

Basque and Spanish Identity in a Changing Context

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Subjective national identity has been a widely studied phenomenon, and presents several implications. Membership in a specific “imagined community” and the collective adhesion of the citizens to that community are related to many aspects: economic, cultural and political. In the case of the Basque Country, subjective national identity is normally studied and measured in relation to the Spanish one, as these identities are for some people conflicting, and for others, overlapping. The reallocation of political options and positions in the political spectrum in the Basque Country and Spain, due to the end of violence, among other elements, also has as a consequence a reallocation regarding the identity issue. The absence of violence and violent threats in the Basque Country has put institutions and political actors in a less confrontational situation. This article argues that the intensity of the confrontation and the subjective identity are independent elements and, as a consequence, the end of violence and the new scenario has no effect on the levels of collective Basque identity, and therefore, the levels of subjective identity remain unchanged or, at least, independent from the shifts in center-periphery relations. This article aims to present data on the levels of Basque/Spanish identity in the last years to measure how subjective national identity has evolved. We look at voting behavior, language skills, age, education level and specific attitudinal and value indicators as they correlate to subjective identity. Data and evidence on the evolution in the last decade will be provided to have a clear insight on the levels and grounds on which subjective identity in the Basque Country is supported.

Keywords: Basque Country; national identity; nationalism; political attitudes; voting behavior; political culture

This article addresses the issue of Basque identity in a new context of non-violent activity in the Basque Country, and analyzes whether this new context has reorganized self-identification in terms of identity in the region. The existence of nationalism in the Basque Country has been accompanied by a self-definition of the Basque population in terms of identity. Subjective Basque identity (in relation to the Spanish one) has been a widely studied phenomenon, which has several implications

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to address. Membership in a specific “imagined community” and the collective adhesion of the citizens to that community is related to many aspects: economic, cultural and political.

The Basque Country is currently experiencing an exceptional moment, in which the precarious status quo in the political arena has suddenly changed, with a reallocation of political options and positions in the political spectrum. This reallocation process is dynamic and progressive and has not finished yet, though it has started to be visible in the electoral campaigns and electoral behavior.

Another area of reallocation in the political arena is the issue of identity. The absence of violence and violent threat in the Basque Country has placed institutions and political actors in a less confrontational situation. It has been argued that one of the manifestations of the confrontational situation has traditionally been the intensity of the feeling of Basque identity in opposition to the Spanish identity. This article argues that the intensity of this confrontation and the subjective identity are independent from each other, and as a consequence, the end of violence and the new context will have no effect on the collective Basque identity. Therefore, the levels of subjective identity will remain unchanged or, at least, independent from shifts in center-periphery relations.

The article presents data on the levels of Basque/Spanish identity in the last years, using data from 1999, 2008, 2012 (European Values Study, Spanish Center for Sociological Research and own compilation) to measure trends in the evolution of the subjective identity measure. We will also analyze specific correlations with measures of identity, such as voting behavior, language skills, age, education level and specific attitudinal and value indicators.

There has not yet been a sufficient margin of time to establish a prospective hypothesis on how the evolution of the subjective identity measure is going to develop. Nonetheless, data and evidence on its evolution in the last decade will be presented to provide insights into the grounds on which subjective identity in the Basque country is supported.

Thus, the main research questions in this article are, firstly, whether identity in the Basque Country has evolved in a different direction due to the cessation of violent activity, and, secondly, on what variables and factors it relies. The main elements in shaping subjective identity are widely known from the literature (Tejerina, 1996; Ruiz-Olabuenaga, Vicente and Ruiz-Vieytes, 1998; De Pablo, Mees and Rodriguez

Ranz, 1999). This paper analyzes to what extent those different core correlates of identity are impacting subjective Basque identity, and whether relevant differences can be identified before the end of violence or, conversely, whether they remain unchanged.

1. Evolution, origins and main components of the Basque identity

Stuart Hall (2000) defines identity in terms of three main perspectives: firstly, as a subject of enlightenment, secondly, from a sociological perspective, and thirdly, from a postmodern perspective. The first perspective focuses on the individual and refers to the essence of the individual since birth. The sociological perspective focuses on the group, stressing that the core of identity is located not only in individuals, but in their relation and interaction with others. The postmodern vision stresses the constant movement and change of identity, and views it as a historical construct. It further implies the possibility of variations of identities over time and also conflict of identities within individuals. In this sense, we look at the concept of identity as both sociological and historical, in the sense that individuals identify themselves with a group that differentiates the entities of “us” and “them”, and at the same time is shaped with multiple elements and varies over time (Molina and Oiarzabal, 2009).

