Euskal Herria: Imagined Territory

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Paper presented at the SGIR Fifth Pan International Relations Conference
‘Constructing World Orders’
the Hague
9-11 September 2004
Introduction

In the extensive body of literature on Basque nationalism territorial aspects are often neglected. This is rather surprising because in the first place all Basque nationalists agree upon the territorial demarcation of Euskal Herria as they call their envisaged nation-state and, secondly, in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country the geopolitical imagery of an all-Basque proto-state in the making is promoted by the Basque nation builders who dominate the regional government since its birth in 1979. Euskal Herria can be seen as both an imagination of what represents Basque space and a political project that aims at a distinct Basque decision space. Although the nationalist actors and institutions presently comprise four political parties, they all support the idea of a unified Euskal Herria and the project that should lead to an independent nation state. The political imagination of a greater Basque Country as a home of all Basques may be meaningful at a discursive level of what may be called ‘formal geopolitics’ (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992) and its reflection in political rhetoric at high levels of abstraction. However, political practice, mobilization and banalization of Basqueness hardly provide evidence of a Euskal Herria in the making. Loyer (1997) has mapped both the electoral divide between Ba sque nationalism and Spanish or French orientations and has shown the disagreement over nationalist symbols within Basque nationalism itself.

My focus will be on the diffusion of the geopolitical idea of a greater Basque Country. This idea can be understood as the core message of Basque geopolitics. I will trace this core message in ‘formal geopolitics’ and political rhetoric. The first section will describe the conceptualization of Euskal Herria as the envisaged nation state. In the second section I will discuss the practical geopolitics of Basqueness, which differs from rhetoric in the field of external policies vis-à-vis the Spanish and French administrations and internally has a disuniting effect on political identifications. In the third section I will focus on the political convictions and routines of ‘ordinary people’ expressed in respectively voting patterns and ‘geopolitical cultures’. With respect to voting patterns I will briefly describe to what extent Basque nationalism has mobilized its constituencies while I will argue that the banalization of Basque geopolitical culture is confined to specific areas within the dreamt nation state.

My task however does not end by describing the differences between discursive, practical levels of geopolitics and their reflections in political mobilization and geopolitical cultures. I am quite well aware of the need for ‘situated reasoning’ in which historical and spatial contexts may help to explain the rise and success of geopolitical imaginations (Atkinson and Dodds 2000, p. 11; Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998). In this respect it is particularly relevant to compare Basque geopolitics in France and Spain. In the last section I will therefore reflect upon the ways French and Spanish political, economic and cultural contexts have shaped and colored Basque geopolitics in the course of time.

Euskal Herria the envisaged nation-state: Formal geopolitics and the rhetoric of unity

From the beginning Basque nationalist discourse has been influenced by the Zeitgeist (Bidart 2001). It varied from reactionary messages to restore regional privileges (fueros), orthodox Catholicism, republicanism, to language activism. Like ideas on who and what is actually Basque or a Basque, the conceptualization of what is the Basque territory has shown variations over time. Notwithstanding the present territorial claim
can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century when early nationalists from the French Basque area imaged a unity of the seven old provinces, which coincided with the fueros as they had more or less existed in history (Jacob 1994). The basic idea was zazpiak bat: seven in one. The early nationalists were however just messengers with a reduced audience of local elite. The first nationalist who developed both a discourse and a rather successful mobilization strategy was Sabino de Arana y Goiri who at the end of the nineteenth century was active in Bilbao. His ideas about Biscay as the future Basque territory modeled after the fueros as they existed before their abolishment in 1839 are well described (Payne 1975; Larronde 1977; Elorza 1978; Corcuera Atienza 1979). The ikurriña, the Basque flag, is nowadays a symbol for Euskal Herria. However the flag’s designer Sabino de Arana originally drew it for Biscay using the Union Jack as a model.

Although the fueros have always played a role in the demarcation of the outer borders and in the invention of territorial mythology based on a mix of real and imagined history, other territorial imaginations were often anchored in the mediaeval kingdom of Navarre under Sancho the Great (1000-1035) when it had its largest area. Federico Krutwig fabricated one of the more grotesque imaginations of Euskal Herria inspired by the ancient kingdom under his pseudonym Fernando Sarraiñ de Ihartza (1963). Many ideas about ‘Vasconia’ as Krutwig called Euskal Herria have become part of the ideology and strategy of ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna or Basque Homeland and Freedom). For instance the idea of an occupied nation, colonized by Spain and France to be liberated by guerilla activities that would culminate in a action-repression spiral have been part of ETA’s ideological baggage from the 1960s onward. However his greater Basque Country displayed in various maps, perhaps the greatest ever imagined in territorial terms, never prospered in nationalist circles.

Another imagination in formal geopolitics based on Navarre dates from 1941. It is made by Manuel de Irujo who was a Basque regional minister in 1937, when the Basque Country (e.g. the provinces Biscay, Guipúzcoa and Alava) shortly had a statute of autonomy in the Second Republic, then in exile in London. His territorial limits of what he calls ‘Euskadi’ were confined to Spain and did not make any allusion to the Basque areas in France. The map of which at least one copy should exist in Madrid’s Moncloa Palace of Spain’s Prime Minister is not available, but the borders described in article 5 of the Constitution designed by Irujo, are rather similar to Krutwig’s ones south of the Pyrenees. Given Irujo’s position as a refugee in one of the allied countries, he probably had to opt for an amputated version of Sancho the Great’s kingdom, leaving out any territory under French administration. Leaving out the French-Basque territories, Irujo logically opted for a bilingual state, with Basque as the official language in a bilingual regime with Spanish (article 3). His choice of Bilbao as the national capital to the detriment of Sancho the Great’s Pamplona was perhaps a reflection of the power base of prewar Basque nationalism.

Although at present Euskal Herria is the territorial dream of Basque nationalism occasionally Krutwig’s Vasconia and Irujo’s Basque Republic reappear in symbolic acts glorifying the ancient king of Navarre. On 29 May 2004 a monument for King Sancho III the Great was inaugurated in Hondarribia on the Basque coast in the presence of all leading nationalist politicians (El País 30 May 2004). The monument is part of a project developed by the association of Basque municipalities udalbiltza and euskokultur, a Basque cultural association to commemorate the great ‘Basque’ kingdom as a serious precursor of a modern nation state (http://www.udalbiltzainfo.com/sanchoinfo.htm, accessed 10 July 2004). The publication of books, the composition of a theatre play and a cantata, the latter played in eight towns strategically selected in the four Basque ‘historical territories’ in Spain and one such territory located in France (Diario de
Noticias de Navarra, 22 May 2004). Given the various shapes of Sancho’s Navarre during his lifetime, his power politics based on marriages with Frank and Castilian monarchs and the rather loose structure of his Kingdom linked together by family relations, the recent glorifying of Navarre as a Basque proto-state is an exquisite example of contemporary myth making. However a greater Navarre has never become the winning territorial myth.

