

“We Love You” The Basque Government’s Post-Franco Discourses on the Basque Diaspora

PEDRO J. OIARZABAL*

RESUMEN
LABURPENA
ABSTRACT

Este artículo nos presenta los resultados del análisis de contenidos de los sucesivos discursos etnonacionalistas realizados por las Diputaciones Forales Vascas sobre la diáspora vasca desde la restauración de la democracia hasta hoy. El artículo pretende aportar una visión sobre la actual influencia de la ideología en la construcción de discursos de identidad de la diáspora. ¿En qué medida ha influido la existencia de la Comunidad Autónoma Vasca y un Gobierno, con sus políticas, sus acciones e ideologías en la identidad vasca de la diáspora y sus discursos institucionales?

*Artikulu honek demokrazia berrezarri zenetik gaur egunera arte Euskal Herriko Foru Aldundiek euskal diasporari buruz egin dituzten diskurtso etnonazionalis-
tei buruzko edukiaren azterketen emaitzak aurkezten ditu. Diasporak nortasuna-
ri buruzko diskurtsoak eraikitzerakoan gaur egun jasaten dituen eragin ideolo-
gikoei buruzko ikuspuntua azaltzen saiatzen da. Zer eragin izan dute diaspora-
ren euskal nortasunean eta haren diskurtso instituzionalean Euskal Autonomia
Erkidegoak eta Jaurlaritzak, haren politikek, ekintzek eta ideologiek?.*

This paper presents the results of content analysis of the successive Basque Autonomous Community Governments’ ethnonationalist discourses on the Basque diaspora since the restoration of democracy until the present. The paper attempts to gain insight into the current ideological influence in the construction of identity discourses by the diaspora. How has the existence of the BAC and a government, its policies, actions, and ideologies influenced the Basque identity in the diaspora and its institutional discourses?

PALABRAS CLAVE
HITZ GARRANTZITSUAK
KEY WORDS

Gobierno Vasco, Diáspora vasca, Etnonacionalismo, Internet y TV vía satélite

Eusko Jaurlaritza, Euskal diaspora, Etnonazionalismoa, Internet eta satelite bidezko telebista.

Basque Government, Basque Diaspora, Ethnonationalism, Internet and Satellite TV

* University of Nevada. Reno

“As a President of the Basque Government I will never rest while there is a Basque man or Basque woman in the world suffering economic or social hardship [...] What I want to tell you is that we love you, that we are not going to forget you; you are in our hearts [...] I love you more than ever, that you have us at the other side of the ocean, but very close at the heart.”

(Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe, at the Buenos Aires Basque Club Laurak Bat, November 29, 2002) (1)

My interest focuses on the institutional relationships between the Basque Autonomous Community Government (BAC; Basque Government hereafter) and the Basque diaspora institutions (155), which are found in twenty-three countries as of December 2005 (3). The Basque Government is the inheritor of the historical Basque self-government established at the outburst of the Spanish Civil War. This historical Basque Government instituted early institutional ties with many Basque diasporic communities, and which in some cases continue until today. Moreover, it is the only government that deals with the Basque diaspora per se. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s the Basque Government has designed a legal and financial framework such as the specific Law 8/1994 and subsequent policies towards the Basque diaspora in order to strength those ties. In this paper, I present an analysis of the Basque Government’s ethnonationalist past- and future-oriented discourses on the Basque diaspora since the 1980s. How has the existence of the BAC and a government, its policies, actions, and ideologies influenced the Basque identity in the diaspora and its institutional discourses?

2.1. Homeland ethnonationalism

I use Connor’s (1994) “ethnonationalism” concept in order to interpret today’s Basque nationalism in relation to the Basque diaspora. Connor (1994) defines nation as a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related (i.e., an ethnic or ethnonational group), while

(1) Speech displayed at the *Centro Vasco Eusko Etxea* de La Plata’s site, <<http://www.centrovasco.com>>. The conference was broadcasted via live satellite to nine Basque clubs in Argentina: Arrecifes, Bahía Blanca, Chacabuco, La Plata, Laprida, Mar del Plata, Necochea, Rosario, and San Nicolás. This was the first time that such a technology was used by the Basque diaspora.

(2) The author would like to thank Dr. Santiago de Pablo, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of the Basque Country, for reviewing previous drafts of this paper.

(3) Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, France, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, the UK, Uruguay, the US, and Venezuela.

1. INTRODUCTION (2)

2. DISCOURSES ON THE BASQUE DIASPORA: THE BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

nationalism connotes identification with and loyalty to one's ethnonational group (see also Smith, 1992: 13-14; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawn, 1990). A common ancestry means an intergenerational link to common ancestors, i.e., maintaining and transmitting traditions and inherited heritage to the next generation. There is a preservation and continuity of the past tradition in the present and in the future (i.e., a forward orientation). The preservation, maintenance, and promotion of tradition become central to diaspora communities such as of the Basque. For example, Nash (1989: 10-15) defines tradition as:

The past of a culture, as the past is thought to have continuity, a presence, and a future. These features of traditions bestow upon the past a weight of authority; the very fact of survival, pastness, and continuity, give an aura of authority, legitimacy and rightness to cultural beliefs, and practices (indicating the reverence and authority for the pastness of things). That things and practices have traditional warrant makes for a linkage over generations, thus bestowing upon even the most humble member of the group a pedigree, allowing him to identify with heroic times, great deeds, and a genealogy to the beginning of things, human, cultural, and spiritual.

Following Connor, an ethnonational group is not only a tangible, objective or visible rational identity phenomena—a nation with a common language, religion, territory, or ancestry based on myths of common descents or kinship—which “contribute to this notion or sense of the group's self-identity and uniqueness” (1994: 104; see also Smith, 1981). But it is also a non-tangible, less visible physiological, emotional, and therefore subjective identity phenomena. Consequently, Connor concludes that these two ethnonational dimensions—rational and emotional—maintain national consciousness. The author suggests the need for analyzing speeches of national and governmental leaders, among others, in order to understand the emotional depth of the ethnonational identity. In this sense, ethnonationalism is an assertion of being and belonging to a people, a territory, a heritage, and a culture (language, traditions). Diaspora, on the other hand, is an assertion about not being there, in the homeland—the permanent absence from the place of origin. However, what does the Basque diaspora understand as the homeland? According to previous analyses of the content and the hyperlink network of Basque institutional diaspora web sites, the diaspora's homeland is, without any doubt, the Basque Country (see Oiarzabal, 2006) (4). That is, the diaspora identifies almost exclusively with the Basque homeland, defined as seven provinces, over the states of Spain and France. In that sense, the place

(4) Between 2002 and 2006 I conducted quantitative, qualitative, and comparative research on the Basque institutional diaspora presence in cyberspace or Basque webscape. Consequently I analyzed ninety-eight Basque diaspora web sites from sixteen countries (63.3% of total Basque diaspora associations, 155, as of December 2005). A total of 141 people from twenty countries, where Basques have articulated an institutionalized presence, participated in the research (see Oiarzabal, 2006).

of origin becomes central to the identity discourse produced by the diaspora. The study of Basque diaspora web sites and particularly their textual and graphic content of discourses also invoke a strong emotional aspect, which reinforces in-group solidarity, uniqueness, cohesiveness, empathy, and commonality, while, at the same time, reinforcing out-group differentness and even antipathy.

Accordingly, I conducted content analysis of contemporary (post-Franco's Basque Country) BAC Government key nationalist officials and leaders' political speeches, conferences, and lectures delivered to and for the Basque diaspora. Since the transition to democracy in the Basque Country, the Basque Government has been dominated by elected Basque nationalist parties and coalitions. *Lehendakaritza* or the President's Office is the home of the General Secretariat for Foreign Action and the Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities Abroad. The President's Office, the Secretariat, and the Directorate have always been in the hands of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). The Basque Government as a non-state actor has asserted its institutional and symbolic legitimacy—central aspect of state loyalty—which one of the main functions is to politically socialize its population, including the Basque diaspora.

2.2. Basque Government's discourses: contradictory or complementary?

2.2.1. Past-oriented discourses: origins and authenticity

The Basque Government's discourses are structured around three recurring themes: an *illo tempore* nation, a territory, and history (space-time dimension)—use of the ancient homeland; use of history or golden age suggesting nation's antiquity and continuity. The discourses recreate a community of history based on a common ancestry, language, territory.

For over the last two decades, the diverse Basque nationalist governments have recreated an institutional ethnonationalist "emotional" discourse, which connects the present individual and collectivity with a perennial nation, by enhancing the particularity and uniqueness of Basque identity and culture. This discourse focuses on an assumed Basque authenticity, which is easily communicable and apprehensible, for example, by diaspora Basques. That is, the government defines Basques in terms of their past—i.e., a retrospective imagined discourse. In addition, similar arguments of uniqueness and authenticity are also vividly present in the discourses created by the Basque diaspora. In a sense, both homeland and diaspora past-oriented discourses reinforce each other (Oiarzabal, 2006).

Governmental discourses attempt to connect in a more psychological level to the individual and the individual to the collectivity by the prolific use of arguments related to Basque singularity and authenticity. The psychological and emotional dimensions of identity flow eas-

ily across geographical, socio-political, cultural, and generational contexts, creating a strong affective adscription to the individual to the collective identity. The sense of the “singular” and “authentic” character of Basque heritage provides pride and self-esteem to the individual and community, which in turn makes them feel special and unique. In other words, governmental discourses evoke emotionally charged in the audience by recreating a mysterious and perennial Basque nation, which might generate in the audience an automatic pride of an invaluable identity and culture that unquestionably deserves to be preserved and nurtured. I argue that the self-perpetuation of Basque identity in the diaspora is much based on the pride and affection for assumed characteristics such as uniqueness or singularity, which conform such an identity. Those characteristics are transmitted as part of one’s heritage. Therefore, the individual and community are able to commit to maintaining and defending those characteristics due to the positive social status associated to them (see Tajfel, 1978, ed., 1982). This singularity underlines and feeds in-group values such as self-esteem, pride, and positive social recognition. Nevertheless, those values can also be shared by others, becoming useful mechanisms for promoting Basque culture among Basques and non-Basques. According to Oiarzabal and Oiarzabal, “the idea of loyalty and acknowledgement towards the authenticity of Basque identity [...] constitutes itself as one of the principles transmitted; thereby the Basque identity contains in itself the seeds of its regeneration” (2005: 119).

