

# Towards a Basque State



citizenship and culture



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# The Basque State and culture

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# Introduction

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The issue of culture is important in state-building, just as it is in nation-building. Culture may in general be said to provide resources for achieving social cohesion and hence for creating a shared collective identity. Ultimately culture provides any social group which considers itself as such with ways to re-create and perpetuate itself. From this perspective, any analysis of culture reveals connections between culture and power. If a social group wishes to be reborn culturally or socially in the present era, it needs to achieve some degree of cultural sovereignty; that is to say, it needs to have the ability (power) to manage, regulate, create and defend its own symbolic resources. Notwithstanding the present-day questioning of its role, the state is still the institution that makes possible such independence in political terms. Therefore, inasmuch as it is a necessary tool for social or cultural rebirth, stateless national groups seek such an institution for themselves.

Despite claims about the demise of the state, it is an observable fact that new states are being created all the time around the world, at least on those occasions when such a political opportunity arises. Let us not forget that five of the twenty-seven members of the European Union are states created during the 1990s. The world's states numbered fifty at the start of the twentieth century; at the beginning of the twenty-first century there are two hundred. But what most interests us here is the fact that a review of the theoretical frameworks developed to study the birth of states reveals that the determining factors accounting for the disintegration of some states (and the subsequent emergence of new ones) include, along with economic, institutional and political factors, cultural elements linked to identity: language and culture (López, 2010).<sup>32</sup> Thus, among stateless groups there still appears to be great faith in the cultural efficacy of the state as an institution.

Along with a description of the disadvantages to which Basque culture has been subjected in the absence of its own state, the following pages contain reflections on the benefits in cultural terms that would derive from a hypothetical state for Basque society. They focus on the cultural functions of the state, as well as changes to these functions in recent times. There is also an attempt to identify some of the weaknesses and strengths in the cultural sphere affecting endeavours to obtain a Basque state, taking note of issues which the state would be called on to resolve. These reflections occupy several chapters. Each of the articles that form part of this section adopts its own specific perspective with regard to subject matter and the position taken. But over and above the multiplicity of viewpoints represented, a common thread runs through them all: curiosity and questioning about the state, from the point of view of culture.

Taking as their point of departure an analysis of the cultural reality of Euskal Herria and a consideration of current theoretical views and debates, these chapters by professors Ane Larrinaga, Josu Amezaga, Patxi Juaristi, Fito Rodríguez and Iñaki Martínez de Luna explore a range of topics, including the nature of the state's symbolic power, globalization, developments in the culture market and the consequences of transnational culture on a state's cultural sovereignty, an analysis of Basque cultural expression, reflections on the Basque education system and an assessment of the state of the Basque language. Since all these topics have a universal aspect, the analyses are theoretically grounded. But they are also all anchored in a particular historical context, the Basque context. Each chapter represents an attempt to relate universal and particular facets to each other, to correlate

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<sup>32</sup> Jaume López, ed. (2010): "Noves Estatilitats i Processos de Sobirania". *IDEES. Revista de Temes Contemporanis* 33 (Octubre-Desembre 2010), 1-230.

theoretical and empirical views, in some instances allowing the theoretical to occupy centre stage, and in others the practical.

Despite the effects of globalization which raise questions about the independence of the state, **Ane Larrinaga** observes that states are not disappearing, but merely adapting to different roles in contemporary times, particularly in the economic domain. As far as their cultural function is concerned, the author suggests that states have aimed to accumulate a monopoly of cultural resources ever since they started, since they were born with the ambition of being nation-states. Present-day conditions have broken that monopoly, but not entirely. In "Culture in state-building: the state as a symbolic project" Larrinaga argues that, beyond the historical ability of states to impose a uniform cultural system on their territory, no other institution has achieved a degree of efficacy as a producer of social reality comparable to that of states. States are institutions with a capacity to adjust the mental structures of the citizens on their territory, in such a way that they are able to impose certain shared world-views, perceptions and senses of belonging among members of society in the state. Hence it is still an important instrument for social regeneration.

Larrinaga's article insists on the importance of the centripetal influence of the state on the culture system; in the next chapter, **Josu Amezaga** looks at the opposite effect of present-day forces. "State, market and culture: future challenges" examines changes in the current relationships between state and culture: first, the progressive supremacy of the market in culture; secondly, a number of phenomena resulting from globalization which have affected the flow of capital, information and populations; lastly, the violation of the nation's cultural space. Amezaga points out some of the issues that a hypothetical Basque state would have to grapple with: one is the need to build a nation-state out of the cultural community, another the need to address cultural diversity appropriately. One of Basque society's challenges will be balancing the tension between these two principles while attending to shared minorities (for instance, adopting the language as a common element), while others will include establishing regulations to resist market pressures and promoting cultural policies acknowledging grass-roots participation in cultural production.

The third article in this section, "Basque cultural forms: strengths and weaknesses in a hypothetical Basque state", describes several expressions of Basque culture. **Patxi Juaristi** begins by reviewing the polemical issue of how to define Basque culture. He opts for the position that if culture is in Basque then it is Basque culture. He goes on to examine five cultural forms based on verbal communication: *bertsolaritza*, song, theatre, books and cinema. Juaristi argues that the future of the Basque language, hence also that of Basque culture and the Basque-speaking community, depends on cultural forms linked to verbal communication. Therefore, he maintains, an analysis of these cultural forms will provide a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Basque culture in the process of state-building. The strengths include the organisation and institutionalisation of Basque culture by its producers in Basque society outside of public initiatives. Among the weaknesses we may mention the minority situation of the language, the small market for Basque cultural products and the vulnerability of the Basque culture industry.

The point of departure taken in the next chapter is again an analysis of the situation in Euskal Herria, but this time concerning the education system. In "Basque education rights, and a look at some European school systems", **Fito Rodríguez** begins with a review of Spanish and French legislation. He concludes that in the case of Spain, the power to organise the education system as a whole is reserved for the state, even though the Spanish constitution attributes control over education to the governments of the autonomous communities. France does not contemplate any sharing of the state's power to control education. One obstacle standing in the way of a Basque education system is the fact that the Basque language does not have the same legal status everywhere. Looking to the future, the author considers it necessary for the right of all pupils to study

through the medium of Basque to be upheld, and for teachers to be trained in Basque. The chapter ends by considering the education systems of certain countries — Finland, the Netherlands and Estonia — which could serve as models for Basque education. These examples may be particularly useful because they are of systems involving languages which are not only located in Europe but also in situations of language-contact and/or have maintained a high level of quality over a long period in recent years.

In the last chapter in the section, “The situation and outlook for the Basque language at the beginning of the 21st century: the challenges that lie ahead”, **Iñaki Martínez de Luna** offers a diagnosis of the present situation of the language through specific examples. Two key points for an understanding of the language situation are the way the administrative fragmentation of the Basque Country has limited the language’s development, and how the language’s varied legal status has resulted in dubious language policies. In addition to discussing these key factors, Martínez de Luna also paints a fine-grained portrait of the linguistic situation using other kinds of indicators. The analysis of the agents of language transmission, measurements of the language competence and use of the population and descriptions of attitudes and opinions reveal the great obstacles for the regeneration of a minority language such as Basque. The language situations and tendencies in different areas clearly correlate with the type of legal framework and the kind of language policy developed in the respective places, as well as with the strength of the grassroots language initiatives developed. The article examines the difficulties for the survival of a language without the backing of a state, whether because of objective or subjective factors.

# 1. Culture in state-building: the state as a symbolic project.

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Is there any point, today, in relating the demands for sovereignty of national groups without a state to state-building? Or is the institution of the state, as some would claim, doomed as a consequence of the globalization process? This chapter shows how a state, in acquiring and implementing legitimate cultural resources, possesses the effective means to generate social reality symbolically, which gives it the ability to construct and adapt society to its needs. Thus in its socializing authority to impose shared world views, forms of partnership among the citizenry, and so on, its capacity for social regeneration remains unequalled when it comes to ensuring the cultural survival and social integration of a particular group.

Is there any point, today, in relating the demands for sovereignty of national groups without a state to state-building? Such questions are often asked, in political and intellectual circles, of the supporters of the right to create their own state who believe that this is necessary as a means of ensuring social regeneration. Why a state, if the state is doomed as a consequence of the globalization process? Isn't it an obsolete institution, since there are more and more opportunities to go over, or under, the state to regenerate and develop a culture, and culture markets have already transcended state borders in today's globalized world? The following reflections have been written to address these questions.

### **1. IS THE STATE DOOMED? SURVIVAL OF THE STATE IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION**

In recent years much has been said in theoretical and academic circles about the possibility that the state is approaching its eventual demise. The emergence of the state in the western world was clearly linked to the goal of setting up, defending and regulating an internal market limited to a specific territory. This function, the importance of which had intensified since World War II in particular, has lost some of its significance with the emergence of global capitalism, and this has raised questions about the new role and state of health of the state. There has been a lot of discussion of the state's loss of sovereignty. We often read in the literature of recent decades about the supposed demise of the state as a consequence of changes that have resulted from the globalization of markets. In many fields globalization has turned the way society works upside-down: previously unknown problems have arisen today, generated by the traffic of communication and information, economic production and its financing, the transfer of technology, and demographic, ecological and geostrategic risks. It appears that no adequate solutions to these serious problems can be found within the domain of the nation-state. This is seen by some analysts as a gradual weakening of the intrinsic sovereignty of the classical nation-state. But the diagnoses do not always coincide. J.R. Monedero expresses doubt about forecasts of the state's inability to withstand the onslaught of internationalization, and asks: "Have nation-states really retreated? Has the function of this political structure truly changed? Has the state receded, or is the Leviathan merely temporarily fatigued from the demands of the postwar social compact?" (Monedero, 2003: 10). In these questions we can discern different possible facets lurking behind the state's transfiguration.

Despite partial disagreement among analysts about the new forms adopted by the state, all coincide in attributing the main cause of the crisis of the state to the transformation of the socioeconomic system. Recent studies likewise tend to focus on changes in the state as a consequence of economic aspects. These studies suggest that with the creation of global markets and their own institutions and decision centres, a profound asymmetry has emerged between the forms of authority existing in the society, on the one hand, and the economy, on the other (Strange, 2001). In the economic domain the traditional authority of the nation-state has been weakened by integration of state economies into the global economy, which has in turn led to financial and technological change. Therefore, analysts conclude, the hitherto traditional economic responsibilities and powers of the state are weakening little by little: for instance, the influence of the state on economic growth, the effect of employment policies and active intervention to correct economic imbalances have all diminished more and more strikingly in recent years. The resources developed by the state over centuries, such as its principles of sovereignty and territory, are showing cracks as a result. For one thing, state sovereignty is considered to have been seriously breached. The newly created capitalist market requires other political powers which need to share power with the traditional states, some of which are at a higher level than the state (such as the European Union and its institutions), while others pertain to a smaller scale, e.g. regions, so-called global cities and so on. For another, state borders and state-level regulations pose an obstacle to the global markets which need to move

their products and finances around within a single, uniform space. But are these changes powerful enough to lead to the progressive contraction and even disappearance of the state as an institution?

Taking only economic reasons into consideration, present-day trends do not support any such assumption. Certainly, today's economy is global; but the fabric of this economy is composed of multiple networks of interaction at state, supra- and infra-state levels (Mann, 2003). Over eighty percent of world production is aimed at national markets. As of today, goods, assets and research and development are in their states of origin; indeed, they receive necessary state aid to provide for their needs in human capital, communications and other kinds of infrastructure, and economic assistance when required. In a word, the states provide one of the foundations upon which global capitalism stands. Perhaps the main foundation. Over and above the transnational relations based on capitalism's technological and social connections, global networks are to a large extent segmented according to the particularities of nation-states, especially in the case of the most powerful states of the North. Since authority over the world's territories is still vested exclusively in the states, the makeup of all kinds of global systems is based essentially on their participation.

Moreover, far from disappearing in the era of global capitalism, the states seem to be starting to perform other functions too. We are witnessing a readjustment of the role of the state, and in the process states are positioning themselves in a much wider and more complex domain of power (Sassen, 2007). They have not by any means merely limited themselves to reducing their authority over the economic domain or relinquishing their former power to regulate the domestic economy. They have, on the contrary, acquired new functions in order to incorporate and adapt, within the state and its body of legislation, emergent international players in the economy — companies, markets, supranational institutions — and in society and culture, so that players originally created within the state which, paradoxically, may sometimes be thought of as losing ground for the state itself, can also operate beyond the state's boundaries (Sassen, 2007).

Naturally, like other transformations in history, the adjustment of institutional and legal elements by states with a view to the requirements of the global market is not everywhere the result of a smooth, seamless process. Let us not forget that the world is made up of a system of states exerting mutual influences, and that not all states are endowed with the same degree of power and sovereignty. Neither have they all had the same historical origin and development. Such adjustments and adaptation should not obscure the historical evolution of the institution. Without losing sight of this systemic, historical perspective, Michael Mann reminds us that the nation-state, territorially based and independent, is a fairly young institution (Mann, 1993). The number of states in the world has increased progressively and is still continuing to grow (López, 2010). Over the past three centuries both their number and domain of intervention have expanded. Although some of the state's powers have diminished in the past three decades, particularly its power to regulate the economy, other attributions have on the contrary become greater of late, most notably those related to regulation of the private domain: family life, the individual's life cycle, private interpersonal relations and so on (Giddens, 1994; Gurrutxaga, 2004).

## **2. CULTURE IN STATE-BUILDING: THE STATE AS A SYMBOLIC PROJECT**

If we view the state as a tool for a given society to confront the challenge over independence on the local and international stage, this function of the state has undergone changes over recent decades. It is undeniable that such changes have occurred in the institution's economic domain of activity. But can they also be broadened to include



other domains? Specifically, can the state be an effective formula for societies consisting of a minority group trying to protect its culture? What has the state to offer a society from the point of view of culture and identity?

### **2.1. A look at the conditions of state creation at the beginning of the Modern Era: the monopolistic accumulation of social resources**

The cultural mission is not usually considered a salient feature in classical definitions of the state. Or at least, this is usually left implicit. The best known among classical sociological definitions of the state is Weber's, now a century old. In his words, something is a state "if and insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds a claim on the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order." In this view, the accumulation of resources of physical force appears as the chief defining characteristic of this institution. Similarly, most frameworks used to study the origin of the state give preference to such a view: not only Weber, but also Norbert Elias and Charles Tilly, for instance (Weber, 1975, 1979; Elias, 1993; 1994; Tilly, 1992). As has been shown in these frameworks, the formation of the state is accompanied by the concentration of coercive forces in a single place. Thus, in an ideal model state, this institution which is licensed to keep order gradually distances itself from the common social milieu. Thenceforth, legitimate physical force cannot be used by anyone in the society unless it is created for that express purpose, and clearly identified in the society, by this centralized and disciplined public entity. This monopoly is the basis from which the state's power derives.

The western state only achieved this monopoly on the use of violence little by little, in the historical process of its birth, insofar as it dispossessed its internal competitors of the right to use force. Specifically, the state, in its beginnings at the start of the modern era, had to assert itself in the use of physical force not once but twice. First of all the state had to assert itself within its borders against the rival powers (the prince, aristocracy etc.), and the populations under their control. But it also had to fight outside its borders, to defend itself against other existing or would-be states, in order to survive. Thus, as historical studies have demonstrated, the states in Europe were not formed in isolation but as part of a system of states. And the creation of states was invariably associated with warfare, which constituted the "natural selection" mechanism for states (Tilly, 1992; Ramos Torre, 1995).

But according to the classical analysis, although the accumulation of the resources of physical force is necessary, on its own this does not explain the full extent of the state's power. Historically the monopoly of physical force was linked to the imposition of a system of taxes (how else could civil and external wars be paid for?) and the unification of an economic zone (Weber, 1979; Tilly, 1992; Elias, 1993; 1994; Ramos Torre, 1995). Thus began the idea of a "national" market within the territorial borders determined by the state. Hence the monopoly on force and the monopoly on taxation ("coercion" and "capital", in Tilly's words) have to be understood as closely associated processes. Marx himself had noted, in his time, that the modern state and capitalism were created and developed simultaneously.

But does the accumulation of physical force and economic resources, emphasised by the classical authors, fully account for the nature of the state? I don't think so. The concentration of the armed forces and financial resources is not feasible unless the state also consolidates a symbolic capital of approval and legitimacy. The state always starts out as a project to create an integrated society. The state needed to be a *nation*-state in order to survive. Thus the legitimacy of official tax-collecting is usually linked with the state-promoted creation of bonds of identification and loyalty. Collecting taxes and economic relations ultimately favoured the reinforcement of representations of the state as a united territory. In this manner the state first took root in a given space; this was not, of course, the

national space that would eventually be occupied by the state, but that sovereignty appeared increasingly as its competence.

Thus the concentration of economic capital and the imposition of uniform taxes may be said to have undergone a similar process as the consolidation of cultural resources and the unification of the cultural market. It makes sense to assume that these resources should be linked. At the beginning of the modern era, the communal and traditional European social order prior to the emergence of the state was in crisis, so the new institution embarked on the creation of an order of a different kind. Clearly the only way to bring about this change was to act in all domains, government, economy and culture; or to put it as some analysts do: cultivating the areas that involved violence, capital and symbolic production. Thus, as the state gradually accumulated resources in all these domains, it undertook the enormous symbolic reconstruction task of integrating and legitimizing the modern social order (Bauman, 1997). And the medium of the modern order was, and is, the nation-state.

Thus the state has acquired all kinds of cultural resources in its historical development, including tools for re-creating culture and transmitting it; and just as has happened in the domains of power and economics, its monopoly of the cultural domain has entailed the dispossession of "others". Within that meta-process, the state has obviously had to 'manage' the cultural diversity of the original communities contained within its borders. Initially, this plurality of cultures was expressed not just through linguistic diversity but also customs, traditional rights and numerous other characteristics. To deal with diversity, the state, through the elites or dominant groups that have been in charge of it, has had to make choices: which culture to transmit in the society, which language to use in schools, which culture to make official in the bureaucracy and public administration, and so on. Obviously the part it has played in these choices and decisions has not been a neutral one; like any other historical order, it has acted as an institution defending its own interests.

Social integration is the objective, and cultural resources have certainly been used as instruments of integration. Consequently, culture has had to fulfil a unifying role for the state, and usually that is what happens, sacrificing diversity and the ethnic or national groups represented by that diversity. Hence one of the tasks faced by every state is to bring about the unification of the state's culture market, reducing all the codes that exist within its territory to one, including forms of speech, laws, weights and measures, and making all forms of communication uniform, especially in writing and bureaucracy, all for the sake of making the social integration and the very society of the state legitimate. In so doing, the state has not imposed any one culture. On the contrary, it has had to raise particular cultures and languages to a status of universality. But in this process it has denied to other cultures and languages access to the domains of universality; these are refused a chance to regenerate and survive.

## ***2.2. A condition for statehood: the monopoly of culture***

The different culture systems developed with normality in modern Western Europe have for the most part taken shape under unifying, monopolistic conditions created by states. The development of these cultures, and indeed other, not strictly cultural targets of the state including its nation-building project, economic development and the development of human resources, could not have been achieved without first ensuring the relative cultural and linguistic unity of the state's society. The unity of the culture, and even that of the whole society, depended, among other things, on the imposition of the dominant language and culture.

The state is obliged by necessity to bring to bear the mechanisms of social generation and regeneration in order to ensure the survival of the state's order. The means of regeneration are basically formal or informal cultural resources and resources of

socialization: schooling methods, linguistic codes, bureaucratic procedures and so on. Over time, the constant application of these means of regeneration result in the creation of a special domain in the state's society: a *culture system*. By 'creation of a culture system' is meant an autonomous domain developed in a 'normalized' manner in the state's society with institutional support. Once the conditions for unification created in these societies have been ensured, the stage is set for progressive strengthening of the culture. Paradoxically, it is the state that paves the way for the autonomy of the culture system by pursuing cultural policies and regulating the cultural domain.

In the course of this slow, complex historical autonomization process, the legitimate flag-bearing organisations and entities of the language and culture, such as schools, universities, academies, scientific institutions, publishers and cultural concerns, together with artists, intellectuals and the like, assert their authority as time goes by through the gradual accumulation of cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1995).

The articulation of a culture system by every modern state is necessary for the survival of the state's society, because its development provides the state with effective tools for building a common collective identity: the national identity. Cultural institutions in and of themselves are not enough to build a nation-state, but they are necessary nonetheless. Theorists of nationalism say that in the modern era the meanings of a nation are achieved, among other things, through symbolic creation within the cultural domain, such as novels, theatre, poetry, operas, newspapers, films etc. In all of these the nation's characteristics are given expression, origin myths are developed, the group's historical roots are articulated and the general symbols of reference of social life (culturally, geographically, representationally) are established. In fact, the state's nation-building endeavour is in large part an exercise in culture-building: it is its daily task to offer its cultural representation everywhere, at all times, in all cultural and linguistic settings, in official declarations and in everyday life. Through its direct and indirect presence in all facets of social life, the state suffices the entire fabric of social life with this gigantic symbolic construction and so helps to create a community defined by shared cultural tenets and practices. Obviously a key role in this undertaking is played by specially created formal institutions dedicated to socialization such as the public school system and official bodies for the promotion of the culture system. It is their task to teach the official school curriculum (for example, spreading a standardized version of official history), construct a model literature, and fit musical and artistic creation into the state's historical and social coordinates. But let us also not neglect to mention the influence of the informal socialization performed through other social practices. For example, universal obligatory military service, economic development (the sociocultural assimilation of the rural population, for instance, has historically played an important part in state-building), bureaucracy (whereby citizens' lives are regulated by procedures reflected in official designations and documents) and countless other practices have the effect of training and conditioning the population.