Fig. 1 Early nationalist map showing Spanish enclaves and one Navarre, 1901


The winning myth has become zazpiak bat, in which all the ‘historical territories’ form Euskal Herria. The ‘historical’ features of the territories should not be taken too strict because some parts of the Basque space seem to be more historical than other ones. For instance the enclave of the County of Treviño belonging to the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon was already an enclave in Alava in the twelfth century. Indeed some old ‘nationalist’ maps still show the enclave as a hole in Euskal Herria as Sabino Arana’s map published in 1901 in the review Euzkadi, displaying the Treviño enclave and the small Trucios enclave in the northwest as distinct units. Furthermore his map shows that the seven-in-one claim was actually a six-in-one claim because Arana drew Navarre as one territory unifying the Spanish Province of Navarre with area of Lower Navarre in France (Fig. 1.). The six or seven in-one interpretation has however not totally disappeared. In official representations, like in the Basque museum, documents of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and the weather maps on Basque TV, the seven ‘historical territories’ are omnipresent. However there are still six-in-one versions of Euskal Herria in vigor, which reflect the old Aranist idea of ‘Euzkadi’ or Vasconia, the former a neologism invented by Sabino Arana himself. The website of udalbiltza uses the six-in-one version (Fig. 2). This udalbiltza version is the ‘radical’ udalbiltza led by ETA sympathizers that split-off from udalbiltza in 2001, also known as udalbiltza Kursaal. The original udalbiltza dominated by the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) uses the ‘official’ seven-territories version (http://www.udalbiltzainfo.com/upresentacion.htm, accessed 5 August 2004). This version can daily be watched on ETB, the Basque TV sender (Fig. 3).
Fig. 2 Contemporary six-in-one version of Euskal Herria by udalbiltza

http://www.udalbiltza.net/espainola/conoce, accessed 5 August 2004

Fig. 3 Weather report of ETB (Basque TV), with temperatures for capitals of 'historical territories', 5 August 2004


Part of formal geopolitics is thus territorial myth making, with claims imposed by a historical truth. The University of the Basque Country is one of the important producers of formal geopolitics with publications claiming historical roots of a Basque
state (Agirreazkuenaga 1987) a common will to remove the internal borders between Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Euskadi), the Foral Community of Navarre and the Basque territory in France (Leizaola 2000) or the creation of all-Basque rituals seemingly supported by the inhabitants of Euskal Herria (Del Valle 1993). Academic geopolitics is reflected in schoolbooks in geography and history in Euskadi, where various interpretations of history compete. Radical Basque visions of a future socialist republic rooted in Basque culture up to now severely suppressed by the oppressor states of Spain and France versus interpretations glorifying the fueros and prestige projects of the Basque government like Bilbao’s Guggenheim museum, its metro and fair invent a political space, quite different from the Spanish or French schoolbooks. A new Basque geography and history is now displayed in which there is only a modest role for Spain and France. Under the cosmetic layer of an all-Basque geopolitical vision however an ideological battle between Basque nationalist factions is fought, often in subtle ways hardly visible for outsiders. The arms consist of the use symbols like spelling, appreciation of monuments, the value attributed to modern achievements of the Autonomous Government and so on (Onaindia 2000; Calleja 2001). In his revised edition of ‘Imagined Communities’ (1991) Benedict Anderson has mentioned the production of historical maps by colonial powers, which later helped opposing nationalists to format their claims. In the Basque case the historical maps published in combination with a new Basque historiography have laid the discursive fundament for a distinct geopolitics. The second way maps are serving nationalism according to Anderson is by means of the ‘map-as-logo’, which ‘...penetrated deep into popular imagination forming a powerful emblem for the ant-colonialism being born’ (Anderson 1991, p. 175). In a following section a will return to the popularization of the Basque map and explore its impact.

Apart from formal geopolitics reflected in pseudo-scientific and derived products there is a daily politic rhetoric emphasizing common features of the Basque nation. The producers and inventors of this daily rhetoric usually belong to one of the following political parties or currents. The most voted and oldest party is the PNV, in government in Euskadi from the establishment of the Autonomy Statute in 1979 to the present. After the democratic transition PNV has had seats in the Spanish Parliament. ETA’s political wings do not define themselves as a party but as a platform or coalition, but have occupied seats in the parliaments of Euskadi and Navarre under different names before they were definitively banned in 2001. The wings have been operational as respectively Batasuna (Unity; banned 27 August 2002), Euskal Herritarrok (EH/Basque Citizens 1998-2001) and Herri Batasuna (United People 1978-1998). The name changes are cosmetic and do not reflect changes in political orientations, but are reactions to legal measures to forbid them. Despite prohibitive measures the rhetoric of the izquierda abertzale (the patriotic left) can still be heard in the media, in particular in Gara, the daily newspaper of the radical nationalists. In 1986 internal contradictions about the territorial organization of the Basque Country, political orientation and a divided leadership within the PNV led to the secession of Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity), the third party in play and represented in the parliaments of Euskadi, Navarre and Spain. Abertzaleen Batasuna (AB/Patriotic Unity) if the Basque nationalist party active in France where they occupy seats in municipal councils, and occasionally in cantons. In canton elections, taking place every six years in approximately half of the Basque cantons with the other half intermittently voting, AB has never had more than 11 percent of the valid votes. Although they may me seen as part of the patriotic left, AB’s position has changed to a more autonomous one vis-à-vis ETA and its wings after the its return to violence in 2000.
Based on a near-to daily lecture from 1999 to 2004 of Deia and Gara, Basque nationalist dailies of respectively PNV and the izquierda abertzale, the Spanish newspapers El País (center-left) en El Mundo (center-right) and frequent field visits to the study area, the following observations can be made on what binds the Basques according to the nationalist politicians and what separates them from Spaniards or Frenchmen. In contrast with early Basque nationalism with its focus on bloodlines, contemporary conceptualization of Basqueness is centered on language and culture with euskara, the Basque language as the key attribute separating Basques from other people and uniting the Basques. All nationalist parties claim a bascophone Euskal Herria in some form a combination with Spanish and French. In an imagined territory with probably less than one fifth of the inhabitants speaking the old language in the private sphere this is a remarkable symbol of unity. Perhaps even more surprising in an area, which is internally divided along linguistic and political lines is the frequency politicians refer to ‘Basque society’. They often do so in a personalized way as if all Basques hold an opinion have a feeling, claim something or are angry for some reason. I suffice with the following brief selection of examples:

On 10 July 2004 the PNV warns in a communiqué that ‘...Basque society is not at all willing to accept mafia-like positions such as the ETA ones’ (Deia 11 July 2004). Gara’s editorial on 27 July 2004 bears the title ‘To know the will of Basque society’. From el País (15 June 2004): Yesterday Josu Jon Imaz [party leader PNV] informed the media about the ‘deception for Basque society’ caused by the Government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and the PSOE [Spanish socialist party] for their inability to take a distinct position from PP [Partido Popular] after the electoral victory of 14 March’. Important PNV politician Idoia Zenarruzabaltia, vice-president of the Basque Government stated that ‘...the proposal for a new Statute for Euskadi is the answer to the compromise the Government has reached with Basque society [...] so that finally the right of Basque society to decide democratically its future will be respected...’ (El Mundo, 3 November 2003). For more aspects of political rhetoric on ‘Basque society’, see Mansvelt Beck (2004a, chapter 4).

A similar exercise with quotations from the media can be made about the way Euskal Herria should be governed. Pluralist democracy, in daily rhetoric ‘pluralismo’ is used ad nauseam. At first sight the combination of an organic personified idea of ‘Basque society’ does not seem very much in line with plurality because the latter suggests internal diversity, distinct identifications and a variety of political aspirations. It is as if the common will of the personalized Basque society has become a multheaded monster representing multiple singularities. Seemingly ‘the other’ is discovered in the pluralist narrative on good governance. In the next section I will show that pluralismo is a mere rhetoric dimension of Basque geopolitics instead of practical policies.

The rhetoric of a common Basque territorial identity has obviously had repercussions on the discursive representation of the Basque conflict. Today’s Basque nationalists interpret the conflict as a struggle of all Basques for independence. The enemies are respectively the ‘Spanish and French states’ as in the nationalist idiom the words Spain and France are taboo, though there are strong arguments to qualify the conflict as an internal conflict and not as a sort of war between two states on one side and one proto-state on the other. Therefore the quest for ‘dialogue’, another excessively used term, is generally directed to the leading political parties of Spain and France, in particular to their representatives in the states’ administration, ignoring the significant support of these parties in various parts of Euskal Herria. The all-Basque rhetoric symbolically supported by the omnipresent map of Euskal Herria and the ikurriña.
deeply differs from practical geopolitics, which rather displays fragmentation than unity.

Practical Geopolitics: Practice of fragmentation

In present-day Euskal Herria politicians are elected according to the regional arenas in which they compete (Fig. 4). South of the Pyrenees the Euskadi and Navarre are the two regions where Basque and Spanish political identities clash. After the democratic transition Euskadi has become the stronghold of Basque nationalism. Euskadi’s political elite mainly consists of PNV members, and to a lesser extent EA affiliates. Conversely, in Navarre Basque nationalism has never been represented in the foral government. Basque nationalists with usually in-between 15 and 20% of the valid votes have had a continuous representation in the parliament where they are used to contesting the separation of Navarre from Euskadi by claiming unification and where they normally criticize the government’s linguistic policies. Whereas south of the Pyrenees there are two administrative areas with distinctive powers and outer borders that fit the southern Euskal Herria (Hegoalde), the northern part (Iparralde) does not have a formal administrative status in the French administration. The ‘historical territories’ of the French Basque area are situated in Département des Pyrénées Atlantiques, which as twice as extensive as the Basque area. The region of Aquitaine comprising five départements and administered from its capital Bordeaux at more than 200 km from the Basque Country is relevant to policy-making in the Basque realm because trans-border cooperation with Euskadi and Navarre belongs to the powers of Aquitaine.

Fig. 4 Territorial administration ‘Euskal Herria’

Source: http://www.lurraldea.net/ accessed 17 August 2004
In fact three different geopolitical practices can be distinguished. The first one is Euskadi centered and is the aim of the nationalist establishment of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The second geopolitical practice is aimed at the creation of a separate French-Basque département. The last one is the Euskal Herria option insisting in an all-Basque approach based on common institutions. I will now discuss each of these practices. The Euskadi option is confined to the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. It is a plan for co-sovereignty with Spain first issued in 2002 by the president of Euskadi (Ibarretxe 2002). On 25 October 2003 the Euskadi government officially published the plan, popularly named after its president Juan José Ibarretxe. The Ibarretxe plan can be seen as a step towards near-to-independence of Euskadi, leaving open the integration of Navarre and the French Basque Country. This newer version of the Ibarretxe plan has a more appropriate title than the earlier version of 2002 because it now refers to a new political status of Euskadi whereas the draft version ‘a political proposal for coexistence’ [Una propuesta política para la convivencia] still masks what the plan really is: the creation of a nation state in the making. Reactions from the Spanish center-right government of Aznar were furious because the plan was anti-constitutional, immoral in a context of terrorist pressure, and moreover it would not solve the problem of political violence. The Zapatero administration of a socialist brand tries to come on speaking terms with the Basque government. In the summer 2004 for the first time after three years the Spanish prime minister had a personal conversation with the Basque president in Madrid’s presidential Moncloa palace with the ikurrina waving alongside the Spanish flag. However, despite the improved relations and the historically more sympathetic views of the Spanish socialists towards a federal Spain, no concessions have been made. Given the electoral geography of Euskal Herria, the Euskadi geopolitical option is an example of Realpolitik. This is because in Navarre and in the French-Basque Country the support base for Basque nationalism is far too weak for a more ambitious territorial project. Euskadi as the heartland of Basque nation building is thus proposed as part of a sort of confederation with Spain, having own representatives in the EU Council of Ministers and state-like powers in the field of justice and police. The political debate for the last two years is now centered on the referendum proposed by the Basque government and rejected by the Spanish administration. At the first sight the Euskadi geopolitical practice seems to be a geopolitical innovation. However a closer look on contemporary Basque politics in Euskadi reveals that PNV as the main player has changed its strategy after the so-called Lizarra agreement of 1998. In exchange for a truce declared by ETA, PNV now sought alliance with all the other Basque nationalist groups and decided to opt for a strategy leading to sovereignty. This strategy, also known as línea soberanista or sovereignty line has always had its supporters within the party. All in all since its existence at the end of the nineteenth century PNV has had two competing wings, one in favor of separation, and the other sympathizing with territorial autonomy with the Spanish state. The long history of frequent swings in the PNV’s politics and its ambiguity ion geopolitical questions can be attributed to the competition of the different factions within the PNV (De Pablo et al 1999, 2001).