According to Henry Hale (2004: 459), theorists usually begin by discussing the debate between what most call “primordialism” and what is variously termed “constructivism”, “circumstantialism”, or “instrumentalism”, although there is some consensus in calling the latter theory “constructivism”. Primordialists argue that each group establishes its identity in terms of a group of “stones” that all together constitute a wall, which is society. These “stones” are constitutive features (cultures, traditions, histories, physical traits, language repertoires, religion, etc.) that also do not change and that tend to be quite consistently distributed within the group (Hale, 2004: 460). These features are assumed to be created in a specific point in time, but are not necessarily persistent over time.

Conversely, constructivists argue that these features and shared characteristics that constitute a specific ethnic identity are not its key element, but rather the fact that boundaries are perceived and persist (Hale, 2004: 461; Barth, 1969). Therefore, this definition of identity and its group characteristics are flexible and are very susceptible to change over time. Moreover, these identities, according to constructivist theorists, may not only fade away as modernization and growing cultural integration bring

people together, but they may even be subject to constant redefinition, though subject to certain constraints (Hale, 2004: 461; Conversi, 2006, Kaufmann and Conversi, 2007). In this sense, the ethno-symbolic approach (Smith, 1981) argues that the persisting features in the formation and continuity of national identities are myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols, which can be invoked in new ways for new purposes at different points in time (Hale, 2004; Conversi, 2006).

Identity and the elements configuring identity are also subjects of disagreement within the Basque Country. There is no consensus on what being Basque means or on what grounds people can define themselves as Basque or “something else” (A. Oiarzabal and P. Oiarzabal, 2005 and P. Oiarzabal, 2012). Moreover, Basque identity is not unaware of the primordialist-constructivist debate. As theorists argue, identity and the construction of identity are not static, and may be subject to redefinition. While the origins of the Basque identity were initially explained in primordialist terms, the twentieth century and the impact of modernization in the last decades have had an effect on the present definition of Basque identity in a way that is closer to constructivist claims. Historians locate the roots of Basque identity formation in the fifteenth century and the beginning of Spanish State-building (Mees, 2001; De Pablo, Mees, and Rodríguez Ranz, 1999). The nineteenth century was also a key period in which the configuration of the Spanish State remained unfinished due to the weakness of Spanish liberalism, which was in a chronic financial crisis after losing most colonies. The bourgeoisie was located in the periphery, but the traditional aristocratic elites were located in the center (Mees, 2001; Núñez Seixas, 1992).

It is one of the core goals of this article to identify the key elements of Basque identity—especially during some of the critical years of the Basque conflict, *i.e.* the immediate years before and after the end of the Basque independent terrorist group ETA violence—in order to locate differences. In this sense, it is helpful to understand the evolution and formation of this identity in the Spanish context. Basque identity and its evolution are not an isolated phenomenon and have undergone several stages, which are parallel to several other cases of identity creation and evolution. It is therefore helpful to contextualize the formation and evolution of Basque identity with other phenomena. Ludger Mees (2001: 802) established a parallel for the Basque Country’s creation of nationalism in line with Hroch’s stages (1995). Phase A would correspond to the romantic illusion of the people, with a rediscovery of national

identity through the folklore, culture and language of the people, but with no political aim. Phase B would correspond to the agitation of a group of intellectuals, who, inspired by the movement in phase A, would claim a national idea and would add political and cultural agitation for the emancipation of the people. In phase C this movement would gain massive support, creating political parties and clearly articulated political goals. According to this scheme, phase C in the Basque Country would coincide with the creation of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and the moment in which they obtained a majority in the provincial elections in Bizkaia in 1917, as a response to the changes occurred during this century due to the process of industrialization and a situation of massive migration to the Basque Country. According to Mees (2001), it was a second wave of industrialization and immigration during the 1960s which, together with a deeper crisis that was triggered by other factors such as a crisis of traditional values and the political repression of Franco's dictatorship, among others, fuelled a split of Basque nationalism and led to the creation of ETA, which, after several years, was transformed into a paramilitary group. ETA was a reaction to the situation of perceived repression from the regime and a reaction to the prohibition of the use of the Basque language and any manifestation of the Basque culture and identity (Grugel, 1990: 108). In the first stage, its ideology was influenced by the Aranian nationalism, defining nationalism in primordialist terms, but with a stronger emphasis on language (Diez Medrano, 1995: 139). In the late 1960s this movement was transformed into a form of urban guerrilla, complemented in the political sphere by the activities of Herri Batasuna and the umbrella coordinating organization 'KAS'. The main goal of the group from its creation was total separatism and independence from Spain, as they see the autonomy process as superficial and insufficient. At this point, Basque nationalism had massive support during their time in clandestineness. From the identity perspective, as Mees points out (2001: 805), 'being nationalist was not only a political option; it was a way of life and an identity symbolized and reproduced by a flag, and anthem, festivities, language and socialization in one or more of the multiple cultural groups and initiatives attached to nationalism'. The combination of political deprivation with a radical industrialization process, accompanied with a massive unskilled migrant labor force had as a result a very complex and diverse society, with multiple and often conflicting identities.