Arguments on Basque singularity, authenticity, and historical continuity are not new, but they draw on to previous scientific and ideological discourses such as Basque nationalism. For example, since mid-nineteenth century, international and local social scientists have been immersed on addressing the Basque people (language, history etc.) by creating and reproducing a great number of icons, which have become defining canons of Basqueness such as the “particularity” of the Basque language, the “exclusive” physiognomy, or blood type of the Basque people, or the “perennial” Basque history. Those icons or canons were used to differentiate the Basque people and culture in relation to other cultures (see Douglass and Zulaika, 1996; Zulaika, 1998). Basque nationalists have reproduced to some extent these essentialist arguments in order to profusely create an independent unique nation-state in opposition to the Spanish and French nation-states. Some of those “stereotypes” are still alive in the Basque nationalist imaginary and they are utilized in speeches that appeal not only to reason but also to emotion.

According to the analysis of the Basque Government’s discourses, evidence shows that the current Basque nationalism, as did the nineteenth century, reimagines, and reconstructs a pre-existing Basque identity and culture by mystifying its history and culture. Basque authenticity is believed to be based on a remote past, which justifies

the existence of the Basque nationalist ideology whose goal is to create a politico-territorial state to ensure the protection of Basque identity and culture. There is a projection of the nationalist ideology and its *raison d'être* into the past through asserting certain direct links to what are considered Basque nationalist common myths of ancestry, origin, and election: direct descents of the Cro-Magnon people; mysterious origins of the Basque people and the language; or racial pride and biological differentness (see Smith, 1992: 21). According to Douglass, Lyman, and Zulaika (1994: 90-93) those myths recreate a culture of continuity, purity, isolation, and resistance.

The following examples interpret Basque identity and its authenticity, which is, assumedly, found in a remote past, in its antiquity. That is to say, they recall the “unknown” origins of the Basque in order to establish historical linear continuity between a remote past and a present. An article published by the BAC Government’s magazine for the diaspora, *Euskal Etxeak*, referred to the famous friezes of horses at the Santimamiñe prehistoric cave paintings near Gernika. The article was titled “What it was like to be Basque 80,000 years ago” (1992: 16-17). Similarly, the Basque-American Catholic Newsletter, *Lokarria* (December 2005) reproduced an article, previously, published in the newspaper *Le Sudouest*, on DNA research carried out by the University of Cambridge (UK). The study concluded that 75% of a European sample possessed traits of the *Vascon* genome. “Must we conclude that we are all Basques?” the author asks: “This is today a perspective that we cannot ignore [...] This way of imagining the population of the continent turns upside down concepts that we had until now. Instead of being a tenacious people of an unknown origin, the Basques could perhaps be the founding fathers of Europe. Which is effectively the same story” (December 2005).

Similarly, the BAC Government’s site (<<http://www.euskadi.net>>) provides a section dedicated to the Basque diaspora titled “Basque Clubs and Communities.” (5) Under this section, the government offers an electronic document titled “The Basques in History,” which exemplify a Basque historical golden era by highlighting “universal” Basques, while referring also to the future as a culture of continuity (6):

Over the centuries, the Basques have produced a number of great men who have left their mark on history: men like Juan Sebastián Elcano, first man to sail around the world between 1519 and 1521; Urdaneta and Legazpi, pioneers of the Pacific route between Mexico and the Philippines; Juan de Garay, founder of Buenos Aires; Simón Bolívar, liberator of much of colo-

(5) This page was last updated in 2004, and it was last retrieved on February 21, 2006.

(6) The Basque Government’s General Secretariat for Foreign Action established in 1996 the Basque of the Year Award or *Premio Vasco Universal* to acknowledge those who have made a significant contribution.

nial South America; Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits; and Francisco de Vitoria, one of the forefathers of international law, and the Navarran Francisco de Javier [...] In more modern times, the same kind of drive and initiative led to the creation of highly respected industries and banking houses [...] Today, industry and finance remains a solid combination, guaranteeing the Basque Country's prospects for the future.

The Basque diaspora also establishes a similar if not identical discourse, which recreates a Basque historicist golden era. For example, 60% of Basque institutional diaspora sites also provide specific sections that recreate a glorious past by highlighting famous or prominent Basques personalities who have contributed to global history and culture (e.g., St. Ignatius of Loyola, José María Iparraguirre, Juan Sebastián Elcano, or Miguel de Unamuno). Diaspora associations, as well as the Basque Government, convey a positive message about their splendid shared past by enumerating names of Basque historical or charismatic personalities who had excelled in life, while instilling a sense of pride amongst their current membership and community at large. The positive values embedded in those historical figures and in their enterprises and contributions are transmitted into the present Basque community by linking a golden past to the present. At the same time, they also communicate a sense of fascination or at least a sense of curiosity or amazement amongst non-Basques. I am inclined to argue that the proliferation of references to Basque “outstanding” contributions to world history and particularly to the countries of residence of many Basques (by highlighting positive inherited values of past eras) are somehow utilized by diaspora institutions in order to overcome negative values such as terrorism or political violence associated with the current Basque identity.

2.2. Future-oriented discourses: endurance and positiveness

At the same time that the Basque Government is producing past-oriented discourses (i.e., a community of memory), it also is constructing a future-oriented (postmodern) discourse by presenting Basque identity and culture as a guarantee of survival—a community of destiny based on a common future. That is, the government defines Basques in terms of their future—i.e., a prospective imagined discourse. Are those discourses contradictory or complementary? In my opinion, the Basque Government sends to the diaspora contradictory images or messages in relation to the homeland's current reality. However, this does not mean that they cannot be complimentary, as in fact they are. For example, the government's officials and representatives recreate images that tend to depict the Basque Country as both, traditional and postmodern. On the one hand, for example, the covers of the books on diaspora matters *Euskaldunak Munduan-Vascos en el Mundo*, published by the Basque Government Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities, depict traditional images of the Basque Country such as farmhouses, fishing ports or children dressed

in typical dancing or rural costumes. On the other hand, simultaneously, some issues of *Euskal Etxeak* are monographic portrayals of a postmodern Basque Country; e.g., on science and technology, contemporary Basque music, cinema, tourism or architecture. In addition, the Basque Government has sponsored cultural and informal educational programs for the Basque diaspora since 1989, which tend to be more “contemporary” and eclectic than traditional activities such as Basque rural sports. Every four years, the Basque Government has organized World Congresses since 1995, following the dictates of the Law 8/1994, which establishes the relationships between the BAC Government and the Basque diaspora; the *Gaztemundu* annual workshops aimed at the Basque youth since 1996; and it has published the aforementioned magazine *Euskal Etxeak* since 1989 (7). All those programs attempt to promote a particular postmodern homeland-centered culture, while somehow dismissing other more traditional aspects of Basque culture. In an interview with Dr. Toticagüena, she criticizes the Basque Government insistence on portraying the Basque Country, to the diaspora, as postmodern—in her opinion, the Basque Government is giving the diaspora something they are not particularly interested in:

Because the diaspora prefers a more traditional and historical Basque Country. The debate focuses between [choosing to represent the Basque Country with] the Guggenheim Bilbao *Museoa*, or [with] the Basque Archaeological, Ethnographical, and Historical Museum of Bilbao. The Basque Government believes that the diaspora only maintains “alive” the historical reality of the Basque Country. I think that this is not totally correct. The diaspora is also aware of the postmodern reality of the Basque society, but it is not interested on it [...] I do not need to go the Guggenheim to see modern art; I can see it in any art gallery in the United States. However, there is not any place in the United States where I can see my own Basque history. The Basques from the diaspora want to go to the Basque Country to see Basqueness [The Basque Government does not understand it yet] (Oiarzabal, 2003: 61).

In a sense, the government constantly invokes the diaspora to participate in the postmodern, non-traditional, or non-essentialist Basque Country. The governmental speeches introduce to the diaspora a view of Basque society, culture, identity, and values embedded in a process of globalization and postmodernity. The speeches convey to the diaspora a new image of the Basque Country and its people. Consequently, the government repeatedly invites the diaspora to promote this newly crafted postmodern, post-industrial image of the Basque Country, to their communities and countries of residence, as they are considered the “true ambassadors” of the homeland. The

(7) Since 2001, there is a weekly electronic version of the *Euskal Etxeak* magazine, called *Euskal Etxeak Virtual*. As of March 2002, *Euskal Etxeak Virtual* was being distributed to 10,000 e-mail addresses throughout the world (*Euskal Etxeak*, 2002).

promotion of a postmodern image of the Basque Country is somehow related to the promotion of the assumed “true” image of the Basques: peaceful, serene, innovative, and industrious.

The Government future-oriented discourses that I will examine focus on the following themes: Basque identity endurance; a post-modern Basque Country; politics of self-determination; and the achievement of a peaceful and a positive image abroad.

2.2.2.1. Basque identity endurance

The set of discourses promoted by Basque Government leaders attempt to convey the idea that the Basques are not all about the past but also about the future by highlighting the fact that the antiquity of the Basque people guarantees its survival in a near or remote future. That is, according to the discourses the Basques, while remaining faithful to their history and language, are an enduring and restless people “open to globalization” and internationalization. The Basque language becomes, once again, a prominent defining element of Basque identity. For example, during a trip to the US, Joseba Azkarraga, the BAC Minister (8) of Justice, Employment and Social Security, delivered a series of lectures on the proposal for a New Political Statute (the so-called Ibarretxe Plan). In the lecture given at the San Francisco Basque Cultural Center in February 2004 (<<http://www.basqueclub.com/>>), Azkarraga stated:

Our *Euskal Herria* is one of the oldest nations in Europe. Old, historically speaking, but young in spirit. At the footsteps of this newly born 21st Century, ours are a people with the doors open wide. However, always holding on to their identity [...] Above war, repression, dictatorship or partition of the land; just as until now, our people have known how to keep their identity –like *Euskera*, their beloved language [...] And, that nation, *Euskal Herria*, if she keeps alive is thanks to today’s efforts. But most of all, thanks to the work carried out by those who came before us: our parents, grandparents, and forefathers.

