de la historia de la península Ibérica, tierra de los vascos. Raza viril, fuerte y austera (...) En el siglo VIII y ante la invasión sarracena, los vascos del Pirineo constituyeron el Reino de Navarra". Ese era el tipo de textos que se enseñaban en las escuelas navarras a inicios del siglo XX, con diputaciones carlistas o liberales. ¿Ya entonces estábamos los abertzales manipulando la educación de los niños?

Pero lo peor de esta derecha navarra es que desconoce por completo a sus propios próceres. Algunos sí los conocen, por eso hay que exigirles que pongan más ilustración en el majadal de su partido. No les pedimos imposibles, como sería sofrenar a Ana Beltrán y su grey, incapaces de distinguir un libro de una paca de alfalfa. Los de UPN son navarros, tienen que llegar a entender que para defender la identidad de una Navarra sola no tienen que renegar de sus apellidos, de sus abuelas euskaldunas, del orgullo de la Vasconia pretérita. Que toda la derecha navarrista se ha enfrentado siempre al nacionalismo vasco diciendo precisamente que los verdaderos vascos eran los navarros. E Iruña su capital. El político pamplonés Víctor Pradera, padre del navarrismo y el mayor enemigo de la unidad política vasca, no tenía reparos en hablar ante las Cortes como "un diputado vasco". Para él, en 1512 Navarra fue "el último pueblo vasco que se unió a España". En 1918, El Pensamiento Navarro lo llamó "verbo de España y de Euskaria".

OLENTZERO ETA ZORIONAK

Esta publicación nos ha sido enviada generosamente por el autor para su publicación en este blog.