Democracy brought a new constitution, a generalized lack of support for Basque nationalism and an increase in violence by ETA. Gradually, higher levels of self-government were implemented in the Basque Country, with a highly successful outcome in the elections for the nationalists, who have been in power most of the time with different government coalitions, especially with the socialists from 1986 to 1998, and afterwards with other moderate nationalists. In addition to that, they have played a very influential role in the central parliament, with strong negotiation power in shaping majorities in the Spanish Parliament (Moreno, 2000; Field, 2013), and articulating strong demands against the center. Several explanations and strategies explain the center-periphery minority challenges and negotiations in the case of Basque Country. One such explanation is the ethnic bargaining explanation, which claims that demands against the center would serve as strategic bargaining tools for concessions, power-sharing agreements, etc. Another strategy for negotiation is the so-called internal sources of power, which argues that internal compactness is an indicator of strength. A further argument is the institutional one, which argues that the presence of autonomous institutions with high levels of power lead to a greater demand for independence. The political economy argument has also played a role in center-periphery negotiations, based on economic differentials (Jenne, Saideman and Lowe, 2007: 541).

Despite its success in the Basque context, given its strong lobbying capacity through Basque radical nationalism, ETA and its actions contributed to a highly confrontational situation between the center and the periphery in the Spanish context. This situation has gone on for decades, with specific breaks in terrorist activity, until the present, with a new scenario brought by the end of violence and a highly articulated and strong Basque nationalism.

Summarizing the core elements of Basque identity, we identify several main components. Firstly, attachment to a territory or homeland, which has been broadly discussed in studies on identities, creates a connection with cultural geography and identities (Jokinen, 2005). Very often, ethnic groups use a spatial dimension when articulating their identity, and, in the case of the Basque Country, they claim a territorial or some sort of political independence that they had enjoyed in the past. Many Basques claim that the seven Basque provinces are the true Basque territory and they base their territorial identity on this idea. According to Conversi (1997), the major demand of Basque nationalism is full independence of the associated territory.

Secondly, ideological attachment to nationalist ideals is a very strong identity articulator. Strongly linked to the territorial dimension specified above, nationalism calls for either a higher level of autonomy or the complete independence or self-determination for a given territory and for the inhabitants who create this nation. According to Rubenstein (2003), nationalism promotes a sense of national consciousness, and awareness of shared characteristics (Mar-Molinero, 1996), which fuel identity within a given territory (Olabuénaga, Vicente, and Ruiz Vieitez, 1998).

History also plays a role in shaping identities in the Basque Country. Nationalism arose in the Basque Country as a reaction by the petty bourgeoisie to the wave of low skilled labor migrating from other regions of Spain. During this stage of early Basque nationalism, the Basque identity, or being Basque, was not purely a matter of territory or shared cultural characteristics, but an identity based on ethnic traits at a specific point in time (MacClancy, 1996); in this sense, identity was not an acquired characteristic, but an ascribed, or “given” one. In this sense, radical Basque nationalists defined Basqueness in such a way that not all who were born in the Basque Country could be considered Basque; on the other hand, the Basque Nationalist Party had declared that those who were integrated and adopted the identity could be considered true Basques (Jokinen, 2006: 30).

A very important element to understand and explain Basque identity is its link to the Basque language (*Euskera*). In this sense, language acts as a symbol for self-identification and distinction between “us” and “the others” (Jokinen, 2006). It also serves as a very useful instrument for nationalists to claim territory and a common culture in order to articulate political demands, even if the Basque language did not have a true value for Basque nationalism until recently (Conversi, 1997). According to Kurlansky (2000: 30), the only way in the Basque language to define a Basque person is by defining that s/he is a Basque speaker (*Euskaldun*). According to Tejerina (1996; 1998: 272-275), Basque identity has moved from placing a greater emphasis on ethnic elements to establishing the conditions to be Basque on social and cultural traits. In this sense, language, even if it was initially a secondary aspect for Basque nationalism, has become a central issue in the definition of the Basque identity (Mar-Molinero, 1996).

According to these defined elements, we argue that Basque identity is shaped and conditioned by the individuals’ positions on these factors, namely, his or her attachment to a territory, ideology, origin and language. Given the diversity in the

population living in the Basque Country, we argue that different positions in those dimensions will shape the degree of Basque identity.

As Grugel (1990: 112) points out, Basque identity is not a result of merely living or being born in *Euskadi* (Basque Country) or speaking *Euskera* (Basque language). Basque identity is in this respect very different from Catalan nationalism, where identity is shaped by birth, territory and language. Accordingly, it seems paradoxical that, ‘regional identity [is] stronger in Basque country, yet it is also a more divisive force there than in any other parts of Spain because it is complicated by class and territorial cleavages’ and lacks a sense of dual identity (Grugel, 1990: 113).

Given the complexity of Basque identity, as an attempt to prioritize the core elements and correlates of subjective Basque identity, some consensus has been reached on the strong effect of the linguistic dimension, together with the nationalist vote—that is, the attachment to the language together with the political expression of the will to be Basque.