The second type concerns the creation of a separate French-Basque département, which would imply a splitting of the present one of the Atlantic Pyrenees into two parts. The claim for a distinct territorial unit within the French state is not only an issue of Basque nationalists, most of them nowadays represented by abertzaleen batasuna (Patriotic Unity). For this party struggling against debasquization, rural depopulation, rapid growth of tourism and land speculation, an own département is one step closer toward the final, but far from their utopian Euskal Herria. However they have two strange allies (Chaussier 1996). First, many Basque politicians who are in French
statewide parties are sympathetic towards the claims for more autonomy in order to promote Basque language and culture. Local politicians belonging to the French center-right, the socialist party or Christian democracy, together with nationalist politicians, are involved in a process of ‘symbolic outbidding’ each other as if it were a championship of Basqueness (Izquierdo 2000, p. 102). Secondly, established business interests in Bayonne, articulated in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have joined the nationalists and cultural activists because Bayonne as a potential capital for the département would benefit from many new jobs in the public sector. Lurraldea, a public authority in the field of developing economic and cultural policies for the French Basque area is operational since 1997, but in close cooperation and under supervision with the central, regional and département administrations can be seen as a substitute for the desired territorial unit (http://www.lurraldea.net/ accessed 18 August 2004). The same can be observed concerning the Council for the Basque Language (Conseil de la langue basque or Hikuntz kontseilua) established on 3 July 2001.

Euskal Herria as an aim of practical geopolitics seems the most utopian practice because of the absence of support in Navarre, Iparralde and Alava. However the izquierda abertzale has organized all-Basque institutions active in Euskal Herria. Apart from the political parties, ETA’s wings now banned in Spain and AB in France, other associations for linguistic revival are active all over the area. It is not surprising that affiliated organizations usually share the anti-system features of abertzale politicians. The claim for an ‘own Basque decision space’ is often legitimated by the existence of udalbiltza, the association of Basque municipalities, or to be correct udalbiltz a Kursaal that split off from udalbiltza on 30 September 2000, banned by the Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón on 23 May 2003. The original udalbiltza still exists under the leadership of PNV, but the association is not even mentioned in the Ibarretxe Plan. The other organizations with a prominent abertzale representation are connected with language activism, solidarity with ETA prisoners, squatter interests, ecologists and women’s lib. Batasuna, the banned radical party openly opposes the Ibarretxe plan. Joseba Permuch has recently warned PNV that ‘never ever’ they would support a ‘new statute for the three provinces’ (El País, 24 August 2004). Groups of highly mobilized people usually support the practical geopolitics of the abertzales. Their fundamental weakness is their near-to-absence in parts of the claimed territories. The institutional landscape of udalbiltzas, abertzale parties and sister organizations shows impressive voids outside their strongholds in Guipuzcoa. In particular Iparralde and Navarre with an overwhelmingly dominance of respectively ‘French and ‘Spanish’ institutions are vast blank spaces on the map of radical institutions as is the case with the Alava territory in Euskadi (Linz 1986 passim; Mees 2003, pp. 52-56; 148-151). Many ‘Spanish’ and ‘French’ dominated municipalities are not represented in udalbiltza whereas some these municipalities are only represented by a few nationalist councilors of small dissent factions.

Compared to the Euskadi administration as an opportunity structure for Basque nationalism, udalbiltza is insignificant in budgetary terms: €1,281,393 in 2003. A similar observation can be made about its split-off udalbiltza Kursaal with a €400,000 funding available before the banning on 29 April 2003. The yearly budget for Soccer club Athletic de Bilbao was 38 million Euros, let alone the Euskadi budget of over 6 billion Euros for 2003. The latter is about 4,000 times higher than both udalbiltza budgets together. I deliberately left out a comparison with the Basque councils of France that have substantially higher budgets than udalbiltza, but it is highly doubtful whether they have sufficient autonomy and nationalist content in order to serve as carriers of a common Basque geopolitical practice.
The Basque language is the symbol *par excellence* of Basqueness. Nationalists in Euskadi and Navarre and both nationalists and non-nationalists in the French Basque Country pay tribute to the old language. In Euskadi controlled by the nationalists a revival of Basque has been taking place in the public domain, reflected in Basque-taught formal education, official documents and TV. Here the Euskadi and Euskal Herria practices are visible. PNV and to a lesser degree EA are now glorifying the rebasquization of Euskadi often by displaying statistics and Basque and bilingual education, which indeed show an enormous increase since the granting of the autonomy in 1979. In order to stress their distinctiveness they criticize the Navarre government for doing so little on what they officially call ‘linguistic normalization’. The Ibarretxe Plan is also following the Euskadi geopolitical line concerning language as in article 8 it is recognized as the official language of Euskadi together with Spanish whereas the draft statute does neither make mention of French nor of Gascon spoken by a small minority (Gobierno Vasco 2003). The izquierda abertzale, strongly represented in the Basque world of language and culture, usually insist on the halfhearted euskaldunization (basquization) as a result of the role of the evil Spanish state and its PNV collaborators. Although the Navarre government may be criticized to a certain extent on its language policies, formal education has experienced an enormous increase in Basque-taught education in the special zones (bascophone and mixed) with important Basque-speaking minorities (Mansvelt Beck 2004b). The final result of these policies, a substantial growth in the numbers of people who can speak Euskera, is not so different from Euskadi. Paradoxically the Euskadi geopolitical practice often ignores the dramatic language loss in favor of French in Iparralde. Obviously, for the radical Euskal Herria supporters, deficient language policies in all the territories that form part of their discursive and action repertoires are blamed.