One notable function performed by the cultural component of nation-state building is the work of 'political archaeology' carried out by cultural institutions and producers (Smith, 2000), whereby states use cultural resources and institutions of socialization to articulate and adjust what the population remembers and forgets, helping to reconstruct the past in order to legitimise the present-day community. The work of many historians, philologists, philosophers, anthropologists, archaeologists, writers and other contributors to the culture within the framework of the state's culture system consists, indeed, of constructing elements of the state culture. In most cases this is not done consciously. As a matter of fact, the state is the unconscious, subliminal political backdrop of every official, dominant culture system, taken for granted and considered indisputable in normal cognitive structures. Intellectuals and professionals in cultural fields have provided keys for understanding the contemporary social state, helping to situate it in history and the world, magnifying the culture of the society and cultivating its language. Many have gone further still and

attempted to filter certain parts of the heritage and cultural traditions, cultivating these by selecting and registering events, interpreting these selectively, and also establishing, rounding out and polishing a canon, which is moulded and adapted to current scientific evidence and contemporary perspectives.

Groups located outside the state-supported culture system or lacking institutional backing from the state, on the other hand, generally find it very hard to induce social regeneration and survive culturally. In a word: unless you have strong state sponsorship, you must work very hard indeed to define yourself as a differentiated group and present a social and cultural identity to others, and you will obtain help from far fewer resources in the domain of symbolic struggles. In most cases, therefore, symbolic influence is much more limited.

Unlike state cultures, those without state protection tend to be under-institutionalised and socially atrophied, and it is difficult for them to become culture systems, that is, to create an institutional fabric, and for producers of such a culture to acquire authority (Larrinaga, 2007). Thus typically one of the objectives of stateless national movements is, in the absence of initiatives from political institutions, to stimulate and support their own culture through grassroots initiatives. For the same reason, programmes for the recovery of minority languages and cultures, that is, endeavours to construct their own culture system, are most often linked to demands for political sovereignty and institutions of some sort or other.

### **2.3. The symbolic power of the state**

What have been the consequences of the accumulation of cultural resources in the hands of the state and the articulation of the culture system that the state has made possible? How effective does this accumulation of resources make the state as an institution? Why, from the point of view of culture, would a stateless group wish to assert a need to have their own state?

Beyond the visible expressions of a particular culture system that are conventionally labelled as culture, every society adopts, internally, a symbolic dimension which is less evident to the naked eye. Or to put it another way: a basic component of any society, besides its social or institutional structure, is its *symbolic* order. This symbolic order provides the members of the society with an overall framework comprising the meanings, cognitive structures, beliefs and symbols which favour social integration. It supplies symbols and narratives which encourage a sense of identity, and constitutes a complex structure that gives meaning to social acts. As Geertz observes, culture (as a symbolic world) and social structure are two inseparable levels of social life: on one level we have beliefs, meaningful symbols, and values, which individuals use to define the world, express feelings and ideas, and formulate opinions; on the other, the human relations which constitute society's structure (Geertz, 1987).

By obtaining and accumulating cultural resources, the state has acquired effective tools for the symbolic creation of a social reality, thereby gaining opportunities to build and mould society according to its requirements. So much is this so, that in the modern era 'society' is identified more and more with the society which the state has articulated; so for example, when the concept of 'society' was used in sociology it was long equated with the society of the state (Lamo de Espinosa, 2001). Today we often hear that the market trends, technological changes and transnational migrations of cultures and populations resulting from globalisation have diminished the cultural monopoly once held by the state. It is quite true that, as a result of worldwide culture industries and the migratory movements of populations with different cultures, states have faced difficulties in enforcing their projects for imposing cultural uniformity and limits have been placed on their monopolistic plans. Nonetheless, I suspect that the newly emerging institutions cannot yet match the efficacy of the state as an entity capable of producing social reality in a symbolic form in people's everyday life.

In fact, not only has the state managed to create a dominant cultural model through its laws, bureaucracy, education system, social rituals and use of the mass media and language in the framework of the state, but it also has other profound symbolic influences, for it has the power to modify its subjects' very mental structures to a far greater extent than any other social institution. By use of this power it imposes a shared world-view, perception and particular type of belonging on the members of its society. Insofar as it regulates social behaviours (together with the cognitive and cultural principles behind them), the state has the power to bring about in its subjects permanent loyalty and a common way of thinking, so that they will perceive reality in a particular way and are conditioned to feel and interpret things according to certain patterns. Such shared patterns of judgment, perception and memory help to achieve agreement about evidence based on the society's established 'commonsense knowledge' in the societies of all states.

In this way, symbolic domination using cultural and cognitive resources has gradually replaced violent subjugation in the activity of states. Indeed this form of domination is much more efficient than physical force because it is based on the implicit assent of the dominated. In such cases, the state is still, today, one of the most effective and powerful apparatuses for the creation of systemic compliance and moral conformism, in spite of the fact that its social power is never absolute, since it is capable of creating cognitive structures which support unthinking, reflex acceptance of a certain meaning of the world, and because these make the common experience of the world accessible to individuals within the state.

Comprehensibly, then, today many stateless social groups have aspired to a state of their own in order to ratify their social character. Bourdieu points out that the state effectively helps create and re-create the tools needed to build a social reality (Bourdieu, 1997). Although a new social reality and new actors have emerged on a different scale in the era of globalisation, such as the transnational markets and cultural enterprises, the state is still playing its part, articulating and constituting mental structures of thought, memory and comprehension very effectively. Hence the social order established by the state does not raise too many issues or controversy because its institutional structures correspond adequately to the citizens' cognitive patterns.

The state remains, today, the chief repository of democratic rights and the arena for democratic participation by citizens (Giddens, 1994; 2000). The other side of the coin is the symbolic capital which the state must accumulate in order to achieve this. If it is anything, the state is the main locus of accumulation and use of symbolic capital in modern societies. Its various legal resources are among the most objectified and codified expressions of this symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1997). The state has gathered symbolic capital in such a way that this institution is the main referent for social 'denomination' in the present era. This means that through certificates, designations, titles and all kinds of public recognition and official registers, the state has the authority to determine people's legitimate social identity in their own country. In other words, the state is attributed sufficient legitimacy to have the authority to say what and who things and people are and can be, what they say, and can say, do, and can do. Thus it is the state which names and approves the legitimate associations in the society: for instance, it decides what does and does not constitute a family, an organisation or a political party. It decides on the legitimacy of social identities: who is a citizen, a tax-payer, an owner, a relative or a person capable of practising a given occupation. What is more, the state must be informed of changes in such designations, and the state must be asked for recognition of new rights. There do not appear to be any other powers today, whether markets or political institutions on any other scale, for instance, that have achieved a comparable degree of legitimacy to determine the nature and social identity of people and groups in this manner.

#### **2.4. The state and building the individual's everyday world: national identity in daily life**

For now, then, the nation-state is the dominant political structure. Globalisation has not yet freed the countries of the world from the political ascendancy of the state. Indeed, the world is undeniably divided into sharply delimited, discrete nation-states. This world of states could not sustain itself if it did not have strong backing in people's consciousness. In other words, today's nation-states have essential components of culture and identity, and display a capacity to re-create these continuously. And what is more, they are capable of embedding them into the everyday thoughts and everyday knowledge of their citizens.

But what is meant by 'everyday knowledge' or 'commonsense knowledge'? Knowledge is a basic category in the process called the *social construction of reality* by P.L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Berger & Luckmann, 1979). Social reality consists of individuals' acts of mutual agreement, acts which are repeated over and over again over time. Knowledge is thus not only the systematised and formalised knowledge which characterises intellectual spheres of activity, or the cultivated knowledge created by recognised professionals in academic fields. Knowledge also consists of the ordinary cognitive practice generated by social activity and embedded in that activity. Therefore, in addition to formal knowledge there is also informal knowledge; besides professional knowledge there is folk knowledge; as well as cultivated knowledge, ordinary or commonsense knowledge. This second kind of knowledge dominates everyday life, as the body of knowledge that is developed and shared by all the members of society. Such knowledge gives them a basic reference about social life, making it possible for them to deal with everyday social functions. This pre-theoretical 'received knowledge' generated in socialization processes provides members of society with basic knowledge or understanding about social life so that they acquire pragmatic skills for everyday life. When people internalise that knowledge as real, they assume that the view of reality it supports is also true. So the social reality of everyday life is considered an established reality in the ordinary perspective shared by members of a society, and so it appears in the guise of indisputable fact. As such, it needs no checking or verification. The ordinary knowledge on which this reality is based is founded upon 'common sense', it is self-reflexive and non-scientific, but that doesn't make it any less effective socially because it has the strength of evidence.

Among the elements of people's knowledge of everyday life, their common world-view, is the very idea of the nation that has been created by the state. States constantly transmit, spread and anchor in individuals' national consciousness the category of the nation as a moral order by means of immersive socialisation. As Michael Billig rightly says, nationalism is not just a kind of activity developed by nationalist movements without a state who are seeking change, i.e. a 'visibe' activity through political activism and unconventional protests or mobilisations; this is only one facet of nationalism. Nationalism consists for the most part of the 'cold' activity carried out by nation-states in the midst of everyday ordinariness. The point is that this ordinariness usually makes it impossible to see the state's activity; indeed, state nationalism goes unmentioned in many analyses. Hence nationalism has frequently been studied as a particular political variable as if it were the specific domain of groups seeking to create a nation-state. It is not treated as a feature of all the political, cultural and everyday acts of already established states (Billig, 1998).

It is therefore not usual for studies to take into account the cultural, ideological and political conditions required for the regeneration of already existing nation-states. It is forgotten that every state needs to keep regenerating to survive, and this regeneration must take place within objective or subjective structures, that is, in institutional structures and individuals' consciousnesses. To achieve this, the state and its institutions must perform a constant ideological and symbolic-cultural function to fill people's world with beliefs, images and social practices concerning social reality. In this way the nation-state has become an indisputable reality embedded in people's everyday world, unnoticed and ubiquitous in the societies of contemporary states. This order created by the nation-state is

not put to a referendum every day. Rather than conscious, voluntary loyalty, the force of systemic complicity is imposed, day in, day out. Through conventional acts, citizens are created and re-created as members of the nation-state without any sense of compulsion, both from a cultural perspective and the perspective of identity.

This being the case, the national identity that is forged by the state cannot be understood, as it is in many of today's textbooks, as a mere reflection of the individual's inner self or ego. Whatever the psychological dimension may be, identities are based on particular collective ways of life situated within society and history. To put it another way, national identities, like other group identities, incorporate collective categories and representations, and social customs and practices too. A national identity is a way of existing in the world and understanding and perceiving the world, which also serves, at the same time, to regenerate that world and present it as something 'natural'. By being a way of life and being rooted in everyday social experiences, the experience becomes so well-known and ordinary that it is thought of as obvious.

Thus thought and perception categories about social reality (including the nation) are regenerated within individuals through their practical experiences because the cognitive and symbolic structures promoted by the state are embedded in daily social practices, such as school traditions, all sorts of bureaucratic practices which must be repeated over and over again, media consumption, sports and cultural activities, language, and so on. When speaking, going to school, dealing with the administration, watching television, participating in sports events, getting married, licensing a vehicle, getting health assistance, or just looking at one's surroundings (with its official buildings, flags, street names, signs in a particular language, etc.), members of the society perform ordinary acts in their daily lives which involve cognitive structures inscribed with specific identity markers or world-views, and unconsciously internalize those structures. The nation-state's symbolic order is regenerated in this way.

Of course, in addition to this ordinary kind of regeneration, occasionally extraordinary events occur in the life of a state which also serve to revitalise sentiments of identity and belonging. Sometimes these are the result of unexpected turns of events, such as international crises, state funerals, or conflicts with other states; other times, the state itself orchestrates such occasions, as with celebrations of the 'national day', 'independence day', 'armed forces day' or whatever. On all these occasions the monotony of the ordinary is set aside and resources are put into play to ignite citizens' sentiments of loyalty (Billig, 1998). Today, such meaning is attached to important sports competitions and other cultural events and so on. But once such exceptional happenings, which shake up our feelings for a time, are over, the usual ordinary regeneration sets in again. In this fashion, the nation-state remains present in the foundation of people's day-to-day life, regenerating over and over again and embedded in their daily consciousness. This unknowing *habitus* of daily life constitutes the unconscious reverse side of custom, by means of which daily life is nationalised, because the nation-state has become the ubiquitous context and stage for people's lives. This *habitus* encompasses structures of remembering and forgetting, the state's ongoing socialising operation, which implicitly includes a reading and interpretation of history and of the present, and situates citizens' ordinary perceptions and viewpoints within certain social and historical coordinates in accordance with that reading, making it unquestionable, seemingly natural. The state's biggest challenge and greatest achievement is the naturalization of a certain social order and symbolic order. It is that power which stateless national groups aspire to obtain by building a state of their own.

Let us return to the initial question with which the chapter began, then. Is the state becoming obsolete? Can a state offer a social group demanding one any assurance of social survival and regeneration? A state is a complex thing, a changing, many-faced institution which is constantly reshaping itself to adapt to the changing conditions of

society. Its structure and functions have been affected by globalisation and recent requirements of the capitalist markets. As a result the traditional sovereignty of the state appears to have been diminished, particularly in the economic domain. In the cultural domain too, global movements of markets and populations have created resistance and raised barriers against the state's former integrating and homogenising projects. But again: the state is a many-faced, multidimensional institution, an adaptable entity which enables powers and functions of many different kinds. One of these dimensions is its symbolic-cultural power, which has been discussed in this article. In my opinion, the socialising effect of accumulated symbolic resources on members of society within the state remains strong. Thanks to that effect, the state-imposed symbolic order is the invisible hidden face of all social practices. When the ubiquity of the state is almost absolute in the social practices of a given country, this institution is capable of remaking the social order to its requirements over and over again. Of course, this regeneration is never perfect, it is neither complete nor flawless. This is witnessed by the resistances and tensions to the state's cultural autonomy, from without or within, which states today increasingly need to manage. Nevertheless, although in recent years some marked trends have begun to threaten the state's monopoly, the state is still more effective than other emerging types of institution at producing symbolically citizens' social reality throughout their everyday life. Thus even today the state's resources for social regeneration make it a necessary tool for social survival.



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## 2. State, market and culture: future challenges in a hypothetical Basque state.

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Culture has played an important part in the building of nation states, among other reasons, because it has contributed to the nation's homogeneity. But today the ability of states to impose a common national culture has run up against a limitation: as a result of globalization national markets have been weakened, including nationally-based culture markets; and intercultural contact has intensified owing to the increased movement of people and information flow. Add to that the advances in information technology, and we have a formula for growing internal multiculturalism in present-day society. What does a state require in order to create a national culture in such conditions? Is it even possible? What is the purpose? Through what kind of cultural policies? This chapter addresses those questions.

## 1. STATE AND CULTURE

Where history, economics and political power have permitted the formation of a state solidly established within society, states have endeavoured to make the nation appear to be uniform. Where the most successful states have arisen, this has been the most common approach to the cultural issue in an attempt to build a political community and attach legitimacy to its power. That is because since their beginnings modern states have needed to create a nation around themselves, understanding 'nation' as a political community which shares a common sense of belonging and, in consequence, accepts a power structure that represents it and takes responsibility for it. Given that throughout all of history a common culture has always been one of the chief components underlying ethnic groups which unites their members and supplies them with a group identity, the task of nation-building required a national culture, that is, a uniform culture which would unite the nation. Anything that might jeopardise that unity was seen as a threat. The Committee of Public Safety, set up following the French Revolution, said as much in 1794:

Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand; la contre-révolution parle l'italien, et le fanatisme parle le basque. Cassons ces instruments de dommage et d'erreur... Pour nous, nous devons à nos concitoyens, nous devons à l'affermissement de la République, de faire parler sur tout son territoire la langue dans laquelle est écrite la Déclaration des droits de l'homme.<sup>33</sup> (cf. Cantera Ortiz de Urbina, 1992)

In the nation-state, cultural exclusion is the foundation of the political community: exclusion not only of ethnic minorities in the territory that is subject to the state, but also foreigners to be kept out of the community of the nation (Robins, 2006).

In the first years of the nation states, schools were the most effective means of unifying the culture. In addition, they began to design and implement cultural policies. Probably the first steps of what we think of today as cultural policy were taken in the Italian Renaissance, where the ruling classes, to legitimise their power, established the patronage system whereby art and creativity were supported and given monetary aid. Then there are non-state policies with cultural implications, such as the Church's regulations (for example the requirement to establish a surname, thereby eliminating the Basque tradition of taking the name of one's house) or repressive measures (the Inquisition). But another way of influencing culture spread with the patronage system. After that the modern state implemented a nationalising cultural policy focused on acknowledgment of the nation and school education, as is seen in national museums, national academies and so on. It should also be kept in mind that the modern state grew up in the period of the Illustration, and traces of that movement are visible in the cultural policies of the new states: this is seen in the state's power to extend its reach to broader sectors of the population through the medium of elites of knowledge and education. Another process leading to a particular kind of state cultural policy was industrialisation, which required a literate population. Thus from the Renaissance to the present day a cultural policy has evolved which some (Zallo, 1995) have defined as cultural democracy, but these policies were always subservient to the aim of constituting a nation and achieving uniformity.

Of course, the press and media have also been excellent tools of this homogeneity-seeking policy: From the printed media of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries right down to the audiovisual ones of the twentieth, the media helped to create compact spaces where ideologies supporting the government or symbols of national identity were promoted while also creating a common culture. Inasmuch as that space coincided with

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<sup>33</sup> "Federalism and superstition speak Breton; emigration and hatred of the republic speak German; the counter-revolution speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us break these harmful instruments of error... As for us, we owe it to our citizens, we owe it to the consolidation of the Republic, to cause the language in which the Declaration of the Rights of Man was written to be spoken throughout its territory." The document went on to command that schoolteachers be sent out to all the territories where French was not the common language and which were in need of 'Frenchifying'.

not just the nation's political space but its market as well, the culture industry that has developed over the past century and a half has also been a source of national homogeneity.

In our socio-historical context, this type of uniform national culture of a nation-state is the norm. Not only for the states that oppress us, for it has also been in the nationalist discourses developed to demand liberation from them. As Letamendia says (Letamendia, 1997), ethnic groups tend to mirror the oppressor whom they confront, not only demanding their own state but also seeking to build a national community of their own. And to do that they also need their own national culture, distinct from the oppressor's culture, so they undertake their own exclusion campaign, distinguishing between 'ours' and 'theirs', giving preference to what distinguishes us within the former category, and marginalising whatever makes us like the second. In this way uniformity is again sought: one that sets us apart from the oppressor's uniformity.

Here the point is not, in my opinion, to criticise and reject this mirror-behaviour just because it leads to the exclusion of certain cultures. The issue raised by the French revolutionaries of how to build a new state in the midst of linguistic and cultural diversity is not resolved by a pro-diversity discourse alone. We may argue about whether or not we want a state, but if we do then we shall have to grasp this bull by the horns. And it is not an easy one!

And if it was hard before, now it is harder. After all, some things have changed since the Parisians took the Bastille, and those changes affect the power of the state over culture. First, the state has lost some ground to the market, in culture as in other areas. Secondly, there is the set of phenomena referred to as globalisation which, with its movements of capital, people and information, simultaneously promotes uniformity and cultural diversity in contradictory ways. In the third place, cultures have also changed a lot, there is more interchange between them now, and drawing exact lines to separate one culture from another, and hence speaking of cultural systems, is getting very complicated. And lastly, newer technology, and especially the digital age, may bring about changes in culture at least as great as those ushered in by the advances of preceding periods such as writing, printing or television.

### **1.1. Competition between the state and the market**

Until it became a big business, the market didn't have enough power to influence the state's cultural policy. Culture had been used to make money before, for example with cordel literature or the sale of Basque 'verse papers'. But the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the growth of a reading audience and a new literature aimed at it. Subsequently the audience grew still more, and so did cultural production, eventually adapted to the new media of the periodical press, radio, cinema, television, etc., and so the culture industry was born. This industry has progressively become more powerful both economically and ideologically, until it was in a position to vie with the state for the control of culture. Today if we take the culture industry in its broadest sense to include the information industry within it, it may be considered the world's biggest business.<sup>34</sup>

This culture industry, having entered the logic of capitalism, has been putting more and more pressure on states over recent years until they ran up against certain limits put in place by the latter. What happened with radio and television in Europe in the nineteen-seventies and eighties was paradigmatic: having been in public ownership until that time, in name a public service, in intention a means of legitimising the state, they then started to

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<sup>34</sup> To gain an idea of the amount of surplus value this industry produces, consider the movie *Avatar*, the biggest selling film ever in its day: having cost \$460 million (half in production, the other half in marketing), it brought in nearly \$3000 million in 2009, the first year, alone.

be deregulated with the entry of private capital. Today, market logic has completely taken over in all the audiovisual media, not only in privately-owned media but even in the public ones, putting an end to whatever still remained of the state's avowedly enlightened purposes (such as the promotion of educational television).

