

The *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspaper: Witness and actor in Basque culture

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Abstract

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Abstract

On 20 February 2003, Juan del Olmo, a judge in the High Court in Madrid, decreed the closure of the *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspaper on the grounds that it formed part of the "apparatus of ETA". *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* had been in circulation for twelve years, and was the only newspaper wholly written in Basque in the world. The authors of this work maintain that *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was a standard European newspaper and an outstanding witness of and actor in Basque culture. The authors endorse this statement by providing both quantitative and qualitative data originating from three studies: an analysis of 100 news items appearing on the paper's front pages, a compilation of quality indexes, and an in-depth examination of the 3,789 issues published. This has led them to the view that the closure was an unjustified attack on freedom of expression.

Key words: Basque journalism, Basque culture, identity, freedom of expression.

1. Introduction.

In the early hours of 21 February 2003 in Gipuzkoa (the Basque Country), dozens of heavily armed Civil Guards detained ten people related to the *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspaper, which in Basque means “newspaper of the Basque-speakers”. All were editors or ex-editors of the paper. They faced very serious accusations: “forming part of a business apparatus aimed at funding the terrorist group ETA”. The action was ordered by Juan del Olmo Gálvez, magistrate in Central Court of Instruction no. 6 of the Spanish High Court. At the time, Spain was governed by José María Aznar’s Popular Party. The measure implied the sealing and precautionary closure of the newspaper's premises as well as the seizure of all its offices. In practice, this closure was definitive, since the doors of the publication were never to open again.

The people detained were well known in Basque society as journalists and writers of great prestige in cultural circles. *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was the only newspaper written wholly in Euskara, which experts say may be the oldest living language in Europe. All those affected condemned the degrading and humiliating treatment they suffered during the detention. Some reported being subjected to torture, and one even tried to commit suicide during their captivity. Weeks went by, then months, with some detainees held in prison for more than a year. They were eventually released on bail and are presently awaiting trial.

In a resolution adopted on the 14th of December 2006, Miguel Ángel Carballo Cuervo, public prosecutor in Central Court of the First Instance number 6 of the High Court, requested that the case be dismissed, on the understanding that there were no “incriminating elements for considering as proven the perpetration of the crime of membership of a terrorist organisation and/or unlawful association”. The private prosecution, represented in this case by the right-wing associations “Dignidad y Justicia” (Dignity and Justice) and the Association of Victims of Terrorism (AVT), were not satisfied with the public prosecutor’s report, and maintained a petition for imprisonment varying between 12 and 14 years for the remaining seven accused. The trial and judgment on the “Egunkaria case” is expected to take place in 2008.

Popular initiative and the wide social support for *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* meant that the day after this closure the newspaper *Egunero* was set up, also published entirely in Euskara. This provisional solution was followed months later, in June 2003, by the founding of *Berria*, a newspaper that took in almost all the staff of *Egunkaria*, also retaining Matxelo Otamendi as its editor. The closure of *Egunkaria* aroused protests across wide sectors of Basque society, who interpreted the measure as an attack on one of its signs of identity. The closure of *Egunkaria* had been preceded in July 1998 by the shutting down of *Egin*, a bilingual newspaper close to the nationalist left, which was also closed during the government of the Popular Party. The same happened to the *Egin Irratia* television station and the *Ardi Beltza* magazine, which belonged to the same publishing group as *Egin*. Then too there was a widespread social response, although not as great as in the case of *Egunkaria*.

2. Objectives, hypotheses and methodology used.

The *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspaper was founded on 6 December 1990. Its origins were strictly popular: it was funded by contributions from thousands of shareholders who collaborated disinterestedly and with modest amounts (most shares were 150 euros). It was on sale continuously for more than twelve years, and a total of 3,789 issues were published.

The nearest and in fact the only precedent for a newspaper published entirely in Euskara can be found in 1937, with the publication of *Eguna*. This newspaper barely

survived for seven months, disappearing during the Civil War after Bilbao was taken by Fascist troops. Before that, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there had been other unsuccessful attempts. These had been backed by Eusko Ikaskuntza (the Basque Studies Society), the Basque weekly newspaper *Argia*, *Euskaltzaindia* (the Royal Academy of the Basque Language) and leading representatives of the Basque arts scene including the poet Xabier Lizardi (Diaz Noci, 1999, 2001 and 2004). The attempt failed because it was felt impossible to guarantee the 3,000 subscriptions that were then considered essential to get the project up and running.

From the start, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* too was linked to Basque arts and cultural circles. The debate, which had been shelved for decades, was reopened in the 1980s, when it was decided that the conditions were now right for publishing a daily paper in Euskara. Once again, it was *Argia* that catalysed debate. On Franco's death, Euskara had a fairly token presence in the Basque periodical press. Bilingual papers were published, with Euskara used for occasional news items or in special supplements, but not throughout the publication. And in 1990, as now, there were many magazines published entirely in Euskara but no daily newspaper as such. In this context, the appearance of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was a significant qualitative leap forward for Basque journalism; a coming of age that it had so far been denied.

The new paper went for a modern approach. It was a classical, European-style, quality (not sensationalist) publication, in tabloid format, technologically advanced and similar in design to its neighbours. It was "just another daily", but with the unique feature already noted: it was the only daily paper in the world published wholly in the Basque language.