2. Hypotheses

This article aims at answering two main research questions related to Basque identity. The first research question relates to the evolution of Basque identity after a period of violence and once this context of violence has ended. The second research question analyzes on what aspects Basque identity relies.

The presence of violence had distorted the vision and political relations on both sides, Spanish and Basque, which may have had an effect on the way Basques see themselves in identity terms, in reaction to Spanish identity. It is our expectation that (H1) the end of violence has had little or no effect on the way that Basques articulate their identity. Our expectation is that identity has remained independent from the political confrontation scenario, and has not been shaped by a given political scenario. On the other hand, we argue that (H2) stronger feelings of Basque identity are mostly linked to attachment to a territory, ideology, origin and language.

3. Data and methods

For the analysis of the evolution of the Basque identity and its components, several datasets are used. The European Values Study is a comparative study which measures values across European societies since 1991. This article shows results from a sample for the Basque Country and Navarra. Specific questions regarding identity have been

added to the master questionnaire of the European Values Study for the sample of Basque Country and Navarra. The timing of these stages of the survey (1999 and 2008) reflects phases when ETA was active. Even if ETA had called a temporary cease of violent activity in September 1998, it was still active and resumed violence in mid-1999. In 2008, ETA was also active, in a situation of complete confrontation with the State after breaking the ceasefire in 2006 with the bombing at the parking lot in the Madrid Airport terminal. In order to analyze the levels of Basque identity after the last—and current—situation of cease of violent activity, we use data from the project of Parliamentary Elites, a research team in which the author is a member. These data were compiled in June 2012 in order to measure ideological congruence between elites and citizens in the Basque Country, and also contain the key questions regarding identity.

The survey questions regarding identity included, firstly, a general question on Basque identity in relation to the Spanish one. The formulation of the question is ‘to which of the following statements do you feel closer’, and contains a five item scale: 1 - I feel only Spanish; 2 - I feel more Spanish than Basque; 3 - I feel equally Basque and Spanish, 4 - I feel more Basque than Spanish; and 5 - I feel only Basque.

Another question relevant to this study concerns the conditions for being considered Basque. The question was: ‘Which of the following conditions do you think are important for a person to be considered Basque?’ The possible answers are an array of dummy variables which the respondents could select or not: a) to be born in the region; b) to speak Basque; c) to have Basque origins; d) to defend the Basque region; e) to live and work in the Basque Country; f) to have the will to be Basque.

In addition, we included some control variables: “nationalist vote”, with a dummy variable measuring whether respondents have voted for a nationalist party, and a variable for independence measured as a dummy variable that scores 1 for those who answered positively to the question the defense of the independence of the Basque Country. We have also included the left-right scale variable measured from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right), as an attempt to capture the effects which historically the leftist ideology has had on national identity. Other ideological cleavages, such as green or liberal, would have also added to our analysis, but the relevant data were unavailable. Interest in politics was also included in the analysis, with a four point scale with the categories: “very interested”, “somewhat interested”, “little interested” and “not interested”. Other control variables included in the analysis

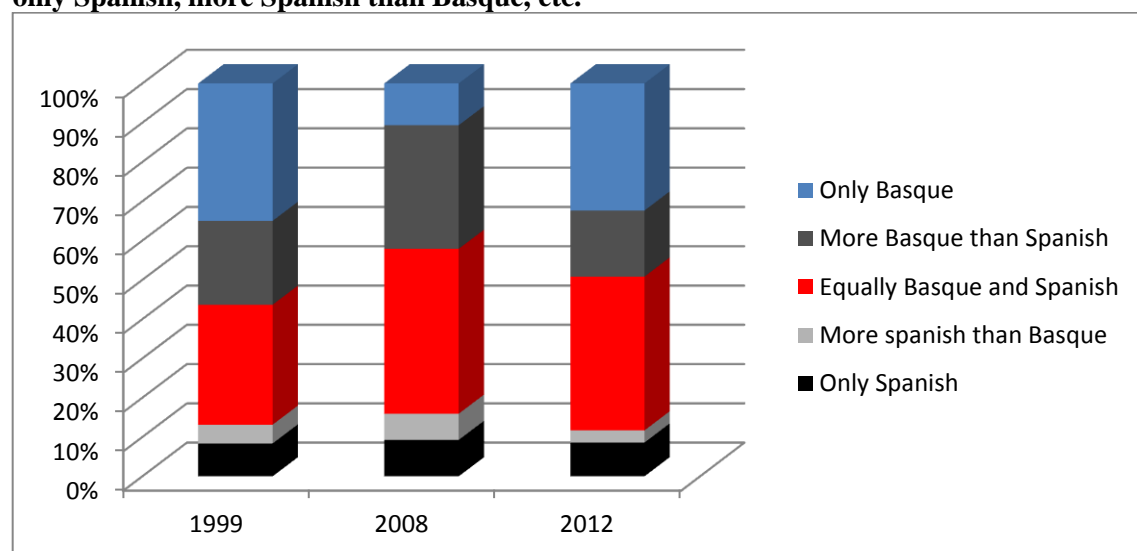
were age and gender, measured with a dummy variable scoring 1 for male and 0 for female.

