NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY IN SPANISH POLITICS: THE BASQUE CASE IN CONTEXT

Francisco J. Llera Ramo∗
University of the Basque Country, Spain

francisco.llera@ehu.es

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NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY IN SPANISH POLITICS: THE BASQUE CASE IN CONTEXT

Francisco José Llera Ramo∗
(University of the Basque Country)

The question of identity, whether as an individual or a group, is as age old as civilization itself. The collective identity, as a component of the culture of a human group, defines its sense of us, distinguishing it from them, articulates its mechanisms of social and community cohesion, and organizes the group activities that bring about feelings of belonging, loyalty and social control. Reflections on this topic are not new to modern sociology, since Tönnies, Weber and Pareto each underscored the role of subjectivity as a source of social action. Yet, it has gained a renewed academic interest in the last couple of decades and has been the subject of special focus, not only among sociologists, but also anthropologists, historians, philosophers, economists and political scientists1.

Apart from other considerations, among the reasons for this renewed interest in what we might call the identity question in our contemporary societies, lies the very fragmentation that produces its growing complexity and the societal fatigue that has been accumulated by the pressure from nations and markets to be homogeneous. At the root, individuals and groups have a problem adapting to the social changes, and consequently, to the various and/or superimposed models of the mechanisms of control and social cohesion that define the group and community structures within complex societies2. The impact of globalization on this phenomenon must also be taken into account- generally speaking, that includes the processes of internationalization and super-state integration. Inevitably, the result is the manifestation of a plurality of loyalties that are more or less concentric or eccentric, hierarchal or at odds, intertwined or fragmented, and also a weakening of some of the group's connections with respect to some of its other attachments, thereby altering the structure of its hierarchy. Therefore, it is not a mere coincidence, when faced with the overall uncertainty and chaos, that the renewal of the concept of glocal3 may take on an identitary strength, in the same way (and perhaps over the same model) that self-affirmation has gained strength in territorialized communities or in ethnic groups faced with the inefficiencies of nation-state homogenization4. In this manner, social cohesion, along with the language of solidarity and community, are converted into a political topic.

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1 For an update of the old problem of identity, you can consult the recent essays written by Jonathan Friedman (1994), and particularly the contributions about the processes of expressing identities in the essays edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (1996).
2 This is what Ulrich Beck (1994:28ss) would define as a continual process of “detachment/reattachment”.
3 This term was introduced by the Japanese business world in the 1980’s, and adopted into sociology ten years later by Roland Robertson (1992 and 1995), which he used in order to try to explain the questions or paradoxical symbiosis between what is local and what is global when faced with the impact of the process of globalization on our societies.
4 A few months ago, the cultural supplement of the Argentinean daily newspaper Clarin published an article by Ralf Dahrendorf, in which he warned that “it is possible that the weakening of the social control is the largest specific problem facing the modern world” in reference to the very rapid changes of social connections and loyalties in our societies (See Clarin no. 179 from March 3, 2007).
Although, it is the politization of the identity question that interests us most at this time, and I will be referring to this question throughout the pages that follow. Unless I am mistaken, the progressive contemplation of the nation-state paradigm of State-building⁵ was created precisely in order to highlight the advantages of reinforcing state power in European societies⁶. The state-centered view, according to the early Weberian approach, conceives of the State as a geographically sovereign political entity with a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, the ability to relate with other states in accordance with international laws, and a series of social institutions that confer it a monopoly in the legitimate use of force over such territory. State and Nation are two sides of the same coin, although both may take on distinct shapes and models, not only in their structure, but in their composition, and also in their way of relating to each other. If the ability of the State refers to the strength and performance of its institutions, the Nation brings us back to the population itself, unified and connected by identitary links of history, culture or language, etc. Our states have been more or less efficient for modernizing our societies, bringing about economic development and social cohesion, and also for creating and stabilizing democratic institutions within stable borders. However, it has not always been so much in order to culturally homogenize its population, or otherwise convert it into a “national community”⁷. That is, whether it occurs before or after, State-building needs and is complemented by Nation-building; as far as the state model is concerned; it needs a soul, or in other words, it needs its population to share, in its own way, that imagined community⁸. Yet, State and Nation or Nation and State have found themselves, whether merging together or not, completing one another or not, rethinking each other or not... in each process of democratization that has been more or less both successful and swift (we could also speak about Democracy-building), in considering the plural construction of its respective society⁹.

⁵ For an updated view of the vast scientific production of this paradigm, see also the recent collective essay edited by Aidan Hehir and Neil Robinson (2007).
⁶ Charles Tilly uses the following words to describe the advantages of such a state construction in Europe: “…the state construction provides the emergence of specialized personnel, control over a consolidated territory, loyalty and durability, in addition to permanent institutions with a centralized and autonomous state structure that monopolizes the violence over a certain population group.” (1975, 1970’s)
⁷ It is convenient to recall the two large conceptions or paradigms about nationalism that exist in social science: that of the historicist or modernist school of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm or Benedict Andersen, among others, according to whom, the nation and nationalism are products of modernity, created with political and economic purposes; and that of the so-called fundamentalists, such as Fredrik Barth or John A. Armstrong, deriving their inspiration from the ideas of German romanticism, according to whom, the nations are a natural phenomenon with blood and cultural connections that predate and are superior to the states themselves. The ethnosymbolism of Anthony D. Smith (1986) would try to resolve the synthesis of both paradigms by highlighting the importance of the preconditions for the formation or viability of nations, such that the memory of the mythical heritage ends up being more important for the national identity than the actual territory that the nation currently occupies.
⁸ Benedict Andersen (1983) defines the nation as an “imagined political community”, such that it is idealized as inherently limited, sovereign, and distinct from a specific community based on the daily interaction of its members, because what they really share is the mental image of their identitary affinity, and of their fellowship.
⁹ See also the essay written by Joel S. Migdal, (2001), State in Society. Studying how States and Societies Transform and Constitute one another. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
1. IDENTITY AND IDENTITIES: THE NATION AND THE STATE