This research is based on following working hypotheses:

- *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was a standard newspaper with a consolidated market share that throughout its existence attempted to faithfully fulfil the terms of Article 1 of its initial Style Guide (1992); that is, to offer professional, balanced and independent information.
- Although following a pro-Basque, progressive line, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* maintained an open approach to information, welcoming contributors of very different ideologies onto its pages.
- *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*'s *raison d'être* lay in the Basque language and culture, and the impetus it provided in these fields was recognised by many institutions.

These same hypotheses - phrased in the form of desires - appeared on the front page of the newspaper's first issue, published on 6 December 1990. Under the heading "Agur t'erdí" (Greeting) the new newspaper indicated the following in its editorial (06-12-1990):



With the publication of Egunkaria, Basque-speakers are fulfilling a long-held desire, made possible by the support received from thousands of lovers of our language. The growing interest in Basque culture in recent years have been very significant. Our intention is to offer national, Euskaldún, independent and plural information. By the proper use of new technologies, the team behind Egunkaria aspires to establish for the press in Euskara a worthy place among the newspapers published in Euskal Herria, satisfying on a daily basis the right of all Basque-speakers to receive information in their own language. A splendid future awaits us. Of that we are convinced. It will be possible thanks to the support of the companies that entrust us with their advertising, to the help that will be offered us by the institutions and, above all, to the enthusiastic support of all Euskaltzales (lovers of the Basque language).

On the threshold of that beautiful future that awaits us, we wish to pay homage to all those who have worked for the progress of the Basque nation and language, to all those who - in spite of the difficulties of this project - have struggled to set it into motion. For all the above, and for all Euskal Herria in general, Egunkaria sees the light today.

The methodology used for this research has taken into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects related to content analysis techniques. Our research spanned three different fields:

- Compiling of objective quality indexes that illustrate the standard and fully comparable nature of the daily.
- Analysis of 50 front pages chosen at random - following a sequence of 77/78 issues - from among the 3,789 published.
- An in-depth study of all the newspapers published.

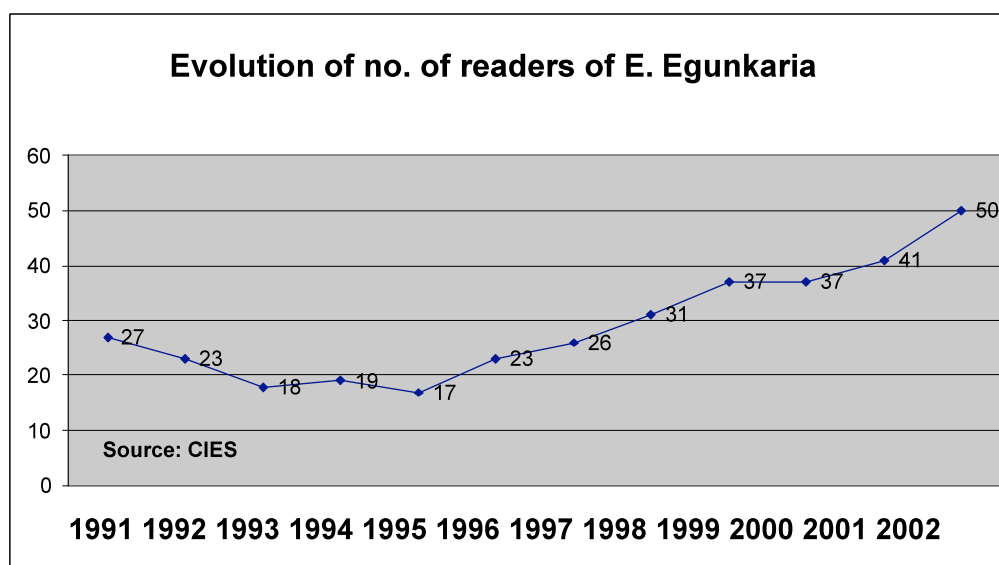
3. Quality indexes.

The market for the Basque press has historically been very competitive and complex. Within the Spanish State, the Autonomous Communities of Euskadi and Navarre have always been leaders as regards consumption of the press. Their circulation rate over the last twenty years has varied between 150 and 190 issues per 1,000 inhabitants. This figure is very much above the Spanish average (around 100 issues), although below the European average (more than 200 issues). The quality and plurality of the Basque press has been confirmed by much research carried out over recent decades (Caminos, 1996; Diezhandino and Coca, 1997; Ehuki, 1997; Bezunartea et al., 2000; Ruiz Olabuenaga, 2001; Azpillaga et al., 2002).

The birth of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* in 1990 undoubtedly represented a major challenge for its sponsors. It was entering a particularly difficult and saturated market. Likely readership and advertising response were unknown. More worrying still, the institutional support offered so far did not guarantee its future. Only a faithful few believed that in time, this daily would find its place in the market.

Consolidated presence.

Although it had its ups and downs between 1991-1995, the presence of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* in Basque society increased substantially year on year practically up to its disappearance in 2003. This is witnessed by data offered by CIES¹. According to this company, a specialist in measuring media audiences, in 2002 the daily had 50,000 readers. Based on the premise that in 2002 the readership rate² for the press in the Basque Country and Navarre was around 3.2 per copy (AEDE, 2007:32), it can be fairly accurately concluded that at the time of its disappearance this daily was selling approximately 15,500 copies. This figure is particularly significant considering that the universe of the Basque-speaking population was around 600,000 people (between 25 and 30% of the total population).