The methods used to analyze the data against the hypotheses are descriptive statistics and linear regression. For the first hypothesis, we use separately the three available datasets to compare the levels of Basque identity over time, analyzing the two specific questions regarding identity. Given the different nature of the samples, sample sizes and data collection processes for the surveys we have not merged the datasets in order to run the analysis. To test the second hypothesis we run linear regression, taking the five point scale identity question of feeling “only Spanish”, “more Spanish than Basque”, “equally Spanish and Basque”, “more Basque than Spanish” or “only Basque”, as the dependent variable. The rest of the variables regarding ideology, origin, nationalist vote, independence, conditions for being Basque, interest in politics, age and gender are used as independent variables. We run two separate regression analysis, one for 2008 and another one for 2012, to analyze the two points in time separately.

4. Descriptives for levels of Basque identity

In order to analyze Basque identity we look at the descriptive statistics of the main dependent variable in the further analysis, which measures Basque identity with respect to the Spanish one for illustrative purposes.

Graph 1. Basque-Spanish identity in 1999, 2008 and 2012. Percentages of those who feel only Spanish, more Spanish than Basque, etc.



Source: European Values Study (1999, 2008) and Project Political Elites (2012).

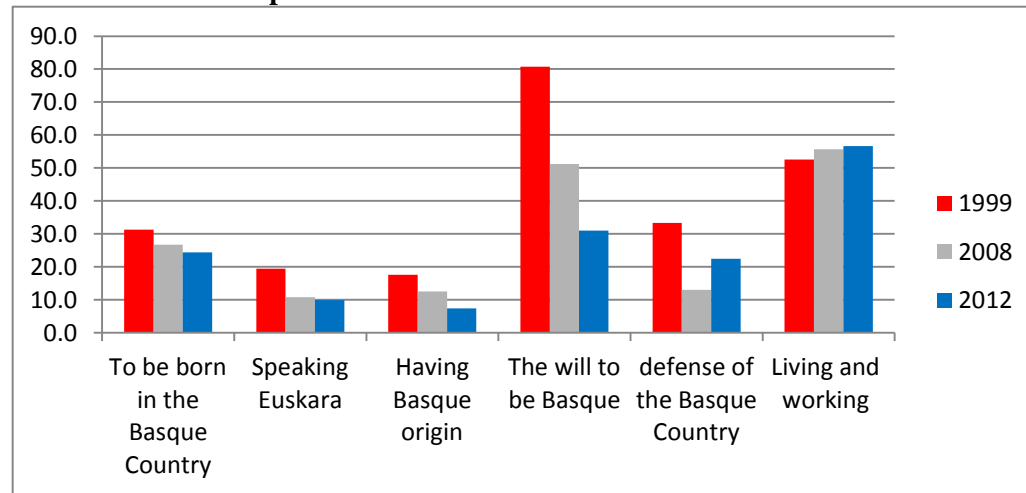
As we can see from Graph 1, the levels of Spanish nationalism have practically remained unchanged throughout the period 1999-2012 with a minority position in the spectrum. The option “equally Basque and Spanish” occupies a very relevant position in the spectrum, with a higher frequency in 2008, but in 2012 it seems to turn back to the levels of 1999. The percentage of people who declare to be either more Basque than Spanish or only Basque represents between 50-60% of the population. What seems to change throughout this time is the option in which people locate themselves. Data from 1999 show that a higher percentage of respondents declared themselves as only Basque in comparison to those who declared feeling more Basque than Spanish.

Data from 2008 show a different pattern, with a much higher proportion of people declaring to feel more Basque than Spanish, and a low proportion declaring to be only Basque. Given the nature of the datasets and of the available data, the evolution of the Basque identity can be only assessed by the descriptive data. Thus, the confirmation hypotheses of the independence of the Basque identity, regardless of the situation of non-violence in the region, can be, in this article, only be suggested by the descriptive data. In general terms, Basque identity has remained unchanged in its levels, if we consider the categories of “more Basque than Spanish” and “only Basque” together. The variation appears within those two categories, with a significantly higher number of individuals who locate themselves in the category “only Basque” in 2012 if we compare it with 2008, but there is no significant change if we compare it with 1999. Graph 2 shows the percentage of individuals who declare as relevant a number of given conditions for being considered Basque. This is the traditional survey question asked in order to assess on what grounds individuals articulate their identity, given the diversity in the region.