A future Euskal Herria is displayed as a democratic and pluralist nation-state. The way the various nationalist actors and agencies have brought democracy and plurality into practice has little to do with what is generally be defined as ‘pluralist democracy’ even in the proper nationalist rhetoric. In his classical book ‘Polyarchy...’ Dahl (1971: 3) listed the following requirements to be met by democracies:

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. The right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. The right of political leaders to compete for support
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

In plural societies like Euskal Herria where a majority has one of the to states’ languages as their mother tongue and a substantial minority speak Basque Dahl’s conceptualization of democracy is too ‘vote-centric’, too much concentrated on electoral procedures that may lead to majority rule ignoring linguistic and ethnic diversity (Patten and Kymlicka 2003: 13-16). The idea of deliberative democracy proposed by these authors based on empathy, recognition of differences and diversity by the diverse political orientations includes language minorities into the political practice, e.g. in law making, institution building and language policies. Here three types of nationalist political practice can be distinguished, ranging from talk-centric or deliberative to totalitarian. AB’s small support base in the French Basque Country has convinced them that only by compromising with more powerful ‘French’ adversaries
concrete results can be obtained in a territorial and linguistic sense. Actually the creation of the Basque Councils as a sort of surrogate for the département has probably been the maximum concession done by the still centralist administration. Yet the concession has been the result of compromise seeking with French parties and local business interests. A strong anti-system practice as in the case of the Spain-based abertzales would probably have alienated their partners from them. Richard Irazusta, one of AB’s spokesmen has repeatedly shown his discontent with the non-democratic practices of his abertzale peers south of the French border (Deia 21 June 2001; http://www.hika.net/revista/zenb110/iraz.html, accessed 20 August 2004). The modest revival of Basque culture in Iparralde now supported with public resources can be seen as the result of a democratic practices which have become slightly more deliberative and which have continued being vote-centric. Evidently AB’s rhetoric claim for a Basque-speaking Euskal Herria is deeply anti-system because it questions the French state and its ‘universal’ Frenchness. However in geopolitical practice their anti-system discourse has been reduced to a more pragmatic compromise-seeking stance.

In contrast the Euskadi geopolitical practice is not precisely the pluralist and democratic mode that can be heard in daily rhetoric. Spain’s democratic transition generally considered as ended in 1982, has perhaps never accomplished in Euskadi. From 1982 to 1987 death squads of the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL) organized by Spanish state institutions made a dirty war against presumed ETA terrorists. The absence of a rule of law has however not ended the weaknesses of Spanish-Basque democracy. Like elsewhere in Spain the opportunity structure created by the devolution of powers stemming from the 1978 Constitution has resulted in the rise of a new regional power elite usually involved in clientelist practice. The PNV governments of Euskadi have followed this practice and clientelism has been booming according to ethnic lines (Van Amersfoort and Mansvelt Beck 2000). Before the rupture with the Spanish factions of the socialists and the PP in 1998, PNV formed coalition governments in Euskadi with the socialists. After 1986 the Basque nationalists of PNV’s split-off EA joined these coalition governments. With the rupture however, the situation for the ‘Spanish’ agencies deteriorated. This was however not a result of flaws in legislation, but instead has been a result of halfhearted policies of the Euskadi government against violations of democratic rule. Out of Dahl’s criteria at least three basic rights have run into peril. First the freedom to form and join organizations is jeopardized because of a lack of protection by theertzaintza, the regional police of party offices of the PP and the socialist party, the ‘Spanish’ labor unions Comisiones Obreras and Unión General de Trabajadores and the Justice departments of the Spanish Ministry. They have become under pressure of violent street gangs who operate from 1992 as the outcome of a new ETA strategy. Not only the Ertrzaintza has a sad record of non-intervention, nationalist politicians like former PNV leader Arzalluz (1980-2004) have often communicated their understanding for the perpetrators of street violence, known as kale borroka (street struggle). In particular in villages and small towns where everybody knows everybody the lack of protection of the right of association has deterred many sympathizers and party members of the Spanish parties to be nominated for the elections. Spokesmen of the two Spanish parties have complained about the inability to find local candidates and substitute them for non-locals and the ways fear affects the freedom of expression, the second right that is violated (El Mundo 11 March 2003; El Correo, 5 January 2002). Finally the right of political leaders to compete for support is also undercut due to a lack of protection. In this respect it is not uncommon to see political meetings disturbed by violent adversaries.
The lack of a pluralist conduct by PNV has become salient in the use of exclusive symbols emphasizing their conceptualization of Basqueness and ignoring Spanish and hybrid identities, which are substantially represented in Euskadi. The choice of the anthem, the retouching of the coats of arms of Biscay and Guipuzcoa by removing historical Spanish symbols and the renaming of streets and squares after the reactionary and racist Sabino Arana have mentally excluded those who do not share the PNV view on Basqueness from the nation-building project (Mansvelt Beck 2004a: chapter 6). The Spain-based abertzales also practice exclusion, but in a more harsh way than the PNV nation builders of Euskadi. Their weapons are the manipulation of fear and hatred. Some authors have stressed that the world of radical nationalism is a more inclusive world because descendants of migrants from outside Euskal Herria are invited to share the radical project no more based on blood lines but on culture and residence (Conversi 1990, 1997; Urla 2001). However, the dark side of the possibility to socialize as radical Basque nationalists is that socialization also implies the negation of any other than Basque identities. In the smaller socially controlled settlements, those who do not share are placed in social quarantine and degraded to second-rank citizens. Totalitarian methods are being applied to force people either to join the abertzale world or to leave. When in 2001 udalbiltza Kursaal introduced a Basque identity card, volunteers went from house to house in order to query, who was interested in obtaining the Basque ID card and who not. Not surprisingly these totalitarian actions took place in municipalities controlled by the radicals. Journalists like Calleja (2001) have described that socialization in the Spanish-Basque world of radical nationalism implies solidarity with their symbols and methods. In this way new recruits become familiar with both anti-system symbols and anti-system behavior.

Mobilization and banalization

The electoral geography of Euskal Herria shows a remarkable continuity. Today’s mobilization shows geographical pattern, which are quite similar to the ones during Spain’s Second Republic, while in the French Basque Country the recent emergence of Basque nationalism is real, but insignificant (Linz 1986; Llera 1994). Despite 25 years of nation building in Euskadi, it has not been possible to successfully foster the export of the nationalist message to Navarre and the French Basque Country. Nationalist mobilization in terms of voting behavior remained mainly confined to Guipuzcoa, Biscay and some bordering areas of Alava and Navarre. Weakly mobilized Iparralde stayed outside the nationalist project.