At the Third World Congress of Basque Communities (Vitoria-Gasteiz, July 2003), Ibarretxe delivered a powerful inaugural address that was widely echoed by the press:

No one [...] in the name of globalization has the right to ask us to stop being what we are: Basques. No one in the name of globalization should be allowed to strip naked a nation that has been around for more than 7,000 years. No one in the name of globalization has the right to deprive the world, not only of the Basque people, of *Euskara*, the oldest language in Europe. Defending identity is, therefore, central to people, families, and nations. A person, a family or a nation that has no memory cannot be a person, a nation or even an enterprise. It is merely a ghost [...] I once heard a highly

(8) The BAC Government officially translates the term “*Consejero*” or “*Sailburua*” for the one of “Minister.”

acclaimed Basque linguist [Koldo Mitxelena] say that 2,000 years ago different languages, such as the Romances languages, were spoken in the world. But here in *Euskadi*, there was a small group of Basque men and women who communicated with each other in *Euskara*. Today, 2,000 years later English and Spanish are the world's dominant languages [...] but here in the Basque Country we still speak our own language, *Euskara* [...] I don't know what languages might be spoken in another 2,000 years' time, but I am absolutely certain of one thing [...] We will still be communicating with each other in *Euskara*. And there will be a Basque nation (Gobierno Vasco, 2004: 31).

These arguments are not exclusive of governmental leaders but also are commonly found in the Basque diaspora. For example, Mark Bieter, a second generation Basque author in Boise (Idaho, USA), wrote an article titled "A distant mirror" for the homeland newspaper *Berria* reflecting on the Boise Festival, *Jaialdi*, and on the endurance of the Basque identity as the best guarantee for its survival: "Many years ago, an old Basque man told me a story that every Basque knows. When he was a boy, his grandfather took him to a bridge built by the Romans, somewhere in the Basque Country. His grandfather pointed to the bridge and said 'The Romans are gone but the Basques are still here' [...] I have one-year old daughter. When I returned from *Jaialdi*, the best surprise was realizing that some day I can take her to the Roman bridge" (*Berria*, August 10, 2005).

2.2.2.2. *A Postmodern Basque Country: Satellite TV and the Internet*

The Basque Government is resolute on "bringing up to speed" the Basque diaspora into the "current" reality of the Basque Country. What constitutes this postmodern *Euskal Herria*? The government is keen to "sell" abroad, particularly to the diaspora, an extremely innovative and prosperous image of the Basque Country as a way to show the well-being of the Basque society in comparison with their neighbors. Mass media such as TV facilitates the construction and dissemination of this image into the diaspora. This Basque postmodernity based on progress is taken as a Basque differentiating factor in relation to other national societies, by reinforcing the in-group borders and its positive social status, while encouraging a sense of pride amongst diaspora Basques. For example, President Ibarretxe told the audience congregated at the Buenos Aires Basque Club *Laurak Bat* (November 29, 2002): "Today we are one of the most advanced societies, with a better quality of life in Europe and in the world. *Euskadi* is one of the ten first countries of the world rank in relation to the UN human development index; the one that does not only take into account the economic growth, but also other elements that are part of the integral growth of the people" (at *Centro Vasco Eusko Etxea* de La Plata's site, <<http://www.centrovasco.com>>).

In addition, Joseba Azkarraga's February 2004 conference at the San Francisco Basque Cultural Center went into more detail to describe the socio-economic progress of the BAC: "The Basque Autonomous Community which consists of three of the seven territories of *Euskal Herria*, has an [average] income per capita of \$26,200; \$4,750 more than Spain as a whole [...] The Social Protection costs [...] are little by little reaching European parameters, after having surpassed the Spanish mean several years ago. The Basque Country is the only Spanish autonomous community where a minimum income, or social salary, is guaranteed by law for all those citizens who have no other economic resources" (at the Basque Club of San Francisco's site <<http://www.basqueclub.com/>>).

I argue that the Basque Government assumes that the Basque diaspora is culturally and identity-wise outdated, living in a past detached from today's homeland; a "Jurassic park" of identity (Iñaki Egaña, *El País*, July 23, 2004). In this regard, Josu Legarreta, Director for Relations with Basque Communities Abroad, argued:

The history of the world is a continuum search for renovation and change [...] Traditions is what persists; it's what we hold on to as an emblem of our cultural roots, a sign of identity which keep us united. It is which shows others that we belong to a certain group of people. [At the same time] we must live for and create the future; we need to modernize and move forward or allow ourselves to fall behind [...] Without roots there can be no trees. But trees cannot exist without branches and leaves and new fruit. The Basque centers see to preserving these roots, disseminating Basque folklore as part of their activities [...] We are all the makers of history, but today's reality is much more than a struggle to keep our past alive. Remembering the past is essential but we must do so while looking towards the future and setting our sights on the new reality" (*Euskal Etxeak*, 2002: 3).

That is to say, diaspora Basques tend to idealize and "mythologize" the homeland and identity by reproducing ideal, nostalgic, and timeless images and memories from an inherited lost past. The Basque diaspora is reconstructing an image of the Basque Country "in the distance" and "in some sense disconnected from the real appearance of the actual Basque Country" (Alonso, 1998: 288). Narratives of migration are created as a sense of loss, separation, and crisis from the homeland and consequent yearning. There is a spatial and temporal dislocation—i.e., broken connections between homeland and diaspora. For example, Basque cultural and political imaginary of both diaspora and homeland Basques is closely related to a declining and fast disappearing rural world, but symbolic in nature as it is assumingly the recipient of the "authentic" and ancestral Basque culture. Nevertheless, while homeland Basques witness and experience on a daily basis the modernization of their country, diaspora Basques lack those direct experiences. Hoffman explains the reasons for homeland-diaspora estrangement or disjuncture in the following terms: "Loss is a magical preservative. Time stops at the point of severance, and no subsequent impressions muddy the water you have in mind. The

house, the garden, the country you have lost remain forever as you remember them. Nostalgia—that most lyrical of feelings—crystallizes around these images like amber” (1991: 115).

I agree with the argument that portrays the diaspora as a “mythologizing” agent of the homeland, but this does not imply that the diaspora is completely detached from the current homeland’s reality. I argue that Basque diaspora communities are evolving identity-based communities, far from being isolated as the increase of communication and the flow of daily information works against the assumption that they are stagnated, frozen in time, as postcards from the past. However, the diaspora construction of past-oriented discourses, based on images and symbols from a lost past do not necessarily imply that they are frozen in time. The use of images recreating a lost past have a more profound meaning, as they attempt to recreate memories that directly connect to their childhood, family members, ancestors, and homeland. There is an implicit choice. More current images might also find their way into the diaspora imagenary; however, they are not central identity references for diaspora individuals and communities, at least currently. In the context of an ever-changing and unpredictable post-industrial, globalized, and postmodern world, I argue that the Basque diaspora articulates an identity in terms of authenticity, singularity, perdurability or timelessness (an identity with neither beginning nor end) and community, which overcomes individuality, in order to create a sense of meaning, order, and familiarity (Bauman, 1991; Castells, 1997, 1999; Melucci, 1989). That is, being Basque would provide a guide to interpret an assumed chaotic or uncertain world. The security that brings the fact of being allegedly an immemorial people, provide a sense of certainty in the future. The promise of a future would be a guarantee of survival in this chaotic world through the maintenance of the Basque identity. Being and belonging to a particular identity represent a way to act and to interpret the world. In words of Castells, “identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only, source of meaning in a historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. People increasingly organize their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are” (1996: 470).

Meanwhile, although diaspora Basques are considered static individuals as mere reproducers of homeland culture, they are also producing their own culture based on their migration experiences and adaptation to the hostlands. This diasporic or hybrid culture recreates a different sense of Basque identity—transnational and diasporic—and which, consequently, differs from the homeland identity. That is, there is an apparent disjuncture or disconnectedness between the diaspora and the homeland notion of Basqueness according to the discourses constructed, for example, by the Basque diaspora in its web-scape or landscape produced by Basque diaspora web sites. In relation

to the existing divergences on identity between the homeland according to the Basque Government and the diaspora, there is a danger, in my opinion, when one interpretation of identity attempts to be imposed upon the other according to a set of pre-established criteria. The homeland understands Basque identity as authentic and original, while diaspora plays a secondary reproducer role. However, the diaspora displays a more essentialist interpretation of the Basque identity based on a recreation of the past and its idealization, while the homeland subjective criteria on defining Basqueness are gaining terrain.

According to the evidence collected the Basque Government's discourses attempt for the diaspora to reproduce the benchmarks of Basque homeland identity; that is, Basque diaspora identity needs to be defined according to the homeland's identity parameters. The government's constant references about the postmodern identity of the Basque Country tend to push the diaspora towards a more civic and subjective dimension of Basque identity as expressed in the homeland. The diaspora's exposure to the aforementioned Basque Government's politics of identity and culture; personal visits by government officials; homeland musicians and other cultural performers; homeland media; and, particularly, the Internet provoke some questions: Will this exposure and homeland-diaspora contact lead to a synchronization of both the diasporic and homeland culture i.e., a (cyber)cultural (re)unification or diaspora de-ethnicization or homeland "re-ethnicization"? Or on the contrary, will this exposure and homeland-diaspora contact lead to an increasing awareness of "differentness" and separateness from homeland Basques?