The condition that seems to be the least relevant for respondents is to have Basque origins, in terms of having Basque parents or grandparents, which has also decreased over time. Speaking *Euskera* is the second least relevant condition for respondents, also showing a decrease over time. This information is particularly important, since language has been a very relevant identity articulator for Basque nationalism in recent decades. However, for respondents, who often do not speak the language, speaking *Euskera* is not a very relevant condition. To be born in the Basque Country is also one of the conditions that have been decreasing in relevance over time, probably due to the effect of immigration and assimilation of many of the inhabitants in the Basque Country. Defending the Basque Country was somewhat

relevant in 1999, with a significant decrease in 2008, and a revival in 2012, although it has returned to the levels of 1999.

Graph 2. Conditions for being considered Basque 1999, 2008 and 2012. Percentages of those who choose a specific condition.



Source: European Values Study (1999, 2008) and Project Political Elites (2012).

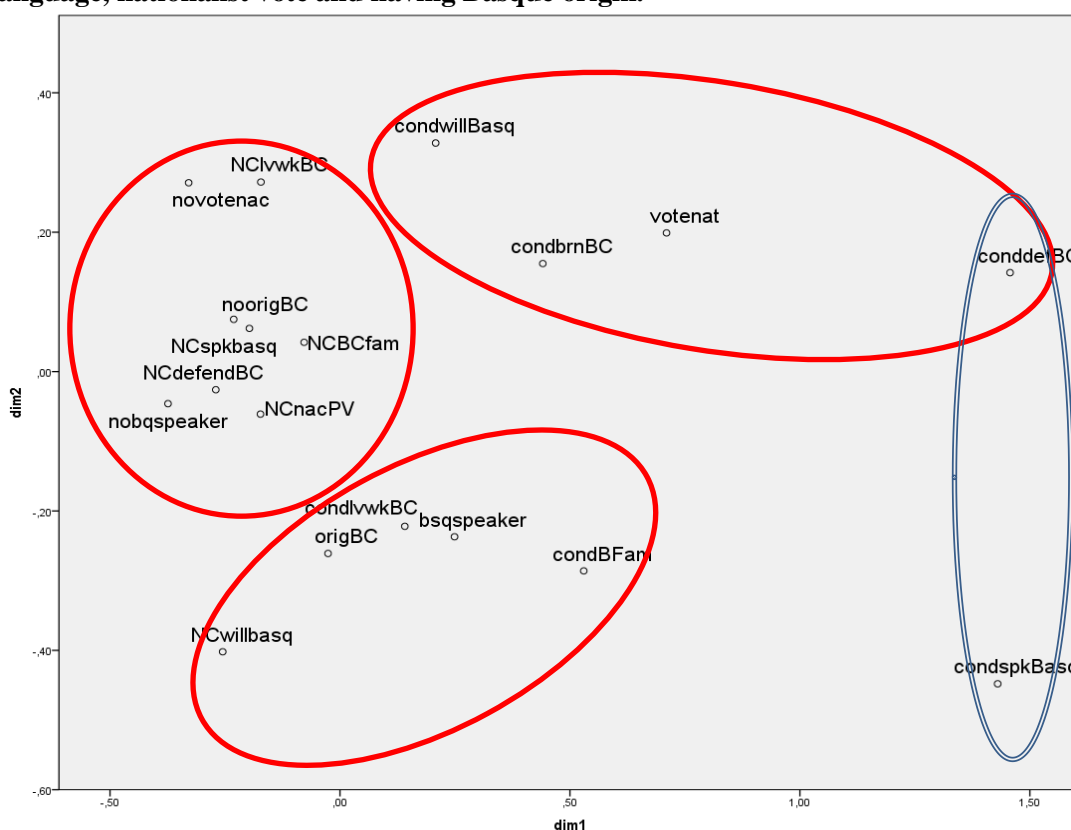
The two conditions to be considered Basque found most important by the respondents are: firstly, the will to be Basque—although this has experienced the strongest decrease throughout time, probably due to changes in the political discourses; and secondly, living and working in the Basque Country, a very inclusive condition, defended by the Basque Nationalist Party. This condition scored the second highest in 1999, and the highest in 2008 and 2012, with a constant increase over time. Given these data, it appears that living and working in the Basque Country is a condition to be considered Basque which finds much more support than language or origins.

In order to have a more complete view of the composing elements of Basque identity, a correspondence analysis has been conducted, using data from 2008 with the purpose of visualizing simultaneously the information on the responses regarding the conditions in order to be considered Basque, together with some other explanatory variables, such as nationalist vote, speaking Basque as first language and having Basque origins (one or both parents being Basque).