This tendency towards deregulation has not been limited to the audiovisual media, however; it has spread right across the whole culture industry. At the same time, states' culture policies have changed direction in the last few decades as a consequence of a number of factors (Zallo, op. cit.): for one thing, the emergence of new social movements brought into question the existing cultural framework according to which it was mainly the job of the state to carry high culture to the masses; indeed, those movements threw doubt on the very concept of 'high culture' (consider pop art, for example). For another thing, the state now attempts to compete with the industry, turning the country into an audience. And thirdly, with the beginnings of disintegration of the welfare state the very concept of public service is crumbling: in periods of crisis, the budget for culture is one of those that can be cut, and in any case some functions have been transferred to the private sector.

As a result of these changes, the logic of economics is penetrating further and further into the cultural sphere, not just in the industry but in cultural policy too. The latest trend is to use culture for the purposes of marketing and boosting the economy, the Guggenheim Museum in the Basque Country (both the one in Bilbao and the project for Urdaibai) being our best example of this.

## 1.2. Globalisation

As economics has gained influence over culture, worries about cultural sovereignty have increased worldwide. When the modern states were created, insofar as they were capable of regulating their national markets, the market was an accomplice in the pursuit of their unification project. Thus the issue of cultural sovereignty was only an issue for communities that lacked a state of their own, such as ethnic minorities and colonised countries, who denounced the cultural oppression to which they were subjected by states refusing to recognise their nationhood or denying them independence. But the decolonisations that took place in the second half of the twentieth century brought a new matter to the world's attention: political sovereignty is not the same as economic sovereignty; and neither of these is the same as cultural sovereignty. The last point came into full evidence in the debate over the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the nineteen-seventies. It was argued by the protagonists of that debate (MacBride, 1985) that cultural frameworks and communication media from the richest countries (and the US in particular) which were spreading all over the world were a threat to the cultural and communication needs of poorer countries, which were at risk of being made subordinate to the world powers in cultural as well as economic terms. Critics claimed that such cultural uniformity would threaten the survival of most of the world's peoples and cultures. The term that best described this threat in the 1970s was *cultural imperialism*. What this was taken to mean was that culturally dominated societies were being immersed in and drawn over to the world's dominant ideas and values, and their own cultural roots invalidated (Schiller, 1976). Needless to say, this concept, which was most widespread in Third World countries, was also widely adopted in the Basque Country. Thus to the cultural oppression to which Basques were already being subjected by the Spanish and French nation-states must now be added another, coming mainly from the English-speaking world.

But eventually the cultural patterns of a handful of places turned into a threat not only for the poorest countries, as increasingly concern spread to those who had a strong economy and, to the extent that their internal cultural unification had advanced, a well-established national character too. That concern was expressed clearly in the 1995 negotiations over one of the chief promoters of globalisation, the World Trade

Organisation. A decade after the NWICO debate, in a context where the state, as primary cultural sponsor, had ceded much of its former effectiveness to private business, some states took a stand in favour of *cultural exception*, the right to exempt culture and communications from measures applied to other commercial products in the worldwide agreement. That right was ratified by UNESCO ten years later (UNESCO, 2005), and several powerful states, most notably France, applied it, wary that the liberalisation of the culture and communications market could jeopardise their national project for cultural unification.

This debate concerning the dominance of the media and culture industries of a handful of countries over other countries was, so to speak, ordered, both on the level of a dispute between nationalities and dominant states (cultural oppression), and between ex-colonies and metropolises (cultural imperialism) or between English-speaking countries and others (cultural exception). I say 'ordered' because it was clearly the case that cultural power was concentrated in a few places who exerted this power over everywhere else. But as globalisation has proceeded, the debate has become much more complex. John Tomlinson (Tomlinson, 1991) points out that globalisation comes after imperialism, and one of the main features of imperialism is its complexity. Thus, rather than a process in which a few centres of power impose their models on all the others, it is a process involving many variables and contradictory tendencies where even hitherto dominant countries will ultimately be affected: "The effects of globalization are to weaken the cultural coherence of all individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones - the 'imperialist powers' of a previous era" (p. 175).

Today many facts support Tomlinson's analysis. If the French revolutionaries in the eighteenth century considered the existence of places where French was not spoken an obstacle to national unity, what are we to make of the fact that in the United States today the percentage of the population who do not speak English at home has risen from 11% to 20% during the past twenty years? Or that the tendency to maintain the language of their home has risen among American immigrants (Siegel, Martin & Bruno, 2000)? In Australia too, the proportion of the immigrant population whose home language is not English has risen from 17% to 22% in the past two decades. I do not dispose of comparable statistics for Europe, but partial studies of the vitality of immigrants' languages (Baker & Eversley, 2000; Extra & Yagmur, 2004) suggest similar trends.

In countries that seemingly had achieved national unity based on cultural unification, reactions to the effects of globalisation also reveal a threat to those nations' cultural coherence: for example, the creation of a Ministry of Immigration and National Identity in France; the requirement in more and more European Union countries (currently all of them except Sweden, Ireland, Cyprus and Spain<sup>35</sup>) of knowledge of the national language as a prerequisite for obtaining residence, citizenship and other rights; or questioning of whether certain cultural (chiefly Muslim) groups should be allowed to become members of the community (Sartori, 2001), all suggest that such ideas are gaining a foothold.

### **1.3. Mass media, contact between cultures and digitalisation**

To analyse what is happening with culture in our times (and no doubt in the near future), it is essential to look at the changes taking place in the field of communications. Granted that the media are not the only repositories and conveyors of culture, and they work in conjunction with other institutions, such as the family, the neighbourhood, the schools and so on. If that were not the case, Basque would surely have disappeared by

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<sup>35</sup> Let us recall that the Spanish Constitution establishes the requirement for all Spanish citizens to know Castilian. Therefore a legal foundation exists for a hypothetical language knowledge requirement for citizenship, and so for the granting of basic civil and political rights.

now because it did not have any access to the media at all until well into the twentieth century. However, the influence of all these components has not been the same in every period, and at the present time the influence of the media in cultural regeneration is at an all-time high, with the others losing out in the bargain. This is so for several reasons, but in brief, mediated communication has stolen much territory away from face-to-face interactions. In industrial societies people's lifestyles have become atomized, social networks weakened, and social interaction restricted. Families, which are one of the chief channels for the transmission of culture, have become smaller, urban life is largely anonymous, mobility of populations has increased, living and working conditions have become more and more changeable (at the expense of established structures or customs and traditions), and so on. We live in a society where people spend on average over three hours a day in front of the television or the Internet, and the manner in which we spend this time is becoming more and more solitary. Even in school Internet contents have a growing presence, whether directly or mediated by the school's educators. All this, together with changes in technology, make the media so much more important for the way culture is evolving.

On the one hand, the media and the culture industry generally are becoming transnational. This is an encroachment on the national cultural space, as I have already observed. But in recent decades we are witnessing another phenomenon: migrants who are moving from one country to another as a result of accelerating flows of migration have more and more easy access to the media of their countries of origin, hence to their culture. We can take satellite TV as an example. Over 90% of people in the US who speak a language other than English at home have the opportunity to watch programmes in their own language. The situation in Australia is similar: we lack precise statistics for Europe, but the presence of programmes broadcast to the continent in 'non-European languages' suggests the same trend<sup>36</sup>. Plenty of studies have shown that immigrants and diaspora groups make more than anecdotic use of their original languages in the media, and these are closely linked with the regeneration of their language, culture, religion and identity (see Amezaga, 2007 for references).

So as Tomlinson predicted, transnationalisation is no longer limited to the imposition of the cultural patterns of rich countries on the rest; to a large extent, migrants, when they move from poor countries to rich ones, carry their cultural patterns with them; and when they have access to the media, the baggage of culture and identity that they brought with them is re-affirmed. Several concepts have recently been proposed to account for these phenomena: to explain the implications of flows not only of capital and merchandise but of populations *beneath globalisation* (Appadurai, 1996); *transnationalism* to define the regeneration of national identity beyond its borders (University of Oxford, 2011); or *transculturalism* to explain the experience of those who are immersed simultaneously in different cultures and communities: the home country, the host society and international migrant networks (Robins, *op. cit.*).

Such growing fluxes have put the world's different cultures into contact with each other to a hitherto unprecedented degree. The exchange which formerly took place within the borders of a culture's territory has now spread to all places and levels. And it is no longer limited to an exchange between two or three cultures, but takes place simultaneously between many cultures. In culture systems' age-old dialectic between centrifugal forces (dispersal of elements and incorporation of elements from other cultures) and centripetal tendencies (amalgamating elements and agglutinating them around a single main hub or core), the balance is tipping in the first direction. Consequently, it is getting harder to conceive of cultures as closed, discrete systems. If

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<sup>36</sup> We have already gone as far as to question the concept of 'non-European language'. For example, does this include Arabic, of which there are millions of speakers in Europe (and which historically has been present on the continent for many centuries)?

it was hard before to answer questions like 'What is Basque culture?', the answers are becoming ever more complicated now.

Technology, especially digitalisation, is intensifying the effect. For instance, the statistics given in the above example of satellite television are even higher when we look at media on the Web, including internet TV, radio, press, forums and all the rest. Culture is going digital, and for a hint of how enormous the resulting changes will be, suffice it to consider how other great changes throughout the history in the media for transmitting information have affected culture: just look at the consequences of the introduction of writing; then of printing; and finally of television. It is still uncertain what digitalisation will lead to, but it is definitely going to be a massive change.

## 2. FUTURE CHALLENGES

### 2.1. Can we influence culture?

Let us briefly recapitulate the panorama painted above. First, faced with the upsurge of the private culture industry and the global markets, states' ability to control the culture of their national spaces is waning. Next, contact between cultures is intensifying, stimulated by the worldwide flow of people and information. Thirdly, the world's societies are becoming more and more like each other in culture, while simultaneously they each become internally more heterogeneous. And lastly, as a consequence of all the above, it is getting harder for any state to apply an effective cultural policy. This overall picture raises some basic questions: is culture important for the construction of a Basque state? If so, what should be the purpose of acting to influence culture? And how can it be done?

To answer the first question, in the Basque Country the theses bandied about outside the cultural community that supports Basque nation-building are well-known: they have been specially developed to refute Basque nationalism and bolster up the Spanish nation, in defence of a project to impede the development by Basques of a culture of their own and instead create a homogeneous Spain just consisting of 'regions'. These biased interpretations of Habermas' 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas, 1989) have little or nothing to do with reality at all: what the original proponents of that concept were denying is not the option of a cultural community but the idea of basing a nation on an ethnic nucleus *alone* (which is perfectly logical, coming as it did from a society still recovering from the excesses of Nazism). History shows that purely political ideologies deriving from a constitution are *not* enough to consolidate a nation. As Castells points out (Castells, 1997), the most powerful state there has ever been, the USSR, failed to build a Soviet nation around the sole idea of a political ideology and the transformation of society, hence as soon as the state weakened the Soviet Union split up into numerous nations based on cultural communities. The same happened in the former state of Yugoslavia, and we are even watching it happen now in Belgium, a state with a far longer historical tradition. So we conclude that some sort of cultural community is necessary for the building of a state. The debate opened in 1789 about how to build a state without cultural unity is still ongoing.

In some countries, multiculturalism has been the response to this debate, where by multiculturalism we mean a policy of building a national community while still respecting cultural diversity. The United States and Canada immediately come to mind. In the case of the US, we should bear in mind that a culture was developed in the twentieth century to lend cohesion to a society with multiple origins, the so-called culture of the masses which, by combining elements derived from the many cultures of immigrants, ranging from the hamburger to rock music, gave the people a cultural identity which became an important component of the nation (together with other components, including a historical narrative — the drive to colonise the lands of Native Americans, the War of Independence, the



American Dream, and so on and so forth). In the case of Canada, the very concept of the Canadian nation is questioned by the Québécois independence movement. The vicissitudes of Canadian cultural policy also prove that multiculturalism is not incompatible with the imposition of a cultural lowest common denominator: in the end the most important factor is language (Kymlicka, 2003).

Culture helps to create a space for the building of a community. However, culture is not the *only* way to give identity, although it is admittedly fundamental for communication. Take language: language is a component of culture, and we communicate through language. Unless we share that cultural element, we shall hardly be able to communicate. But the same is true of other components of culture: the more elements we have in common, the better our ability to communicate. This is applicable both to cultural content (language, values, customs etc.) and to cultural institutions (media, the culture industry etc.). And of course communication is essential for a democratic state, i.e. for the creation of a public domain where citizens are able to participate, build a civil society, and so on.

On another level, culture is a system that we develop to confront reality with. If we want to develop as a country we need our culture. It is important to realise that the phenomena discussed above — cultural oppression, cultural imperialism and globalisation — do not cancel each other out: each is superimposed on the other. So for example the era of external cultural imperialism did not, in Euskal Herria, lead to the disappearance of the pre-existing cultural oppression by Spain and France, which was maintained as always, but now Basque culture had to address a new challenge: the Anglo-Saxon invasion, so to speak. And now the same is happening again with globalisation. The new trends introduced by globalisation, such as the implantation of immigrant cultures in rich countries or the appearance of new agents of communication, have not wiped out the power of the previous dominant cultural agents.<sup>37</sup> So like different layers placed one on top of another, a projected Basque state has to confront the culture issue on multiple levels. If it doesn't, the whole society that needs to support the project, and the individuals who make up that society, will end up in the grips of other cultural powers.

## **2.2. The purpose of intervention**

From what we have seen so far, it is difficult to imagine a nation that is culturally uniform. Not only is it difficult, but I would go so far as to say that it is not even desirable because it necessarily entails cultural oppression. In the course of history, peoples have largely been differentiated by their cultures, and the nation-states intensified those differences with the intention of thereby achieving homogeneous communities. But nowadays the dividing lines have become more blurred.

However, as I have said, a hypothetical Basque state would be in need of some lowest common denominators if it wished to surround itself with a political community. The language could be one, given its characteristics: it links us with our past, is accessible, is the most important communication system, and so on. That is precisely the approach of European states: knowledge of the language is a requirement for access to certain basic rights. It would be ironical indeed if anyone were to accuse a Basque state of excessive ethnicism or essentialism on account of its imposition of its own language!

But there are undoubtedly many things to be discussed here: apart from the language, what other cultural minima must a Basque political community have to secure its survival? A collective memory? Values? Customs? Because a cultural policy will have to establish such objectives.

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<sup>37</sup> Today half a dozen companies control the entire planet's communications market and these companies are all concentrated in a very small number of places: the US (Time-Warner, Disney, Viacom, News Corporation), Japan (Sony) and Germany (Bertelsmann) (Thussu, 2006).

Another issue that will be much debated in the near future is multiculturalism, in the sense of a policy to address cultural diversity resulting from immigration. Other policies that have been tried out by rich, developed countries, ranging from segregation to cultural assimilation, seem to have failed: regarding the first of these, Angela Merkel's admission to *The Guardian* (*The Guardian*, 2010), recognising the failure of a decades-long policy of exclusion of Turks and Kurds from German nation-building, are telling: 'We kidded ourselves for a while that they wouldn't stay, that one day they'd go home. That isn't what happened.' France, on the other hand, the country that has tried hardest to assimilate immigrants culturally, has seen its policy thrown into disarray by events such as the position taken by the National Front, or the unrest involving third-generation Maghrebi immigrants in the autumn of 2005. Thus the only viable policy for addressing this issue today would seem to be multiculturalism. It is also probably the most difficult objective to define and implement.

Another objective of any cultural policy is to achieve recognition of the value of its culture. A culture is not just of value to draw a national community together, but is also an essential means of personal development and a group's basic way of dealing with the world. Just because this chapter has hardly referred to this matter it is not implied that it is not in need of a thorough analysis. On the contrary, it should be considered indirectly implied in the comments found in every section. In order to address issues of gender discrimination, the environment, social justice and so on, the culture must come into the equation at every turn. Therefore, a cultural policy must define very clearly in its objectives what kind of society we wish to have, and its policy developed accordingly. On some subjects, such as patriarchy for example, that will entail intervention on the deepest roots of the culture.

### **2.3. Tools for a culture policy**

Once the objective of influencing culture is decided upon, the appropriate tools must be chosen.

As I have tried to show throughout this chapter, states today have less ability than in the past to implement an effective cultural policy, just as it is harder for them to influence the economy. Formerly they employed two strategies for this: direct participation (through the organisms under their control) and regulation (in order to control the activity of private enterprises and other kinds of initiatives). Now, however, the first of these has fallen under the laws of the market, and the second has been greatly restricted by globalisation (transnational cultural output is hard for a state to control), technology (it is technically impossible to limit the movement of information to the national arena) or neoliberal ideology. So a cultural policy is difficult to implement these days.

But a state cannot afford to ignore culture altogether if it hopes to ensure its survival, particularly if it wants to be a means of achieving a freer society. Culture is too important to be left entirely up to market forces or in the hands of other states. So despite the difficulties, new ways to influence culture must be sought.

Throughout history three main actors have made an impact on the evolution of culture: people and society; power and the state (including the Church); and the market. In each period of history one of these three has played a leading role, yet that has not eliminated the effects of the other two, and at the present time there are important forces at work in cultural production at all three levels. Hence a cultural policy must take into account all three to achieve its objectives.

First, then, people and society: Euskal Herria has a long tradition and tight social networks in the cultural area, and it should be one of the state's chief goals to strengthen and develop these. Recovering what is recoverable from the public debate of a few decades ago about *popular culture* while adapting it to the way things work nowadays, a top objective should be to promote initiatives and trends of grassroots origin, whether they are linked mainly to old

traditions or new ways, including uses of new technology. Let us remember that a factor that made the twentieth-century culture industry so powerful was the concentration of media and their unidirectional character (with one sender and many receivers); this is what was known as 'mass communication'. These days, some specialists (Castells, 2009) speak of *mass self-communication*, to emphasise that receivers are acquiring an increasingly important role while new communication agents are springing up who are modest in size but many in number (the Web 2.0 phenomenon). Even if we avoid the temptation to be dazzled by this new setting and bear in mind that it is still early days to be drawing any solid conclusions, a cultural policy would definitely want to keep a close eye on this trend because it could turn out to provide a useful way to mobilise the population.

Culture, then, is going digital, as cultural content is finding itself more and more in a digitalised medium (with all the advantages this implies for its transport and distribution). Therefore, this is a space that should be watched closely, and where popular trends may play a particularly important role.

As regards what the state can do directly, one of its greatest powers is the ability to regulate: for despite what neoliberals may think, it is necessary to set up a framework where all actors must play a part. Rules about the language, content, monopolies and the like cannot be left outside of the state's competence. As we have seen, there are several cases in Europe worthy of study in order to make more progress in this area.

But the state's role cannot be limited to regulating, among other reasons because there are also limits to what can be regulated in the world we now live in. As I have shown, the state's competence in this respect is rather limited. So other forms of intervention must be developed, one of which will be promotion of Basque cultural activity, whether coming from the grassroots or from business concerns. Digitalisation brings with it the cheapening of distribution channels for many cultural products, making products highly accessible (in the case of audiovisuals, music and literature, for example); so the focus should be on production in order to supply the market with products compatible with the general objectives of a cultural policy.

One of the state's main concerns, where it is able to act directly, is to establish stable places for Basque culture which can serve as sources of information, knowledge and references. In other words, places to gather, cultivate and give access to the tradition of Basque cultural products, i.e. museums, libraries, archives and the like, and give to the Basque people's historical cultural assets the place of honour they deserve. Usually too little value is attached to Basque culture as the repository of a language that has survived for thousands of years. This viewpoint ought to provide a legitimate counterweight to imported cultural models, particularly those originating from the transnational culture industry or the French and Spanish states.

Lastly, arguments were given above in defence of regulating market activity to whatever degree is possible, and that includes the cultural domain. Besides, the culture industry today is one of the biggest areas of the world's economy and there is no reason for not jumping on the bandwagon: so the economical value of culture is also a point to consider, and this can be seen as economic development. Therefore, investment in culture can be seen in an economic light also. But in this we should not lose our way: the main function of culture is not to make money, but to help build a freer society and a freer country. A Basque state will need to get the balance right here.

In order to build a free country made up of free people, we need our own culture, a culture that will stand side-by-side with the rest of the world's cultures, and one which will make us a people. For that, a cultural policy must be developed which will make a stand against the current trends towards uniformity or negation. But a cultural policy needs to have

its own state structure behind it so as not to remain subject to other states or markets. From that perspective, the attempt to build a freer people will need the support of a state. At the same time, that state which Euskal Herria needs in order to advance on other fronts as well will need its own culture, in order to draw the nation to it and articulate a political community. Basque culture needs a state; and the Basque state needs a culture.

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### 3. Basque cultural forms: strengths and weaknesses in a hypothetical Basque state.

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Basque culture, like all cultures, adopts forms which can be classified into two broad types: those based on verbal communication, such as bertsolaritza, songwriting, drama, literature, television, radio, internet, cinema, the press, books, periodicals or storytelling; and those which use non-verbal media, such as dance, fine arts, architecture, town planning, fashion, design, music etc. This chapter examines five cultural forms based on verbal communication — bertsolaritza, songwriting, drama, books and cinema — in an attempt to identify the strong and weak points of Basque culture, asking what strategies need to be pursued in order to make them more effective.

## INTRODUCTION

Different identities and cultures live in Euskal Herria. By the side of people who live traditionally in Basque are found the Spanish culture and the French, not to mention the identities and customs of recent immigrants (see Baxok et al., 2006). Given the coexistence in such a small area of so many views of the world in close contact or intermingling, there are disagreements about the definition of Basque culture. In some people's opinion Basque culture is that which is entirely in the Basque language (the linguistic criterion); while others think Basque culture is whatever is produced by people who were born or live in the Basque Country, regardless of the language they may speak (the administrative-residential criterion).