The process of constructing modern states, to the extent that they originate from or operate within socio-demographic and territorial realities or complex cultures, and have played the lead role in histories that are more or less broken and laden with state-nation centralization, have generated a central-peripheral dynamic\textsuperscript{10}, which is the source of conflicts that are many times very difficult to resolve. Although this dynamic does not always have a practical translation that is spatial or geographic, as occurs in the Spanish case with the regional peripheries, we are able to associate it with the existence of a national political identity that is hegemonic or central, that integrates, competes with or opposes local identities that are more or less strong, and that are either preexisting or not. At the same time, some nation-states, whether due to the ethno-cultural diversity (ethnic, linguistic, religious, etc.) of its prior composition, the socio-demographic displacements, the complexity of its territorial and productive model, or all of these facets at once, have to be considered with the territorial tensions that force political processes of decentralization and/or adjustment\textsuperscript{11}.

Going back to Benedict Anderson, our national communities are, at the very least, \textit{invented} social and cultural organizations, or constructed mentally, based on cultural materials derived from sharing histories, languages, land, traditions, and mythologies, etc. That is how we build our community identities, whether they are inclusive or exclusive of one another, and with ethno-cultural boundaries that are more or less clear or diffuse. In any case, we are now faced with one of the dimensions of identitary construction: the cognitive dimension (necessary for imagining and understanding the community \textit{we} [or \textit{us}]) that encodes, stores, processes and recycles the information from the community heritage. However, it is possible to easily verify the possible existence of another two dimensions that complement the one aforementioned and that make a \textit{lived reality} out of that which was imagined. On the one hand, the emotional dimension, which refers to the emotional interpretation of the perceptions, the information or the collective knowledge, and is associated to the connection (positive or negative) of individuals to their people, their objects, their ideas, etc. And on the other hand, the motivational or voluntary dimension, which refers to the connection between both knowledge and emotions and that of behavior, is associated with the question \textit{why}, which is the proactive aspect of the individual behavior- that is, one’s commitment to the community. Nevertheless, the \textit{imagined} identities can, in the end, be converted into \textit{lived realities}, closing the circle of the community dimension\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{10} The essay discusses the importance of this \textit{cleavage} in order to generate territorial loyalties and to set the political leaders apart from the partisan competition by drawing attention to themselves. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) and Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin (1982 and 1983). In order to delve deeper into the evolution of these factors, based on a compared perspective, see also the recent essays written by Jennifer Todd, N. Rougier and L. Canas Bottos (2008), or Christian Deschouwer, Michael Keating and L. Loughlin (2002), among others.

\textsuperscript{11} For this purpose, it is recommended to reread the essays written by Ernest Gellner (1983), or the more recent essays by John Coakley (1992), Brendan O’Leary and John McGarry (1993), Andrés de Blas (1994) or Jennifer Todd (2007), among others. In addition, on the topic of comparing the management of such tensions and the role of the partisan leaders, see the essays written by Kurt Richard Luther and Christian Deschouwer (1999) or John Coakley (2003), among others.

\textsuperscript{12} The distinction that Juan Linz (1985, 32ss) makes between “fundamentalism” and “nationalism” is very appropriate in order to refer to the evolution and/or predominance of these aspects when describing the national sentiments in Spain.
It is out of the materials of the ethnocultural\textsuperscript{13} dimension that human groups begin to construct their collective identity, their sense of community cohesion, and eventually their national conscience or their sovereignty, equipped with a state entity. The complexity and dynamics of the setting in which ethnic groups, nations and state realities are rooted, is quite apparent\textsuperscript{14} if we bear in mind a few details: 1) the number of states has multiplied considerably in the last century, particularly if we keep in mind that 44 states were integrated into the United Nations in 1945, which already consisted of about 200 states, without there being examples of states that had merged or unified; 2) at the same time, more than 15,000 ethnic groups and 7,000 languages can be identified and recorded on the world census\textsuperscript{15}, although half of the world's population can be identified with the 10 most spoken languages; 3) globalization, while it produces supra-state integrations, strengthens the migratory mobility of the populations and the ethnic complexity of the states; and 4) many states feel obligated to decentralize or to adjust their way of exerting or organizing sovereignty, dealing with ethnoterritorial or other types of demands.

Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (2006), beginning with the bidirectional relationship/identification of “State=Nation=Language” as the heart of the question, makes the following conclusions from the analysis of all of these essays that we just quoted and that he mentions: First, the ethnic dispersion through political structures is apparent; second, the majority of the states characterize themselves by their ethnic plurality; third, the romantic ideal of the Nation-State as a monoethnic character is an exception (no more than 5% of all of the ethnicities have achieved such an ideal). For that reason, as he himself states, it does appear that languages, nations and states can adjust easily, disregarding the romantic ideal of nationalism\textsuperscript{16}. According to Manuel Castells, “the real question is how you build a form of social and cultural organization that calls itself a nation... (and continues)... any objective observation shows that, in the modern age, there are nations, there are states and different forms of relating among one another: nations with a state, nation-states, multinational states, and imperial nation-states that integrate various nations by force\textsuperscript{17}.” Emilio Lamo de Espinosa himself, questioning the state-nation model, concludes that “if the state-nation model is not useful for us, then the nation-state model is even less useful for us”\textsuperscript{18}, referring to a fate of \textit{national secularization} of the current State itself, that rejects cultural homogenization of its people, who have a plurality of sentiments and loyalties.

