

AN ALTERNATIVE VISION OF THE BASQUE SOCIETY

Conference pronounced at Stanford University the 3rd April 2008

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Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Gabon guziori eta milesker euskal gizarteko zati baten ordezkaritza neure bizkar hartzea ahalbideratu didazutelako. Buenas noches a todos y gracias por la invitación para presentar una visión alternativa de la sociedad vasca.

I want to thank Stanford University for allowing me to present a vision of the Basque society, a vision probably different from the one presented to you by the president of the Basque Government. My thanks too, to the Foundation for Freedom for having considered that I would be apt to the task of giving voice to an alternative vision of the Basque society.

I would like, if I may, to begin by giving you some information about myself. I am now 61 years old. All my life, one way or another, I have been involved in politics. I was born in 1946, in a village near San Sebastián, in the province of Gipuzkoa. It was in the heydays of Franco's dictatorship. I was born in a family where Basque was the only spoken language. Basque was my mother's and father's language. I spoke only Basque when I started school, I was six years old. I learned Spanish with difficulty, and also Mathematics and History. Basque is still my family's language today. I can't think of any other language to speak to my 3 sons. I am, at the present time, a professor of Sociology (knowledge sociology and culture sociology) at the public university of the Basque country, and I teach the subjects in the Basque language.

I was born in a very nationalist and catholic family. My family has had a long

tradition within PNV, Partido Nacionalista Vasco, Basque Nationalist Party. (Keep this name in mind).

My father fought against Franco in the civil war. He was sentenced to forced labor, and found it very hard to get work after the war. My oldest brother was imprisoned in the sixties, and I was jailed in 1968 - the same year in which ETA began the strategic use of violence, killing two police officers. I was prosecuted under military law at the beginning, and later on transferred to the special civil-political courts of the dictatorship.

Many years later, I began to work for the Basque Government, that was on January 1982. My main task was to design and enforce new policies for the development of the Basque language. After that, I was, for nine years, (Consejero) Secretary of Culture and the Speaker for the Basque Government. I was elected five times to the Basque Parliament, under the banner of the Basque Nationalist Party. About five years ago, I personally decided I could no longer be a member of my party. My decision - a hard one - had to do with my profound and deep political differences with the party. My party had signed the so called Estella/Lizarra agreement, an arrangement that excluded half of the Basque citizens from the possibility of taking part in the definition of the political future of the Basque society. After that, and knowing that my party was not ready to reconsider its error - that is, in signing that agreement, I decided it was time for me to leave the party. I am today an ordinary citizen.

I am a Basque and a Spanish citizen. A Basque citizen because much of my every day life is governed and administered by the Basque institutions. I am a Spanish citizen because these Basque institutions are articulated, defined and regulated by the Spanish Constitution. My every day life as a citizen is today governed by two fundamental laws: the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and the Estatuto de Gernika of 1980. For any citizen of the Basque society, the Spanish Constitution does not exist without the Estatuto de Gernika. The Estatuto de Gernika defines Basque institutions, and therefore the political power of the Basque society in many areas. And viceversa: for any Basque citizen the Estatuto de Gernika does not exist without the Spanish Constitution. That means that the Basque political institutions and Basque political power cannot exist without the Spanish Constitution. I am a citizen of the Spanish State, which is a complex, complicated and internally differentiated State, where the political power is distributed like in a federal system, according to the idea of the sovereign citizen on one side, and on the other side, to the idea of a plurality of territories integrated in one State.

What does all this mean and what does it look like in the real life? I would like to begin with the regulation of taxes, one of the most important areas in the life of any citizen and in the functioning of a democratic state. We, the Basque

citizens, don't pay any federal taxes. I live now in the province of Biscay. All the taxes that I have to pay do not go to the Spanish government, neither to the Basque Government: instead, they remain in the hands of the governing body of the province of Biscay, who pays, to be sure, a big chunk of its fiscal income to the Basque Government. And so the rules governing the taxes that I have to pay are decided by the province parliament of Biscay. According to these rules, the citizens in the Biscay province that have the highest yearly income have to pay two percentage points more than the citizens, say, of Madrid or Seville. On the other side, the corporate taxes that are to be paid by the enterprises incorporated in the province of Biscay, for example the most important energy corporation in Spain and one of the most important in Europe, Iberdrola, have to pay four percentage points less than the enterprises incorporated or established in other parts of Spain. This political capacity, this political power to set different percentages, goes as far as to allow some industrial corporations to pay in corporate taxes of only 2,5 percent.