For example, in May 2000, at the centennial Basque association, *Laurak Bat* of Buenos Aires the former Minister of Culture of the BAC Government, Mari Carmen Garmendia gave a conference that clearly summed up how the Basque Government views the diaspora, while suggesting that the diaspora, without departing from tradition, needs to embrace a more current understanding of today's Basque identity. Garmendia warned that the existing gap between the diaspora and the homeland might widen over time, while suggesting the role that mass media and new technologies could play in order to narrow such a gap. Garmendia stated:

We the Basques, those who stayed there, and those who, today, live dispersed around the world, cannot limit ourselves to the roots [...] Basque society is a changing society [...] We still feel Basque like our ancestors, but, we look hardly like them [...] We don't relate to the image of the Basque that your elderly transmitted to you [...] I want to say to you that new "branches" are growing from the roots that we share, from our collective memory; that we all, Basques who live here and Basques who live outside here, need to incorporate to our common cultural heritage. We cannot content ourselves with sharing memories, but we have to share also the projects. Our cultural community cannot remain anchored in the past, but we have to open it to the future. In other words, a time will come, in which we could fail to recognize each other. We have to achieve that every time that a Basque, from abroad

comes back to her land, recognize us as part of her community, and recognize also herself as a member of this cultural community [...] In order to obtain such a bond, in order to avoid that our sense of belonging and community be broken, there is no other better tool than to keep alive in a constant manner our communication [...] for example, through the Internet (9).

Communication, according to Garmendia, is the key to eliminating the existing disjuncture between the diaspora and the homeland by promoting, developing, and disseminating the contemporary Basque Country reality abroad, and particularly within the diaspora. The BAC Law 8/1994 that regulates the institutional relationship between the BAC and the Basque diaspora was the facilitator of the first satellite television broadcasts for the Basque diaspora. Indeed, the Law 8/1994 is intended to “project knowledge of the reality of the Basque Country in the places where Basque communities are settled” (Gobierno Vasco, 1994, Article 1c).

The different satellite television experiments carried out by the Basque Public Radio and Television (EiTB) (10) since 1996 resulted in the creation of *Canal Vasco* for Latin America in 2000. It is currently the only Basque satellite television. According to research carried out by Amezaga (2004) on the use of the Basque satellite television (*Canal Vasco*) by diaspora Basques from Argentina and Venezuela, and its influence on identity maintenance and formation, two main attitudes towards its use were found. Those are intrinsically related to the viewers’ own identity. On the one hand, for viewers with a well “established” and defined Basque identity, *Canal Vasco* would, obviously, either contradict or assert their preconceived definitions of Basque identity. These viewers tend to have a more critical attitude towards the channel if the discursive images shown contradict their definitions of what Basque culture and identity are. On the other hand, viewers who are in the process of constructing their Basque identity do not have any problem with what the programs have to offer because their expectations are minimal. This second group of viewers considers that the television channel is showing the *true* Basque Country without questioning it. Amezaga argues that *Canal Vasco* helps dias-

(9) Mari Carmen Garmendia’s *Laurak Bat* Conference, May 12, 2000 at the Juan de Garay Foundation’s site (Buenos Aires, Argentina; May 7, 2005.

<<http://www.juandegaray.org.ar>>).

(10) As of 2006, EiTB, Euskal Irrati Telebista, has five radio stations and four television channels; two of them are satellite televisions: ETB Sat focuses on the European audience, while *Canal Vasco* focuses on the American audience. Since 2000, the radio stations and the ETB Sat channel are available online through its website <<http://www.eitb.com>>. As of March 2006, EiTB’s two satellite channels and the five radio stations are accessible on high definition via the Internet. In addition, EiTB offers through its news site, EiTB24 (<<http://www.eitb24.com>>), a specific section on news about the Basque diaspora called “Basques around the world,” which is offered in Basque, Spanish, and English: <http://www.eitb24.com/portal/eitb24/vascosmundo_home/basques_around_the_world?idioma=en&cl=/eitb24/vascos>.

pora Basques to visualize, imagine, and recreate the most tangible aspects of the Basque homeland. The TV channel introduces a current Basque homeland dimension in their living rooms, consuming an immediate and quotidian “digital experience” of Basqueness. However, the author concludes that this digital experience alone is not sufficient for the individual to maintain her Basque identity. There is also a need for real life experience, for example, by participating in Basque diaspora community gatherings or by visiting the Basque Country.

If in 1995 the diaspora institutional delegates at the First World Congress on Basque Communities abroad called for the need of a Basque TV channel for the diaspora as a way to get close to the Basque homeland reality, in the Proposal of the Four-Year Plan for Institutional Action 2003-2007, drawn up during the celebration of the Third World Congress on Basque Communities, the diaspora delegates suggested “that EITB [should] include news of the diaspora in its habitual programs and news.” At the same time, they urged “all journalists and media in *Euskal Herria* to get involved in the habitual coverage of news from the Diaspora” (Gobierno Vasco, 2004: 254). That is, the Basque diaspora would like to become an integral part of the Basque homeland’s day-to-day experiences. The institutional delegates advocated for a two-way communication channel, where both current realities from homeland and diaspora could be shown in each other’s living rooms; as a way to narrow the existing differentness between both realities, not only as a way for the diaspora to become more *alike* the homeland.

Finally, learning from the Turkish diaspora, Aksoy and Robins conclusively argue that new media technologies (e.g., transnational communications such as satellite television) *enhance* a synchronization of diaspora’s culture and identity with homeland’s culture and identity, and consequently enhance a de-ethnicization of the diaspora. According to their research on Turkish migrants in London, the authors argue that although “television may nourish warm and nostalgic feelings,” satellite television “brings the ordinary, banal reality of Turkish life to the migrants living in London [...] The ‘here and now’ reality of Turkish media culture disturbs the imagination of a ‘there and then’ Turkey –thereby working against the romance of diaspora-as-exile, against the tendency to false idealization of the ‘homeland’. We might say, then, that Turkish television is an agent of cultural de-mythologisation” (2002: 10-12). Therefore, the satellite TV, marketed primarily for the Turkey audience, creates a united audience, a common national imagined community without marking differences between Turks in Turkey and Turks abroad. However, Aksoy and Robins (2002: 18) argue that in the Turkish case, the viewers might not feel at home in the “we-ness of Turkish broadcasting culture”; i.e., satellite television is embedded in a national imag-

inary that works towards the creation of a national imagined community rather than a diasporic imagined community (see also Aksoy and Robins, 2000).

What are the implications of new technologies such as the Internet for resolving the estrangement between the Basque Country and the Basque diaspora? The Internet, particularly the Web and its Basque diaspora webscape allow for diaspora Basques to access (and distribute) a vast number of resources and amount of information for material and symbolic recreation of some aspects of the Basque culture such as history, games, sports, or language; while providing the ability to construct social ties among individuals and communities. Taking into account the specific characteristics of the Internet and the Web, their potentiality for enhancing or strengthening identity maintenance in the diaspora is higher than other media such as the Basque satellite television channel where the viewer is a mere receptor or consumer of a culture produced or tailored not only for Basque viewers but for the general Latin American population (Amezaga, 2004).

Is the Basque diaspora perceived by the *Canal Vasco's* board of directors as part of a Basque imagined transnational community constituted by both homeland and diaspora? Or is the Basque diaspora just an audience that is willing to consume programs, which were originally aimed at the homeland? Here is where some of the differences between the satellite television and the Internet are found. On the Web, diaspora Basques are not only consumers of a predetermined culture, but also producers of culture; they are readers and authors. For example, the Internet as the channel, and the Web as the medium, allow for the diaspora Basques to *interact* with each other as well with homeland Basques in an immediate way on matters that might be core to their identity. The existing gap between homeland and diaspora, for example in the different interpretations on Basque identity, could well be narrowed by the communication and interaction provided by the Web, but not alone. Diaspora Basques can access to this current Basque "reality" in an unprecedented manner via the Internet and the Web. But in this equation, the offline dimension is key if diaspora Basques and their institutions wish to implement this "new" *Euskal Herria* into the communities' imaginary, allowing building bridges towards the current homeland. However, it is up to the diaspora Basques and their institutions to close or not the aforementioned gap. At the same time, it is also up to the Basque Government to understand the unique diaspora identity characteristics, and the reasons behind its exclusiveness and continuous allusions to primordial identity markers such as language or ancestry. In this way, the Internet and the Web are great windows of opportunities for government officials to learn in a fast, immediate, and an inexpensive manner about Basque diaspora identity.

2.2.2.3. *Politics of self-determination: securing the future*

The preface of the so-called Ibarretxe Plan of the proposal defines the Basque people as: “A People with its own identity within the community of European peoples, repository of a singular historical, social, and cultural heritage, distributed geographically in seven territories, currently articulated in three different legal-political regions and located in two different states.” Article 5 refers to the Basque diaspora as a clear indicator of the Basque Government’s commitment towards the Basques abroad and their inclusiveness in the future of the BAC as part of the greater Basque family: “All persons resident abroad, and their descendants, whose last place of residence was the Community of the Basque Country, may, should they wish, enjoy Basque nationality and the political rights corresponding to Basque citizens with the provisions established by Law.”

This inclusiveness is also a constant reference in speeches of government leaders. For example, at the First World Congress, the former *Lehendakari* José Antonio Ardanza reminded the delegates:

We want you to be part of this land, more than that, a very important part of it, for without you, our self-government would not be complete. You are the most genuine example of the ‘*eman ta zabal zazu*’ of our most universal symbol: the Gernika Tree. You represent for us the extraterritoriality that enlarges the dimension of our self-government and opens our small country to the whole world. I am sure that [...] you will plant in your children the seed and the pride of being Basque that you received from your parents (Gobierno Vasco, 1996: 21).