This is no sterile debate. The choice of either of these definitions will have clear consequences when it comes to outlining and implementing cultural policies. To the extent that one leans towards the linguistic criterion, efforts will need to be focused mainly on Basque-language cultural expressions to achieve a strong Basque culture. According to a report suggesting guidelines for the development of strategies in Basque culture-building by Sorguneak Ikertegia (2011:14), "Basque is this country's native language which has been turned into a minority language, and it is the job of the Basque language community and the public authorities to support the language's development. That means that this variable must be taken as a basic variable in an understanding of cultural policy too."

According to those who think Euskal Herria's cultural construction should be based on the administrative and residential status of those who live in the Basque Country, on the other hand, people who live in Euskal Herria make Basque culture, independently of whether they use Basque, Spanish, French or any other language in their cultural production. It follows that all cultural expressions arising on Basque territory, whatever the language used, deserve the same amount of support.

For example, the cultural plan "Kulturen Aldeko Herritartasun Kontratua" [The Citizenship for Cultures Contract] published by the Basque Government in 2010 (*Kulturen Aldeko Herritartasun Kontratua*, 2010) talks about giving equal treatment to Basque-language and Spanish-language culture: "This contract for cultures takes full account of the multilingual nature of Basque society, and is equally applicable to activities in either Basque or Spanish."

The choice to define and design strategies for Basque culture in different ways may lead not only to different readings, analyses and forecasts for Basque culture but even result in opposing conclusions in some instances. The position one takes about Basque culture will vary depending on the definition adopted. On account of the minority situation of the Basque language, conclusions founded on the linguistic criterion will generally be more pessimistic than those based on the administrative-residential standpoint.

Whatever the arguments for or against, I consider Basque culture to be culture in Basque, and this article is written from a viewpoint that corresponds to that criterion.

### 1. BASQUE CULTURAL FORMS

Basque culture, like all cultures, finds expression in forms of two different kinds. One kind is based on verbal communication: here we may include *bertsolaritza* (improvised verse composition), songs, theatre, literature, television, radio, the Internet, filmmaking, the press, books, periodicals, story-telling and so on. Then there are the cultural forms which employ non-verbal communication, such as dance, the fine arts, architecture, town planning, fashion, design, music etc.

In this chapter I will look at five forms of culture based on verbal communication, namely *bertsolaritza*, song, theatre, books and filmmaking, omitting from consideration the non-verbal forms although these are an important part of Basque culture too. My reason is that it is chiefly the forms based on verbal communication that are critical to the future of the Basque language, hence also to that of Basque culture and the Basque speaker community. I suspect that by examining *bertsolaritza*, song, theatre, books and filmmaking we can obtain a fair idea of the strong and weak points in Basque culture of relevance to a hypothetical Basque state and the strategies that will be required to make the culture stronger.

### 1.1. *Bertsolaritza*

*Bertsolaritza*, a Basque tradition of improvised rhyming verse composition, is an ancient cultural form (Amuriza, 1996; Urkizu, 1996: 13). However, in the last thirty years it has shown a capacity for innovation and modernisation, becoming one of the most successful Basque cultural manifestations (Siadeco, 1995; Aierdi et al., 2007). It has undergone the influence of many factors, of which I would like to single out four for comment: *bertso* schools, the Bertsozale Association, championship contests and *bertso* sessions.

The first *bertso* school of the modern period was founded in Almen Ikastola (in Aretxabaleta) in 1974. It was followed by the creation of many other such schools during the eighties.

These schools have performed excellent work for over thirty years. They have endowed the so-called 'National Sport of the Word' with a fresh image and reared a new brand of *bertsolari*. Proof of this is the fact that of the 47 competitors in the 1997 national *bertsolari* competition, no fewer than 26 were people with university educations.

These schools have done more than produce *bertsolariak*; they have generated greater admiration for these artists among the population, and made people more knowledgeable about the principles of their craft. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that never before have there been so many *bertso* enthusiasts who can actually tell the difference between a good verse and a mediocre one!

Bertsozale Elkartea (the verse enthusiasts' association, <http://www.bertsozale.com>) has also played a big part in the revival of interest in *bertsolaritza*. Founded in 1987 as the Bertsolari Association, it has been called the Bertsozale Elkartea since 1995. The Association has stimulated the popularity of *bertsolaritza* with great success, and has a current membership of 2,400 verse singers, masters of ceremonies and enthusiasts. The Association's efforts have resulted in better organised competitions and sessions, and support for events and resources, including television programmes (the first of which was broadcast in 1988), teaching materials (also since 1988), the *Bertsozale* bulletin (founded in 1989), the Xenpelar Documentation Centre (founded 1991) and the Lanku company (as of 1999).

In my opinion a third factor that has boosted *bertsolaritza* is that of the *bertsolari* competitions. In the view of some, the competitive character of these competitions goes against the traditional spirit of *bertsolaritza*, and are intimidating for many good *bertsolariak* who turn their back on the art as a result.

While this is perhaps true, in my opinion competitions do strengthen *bertsolaritza*. They have attracted interest from the media, made it popular and generated many enthusiasts. The finals of the 2009 grand championship drew a crowd of 14,500 spectators; two weeks before the event, tickets to it were already sold out, while the television and radio broadcasts of the contest were followed by many more thousands.



Verse festivals are a fourth way in which stronger interest is encouraged.

The *bertso* schools, Bertsozale Elkarteá's activities and the competitions all contributed to creating the right kind of atmosphere for the development of *bertsolaritza* in the nineteen-eighties, and from the end of the decade on, verse sessions became more and more widespread. By the early nineties *bertsolaritza* was going through a veritable boom. In 1992 alone 715 verse sessions were held across Euskal Herria, which were enjoyed by between 250,000 and 300,000 spectators, according to data from Siadeco (1995: 23).

Since then, the big numbers of the nineties for verse sessions and audiences have fallen off somewhat. However, verse festivals continue to draw large numbers. As a matter of fact, these are good times for *bertsolaritza*. According to Aierdi, Aldaz Alkorta, Retortillo & Zubiri (2007: 11), of every ten Basque speakers four are *bertso* fans. About a third of these are highly enthusiastic, representing between ten and fifteen percent of all Basque speakers.<sup>38</sup>

In 1995, the research company Siadeco described *bertsolaritza* as a high velocity train whose destination was uncertain (Siadeco, 1995: 27). Today the train may have slowed down a little, but its destination, and how and by what means it will get there, may be said to be somewhat better known. It has proved to be more than a balloon that blows up fast and then fizzles away. Perseverant work has paid off, it is a form of cultural expression with strong roots, and if things don't go very wrong it is likely to be around for a long time to come.

In the nineties some feared that the apparent boom in *bertsolaritza* might have negative effects for the future of Basque culture because it was taking over spaces and functions that did not belong to it, thereby robbing space from other parts of culture, such as music and theatre (Atxaga, 1992). The popularity of using *bertsolaritza* in teaching, the media and other cultural events, it was claimed, was having the effect of stifling the development of other cultural forms (Siadeco, 1995: 31). Today it is apparent that its success is the result of work well done, and what is happening in Basque culture is due not so much to the excessive presence of *bertsolaritza* as to the weaknesses of other cultural domains.

## 1.2. Basque song

Basques have been singing for a long time! At church or in the tavern, on special events and festivals (such as Saint Agatha's Eve, Christmas Eve or the Carnivals), or just after a meal, Basques love to have a sing; and Basque towns, associations, parishes and neighbourhoods have all had their choirs and singing groups from time immemorial. Euskal Herria has produced many fine voices including Jose Maria Iparragirre and Luis Mariano. Yet in the nineteen-fifties the world of Basque song was an arid wasteland (see Agote, www.badok.info). The Franco dictatorship had stamped out Basque culture and the Basque language, the remnant lacked the strength to create anything, and in any case all attempts at cultural activity were obstructed by the authorities. Singing was not an exception. Nevertheless, throughout the sixties there began to be a gradual crescendo of political and social demands, which included calls in defence of the Basque language and Basque culture. The time had come for a great rebirth of Basque culture; indeed, during that decade many of the foundations of contemporary Basque culture were laid down. In 1957 Txillardegui published his landmark novel *Leturiaren egunkari ezkutua* ('Leturia's secret diary'); in 1958, Euskaltzaindia (aka the Academy of the Basque Language) organised the

<sup>38</sup> The Basque Government's Basque Culture Observatory, in its 2007-2008 survey *Kultura Ohiturak, Praktikak, Kontsumoa*, gives different statistics, according to which 17.3% of the bilingual population of Euskal Herria have gone to listen to *bertsolariak* in recent years. According to this study the number of passionate enthusiasts is lower: 8.1% of Basque bilinguals listen to *bertsolariak* habitually, i.e. have attended *bertsolari* events in the last three months. According to the survey, 24.4% of those who go to *bertsolari* events have gone three or four times in the past three months. Even according to the data one in four *bertso* fans are very enthusiastic about it.

Bizkaia Bertsolari Contest; 1960 saw the founding of the Jarrai drama group which ushered in modern Basque theatre; in 1964, Gabriel Aresti published his seminal book of poetry, *Harri eta Herri* ('Stone and Country'); in 1965 the Gerediaga Association organised the first annual Basque Book and Record Fair; and in 1968 Nestor Nestor Basterretxea and Fernando Larrukert made their landmark documentary film, *Ama Lur* 'Mother Land'.

It was also in this period of political, social and cultural unrest, yet enormous creativity, in 1961, that the Basque New Song movement took off.

The movement encompassed numerous artists and groups, but one of the most significant turns of events was the creation of a vanguard movement of committed Basque singers, writers and other figures in culture which called itself *Ez Dok Amairu* (literally 'There's No Thirteen'). The members of this group took traditional song as their initial point of departure to explore new avenues. Although the group itself was disbanded in 1972, far from being the end this was only the beginning of the story! Singers and songwriters who had formed part of *Ez Dok Amairu*, such as Mikel Laboa, Lourdes Iriondo, Xabier Lete and Benito Lertxundi, went on to have spectacular careers as solo artists and laid down much of the groundwork upon which modern Basque music rests today.

*Ez Dok Amairu* and the whole Basque New Song movement succeeded in breathing new life into Basque music and Basque culture in general. As well as embarking on new directions of social, political and cultural protest, the singers and their songs created innovative ways of singing, a new aesthetic style. But this wave came to an end in the early eighties, when newer rock or folk groups such as *Errobi*, *Itoiz*, *Izukaitz*, *Haizea* and *Oskorri* came to the fore, eclipsing somewhat the singer-songwriters, and shortly afterwards the appearance of Basque Radical Rock resulted in a complete break (Agote, [www.badok.info](http://www.badok.info)).

The so-called Basque Radical Rock movement made an explosive entry into the Basque music scene in the early eighties and lasted roughly until 1990. Although most of the groups in the movement sang in Spanish, there were some Basque-speaking groups too and the result was a renovation of Basque song. Moreover, although the movement petered out in the early nineties, the new rhythms, music, aesthetics and words of the period exerted a strong influence on many subsequent Basque groups.

In the late eighties, as Basque Radical Rock was slacking off, a number of Basque *trikiti*-style accordionists using the midi format started *trikiti*-rock groups which achieved much success right through until 2000, recording many disks and playing live in town squares (Markez, [www.badok.info](http://www.badok.info)).

The *trikiti*-rock groups brought a breath of fresh air to Basque songwriting, and although these groups started to disappear around 2000, their influence continues to this day. Many successful contemporary Basque groups, such as *Gose* or *Esne Beltza*, have drunk from the waters that sprang from the movements of that period. And thanks to the *trikiti*-rock groups the Basque accordion has known unprecedented popularity since the nineties. *Trikiti* schools sprang up all over Euskal Herria, and the Basque *Trikitixa* Association came into its own.<sup>39</sup>

Basque music has come a long way in a short time. Between the wilderness of the sixties and the present day is a road marked by thousands of albums, songs, lyrics, sounds and groups. Basque musicians and singers have experimented and innovated over and over again, and produced good results. The Basque Song Association ([www.kantuzale.net](http://www.kantuzale.net)), founded in 1990, has supported numerous song contests and festivals to motivate new singers.

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<sup>39</sup> Founded in 1990, this association was initially run by volunteers but acquired its first professional administrators in 2001. Today there are over three hundred members (<http://www.trikitixa.net>).

However, Basque song now seems to have reached a crisis. No new movement has appeared to reflect the current period, and as a result there is an over-representation of Basque New Song, Radical Basque Rock and trikiti-rock groups in the contemporary Basque music scene. There is a shortage of groups and musicians producing new styles, rhythms, music and lyrics: the most successful groups of late are Berri Txarrak and Ken Zazpi, but a decade has passed since they started playing.

Consequently, non-Basque groups have filled the space that was occupied by Basque singers in the eighties and nineties. Because of the dearth of new groups and musicians, we are turning back to the past: given the lack of new groups, the songs and artists from the period between the late sixties and the early eighties are undergoing a revival.<sup>40</sup>

Why has this happened? What is the reason for the crisis in contemporary Basque music? No doubt there are many reasons, but I would pick out four in particular:

The first reason is the meagre support and aid for Basque musicians from official institutions (Mendibil, 2008).

A second reason may be that Basques, and Basque youth in particular, are drawn more to foreign groups, backed by powerful publicity campaigns, than to local artists. We seem to be stuck in a vicious circle here: because new Basque music is not being created, young people listen mostly to foreign groups; and that in turn makes it harder to produce new Basque musicians and groups.

In the third place, in giant concerts held in the cities of Euskal Herria and small-town festivals and cultural programmes, Basque singers are mostly absent (Mendibil, 2008).

Lastly, consumer habits and ways of listening to music have changed over the past decade owing to the Internet and new technological resources. Like musicians all over the world, Basque singers sell less now than they did a few years ago.

This and the other reasons mentioned have directly affected the production and sales of Basque music albums. Elkar (a brand of Oihuka and Elkarren) is the record company for modern Basque music that produces the most records per year. In 2000 it carried 43 labels, last year only 21 (Erostarbe, 10-3-2011).

The crisis in Basque music necessitates measures to protect it, but what measures? Gontzal Mendibil (Mendibil, 2008) proposes a quota for Basque music in radio, television and cultural programming, as is currently done in some other countries. No doubt this would be of some help, but in my opinion it is more important, in order to stimulate creativity and the emergence of new musicians and groups, to promote education, grants, concerts and awareness of singers.

### 1.3. Theatre

Euskal Herria has a long theatrical tradition too. The masquerades, pastorals and *astolasterrak* go back a long, long way (Urkizu, 1996: 75). In recent times, the dynamic Basque theatre that emerged in southern Euskal Herria in the period of the Second Republic, from 1931 until the Spanish Civil War, became a valuable tool for propaganda and winning people over to the Basque nationalist cause (Urkizu, 1996: 75).

After the war, the Franco regime outlawed Basque language and culture, and Basque theatre practically disappeared. Nonetheless, the special social and political climate of the

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<sup>40</sup> Some symptoms of this wave of nostalgia are the CD and concerts of *Gu Gira*, a recent documentary about Ez Dok Amairu, or the comeback of the rock group Zarama.

sixties and early seventies led to a profusion of groups that introduced the trends of modern drama: Jarrai (started in 1960), Goaz (1974), Geroa, etc. Since then, many other Basque-language theatre groups have arisen. Amateur and professional drama groups seem to have become even more numerous in the last fifteen years. Here the influence is seen of drama schools which opened their doors during the past thirty years.

There is more Basque-language theatre now than a few years ago. With the support of public subsidies, the recent trend has been to offer the same play in both languages, and this policy has increased the opportunities to watch theatre in Basque.

The creation and maintenance since the beginning of the nineties of a theatre network in the Basque Autonomous Community<sup>41</sup> has also had a positive impact on the vitality of the Basque drama scene.

Compared to the nineteen-sixties the situation of Basque theatre is greatly improved today. Furthermore, there are reasons for thinking it will be in an even better situation in the future, thanks to three projects to strengthen Basque theatre that have arisen in recent years: Eszenika, EHAZE and Mintzola.

The Mintzola Foundation (<http://www.mintzola.com>) was created in 2008 to support research into oral traditions. Its work promises to be a spur to creativity in bertsolaritza, theatre, song and story-telling.

Another move that will probably offer a lot of support to Basque theatre was the founding in 2010 of the Basque Theatregoers' Association (EHAZE, <http://www.antzerkizale.com>). The association's purpose is to bring together the dispersed supporters of Basque theatre, both professional and amateur, and to bring the Basque language into it so that a genuine Basque theatre is built.

And last but not least, a new higher school of dramatic arts, dance and theatre techniques will open its doors in 2012-2013 in Bilbao, called Eszenika, offering five degrees in drama and dance; this will certainly give Basque drama a further boost.

Many members of the staff and administration of the various music schools, who have been working in the field for years now, are somewhat uneasy about Eszenika. They fear that their schools will be plunged into a crisis, not only because they will have fewer students but because the Basque government will reduce the subsidies they receive.

This looks like it is going to be a challenge for Basque theatre: to strike the right balance between the established schools and Eszenika. The schools need to be protected so that they can perform their work of preparing pupils well for admission to Eszenika. Thus the schools will need to bridge that gap, while still performing their present function for the amateur theatre community.

Language is another issue affecting Basque theatre, and Eszenika in particular. Eszenika should not forget the fact that the number of students learning drama in Basque has risen in recent years, and bear in mind that the place allotted to Basque may have an important effect on the future of Basque theatre.

Another important matter is the position taken by Basque theatre towards its bilingual audiences. Some people think the policy of supporting through subsidies the offering of works in both languages has been good for Basque theatre, while others claim it has hurt it. According to the Sorguneak research centre (Sorguneak Ikertegia, 2011), in those fields of

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<sup>41</sup> Euskadiko Antzoki Sarea is made up of 51 theatre groups from every part of the BAC; its objective is to provide the dramatic arts with the necessary infrastructure.

culture where both languages are used Spanish has gained dominance both in the area of creativity and in that of distribution.

#### 1.4. Books

The book industry is another area of Basque culture which has made enormous strides since the sixties. Between 1965 when the Gerediaga Association inaugurated the annual Durango Book and Record Fair and today, the numbers of Basque books, publishers and writers have mushroomed, and the book business has taken shape and been consolidated.<sup>42</sup>

In the nineties, between 1,100 and 1,200 new book titles were published each year (Torrealdai, 1997: 90), while in the next decade the yearly average rose to around 1,900 (Torrealdai, 2011: 23).

The number of reprinted titles was a bit lower in 2009 than 2008, but if we look at the last ten years as a whole there is a general upwards trend here too, which probably means that the rate of reprints has stabilised: in 2009 reprints made up 29% of book production.

One reason why Basque book production has risen is that until recently the Basque Government subsidised Basque-language books by buying a certain number of copies of each new edition.

A second reason may be that there are more people able to read and write Basque today than ever before.<sup>43</sup>

A third reason is that there are more Basque writers today than there have ever been in the past.<sup>44</sup> Some of the best, such as Bernardo Atxaga, Ramon Saizarbitoria, Andu Lertxundi and Joseba Sarrionaindia, have even been translated into other languages.

Fourthly, since 2004 the Bergara Writers' School (<http://ieskola.asmoz.org/>) has been training new writers, with a favourable impact on Basque literature, books and culture.

Lastly, Basque writers, publishers and associations to popularise reading have organised themselves over the past few years, and it is fair to say that this has had a hugely favourable effect on the Basque book industry.<sup>45</sup>

However, the Basque book sector also faces a number of problems. The first of these is that it doesn't have many readers. Although the number of readers of Basque is admittedly growing<sup>46</sup>, that number is still too low, in my opinion, for us to be able to claim that we are building up a broad Basque reading public. Thus if we want to sustain the Basque book trade, we are going to have to do something to spur more interest in reading Basque, especially among children.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nineteen publishing houses took part in the first edition of the Durango Fair, which only included a handful of new items. In the 2010 edition, the 45th, 138 organisations exhibited their wares, occupying 284 sales points, and 505 new items were launched ([www.berri.info](http://www.berri.info)).

<sup>43</sup> According to official Basque government statistics, 27% of the population of the BAC can read Basque well, and another 13% fairly well (Eusko Jaurlaritza, Prospekzio Soziologikoen Kabinetea, 2011: 21).

<sup>44</sup> The Basque Writers' Association has over 350 members ([www.idazleak.org](http://www.idazleak.org)).

<sup>45</sup> EIE (the Basque Writers' Association, [www.idazleak.org](http://www.idazleak.org)) was started in 1982, followed two years later by the creation of the EEE (the Basque Publishers' Association, <http://www.editoreak.com/>). Then in 1990 the Galtzagorri Association was founded (<http://www.galtzagorri.org>) to promote an interest in reading among young people and support and publicise children's and young adult literature.

<sup>46</sup> According to a 2003 report titled *Hábitos de lectura y compra de libros en Euskadi*, 20.4% of the population of the BAC usually read in Spanish but sometimes read Basque; only 0.6% read in Basque only. When the study was repeated in 2005, it was found that 27.3% usually read in Spanish and sometimes in Basque, and 3.1% mostly in Basque ([www.euskadi.net](http://www.euskadi.net)).

<sup>47</sup> Therefore I think we should value highly initiatives such as the *Berria* newspaper's Saturday supplement *Mantangorri* and the *Bularretik mintzora* project.

Another problem is the small scale of Basque publishers, which impacts unfavourably on production (see Torrealдай, 2011: 25).

Yet another issue involves book sales. Books are indeed published but are often very poorly publicised and therefore sell poorly. Most Basque authors are not subjected to good marketing, or else they must take charge of promoting their own works. There is a need for a general plan for Basque book promotions and sales.