\textsuperscript{13} It is convenient to remember the traditional definition by Fredrick Barth (1969, 3ss), on ethnic groups as organizational types that are formed based on associating oneself with a certain category or being associated with a category based on the perception of others, which allows the ethnic groups to define collective identities and to establish limits to the interaction.
\textsuperscript{14} They are very illustrative with regards to the essays of G.P. Nielsson (1985), in analyzing the distribution of the 575 ethnicities that were recorded on the world census in 1985, and more recently W.W. Isajiw (1999).
\textsuperscript{15} See also the reedited and updated collective study in its 15\textsuperscript{th} edition, by Raymond G. Gordon (2005).
\textsuperscript{16} Evoked by Elie Kedourie (1960) when she identifies the three supposed ideals of this type of nationalism: The natural division of humanity into nations; 2) the simple and empirical identification of the nations; and 3) the right of these nations to have their own State, as the only source of legitimacy.
\textsuperscript{17} In \textit{Inventar naciones} (La Vanguardia, January 26, 2008)
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 137
2. SPAIN: A COMPLEX STATE AND A PLURAL NATION

The Spanish political system, which emerged from the Constitution of 1978 and the consociative politics (Lijphart, 1984:21) of the democratic transition, has played a key part in one of the major innovations in the political processes of the advanced democracies, and of course, as affirmed by Juan P. Fusi, “the greatest change that we have made here since 1700”19. Without a doubt, it has to do with the so-called State of the Autonomies, which overlaps various state models, and what Eduardo García Enterría (1984, 1985, and 1988) would describe as federalizable20.

In the current Spanish Constitution of 1978 (SC), the constituent members of our democracy tried to articulate the plural coexistence of the common Nation21, by affirming its constitutive and integrative diversity of nationalities and regions organized into Autonomous Communities22. To be precise, it has to do with reaffirming the coexistence of various national events within the same state framework, enabling an array of shared loyalties and dual or plural identities. The citizenship of our political nation expresses and establishes its diversity in the plurality of cultural nationalities, that are, in turn, unavoidably plural in their loyalties and sentiments. Something that distinguishes them is that some of them are defined individually and by the exclusive nationalisms of one or another type, as Juan P. Fusi warns (2006)23. In summing up the meaning from the second centennial on May 2, 1808, Arturo Pérez-Reverte tells us that it is "key in order to understand the certainty of this nation, questionable perhaps in its modern arrangement, but unquestionable in its collective substance, in its culture and in its historic dimension"24. In fact, it is possible that a certain Spanish nationalism has failed in its attempt to create a culturally homogeneous nation, yet the peripheral nationalisms still remain in the forefront in its own failure to homogenize its respective communities. Today, the political nation coexists and exhibits itself in the plurality of cultural and linguistic identities, with feelings of belonging and loyalties that are also plural. The statutory reforms that are underway illustrate this plural reality, such that: 1) The Statute of Catalonia speaks of a definition "majority of Catalonia as a nation... and that the European Union recognizes the national reality of Catalonia as a nationality" without any mention of the Spanish nation; 2) that of the Valencian Community speaks of its “identity as differing from the historic nationality”, but in reference to the “unity of the Spanish nation”; 3) that of Andalusia refers to the description of Andalusia as a “national reality” in the Andalusian Manifesto of 1919, but in reference to the constitutional recognition of Andalusia “as a nationality within the framework of the inseparable unity of the Spanish nation”; 4) that of the Balearic

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19 Interview published in El País (May 28, 2006)
20 Although, not always in a favorable manner, especially when differing with any of the conclusions of the Informe sobre las autonomías (Report on the Autonomies) by J. Tornos (1988). It would be Andrés de Blas (1989, 265ss) who later returns to the idea and expounds on it.
21 José Alvarez Junco takes us closer in is work, Mater Dolorosa (2001), which looks at the historical key components of the “idea of Spain” in the 19th century. See also Molinero and Smith (1996)
22 In his article, Nación y nacionalidad (El País, December 2, 2004), Andrés de Blas defends the sense of belonging and the profound meaning of such a distinction.
23 He states, “Every person has some feelings of identity or belonging to a community, to a nation or to a town. We are all born into a cultural and linguistic environment; it is that we know the best and have first-hand knowledge of, and it is that which affects us the most. We share its traditions, and we like its landscape. In sum, that is what it means to have a certain feeling of national identity. However, having a certain feeling of national identity and being nationalist are two different things.” (El País, May 28, 2006).
24 In his article, Cólera de un pueblo, certeza de una nación (El País, January 24, 2008).
Islands speaks of “historic nationality” as a form of expressing the collective will of the islands and in the framework of the Constitution; 5) that of Aragón also speaks of “historic nationality” in reference to the Constitution; 6) and finally, that of Castilla y León defines the national reality as “a historic and cultural community…that has contributed decisively to the shaping of Spain as a nation”. And the six that I have just mentioned, are the first of the remaining eleven to follow, which reflect on the process of identitary and organizational self-affirmation that emerged as a result of the constitutional decentralization following nearly three decades of institutionalization and extension.

For the purposes of this contribution\(^{25}\), we conducted a recent survey about these questions, in which we asked the Spanish people their opinion about the possibility, or the fact that some of the Autonomous Communities define themselves as a nation within the framework of their statutory reforms, and we obtained the following results: almost two-thirds of the Spanish population over the age of 18 (64%) are against the idea, a little more than one out of four view it positively (29%), 5% of those surveyed were indifferent, and 2% did not offer an opinion. A couple of years ago, CIS\(^{26}\) went back and asked the same question again, as it has been doing since 1990, but this time rephrasing the question, asking citizens if they prefer the label of national or regional for their respective Autonomous Community, which revealed that almost eight out of every ten Spanish people (77%) preferred the term “region”, whereas a little more than one out of every ten (13%) chose the term “nation”. What is significant is that if the Basques leaned toward the first term (44%) versus the second term (38%), the Catalonians were almost equally divided between the two terms (40% and 45%) respectively, revealing not only the lack of internal homogeneity in each of those Communities, but also their volatility, if we take a look at the way this indicator has evolved over the period of time since we have been conducting the survey.