Within the context of the proposed Ibarretxe Plan, Minister Azkarraga elaborated on the previous arguments:

Euskal Herria, the Basque Nation [...] is a nation that demands respect for its right to be itself; just like it itself respects the right for the French to be French is recognized. The Spaniards have their own state. We the Basques also want our right to be recognized: to define, according to our own free will, what we want to be [...] And, today, if we are a nation, to a large degree it is thanks to you as well. That’s to say, the Basques who live far away from *Euskal Herria*. Because you are, without any doubt, the mirror of the true *Euskal Herria*. Although so many have tried to destroy the true image using the unacceptable violence of ETA in a rotten and evil organized spider’s web” (at the Basque Club of San Francisco’s site <<http://www.basqueclub.com/>>, February 2004).

In addition, Azkarraga described the Ibarretxe Plan as “a proposal open to the Basque diaspora [...] because it’s not only the history that unite us, but also the present and the future.” Then, he strongly and bluntly invoked the audience and the diaspora: “You [...] will continue to defend your father’s house [...] you need to become active agents [to obtain] peace and freedom for *Euskal Herria*” (at the Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, USA; February 11, 2004). Similarly, during a visit to Buenos Aires, the then Minister of Education, Anjeles Iztueta, openly asked the Basques in Argentina for their support to the Ibarretxe Plan “in order to exercise

our right of self-government, because we want to be the masters of our own future” (*Deia*, October 10, 2003). That is to say, Basque Government’s representatives attempted to mobilize the diaspora in support for a homeland nationalist agenda.

As any member of the Basque “greater family,” the Basques from abroad have also rights—similar to those enjoyed by the BAC citizens—but what about their duties? What is the role of the Basque diaspora assigned by the Basque Government? According to the survey I carried out during the Third World Congress of Basque Collectivities (July 2003), diaspora institutional leaders from seventeen countries believed that the diaspora should have an active participation in homeland’s matters, such as, for order of importance, culture, politics (via direct political representation in the BAC Parliament, and on the resolution of the violent conflict), and economy. In this sense, the diaspora representatives believed that for the Basque Government the Basque diaspora is, mainly, a tool to promote Basque culture abroad. However, they tend to be indifferent about the Basque diaspora’s active participation in the international relations or foreign para-diplomacy of the Basque Government, and particularly about its active involvement in the Basque Government itself.

In other words, the aforementioned government’s inclusive and top-down approach towards the Basque diaspora implies, according to the above mentioned statements, the active role of the diaspora as a political agent in the consecution of the “alleged” intrinsic rights of the Basque people as an “immemorial” nation. The Basque Government openly calls upon the political support of the Basque diaspora in any near future exercise of the right of self-determination, including the Ibarretxe Plan. Furthermore, the government is keen to offer the diaspora a national project around *Euskadi*. For example, during the opening ceremony of the First World Congress of Basque Communities abroad (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1995), former President Ardanza stated, “with these self-governmental institutions we can offer you today a solid frame you can identify with, that can and should help you to define more easily and effectively than in the past, your own feelings of identity and belonging, and to make you feel you share even more (if possible), a national yet universal project that can be recognized in the whole world with the name of *Euskadi*” (Gobierno Vasco, 1996: 19).

The message transmitted to the diaspora is straightforward: there is an imperative need to obtain the highest level of self-government and even self-determination in order to guarantee the future of the Basque identity, culture, and ancestral homeland, which directly affect the diaspora’s “survival.” By utilizing the emotional dimension of identity, through rhetorical arguments on the mysterious and fascinating origins of the Basque people and the language—a community of common history as well as of common destiny—the government attempts to gain the support of the diaspora in achieving the governments’

(mainly nationalist) agenda. Particularly, within the context of campaigning for the New Political Statute, various government officials went to the diaspora communities to convey the political messages embedded in the proposal (11). Consequently, the level of political, nationalist, discourses have gradually increased in relation to the homeland's political momentum, particularly since 1998; a year marked by ETA's ceasefire, following the so-called Lizarra Declaration, and the formation of a short-lived Basque Government nationalist coalition front (1999-2000), which included *Euskal Herritarrok*. The direct calls for the diaspora to take action and be part of the homeland political process have been also more overt than in previous eras (12).

In sum, the current Basque diaspora, and its institutionalization (*euskal etxeak* and federations), constitutes another dimension of the international projection of the Basque Country and the Basque Government. According to Totoricagüena (2005), the Basque Government capitalizes on the high status of diaspora Basques in order to achieve its political and economical goals. It is not a coincidence that the Directorate for Relations with the Basques Communities is part of the General Secretariat of Foreign Action. Guillermo Canut, President of the Basque Club *Zazpirak Bat* from Rosario (Argentina, <<http://www.zazpirakbat.com/>>), and former Vice-President of FEVA, the Federation of Basque-Argentinean Associations (2002-2004), wrote an article, "*El Camino hacia la libertad*," in the newspaper *Gara* defining the Ibarretxe Plan as "an irreversible process" and the best way to achieve more freedom and

(11) For example, Joseba Azkarraga (Minister of Justice, February 2004; USA); Anjeles Iztueta (Minister of Education, October 2003 and March 2004; Argentina); Idoia Zenarruzabeitia (Vice-President, June 2004; Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay); Miren Azkarate (Minister of Culture, November 2003; Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay; and June 2004; Mexico); and Sabin Intxaurreaga (Minister of Environment, August 2004; Argentina).

(12) For example, political news and editorials, and monographic issues on homeland politics that were displayed on the Basque Government's diaspora magazine *Euskal Etxeak*, have become a norm for the past few years: Issue 39, September 1998: "*Euskadi chooses its future*." The editorial was: "*To vote: right and a duty also for Basques living abroad*"; Issue 40, December 1998: "*Euskadi faces the legislature of peace*"; Issue 41, 1999: "*Time to talk: Euskadi holds out hope for the peace process*"; Issue 42, June 1999: "*Historic Agreement: EH committed to democratic procedures*." The editorial was: "*An agreement for history*"; Issue 48, December 2000: "*Declaration of Gernika: an ethical engagement in defense of the right to life and the freedom of all persons*"; Issue 49, May 2001: "*The Lehendakari call for an election in the Basque Country on May 13th*"; Issue 50, September 2001: "*Euskadi votes for peace: the PNV-EA coalition wins the election*"; Issue 51, October 2001: "*A commitment to Euskadi*." The editorial was: "*To life, peace, respect for the Basque people and solidarity*"; Issue 53, March 2002: "*Where there isn't life, there isn't freedom; where there isn't peace, there isn't freedom*"; Issue 54, June 2002: "*The Idaho State Legislature unanimously approved a declaration in favor of the Basques right to self-determination*"; and Issue 67, March 2005: "*New Political Statute, a proposal for coexistence*." The Editorial was: "*A proposal for coexistence*."

peace (13): “There are not threats, decrees, tribunals, or jails that could contain the process of self-determination of a people who wishes more freedom and more quality of life for far too long. Here, it is natural to talk about the seven provinces that form *Euskal Herria*; there is no Basque abroad that ignores that Navarre and *Iparralde* are an indissoluble part of that nation” (*Gara*, January 21, 2005). According to Canut the role of the Basque diaspora in the process of self-determination is: “To take the New Statue, to the media, political, social, cultural, and why not, sport institutions, so they know from first hand the real will of the Basque people. They already know us, we have opened doors for many decades in the institutions of our cities, and this merit is due to [...] our grandparents who left the best of themselves in everywhere, and they were always recognized as industrious, honest, and trustworthy Basque men and Basque women” (*Gara*, January 21, 2005).

As a result of the increasing politization, over the years, of the government’s discourses on the diaspora, the 2002 Idaho Joint Memorial No. 144 (USA) was a response to those direct calls (14). The Idaho Joint Memorial No. 144 was passed unanimously after being submitted by local Basque-Americans to the Idaho State Legislature. The Memorial declared the State of Idaho’s support for the Basque people to exercise their right to self-determination, while calling for the end to violence in the Basque Country perpetrated by ETA, as well as by the *Spanish State* (Toticagüena, 2005) (15). Following the Idaho Memorial, FEVA, presented *Lehendakari* Ibarretxe, during his visit to Argentina in November 2002, with a document in favor of peace, free-

(13) For example public figures such as the Basque-American Mayor of Boise (Idaho, USA), David Bieter have publicly expressed their support for the Ibarretxe Plan (*Deia*, December 13, 2003). Moreover, during an official visit to the Basque Country, the President of the Buenos Aires Province’s Chamber of Deputies, Osvaldo José Mercuri, stated his personal support for the independence of the Basque nation, while recalling the historical ties between the Basques and the Argentineans as well as the number of Argentineans of Basque ancestry –an estimate of 15% (El Adelantado de Salamanca, July 29, 2004). In October 2004, the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Province of Buenos Aires received President Ibarretxe according to protocols reserved to head of states. Deputies and Senators officially expressed their support for the Ibarretxe Plan (*Deia*, October 27, 2004).

(14) In 1972, the Idaho Joint Memorial No. 115 condemned Franco’s Government while urging peace and democracy in the Basque Country.

(15) The Idaho Memorial created an international dispute with the Spanish Government as the later understood the Memorial as a statement of support for ETA. It also provoked an internal dispute with the US State Department as argued that “foreign policy is a presidential prerogative” (*CNN*, March 11, 2002; *Gara*, March 8, 2002). The Basque homeland nationalist and pro-independence press (*Deia*, *Gara* or *Egunkaria*) welcomed the Idaho Memorial declaration, while the Spanish press (*El País*, *El Mundo* or *ABC*), the Spanish Government and the conservative Popular Party criticized the initiative for its interference into domestic politics, while making ridicule of diaspora Basques, including one of the promoters Pete Cenarrusa, former Secretary of the State of Idaho, for being so ignorant of the homeland reality (see *Gara*, March 6 and March 12, 2002; *Deia*, March 12, 2002; *ABC*, September 5 and 6, 2002; *El Semanal Digital*, September 1, 2004). In relation to the

dom, and self-determination for the Basque Country, while manifesting its adherence to the Idaho Memorial declaration. Similarly, the Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Santa Fé (Argentina) issued a statement in May 2002, endorsing the Idaho Joint Memorial and FEVA's respective declarations on a future peace process and the self-determination of the Basque Country by peaceful means, while rejecting ETA's methods. Significantly, FEVA defines itself as an apolitical and non-partisan institution.