The map displays Euskadi as a nationalism-dominated territory (Fig. 5). However some white ‘Spanish’ areas are more important than the surface on the map suggests. The Left Bank area of the Nervion river linking Bilbao with the sea with its population of industrial and dockworkers is a stronghold of the Spanish left while the former provincial capitals of San Sebastian and Vitoria are populous enclaves of the Spanish center-right of PP. Basque nationalism has only weakly penetrated the south of Alava as is the case with most of Navarre. Radical nationalism is established south of San Sebastian and in a small fringe of Navarre bordering with Guipuzcoa. In fact the spatial divide into three types of voting areas is the electoral reflection of the fragmentation of Basque society into what has been labeled as ‘micro-societies’ (Tejerina Montaña 1992). In the shaded areas on the map Euskal Herria is in many people’s mental map, in particular in the darkest areas where they believe in its geopolitical existence. The citizens of an imagined Euskal Herria live in these socially controlled abertzale municipalities. In contrast in Iparralde, not displayed since it would
not have any shaded areas, as well as in Navarre territorial identifications are rather with the existing states than with this imagined territory. The electoral map however does not display the multi-faced roles of urban centers in the diffusion of the imagined territoriality of Euskal Herria. Institutions belonging to nationalism are particularly located in the historical city centers of the Basque Country. This is not only the case for Euskadi with its institutionalized nationalism with a museums, flags, building of its public administration trying to popularize the geopolitical imagination, but also those organizations representing more militant brands of nationalism are located in inner-city areas.

Fig. 5 Nationalist mobilization Euskadi, Navarre, Municipalities, European elections 1999*

*Radical Basque mobilization: valid votes for EH and PNV-EA greater than or equal to 50% of votes for PP, PSOE/PSE/PSN, PNV-EA and EH and EH vote greater than or equal to PNV-EA, for PP.

Basque mobilization: the same as radical Basque but with EH vote smaller than PNV-EA vote.

Weak mobilization: PSOE/PSE/PSN, vote over 50% of the vote for PP, PSOE/PSE/PSN, PNV-EA and EH.

A short walk through Petit Bayonne the picturesque downtown area of Bayonne gives the impression of a very Basque and very nationalist city. Around the rue de Panneceau there are a multitude of small headquarters of nationalist parties hardly represented in the municipal councils of the French Basque country, centers for language activism and promotion, Basque bookshops, organizations for solidarity with prisoners and many abertzale bars displaying photographs of ETA prisoners, flags, posters of festivals of radical rock music, murals, and so on. The map as a logotype with two arrows pointing to a stylized Euskal Herria represents the symbolic claim of the return of the prisoners to the Basque Country and is omnipresent in old Bayonne. Perhaps Bayonne, a town with over 90% of votes for statewide parties in all the elections held so far, is the most extreme example of an urban area with such a sharp
contrast between a widespread state loyalty and a flamboyant visual representation of sub-state nationalism in its symbolic heart. A similar contrast between a Basque-nationalist urban landscape and a state-abiding population can be observed in Vitoria, San Sebastian, Pamplona and, though to a lesser degree, in PNV-dominated Bilbao. In many smaller settlements of Euskadi, where nationalism controls social life a monopolization of the town and village landscapes by Basque nationalism has occurred. The offices of ‘Spanish’ parties and labor unions that are still operational are recognizable by anti-Spanish graffiti. People who feel Spanish have become used to not publicly displaying their Spanishness.

In popular geopolitics various imaginations of Basque territoriality are being transmitted. For the outside world the Basque flag and the logotype prisoners’ banner are the most visible symbols. Important sports events, in particular the Tour de France are used to making the claims for Euskal Herria known to the outside world. Given the easy access for spectators and massive media coverage, the event is ‘...an especially vulnerable target for protest groups...’ (Palmer 2001: 150). By waving Basque flags and Euskal Herria logotype banners, painting graffiti, well organized and highly motivated Basque radicals pursue several goals. They make the geopolitical claims for Euskal Herria known to the outside world and to their supposed compatriots. In this way the Tour de France as one of the popular symbols of the French nation state is contested by counter symbols of Euskal Herria. On the other hand bike racing is among the most popular sports in the claimed territory itself and the mix of political propaganda and sport enthusiasm serves to build the Basque nation. On the other hand the polemic nature of Basque protest, supported by ETA’s sister organizations disrupts the ritualistic character of groups of politicized supported positioned on strategic media sites. When in 2003 radical organizations claimed that official speakers had to speak Basque alongside French when the Tour crossed Iparralde this produced a lot of concern among the Tour management and the public authorities. The solution was a typical French-Basque one: Jean Grenet, the Christian democrat mayor of Bayonne adopted the Basque radical issue and so integrated the initial anti-system idea into mainstream politics (Deia 10 March 2003; Gara 10 July 2003). After Grenet’s intervention the Tour management appointed Basque speakers and the issue disappeared from the media as the French authorities now made a concession to a well-respected politician of the French center-right, and no more to a radical organization connected with terrorism.

Only in abertzale circles Euskal Herria is such an undisputed imagination that it has become a ‘reality’. Within the nationalist establishment of Euskadi, differences can be noticed between the rhetoric Euskal Herria option and the practice of Euskadi. For instance sometimes there are efforts to promote the Euskal Herria claim, as in the case of a subsidy from the ‘old’ udalbiltza to zazpiak bat, a biking tourist club, which got a polemic subsidy of 25,000 Euros to send supporters to Tour de France, obviously to promote the Euskal Herria vision (El País, 20 June 2004). On the other hand Euskadi has to deal with the outside world and with outsiders and adapts its logotype maps to daily practice. The tourist map published by the Basque autonomous government displays Euskadi while respecting the two ‘Spanish’ enclaves of Condado de Treviño and Trucios. In contrast the weather report on Basque autonomous TV shows Euskal Herria as one undivided logotype map so that Basques themselves can identify with the imagined nation state.