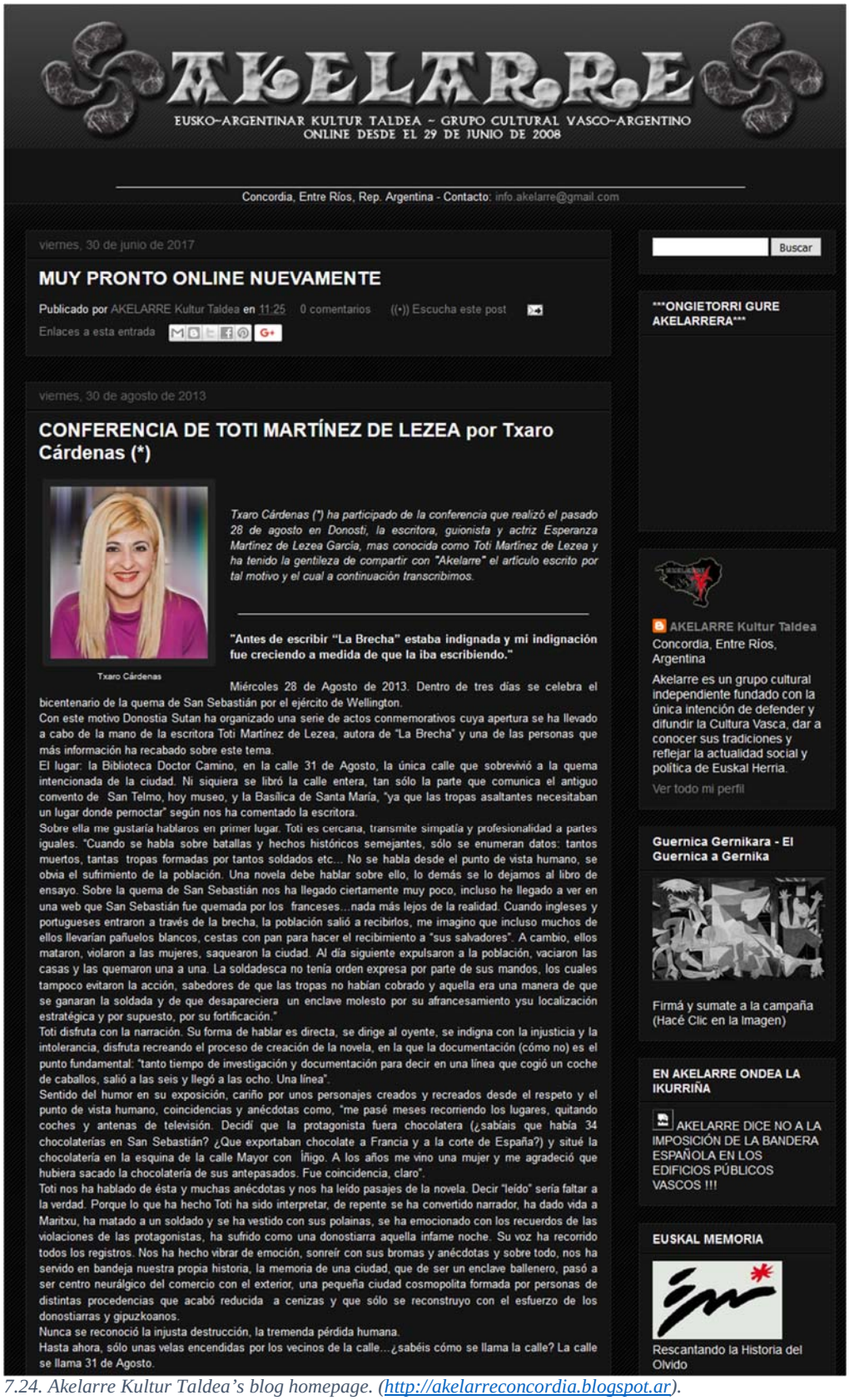
Por Aitzol Altuna Enzunza

La Navidad cristiana proviene de la "saturnalia" de los romanos, las cuales duraban 7 días en continuo festejo e incluían un banquete público seguido por el intercambio de regalos en un ambiente de carnaval. Fue el propio Julio César el que instauró el "Natalis Solis Invicti" o Nacimiento del Sol invicto asociado al nacimiento del dios Apolo el 25 de diciembre (con la adaptación al calendario Gregoriano, sería el 21 de diciembre actual).

El historiador Sexto Julio Africano que nació en Jerusalén en el año 160, adaptó en su libro "Chronographia" el nacimiento de Jesucristo a esta festividad romana, la cual ya es oficial entre los cristianos al menos desde el Concilio de Nicea del año 325, en la cual Constantino III "El Grande" convirtió el cristianismo en la religión oficial de todo el Imperio Romano. En la parte Oriental del Imperio con Constantinopla como capital, se celebraba el nacimiento de Cristo el 6 de enero, pero gracias sobre todo a la influencia de San Juan Crisóstomo, el padre de la Iglesia de Oriente y patriarca de Alejandría, se consiguió que adoptasen también el 25 de diciembre como la fecha del nacimiento de Cristo a finales del siglo IV, quedando el 6 de enero como el día de "Los Reyes Magos" en todo el Imperio.

A comienzos del s. XI el abad de la Oliba (Catalunya), pese a ser amigo

7.23. Askatasunaren Bidea's blog homepage (http://askatasunaren-bidea.blogspot.ar).



7.24. Akelarre Kultur Taldea's blog homepage. (http://akelarreconcordia.blogspot.ar).

7.25. Below, a series of presentation pamphlets from A Casa/Etxera (thanks to Susana Etchegoyen):

Colectivo "A Casa Etxera"

Buenos Aires- República Argentina

Quienes Somos

- Nos presentamos como un colectivo en construcción y por lo tanto abierto a quien se quiera sumar, integrado por miembros de la diáspora vasca en Argentina, y por compañeros que sin serlo se sienten comprometidos solidariamente con la lucha del pueblo vasco, compañeros con experiencia militante y otros que comienzan a recorrer este camino. También ex presos políticos argentinos, exiliados en su momento durante la negra noche de la dictadura, y otros más jóvenes que afortunadamente no han tenido que pasar por aquello. A Casa/Etxera es por lo tanto fundacionalmente un colectivo con profundo respeto por la diversidad, que hunde sus raíces en la lucha por los derechos humanos y por los de los presos en particular, y que decidió trabajar con los presos vascos y sus familias que por las duras condiciones de detención que soportan, constituyen un ejemplo paradigmático como víctimas de la violación permanente de derechos humanos por parte de los Estados español y francés.