On the other hand, in this same study in 2005, the CIS asked citizens about their feeling of being proud to be Spanish, as well as Andalusian, Galician, Extremaduran, etc., obtaining identical responses for each one of the two distinct feelings, if we consider that 85% of the Spanish people said that they were very proud or quite proud to be Spanish, but also to be Basque, Catalanian, Galician, Andalusian, Asturian, etc. In contrast, a mere 13% expressed that they were only proud to be Spanish and 8% expressed only a regional pride.

In addition, in our last survey for this essay, we went back and asked the Spanish people to give us their idea of Spain\(^{27}\), thereby obtaining the data that is revealed in Graph 1. As you can see, for almost two out of three Spanish people (63%), the preferred option is “my nation or my country”, the idea of citizenship (“the State of which I am a citizen”) is supported by 16%, the plurinationality by another 18%, and just 2% stated that they identified with “another State” or felt a sense of national alienation. Only in cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country\(^{28}\), is there a distinct

\(^{25}\) Carried out by our Basque barometer team of the University of the Basque Country, based on a random sample of 1,035 interviews conducted in November and December of 2007 for the project SEJ 2006-15076.

\(^{26}\) Referring to study 2610 conducted in 2005

\(^{27}\) As the CIS has also been doing for many years In reference to the question: What does ‘Spain’ mean to you?

\(^{28}\) We took the data from our Observatory of Autonomous Politics, referring to the year 2005 (for Catalonia) and 2006 (for Andalucia, Galicia, and the Basque Country).
distribution, but it is no less plural. The Basques and the Catalonians lean toward the plurinational idea (42% and 45% respectively), following the idea of a Spanish nation (24% and 35%), that of citizenship (18% and 14%), and to a lesser extent, we could say that they identify with a sense of national alienation (13% and 3%).

(Graph 1)

Finally, in our survey, we went back and asked them a question that we have been asking for a long time, especially in the Basque Country29 -- we specifically asked if they feel or do not feel like they are “Spanish nationalists”, and if they feel or do not feel like they are “Basque, Catalanian, Galician, Asturian nationalists etc.”-- and the results that we obtained were stunning: more than two-thirds of the Spanish population stated that they do not feel like Spanish nationalists (68%), nor nationalists of any other place (69%), compared with almost one-third who state that they feel like they are Spanish nationalists (29%) or nationalists of their respective regional people group (30%). In the Basque case, the percentage of those who feel like they are nationalists versus those who feel like they are non-nationalists, is practically even, with a small slant towards being non-nationalist (51%). What’s more is that in the Basque case, we went back and asked the Basques in our battery of “Euskobarómetro” surveys (fall 2005), about their level of agreement or disagreement with an emphatic declaration made by a nationalist leader in 2002 (“The Basque are not Spanish, and we do not believe in the Spanish nation”), revealing a majority who disagree with the statement (50%) – 78% among those who are non-nationals -- versus a decreasing minority (28%) -- 59% who are nationalists – who subscribe to that idea.

With these brief sketches derived from a handful of sample indicators, it is obvious that there is not only a national plurality in Spain, but also a plurality of its most vital nationalistic components. At the same time, there is a strong regionalist tension of what defines the Spanish nation, and a slight nationalist tint of the Spanish nation. And finally, there is a greater coherence and capacity for the inclusion of the Spanish national consciousness versus that of the more mobilized nationalist consciousnesses. Without a doubt, the leaders of our XIX century liberal State, while they failed to modernize and democratize our country, they were also misguided in their strategy to homogenize and centralize it, and especially in their attempt to impose a nationalistic and unified vision of Francoist Dictatorship, after the civil war. There is very little doubt about the counterproductive effect of such strategies, especially that of the dictatorship, but at the same time, it is also clear that a national conscience exists, even though it is without nationalists30. These failures and political errors, that led to “the two Spains”, offered a reactive opportunity to the regional cultures in order that they may reaffirm their differing consciousnesses, and in some cases, the consolidation of nationalisms that have been nurtured exclusively of one another, especially feeding

29 For the Basque Country, we usually ask, Would you say that you identify with being a Basque nationalist, or not?, and the results can be consulted in the Survey Series of the Basque barometer (www.ehu.es/euskobarometro).

30 As Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (2006, 130) eloquently states, “Spain is one of the countries that has the strongest and most pronounced regional identities in the world, yet a smaller Spanish nationalism”.
on an anti-Spanish victimization that is initially linked to an agonizing view of having lost the regional languages\textsuperscript{31}.

3. IDENTITY OF IDENTITIES

As Manuel Castells\textsuperscript{32} warns, “not just any regional community forms itself as a nation, because the community identity is formed by physically sharing many elements that are common to each other, yet different from other communities, and this sharing occurs on a daily basis over a long period of time.” That is how interculturality has made it so that the national Spanish identity has been unraveling itself, secularly and not without ambiguities, like a fusion of regional identities, whereas the strong perseverance of these nationalistic identities feed on the characteristics of this Spanishness, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree.