The taxes, that all Basque society pays, are collected through our local institutions. These revenues are administered by the Basque institutions. A portion of the collected revenue goes to the central government to pay for areas such as defense spending, foreign policy, the Royal house and so on.

Keep in mind then, that the Basque society, through our local institutions, administers the revenues collected to pay for all the cost of our educational system, health system, law and order enforcement systems, public railway and transportation systems, roads and other infrastructures.

As you can see, Basque society pays for its police force, all the schools and the university, its medical personal, hospitals and related infrastructures, its public radio and television broadcasting system and so on. The Basque society not only pays for all of this but also has a wide range of political capacity to regulate each one of them, at any given stage. One example: the Basque government can regulate up to 55% of the academic curriculum taught in schools, and even more important: the Basque government can determine the academic language in which the whole curriculum has to be taught. My three sons have gone through kindergarden, elementary and secondary education being taught all the school subjects entirely in Basque. Spanish was taught as a second language, and was treated the same as English or German.

I am a professor at the Basque public university. I teach Sociology in the Basque language. Today, our university students can get their degrees having been taught only in Basque. I personally think this is a big mistake. I believe they should do their university studies being lectured in both languages. That is in Basque and Spanish. Nevertheless, they have the right to choose. The Basque government

has the powers to implement all kinds of policies, norms and rules regarding many other areas that affect our every day life. The Basque government, through its home secretary - interior ministry - has implemented a new policy, that is: any detainee held in Basque police custody, must be under camera surveillance at all times. And it has established this policy regardless of the rules applied to the rest of the Spanish police. And it has done so because it has the powers to create and implement as many policies as it wishes to.

What I'm trying to explain is that the Basque society has all sorts of tools and instruments to govern itself.

The term *autonomous community* is not an empty word. It means that the autonomous community has as far reaching possibilities to governing as it chooses to. But, I may say that this capacity of self government should be for the benefit of all its citizens, that is, to benefit a very mixed and complex society.

The term *Basque country* gives the idea of a homogeneous society. I prefer to speak in terms of Basque society, because the term society allows me to think in terms of inner differences, in terms of complexity. We often speak about the *Basque* society. How much is the Basque society really *Basque* if we bear in mind that it is the language what traditionally has defined the term in the Basque language? Keep in mind that not all of Basque citizens are able to express themselves in the Basque language. Not even a majority of them. There are approximately only 30% of the citizens of the Basque country who are proficient in Basque. According to Bernardo Atxaga, one of our most internationally renowned writers, if we consider someone as being Basque - in linguistic terms - only if he uses the Basque language at least two hours a day, and only this language, then the Basque people, *euskaldunak*, would account for 200.000 persons, less than 10% of the total population.

According to different sociological studies, 30% of Basque citizens see themselves as Basque speakers. This 30% of a total population of 2.100.000 citizens it is about 700.000 people.

Out of this 30%, the fact of the matter is that only 5% use Basque, for example, when they go shopping. This is the reality. These are the facts. And there is nothing wrong with it. If you allow me to play with words, I would say that Spanish is a very Basque language. It has always been that way. This is so not only after Franco's dictatorship, or because Franco's dictatorship as some people may insist. The fact is, that the Ancient Laws governing the Basque institutions at the end of the Middle Ages were written in Spanish. Through all the history, the Basque society has always been bilingual: one of the most important requirements to hold office in the Basque institutions used to be to have a full command of the Spanish language.

When I refer to different Basque societies, I want to say that there has never been a Basque united society, there has never been a politically united Basque country in the whole of its history (later on I will explain this point).

The linguistic situation can also be extended to other areas bearing important consequences as to the understanding of the political situation. When I say that the Basque society is a complex society, a very differentiated society, it does not mean that there are parts of the population who are only Basques and other that are only Spanish. It means that a large majority of Basques feels themselves as being both at the same time Basque and Spanish in a diverse degree of mixtures.