### 1.5. Basque filmmaking

Filmmaking is nothing new to the Basques (Gutierrez, 1994: 279-295). But the scholars and experts all agree that its turning point was Nestor Basterretxea and Fernando Larrukert's *Ama Lur* (1968), a Basque-language documentary which introduced a new idiom of cinematic narration, and marked a new style.

Since that time a good many films have been made in Euskal Herria, but nearly all in Spanish or French. Legislation about Basque filmmaking exists, but the Basque-language film industry is weak in production and even in dubbing capacity. Although audiovisual production and translation companies popped up in connection with Basque television, the latter failed to promote the film industry as it might well have done. The Basque Government's ministry of culture created a "Cinema in Basque" programme, yet in the towns and cities of Euskal Herria opportunities to watch films in Basque are frankly few and far between; the "Cinema in Basque" programme sees to it that at least one film plays in Basque in each of the chief cities every month.<sup>48</sup>

Some believe the Basque film industry to be weak because it has no market. Basque speakers are too few in number to create much demand and make the business profitable. What little is produced or dubbed must be done using public subsidies, which is not fruitful in the long run.

There are also some who say there is a lack of talent in Basque cinema, which is therefore not competitively viable (Erostarbe, [www.berria.info](http://www.berria.info)).

Admittedly it would not be easy to create a "Basquewood", yet I do think there are some arguments in favour of starting some kind or other of a film industry here: a modest tradition does exist; there are skilled directors, actors and technicians. Almost all the universities in both the northern and southern Basque Country offer degrees related to the audiovisual field. ZIBIES, the Film and Video School in Andoain, has been providing the audiovisual sector with trained professionals since 1986; and in recent years there have been a number of courses and seminars on scriptwriting too.

In my opinion, there *is* a future for Basque filmmaking provided new ways and paradigms are evolved. There is little chance for Basques to compete on the commercial market, but independent films might offer their professionals better opportunities.

Basque filmmaking faces many challenges; of that there can be no doubt. Nonetheless, I believe that if things are done in the right way, a market can be found. When the Basque film *Kutsidazu bidea*, *Ixabel* was included in the 2006 edition of the San Sebastian International Film Festival, it was seen by about 29,000 people in the first few weeks it ran; and the documentary *Nömadak TX* was another great success.

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<sup>48</sup> In a 2007 study of language use in cinemas, the Counsel of Basque Social Organisations (Kontseilua) found that of 29 cinemas in different parts of Euskal Herria the place for Basque was minimal. Most of the items shown in Basque were children's films, and of the ten most popular films there no Basque was heard in any of them.

## **2. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF BASQUE CULTURE FOR A HYPOTHETICAL BASQUE STATE**

For the state, culture is an important issue. It gives society an identity, and keeps it together; it also gives it a justification for its own existence expressed through reasons, principles or symbols. In communities that have lost their own culture and assimilated somebody else's, there are typically problems, and members of such a society develop all sorts of imbalances.

But how can a society as diverse and complex as the Basque Country acquire cultural cohesion? In my opinion, for a hypothetical Basque state it is imperative to make sure that an opportunity exists to develop all the senses of identity, cultural expressions and national identifications that coexist in Euskal Herria, but by the same token, its Basqueness must be maintained. That means in particular that Basque cultural forms need to be supported to put an end to the assumption that Basque culture always belongs to a 'minority' or subordinate category. The linguistic and cultural communities that speak Spanish, French or some other language will have to acknowledge that their languages and cultures receive support and gain their strength somewhere in the world, whereas the only chance the Basque language has for regeneration is in Euskal Herria. Basque is the language of this country and a hypothetical Basque state must support its development.

### **2.1. Strengths and weaknesses**

Basque culture has been successfully modernised, regenerated or adapted to contemporary life starting out from tradition. In the period between the dark age of the postwar years and the present day, many thousands of records, books, verses, associations, theatre groups, institutions, songs, bands, films etc. have been produced. The makers of Basque culture have come up with many excellent proposals, initiatives and undertakings, thereby revitalising Basque culture and paving the way into the twenty-first century. While recognising the significant remaining problems, particularly in the domain of the cinema, creation of cultural forms of expression has continued unabated. This fifty-year process has demonstrated that the Basques may be few in number but they have a great capacity for cultural innovation and creativity.

It is also a strong point of Basque culture that important organising efforts by the creators and facilitators of the different verbal culture forms took place in the eighties and nineties, through institutions and associations for the defence of their interests and the interests of Basque culture: the list must include the Bertsozale Elkartea (verse enthusiasts' association), Euskal Kantazaleen Elkartea (association of enthusiasts of Basque song), Euskal Herriko Trikitixa Elkartea (Basque accordion association), Euskal Idazleen Elkartea (Basque writers' association), Euskal Editoreen Elkartea (Basque publishers' association), Euskal Herriko Antzerkizale Elkartea (drama enthusiasts' association of the Basque Country), Mintzola (oral traditions association), etc.

In spite of their numerous weaknesses and frequent funding crises, these associations have withstood the test of time, influenced public opinion and official institutions, and as a consequence more support, recognition and money for Basque culture has been rallied than ever before, even though still not as much as it needs. By virtue of the hard work and vigorous efforts of these and other such organisations, Basque culture has made itself seen and heard and improved its prestige, the proportion of the population who support Basque culture has risen, and more people have taken an interest in the products of and happenings in Basque culture. Practically all the cultural organisations that have emerged did so in spite of the political and administrative obstacles put in their way, and looking towards the future that is a positive point because it has given the Basque cultural movement so much more cohesion and strength. Let us note that all the associations we

have talked about here have a professional management, they all have their own websites and such, and make use of new technology. Whatever their weaknesses, I think the Basque cultural organisations are well placed to confront the challenges of tomorrow.

As a result of this institutionalisation of the cultural forms based on verbal communication and the funds of official subsidies, infrastructures have improved and concerts, verse sessions, drama festivals or cultural programmes can be organised with as much facility as any other kind of cultural event or initiative. Similarly, a minimal educational infrastructure has been created. Over the past thirty years, verse schools, drama schools, writers' schools and faculties or schools offering audiovisual courses have sprung up around Euskal Herria, together with the production of textbooks and teaching aids.

But although these things warrant some amount of optimism, it seems to me that Basque language and culture present a lot of weak points which will need to be addressed by a newly created Basque state.

The first weak point is the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of Euskal Herria do not speak Basque. Furthermore, from the perspective of use, the situation of Basque does not look good. According to studies, Basque speakers who use Basque in their everyday activities are in the minority (Juaristi, 2007). Consequently, Basque is not present in most cultural events in the Euskal Herria. Although Basque culture has made much progress, the cultural panorama in the Basque Country is dominated by languages other than Basque.

What is more, most Basque speakers do not attend the events, read the books, or go to see the plays or films that are the products of Basque culture. According to Maialen Lujanbio, there are only nine thousand people who are habitual consumers of Basque culture ([www.berria.info](http://www.berria.info)).

In conclusion, the market for the products of Basque culture is too small, and is not profitable for private enterprise. Inevitably books, CDs, plays or films that are created or produced in Basque need public subsidies to be viable. Indeed, many people say that Basque culture is built on a social falsehood. Many more books, CDs, films and plays are produced than are actually sold or consumed, and people buy more than they read, watch or listen to.

Another weakness of Basque culture is the fact that the business concerns involved in it are too small and feeble to lead the way in Basque culture policy and ensure it will have a future. Yes, the infrastructures and associations have been created; but many of them are too short of resources to truly serve Basque culture. Nearly all are over-dependent on public subsidies. And normally the subsidies given out by public bodies are either unstable or inadequate.

## **2.2. Strategies for the future**

Clearly Basque culture will need to be reinforced in the process of building a hypothetical Basque state. That will require a general plan of culture covering all seven Basque provinces. Here are some of the things such a project would need to take into consideration.

Our experience has been that those cultural forms which have managed to start out from tradition and create something new have met with success. For Basque culture to flourish, Basques need to create something new, but something *theirs* (cf. Barandiaran, 1999: 239).



Basque cultural figures need to receive more support. Basque singers, *bertsolariak*, dramatists, filmmakers and writers need to see that the public institutions value their work and show it by providing grants, promoting their products, taking their view and needs into account, and backing cultural events.

The schools set up by the recently created cultural associations, public institutions and figures in Basque culture need to grow stronger, and new schools opened. A general plan should take into account the need for education to strengthen Basque culture and promote creativity.

At all levels and in all areas of culture, further associations need to be started, and the existing ones made stronger. Cultures benefitting from compact social networks have a better education system, infrastructure and organisational capacity. They also make it easier to make themselves heard by the authorities and obtain funding, support and assistance for culture.

It is essential to attract people who speak Basque into Basque culture. This can be achieved by creating high-quality products and by drawing people to those products through effective publicity campaigns. This will result in a broadening of the market for cultural products and a strengthening of the vulnerable Basque culture industry.

Basque culture needs a network made up of theatres all over Euskal Herria. It needs an infrastructure that will support a permanent programme of Basque-language products in the seven provinces. Indeed, what is the point of having drama schools, *bertso* schools, writers' schools and all the rest, if there is nowhere for the artists to present their works?

And finally, it needs to be clearly understood that in order to strengthen Basque culture in all domains, the Basque language needs to have much more access to these than it does at present.

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- Galtzagorri Elkarte (Galtzagorri association): <http://www.galtzagorri.org/>

## 4. Basque education rights, and a look at some European school systems.

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It is impossible to achieve the normalization of Basque schools when they are subjected to five sets of regulations on the use of the Basque language in different parts of Euskal Herria. Instead of an education system that differentiates between various language models, what is needed is a school system that recognises the right of all Basque children to be educated in Basque and provides the necessary means to achieve this. As in Finland, Quebec or Belgium, so in Euskal Herria too it should be a given that all future university graduates must know the national language. The road to independence is incomplete without education in Basque. This chapter explores ways to improve this situation by looking at how things are done in Finland, in particular, and in the Netherlands and Estonia.

## INTRODUCTION

Each of the two states responsible at present for Euskal Herria's education system has endeavoured to implant its own culture at the expense of a hypothetical Basque school curriculum; this has had, and still has, consequences for education policy and legislation which make themselves felt in the biased language-support structure and also when attempting to ensure balanced development of a teaching community. To begin with, the French national school system has never consented to give assistance to school systems outside its own system. And in the kingdom of Spain the only recognised language of education is Castilian. The whole educational structure has been organised in accordance with the two states, ignoring the educational needs of Euskal Herria historically and imposing the states' education policy.

State-building in France and Spain led to the choice of a single language and culture among those found in each state's territory, and its development. The languages and cultures that were not chosen were thus displaced or even forbidden. Consequently Breton, Alsatian and Occitan were not able to have a state-supported school system, and neither could Catalan, Galician and Basque. These languages were excluded from the official public education system. This is by no means the only example of the use of a school system to force an alien culture on people. In the United Kingdom, for example, Gaelic, Scots Gaelic and other Celtic languages were excluded from the public school system; in Belgium, Flemish (Dutch) did not receive proper treatment in public education until Belgium became a federal kingdom (in 1932, in Flanders, there were 108 public schools and 101 private schools, all of which only taught French) (Rodríguez, 2011).

The French national education system has never consented to give any assistance to the schools outside its own system. The words of Barère, spoken in 1794, still echo today: *"Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas breton, l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand, la contre-révolution parle italien, et le fanatisme parle basque. Cassons ces instruments de dommage et d'erreur."* [Federalism and superstition speak Breton; emigration and hatred of the republic speak German; the counter-revolution speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us break these harmful instruments of error.] In the whole history of educational legislation (e.g. Mirabeau 1740-1791, Talleyrand 1758-1838, Condorcet 1743-1793) and especially Napoleon Bonaparte's educational reform (1799-1815), there is never a good word spoken for anything outside of French culture, just negation and exclusion. A decree of the 17th of November, 1794, established that primary schooling anywhere in France must be in French. In a recommendation emitted by the Bayonne city council in April, 1796, and in another from the prefect of Maule in 1802, it is laid down that only French is to be used in schools. The same thing was repeated by the prefect of Donibane Garazi in 1819, and thus Basque was persecuted throughout the northern Basque Country: "J'ai exigé des instituteurs l'abolition entière de l'usage de la langue basque en classe" (Maule school inspector, 1833); "Le Règlement interdit de parler basque" (Donapaleu committee, 1846). In such ways as this Basque was systematically pushed out by French: "Nos écoles au Pays Basque ont particulièrement pour objet de substituer la langue française au basque" (prefect of Bas-Pyrénées, 1846). Not only has France's national education system never accepted any culture or language but its own in the public school system, it even refused all assistance to initiatives outside the public system up until the publication of the legal agreement of the 11th of December, 1959, when the national system began to hand out subsidies to so-called 'private schools' on a one-by-one basis (Rodríguez, 1996).

In the kingdom of Spain, too, Castilian was the only acceptable language of instruction: *"Mando que la enseñanza de las primeras letras se haga en lengua castellana generalmente y dondequiera que no se practique, cuidando de su cumplimiento las audiencias y justicias respectivas para su exacta observancia y diligencia en extender el idioma general de la nación"* (Article VIII of an order given by King Carlos III on the 23rd of

June, 1768). [I command that primary education shall be carried out in the Castilian language generally and wherever it is not practised, compliance with which being supervised by the respective courts in order that this be exactly observed, taking care to spread the general language of the nation.] When the Moyano Law was passed, it became absolutely clear that Castilian was to be the only language admitted in education: "The grammar and spelling of the Academia Española shall be the obligatory and exclusive text for these subjects in public education" (Article 85 of the *Ley Moyano* or Law of Public Instruction, 7th of September, 1857).

Some school textbooks in Basque were subsequently published, e.g. in the south, *Diálogos basco-castellanos para las escuelas de primeras letras*, Iturriaga 1842; *Diccionario manual vascongado y castellano*, Astigarraga 1825; *Método práctico para enseñar el castellano en las escuelas vascongadas*, Eguren 1867; and in the north, *Uskara eta franzes gramatika uskalerrietako haurrentzat egiña*, Archu 1852. But all these books were bilingual; their purpose was to wean pupils away from Basque, and they were used to teach Spanish or French to monolingual Basque-speaking children (who were the majority) (Rodríguez, 1999).

What is more, the entire organisation of education was as determined by the two states: in Spain's case, this was in accordance with a decree of 1874. The local authorities lost their competence to hire schoolteachers. A statewide teaching profession was established, training and qualifications for which were under state control and have remained so to this day; since 1902 in Spain.

Article 26 of the 1988 Declaration of Human Rights states that all people have a right to receive an education without any kind of discrimination. Throughout history, Basques have been denied the possibility of taking responsibility for the fulfilment of this right.

## **1. ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION**

Article 20 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, the purpose of which is purportedly to ensure educational freedom, nonetheless places strict limits on the possibility of developing Basque education. Article 27, on the other hand, addresses educational rights. According to the latter, the state of Spain reserves the option to guarantee that all Spaniards's educational rights are respected and speak on powers covering local languages and education.

Accordingly, although there are two different politically autonomous regions in southern Euskal Herria which both have powers in education, competence to organise the education system as a whole belongs to the state. In consequence, Euskal Herria is denied the ability to organise its own education.

The French Republic, as we have seen, does not share its powers over education with anyone. The only national education and language are French education and the French language. In Spain, on the other hand, control of education is determined in Articles 20, 27 and 149 of the Spanish Constitution together with a set of more specific laws. All this is limited by Article 148 of the Constitution. So let us see what limits this places on education in the southern Basque Country.

Although Article 20 of the 1978 constitution claims to ensure freedom of education, it establishes narrow limits. The most basic point is that it forbids any criticism of the Spanish Constitution in non-university education (Antonio Embid Irujo, 1984); that rules out making any claims on behalf of Euskal Herria.

Article 27, on the other hand, addresses educational rights. According to this article, the Spanish state reserves the right to guarantee that all Spaniards's educational rights are respected and to speak on powers concerning local languages and education: "*Velar por el cumplimiento de las condiciones básicas que garanticen la igualdad de todos los españoles en el ejercicio de sus derechos y deberes en materia de educación, así como de sus derechos lingüísticos, y en particular el derecho de recibir enseñanza en la lengua oficial del estado*" (Royal Decree 480 1981 of the 6th of March on the High Inspectorate of State for non-university education in the Basque Country and Catalonia). [Ensure compliance with the basic conditions guaranteeing the equality of all Spaniards in the exercise of their rights and duties in education, as well as their language rights, particularly the right to receive education in the official state language.]

Briefly put, Spain retains as its own the following powers in education:

1. Organisation of the education system: the power to create structures (levels, cycles and the relationships between them), conditions and criteria for teachers, schooling periods, school organisation, average for pupils in formal education... 2. Minimum teaching contents: curriculum objectives and content, criteria for evaluation, general requirements for textbooks... 3. Design of qualifications or equivalences: syllabuses, minimum credits, core subjects, fields of study... 4. Teaching structure: staff positions, resources, etc. 5. Superior inspectorate: ways to check whether the above conditions are being met, investigate whether there is discrimination against Spanish pupils, check whether requirements for obtaining qualifications are being complied with.

Apart from this, there are clauses relevant to education in the Gernika Statute (Organic Law 3-1979) and the Law of Improvement of the Regime of Navarre (Organic Law 13-1982); these lay out the basic powers of the governments of the Basque Autonomous Community and the Community of Navarre respectively. In the Gernika Statute there are three such articles: Article 6 (on the official status of the language), Article 10 (on culture in general) and Article 16, which is directly concerned with education. The pertinent parts of the Navarrese law are articles 9, 44 and 47. The determinations on transfers of powers in education contemplated in Article 148 of the Spanish Constitution are fleshed out in these legislative documents.

However, those transferred powers are subject to conditions laid down in the constitution's Article 149, which lists the powers which the state retains for itself, which include control of the civil service (teachers in the Spanish public school system have the status of civil servants), the ability to issue qualifications and responsibility for school inspectors.

Civil servants in the public school system, however, have been covered by special state powers since the Bravo Murillo Law of 1852, although the general law in effect in the southern Basque Country governing this dates from 1918 and was amended in 1964 and confirmed again in the 1978 constitution. In northern Euskal Herria, the 1946 Law of Public Service amended after the Second World War remains in force to this day.

Accordingly, although there are two different autonomous communities in southern Euskal Herria which both have powers over education, the power to organise the education system in its entirety remains in the hands of the state. Hence the following are not controlled by the Basque Country:

1. Organisation of the education system, including the power to:
  - 1.1. Create structures (levels, cycles and the relationships between them).
  - 1.2. Determine conditions and criteria for teachers.
  - 1.3. Decide schooling periods.
  - 1.4. Organise schools.
  - 1.5. Average for pupils in formal education.

2. Minimum teaching contents:
  - 2.1. Choose Basque as the only language of education.
  - 2.2. Set curriculum objectives and content.
  - 2.3. Determine the criteria for evaluation.
  - 2.4. To legislate general requirements for textbooks.
3. Design of qualifications and their equivalences.
  - 3.1. Determine syllabuses autonomously.
  - 3.2. Decide core subjects and fields of study.
4. Freedom to organise the teaching structure.
  - 4.1. Employ school staff.
  - 4.2. Provide for teaching resources.
5. A superior inspectorate to check whether the above conditions are being met, investigate whether there is discrimination against Basque-speaking pupils, check whether requirements for obtaining qualifications are being complied with.

This list contains competences attributed to itself by any state in order to ensure that educational rights are provided for, yet despite the transfer of powers over education in the southern Basque Country, these powers are denied to the Basque Country; these rights remain to be conquered.

## **2. LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE: A PROPOSAL**

The normalisation of Basque education is impossible as long as Basque is subject to five different sets of administrative regulations in the territory of Euskal Herria.

With regard to language use in instruction, we demand a school system which will ensure respect for the right of all children in the country to be educated in Basque.

To achieve this, there is a need for a Basque system, that is, the right to give out qualifications and the ability to organise teachers.

This leads to the need for a reform of schools and faculties for the training of teachers. The University should ensure, as in Finland, Quebec or Belgium, that all newly qualified teachers know the country's national language. A Basque education is necessary for the road to independence. To outline that road we shall note in particular the case of the education system adopted by Finland, while also looking at what has been done in the Netherlands and Estonia. These countries, starting from an initially bilingual sociolinguistic situation, have successfully extended the proper fulfilment of the right to education, and all have now attained top marks in education quality, with good reasons to foresee excellent perspectives for the future.

### **2.1. Education in Finland**

We may conclude from a comparison of PISA statistics between countries that at age fifteen Finns have the highest scores anywhere in reading, mathematics and science. From that point of view, the Finnish school system may be considered a model for imitation. Of course many other aspects should also be evaluated to determine the bill of health of education, not just these skills. In any case, there is much to be learnt from the Finnish example, which has often been noticed by Basques. Many teachers, principals and educators from the Federation of Teaching Cooperatives of Euskadi and HETEL have been there on visits. They have seen the Finnish schools in action, studied them, evaluated them and analysed what can be learnt from them in the Basque Country (*Hik Hasi*, monograph, **23**, 2008).