2.2.2.4. A peaceful and a positive image abroad: the 2003 World Congress Declaration

The BAC Law 8/1994 defines the role of the diaspora in the following terms: "In an environment of continuous globalization and internationalization of modern societies, Basque communities [abroad] can play the part; there is no doubt, of stimulators of social, cultural, economic, and political relations" (Gobierno Vasco, 1994). That is, the Law 8/1994 provides certain legitimacy for diaspora institutions to get involved in homeland matters, if not in real terms at least in a symbolic way. Even over a decade earlier than the aforementioned law was passed, President Carlos Garaikoetxea expressed the post-Franco Basque government's willingness to get the diaspora involved in homeland issues. One of the earliest Basque Government's references to the Basque diaspora is found at the celebration of the First Basque American Congress in *Euskadi (Ameriketako Euskaldunak Euskadin)*, September 2-7, 1982, Donostia-San Sebastián) (16), which was the first congress of its kind organized by the then newly established Basque Government and its Department of Culture (17). Garaikoetxea told the diaspora delegates at the 1982 Basque American Congress: "We believe that what happens in *Euskadi* concerns all Basques whenever they may be" (*Basque Studies Program Newsletter*, 1982).

Idaho Memorial Basque historian José María Portillo sarcastically stated: "I would like to propose to our representatives in the Parliament of Vitoria, first of all, to send urgently educational material, particularly on history, geography and anthropology of the Basque Country to the Idaho Congress" because of "the manifest ignorance of those Americans" (*El Correo*, March 9, 2002; *El País*, March 10, 2002; *Deia*, March 20, 2002; Savater, 2004: 69-72).

(16) This Congress was attended by 126 people from ten countries (six from South America, three from North America, while the Philippines representative was invited as an observer). In 1987, a second International Congress of Basque Centers was also celebrated in the Basque Country. Another, three diaspora congresses were celebrated in Argentina: in 1989 Bahía Blanca, in 1990 Necochea, and in 1997 Buenos Aires. They were only attended by Basque-American centers.

(17) In 1984, the Basque Government's Department of Culture created the Service for Relations with the Basque Centers. Later on, in 1990, the government established the Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities, under the General Secretariat for Foreign Action, within *Lehendakaritza*.

Government leaders and officials' "heartwarming" speeches produce strong emotional connections with diaspora Basques by utilizing ethnonationalist arguments, which reinforce not only Basque cultural uniqueness but also Basque political uniqueness. Basque identity and culture are not only defined in symbolic, cultural, or historical terms but also in political terms, where national differentness provides a new perspective in the construction of Basque singularity. The Basque diaspora is seen as an ideological community—an extended family that spans the planet—enhanced by the Basque Government, and fuelled by a nationalist agenda, which places great significance on traditional and cultural values as proof of differentness, coinciding with the diaspora's own discourses of uniqueness. The Basque Government conveys to the diaspora a nationalist message promoting the idea of a timeless or immemorial, homogeneous and united seven-province nation. The diaspora is consequently viewed by the Basque Government as a vivid proof of Basqueness. The existence of Basques abroad are a proof of the authenticity of Basques in the homeland—resilient, enduring historical continuity of Basque identity—not as a figment of imagination, or a political nationalist construct; while celebrating the perpetuation and preservation of a timeless and unique Basque identity, values, and cultural traditions abroad, which survives despite not having experienced always the right conditions.

In this sense, Basque political violence becomes central to the discourses created by government representatives in relation to the Basque diaspora. The Basque Government attempts to circumvent the consequences of ETA's violence by promoting a peaceful image abroad. Consequently, one of the goals of the Basque Government is for the diaspora to convey to their countries of residence a peaceful and socio-economically modern society. The government does not only invite the diaspora to have an active role in international politics by promoting the "true" real Basque Country self-image—postmodern as well as peaceful and tolerant—but also to proclaim its commitment with the homeland's right to self-determination—the right to decide its own future.

For example, President Garaikoetxea is one of the first Basque leaders to provide a statement regarding the role of the diaspora in promoting a Basque peaceful image, while conveying the wish of the Basque people to achieve peace: "I want to proclaim before you all that the reality of the country is one in which the immense majority of men and women ardently desire peace and detest violence, and they pursue with equal earnestness their national liberties (at the First Basque American Congress, Donostia-San Sebastián, *Basque Studies Program Newsletter*, 1982) (18). President Ibarretxe stated in 1999 at

(18) In 1983, Garaikoetxea traveled to Panama, Venezuela, and Colombia within the framework of the bicentennial birth anniversary of Basque descendant Simón Bolívar. The

the Second World Congress of Basque Communities: “We have to get across to the world that the Basque people are a hard-working and peace-loving people, over and above all the cliché’s that are being branded about us around the world [...] You are extraordinary ambassadors of this value that the Basque society has” (Gobierno Vasco, 2000: 23).

According to the analyzed data, the Basque Government establishes a direct correlation between promoting peace—or at least the image of a peaceful society—abroad, and achieving a positive social image and status abroad, which could turn into potential international political solidarity or simply into economic and financial investment. At the same time, the government also establishes a second correlation between achieving peace and achieving a new political framework, such as the New Political Statute, for the future political relationship between the Basque Country and Spain. For the last two decades, diverse government representatives have, constantly, insisted on the need for the diaspora to be part, to a certain extent, of homeland political matters, particularly in its role of messenger of the image of the BAC.

The government’s calls for the diaspora to play the role of the Basque Country’s ambassadors of promoting a peaceful and positive image of the Basque Country have been answered on multiple occasions as diaspora Basques are confronted by news that almost exclusively associate Basques with violence. That is, there is a common interest for both homeland and diaspora to overcome such a negative identification and stereotype by promoting a collective positive image (19). According to several authors (e.g., Tajfel, 1978, ed., 1982; Calhoun ed., 1994) the acquisition and maintenance of a positive

purpose of the trip was to renew ties and to express gratitude to those countries that have received Basque migrants, while conveying a peaceful message: “The oldest nation of Europe, the Basque Country, fights for its national liberties [...] However, minority groups of our country still think that the Basque national liberties can only be obtained through violence [...] In contrast to the image of violence that minority actions could project [...] there is a reality of a country that has chosen the weapons of peace and the democratic fight to obtain the self-government of the Basque nation [...] There is a reality of a peaceful and solidararian country” (Gobierno Vasco, 1983). It is significant that the first presidential trip of the newly established Basque Autonomous Government was to Basque communities in America as a way to thank them for their previous financial help to the Basque Country and the Basque Government-in-exile. Garaikoetxea was received by the three American countries with the same honors of a head of state (Gobierno Vasco, 1983: 11). (19) According to Drzewiecka labels “are used strategically to assert different positionalities and rights of the collective ‘we’ in specific situations [...] to accomplish a variety of goals” (2002: 8). In this sense, the “terrorist label” (as a negative stereotype) is perceived by diaspora Basques and homeland Basques as an obstacle for establishing a constant positive collective identity. This has provoked the reaction of diaspora Basques from an individual level to a more organized defense to confront those assumed false public accusations, by portraying the Basques as ‘peace lovers,’ while disengaging the collectivity of Basques from the violent actions of a minority.

social status and self-image for emigrant groups is essential for their identity promotion within their host societies and the potential affiliation of the members to a specific group. For example, as a result of *Al-Qaeda* attacks in Madrid, which produced nearly 200 deaths (March 11, 2004), the Spanish Government rushed to blame ETA, and continued to do so, even after a group linked to *Al-Qaeda* claimed the terrorist attacks. The New York Times opened the following day's front page with an article titled "10 bombs shatter trains in Madrid, killing 192: 1,400 are hurt – top suspects are Basques and Al-Qaeda," while on Page 1 a report stated "Rush-hour blasts kill 192 on Madrid trains: Basques first blamed, but Al-Qaeda role claimed" (March 12, 2004). On March 13, 2004, the daily paper carried similar headlines: "Bombings in Madrid: Spanish officials divided of whom to blame for train attacks: Basques or Islamists." The use of the term "Basque" instead of the term "ETA" created certain public distress in the Basque-American community. Three New York-based Basque organizations—the Society of Basque Studies in America, the Basque International Cultural Center, and the *Eusko Etxea* of New York (<<http://www.eeny.org>>—sent a letter to the editor of the paper, but it was never published. The letter reads as follows: "It's time to stop maligning Basques [...] Let's get it straight: Basques are NOT terrorists, Basques are a peaceful people [...] Please do not confuse Basques with ETA, nor Irish with IRA, nor any other culture with a terrorist group [...] We wish the media would show the true response of Basques to ETA, to *Al-Qaeda* and to the bombing of Madrid" (at the *Eusko Etxea* of New York's site <<http://www.eeny.org>>, emphasis in original).

Moreover, the California-based International Basque Organization for Human Rights (IBO) also sent a letter to The New York Times editor in protest for the use of the generic term "Basque" to refer to a particular group "ETA", while rejecting the use of ETA, by the Spanish Government, as a tool to discredit the Basques in the homeland and in the diaspora: "What prompted us to write you is the wording of your headline, which stated that the blame was directed at the Basques [...] This sadly reflects Spain's official stance when it comes to dealing with Basque nationalism: It leads people to think that all Basques either are involved in or support terrorist acts like the ones perpetrated in Madrid in which so many innocent people's lives were affected [...] What the Spanish government is trying to do is to strip the Basques of their right to self-determination, a right enshrined in the UN's charter (20)" (at IBO's site <<http://www.euskojustice.org/>>). The

(20) On a previous occasion, in a public event in Oklahoma on January 31st, 2004, Senator John Kerry, and former candidate to the 2004 US Presidency for the Democratic Party, while referring to the IRA, compared the Basques and Sikhs to terrorist organizations. The Basque association IBO sent a letter to Senator Kerry seeking a public apology for defining the Basques as terrorists. IBO representative Alejandro Eguia-Lis stated: "Nothing

aforementioned association considered the collective identification of terrorists for ethnic or national origin with all Basques unjust, as those identifications stigmatized and criminalized a whole collectivity, not for what it does but for what it is. That is to say, this type of stereotype could easily promote prejudice and hatred towards innocent Basques. NABO, the North American Basque Organizations federation, maintained itself outside this polemic and did not state its opinion on the matter.