Quienes Somos

- Nuestro Colectivo inició sus actividades hace ya 4 años, cuando decidimos escribir a los presos políticos vascos, comenzando por los gravemente enfermos, seguros de que nuestras cartas llevarían fuerza y consuelo a sus horas amargas. En este momento hemos extendido nuestros correos a los mayores de 70 y a las compañeras presas con sus niños en la cárcel. La experiencia ha sido sobrecogedora y hoy muchos de ellos forman parte de nuestras familias y de nuestras vidas. Estamos más convencidos que nunca de que no hay frontera que pueda ser obstáculo para la solidaridad entre los pueblos, nuestros corazones laten juntos.

Nos Convocan

- Más de trescientos compañeros presas y presos políticos vascos encarcelados en 79 prisiones bajo una política de excepción de la cual la llamada "dispersión" los mantiene a muchos kilómetros de su casa en España Francia y en otros países; 10 presos gravemente enfermos en la cárcel. 8 presos en prisión atenuada por enfermedad grave e incurable. Todos víctimas de las más flagrantes violaciones a los derechos de las personas detenidas, establecidos por la legislación internacional.

Compañeros Gravemente Enfermos

Nuestra Tarea

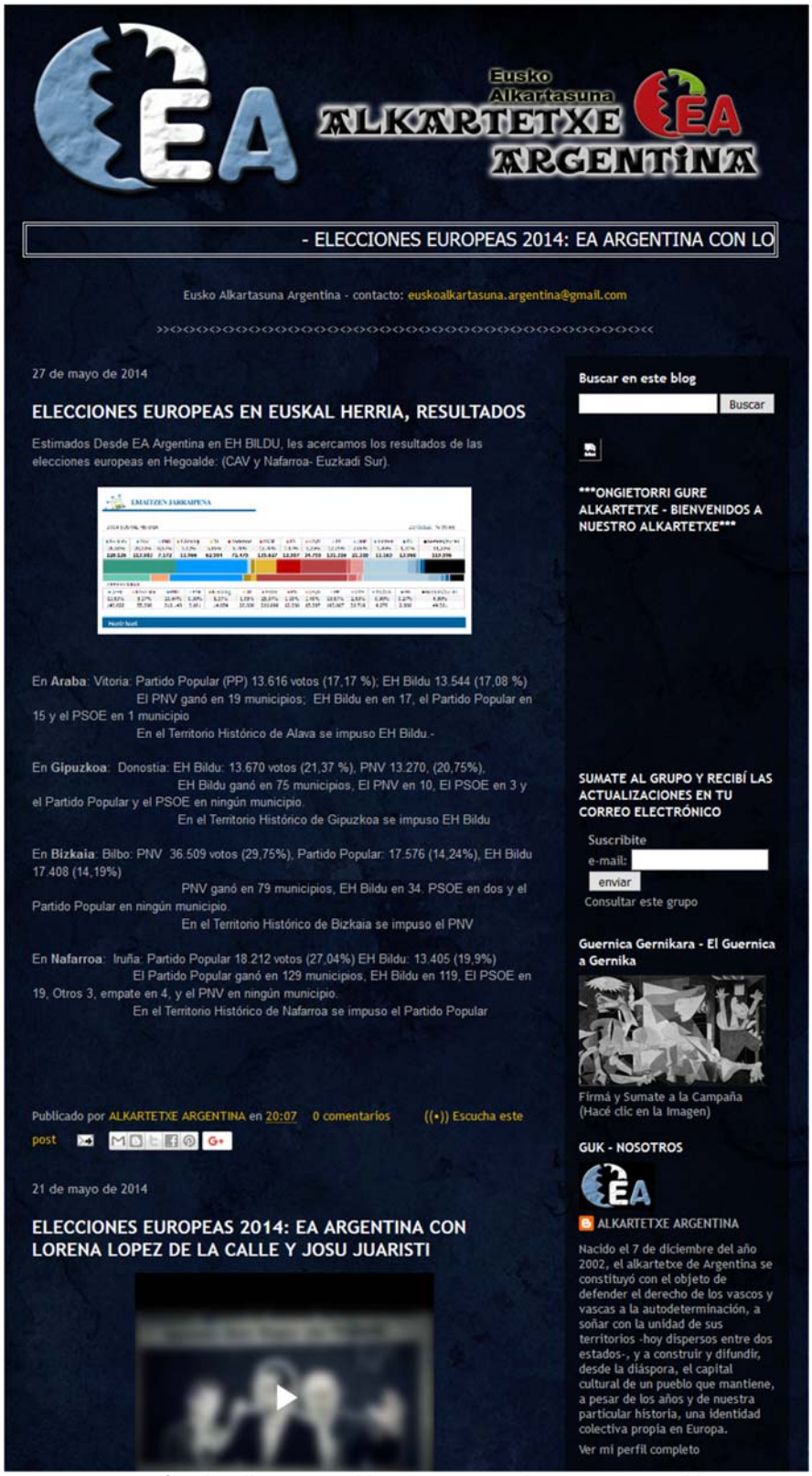
- Intercambio epistolar con cuarenta presos (gravemente enfermos, mayores de 70 años y madres con sus hijos en la cárcel).
- Entrevistas personales y telefónicas a familiares de presos políticos (estas últimas con cierta regularidad).
- Visitas de algunos miembros del Colectivo a presos políticos vascos.
- Mesas redondas y Jornadas de Estudio de materiales producidos por los diversos organismos de DDHH de la República Argentina y del Reino de España. (APDH, EATIP, SERPAJ. Congresos de la Universidad de Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Juicios contra delitos de Lesa Humanidad, etc.).