### *Key features*

In many countries in the world, giving children a school education or making them literate is an objective that has not been achieved in its totality. In other countries, all children can read and write and go to school; this basic right has been fulfilled. For these countries the big challenge is to improve the education system: its resources and infrastructure, pedagogical issues, the situation of the staff and the pupils, participation and so on. Many measurements are made to quantify the state of health of education systems. One of these is PISA, the Programme for International Student Assessment. This study is performed once every three years. The first took place in 2000, and forty-three countries were took part. The second was carried out in 2003 in forty-one countries and the third in 2006 in fifty-eight countries. PISA evaluates reading, mathematics and science skills. The results to date show that the Finnish school system has achieved the highest ranking. Fifteen-year-old Finnish pupils achieved better scores in 2003 than in 2000 in the mathematics and science sections. In reading Finland remains in first place. Finnish pupils have achieved the best results in "the key competences related to knowledge and skills for life". What is more, when compared to other countries, the system in Finland shows the greatest degree of equity between students. There are fewer differences between girls and boys, or between schools among the regions, in Finland than in other countries. So what is the Finnish system's secret for achieving such good results? How is it organised, and how do they train their teachers? Here are some of the facts to explain this success: Finland is a country of 5,200,000 inhabitants. There is a high level of social cohesion and homogeneity among the population. It has the highest literacy rate, at 100%. It may be said that there was no literacy at the start of the twentieth century. Education has been fundamental to this country which lived under Swedish and Russian domination for centuries. Education has been the road to the maintenance of a national identity and the achievement of independence.

### *Educators' university training*

Teachers are able to update their training through in-service courses as regulated by local councils. Courses are provided with assistance from the central government. But less importance is attached to this than to teachers' initial training.

Anyone who wants to be a teacher must go to university. This is considered important. Places at university fall short of demand, and only 10-15% of the applicants get in.

Three basic qualifications are offered by the university:

- Infant Education diploma: courses last between two and three years.
- Primary Teachers: studies last between four and five year.
- Teachers of specific subjects or areas: teachers are responsible for one or two subjects at compulsory secondary school level. The university recognises two possible routes:
  1. Subject-based: mathematics, chemistry, geography etc.
  2. Teaching-focused: special training focusing on preparation for the teaching profession, provided by the Faculty of Education.

There are also many Masters degrees for specialisation, including special education, arts, music and domestic economics.

All specialisations share 35 credits in core education-related subjects, and it is here that the general principles of educators' training are defined:

- Training based on research projects: there is ongoing cooperation between those who perform research and those who put it into practice from the beginning of the programme.



- Practicum: a practical component is done at all levels and in all stages. For every module that they complete, trainees perform some kind of activity, such as an observation or an internship, to see the things that they have learnt in theory put into practice. The content and objectives of the practice component are related to the programme syllabus. Trainees begin as observers and by the end they perform a real, professional assistanceship, acting as teachers and taking part in all school activities, including teachers' meetings. They can keep track of a class of pupils year by year and follow the group's evolution.
- Theory and practice are closely linked. Based on their theoretical knowledge, they learn to seek solutions to the challenges that arise each day at work. They do not limit themselves to a single methodology, but develop several methods so that they can choose the most suitable one later when they are working.

### *Council involvement*

Town councils have an important function. The council plans, builds and maintains schools. The council hires school staff (always supervising the principal's work). It also hires the principal. The council is in the last resort responsible for the good working of the school and is its owner. It establishes the principles governing the school's autonomy.

The school and its staff (especially the principal's office), for their part, are answerable to the council for the functioning of the school. Teachers have a great deal of autonomy in the school's functioning and to implement and adapt the national curriculum. Although under the supervision of the principal and the council, they are not limited by them.

The different sectors of the school take part in the school's committees and also in their town's education commission.

### *Decentralisation*

One of the features of the Finnish education system is decentralisation. They have carried out a twenty-year decentralisation system for the purpose of improving their system of education. Currently the functions carried out by the authorities are as follows:

#### Ministry of education:

- Educational legislation and strategy.
- Development of education plans.
- Budgets for education.
- General objectives.
- Achievement targets.
- European and international agreements.

National Education Commission (a commission made up of education experts which assists the ministry of education):

- Design of curricula for each level.
- Evaluation of skills and study programmes.
- Education management systems.
- Services for the ministry, schools, educators etc.

#### Local administration, education commissions and inter-city federations:

- Local and regional strategy.
- Local school system.
- Local curriculum.
- Hiring of teachers, principals and other services.
- Organisation of enrolment.
- What schools delegate to other entities varies from place to place.

### *Entrance exams*

However, it was the impression of the Basque visitors that choices become much more limited beyond the level of compulsory education. Thirty to thirty-five percent of applicants who wish to study for the equivalent of A-levels are turned down. According to the experts, "each secondary school has its own entrance exams; some take into consideration the applicant's marks for the last three years, others set different exams depending on the area of specialisation, still others require a minimum mark." "[In the Basque Country] there are more opportunities for higher studies. Whatever one thinks about whether or not it is a good idea to have so many people with degrees, the fact is that the opportunities are greater here" (see *Hik Hasi*, monograph, **23**, 2008).

A-level schools are specialised. Vaskivuori School in Vantaa, for example, specialises in music and dance. The core curriculum which is obligatory for all pupils covers 63-68% of the timetable, and the rest is optative. There is a very flexible schedule and individual pupils program their own modules. The A-level programme usually lasts three years but some do it in two years, some in four.

### *Occupational colleges*

Individuals who have no official qualification but demonstrate that they have mastered a trade can be recognised by the occupational schools and in some cases receive a qualification. This scheme, which started ten years ago in Finland, was recently adopted in the Basque Country.

54% of the population are in in-job training, and this increases the importance of the occupational schools.

### *Prestige and training of teachers*

Given the tough selection process for admission to teacher training, and on account of their university education, teachers are held in high esteem. Only 15% of student applicants to the Faculty of Education are admitted. "We asked at the university about the reason for the high prestige attaching to the teacher's profession, and were told that the reason is historical," wrote HUHEZI instructor Marian Bilbatua (*ibid.*). "Finland used to belong to Sweden and Russia, and one of the few areas where they could maintain their own culture was in education. This explains the stress placed by Finns on education."

The study programme is centred around thinking. "The ultimate goal of training is to provide teachers with tools for thinking about and improving the situation and what one does about it," explains Marian. "When students start their degree they think they know everything, because they have been in school for years. Their main work is to review and analyse that experience, evaluating positively the things that were useful. They must each reflect on their own experience in order to bring about improvements."

So the keys to good training are thinking and linking theory to practice.

## **2.2. Education in Estonia**

We must go a long way back to find the beginnings of the Estonian education system. The history of formal education in Estonia starts when the first schools were founded in the thirteenth century. At the time, Estonia was controlled by German and Danish feudal lords, and the education system is linked to the vicissitudes of history as Estonia changed hands between Finland, Sweden, Germany and Russia. Getting an education has always been very important to Estonians. The first Estonian university, the University of Tartu, was established in 1632, and by the end of the eighteenth century two out of three Estonians

could read, while according to the 1881 census 90% of Estonians were then literate. Now, after independence, the education system has two main goals: one is for all children to go to school; the other is to win over to Estonian all children with another native language. The education system in Estonia was already closely linked to the language before independence: during the period of Soviet occupation (1940-1990) the schools fought hard to be able to teach in Estonian, because Russia had established that Russian was to be the language of education. Today the Russian community are an important minority in Estonia: 26% of the population are Russians, and in the capital, Tallinn, they make up half the population. Since it became independent Estonian is the only official language of this Baltic republic, and it is also the language of school. In compulsory education, from ages seven to fifteen, at least 60% of classes must be taught in Estonian so that pupils will be able to do their A-levels and university degree in Estonian. Russian is the second language at school. Interested in the language recovery work being done by the schools, *Hik Hasi* visited Tallinn to take a closer look at the Estonians' education system.

#### *Organisation of the education system*

Compulsory education in Estonia is from seven to fifteen years old, but the Estonian education system encompasses infants', primary, secondary, occupational, higher and adult education. Most of the schools were started by the state or local governments, although a few in the capital have been founded with private capital. The ministry of education establishes the general guidelines, which are to create suitable conditions to favour the development of identity, family and the Estonian nation; to favour the development of Estonia's culture, politics, economy and ethnic minorities; to teach good citizenship; and lastly, to provide the conditions for the creation of a national, lifelong tradition of learning. Each town council has an education commission and authority to develop its own education policy. From the age of eighteen months on, children may start school, so infants' schools are for children aged from a year and a half to seven years old. Today children go to nursery school until they are three years old. But until recently, children stayed at home with their mother, who retained her job and was paid a full salary. As a result of the financial crisis the terms of maternity pay and leave have worsened, and although a mother's job is kept for her for three years, the state ministry has cut their pay back almost by half. The effects of the crisis are revealed in the figures: in 2003 there were 15,698 children attending school in Tallinn; last year there were 21,512. Thus there has been a rise of almost 40% in seven years. In the case of infants' schools, the city council pays the school a quantity for each child enrolled, regardless of whether the school is public or private. At present, for example, infants' schools in Tallinn receive 1,279 euros from the council for each pupil. Parents pay 22 euros a month for each pupil. They are charged €1.60 for each day the pupil eats at school, covering three hot meals. Staff and maintenance costs are paid out of the money provided by the council and parents' monthly fees.

From eighteen months to three years old, classes of fourteen children are looked after by two educators, although two to four more children may be brought into a class according to needs. Average attendance is 50%, so about half of the fourteen are in class on a normal day. From age three to seven, there are 24 children and two educators per classroom. Although each infants' school may differ, Estonian infants' schools generally, and particularly the ones visited by *Hik Hasi*, share some common characteristics. From the youngest age, the education system is based on respect for each child's personality, with learning based on play and democratic coexistence among the children. In addition to teachers the schools also provide psychomotor, music and speech pathology specialists, and it is understood that the children's education is the responsibility of all of these educators, together with their families of course. Consequently, infants' schools nurture a close relationship between the school and the family. To facilitate this, the schools remain open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., although formal school hours are from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. There are some schools (in Tallinn there are three) offering a night-care service for parents who because of their work or other necessities cannot have their children at home overnight.

There are schools for children with special needs all over the state, but if parents prefer they can put their children into regular schools. In Tallinn for example, there are two special-needs schools, but there are thirteen other schools in the city which allow such children to be enrolled provided a ratio is maintained of one special-needs child for every three with normal needs. Each school is free to choose its own pedagogical approach, but certain currents are popular in Estonian schools: these include the Maria Montessori and Loris Malaguzzi (Regio Emilia) methods and the approach of an Estonian called Johannes Käis (1900). This is based on two basic principles: developing a close connection with nature, and using play as a basis for learning. Play has a special place in infants' school, being considered a fundamental resource for the education of small children. Children play outside for an hour and half every day, and in spring and autumn when daylight hours are longer there are two such hour-and-a-half outside play sessions per day. Schools are not just the place where content is transmitted: children get three meals a day at school, at 9 o'clock, noon and 3:30, and after lunch all children up to age seven have a nap for an hour and a half or two hours. The school is closely involved with health care, and in addition to playing, sleeping and eating, is also concerned with their physical exercise: during the extremely cold Estonian winter saunas are used with all pupils to make them sweat: children from 18 months to three years old spend ten minutes in a 60°C sauna, while children between three and seven spend twenty minutes at 65°C. There is a first-aid kit in every classroom and a nurse for each school. In addition to playtime, the current lesson plan is based on four components: play, creativity, nature and culture. The schools are important tools for transmitting Estonian culture, both by revitalising and teaching the language and transmitting the culture itself, especially oral culture. To be a teacher for children from eighteen months to fifteen years, teachers in training must follow a degree-level course of studies which takes four years at a university. Over the four years they will have to spend eleven weeks altogether as student teachers. Candidates for the job of school principal must have a Masters degree as well as a four-year first degree. Then the principal of the school undergoes an evaluation every two years and in the event of failing twice in a row must step down and be replaced by someone else. All teachers must take part in in-job training courses every five years. Furthermore, all teachers undergo an annual internal evaluation following criteria established in 2006 by the ministry of education, and an external evaluation every three years. In addition to evaluation of the director and teachers or staff, there is joint cooperation, with yearly evaluations of the administration's work (especially the budgets) and pedagogical projects. Apart from evaluations, teachers and schools participate in numerous competitions, particularly contests organised by the local council to motivate, make known and stimulate school employees. When the hiring process for jobs begins with the choice of principal. Teachers who have, in addition to their degree in Pedagogy, completed a Masters degree that enables them to be a principal receive an announcement of the availability of a principal's position. The principal, once chosen, is given a permanent contract, then the principal chooses the necessary teachers and other members of staff with the assistance of a representative of the council, an education specialist, a teachers' representative and a parents' representative. These representatives all belong to the council's education commission. Once the teachers are selected they are also given permanent contracts. The same system is followed in public and private schools. In the case of new schools, the local council may make the initial appointments. The basic salary for teachers is 750 euros. This is a hundred euros lower than the average Estonian salary. However, after working for five years they receive a pay rise. The minimum monthly wage in Estonia is 300 euros. Parents who decide not to send their children to an infants' school at age 18 months are advised to get a carer with a childcarer qualification. These childcarers have done a 160-hour course including subjects on education, psychology, social work, health and safety.

#### *Compulsory education*

Since 2006 there are 601 schools in Estonia, including 85 infants' schools, 264 primary schools, 236 secondary schools and sixteen adults' secondary schools. This is not counting

special education schools and occupational colleges. Although most children start school at 18 months, compulsory education starts at age seven in Estonia, and remains compulsory until fifteen. Basic education consists of nine grades and is paid for by the state and the town council. After the nine grades of basic education, pupils go on to compulsory secondary education; a further three years are required for A-level classes. 72% of pupils who finish their compulsory education opt to continue on to do A-levels, and of these 70% get into university, while 28% opt to go to occupational colleges. The remaining 28% of those who have completed their compulsory education do vocational training, for which there are 48 schools around the country. Occupational education in particular has become stronger in the last eight years, with the creation of networks incorporating both public and private schools which coordinate their course offerings. There are another eighty trade schools in Tallinn targeting pupils who had difficulty completing compulsory education. Although the ministry of education establishes guidelines and minimum requirements for compulsory education as it does for infants, each school decides what subjects outside the obligatory curriculum it wishes to teach, as well as which parts of the obligatory curriculum it wishes to reinforce. Pupils must pass three state exams in order to obtain a diploma of compulsory secondary education (*Hik Hasi* journal, 160, 2011.)

### 2.3. Education in the Netherlands

#### *Country introduction*

The area of the Netherlands is 41,500 km<sup>2</sup>, twice that of Euskal Herria. But its population of sixteen million is five times the size. That makes it a country with a high population density. The state's capital is Amsterdam, but the government and ministries are located in The Hague.

There are over three million immigrants in the Netherlands, making up almost 20% of the population. Half of them are first-generation immigrants, the rest were born in the country and are second-generation immigrants.

Most immigrants are Turkish (22%), Surinamese (21%), Moroccan (20%), Dutch Antilleans (8%), and many others come from the country's former colonies. In speaking of pupils' place of birth the Dutch make a distinction between *autochtonen* (of Dutch origin) and *allochtonen* (of non-Dutch origin).

#### *Characteristics of the education system*

The ministry of education establishes the general lines of the system, providing legislation, funding and monitoring. In other words, the government decides what must be achieved and is responsible for the resources needed to achieve it.

##### 1. Legislation:

- Establishes the conditions which must be met to set up schools.
- Sets requirements for becoming a teacher.
- Specifies a basic curriculum, with 58 general objectives, that pupils must complete by the age of twelve.

##### 2. Funding:

In principle, compulsory education (ages four to eighteen) is free for everyone.

- Sets the amount of money to be assigned per pupil. At the present time, rounding off, the amounts are €4000 for each pupil in infants' or primary school, €6000 for those in secondary school, and triple these amounts for each pupil with special needs.
- All teachers receive equal treatment. The same basic pay applies to all, with bonuses for seniority and for teachers aged over 45.
- Each school spends roughly between 80% and 85% of the money received per pupil from the administration on teachers' salaries, and the rest on its other expenses.

### 3. Monitoring:

- All pupils take a state exam at age twelve called CITO. An external, independent examining body carries this out. Results are made public and placed on the Internet where everyone has access to them.
- For the evaluation of each pupil, in addition to CITO, the school's own evaluation of each of its pupils is taken into account and the average of the two taken.
- These results make a big difference to pupils' future study options: there are three channels in secondary education.
- Schools with poor results are placed under direct supervision from inspectors, and they are provided with special resources. But if there is no improvement more drastic measures are taken, which may go as far as the school's closure.
- The main task of the inspectorate is to monitor schools and promote improvement.
- PISA and other international evaluations are also used. CITO and PISA results have been found to correlate quite closely.

#### *The schools*

The most striking features of the system are its autonomy and flexibility. Each school hires whatever staff it needs, determines its own education project, specifies its curriculum, develops its own methodology and procures its resources. Legislation establishes the 'what', while the school is in charge of the 'how' and its implementation. Each school tries its best to respond as adequately as possible to its needs and priorities and those of the neighbourhood, town and circumstances.

#### *Citizens' rights*

Parents decide which school to send their children to.

At the present time, 33% of schools are public, most of which are run by town councils. Often the council is a shareholder but delegates the school's management to a foundation. 66% are 'special' schools or social enterprises; the initiative to open these schools may originate from groups of citizens, congregations or foundations of various kinds. Under 1% are private or special cases.

#### *Three routes for secondary education*

At the end of eight years of primary education, pupils take the CITO exam. The school counsels each pupil on which option to choose for their secondary education. The final decision is taken by the parents:

1. Vocational training (4 years).
2. General secondary (5 years).
3. Pre-university (6 years).

### **3. SUMMING UP**

Although this article is based on my own research, especially "Schools and linguistic normalization: some comparative examples" (Digit-hum/UOC.2002), I would not have been able to do this without taking into account both the work done over the years by the journal *Hik Hasi* and the evaluation data from PISA, obviously. What is PISA? It is an international research programme. Analysing what? Pupils' ability to apply what they have learnt in real life. What is the purpose? What is tested? Reading, the natural sciences and mathematics (2009 language).

Who performs the research? It is organised by OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Here is where it is done:

OECD COUNTRIES	NON-OECD COUNTRIES	AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES	OTHERS
Australia	Albania	Andalucia	Campania
Austria	Argentina	Aragon	Emilia-Romagna
Belgium	Azerbaijan	Asturias	Flanders
Canada	Brazil	Balearic Islands	Liguria
Chile	Bulgaria	Canary Islands	Lombardy
Czech Republic	China (Taipei)	Cantabria	Piedmont
Denmark	Colombia	Castile and Leon	Sardinia
Finland	Croatia	Catalonia	Scotland
France	Dubai	Ceuta and Melilla	Sicily
Germany	Estonia	Euskadi	Trento
Greece	Hong Kong - China	Galicia	Veneto
Hungary	Indonesia	Rioja	etc.
Iceland	Israel	Madrid	
Ireland	Jordan	Murcia	
Italy	Kazakhstan	Navarre	
Japan	Kyrgyzstan		
Korea	Latvia		
Luxembourg	Liechtenstein		
Mexico	Lithuania		
Netherlands	Macau - China		
New Zealand	Montenegro		
Norway	Panama		
Poland	Peru		
Portugal	Qatar		
Slovak Republic	Romania		
Slovenia	Russian Federation		
Spain	Serbia		
Sweden	Shanghai - China		
Switzerland	Singapore		
Turkey	Thailand		
UK	Trinidad and Tobago		
USA	Tunisia		
	Uruguay		

The following results for language knowledge and reading were achieved in the countries covered by PISA:

#### PISA 2009. AVERAGE READING SCORES BY COUNTRY

Country	Average score
Finland	536
Canada	524
Japan	520
Netherlands	508
Belgium	506
Norway	503
Estonia	501
Switzerland	501
Poland	500
USA	500
Sweden	497
Germany	497
Ireland	496
France	496
Denmark	495
Euskadi	494
UK	494
Hungary	494
OECD	493
Portugal	489
Italy	486
Latvia	484
Spain	481
Czech Republic	478
Slovak Republic	477
Luxembourg	472
Lithuania	468
Turkey	464
Chile	449
Bulgaria	429

So in this article we have looked at Finland, which has stayed at the top of the list year after year; Netherlands, which resembles Euskal Herria and is likewise near the top of the

PISA ranking; and another country which is comparable to the Basque Country and has recently achieved independence, Estonia; all of these are European states and education systems which historically have been through period of language contact, and which from a compensatory point of view are model examples of achieving an equilibrium in culturally asymmetrical societies.

An educational structure is needed in the process of forming a Basque state. To help move in that direction, let us look at the Finnish system again and note the following points in particular: people who want to become a teacher must go to university; there are also masters degrees in many specialisations, e.g. special education, art, music and domestic economy; the local councils play a large role. The council plans, builds and maintains schools (a power which was lost in the Spanish state at the beginning of the twentieth century) and hires their staff. One of the characteristics of the Finnish education system is its de-centralisation, and another is the prestige attached to the teaching profession. The cornerstone of their training is thinking and a close link between theory and practice.

In the Netherlands, in addition to passing laws, the state funds and monitors schools. Thus the main task of the inspectors is to monitor the schools and encourage improvement.

In Estonia, after independence, the education system has two main objectives: one is to give all children a school education, the other, to bring children whose mother tongue is not Estonian into the Estonian linguistic fold.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that in these education systems adult education, institutions of higher education, health and education or the role of the teacher and literacy programmes have been incorporated as core elements of the national system.

Thus, with a bilingual situation as the point of departure in all these countries, they have succeeded in extending the right to an education to the entire population adequately, and today obtain some of the highest scores using quality indicators even though not part of the PISA evaluation scheme.