Newspaper archive collections.

During its twelve years of life, by far the majority of libraries in the Basque Country subscribed to *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*, and in their newspaper archives citizens have enthusiastically read and consulted this daily. Today, a glance at the catalogues of the major libraries shows that this newspaper forms part of the press archives of the Spanish National Library, the Library of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the

French National Library, the Library of the University of Reno (USA.) and, of course, the Library of the University of the Basque Country.

Source of research.

Added to this, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* has been analysed from different perspectives and in diverse publications and university works of research. Among these are:

- *Cambios tecnológicos y de diseño en los diarios de la Comunidad Autónoma Vasca (Changes in technology and design in the daily papers of the Autonomous Basque Community)*. Chapter VII is devoted to Euskaldunon Egunkaria - pp 563-626.
- *Euskara prentsa herri-proiektua da (The Basque press is a popular project)*.
- *La prensa diaria en Euskal Herria (The daily press in Euskara Herria)*. (1976-1998).
- *Diario de servicios en España (Services daily in Spain)*.

Academic recognition

The *Style Guide* published by *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* (with two editions in 1992 and 1995) is one of the manuals used in the teaching of different subjects in the Journalism Degree of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communications of the University of the Basque Country. For example, in the basic bibliography of the 1997-1998 *Teaching Guide* for the subject “Kazetaritzarako Sarrera” (Introduction to journalism) and “Euskara Teknikoa” (technical Euskara).

In 2002, the *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* press archive and data base on the Internet was eulogised in the publication *Informaziorako dokumentazioaren oinarriak (Essentials of educational documentation)*.

Support for Basque literature.

Throughout its existence, many Basque writers were either regular or occasional contributors to *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*. These collaborations occurred in almost all sections of the daily, although most were found in the Culture and Opinion sections. It would be almost impossible to give here an accurate list of all the writers who collaborated with the daily between 1990 and 2003. However, the list below is sufficiently illustrative.

List of writers who collaborated with *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*:

Bernardo Atxaga, widely recognised in national and international circles (among others, Euskadi and national prizes for literature. His work has been translated into more than twenty languages).

Anjel Lertxundi, twice winner of the Euskadi prize for literature.

Jon Alonso, national prize for Literature and Mikel Zarate award for essay writing.

Unai Elorriaga, national prize for narrative.

Joxean Muñoz, Euskadi prize for literature.

Harkaitz Cano, Euskadi prize for literature.

Arantxa Urretabizkaia, national prize for criticism.

Ramón Saizarbitoria, Euskadi prize for literature

Koldo Izagirre, novelist, scriptwriter and columnist.

Aingeru Epaltza, Euskadi prize for literature and Ricardo Arregi prize for journalism.

Itxaso Borda, Euskadi prize for literature.

Xabier Lete, poet and founder of the *Ez Dok Hamahiru* movement
 Pako Aristi, poet, novelist and columnist, twice awarded the Ricardo Arregi prize for journalism.
 Laura Mintegi, novelist and columnist.
 Iñigo Aranbarri, novelist and columnist.
 Juan Martin Elexpuru, TV scriptwriter, writer and columnist.
 Ramón Etxezarreta, columnist.
 Gorka Knörr, singer-song writer and columnist.
 Xabier Eguzkitze, Bertsolari and presenter of ETB
 Federico Krutwig, writer (now deceased), member of Euskaltzaindia.
 Emilia Lopez Adam, essayist and columnist.
 Josu Landa, novelist and columnist.
 Bixente Serrano Izko, essayist, winner of the Juan Zelaia prize.
 Patxi Zabaleta, member of Euskaltzaindia.
 Kirmen Uribe, poet translated into several languages.
 Manu Lopez Ganseni, widely recognised writer of children's and young people's literature.
 Jasone Osoro, novelist, columnist, winner of the "Zazpi Kale" prize.
 Xabier Etxaniz Rojo, columnist.
 Edorta Jiménez, novelist, columnist, winner of the Gabriel Aresti prize.
 Xabier Mendiguren Elizegi, novelist and columnist, winner of many prizes (Lizardi, Donostia Hiria and Pedro Inazio Barrutia, among others).
 Andolin Eguzkitza, member of Euskaltzaindia, deceased.
 Manex Pagola, poet, writer of children's and young people's literature.
 Pablo Sastre, novelist and columnist.
 Ana Urkiza, novelist, essayist and columnist.

Prizes and awards received

During the more than twelve years that it was in circulation, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* received many prizes and awards in recognition of its professionalism, both from a strictly journalistic standpoint and for its contribution to the normalisation of the use of Euskara. The scarcity of the resources with which the newspaper was founded never stood in the way of its acceptance even in its early years.

Some of these prizes had particular social significance. For example, the award conceded by Emakunde (the Basque Women's Institute) which in 1994 awarded 3,000 euros (then 500,000 pesetas) to this newspaper *for its work in favour of the equality of the sexes by systematically including information on the women's participation in sport, both through interviews with sportswomen and results in competitions*.

The weekly *Argia*, founded in 1919, gave individual or collective awards to journalists of *Egunkaria* in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996 and 1999³. Another was the Andoain Town Council in its Ricardo Arregi prizes. Journalists on this paper received some kind of award in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2003⁴. It is true to say that no communications company in the field of journalism in Euskara received such a collection of prizes and awards over a similar period of time. There is a total of around 700 journalism professionals in Euskara working in dozens of companies. None of them have approached the level of recognition reached in its day by this newspaper.