A good indicator of this dual reality that crosses over vertically, both the national Spanish identity and the regional identities, is that indicated in the following Graph 2. We usually call it subject national identity\textsuperscript{33}, widely used by the CIS in its studies, with a great time consistency, and which we have included in our most recent survey for this essay. As can be observed, the pure dual identity of those who associate themselves with feeling just as Spanish as they do about the region they are from, clearly prevails (56%), to which are also added those that share the feeling of being Spanish with a national accent (9%) or a regional accent (12%), thus bringing the compatibility of identities up to more than three-fourths of the Spanish people. Compared with those figures, only 16% say they feel only Spanish, and another 4% say that they only identify with their respective Autonomous Community, with a significant increase in the first group over the last two years. If we take a look at how Basques and Catalonians responded to this same question, we find that the compatibility of identities is somewhat reduced in both cases, but still continues to be the majority (73% in Catalonia and 62% in the Basque Country) with a very clear regional accent in both cases (19% and 25% respectively). In the case of Catalonia, the percentage of those who are opposed to the Spanish (9%) and the Catalanian identities (11%) are almost symmetrical, whereas in the Basque Country, there is a clearly exclusive nationalistic slant (29%) and an extremely small percentage of those who express Spanish nationalism (6%).

(Graph 2)

\textsuperscript{31} The post-war generation of Basque nationalists comprises the children of a century and a half of civil wars and symbolic violence; this was manifested first in the Carlist Wars (1833-1876) leading to a rise of the nationalist discourse and the emergence of an ethnonationalist movement headed by Sabino Arana (the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party) a century ago; and second, in the violent resistance of the younger generations beginning in the 1960s in response to the political consequences of the civil war 1936-39 and Francoist dictatorship. For the Basque nationalism, you can consult Payne (1975), Elorza (1978), Corcuera (1979), Juaristi (1987, 1997, 2006), Azurmendi (1998), De Pablo, De la Granja and Mess (1998), Perez-Agote (1984, 1987) or Gurutxaga (1985), among others.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{33} Answers the question: Of the phrases below, which one best expresses your own feelings? 1) I only feel Spanish; 2) I feel more Spanish than...; 3) I feel as Spanish as...; 4) I feel more... than Spanish; 5) I only feel... (always the corresponding regional people group).
Now, if we merge this indicator of subjective national identity with that of feeling nationalist or non-nationalist, both national and regional, based on what we have already discussed, we obtain the following Graph 3, from which we can clearly deduce that: 1) The compatibility of identities and the dual allegiances are clearly predominant in the four nationalist or non-nationalist areas and from one sample or environment to the next; 2) the Spanish bias is compelling at the regional level among Spanish nationalists, and to a lesser extent, among non-nationalists of the Autonomous Communities, and the opposite occurs more clearly among the nationalists of the Autonomous Communities and the non-nationalist Spanish; 3) an identification with feeling Spanish is apparent in all of the areas, standing out a little more so among the non-nationalists of the Autonomous Communities, and being almost equal with the Spanish nationalists or non-nationalists; 4) the exclusively regional sentiments are only apparent, and are the minority, among non-nationalist Spanish, and especially among the nationalists of the Autonomous Communities.

(Graph 3)

Without a doubt, the case that is relatively the most far-removed from the common pattern, is the Basque case. Precisely, for that reason and due to the violent nature and ethnic cleansing that has been adopted by a minority of nationalists in an effort to defend the national identity, we have tried to delve into it primordial or voluntaristic elements, according to the definition already mentioned by Juan J. Linz. In the following Table 1, we show the distribution of the previous indicator applied only to the Basque Country. As can be observed, there is a clear pro-Basque bias in the adult Basque population, and in the core of the more radical nationalists (based on the nationalists that only identify with being Basque), who represent a little less than one-fourth of them (politically characterized as being the vast majority of the electorate of violent nationalism and less than half of the institutional electorate). This would be the hard core of the ethnic community of Basque nationalism that uses precisely that of the identitary clash as an element of cohesion without the other end of the spectrum having a replica that is clear and promotes a pro-Spanish Community, to such a strategy, if we keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of Basques, whether nationalist or not, fall within positions that indicate a compatibility of identities.

(Table 1)

As the aforementioned case is already significant, the Basque case also stands out due to the confusion of identity records, which was very likely caused by the impact of the terrorist violence in the construction of the so-called “Basque problem”, which some nationalists identify with the euphemism of political conflict. In an effort to delve into the roots and characteristics of such confusion, we usually ask the adult Basque population what they understand as “being Basque”, obtaining a series of results that we reveal in the following Table 2. Based on those responses, we can clearly deduce some

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34 We are referring to ETA’s radical nationalism terrorism and its social and political backing. Unfortunately, violence continues to be one of the sad characteristics of the Basque polity. To read more, see also the essays of Garmendia (1979), Jauregui (1981), Zulaika (1988), Sullivan (1988), Clark (1984 and 1994), Mata (1993), Llera, Mata and Irvin (1993), Shabad and Llera (1995), Dominguez (1998), among others.

35 Juan J. Linz (1980b) and his team spoke very poignantly about the Basque case during the early stages of our democratic transition, in their essay Conflicto en Euskadi (1984), continued by Llera (1993a and 2000).
of the conclusions that draw our attention: The confusion and volatility of the identity characteristics, especially among the nationalists; 2) the establishment a definition based on the citizenry (has increased by 22 points in the last three years and unites the vast majority of nationalists as well as non-nationalists); 3) the loss of influence on the part of the proactive group (which also rallies nationalism, but does not drive away the non-nationalists to such an extent); 4) doubts about the birth of the identity (also shared by the majority, although less intensely by nationalists or non-nationalists); 5) the loss of influence that the fundamentalist elements have (only supported by a minority and by the most radical sectors of nationalism). When, instead of offering a multiple choice response, we ask them about the most important condition, half of the Basques support the aspect of citizenship (six out of every ten non-nationalists and one-third of the nationalists), followed by the proactive component by a little less than one-third (four out of every ten nationalists and one out of every four non-nationalists), the rise of the Basque Country shifts slightly to one out of every ten (both nationalists and non-nationalists) and the rest fall far far beneath these three components.