Finally, the government's insisting demands on the promotion of a peaceful image of the Basque society took an inflection point when institutional leaders of the Basque diaspora issued an Institutional Declaration that explicitly condemned ETA and its actions for first time ever, at the 2003 World Congress of Basque Communities. President Ibarretxe addressed 150 institutional diaspora leaders from nineteen countries at the Third World Congress of Basque Communities (Vitoria-Gasteiz, July 14-18, 2003). His inaugural speech conveyed an overwhelming message, which requested from the diaspora a direct response to ETA's "terrible and inhumane violence" in order to palliate the image of the homeland abroad for being further distorted. Ibarretxe stated:

You are *Euskadi's* face to the world. We are judged internationally by the efforts that you carry out. The image of Euskadi in the world has been torpedoed, manipulated, and twisted. How is it that such a peaceful and hard-working nation like the Basque people has been so viciously depicted as nation of controversy, a nation wrecked by the savage violence of a senseless few? You've seen the harm brought about by ETA violence. What an enormously damaging and unjust international image this gives to *Euskadi* and the Basque people. You are the image of *Euskadi* in the world and it is our job to let the world know who we really are: a peaceful hard-working people, not the other conflictive stereotype which some self-interested people seem to want to spread, based mainly on the terrible and inhumane violence perpetrated by ETA (Gobierno Vasco, 2004: 32).

On the last day of the Congress, an Institutional Declaration, theoretically endorsed by "all" delegates, was issued. However, as it will

could be further from the truth; the majority of Basque people both within the Basque Country and abroad reject ETA's violence, and it is unfair to bundle all of us Basques under the label of 'terrorist supporter' (February 9, 2004; at IBO's site <<http://www.euskojustice.org/>>). The Basque Government also requested Senator Kerry to rectify his statement on the Basques (*El Correo*, February 11, 2004; *Deia*, February 15, 2004). Senator Kerry sent an apologizing letter to all those who have manifested their concerns for his remarks on the Basque people, stating: "It has brought to my attention that remarks I made [...] gave the false impression that people of Basque heritage condone terrorism. I regret that the imprecision of my statement led to this misunderstanding. I should have referred more specifically to Basque Fatherland and Liberty (aka ETA), a US State Department designated foreign terrorist. I realize that, like me, the vast majority of Basques in the United States and worldwide abhor terrorism, and I am sorry for the offense caused by my comment" (February 24, 2004 at IBO's site <<http://www.euskojustice.org/>>).

be discussed below, the majority of the delegates did not discuss, vote, or endorse the Declaration. The Declaration addressed the main concerns raised by Ibarretxe's inaugural address. It stated:

Our condemnation of violence of all types; naturally, this includes ETA perpetrated violence, to which we demand an immediate end. As delegates to this Congress, we stress that violence inflicts enormous damages to the personal and social life of Basque women and men and to the image of the Basque people as a whole in our countries of residence. With the same responsibility, we ask people in positions of authority in Euskadi to initiate dialogue –the only valid instrument for resolving differences and conflicts– in order to achieve democratic and peaceful coexistence, as well as economic and social development for our people [...] We look forward to a peaceful future, economic and social development, and recognition as a nation by all international institutions (Gobierno Vasco, 2004: 261).

The diaspora theoretically took on the role of promoting the “true” image of the Basque Country, by going a step forward, and explicitly condemning ETA and demanding its end, for the first time ever. Even more, the diaspora representatives positioned themselves in favor of dialogue in order to end the Basque conflict, while favoring the right to self-determination of the Basque nation. The diaspora representatives believed that the Basque conflict was a political conflict that went beyond ETA's violence. Consequently, dialogue was the key to the resolution of a political conflict. However, what about the so-called apolitical and non-partisan character of the Basque institutional diaspora? The politization of the Basque diaspora was clearer than ever and its Basque moderate nationalist inclination was even more obvious. The 2003 Declaration associated peace with the dismantling of ETA and a negotiated political end of the historical conflict, recurrent demands of the PNV. Though the 2003 Declaration was not the first overtly political declaration made by the Basque diaspora as an institutional organized “entity,” it was the first one that explicitly condemned ETA (21). In theory, the diaspora, as a whole, consequently sided itself, not only with the vast majority of the Basque society, but

(21) The previous World Congress Institutional Declaration (1999), endorsed by representatives from eighteen countries, was also imbued with political connotations. It also addressed the need for peace and self-government, but it did not make any reference to ETA. It recognized the Basque people as sovereign nation, without a state, but with the right to decide its own future. At the same time, the diaspora requested of the international community the support of the rights of the Basque people: “We wish for the Basque Country to reach at the beginning in this new century a situation of coexistence in peace and freedom with the level of self-government that the Basque people wish to obtain. Many of us are a result of two centuries of political conflict and we want to be the last children of Basque exile [...] With the same end in mind we require from state governments, supra-state institutions and international bodies, respect for the individual and collective rights of the Basque Country and support for the decisions that Basque society may make regarding its future, making it possible in the mean time to have a direct presence in these institutions and efficient overseas projection to guarantee the defense of its identity as a nation on the international arena” (Gobierno Vasco, 2000: 127).

also with the Basque moderate nationalist movement, while turning away from the most radical wing of the Basque nationalism, which overtly supports ETA's goals. Irremediably the diaspora seemed to become another participant voice adding up to many other voices in relation to the Basque conflict.

The 2003 World Congress delegates were divided into three working commissions: Media, Culture, and Institutional Relations. The Declaration was "elaborated" in the Institutional Relations Working Commission (22). On July 17, FEVA delegates presented a draft to the Institutional Relations Commission of what later become known as the 2003 World Congress Institutional Declaration (23). In the eyes of the Basque society, and the rest of the world, the Declaration was a reflection of the opinions of the diaspora as a whole, which expressed an unequivocal disapproval of ETA. However, the Declaration that was finally incorporated into the Congress' proceedings was never a product of a common consent agreed by the majority of the participants. In fact, the draft was not welcomed by many, while producing certain anger among some delegates (24) (see below). In particular, the delegates' objections were directed to the "political nature" of the document, because of the inclusion of the reference to ETA. However, there were not objections raised about the demands for political dialogue as a means of attaining peace, while respecting the will of the Basques to decide their own future; i.e., the right to self-determination; and understanding that there were many more sides of violence besides ETA—implying the Spanish State. Were those not considered political enough in nature?

Consequently, delegates who were reluctant to support the Declaration raised the following reasons (25): Firstly, some delegates considered the document extremely political. Nevertheless, some of them plus others agreed with the content. However, in both cases, they stated that they did not have authorization from their Board of Directors in order to sign a "political document." Furthermore, some

(22) The Commission was formed with thirty-five people from countries such as Andorra, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, France, Italy, Puerto Rico, Spain, the UK, Uruguay, the US, and Venezuela. Also present were Iñaki Aguirre, the General Secretary of Foreign Action, and Josu Legarreta. I took part in the Institutional Relations working commission as a guest of the Directorate for Relations with the Basque Communities.

(23) In June 2003, FEVA issued a similar Declaration supporting the Ibarretxe Plan, while condemning those who use violence and those who persecute the Basque Country, close newspapers, and illegalize political parties: "We don't want through violence neither the freedom for *Euskadi* nor the unity of Spain; not only the goals have to be just but also the means" (at the *Centro Vasco Euzko Etxea de la Plata*, Argentina, <<http://www.centrovasco.com>>).

(24) The different positions are not identified by name, association, or country of residence in order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

(25) The discussion that follows took place at the Institutional Relations working commission (July 17, 2003). I participated as a guest observer.

delegates believed that due to the nature of the Declaration and its potential implications, it should have been discussed and voted on by the other two working commissions.

Secondly, the document was seen by other delegates as a political endorsement of the BAC Government and particularly to its main party, the PNV. These delegates did not want to get involved in partisan politics, manifesting their concerns about the diaspora becoming an exclusive or nearly exclusive patrimony of the Basque Government and the PNV. Particularly, some delegates argued that the relationships between diaspora and homeland relied increasingly on the government of the three provinces. Therefore, they proposed to open relationships with other governments and institutions. The delegate from Argentina refuted the allegations about the PNV's instrumentalization of the diaspora by putting forward the following arguments: the delegate explained that on one occasion the Navarran Government contacted several Basque centers in Argentina in order to let them know that they were willing to provide financial assistance (26) to Navarrans and their descendants, members of Basque clubs, but not to Basque members. The *euskal etxeak*, based on their inclusive membership policy, rejected the Navarran Government's proposal. On another occasion, the delegate recalled how the Spanish Consulate in Argentina was willing to offer financial help to Basque clubs if they registered as Spanish organizations with the Federation of Spanish-Argentinean Associations. In both examples, the delegate argued "there were prices to be paid for losing our identity. Those are clear manipulations. I don't see anything like that in the Basque Government." Finally, some delegates believed that signing the declaration meant to go against the spirit of their institutions, the *homes* for *all* Basques, including ETA political refugees. Delegates, particularly from South America, had a long history of welcoming to their associations any Basques, regardless of their political orientation and background. According to some delegates, signing the Declaration would be like "hanging a 'not welcome sign' at our *euskal etxeak* doors. It would mean discriminating against Basques for seeking an independent homeland." Facing the reluctance of most of the delegates, the representatives from Argentina, promoters of the draft, strongly stated: "If we don't approve it unanimously, it will damage the diaspora greatly. If we don't sign it, it will go against us. We are not guilty for signing the document but those who promote violence. Violence is the worst problem for the Basques abroad as Basques are increasingly identified with violence."