In addition, the coordinator of the group Comparsas de Bilbao gave the second Marijaia prize for 2000, awarded during the town festival, to José Etxebarrioste, the newspaper's photographer, in recognition of his professional work.

Also worthy of mention is the appearance of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* on the USA *National Press Club* poster published in September 2001 after the attack on the twin towers in New York. This featured the 25 best front pages published throughout the world. Among these is the front page of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*. Next to it appear such prestigious newspapers as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times*, *Le Monde* and *Pravda*. At such a crucial time in the recent history of our planet, the appearance in this document meant international recognition for the professionalism and quality of this newspaper.



Highly qualified staff.

In 2003 *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* had 71 professional staff, of whom 65 (92%) were communications graduates. A further ten professionals worked in the production section and 5 more in the design team. All texts were revised before publication. A team of nine professionals from the Department of Euskara monitored all news items published for linguistic accuracy. *Euskaltzaindia* (the Royal Academy of the Basque Language) often resorted to the terminology used in the newspaper to attest to the validity or otherwise of a particular word.

4. Study of 50 front pages, 100 news items.

The success of all research is due largely to the suitability and accuracy of its methodology. The results of any scientific study must be fully verifiable and comparable by other research teams. If not, they are worthless. This means that the criteria used for carrying out research must obey exclusively scientific purposes.

We feel that a good way to approach the contents of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* is to analyse a random sample of 50 front pages selected from among the 3,789 issues published by the newspaper during the period when it was on sale. The first of the front pages analysed was that of the first number published on 6 December 1990, and the last, logically, that of the day when it ceased publication (20 February 2003). We made up the sample with another 48 issues chosen on the basis of a sequence of 77 or 78 issues.

Under these criteria, the copies analysed in our sample corresponded to the following issues:

1	773	1546	2318	3090
78	851	1623	2395	3167
155	928	1700	2472	3244
232	1005	1777	2560 ⁵	3321
310	1083	1855	2627	3399
387	1160	1932	2704	3476
464	1237	2009	2781	3553
541	1314	2086	2858	3630
618	1391	2163	2935	3708
696	1469	2241	3013	3789

This research analyses the two main news items on each of these 50 front pages. In all, one hundred news items. The choice of these two news items was made following the visual hierarchy guidelines that govern journalistic canons in use in any European standard tabloid. The vector of importance runs from top to bottom and from left to right.

Our attention centred on two basic issues:

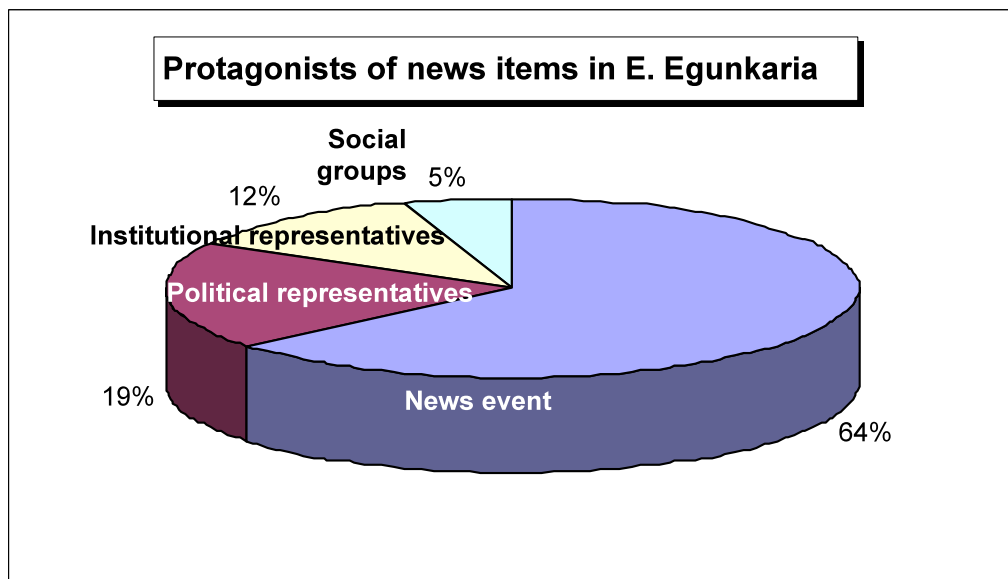
- The protagonists of the news item and
- Its area of reference

We prepared the following record card to facilitate our work:

Copy no.:		Date:	
	Protagonist of the news item	Area referenced	
1st item			
2nd item			

By "agents" we mean the subjects or social agents taking an active position in the news item. In other words, the passive subject of the news item is not considered to be the protagonist. For example, if a headline states that *The Basque Government denounces the attitude of the Zapatero government*, it is clear which is the active subject (the Basque Government) and which the passive subject (the Zapatero government). Therefore in our analysis we have only taken active agents, not passive agents, into account. For one simple reason: the passive subject does not intend to be in the news.