This feature of the Basque society is nothing new considering the history of the Basque territories. You can find along its history a profound sense of being different, together with a similar profound sentiment of being a part of something wider and bigger than its territories of Álava, Biscay or Gipuzkoa. The same characteristic is also true, with much more reason yet, if you take into account the ancient Kingdom of Navarra, and the Basque territories in France. To give you an idea of all of these, Saint Ignace (St Ignatious?) of Loyola was wounded in the city of Pamplona as he was fighting to defend the interests of the king of Castilla. Basque people were among the very first participating in the colonial adventures of the Kings of Castilla, and later on with the Spanish kings. Some examples: the founder of the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, was Juan de Garay; the founder of the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, was Bruno Mauricio Zabala; the discoverer of the northern part of Argentina, San Salvador de Jujuy, was Agustín de Leiza, Lope de Aguirre was a Basque who revolted against the Spanish king while he was conquering territories in the Amazon; Legazpi, another Basque, colonized the Philippine islands; Juan Sebastián Elcano - accomplished the task started by Magallanes, and he was the first sailor to navigate around the world. Those that I have just mentioned and many others that you can find in the history books, participated in the colonial adventures of the kingdom of Spain, and it happened so because they felt they belonged to this kingdom.

You can not think of the development of the modern kingdom of Spain without an active participation of many of our ancestors. The history of the different Basque countries is profoundly intertwined with the history of Castilla, and later with the history of Spain. Intertwined for good and for bad. The civil wars in the XIX century in Spain, were also civil wars in the Basque country. In the first of these civil wars, from 1831 to 1836, the most important general who defended God, the King and the ancient laws, who defended the ancient regime against the liberals, was a Basque, named Zumalakarregi. On the other hand, his own brother, was actively participating with the liberals, writing the first Spanish Constitution in Cadiz, in 1812.

The civil war of 1936 was also a civil war in the Basque country: many Basques fought against Franco, and many others fought alongside of Franco. The second most important person developing the fascist ideas of Falange española was also a Basque from Bilbao. His name was Sanchez Mazas.

Most important of all: the best academic analysis of the emergence and building of a collective identity in the different Basque territories in the nineteenth century - the century of nation building in Europe, the century of collective identity building in Europe - all come to the conclusion that the most important characteristic of this identity lies in the so called double loyalty, double patriotism: that is, a clear sense of being different, but also asserting at the same time, as being very Spanish in their soul. The main characteristics of the collective identity, as developed during the nineteenth century in the different Basque territories, were: one, the Catholic faith - the Basque being the most faithful Christians from the beginnings and without either interruption or any heterodox tendencies; secondly, the awareness about their own institutional tradition and their special relationship with the kingdom of Spain; and thirdly, their profound sense of being Spanish and very proud of it indeed.

The difficulties that arise at the end of the nineteenth century are tied to the transformation of the Spanish kingdom to a constitutional and parliamentary state. According to the liberal tradition in Europe, Spain tried to build a nation-state with a central parliament as the expression of the popular sovereignty. After the last civil war in the nineteenth century, which was a Spanish and a Basque civil war - the then Prime Minister, Cánovas del Castillo, sought the unification of the state through a common law, a common market, a common language and a common culture. But he allowed the three Basque territories to continue with some of their institutions, especially with their special fiscal and financial relationship with the central government. (Navarra had already negotiated in 1841 the adaptation of its ancient laws to the new requirements of the constitutional situation).

It was the dictator Franco after his victory in 1939, who took away this special fiscal and financial relationship with the central government in the case of two Basque territories, Biscay and Gipuzkoa, because in his eyes this two territories had been traitors to his political and dictatorial project.

The Spanish Constitution of 1978, not only re-established the special relationship of the Basque territories with the central government in fiscal and financial questions, but also it went much further in the granting of many political powers, as I have tried to explain from the beginning of this lecture.

I want to underline that the Basque country, the Basque society to speak properly, has been recognized as a united political subject, and therefore has had the

possibility to act as a united political actor, only two times in its past: one in 1936 as part of the second Spanish Republic which undertook the task of structuring itself as an autonomic state, and second, after 1980, grounded in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. In both instances the Estatuto de Autonomía was an integral part.

There are two conditions that are indispensable for the emergence of the Basque society as a united one: first the acknowledgment of the structural complexity and plurality of the Basque society by all its political actors, and second, the existence of the Spanish State, as a democratic, social, constitutional and autonomic state. That is, a state that recognizes within itself different languages, different cultures, different identities, different nationalities, and on one hand allows them to have an institutional power which acts as a reference point to the pluralistic senses of belonging, and on the other hand makes them a part of the structures of the state.

I would like to stress that the structural complexity of the Basque society is nothing new in its history, it is not caused by the internal migration policies of the Franco's dictatorship. The few historical references that I pointed out earlier, should be enough proof of all of it.