The Internet has become an important media to communicate Basque geopolitical visions. I am aware of the limitations of an analysis based on the Internet because search machines are not the neutral technical devices that provided unbiased information. Apart from power and manipulation by individual actors like Web
marketers, Web strategists and Web policy makers, the search machines themselves
provide rankings, which in itself, are influenced by direct and indirect manipulation
(Rogers 2000). I have used a rather simple and quick method by checking the map
images provided by the Google search machine using as search terms respectively
Euskal Herria, Euskadi, Basque Country, País Vasco and Pays Basque. Identical maps
displayed on different websites have been added to the total count. The results in table
1.1 reflect the geopolitical discourses and practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial denomination (Search term)</th>
<th>Euskal Herria Logotype without regions</th>
<th>Basque Country*</th>
<th>Pays Basque</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Maps n (%)</th>
<th>Images N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euskal Herria</td>
<td>14 (35%)</td>
<td>20 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euskadi</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
<td>12 (20%)</td>
<td>23 (38%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>15 (25%)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Country</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (17%)</td>
<td>10 (23%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>9 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>País Vasco</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>29 (52%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>20 (35%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pays Basque</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>18 (41%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The first 380 hits have been taken into consideration.
Source: Google images (in Dutch), 26 August 2004

The maps of Euskal Herria show the imagined territory in 85% of the cases, in
which the logotype without the territorial division is well represented with 30% of the
hits. The category other concerns Euskal Herria with the outer borders, but with the six­
in-one version inspired by the 'historical' unity of Iparralde's Lower Navarre and the
Foral Community of Navarre in 'the Spanish state'. The connotation of Euskadi is more
complex, as can be expected. This is because in some interpretations, e.g. (ETA=
Euskadi ta Askartasuna; Basque homeland and Freedom), the territory is identical to
Euskal Herria, which reflects 30% of the cases. The majority of 58% however fits the
Euskadi geopolitical practice. One quarter of the Euskadi interpretations show the
enclave of Treviño on the Euskadi map, which can be interpreted as a state-abiding
version. Moreover some of the Euskadi maps that display the Autonomous Community
of the Basque Country may not include the enclave because of generalization problems.

The Internet competition around the 'Basque Country' is highly interesting
because it concerns the diffusion to the outside world of different geopolitical visions.
Radical visionaries try to influence external politics by witnessing the existence of a
greater Basque Country. The Euskadi political establishment has a double agenda, one
at the Euskal Herria rhetoric level, and the other confined to Euskadi. Finally there are
local businesses, scholars, individual hobbyists who use maps as marketing frames and
orientation points or to express themselves politically. About one third of the cases
show Euskal Herria as the Basque Country. The same proportion has Euskadi, while the
French-Basque Country, frequently used by the tourist industry concerns almost one
quarter of the maps. The relatively high proportion of other is due to many cases
showing the French-Basque area as part of a wider tourist area, quite frequently Les
Landes. The País Vasco versus the Pays Basque results reveal a higher share of Euskal
Herria interpretations in the francophone search. The latter is a reflection of both the
activities of radical websites and the linguistic practice in French where Euskal Herria is
not widely used compared to Pays Basque. The relatively high proportion of other the
Pays Basque category is probably also due to the lack of an administrative status. In to
France contrast Euskal Herria is widely known in Spain and País Vasco is often
associated with the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.

Table 1.1 Shape of maps according to territorial denominations, 2004

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15
The variety of maps on the Internet is a mirror of the daily visual experiences of the people living in the envisaged nation state. They are confronted with versions of territorial unity and amputated versions, with openly anti-system imaginations to stat- abiding interpretations, and ranging from explicit political claims to esthetic dégustations of a folklorized Basque Country. Part of the cultural industry is heavily politicized, such as comics and pop music. In this respect the comic and song ‘Napartheid’ is a telling example. Born as a cartoon in the late 1980s to protest against the separation into Navarre and Euskadi developed by an anti-system group of Navarrese youngsters, Navarre was compared with the black homelands South Africa suffering under Apartheid. The Spanish state represented the white oppressor regime while misery and discrimination in Navarre was the consequence of the territorial division not wanted by the Basque people.

Territorial identifications within Euskal Herria are thus with different geopolitical visions, which may be exclusive sub-state or state identifications or may combine them into forms of territorial hybridity. The success of Basque conceptualizations of territory is reflected by the banalization of nationalist symbols. Banalization has however its territorial limits because its success depends on the spatial contexts in which it has developed. Something similar has occurred with language as the present-day core value of Basque nationalism. A first glimpse on Euskadi and Navarre would suggest an enormous linguistic revival since Basque-taught school education has attracted so many children. The enthusiasm for ‘language normalization’ as rebasquizition is officially called, has however a darker side. In many Spanish-speaking parts of Euskadi the bilingual schools where the majority of the parents send their children teach them how to speak Euskara, but does not assimilate them into linguistic Basques because at home and on the streets they continue speaking Castilian. Partial linguistic immersion at best converts them into cosmetic Basques. On the other hand Spanish-speaking minorities in the smaller settlements controlled by the abertzales have no choice, since they are forced to assimilate linguistically or to migrate. The term ‘normalization’ is certainly not applicable to relaxed usage of the language in the public sphere. Speaking Basque in public is usually associated with radical nationalism and may even alienate native speakers from the nationalist project (Jáuregui 1996, pp. 126-127; MacClancy 1996, p.317).

A reflection on how spatial contexts influence the banalization of geopolitical messages

I have demonstrated that the geopolitical message on Basque unity and shared values by all Basques is an all-Basque discourse confined to the level of geopolitical rhetoric. The common geopolitical rhetoric about Euskal Herria as the single territory of all Basques, and a nation state in-the-making with Basque as the undisputed official language and plurality as a widely supported phenomenon, sharply contrasts with geopolitical practice and geopolitical socialization. In addition I have shown that the all-Basque message has been the winning myth after having competed with other territorial imaginations of Basqueness. The following questions on territorial myth making however, need some reflection. Firstly, given availability of more than one geopolitical vision, why then Euskal Herria has become the winning myth? Why are there some many differences between Euskal Herria as a geopolitical rhetoric and Euskal Herria in the geopolitical practice? Finally, why socialization of the constituencies shows such a strong spatial compartmentalization? In a tentative way I would suggest the following answers.
The territorial myth of a clearly demarcated Euskal Herria has become the triumphant one for the following reasons. In the first place early Basque nationalism claimed the restoration of the fueros, the old regional privileges. However this would be too much honor to Sabino Arana because his original fuero claims were exclusively directed to the Spanish administration. The integration of the French-Basque territory into the claim was invented before Arana and re-invented in the second half of the 20th century. However megalomaniac versions of Euskal Herria inspired by the old Kingdom of Navarre were the losers of the imaginative battle on territoriality. Why then did the Navarre version fall? Not because of a ‘historical truth’ as the believers in the nationalist myth tend to argue. As a matter of fact the King Sancho the Great’s territory was as historical as the fueros were. Although, part of the PNV membership has still a fuerista orientation, few nationalists consider a real restoration of the fueros because this would imply the involvement of the Spanish king in Basque politics as well as small-scale gatherings with the king under the legendary oak of Gernika (Guernica). Regarding the territorial demarcation I would therefore follow an alternative historical explanation suggested by Benedict Anderson. When in 1833 Minister Javier de Burgos created the Spanish provinces, this was certainly an act of centralization and homogenization the provincial borders in the Basque Country and Navarre did not change substantially compared to the borders of the fueros (Burgueño 1996; 211-212). Under the new name of provincias the fueros persisted as territorial units. Despite the abolition of the fueros the provinces continued with a special fiscal treatment, known as el concierto económico. For Biscay and Guipuzcoa the favorable position ended under the Franco regime while it continued for the Provinces of Alava and Navarre under the name of regimen especial. With the new autonomy status the former provinces now changes their names in respectively ‘historical territories’ in Euskadi and Foral Community in Navarre. As geographic entities however, the revived ‘historical territories’, however have been in the people’s mental maps for centuries. After the transition the provincial territories administratively organized by their capitals continued their role under their refreshed names. Spanish historical maps and maps-as-a-logo therefore used the same demarcations as the nationalist did. In the Southeast Asian context Anderson has argued that historical and logo-maps were the territorial frames inherited by the postcolonial nationalists. For the Spanish-Basque nationalists four out of seven territories were the legacy of Spanish modernization culminating in reproducible series of maps and logo-maps, which as in the Asian case, ‘...penetrated deep into popular imagination...’ (Anderson 191: 175). In contrast the Navarre kingdom map as the competing vision did not have such a massive support in terms of daily confrontations with the institutionalized territories, like administrative bodies, provincial road maps, weather reports, provincial statistics and so on. The confrontation with the Navarre Kingdom map was confined to a few classes of history and geography at school, but never became part of daily-life experiences.