(26) The Foral Community of Navarre established the Law 2/2004, which offers financial assistance exclusively to Navarrans and Navarre associations abroad, meaning outside Spain.

The Venezuelan delegation received telephone calls from Venezuela on the night of the 17th inquiring about what was happening with the Declaration. The following day (July 18), the last day of the Congress, a fax from a European news agency reached the Venezuelan delegation. It read: “The Basque collectivities elaborated a Declaration condemning ETA, while demanding its immediate end.” The news reproduced partial segments of the draft presented at the Institutional Relations Commission. It stated that the Declaration had been made public at the Closing Ceremony. The Declaration was never approved, and furthermore, the Closing Ceremony had not taken place by the time of the press release. The fax quickly spread throughout the delegations and some degree of criticism, thought not widespread, broke out. Finally, the Declaration was published in the Congress’ proceedings. At the Closing Ceremony, Ibarretxe told the diaspora delegates: “For the next four years, [your] main goal must be to transmit to the world that we are a peaceful, hard-working nation and that we want to live in peace [...] Thanks to you, we’ll be recognized in the world as people with good hearts” (*Deia*, July 19, 2003b).

What was the goal of pushing forward the Declaration? The initial draft was presented to the media as the final Declaration (27). Most of the Basque and Spanish press, welcomed the Declaration as a step forward in isolating ETA and its political and social supporters. The daily paper, *Deia*, published an editorial titled “*Euskadi visto por la diáspora*.” It corroborated the government’s assigned goal for the diaspora: “[The diaspora representatives] are the best ambassadors that we could have in the world, the most efficient communicators of the positive image of our country [...] in opposition to the negative [image] that ETA’s terrorist violence creates and which is disseminated in a systematic way by some communication media and ‘Spanish politicians’. They need to know that we are a hardworking, peaceful, democratic, solidary, developed, and, progressive country” (*Deia*, July 19, 2003a).

On the political front, on the one hand, the Basque Government and the Basque nationalist parties PNV and *Eusko Alkartasuna* also welcomed the Declaration. Joseba Azkarraga publicly praised the Basque diaspora for taking an active approach “as agents of justice and freedom.” Azkarraga added: “So, the Basque nation becomes synonymous with well-being and hope in the future; not of violence and resignation. So, you can tell our historic truth [...] With your testimony you

(27) The Declaration was widely covered by the Basque and Spanish press: *Deia*. “*La diáspora pide diálogo y el fin de ETA*.” July 19, 2003; _____. “*Las colectividades vascas piden diálogo para alcanzar la paz*.” July 19, 2003; *El Correo*. “*Los centros de la diáspora vasca exigen el cese inmediato de ETA*.” July 19, 2003; *El Mundo*. “*Centros vascos exigen el fin de ‘toda violencia’ y la desaparición de ETA*.” July 19, 2003; and *El País*. “*Vascos y pragmáticos: diálogo y rechazo a ETA*.” July 19, 2003.

will help your countries of residence to have a more exact view of the Basque nation. You will offer, from your personal and collective experiences, the real version of what we are and what we want to be” (*Deia*, July 19, 2003c).

On the other hand, *Sozialista Abertzaleak* representatives accused *Lehendakari* Ibarretxe and Josu Legarreta, Director of the Relations with the Basque Communities, of “manipulating” the Basque centers and “utilizing the diaspora politically.” Consequently, they called for the resignation of Josu Legarreta as they argued that the Institutional Declaration was never approved or signed by the majority of the delegates (*Gara*, July 19, 20, and 27, 2003). On October 23, 2003, in a session of the Basque Parliament, Joseba Álvarez, member of *Sozialista Abertzaleak*, requested an official explanation about the polemics surrounding the Declaration. On behalf of the Basque Government, Jon Josu Imaz (the then Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism) concisely explained that the Declaration was approved by the International Relations Commission and consequently approved by the Congress. The Minister stated that “only one person disagreed” (*Parlamento Vasco*, Official Transcript 031024).

What are the potential implications of the Declaration for the diaspora, and its relationships with the Basque Government? The Declaration evidences unbalanced equilibrium of powers within the institutional Basque diaspora, where FEVA has attempted to place itself in a privileged position by displaying a great strength within the diaspora. Certain leaders in FEVA have become a tactical ally of the Basque Government’s Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities, and by extension of the Basque Nationalist Party who controls both the Directorate and the General Secretariat of Foreign Action. However, this tactical alliance is related to who controls the Presidency of FEVA as the policies and the relationships with the Basque Government depend on it (28). In the eyes of the world, the Declaration represented the whole institutional diaspora’s stand in relation to the Basque conflict, and not a minority of delegates. Secondly, the Declaration evidences the political divisiveness of the diaspora. The institutional diaspora is not a community free of tensions and disagreements. This divisiveness, in my understanding, cannot be read in white and black tones. That is to say, it is not much about being in favor or against ETA, but about perceiving to be utilized so overtly for political partisan purposes, which defy, somehow, the defining nature of many of the diaspora associations: inclusiveness, openness, and, in theory, non-partisan allegiances and apolitical principles. These divisions tend to neutralize any preconceived inter-

(28) FEVA’s new President, María Luz Arteche, was elected in April 2006, replacing Carlos Sosa (2002-2006).

pretation of the diaspora as a homogeneous and passive entity. It shows that the Basque diaspora is as plural, even politically, as the Basque homeland society itself (29).

In my opinion, the Declaration and all the surrounding events that took place during and after its approval, symbolize a potentially destabilizing episodes (a somehow defining moment) of the recent intra-diaspora institutional history as well as in the short history of the Basque diaspora and the BAC Government's relationships. However, no official complaints were raised against the Basque Government and its Directorate for Relations with Basque Communities. Whether the particular benefits that the Declaration might have generated, overcome the potential risks taken by issuing such a disruptive Declaration, can only be measured with time. The 2007 World Congress will be a good place to find out. Was the 2003 Declaration a punctual or experimental diaspora incursion into homeland politics or is there a layout plan for continuance in the future, e.g., in the 2007 Congress?

Finally, as we have seen, Basque Government's representatives have somehow achieved real time connectivity; a synchrony between diaspora and homeland. This synchrony has been established by the means of the Declaration by connecting the diaspora with the aspirations of the majority of the Basque society. Consequently, the demand for peace, the end of ETA, and the right to self-determination are not viewed by Basque Government officials as partisan politics, but as rightful demands assumed by the majority of the society across political borders. That is, in spite of the distance, theoretically, the diaspora enjoys a synchronic position with the homeland (or at least with the Basque moderate nationalist community and leaders), exemplified by acknowledging the Basque political reality. It can be said that in the government's eyes diaspora Basques are closer than ever to homeland Basques.

3. CONCLUSIONS

I have analyzed the Basque Autonomous Community Government's ethnonational discourses on the Basque diaspora in order to assess the government's current influence on the diaspora's own interpretation of Basque identity, nation, and homeland. For nearly three decades, the successive Basque Governments—all dominated by Basque national-

(29) For example, the diaspora Basques have exhibited a very similar trend in voting patterns as the homeland Basques at the time of homeland elections; for example in the BAC Parliamentary elections. The number of registered diaspora voters as of the 2005 BAC elections was 38,270. Since, the return to democracy to Spain, the PNV has been the single most voted party in the diaspora and in the homeland (see *Euskal Etxeak*, June 2005, and also Toticagüena, 2005).

ist parties—have constructed a set of past and future-oriented discourses in relation to the Basque diaspora that aim to maintain national consciousness among Basques abroad by playing into an emotional dimension of collective identity. At the same time, the contemporary governmental discourses recreate the idea of a unified territorial homeland as a seven-province nation, with a right to self-determination as paramount for the protection and promotion of the Basque identity, cultural, and ancestral homeland, while enhancing the imagination of diaspora Basques as part of a wider imagined Basque community. That is, a Basque “long distance nationalism” understood as “the ideology of belonging that extends homeland politics into transnational social fields,” which “links together people living in various geographic locations and motivates them to action in relation to an ancestral territory and its government” (Anderson, 1991: 327), promoting, according to Wimmer and Glick Schiller, a “trans-border citizenry” (2002: 316-323). This long distance nationalism is without doubt and increasingly a direct impact of technological advancements, which contributes to interconnect the diaspora and homeland, across space and time. The discourses reinforce the Basque diaspora’s own interpretation of Basque identity, nation, and homeland by drawing on the peculiarity, uniqueness, and authenticity, real or imagined, of the Basque identity and culture.

The Basque Governments’ discourses have recreated and delivered a nationalist interpretation of Basque identity and culture to the diaspora. However, the diaspora has already been reproducing to some extent, consciously or not, in similar terms, a nationalist perspective of Basque identity, homeland, nation, and traditions “inherited” from previous waves of Basque migration, particularly related to the Spanish Civil War and Basque political exile. The current Basque Government’s discourses fall into a fertile diaspora, somehow, politicized soil, where Basque nationalism is not aloof for many Basque individuals and institutions. Although political activism in the institutionalized diaspora and Basque nationalism influence is evidenced as early as the late nineteenth century, the impact of the discursive production of the Basque Government and homeland political parties has exponentially been accelerated by the utilization of rapid technologies of communication such as the Internet and the e-mail.

The discourses, simultaneously, recreate a perennial homeland (central to Basque diaspora discourse) and an authentic culture, while promoting a postmodern, peaceful, and positive image abroad, as an attempt to close the “knowledge gap” and assumed existing disjuncture between homeland and diaspora. New telecommunication technologies such as satellite television and the Internet are taken as prime instruments to eventually close such a gap. Consequently, the government bestows the diaspora with the role of becoming an active, and at least symbolical agent on not only the promotion of a peaceful Basque Country but also on the defense of the right of self-determination of

its people as the best instrument to guarantee the survival of the Basque identity, culture, and homeland. The closing declaration of the Third World Congress of Basque Communities abroad is a textbook example of the attempts of instrumentalization of a diaspora by a non-state government within the framework of narrow partisan politics, and which potential implications, if any, are still to be grasped.

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