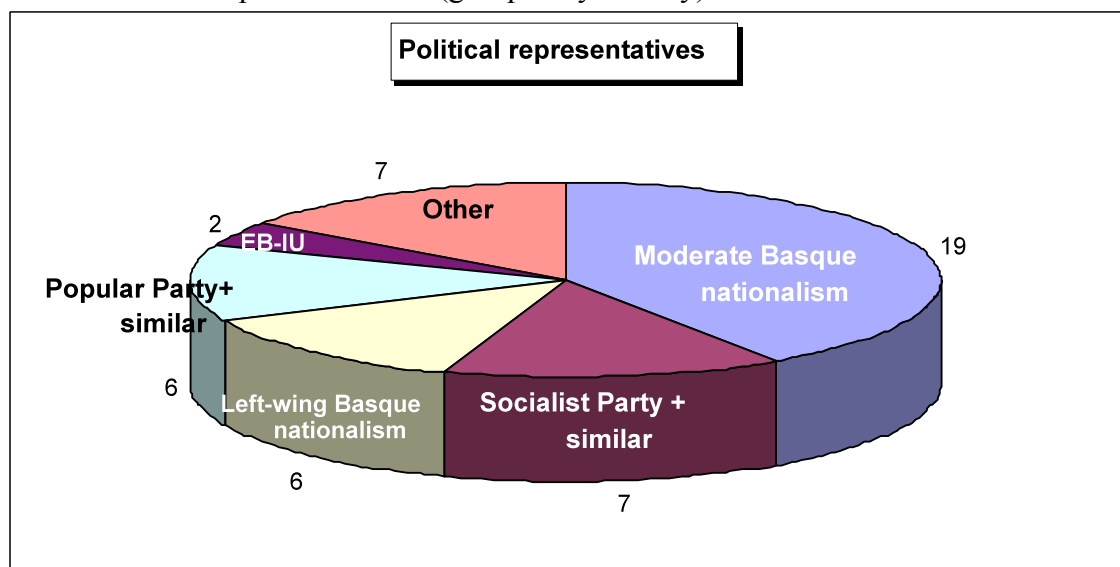
After analysis of these front pages these are the results obtained:



Source: Research team. Own figures.

One very positive aspect to note is that almost two thirds of the one hundred most important news items published by this newspaper arose from covering what was strictly a news event, and was not the result, for example, of statements made by a political or institutional leader. Recently, different voices have been warning how damaging it is for journalism to be held hostage by what is commonly known as “press-release journalism”. This practice says little for the creativity of the journalists involved, and even less for the independence of the medium. We can confirm that *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* emerges here with top marks.

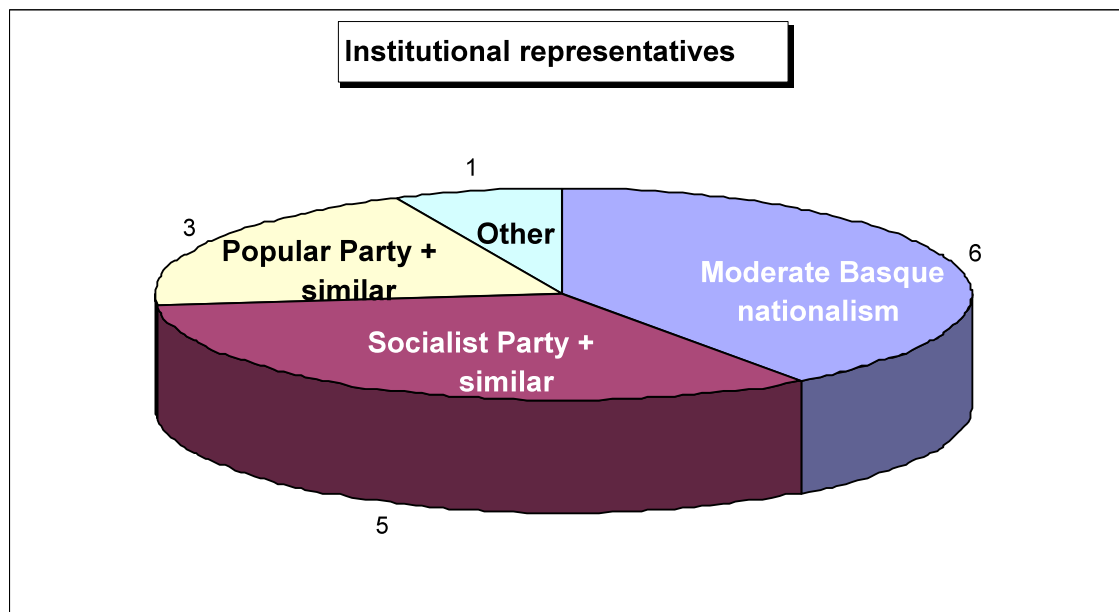
Next we analyse the internal distribution of the other categories analysed: Political representatives, institutional representatives and social groups. This reveals the presence within each of the main political forces (grouped by affinity). The result is as follows:



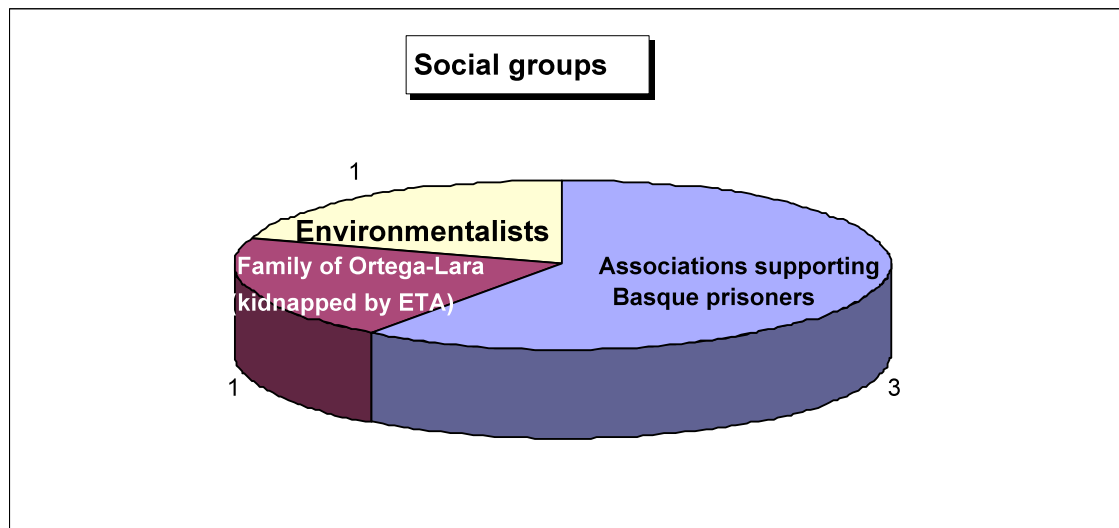
Source: Research team. Own figures.

The category "moderate Basque nationalism" includes the parties in the autonomous Basque government including the PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) - Christian Democrats, and EA (Eusko Alkartasuna) - Social Democrats. The category

"left-wing Basque nationalism" includes the different forms adopted by Batasuna (HB, EH etc.) in recent years. Batasuna upholds the independence of the Basque Country. "Socialist party + similar" includes various versions of the PSOE in Euskadi, Navarre and 6 of the French PSF. "Popular Party + similar" includes the governing parties in Navarre, UPN and CDN (both conservative and upholders of the Spanish Constitution). EB-IU includes Ezker Batua Izquierda Unida, a federalist organisation that upholds the Basque Country's right of self-determination and governs in coalition with the Nationalist parties in the Autonomous Community of Euskadi.



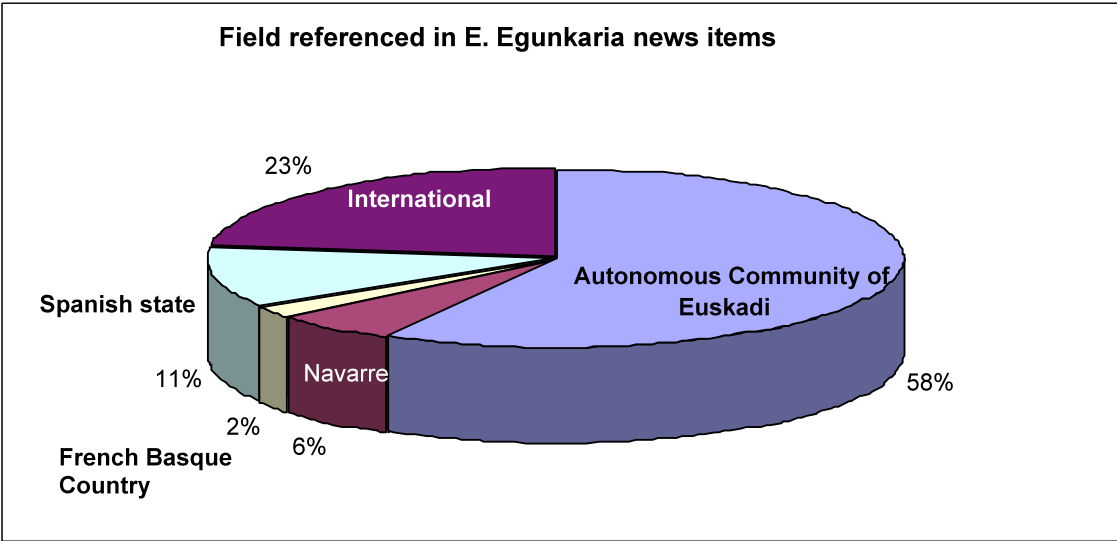
Source: Research team. Own figures.



Source: Research team. Own figures.

We understand that the awareness ratios given by this newspaper are a fairly accurate reflection of the political, institutional, social and educational situation in the territories making up the cultural and linguistic whole known as Euskal Herria, to which *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* is directed.

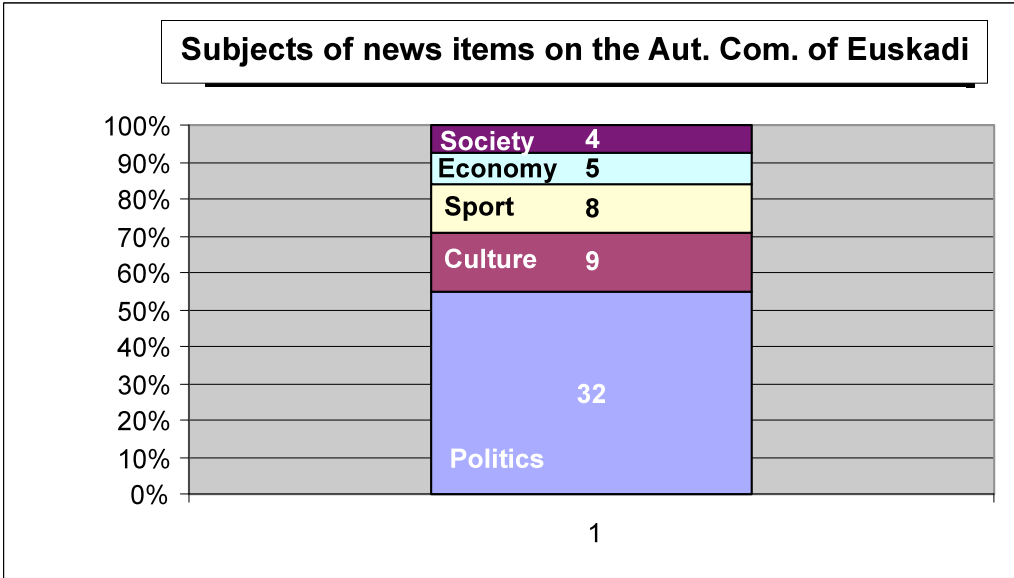
The fields referenced in the news items were the following:



Source: Research team. Own figures.

The appearance in this figure of news items from Navarre or the French Basque Country is logical, given that *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*'s area of circulation and influence extends to the whole of Euskal Herria, a territory that includes all seven historic regions where Basque is spoken, which means all these communities.

Logically, most of the news items published on the paper's front page have the Autonomous Community of Euskadi as their main area of reference. Assuming this to be the case, we wanted to know the thematic origin of the news items. The results are:



Source: Research team. Own figures.

In such a politicised context as Euskadi, these results appear logical. In any case, the significant number of news items related to culture (9%) should be highlighted, as well as the 23% of news items of international origin. This percentage is lower than that of national papers like *El País* (31.8%) or *Abc* (37.4), although somewhat higher than

other local newspapers like *Información* in Alicante (13.8%) or *La Verdad* in Murcia with 17% (Penalva Verdú, 1998). It is therefore on intermediate ground.

5. In-depth study.

Although significant, the analysis of the 50 covers and 100 news items was not enough. The authors of this research therefore carried out a more detailed task, also analysing the inside pages of each and every one of the 3,789 issues published.

From this issue-by-issue analysis the following evidence was extracted:

- During its existence, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* used a wide range of news sources. Its news items featured leaders of all political parties without exception, representatives of all trades union forces without exclusion (nationalist and non-nationalist), economic and business agents, members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and ordinary Christian communities, spokespersons of local, autonomous, national and international institutions (both within and outside the European Union), significant members of all kinds of social movements (ecologists, pacifists, feminists, internationalists, defenders of the Basque language or the rights of Basque prisoners), members of the judiciary and representatives of the penitential institutions.
- *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* showed a high degree of autonomy as regards political and/or economic power. Most of its income came from the coffers of the Basque Government (historically associated with moderate nationalism). However, this was no obstacle for its opinion pages hosting writers of very different ideologies (even openly opposing the Basque Executive). Articles of opinion were published from leaders of all political parties and all trade unions, reflections from major Basque and non-Basque writers, reviews by important academics, philosophers, anthropologists, etc. Many of these were also interviewed at length. The interview was undoubtedly one of the genres that was most cultivated, and that produced the most interesting results in journalistic terms. *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* took great pains to ensure balance even on international issues, as when they published several articles on the situation in Northern Ireland, seeking the opinion of Gerry Adams, republican leader of Sinn Fein (24-06-95) and Arthur Noble, unionist leader of the DUP (24-06-95).
- *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* interviewed a wide range of protagonists of national and international standing. Here is a brief selection:
 - Spanish Army General, Alfredo Piris (13-01-91).
 - Dancer, Nacho Duato (07-08-91).
 - Painter Juan Valdés Led (08-08-91).
 - American Senator John McClaughry (23-01-92).
 - Poet Ernesto Cardenal (31-07-92).
 - Nobel Peace Prizewinner, Rigoberta Menchú (16-09-92).

- American actor Clint Eastwood (23-03-93).
 - Owner of Leclerc hypermarket chain, Michel Edouard Leclerc (28-08-93).
 - Singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez (01-10-93).
 - Creator of Latin Jazz Chucho Valdés (11-12-93).
 - Leader of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams (11-05-94).
 - Actor Javier Bardem (25-09-94).
 - Singer Carlos Cano (29-01-95).
 - President of IBM España, Juan Carlos Usandizaga (19-02-95).
 - Leader of the SDLP, John Hume (25-08-95).
 - Singer Manu Chao (01-09-95).
 - Winner of the Finnish State Award for Literature, Rax Rinnekangas (16-03-96).
 - Ex-Minister of Franco, Rodolfo Martín Villa (19-01-97).
 - Nobel Peace Prizewinner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (31-07-97).
 - Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, David Cassuto (10-08-97).
 - Nobel Prize for Physics Anthony Hewish (31-09-97).
 - Winner of the Spanish National Prize for Narrative, Bernardo Atxaga (22-04-98).
 - Singer-songwriter Georges Moustaki (18-02-99).
 - Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Drnovsek (23-06-99).
 - General Manager of Yahoo España, Xabier Etxebeste (07-11-99).
 - Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa (15-03-00).
 - American intellectual Noam Chomsky (06-09-00).
 - Film-maker Bernardo Bertolucci (23-09-00).
 - Nobel Prize for Literature José Saramago (16-01-01).
 - Italian ex-President, Francesco Cossiga (28-01-91).
 - Designer Giorgio Armani (23-03-01).
 - Writer Paulo Coelho (11-11-01).
 - Singer Kiko Veneno (06-03-02).
 - Bolivian trade union leader (now President), Evo Morales (03-07-02).
 - Ex-Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, David Trimble (23-01-03).
- *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* covered all kinds of news events, with universality as one of its most notable characteristics. It dealt with political, sporting, social and cultural events (international festivals of film, theatre, music, jazz, etc.), and natural disasters. Among others, these included reports from its special envoys sent to cover the following events:
- the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992, in Atlanta in 1996, and in Sydney in 2000.
 - the South African elections in 1994.
 - the Chiapas Uprising (Mexico) in 1994.
 - the Russian elections in 1995.
 - the 5th anniversary of the unification of the two Germanies (03-10-95).