The French-Basque nationalists also have rediscovered the fors as they call their fueros. The history of fors is however more remote than south of the Pyrenees. Although for the nationalists of ‘northern Euskal Herria’ there is no doubt about Basque territoriality, the Euskal Herria logotypes have to compete with the ones of the département and Aquitaine. Most visible in the streets are the logotypes used to support the repatriation of Basque prisoners to Euskal Herria. Given the small number of French Basque nationalists in prison, the symbol is often perceived as something imported from Spain.

I will now return to the discrepancy between geopolitical rhetoric and practice. I suggest the following ingredients for explanation, namely party culture, opportunity
structure and position in the party system. The geopolitical players are Basque nationalist parties. Each party has historically developed its own specific culture of rhetoric as well as practice. PNV, the most voted party, has a hybrid culture of state-abiding and anti-system tendencies that show an alternating dominance. Nevertheless they pursue Euskal Herria as their common goal. Their distinct geopolitical practice of Euskadi as the amputated pragmatic version can be seen in the context of the opportunity structure created by Spain’s de facto federalization. From 1979 hitherto the PNV was the dominating party in Euskadi’s party system, whereas in Navarre it remained a marginal opposition party. The lack of support in Navarre, let alone Iparralde, has led PNV to a Euskadi-inspired geopolitical practice because Euskadi is the only territory in which they may have a chance to mobilize sufficient people for a new territorial status. PNV’s Realpolitik is also linked with the ways the Spanish decentralized administration is functioning both internally and externally, e.g. with respect to the European Union. Internally policies that would directly interfere with Navarre’s powers would be heavily penalized by the Spanish administration and would provoke a lot of protest among the Navarrese voters. Externally any policies not in line with the powers of the respective administrative layers in France would seriously jeopardize European structural funds for cross-border cooperation. In practice PNV’s main French negotiating partners are therefore in Paris, Bordeaux and Pau.

The Euskal Herria geopolitical practice used by the abertzales can be explained by the anti-system culture, which has become rooted in a wider culture of protest. The persistence of this culture has a sectarian dimension. In the smaller towns and villages of Guipuzcoa the electoral success of the abertzales up to the banning of their party reflects the establishment of closed communities of believers of the nationalist dream. The locale as a human environment in which more and less successful entrepreneurs spread the abertzale message and recruit their followers is relevant to the explanation why some parts of the Basque Country have become strongholds of Basque radicalism and other parts not. In Navarre with its weak establishment of Basque nationalism, most nationalist votes went to the radicals while Spanish mainstream parties of which some in a regionalist disguise, obtained a majority control of the new opportunity structure. They tried to outbid the Spanish parties in the regional administration by blaming them for discriminative practices against the Basque language, but could hardly find support in those parts of Basque-speaking Navarre they did not control. Moreover many Navarrese living outside the radical enclaves have a strong territorial identification with the Foral Community of Navarre so that nationalists have to compete with both Spanish statewide and Navarrese region-oriented identifications.

In France, the lack of an opportunity structure and weak support have obliged the Basque nationalist party to find support among the French parties. Claims for an own Basque département as the most realistic geopolitical option can only be negotiated with mainstream parties and business interests by playing down the rhetorical demand for Euskal Herria. The absence of an own opportunity structure in combination with weak electoral support explains the system-abiding practice of the French-Basque nationalists.

Finally I return to the question of why Euskal Herria is so compartmentalized regarding the socialization of the common political rhetoric. Comparing the French and Spanish parts, the weakness of Basque nationalism is caused by the strength of French nationalism. Many French Basques have become Frenchmen, even those whose mother tongue is Basque. In most parts of Spain people have comparatively strong regional or ethnonationalist identities. The feeble appeal of a historically weak state with a political elite that could not agree upon the common features of Spanishness has made sub-state
territorial identifications an attractive alternative to many inhabitants of Spain. In Guipuzcoa and Biscay the collective memory of Spain is more negative than in Navarre and Alava, which got a preferential treatment by the franquist regime. There the Euskal Herria and Euskadi geopolitical imaginations were attractive alternatives to a decentralized and democratized Spain. The place-to-place variations in mobilization and banalization of the Euskal Herria and Euskadi geopolitical views cannot be explained by different opportunity structures in Euskadi and Navarre. Although there is a statistical correlation between nationalist voting and language, the Spanish-speaking settlements west of Bilbao are all socialized in the PNV culture, as the Basque-speaking settlements around Gernika. Guipuzcoa and Navarre have both their Basque-speaking abertzale enclaves and Basque-speaking EA settlements. Although there is a statistic correlation between language and nationalist voting, efforts to find statistic correlates between voting for the Euskal Herria or Euskadi visions on the one hand and socioeconomic, cultural and demographic variables on the other have been fruitless. The only aspect most of the nationalist-voting settlements have in common is their relatively small scale, which actually facilitates social control. Therefore I think that the locale as a reception and reproduction context for each type sub-state nationalism in the ‘Spanish’ part of Euskal Herria is relevant but often ignored variable in the explanation of their diffusion.

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