The variables related to the conditions to be considered Basque are coded starting with *NC* for those who do not consider that aspect to be a condition and starting with *cond* for those who consider that aspect to be a condition. In this way, we have the condition “to live and work in the Basque Country” coded as follows:

NCIvwkBC indicates negative answers for this condition, and *condIvwkBC* positive answers. *NCwillBasq* and *condwillbasq* indicate the responses to the condition regarding the will to be Basque; *NCdefendBC* and *conddefendBC* relate to the condition of defending the Basque Country; *NCBfam* and *CondBfam* relate to having a Basque family as a condition; *NCspkbasq* and *condspkbasq* correspond to the condition of speaking the Basque language; *NCnacBC* and *condbornBC* correspond to the condition of being born in the Basque Country. The voting variable is coded for *noVotenat* for those who did not vote for a nationalist party and *Votenat* for those who did; *nobqspeaker* and *bqspeaker* relate to whether the person speaks Basque as first language; *noorigBC* and *origBC* indicate whether the person has one or both parents originally from the Basque Country or not, respectively .

Graph 3. Correspondence analysis, conditions for being Basque: speaking the Basque language, nationalist vote and having Basque origin.



Source: European Values Study (2008)

The correspondence analysis above shows how attitudes and opinions gather and relate to each other in a two dimension axis. Three main groups of responses and an outlier can be identified in the correspondence analysis. The first group of responses

is located at the top left of the plot with those individuals that do not have Basque origins, do not vote for a nationalist party, do not speak the language and also deny most of the conditions indicated to be considered Basque. This group of respondents living in the Basque Country could be identified as one with a stronger Spanish identity over the Basque one.

A second group of respondents can be found below, in the bottom left side of the plot. This group includes those respondents that have Basque origins and speak the Basque language, and as conditions for being considered Basque they reject the will to be Basque, but they support living and working in the Basque Country and having Basque origins for being considered Basque. The third group identified in the correspondence analysis can be found in the top right side of the plot and appears more widespread in the two dimension axis. This group includes the nationalist voters, and gathers around support for several conditions for being considered Basque, namely, the will to be Basque, being born in the Basque Country and the defense of the Basque Country.

The outlier in this correspondence analysis is the group of respondents who consider speaking the Basque language as a condition for being considered Basque, located on the bottom right of the plot. If we draw a vertical line, we can also find above, at the far right of the plot, support for the condition of defending the Basque Country to be considered Basque. Both of these categories could also be grouped and identified as having the most radical view on Basque identity. This analysis gives us an overview of how the categories of different variables are grouped and related, and also gives us a first picture of how identities in the Basque country are shaped and articulated, which will be confirmed in the explanatory analyses that will be shown in this article.

5. Which elements are shaping the Basque identity? Empirical evidence

Our second hypothesis deals with the aspects that are shaping Basque identity. We focus on these elements at two specific points in time: before (2008) and after (2012) the stop of the violence in the Basque Country.

The theoretical model we have defined is slightly different for both analyses, since the data available were slightly different, and some relevant explanatory variables were only available in one of the datasets. As we have mentioned in the data and methods section, our dependent variable is the variable of self-position on the

identity scale, understanding that the highest value (“only Basque”) is the highest possible category of Basque identity and the lowest value (“only Spanish”) is the lowest possible category of Basque identity. Tejerina (1996) suggests several elements shape identity, namely, the level of nationalism, territory, and language. We have added several more variables to the equation, such as the left-right scale, support for independence, interest in politics, having Basque origins and speaking the language (only available for 2008), and the array of conditions to be considered Basque. Data from 2012 have no information on whether respondents themselves have Basque origins (one or both parents from the Basque Country), nor whether respondents speak the Basque language; the dataset only provide the respondents’ opinions on the relevance of having Basque origins and speaking the language as a condition for being Basque in the independent variables list.

In order to test the hypothesis on the elements shaping the Basque identity, firstly we provide the results for the linear regression run with data from 2008, followed by the results of the regression analysis run for data from 2012. In both cases we have very good R² estimates, with a 51.3% of variance explained for 2008 and 49.6% variance explained for 2012. The coefficients shown in both analyses are the standardized Beta coefficients, for better interpretation.

Table 1 shows the results for 2008. In this year we can see that age has a significant effect on Basque identity. The sign of the coefficient shows that older people tend to show lower levels of Basque identity. Gender does not have a significant effect, which means that being male or female does not have an impact on how individuals see themselves in terms of Basque identity.

Table 1. Results of the regression analysis for 2008.

Dependent Variable: Basque identity 2008	
Independent variable	Beta
Age	-,183**
Sex	0,04
Nationalist vote	,298**
Speaks basque	,268**
Condition: born in Basque country	0,006
Condition: basque origin	-0,025
Condition: the will to be basque	-0,014
Condition: Defence of basque Country	-0,014
Condition: Living and working in BC	0,048
Condition: Speaking Basque	0,075
Has Basque Origin	,175**
Supports independence	-0,057
Left-right scale	-,272**
Political Interest	-0,063
Corrected R2	0,513

Source: European Values Study for Basque Country 2008.

The nationalist vote is a strong and significant predictor of stronger Basque identity. Those who have declared to vote for a nationalist party seem to have a clearly marked Basque identity. Language has a very significant effect, but as a personal characteristic. For 2008, those people who speak Basque tend to show a stronger Basque identity than those who do not speak the language. If we look at speaking the Basque language as a condition for being considered Basque, there is no such significant effect.