(Table 2)

The old Spanish national history is that of a plural nation, culturally rich, socially and politically complex, and difficult but viable. Full of rights and wrongs, it has graduated into one of the oldest European state-nations despite its repeated failure to modernize and its delayed and dramatic democratization. As Spanish people, we are no doubt experiencing the greatest national splendor of our recent history, due to its democratic make-up, the plurality resulting from its constituent agreement, and due to its stability in conditions of growth and well-being with a new political culture. A very essential trait of this new political culture is the identity duality of our territories and the resulting plurality in its entirety, clearly defining the model of a plural nation, and to a far lesser extent, that of a plurinational reality. It is one thing to have nationalist parties, and voters that place their confidence in them, or even governments that are predominantly nationalist, and it is quite another thing to have feelings of identifying with a region or having a predominantly nationalist sentiment, which is a lot less exclusive of other sentiments. This does not even occur in the most problematic and conflictive part of the country, which is the Basque Country. We may conclude the review of this set of indicators by affirming that after thirty years of implementing and developing our decentralized democratic system, we have clearly moved on to a new political and constitutional culture that, for the most part, allows us to share the plural identity of the nation that is common to us all, from any one of various corners. It is only the Basque case that defines an atypical situation, although not contradictory with that previously stated; it is a product of the democratic deficit that is fed by the most pro-ethnic nationalism, whether it comes from the institutional authority or violent persecution.

4. THE TERRITORIAL RESHUFFLING OF IDENTITY

How has this old plural nation been constructed? To what degree is it successful? We find the answers in the very report of the “State of the Autonomies” carried out not only by experts or politicians of one slant or another, but by the citizens themselves.

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36 J. J Linz (1973, 32ss) gave a very correct and early diagnosis of the difficulties and the role of the nationalisms in our national construction of identity.
That is, their opinions, evaluations and attitudes, which allow us to really see the reshuffling of this plural nation from each of the different corners of its heterogeneous territory. It has to do with the progressive materialization of a new political culture that is in the letter and the spirit of the Constitution\textsuperscript{37}, with deep and plural historic roots, especially resulting as a product of the democratic experience of the last couple of decades, given that time and the generational change are making it possible to internalize and share what appears as ground rules in our Great Charter. The citizens of many Communities end up recovering and finding their own territorial identity in the very evolution of the “State of the Autonomies”; in other cases, they find their identity by contrast or competition, and some citizens feel like their expectations have been frustrated because their leaders fail to resolve the grievances they have expressed. That is, that is a fundamental factor that once again indicates the role of the regional leaders for good or for bad.

In the Communities in which their political leaders have maintained an institutional stability or have consolidated a stable political leadership (for example, in Extremadura or Castilla-La Mancha), despite their inferior level of development or the traditional weakness of their identity, they have managed to generate a determination and an autonomous satisfaction that exceeds that of other Communities that could surpass them in some of these areas, such as for example, Asturias, Aragón, Cantabria and Murcia. It is not because they are single provinces that they lack history or that of deeply rooted feelings of identity, rather it is due to the failure of the leaders to maintain the institutional stability when resolving large economic or social problems in the region, which directly damages the autonomous determination itself. In sum, the report that the Spanish people are currently making\textsuperscript{38} about the State of Autonomies, could not be more satisfactory: almost three-fourths of the Spanish population express a satisfaction, which is on the rise (especially in Catalonia - 77% - and in the Basque Country - 74%), leaving the remainder of those who feel unsatisfied for various reasons, as a minority that does not exceed 20%. However, most importantly, according to the CIS, is that none of the Communities express a dissatisfaction that exceeds the maximum of 11% recorded in Catalonia\textsuperscript{39}. Once again, in addition to the objective data of the material and institutional performance of the self-governing Communities, we have to factor in the subjectivity created by some of the leaders who are responsible, stabilizing and loyal to the model. Nonetheless, the chronic and justified Spanish national culture of skepticism and failure is being replaced by a culture of satisfaction in almost every corner of the nation despite the fact that there are doubts and criticisms, and theories about the functionability of the model as a whole, or in some of the Autonomous Communities in particular. For example, the contrast between the majority of the Basque population who express satisfaction, and the agonizing and delegitimizing dissatisfaction that their nationalist government leaders portray, really draws our attention.

We would say that the Spanish people make their report regarding the creation and development of the Autonomous Communities in Spain, and that it is predominantly positive, being an opinion that is shared to a greater or lesser extent

\textsuperscript{37} A constitution that would be ratified again by 74% of the Spanish people, and who also view it as an appropriate and necessary time to give it a slight reform (67%), according to our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007.

\textsuperscript{38} According to the same study.

\textsuperscript{39} The data is taken from study no. 2610 of the CIS (2005).
throughout all of the Autonomous Communities, even before generalizing the most recent statutory reform broadened by the self-government in the majority of the Autonomous Communities, and also before considering the most recent agreement over the new credit system, that, among other things, has led up to the decentralization of the national healthcare system. What is true is that at this time, and despite the tensions that have emerged due to the new statutory reforms, the Spanish people appear to be mostly optimistic (53%) when evaluating how well the organization of the State functions right now, and there is only a small minority of those who are pessimistic (8%).