Concerning the democratic nature of the actual Spanish State, I would like to stress only the most important points. First of all, the Basque society did not vote against the constitution of 1978. In fact, there were more *Yes* votes than the *No* votes. The Basque Nationalist Party asked the voters to abstain, never mind that their representatives in the Spanish constitutive parliament had voted a *Yes* in the (concerning) committee, and gave a *No* vote on the self determination right in the full assembly. The Basque Nationalist Party chose the way of the abstention vote due the following conditions: the historical leaders of the party, that is, the older party members with memories of the second Spanish Republic and the Spanish civil war, were all for a yes vote. And yet the then party boss, was against it. It was clear that the Constitution would collect a more than sufficient majority. And the Basque Nationalist Party acted on the ground that there was no doubt that after the Constitution there would be an Estatuto, a constitutional law establishing the political powers of the Basque society. These conditions made it very easy to propose abstention in the popular vote for the Spanish Constitution.

In December of 1980 the Estatuto de Autonomía was put to a referendum. And it was approved by a very large majority of Basque citizens. The Estatuto de Autonomía is the constitutional law establishing the self government powers never before known in the history of the Basque territories. One of the most important leaders of the Basque nationalist party, Mr. Arzalluz, used to refer to this law as one having powers like the powers of a state, and used to say, also,

that this law had given the Basque society powers beyond those of a German federal land or state.

The constitutional situation in which the Basque country is integrated today, is an entirely democratic one, not perfect, not one is, but with no structural democratic faults affecting its foundations. This does not mean that there are no problems concerning the development of the powers foreseen in the Estatuto de Autonomía. For example, there can be tendencies in the law making process of the Spanish parliament trying to limit the powers already devolved to the autonomies. On the other hand, there are tendencies too within the autonomies to go beyond and to try to exceed the powers foreseen in the Estatutos de Autonomía, that is in the execution of its powers. Such conflicts are decided by the Constitutional Court.

Some nationalist parties lately have accused the Spanish Government, or the Spanish State, for not being loyal to the Estatuto de Autonomía, and obstructing its full development. Let us take a look at this accusation: the only important transfer of power still pending from the central government is the one connected to the complicated questions of the laws governing Social Security and the ways to implement these laws. The Basque nationalists understand that what is written in the Estatuto must be interpreted in a parallel way to the fiscal and financial relations of the Basque country with the central government: we, the Basques, collect all the contributions of the workers and business to Social Security, and then we pay a chunk of it to the central government, a chunk that has to be negotiated each year.

This parallel was precisely excluded when the Constitutional Law of the Estatuto was negotiated and agreed. What the Estatuto says is that the laws governing Social Security are the responsibility of the central government and of the Spanish Parliament. The Basque institutions can collect the contributions of the Basque workers and business without affecting the unity of the financial management of the total contributions. To carry on these provisions there must be some agreements between the Basque and the Spanish governments. The Basque Government, instead of negotiating the means to materialize these provisions, is always trying to re-read or to re-negotiate what has been already agreed.

The Spanish Constitution recognizes the Basque society as a nationality, and it recognizes the Basque language as a Spanish language, and allows that the Basque language to be an official language in the Basque country. The Spanish Constitution gives very important powers to the Basque institutions, including an almost total sovereignty in fiscal matters and in public finances. The Spanish Constitution in doing so, answers to the complexity and plurality of the Basque society, a complexity and a plurality that makes it impossible for the Basque country either to be independent - for it would mean the exclusion of all the

Basque citizens who feel to be at the same time Basque and Spanish, nor to be included without the recognition of its difference in a entirely centralized state. The Spanish Constitution, and including the Estatuto de Autonomía, warrants the rights as citizens of all the people of the Basque society and also warrants their right to the difference - in language, in culture, in identity, and to the institutions that symbolize, with political power, these mentioned differences.

Why then, the permanent reference to the Basque conflict with Spain? What does it mean? What is the real meaning of it, what must be deduced from this political argument? First of all: the fundamental law governing the Basque country today was approved by a very large majority of Basque citizens, as I already explained.

The violent rejection of this fundamental and constitutional law became the organizing central point for all of those that had rejected the outcome of the referendum.