### **3.1. Strengths and weaknesses**

Basque education has a tradition of attaching special importance to the education community. The *ikastolak*, for example, have not only been concerned for the language but have practiced and preached local council participation and civil disobedience in the face of the obligatory imposition of the Spanish and French states' education systems. As we have seen, the Finnish system is based on close links with the town councils and decentralisation (Rodríguez, 1996).

But teacher prestige has been another cornerstone: social attitudes towards Basque teachers in *Euskal Herria* have been positive, but subordination to the legally determined Spanish curriculum limits their training, turning it into a weakness (Rodríguez, 2011).

It is also necessary to build bridges between non-university and university teaching. This is what has been done in the examples cited, and is what was foreseen in the *Lizarra Statute of Autonomy of 1931*, although present legislation blocks this option, creating another weakness (Rodríguez, 1999).

Reading is one component of the curriculum that is a basic criterion used by PISA to evaluate educational success; but insufficient research has been done in the Basque Country to identify the potential Basque reading audience, nor have proposals been developed to design a reading plan. This is another weakness.



Special education, arts, music and domestic education have been cultivated in Euskal Herria, unlike the surrounding states, and that gives us a point in our favour.

Basque teachers have a long tradition of cultivating the link between pedagogical ideas and practice and teachers' in-job training (cf. the journals *Isilik* and *Hik hasi*, the teachers' association, ADARRA, the Basque Summer University and so on), and this theoretical practice performed non-institutionally, which has made of re-training a permanent habitus, is another of the sector's strong points.

But opportunities in the Basque Country to pass laws on education have been extremely limited. That is a weakness. The ability to provide schools with money and monitoring, which is the main function of the inspectorate, is ruled out in Euskal Herria because the states reserve this function to themselves. That is another weakness. So there is very little activity to monitor schools and bring about improvements. Another weakness.

### **3.2. The contributions of a hypothetical state**

In Estonia after independence, the Estonian education system has had two main objectives: to give all children a school education, and to win children whose mother tongue is not Estonian over to Estonian.

In the Basque Country the first of these objectives has been attained but the second has not, and can only be achieved through a new educational legislative arrangement which an independent state would make possible.

To make this clearer and summarise the things that have been explained throughout this article:

To be able to organise the entire organisation of the education system according to the political decisions of the new state, that is: the power to structure the education system by grades, cycles and so on, and the links between them; to decide on terms and criteria for teachers; to set periods of schooling; to manage the organisation of schools with freedom according to needs; to average for pupils in formal education.

Also: to decide minimum teaching contents; to choose Basque as the only language of education; to set curriculum objectives and content; to determine the criteria for evaluation; to legislate general requirements for textbooks.

Consequently, to design necessary qualifications and their equivalences; to determine complete syllabuses autonomously; to decide core subjects and fields of study.

And all that, of course, in order to have freedom to organise the teaching structure; to hire school staff and ensure the provision of educational resources.

To achieve this, it would be possible to create a full inspectorate to check whether the above conditions are being met, investigate whether there is discrimination against Basque-speaking pupils, and check whether requirements for obtaining qualifications are being complied with.

What is described here are the powers of any state to ensure that educational rights are guaranteed, and of course a hypothetical independent state would need to structure the field of education according to its needs and requirements, which is obviously impossible at present.

In any event, there is one area, besides the power of an independent state to pass laws and regulations in any area, that can be given special attention in the field of language and education, and that is the link between local council policy and education.

We have seen that both with regard to the protection that must be given to the national language and the guaranteeing of local school organisation, the top-ranking countries according to PISA, such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia or Switzerland, have opted for a non-centralised school system. To achieve that, at least where the language is concerned, territorial language rights are generally preferred over personal ones (Txillardegui, 1999) and language use in education has been configured according to regional population surveys. In the Basque Country, an educational structure organised according to linguistic registry data has been proposed by Udalbiltza and UEMA, who have now shown how to reorganise councils as described above (Rodríguez, 1993). This offers possibilities for supporting Basque education and culture and developing them as a mainstream national culture, not just as a minority language (Rodríguez, 1993). Thus, rather than the present unending uphill struggle, although there remains much to be done in order to achieve a new organisation of education in the Basque Country, some things have already been done and a hypothetical Basque state has quite a few places to learn from, both inside and outside Euskal Herria.

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## 5. The situation and outlook for the Basque language at the beginning of the twenty-first century: the challenges that lie ahead.

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What is the situation of the Basque language? How has the language fared in recent years, and where do things stand today? What challenges will Basque face in the future? Attempting to answer these questions, this chapter touches on issues such as the language's legal status and language policy in each part of Euskal Herria; language transmission and language work; linguistic competence, language use, attitudes, opinions and representations. The chapter ends with some thoughts about the main challenges Basque will now have to face in order to stake out a satisfactory future for the language, including issues like the symbolic violence to which Basque speakers are still subjected today, the sociolinguistic ignorance that runs rife in this society, and the battle to win over public opinion.

## 1. WHERE BASQUE STANDS TODAY

### 1.1. Legal situation and administrative treatment

*Euskal Herria*, the etymological meaning of which is 'the people of the Basque language', is divided in terms of the law and current political structures into four areas within which Basque is subject to six different legal statuses: five in southern Euskal Herria (the so-called 'Spanish Basque Country') and one in the north (within the French state).

In the south, one status applies in the Basque Autonomous Community (henceforth, BAC); another three within the Autonomous Community of Navarre (Nafarroa in Basque), which recognises 'Basque-speaking', 'mixed' and 'non-Basque-speaking' zones; besides which there is Trebiñu County, an enclave located in the heart of the province of Araba (part of the BAC) administered by the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon, and another enclave located in the province of Bizkaia but belonging to the Autonomous Community of Cantabria, called Valle de Villaverde (aka Villaverde Turtzioz).<sup>49</sup> In northern Euskal Herria the legal position of Basque is determined by the laws of the French Republic, so there the status of the language is different again.

The Spanish constitution of 1978 dictates the legal and political conditions of Basque in the various areas of Euskal Herria under Spanish jurisdiction. Article 3.1 of the constitution states that Castilian is the official language of the state, while Article 3.2 adds that other languages may also have official status in their respective autonomous communities in accordance with each community's statute of autonomy. The constitution says nothing about any *obligation* to know these other languages, whereas it does impose on Spanish citizens the obligation to know Castilian. From this it follows that although the other languages *appear* to have the same status as Castilian, in reality there is an essential asymmetry between Castilian and all the other languages (Bilbao & Casares, 2010: 29-30).

Within the bounds of the Spanish constitution, the statutes of autonomy of the BAC (adopted in 1979) and Navarre (1981) recognise some degree of official status for Basque in the respective territories. In contrast, the statute of Castile and Leon and that of Cantabria do not recognise the Basque language in their respective municipalities of Trebiñu Country and Valle de Villaverde.

No legal status at all is acknowledged for the Basque language in the northern Basque Country, which is situated within the French Republic, and no special linguistic area is recognised for it either. However, some changes occurred in the late twentieth century, as a certain amount of language loyalty is being displayed: society is recognising in Basque a sign of its own identity, and as such starting to be concerned for its survival. Thus the social movement in support of Basque found in the BAC and Navarre is gradually spreading to the northern part of the country (Barandiaran, 2009: 250).

### 1.2. Legal status and language policy

A fundamental document to take into consideration here is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe in 1992, which is a cornerstone of European legislation on the subject. The charter proposes that measures should be taken to promote the use of regional or minority languages in a variety of domains of public life including education, the court system, the administrative authorities and public services, the media, cultural events and services, economic and social domains, and cross-border exchanges. The signatory states periodically submit a report to the general secretary of the Council of Europe reviewing the extent to which they have complied with the measures required by the charter, and other legal institutions or

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<sup>49</sup> Villaverde Turtzioz is the Basque name and corresponds to Villaverde de Trucios in Castilian, which was the official name of this municipal entity until the council decided to change its name to Valle de Villaverde on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, 2008 in order to avoid confusion with the Bizkaian municipality of Turtzioz (in Spanish, Trucios).

organisations are allowed to present their own reports. Having evaluated these, observations and recommendations are sent from the Council of Europe to the participating states.

Spain signed this charter in 1992 and ratified it in 2001, since which time it is legally in force in Spanish territory (BOE 15-9-2001). However, progress is slow, as witnessed by the fact that the recommendations received by Spain in the third report concerning the application of the charter's principles largely coincide with those that had already made in the first and second reports (Hizkuntz Eskubideen Behatokia, 2011: 150). Although France signed the charter in 1999 it has not ratified it, so it is not implemented on French territory, which includes the northern Basque Country (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2011a).

In the BAC, the Organic Law of the Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 1979, names both Basque and Castilian as official languages throughout the autonomous community's territory and recognises the right of all inhabitants to know both languages and use them in speech and writing.

This principle stated in the Statute of Autonomy for the BAC was fleshed out by the new Basque Parliament in Basic Law 10/1982, passed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, 1982, which regulates the use of the Basque language. This law establishes that measures will be taken to favour the development and normalisation of Basque in a number of areas including public administration, education, Basque language and literacy courses for adults, and the media. The law specifies that local sociolinguistic conditions are to be taken into account in its application in each place (Barandiaran, 2009: 251)

This basic law was followed by others that developed it further: Law 6/1989 of the 6<sup>th</sup> of July regarding the Basque civil service, and Law 6/2003 of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December, which covers consumers' and users' rights. Besides these, there are also other decrees and orders establishing certain measures and criteria concerning the knowledge and use of Basque in education, the media, health services, public transport and road safety, the Basque police force, welfare services etc. However, ensuring that the rights recognised in these laws and regulations are actually honoured is another matter, and herein lies the difficulty, according to Bilbao & Casares (2010: 50-51).

The Department of Language Policy, within the Basque Government's ministry of culture, is responsible for the BAC's official language policy. It is also responsible for making sure that BAC public bodies, such as provincial governments, town councils, the University of the Basque Country, etc. fulfil their linguistic obligations.

In 1998, a General Basque Language Revitalisation Plan was adopted with three strategic goals: a) Basque language transmission; b) use of Basque in society; c) Basque language quality control (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 1999); and the same principles were ratified in 2005. A few years later, in 2011, the plan's General Framework aims to support Basque through motivation, language knowledge and language use in the following domains: 1) the family; 2) citizenship; 3) education; 4) the administration; 5) the workplace; 6) leisure activities; 7) sports; 8) culture; 9) the media; 10) new technology (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2011b).

Coming now to Navarre, there are two chief legal documents underpinning the treatment of the Basque language. The first of these is Organic Law 13/1982 of the 10<sup>th</sup> of August for the re-establishment and improvement of the Navarrese regulatory regime, and the second is Navarrese Law 18/1986 of the 15<sup>th</sup> of December regarding the Basque language. These laws specify that henceforth both Basque and Castilian shall be official languages in the Basque-speaking zones of Navarre, while elsewhere only Castilian has official status.

The stated purpose of these laws is to defend the language rights of the citizens of Navarre and establish measures to promote Basque language revitalisation and increase the use of Basque. But since Navarre has now been divided into separate language zones, these rights are denied to some Navarrese because they live in the 'wrong' zone: territorial criteria override personal rights (Barandiaran, 2009: 257), and are as follows: a) there are 56 boroughs or municipalities in the *Basque-speaking zone* where the Basque language has official status (similarly to the BAC); b) there are 48 municipalities in the *mixed zone* where a more restricted set of language rights of Basque-speaking residents is recognised; and c) there are 168 municipalities in the *non-Basque-speaking zone* where Basque speakers have virtually no language rights whatsoever. This zoning system has been a source of discrimination and rights violations among Navarrese citizens (Bilbao & Casares, 2010: 43-45).

Thus the right of some Navarrese citizens to use Basque is recognised in education, the media, health services, transportation and road safety, the Navarrese police, social services and so on. Unlike the BAC, the language rights of consumers and users and rights in the legal administration and the courts are not covered under present legislation (Bilbao & Casares 2010: 43-45, 51).

Between 1995 and 2000 the laws were changed twice: in 1995, the Navarrese government recovered a 1994 law (135/1994) and used it to regulate the use of Basque in public administration. But in 2000 a new government passed a new law (372/2000) which narrowed the application of the previous law. This oscillation reveals the divisions and contradictory positions within Navarrese politics concerning Basque and language policy (Barandiaran 2009: 257). Some analysts stress the restrictive effects of this legislative impasse (Bilbao & Casares, 2010: 46).

Since 2000, the tug-of-war in language policy has continued in the same vein. For example, Navarrese Law 29/2003 of the 10<sup>th</sup> of February regulates the use of Basque in the Navarrese public administration, but Navarre's supreme court ruled (585/2004 of the 20<sup>th</sup> of May) in favour of an appeal against the law, not only declaring some of its clauses null and void but stipulating which obligatory Basque language requirements can or cannot legally be applied, and the tests to be used to fill posts, including different specifications for the Basque-speaking and mixed zones (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2011a).

Since 2008 Navarre's language policy has become the responsibility of an institution called Euskarabidea - Instituto Navarro del Vascuence, the new name for the former Euskararen Nafar Institutua (Navarrese Institute of the Basque Language). Euskarabidea Works in four main domains: a) to provide language assessment to public institutions requesting it; b) to perform and promote linguistic and sociolinguistic research on European minority languages and Basque in Navarre; c) to promote certain programmes, one of which concerns citizens' right to know Basque and use it in their dealings with public institutions, and another aims to recover and develop the use of Basque in different social domains, or promote attitudes favourable to Basque; and d) to respond to demand for Basque language courses for adults, and in particular for staff in the public administration (Euskarabidea Institutua, 2010)

Basque receives no recognition or acknowledgment at all in Trebiñu County and Valle de Villaverde. The Spanish constitution leaves the determination of languages' legal statuses in each place up to the statutes of the corresponding autonomous communities. The statutes of Castile and Leon and of Cantabria say nothing about the situation of Basque in Trebiñu County and Valle de Villaverde, respectively. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages likewise fails to mention these territories, which are located in the interior of the BAC.

All the same, grassroots initiatives in Trebiñu County have given rise to a multitude of local activities in support of the Basque language, most notably the creation there of an ikastola (Basque-medium school) despite the refusal of the Castile and Leon authorities to back these moves (Hizkuntz Eskubideen Behatokia, 2007: 12). In such cases, doing nothing also amounts to a language policy of sorts.<sup>50</sup>

In the northern Basque Country the status of the Basque language is subject to the French legislation in Law 75-1349 of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1975, concerning the use of the French language, where no recognition is implied of any special sociolinguistic situation affecting this Basque-speaking area. And in 1992 France changed the second article of its constitution to make it perfectly clear that the language of the Republic is French.

Two other laws insist on the official status and use of the French language: Law 75-1349 of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December and Law 94-665 of the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 1994. The latter, principally intended to counteract the influence of English, sets out to guarantee the use of French. Any languages other than French will have no legal support and are merely tolerated (Bilbao & Casares 2010: 25-26).

Although it has not ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, since 2000 France has started recognising some regional language rights albeit asserting, in every case, the preeminence of French throughout France (Barandiaran, 2009: 270).

A proposal in the French National Assembly in 2002 to amend the constitution, which would have given proper consideration and protection to the languages of the regions, was defeated. A 2008 constitutional amendment calls these languages part of the 'French heritage', but that recognition in itself does not ensure any rights or freedoms, according to France's Constitutional Council (Portalingua, 2011).

An experimental move in the direction of a language policy for the northern Basque Country was made in 2004 with the creation of the Euskararen Erakunde Publikoa or Office Publique de la Langue Basque, in which all public organisations with competence in northern Euskal Herria are represented.

In 2006 the Office Publique prepared a language policy programme to support Basque in the following domains: 1) transmission within the family, nurseries and schools; 2) use of Basque in the media, leisure activities, publications, place names and current affairs; 3) adult language learning, corpus quality, sociolinguistic research and motivation (Dalmas, Simoni, Dupuit & Pradeaux, 2010: 33-34).

The government of France approved the results obtained from 2006 to 2010 and agreed to give it a further lease on life. In 2010 a new plan called the *Cadre Opérationnel 2011-2016 pour la politique linguistique* [the 2011-2016 Operational Framework for Language Policy] was drawn up and put into effect, with the subtitle 'Main objective: fully competent speakers. Target group: the new generations.' It seeks to pursue further the three main avenues of the 2006 document (EEP-OPLB, 2010: 5).

### 1.3. Language transmission

Two variables are usually singled out in assessments of the outcome of Basque language recovery attempts since the middle of the twentieth century: the expansion of language competence and the development of language use. But the transmission of a language consists of more than that. A child's first experience of socialisation and learning its first language (L1) go hand in hand, or to put it another way, first language acquisition is just one component in the course of a broader socialisation (Martínez de Luna, 2009: 13, 18).

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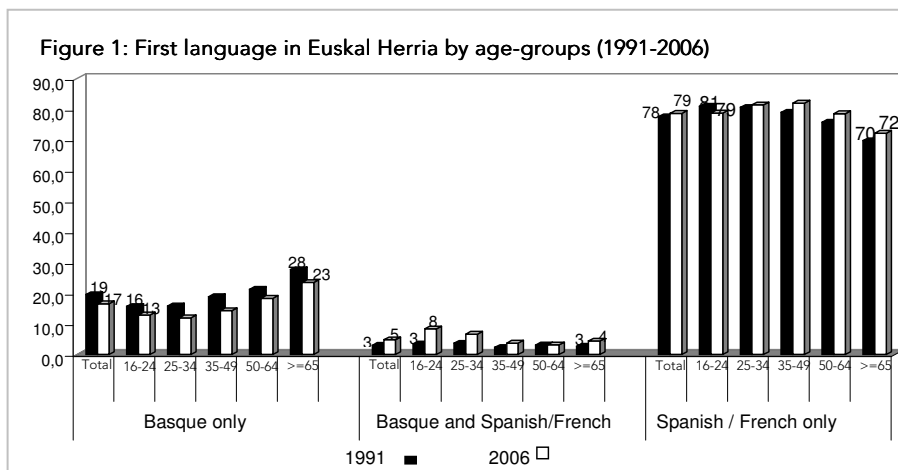
<sup>50</sup> No data are available on the status of Basque in the Cantabrian municipality of Valle de Villaverde.



Three processes in socialisation are to be distinguished. First there is language acquisition, a cognitive process. In the second process, which has been studied in sociology and anthropology, the speaker unconsciously and inevitably identifies that linguistic content as ‘my/our language’. Thirdly, there is a positive or negative affective process: the child comes to feel that, for example, Basque is *nice* and Spanish/French is *foreign*, or else learns, say, to think of Basque as a *useless language*. The most influential agents of this language socialisation process are the family, the school, the media, and friends; here I will consider the first three.

The first steps toward becoming steeped in one’s language start in the family, making this the most important agent of transmission when we are talking about one’s mother tongue (L1). But let us not forget that children and young people whose L1 is Basque are now only a minority of those who can speak Basque, for whom Basque is not their most internalised language (Martínez de Luna, 2009: 18-19).

**Transmission through the family:** As Figure 1 shows, in the fifteen-year period from 1991 to 2006, transmission of Basque within the family rose from 19% to 21% in the 16-24 age group (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2008c); in other words, the proportion of children and youth whose L1 is Basque is gradually growing, which represents a turnaround from the previous downward trend.



The reason why the transmission rate has grown is *not* that Basque *only* is being transmitted to more and more children; this kind of transmission has actually fallen by three percentage points, from 16% to 13%, in the 16-24 year age group. The rise in the family transmission rate for Basque is due, rather, to the fact that to an increasing extent children are being taught *both* Basque *and* Spanish or French, in which case both of these languages can be counted as L1. Thus a double trend difference is seen in language transmission habits. The northern Basque Country is an exception; there, transmission in French only was still increasing (by 12 points) between 1991 and 2006 among the over-fifteen age group (Martínez de Luna, 2011).

However, transmitting Basque as an L1 is not the Basque-speaking family’s only job. Whether families are Basque-speaking or not, they can also be active agents in the Basque language movement (or not be, if they prefer), for instance by supporting the ikastola (Basque-medium school) movement (Martínez de Luna, 2011).

There are also people who have acquired Basque from other sources than the family, particularly from school, and to a lesser extent through study as adults. It is mostly thanks to these L2 Basque speakers (called *euskaldunberriak* in Basque, literally 'new Basque speakers') that the absolute numbers and percentages of Basque speakers have risen in southern Euskal Herria (Euskarabidea Institutua, 2009: 47; Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2005: 68).

**Transmission through the schools:** Although there were some earlier historical precedents, the present trend of incorporating the Basque language into the education system really only got seriously underway in the second half of the twentieth century, in both the north and the south, on account of the *ikastola* movement (Garmendia eta Etxezarreta, 2009).

Later when Navarre and the BAC obtained the power to administer the school system, Basque was brought into the public schools as well through the introduction of a scheme of three types of school, called 'language models': in Model A, Basque is only taught as a subject; Model B is a bilingual formula which seeks a balance between the two languages; while pupils in Model D are fully immersed in Basque; in Model G, widespread in Navarre, no Basque is taught, the same as the BAC's exceptional Model X.

In the BAC there is a choice between three models, A, B and D, in both public and private schools; Model X is reserved for exceptional cases. In Navarre, the full range of choices may be available, or only some of the options, depending on the language zones: in the Basque-speaking zone either there is a choice between B and D, or else D is compulsory; in the mixed zone there is a full choice; and in the non-Basque-speaking zone either there is an option for Model A, or else Model G is obligatory (Euskarabidea Institutua, 2010: 60).