- the American presidential elections in 1996.
- the Northern Ireland elections in 1996.
- the Football World Cup in France in 1998.

6. Conclusions.

1. During its more than twelve years of existence, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* positioned itself as a **standard European, quality, modern European newspaper**, comparable to other papers then on sale.
2. The detailed documentation provided clearly, irrefutably and unequivocally proves that *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* fully complied with its **foundational purposes**, announced both in the opening article of its first Style Guide, and in the editorial published on the front page of its first issue; that is, to offer **independent, plural information at the service of Basque arts and culture**.
3. The sheer number of prizes and awards received and the long list of Basque writers who occasionally or permanently contributed to *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* made this newspaper a **publication of reference** both in arts circles and in Basque society as a whole.
4. **Recognition** of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was widespread throughout the **bibliographic and academic world** in general. The paper now forms part of the newspaper archives of major libraries, both in Spain and abroad, and is indexed in their catalogues. Most libraries in Euskadi subscribed to the daily. Successive editions of its Style Guide were among the basic recommended bibliographies for many subjects taught at Basque universities.
5. At the time of its disappearance, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* had a **highly specialist staff** of professionals and a respectable market share estimated at around **50,000 readers** according to certified reports by CIES, a company specialising in audience measurement (and this in a community of around 600,000 speakers).
6. Our analysis of the 50 front pages and 100 front-page news items allows us to affirm that, without trying to conceal its pro-Basque and progressive orientation, this daily provided a faithful reflection of the political, institutional, social and educational reality of the Basque Country. The protagonists and areas of reference in these news items make for a fairly **true snapshot of the Basque society of the time**.
7. Our detailed analysis - of both its first pages and its inside pages - allows us to certify a **breadth of vision** that is unusual in the current journalistic scenario. The opinion, policy, international, culture, society and sports pages held opinions, analyses and information of very diverse kinds, many of these even openly at odds with the paper's pro-Basque and progressive orientation. The documentation provided also corroborates the **universality** of the issues dealt with, **diversity** of the events covered and **variety** of the protagonists interviewed.
8. *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was founded due to the impetus of Basque society, the dynamism of the Basque-speaking sectors. **It made history** in Basque journalism. It was a **witness and actor** in Basque culture. The sympathies it aroused went well beyond the threshold of its readership. Its texts served as working material at all levels of the educational field.

9. Irrespective of the final result of the criminal trials in progress, the closure of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* was a **full-frontal attack on the Basque language and culture**, and an **unjustified attack on freedom of expression**. A totally disproportionate and exceptional measure was taken, violating a fundamental right that can only be suspended in circumstances of state of emergency or siege (Article 55.1 of the Spanish Constitution). This means that it violated both the European Convention on Human Rights (Articles 10.2 and 15) and the Spanish Constitution itself (Article 20) which consecrates the right to freedom of the press and freedom of expression in a democratic society⁶.

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Documentation used: Complete press archive of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*.

Notes

¹ CIES compiles its data from surveys.

² Estimate of the number of readers for each copy of the daily.

³ Award-winners were, respectively: the newspaper as a whole, the *Naparkeria* supplements, artist Antton Olariaga, the KZ supplement and journalist Albert Barandiaran.

⁴ The journalists, artists, writers and employees awarded during these years were: Antton Olariaga, the authors of the “*Eguneko Pertsonaia*” section, Mikel Elortza, Patxi Huarte, Juan Luis Zabala, Koldo Aldabe, Jone Larrañaga, Anjel Lertxundi, Albert Barandiaran, Xabier Mendiguren Elizegi, Imanol Murua, Humberto Unzueta, Josétxo Azkona, Luis Fernandez, Josu Chueca, Jakes Goikoetxea, Garikoitz Berasaluze, Ainhoa Oiartzabal, and the staff of the daily as a whole.

⁵ In the archive consulted by the research team, copies of issues 2528 to 2559 were missing. This is why instead of analysing issue 2549 we decided to study issue 2560. We felt that this change did not affect the validity of the sample chosen.

⁶ On 5 November 2007 the Department of Justice of the Basque Government organised a day conference on “The Media and Conflict” at Miramar Palace in San Sebastian. Months before this conference, an international commission made up of prestigious lawyers studied the possible legal implications of the closure of the media in the Basque Country between 1998 and 2003 (the *Egin* and *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* newspapers and the *Egin irratia* television station). The conclusions given here appear in the final report that was read at this event. The commission consisted of following lecturers: Kai Ambos (University of Göttingen, Germany), Luis P. Salas Calero (Florida International University, USA), John Vervaele (Utrecht University, the Netherlands) and Juan Luis Gómez Colomer (University of Castellón).