The main aim of this violent rejection was to make impossible the development of the Basque institutions foreseen by and in it: the Basque Parliament, the Basque Government, and the revitalization of the traditional institutions in the diverse territories. The main objective of the front rejecting the Estatuto was the revolution, the break away with the past. They did not want to go with the reforming path in politics, and instead they wanted to try, with memories OF THE WAR IN THE WAR BY Lenin, a revolution in the democratic transition. They who were against the Estatuto de Autonomia did not accept the word of the Basque society, a democratic election of the Basque society. In 1980 the Basque society spoke very clearly: the people wanted reforms and not a revolution. The citizens wanted compromises, the agreement implied by the Estatuto de Autonomia, and were against self determination and independence. It was an agreement first of all and fundamentally between the diverse sensibilities of the Basque society, an agreement based in the recognition of different visions of the Basque society, of being Basque, of the history and the future of the Basque society. And secondly, it was an agreement with the state. This second agreement was only possible because there had been previously or prior an agreement between Basques. The agreement among the Basque people on one hand, and the agreement between the Basque society and Spain are bound together: there is no agreement with the state if there is not an agreement between Basques; and there is no agreement between Basques if the links with the Spanish state are broken.

In this sense, the first meaning of the term **conflict** refers to the unwillingness of some Basques to accept the verdict of the votes, votes casted to confirm an agreement previously obtained by the representatives of the distinct visions of the Basque society. This unwillingness was expressed by the use of violence, killing

representatives of the Spanish state, members of the police forces, of the army, but also killing civilian people, university professors, politicians, city counselors, journalists, businessmen and so on. These assassinations went as far as killing a former vice president of the Basque government.

This is a conflict created by ETA and only ETA, by using violence and terror to upset the constitutional order approved by a very large majority of Basque citizens. It is a conflict created by ETA against the Basque society. It is a conflict first among the Basques, something very internal to the Basque society. It is, at its worst, an expression of the past history, a history full of divisions within the Basque society.

Secondly, there is a conflict between some Basque citizens and the Spanish state, a conflict because Spain does not recognize the Basque country as an homogeneous society, a society with an homogeneous sense of belonging only to the Basque nation. And therefore, because Spain does not accept the right to self determination of the Basque country. If the Spanish State would recognize the Basque country as an homogeneous society in terms of sentiments of belonging, it would cease to be a democratic state, it would deny the structural complexity of the Basque society, the structural complexity and plurality of the Basque identity. Without this recognition, the individual freedoms are put at risk, and democracy in the Basque society would be put into question.

As I already stated, the question regarding the Basque Country can not be defined in terms of not been recognized, because the Spanish Constitution does explicitly recognize the Basque Country as a nationality, also recognizes the Basque language as a Spanish language, and allows the Basque language to be declared an official language. The problem is that for many nationalists, there is only one way to recognize the Basque Country: as a nation with full rights of sovereignty, with the right to decide alone, and only alone, its own future. But keep in mind, that to recognize such a right means to break the links that most of Basque citizens have with the Spanish culture, with the Spanish language, and with all other citizens of the Spanish State. Clearly, about half of the Basque citizens do not want to decide the constitutional features governing Basque society just alone. They want to decide in conjunction with the other Spanish citizens.

But these same Basque citizens also want very much to have their own Basque parliament, a Basque government, special fiscal and financial arrangements with the central government, with all the powers devolved to the Basque institutions by the Spanish Constitution and the Estatuto de Gernika. Thanks to these distinctive Basque political institutions, there are enough identity references for the citizens who need them for constituting their own personal identity. But without denying no one's freedom. One does not exclude the other.

It is very important for the idea of citizenship to consider that the freedom of identity is a modern translation of the freedom of conscience, out of which all modern political liberties were born.

It is for me now a priority to track the idea of the conflict during the last years, and its use in the political debate. For the Basque Nationalist Party the best way to explain ETA's use of violence and terror has been, during many years, to refer to ETA as a revolutionary group with Marxist spirit. In 1998, an agreement between all nationalist parties and a representation of ETA was signed. The Basque Nationalist Party gave to the Basque people a very different explanation than the one given before. At this time the violence and terror carried out by ETA was the result of the existence of a political conflict between the Basque Country and Spain. They insisted, that this permanent conflict had become an unbearable one after 1836(??)

This second explanation did not last very long, at least apparently: the latest effort of the Basque Nationalist Party to explain ETA's use of violence and terror is a no explanation. It is simply an statement saying that there is no excuse for ETA to use violence any more, it is an statement saying that to achieve the right to decide alone the future of the Basque country as a nation, here ETA's violence and terror is precisely the main obstacle. Therefore, ETA must disappear as the main condition in order to achieve the recognition of the right to self determination of the Basque Country.