At different speeds and with unequal intensity, the Basque-language models, D and B, are becoming progressively more widespread in all three administrative parts of Euskal Herria.<sup>51</sup> The trend is strongest in the BAC, where between the 1997-8 school year and 2010-11 enrolment in Model D rose from 36% to 60%, and Model B from 18.8% to 22%, in primary and secondary schools (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2011c: 18).

The proportion of Basque is also rising progressively in Navarrese primary education, where there were 19.9% Model D pupils in 1996-97 as compared to 28.8% in 2006-07. There is virtually no Model B. Model A, which is the only option with any Basque offered in the non-Basque-speaking zone, is growing, having risen from 15.2% in 1996-97 to 31.6% in 2006-07 (Vilches & Vilches, 2006; Nafarroako Gobernua, 2011).

In the north, the percentage of pupils enrolled in Basque-language primary education (bilingual schools plus immersion) has gone up from 24.5% in 2004-05 to 32.3% in 2009-10 (Euskararen Erakunde Publikoa, 2011).

Media: Zubiri, Retortillo & Aierdi (2008: 86, 89-93) offer relevant data and conclusions about the consumption of Basque language media. Even by an optimistic estimate, media in Basque only reach half (57.7%) of Basque speakers. It is claimed that the Basque language media do not satisfy Basque speakers' needs; the authors distinguish between two kinds of cause for the limited reach of Basque media: demand issues and supply issues.

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<sup>51</sup> A precise, direct comparison between these areas was not possible owing to the unavailability of strictly comparable statistics.

## 2. BASQUE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND THE SITUATION TODAY

### 2.1. Language competence

Euskal Herria had a population of 3,015,558 in 2006, of whom 71% were in the BAC, 20% in Navarre and 9% in the north (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza, 2008a: 199). To these must be added 1,640 in Trebiñu County and 369 in Valle de Villaverde (INE, 2011).

There has been remarkable progress in the development of Basque language competence from 1991 to 2006 among inhabitants aged sixteen and over: see Table 1. Ge1. TAULAhiagoko biztanleriarentzat (portzentje bertikalak).

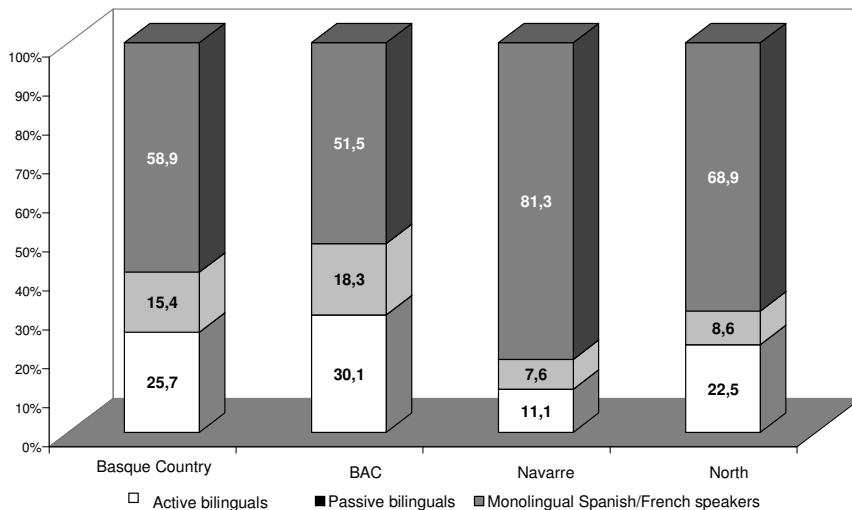
1991 2006		Table 1. Language competence in Euskal Herria in inhabitants aged sixteen or more (vertical percentages)	
		1991	2006
BILINGUAL	Bilingual Basque speakers: better at Basque than Spanish or French	22.3	25.7
	Balanced bilingual: speak both languages equally well	6.2	7.8
	Spanish/French bilingual: speak the other language better than Basque	8.4	10
Passive bilingual: know some Basque but don't understand as much as a full speaker		7.7	15.4
Non-Basque-speaking monolinguals: only speak Spanish or French		70.0	58.9

Source of data: Euskal Herriko Hizkuntza-Adierazle Sistema (EAS). Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetza (2008c). The author is responsible for the tabulated presentation.

The number of non-Basque-speaking monolinguals has fallen by 11.1 points, mostly in favour of the group of passive bilinguals which has grown by 7.7 points, although the other bilinguals have also grown in number by 3.4 points. The main explanation for this rise in passive bilinguals is as follows: a lot of children who were supposed to learn Basque as an L2 have really only learnt it in part; this is the case of many children from homes where the L1 is not Basque. The efforts to teach Basque through the schools only, without any transmission in the home, are in many cases (Gabiña, Gorostidi, Iruretagoiena, Olaziregi & Sierra, 1986: 23; Sierra & Olaziregi, 1990: 40-44; Arregi & Tambo, 2010: 30) only meeting with limited success as a way of ensuring adequate Basque language competence. However, the group of passive bilinguals also includes a good number of adults who have tried to learn Basque without fully completing the process.

These are general figures for the whole of the Basque Country but they vary greatly between areas. The BAC is the part with the highest proportion of active and passive bilinguals, followed by the north, while Navarre has the fewest of both (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Language competence in Euskal Herria by regions (2006)

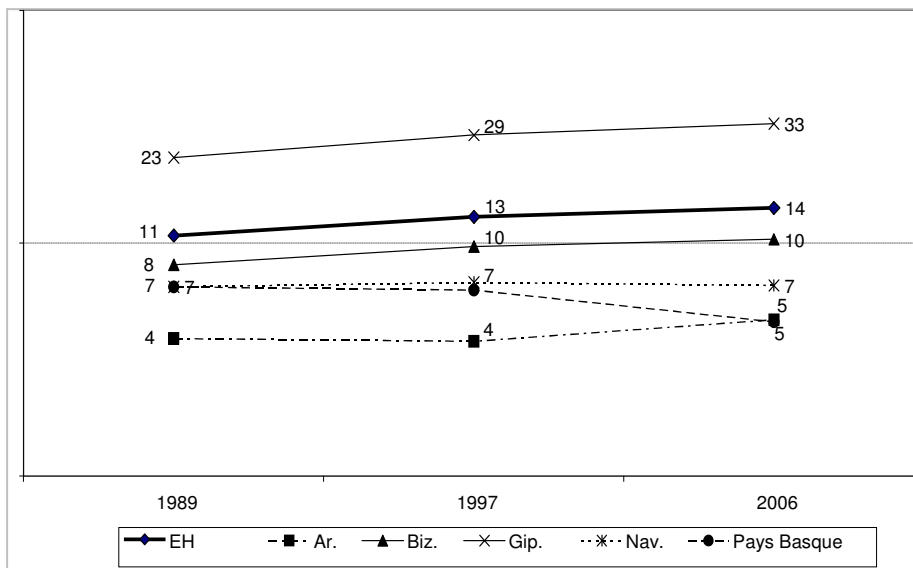


The number of Basque speakers in the BAC and Navarre grew between 1991 and 2006 by 6.2 and 1.6 percentage points respectively. However, in the north the percentage of Basque speakers fell by 10.6 points, although even there the downward trend is reaching a turning point in the youngest age group. In the BAC the increase in the number of bilinguals extends up to the under-fifties, in Navarre to people under thirty-five, and in the north is true of under-twenty-fives. Thus, in all three parts of the country, the younger the group the higher the number of bilingual people.

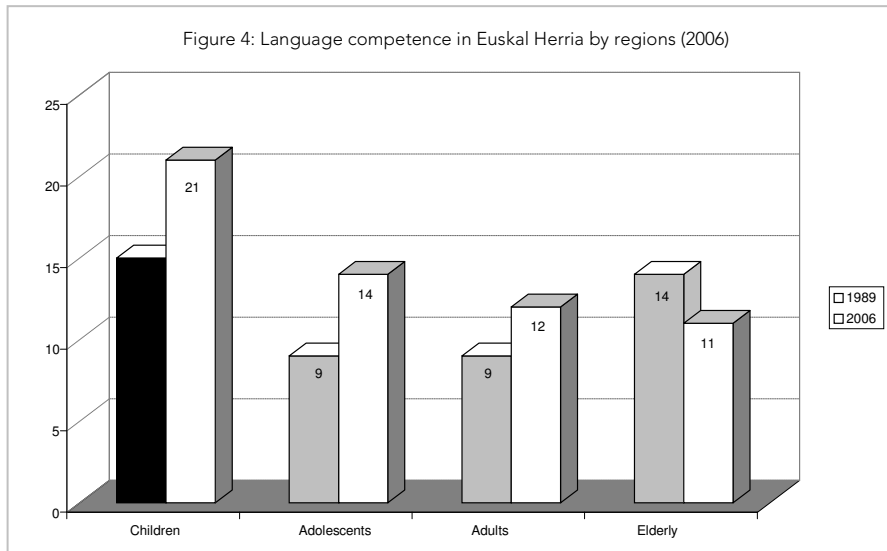
## 2.2. Language use

Data ranging over the period from 1989 to 2006 show that "street use" of Basque (i.e. spontaneous conversation in Basque observed in the streets among ordinary people") has increased gradually; averaging out the data for the whole of Euskal Herria, its percentage has risen from 11% to 14% in this period (Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2007): see Figure 3. Here too there are notable differences between different parts of the country, with the province of Gipuzkoa coming first in both the amount of use of Basque and how much it has increased. Next comes Bizkaia, and in third place is Navarre. The lowest numbers for language use are for Araba and the north, which are tied in the 2006 statistics, but while the figures for use of Basque are rising in Araba, in the north they are falling.

Figure 3: Street use of Basque from 1989 to 2006 in Euskal Herria and by regions (vertical percentages)

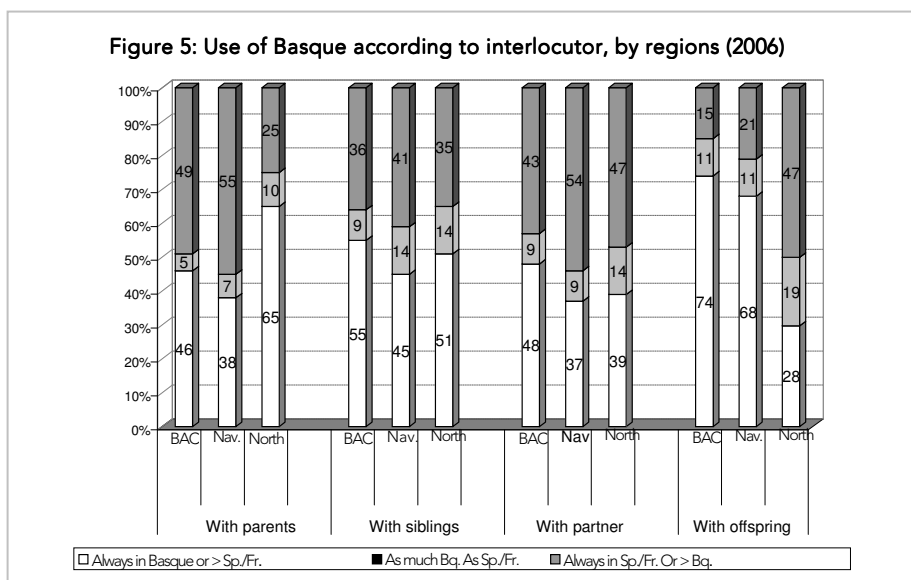


The increase in this language use starts with the adult population and falls off at an increasing rate as the subjects' ages rise; children have the highest percentage, 21%. But for the elderly, use of Basque was lower in 2006 than it was in 1989, and indeed that is the generation with the lowest proportion of Basque speakers that has ever lived in the Basque Country (see Figure 4).



The Basque government developed a typology in 2006 to measure the amount of Basque used in the family, among friends and in formal domains of language use. According to its data, 15.3% of the inhabitants of the Basque Country either use as much Basque as Spanish or French (for 5.4% of them) or more (9.9%) in their daily life; another 9.8% also use some Basque but not as much as Spanish or French; while 74.9% only use Spanish or French (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetzak, 2008a: 215).

The same research also analyses the interlocutors with whom speakers use the most Basque (Figure 5): the highest rate of Basque use is that of parents addressing their children in the BAC and Navarre, but not so in the north, where the highest rate of Basque language use is when speaking to one's parents. Use of Basque between members of a couple is lower than that between brothers and sisters in all three parts of the country. Lastly, Basque is used least of all with parents in the BAC and Navarre, but in the north, on the contrary, this is the relationship where it is used most.



These statistics are significant: the conviction of a need to transmit the Basque language to one's children is very widespread in society in the BAC and Navarre, hence the particularly strong tendency to speak to one's children in Basque. Not so in the north, where L1 Basque speakers speak to the older generation, their parents, in Basque but transmission to the following generation has been interrupted. Enthusiasm for the Basque language, which has reignited in recent years, does not yet have enough social weight to have made an impact on the statistics.

### 2.3. Social attitudes, opinions and representations

As with all social behaviour, languages have both objective and subjective facets. Bourhis, Giles & Rosenthal designed a Subjective Vitality Questionnaire in order to profile the subjective dimension (Bourhis et al., 1981). An exploration of this subjective dimension is one possible way of accessing society's attitudes to language, hence the following section.

2. taula. Euskara ikasteari buruzko jarrerak euskaraz ez dakitenen edo pixka bat dakitenen artean (16 urte edo gehiagoko biztanleria).

	Area				Age group				Origin		
	EH	BAC	Nav.	North	16-29	30-45	46-64	65	Immig.	Sec. gen. immig.	Basque
Yes	5	6	2	4	11	6	2	1	2	8	5
No, but I once tried	23	29	15	8	32	30	20	8	11	34	25
No, but I would if the conditions were right	23	25	22	20	26	30	21	17	23	24	24
No, and I don't plan to	46	40	56	61	26	33	53	71	63	31	42
No comment	3	2	6	8	5	3	3	3	2	3	5
(Vertical percentage)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As Table 2 shows, 46% (nearly half) of the inhabitants of Euskal Herria who do not speak any Basque or only a little have never tried to learn Basque and have no intention of trying. This attitude is even more widespread in Navarre and the north, people over 45, and immigrants. But 23% of monolingual Spanish or French speakers say they would like to learn Basque if there were suitable circumstances; and this attitude is fairly evenly spread among all the groups. It is also a significant fact that another 23% of the people who don't speak Basque have studied it at some point. We might say that these all 'dropped out' for some reason or other, leaving them in the category of people who know no or very little Basque (Baxok et al., 2006: 62-70).

The combined 46% of the population who either are or have been learning Basque or would be prepared to were asked for their reasons for being interested in Basque. The answer most often given (by 70%) was linked to a *sense of identity*: 41% said 'Because it is the language of this country', 19% 'Because I feel Basque', and 10% 'To discover my roots'. Other reasons mentioned include the following: *communication*: 'To be able to communicate with Basque speakers' (34%); *work*: 'Because I need it for my work or to get a job' (17%); *family*: 'Because my children are learning it' (17%); and *social integration*: 'To become integrated in this country and not feel excluded' (10%)<sup>52</sup> (Baxok et al., 2006: 63-64). Of all these pragmatic reasons, the only one which might be classified as social pressure is the need to know Basque to find employment, and notice that this was not one of the commonest responses; the others all imply a free choice.

<sup>52</sup> These do not add up to 100% because respondents were allowed to choose up to three reasons.

### 3. AT THE CROSSROADS: A LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Up to this point I have sketched the situation and development of Basque. Based mostly on these observations, let me now sum up the present state of affairs and try to pinpoint the crossroads at which the language now stands.

**1. Official status.** In southern Euskal Herria, the real status of Basque is inferior to that of Spanish on account of the fact that the obligation to know Castilian, stipulated in the Spanish constitution, is not matched by a clause imposing any similar obligation regarding Basque. Given this context, Basque has attained a sort of second-class official status in the whole of the BAC and one part of Navarre. In the rest of Navarre there is no legal recognition of Basque, so many requirements of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages do not need to be applied. Similarly in northern Euskal Herria and in the districts of Trebiñu County and Valle de Villaverde, administered by the Spanish autonomous communities of Castile and Leon and of Cantabria respectively, Basque is accorded no official status and there is no recognition of any rights of Basque speakers in those places.

**2. Language policies.** In accordance with the different legal statuses of Basque in different parts of Euskal Herria, language regulations vary. The language policy in different regions is not only conditioned by the legal and statutory situations but also affected or restricted by differing political interests. A good many favourable measures are being implemented in the BAC and the Basque-speaking zone of Navarre, which receive assessments that range from one extreme to the other depending on political leaning and viewpoint; in consequence, it is difficult in some cases to bring about the observance of legally acknowledged rights. In the north and the mixed and non-Basque-speaking parts of Navarre, pro-Basque local authorities and members of the language movement are trying to apply measures or programmes and to organise events by making the most of loopholes left by those who are opposed to giving Basque any legal recognition. For its part, the international group of experts charged with monitoring the Euro-Charter submit recommendations to the authorities in the Spanish state, Navarre and the BAC, suggesting further steps and improvements that each should take in the area of the Basque language.

**3. Competence and use.** The number and proportion of inhabitants who know Basque is rising in Euskal Herria, particularly among young people and children; thus the decline of years past has been reversed and the changed trend has started to make itself felt of late in the north, as it did a few decades earlier in the south. This revitalisation is taking place largely through transmission of the language in the schools (where Basque is L2), and to a lesser extent through increased transmission at home (where Basque = L1, mostly as a result of a growth in the number of linguistically mixed marriages).

For Basque revitalisation it is indeed essential that the number of Basque-speaking people should grow, and such growth does expand the language's horizons, but we must not forget that among today's Basque-speaking children and youths, the majority are people for whom Basque is an L2. These *new Basque speakers*, unlike the Basque L1's, are generally less competent in Basque than in Spanish, and on account of this a proportion of them have a tendency to abandon Basque and live out their lives in Spanish.

The fastest growing group is that of passive bilinguals who don't know enough Basque to be called Basque speakers, and this fact calls for some reflection. One way of looking at this fact is as an increase in the number of people who 'want to but can't': they have tried to learn Basque but failed. On the other side of the coin, however, clearly the study of Basque as a second language favours the growth of the number of Basque speakers, and even a limited, passive bilingualism among non-speakers facilitates some forms of Basque language use: for example, certain kinds of social event can be carried out in Basque only, because everyone can understand, even if some only just.

**4. The subjective dimension.** One perceives a definite effort to transmit Basque language competence at home in both the BAC and Navarre; however, the fact that Basque is used proportionally less when speaking to grown members of the family, i.e. siblings, partners or parents, unfortunately conveys to the children in such families the subliminal message that *Basque is a language for children while Spanish is the language for grownups and the language that really 'works' in society.*

Nearly half of the people who cannot speak Basque have no interest in learning it; this indicates that Basque is not regarded in society as something necessary or important. However, one in four non-Basque-speakers would like to learn Basque; this reveals a certain sense of loyalty to the Basque language in society.

Today, Basque identity is the strongest factor generating favourable attitudes and behaviours in support of the Basque language, especially when under the influence of a Basque nationalist ideology. Conversely, given that the society has failed to generate a need for Basque to supply other wants, people who disagree with the nationalists' postulates for the most part feel no strong motivation to support the language.

**5. Society and linguistic situation.** In the light of what has been said, the variations from one part of Euskal Herria to another regarding their situations and trends in Basque language competence and use are not arbitrary. The variations correspond in large part to the configuration in each region in terms of the legal framework with regard to the Basque language, the aggressiveness of the official language policy and the strength and effectiveness of the Basque language movement.

Many of the current efforts towards Basque language revitalisation are working well, but some no doubt need to be refined to improve their efficacy.

**6. Public opinion.** It may be that today's greatest risk for the future of Basque is a certain response to the existing power relations, namely what Pierre Bourdieu has called symbolic violence, to which, applying his idea to language, the Basque-language community seems to be subjected. In this case the besieged language community submits itself to the dominant language's postulates, leading a minority language speaker to adopt and use the invading language to such an extent that it becomes a reflex response. Even if speakers want to, it is difficult to reverse this behavioural trend (Suay & Sanginés, 2011: 11). Such language-submissiveness is seen, in the case of Basque, when, for example, even where the law states that Basque speakers can choose freely which language to use in many public relations, they opt for Spanish (or French), whether out of embarrassment or some fear or other.

Two states of affairs need to be battled in the whole of society, among both Basque speakers and non-Basque-speakers: a) ignorance about the full complexity of a language recovery effort; b) the absence of new reasons and motivations for taking a strong stand for Basque, which involves reflecting carefully about *why we need Basque* and *what we need it for* in terms which go beyond the identity perspective, perceiving a value in the language for the whole of society.

Basque public opinion, including both those who are Basque speakers and those who are not, needs a new cognitive 'framing' (Martínez de Luna, 2010: 53-67) to guide and direct the perception and representation of the reality of the Basque language.

Considering the enormous impact of the media in the creation of public opinion, it is both shocking and disheartening to observe the limitations and inadequacies of the Basque language media in both offer and demand; it will be impossible to rectify those problems within public opinion without proper communication.



**7. Future in the sky?** It is always possible to doubt whether all these efforts will suffice to achieve the normalisation of a language such as Basque. The answer to that question will not fall out of the sky, but depends on what the speakers and the speaker community are going to do about it:

Even the weakest of languages can have their place. All it takes is for the language community to have a strong will to keep its language alive, but to bring that about a good language policy must be enforced. (Coyos, 2010: 179).

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