With respect to the decentralizing dynamic, what are the advantages and disadvantages highlighted by the Spanish citizens? The vast majority (73%), which is on the rise in almost all of the Autonomous Communities, believe that the Autonomous Communities have contributed in bringing the administration of public affairs closer to the actual citizens. The opinions are more evenly counterbalanced when 48% affirm or 45% deny that the Autonomous Communities have contributed to an increase in spending without improving the public services, indicating the dysfunctions, duplicities, lack of coordination and clientelism, that such a far-reaching process is able to occur. There are also many doubts about whether the model has actually served to improve the coexistence between the provinces, despite the fact that there are more who believe that they have helped (48%), versus (44%) who say that they have not been helpful. That may be due in part to the fact that there is almost a majority (47%) of those who tend to think that the model has contributed to the growth of the separatist groups. However, on the other hand, it may also be due to the evaluation of the dynamic of the differences in regional development and wealth. And a third factor that may be influencing this popular perception of such a centrifuge dynamic, may be related to the comparative grievances of the perceived preferential treatment of the various Autonomous Communities by the central government. In fact, after an evolution that has not been at all positive in the last few years, more than two-thirds (69%) of the Spanish people continue to think that the central government does not treat the Communities equally, but that it gives preferential treatment to some more than others, whether it is because of the political leanings of their respective government, or due to the ability of the local leaders to put pressure on the citizens, especially if they are nationalist that play a role in governing the State. Especially Catalonia (from 69% in 1992 to 87% in 1996) and the Basque Country (from 38% to 57%, respectively), and Madrid (from 27% to 18%) and Andalusia (from 48% to 12%) to a lesser extent, in this order and with a greater or lesser intensity and insistence, have been indicated as the main beneficiaries of such grievances or unequal treatment.

As can be observed in the following Graph 4, the current territorial model has been gaining strength and legitimizing itself over the years (from 31% in 1984 to 57% in 2007), especially due to a weakening of the skepticism and resistances of the more centralist and homogenizing provincial models (from 29% to 12% during these same years). Nevertheless, it has not succeeded in winning over those who continue to be in favor of a greater decentralization in the federal core (between 20% and 22%, almost consistently and without fluctuating), and to an even lesser extent, the independents or those who continue to fight for the right of secession (always less than 10%). Even in Catalonia (73%) and in the Basque Country (63%) the integrationist options (either

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40 The data is taken from our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007.
41 According to the data obtained from our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007.
42 The data is taken from study no. 2228 of the CIS (1996).
autonomous or federal) are predominant, with more of a slant towards autonomous groups in the case of the former than in the latter Basque Country. However, the Basque Country stands out due to the greater influence of secessionism (around 30%).

(Graph 4)

We would say that the constitutional model of self-government, whether in its static version or considering its potential federalizable evolution towards higher positions held in self-government, obtains the growing and overwhelming majority of support of the Spanish people from all corners of the country. If the centralist aspirations have very little capacity for challenging the model, the Basques and the Catalonians, especially, count on the independent tendencies43 to do just that.

This complex process of decentralization44 has been carried out asymmetrically and at a different pace, according to the Autonomous Communities and their relationship with the central government, and this has inevitably been the cause of political tensions, comparative grievances, financial dysfunctions or deficiencies in public services, and especially, problems in achieving cooperation and social and regional cohesion. We would say that learning how to forge interregional cooperation and cohesion are the lessons that the Spanish system of decentralization still needs to learn. If we exclude the Basque case and the tensions of the new autonomous public financial system (so called *Concierto Económico*), it is true that the initial conflictivity has been reduced. In addition, we have even seen how all of the Statutes of Autonomy of the thirteen Autonomous Communities, all of a common system, were reformed by expanding their levels of self-government without increasing tensions (except in the case of Aragón), and by the agreement between the large political forces, in cooperation with the independent plans of Ibarretxe45. However, the recent reform of the Statute of Catalonia has also intensified tensions46. In any case, the mechanisms of multilateral cooperation still have yet to be institutionalized, which is necessary in order for the system to progress efficiently and in a balanced manner. To be specific, as of today, two-thirds of the Spanish people (67%) advocate that the State reassign the authorities of the Autonomous Communities, and 60% believe that the central government should give top priority to the multilateral agreements with all of the Autonomous Communities (versus 35% of the population that advocates a bilateral model)47.

The key question, however, is to know which is more dominant: division or cohesion, the centrifugal dynamic or the centripetal dynamic, the politics of rivalry or of consensus, competition or conflict in the culture and behavior of the political leaders. It has

43 On the regulatory or contextual question of the succession, based on a comparative perspective, see also the essays of Bruno Coppieters and Richard Sakwa (2003) or Michel Huysseune (2006).
44 From the asymmetry and institutional diversity acquired in the process of constructing our territorial model, one realizes the excellent contributions found in the essays of E. Aja (1999).
45 The so-called “Ibarretxe plan” of September 2002 is the establishment of the sovereignist strategy and of the rupture of the current model of self-government included in the Estella agreements, through the exercise of the alleged and natural “right to self-determination”, which seeks to combine all of the nationalism into a unit of anti-constitutional action against the State, as a form of putting a political price on the end of terrorism.
46 The critical view of this moment is offered by Francisco and Igor Sosa in their *El Estado Fragmentado* (2007).
47 According to the data obtained from our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007.
to do with knowing at what point the separatist dynamics, encouraged by certain leaders of peripheral nationalism, establish itself and delves into the structure of social pluralism in our political culture until it makes itself incompatible not only in some provinces, but among the large national ideological families and their social supports.