But on the other hand, the resolution of the Basque conflict continues to be the necessary condition for ETA's dissolution. In a letter sent by N.A.B.O., North American Basque Organization, to the Office of the President of this University, John L. Hennessy, one can read the following statement: - I quote- *"as a representative of the Basque people Mr. Ibarretxe and fellow officials came among us because they seek what we have: the opportunity to live in peace. They have tired of the decades of conflict, and they deeply yearn for a resolution that has evaded them to date. But rather than resign, they have come instead with a resolution to bring an end to this conflict once and for all"* -end of the quote-. In this statement you can find clearly exposed the link between the change of the constitutional arrangements and ETA's end. You can see the very real meaning of the conflict: ETA's use of violence and terror.

The two main nationalist parties apart from ETA, are PNB and EA. They are both deeply involved in this contradiction: they say, on one hand, that resolving the conflict between the Basque country and Spain is the way to persuade ETA to disappear, but on the other hand, sensing that this way is democratically illegitimate, they state that ETA's violence and terror is the main impediment to achieve the resolution of the conflict.

To understand this contradiction it is important to look in the past. It was in 1998 when the Basque Nationalist Party began with references to the need of a new frame of relationship with Spain, implying that the actual frame, Constitution and Estatuto de Autonomía, were not longer adequate to achieve ETA's dissolution. On one occasion, the mastermind of this agreement of 1998, the agreement of Estella/Lizarra, when he and I were both members of the Basque Parliament, told me that *there won't be a dissolution of ETA if we don't concede the right of self determination and the territorial demands* that include Navarra. By the way, in Navarra, 80% of its population are non-nationalist, and in the Basques territories of France the nationalists are about 10%.

Going back for a minute, I must remember that the agreement of Estella/Lizarra meant the union of all nationalist parties and ETA, and excluded the rest of the Basque citizens, those who are not nationalist, in order to define the political future of the Basque society.

For the Basque Nationalist Party the resolution of the so called Basque conflict with Spain has always been a way to satisfy the demands of ETA, and so a way to try to bring to an end ETA's violence and terror. Only later, when the agreement of Estella/Lizarra ended in a total failure, this is, with ETA breaking the ceasefire and reassuming the bombings and killings, the Basque Nationalist Party began to speak of the need of ETA's disappearance, in order to achieve the two goals formerly put on the negotiating table as the necessary conditions for ETA dissolving itself.

There is one clear reason for this contradiction, and it is the same reason for ETA's unwillingness to accept the decision of the Basque society: they are not ready to accept, with all the political consequences, the fact that the Basque society is a profoundly complex and plural society. They dream of an homogeneous Basque country, a country very well defined, close in itself, easy to identify, with a perfect continuity in history, always politically independent, even when there was no possibility of thinking in terms of independence like in modern times. They dream of some historical subject that could materialize this homogeneous unity - ETA speaks of itself as the founding event of the Basque people and of Basque history, implying that until the appearance of ETA there was neither a Basque people conscious of itself, nor there was a Basque history conscious of itself-. For the Basque Nationalist Party as they see it, there must be somewhere, somehow, something - as a referendum, or something like it - that would reveal that there is an homogeneous entity that must be recognized as such, even though, if after the recognition life goes on as usual. But this is a dangerous dream, because this dream takes place very near the violence and the terror of ETA.

In all of this, there is on the one side a fear caused by the complexity of the Basque society, caused by the plurality of the Basque society. A mixed society is contrary to the myth of unity, and of simplicity. Because in reality there is no one Basque Country, there are many Basque countries, as there are many visions of Basque history, as there are many visions of being Basque, as well as many visions of the future of the Basque society. But all the nationalists are after is a historical moment, a political instrument, a magical point that could provide the simplicity and the unity denied by reality.

Many democracies have had to learn that democracy is nothing more than the management of plurality and complexity, because only in complexity and plurality can the conditions for freedom be found.

Democracy is about citizens, not about identities: the rights of citizenship are not bound to one religion, to one ideology, to one political creed, to one linguistic or cultural identity.

In the end, the Basque conflict is, as it has always been, a conflict among the Basques, a conflict between freedom and imposition of unitary visions of identity, of culture, of language.

I want to thank you, all of you, for being here tonight, and specially to Stanford University for giving me this unique opportunity to present a different vision than the one given by others.