If we look at the conditions for being considered Basque, we find that irrespective of the respondents' opinions in this sphere, there is no strong effect on the Basque-Spanish identity. The coefficients shown in the regression analysis for 2008 demonstrate very weak effects on the dependent variable, as well as non-significant ones. This suggests a clear independence of self-location in the identity spectrum and the opinions on the conditions for this identity.

Having Basque origins—coded as 1 if the respondent has one or both parents with Basque origins and 0 if they have no Basque origins—also has a positive and significant effect on identity. Those who have Basque origins have a clearly stronger Basque identity than a Spanish identity. In this case, the attitudes towards the political independence of Basque Country have no effect on Basque-Spanish identity. In this sense, attachment to a specific territory and the claim for political emancipation

suggested by the literature has no significant effect in the 2008 data. The position in the left-right scale has a negative significant effect, which locates those people who declare a stronger Basque identity on the left of the scale. Basque identity in the Basque Country is in this sense relates to the political left.

Data from 2012 show a similar pattern with little variations, due to the lack of several variables that were available for 2008, but not available in 2012. For 2012, there is no information available on Basque or Spanish origins or on whether respondents speak Basque or not.

Table 2. Results of the regression analysis for 2012.

Dependent Variable: Basque identity 2012	
Independent variable	Beta
Age	0,027
Left-right	-,101*
Political interest	-0,068
Condition: born in Basque country	-0,034
Condition: Speaking Basque	-0,008
Condition: basque origin	-0,033
Condition:Defence of basque Country	-0,029
Condition: Living and working in BC	-0,016
Condition: the will to be basque	0,047
Supports independence	,324**
Sex	0,007
Nationalist vote	,485**
Corrected R2	0,496

Source: Project of Political Elites and Ideological Congruence 2012.

For 2012, age has no significant effect on identity. Contrary to the evidence in 2008, age has a positive effect, but this is not significant. Left-Right self-placement follows the same pattern in 2008 and 2012. Basque identity seems to be a characteristic of the Basque left.

In the same way as it was observed in the previous regression analysis, in 2012 political interest has no effect on the way people declare themselves in terms of national subjective identity. The respondents' opinions show for 2012 exactly the same pattern that was observed for 2008: very weak coefficients with none of them being significant. Opinions on what are the basic conditions for being considered Basque seem to have no effect on people's own assessment of their identity. In this case, and contrary to the findings for 2008, attitudes on independence show a strong and significant positive effect on identity, which supports the hypothesis that

attachment to a territory and the will to emancipate it politically have a strong impact on personal national identity.

The same pattern is observed for the nationalist vote. Similar to previous findings, those people who have declared to have voted for a nationalist party show at the same time a higher degree of Basque identity. Finally, gender has no significant effect on identity, as observed previously. According to the findings in the regression, the most relevant predictors of a stronger Basque identity in relation to Spanish identity are having Basque origins, speaking the language, voting for a nationalist party and being politically-oriented to the left.

6. Conclusion

This article provided empirical evidence of a phenomenon that can be very easily perceived in society and has been subject to great disagreement in the political arena. Who are the Basques and who are the “others”? To what extent do people in Basque Country feel Basque or Spanish, or both? Where do we set the boundaries and conditions for people to be considered Basque in such a diverse society as the Basque Country? On what grounds does Basque identity rely? Has the end of violence affected the Basque identity in a less confrontational political scenario?

There were two main research questions addressed in the article. Firstly whether the end of violence has, so far, affected the intensity of Basque identity, given a less conflictive relationship between center and periphery, and, secondly, what elements are shaping and impacting upon Basque identity in relation to the Spanish one. The nature of the data and the data collection does not allow at this point a longitudinal analysis with more explanatory effect and we need to restrict our analysis to a descriptive one, which shows no strong variation in terms of Spanish identity and Basque identity, taken as a whole. Stronger variation can be observed within these broader categories, with a steady increase in 2012 of those declaring themselves only Basque, moving back to the levels of 1999. Even if we cannot conclude on the significant effects of the end of violence, we can suggest that there does not seem to be a relevant change in terms of national identity in the Basque Country before and after the end of violence.

Regarding the factors that may be affecting Basque and Spanish identity, theories mention factors such as territory, will to politically emancipate, language and origins. Additionally, personal positions regarding which elements are required to be

considered Basque were introduced in the analysis. We constructed our model with both personal and attitudinal traits. From the analysis of the data we observe that identity relies more on personally ascribed characteristics (age, origin, language) than on opinions on what defines such identity. Some attitudinal elements, such as ideology, attitudes towards independence and the nationalist vote are also strongly significant, but not in relation to the conditions for being considered Basque. In this sense, language, having Basque origins and voting for a nationalist party seem to be the strongest factors impacting Basque people's identity.

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