After a process of political and administrative decentralization\(^\text{48}\) carried out in record time, on the compass of the democratizing process, threatened by terrorist violence, and in the midst of an economic modernization that is laden with tensions and lacking a model for comparison in the Western developed world, we now have seventeen parliaments in Spain, with their respective governments, autonomous administrations, superior courts and networks of institutional organizations and public businesses that require a regional political leadership of more than 3,000 authorities for a country of 40 million inhabitants, to which we can add about 1,100,000 public employees who are dependent on such regional administrations, and that translates into more or less half of all of the personnel to the service of the public administrations in Spain (completed by about six hundred thousand of the central administration, and another five hundred thousand of the local administration). The regional and cultural diversity also states explicitly that there are at least eight regional languages that are recognized (six of them have a statute of co-official language), along with Spanish, and in seven Autonomous Communities, there is an official bilingualism that pertains to almost half of the Spanish population, although the bilingual inhabitants are no more than one-fourth of the Spanish people. This new political-administrative reality has led to 17 healthcare systems, 17 educational systems, some provincial police departments, various systems and methods of public communication (radio and television), autonomous public infrastructures (highways, railways, etc.), and policies pertaining to agriculture, fishing, food, and tourism, and to industrial, commercial, urbanistic, environmental, labor, and housing development, as well as territorial organization and social protection, etc. exclusively dependent on the new regional administrations, and that level out at about one-third of the total public spending for all of the public administrations in Spain (53% of the central administrations, and 14% of the local administration).

Thus, the governance in Spain consists of making sure that this complexity operates efficiently, cooperates institutionally, maintains the cohesion of the national plurality and that it generates an output, both in democratic terms, as well as services for the citizens. It is true that, generally speaking, we almost always find the same governmental stability at the territorial level, as we see at the national arena, although the political gains are unequal.

The huge storm cloud over the Basque Country, which requires a democratic intelligence and calmness in order to sort it out, and the tension produced by the Catalanist populism\(^\text{49}\), must not cloud our vision so as to inhibit us from seeing the current model that

\(^{48}\) A good study of the Statutes of Autonomy, its legal system, contents and chronology can be found by consulting I.Torres (1999)

\(^{49}\) 67% of the Spanish people recognize a clear deterioration of the amicable relations between the Catalanians and the rest of the Spanish people in recent years (versus 28% who do deny that is the case), something that nevertheless, has not led up to the nationalist violence, as is the case with the Basques (60%), according to the data taken from our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007.
is proving successful and still has ground to be covered\textsuperscript{50}. However, as we have said before, the model has a few deficiencies that require corrections in the process, or at the very least, it requires that certain mechanisms be strengthened, such as: 1) the dynamics of State consensus for matters related to the definition and coordination of national cohesion; 2) the institutionalization and effective implementation of multilateral intergovernmental cooperation, as well as interterritorial solidarity; 3) the reciprocal constitutional loyalty in the plural definition of the nation and in the application of the principles of equality, distinctiveness and solidarity that unite our model of self-government; 4) the motivation of the shared nationalist responsibility and the ability of the State government to form a coalition; 5) the institutional expression of regional participation in shaping the Spanish position before the institutions of the European Union; 6) the top-down decentralization, which implies that the local entities, and above all, the cities, must play a larger and more central role in creating a network that will offset the centrifuge tensions from the center and periphery; and 7) the implementation of a useful reformism that anticipates the dysfunctions of the model, and implements the necessary corrections, such as the overhaul and reform of the Senate.

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\textsuperscript{50} In this sense, two-thirds of the Spanish people (66\%) declare that they are opposed to allowing some Autonomous Communities the possibility of holding a referendum to determine their continuity or not of belonging to Spain (versus 27\% who are in favor of the idea), according to the data taken from our study SEJ 2006-15076, conducted in December 2007, according to this same study.


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NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY IN SPANISH POLITICS: THE BASQUE CASE IN CONTEXT

ANNEX: TABLES AND GRAPHS
Graph 1. THE IDEA OF SPAIN (2007)*

- **My country, my nation**: 63%
- **A multi-national state**: 18%
- **An alien country**: 2%
- **No Answer**: 1%
- **The country which I belong to as a citizen**: 16%

*What does Spain mean for you?*

Graph 2. DUAL IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPANIARDS (2007)

Data from Catalonia and the Basque Country correspond to their respective autonomous observatories from October and November 2006 (OPA 6, 2007).
* The survey included a question on the name given to their respective region of origin (madrilène, basque, galician…)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catalonia</th>
<th>Basque Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel only Spanish</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more Spanish than… (*)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel as Spanish as… (*)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more… (*) than Spanish</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel only… (*)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 3. TIPOLOGY OF THE SPANISH POPULATION ACCORDING TO THEIR NATIONALIST FEELING AND IDENTITY (2007*)

- SPANISH NATIONALIST: 29%
- SPANISH NON-NATIONALIST: 68%


*Which one of these sentences express better your feelings?
Table 1: BASQUE PEOPLE TYPOLOGIES IN 2006 ACCORDING TO THEIR NATIONALIST FEELING AND IDENTITY*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEELING</th>
<th>ONLY SPANISH</th>
<th>MORE SPANISH THAN BASQUE</th>
<th>AS BASQUE AS SPANISH</th>
<th>MORE BASQUE THAN SPANISH</th>
<th>ONLY BASQUE</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
<th>Nr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basque Nationalists</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Non-nationalists</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nr.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage from the total
Source: Euskobarómetro 2006/2
Table 2: CONDITIONS TO BECOME BASQUE, 1979-2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Living and working in the Basque Country</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaking euskera</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Descending from a basque lineage</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To be born in the Basque Country</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defending the Basque nation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The will to be a Basque</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Having nationalist feelings</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only positive percentages are included

Sources: for 1979: (J. LINZ, 1986:31ss); for 1987 and 1996: F. LLERA (CIS, 1795 and UPV/CIS, 1996); and from 1999 EUSKOBAROMETRO