Cartas más allá de las rejas

ATRAVESANDO MUROS
HARRESIAK ZEHARKATUZ

- Porque estamos convencidos de que la solidaridad atraviesa los muros y acorta las distancias.

7.26. Invitation to an activity organised by Askatasunaren Bidea



7.27. Homepage of Eusko Alkartasuna's blog in Argentina. (http://eaargentina.blogspot.ar).

7.28. Post with the letter of foundation of EA's Alkartetxe in Argentina. (http://eaargentina.blogspot.ar).

euskalkultura.com

DIÁSPORA Y CULTURA VASCA

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Inicio / Noticias / Se presenta en Buenos Aires la asociación Amigas y Amigos del Pueblo Vasco (Euskal Herriaren Lagunak)

Noticias

Se presenta en Buenos Aires la asociación Amigas y Amigos del Pueblo Vasco (Euskal Herriaren Lagunak)

14/06/2010

De izquierda a derecha, Guillermo Paniagua, Irene López de Vicuña, Carlos Aznárez, Vicente Zito Lema y Atilio Borón durante el acto de lanzamiento oficial de la nueva asociación

PUBLICIDAD

Buenos Aires, Argentina. "Entre gritos de apoyo a presas/os y represaliadas/os vascos", se presentaba oficialmente el martes de la pasada semana en el Anfiteatro de la Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado de Buenos Aires el capítulo argentino de la asociación Amigas y Amigos del Pueblo Vasco (Euskal Herriaren Lagunak).

El acto se convirtió en realidad en un homenaje "a los presos y presas vascas, a los deportados, refugiados y asesinados por la represión franco-española" y contó con el apoyo de diferentes colectivos argentinos argentinos y latinoamericanos del área de los derechos civiles y la acción política y militante. Crónica del acto: en ResumenLatinoamericano.org.

Enlaces relacionados

Web de Euskal Herriaren Lagunak de Uruguay
http://ehluruguay.blogspot.com

7.29. Official presentation of the EHL in Buenos Aires.