

The Construction of the Basque Polarized Pluralism

Francisco J. LLERA RAMO

Universidad del País Vasco

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The political transition from the authoritarian system to the pluralist regime started in December 1976 with the Political Reform Act and finished with the approving referenda of Constitution and Statutes, being the first one (December 1978) general for the State and the second (October 1979) specific for the Basque Country. The following stage in both cases was that of starting the previously designed institution-building process to result in a third phase that we might define as consolidation of the democratic system which is the present one.

The Basque people have been called to polls more than twelve times since the first free elections in 1977. They have voted the composition of the Houses in Madrid and Vitoria, of the regional institutions of Alava, Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, of the city councils and even of the European Parliament, not to mention the four referenda. At the regional level, the "inaugural" 1980 election opened a period of political alignment and institution-building hegemonized by the PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, Basque Nationalist Party) in a context of strong anti-centralist mobilization and of maximum activity of the radical nationalism's armed organisms at the same time as ETAp decided its dissolution. The second elections of 1984 were of "passage", extending the previous situation to a term shortened by PNV's parliamentary weakening eventually leading to its early split at the time of defining the internal organization of the Basque Country with the LTH as well as its alliance-politics. The third 1986 elections were of "realigning" as a result of the cataclysm caused by PNV's split and the emergence of a new party, EA (Eusko Alkartasuna) from which other political forces would profit; for example, the PSOE obtains the top parliamentary position and will have to initiate a new political phase of coalition. The last elections of 1990 are again "transitional" (1).

1. EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The arrival of liberties with free and competitive elections' summons and parties legalization, made possible the public emergence of a rich political pluralism which the Basque society had been hatching during the last years of authoritarian regime. Some parties (PSOE, PNV, PCE, ANV and the Partido Carlista now socialist and favoring workers' selfmanagement) counted already with a centenary existence or at least had participated in the last republican experience and shared front, government and opposition from the beginning of the civil war. Others, on the contrary, emerged with the transformation of dictatorship and shared out the legacy both of the regime and of its opposition.

Taking as point of reference the first free elections of June'77 we find already a wide plurality of options: the old and the new ones, nationalist and centralist, those derived from the regime's political families and those which suffered opposition, those connected with political violence and those that rejected it and finally, the right, center

and left parties (2).

PSOE had to compete with a splinter of its historical sector (PSOE-H) and with the legacy of the interior socialism collected by Tierno Galván's PSP which would later join it. The PCE competed with communist organizations born from the sixties' crisis: ORT, PT, EMK and LKI. The Francoist center-right legacy will find great difficulties to organize itself in the Basque Country not being able to compete in all provinces; namely UCD and AP do not compete in Guipúzcoa, while some other temporary unions appear (GU, DIV or the right-wing FE-JONS and Proveristas). To this center-right block we must add the Christian-democratic opposition agglutinated in the FDC whose delegates at the Basque Country will be the DCV later to join in the UCD. Lastly, close to the PNV's and ANV's historical nationalism will emerge the so-called "abertzale left" organizations which intend to collect the legacy of ETA's anti-Francoist fight from the fifties, namely the social-democratic ESB and ESEI, the Euskadiko Ezkerra coalition (formed by EIA, EMK, ES, EIC and supported by ETA-pm) with a revolutionary marxist trend, and EHAS, at a convergence stage to create HASI and LAIA supported by ETA-m and that will not compete electorally until HB's creation in 1978.

2. PERIODS IN THE CREATION OF THE BASQUE PARTY SYSTEM

The fragility and difficult crystallization of the Basque party system becomes clear as soon as we take a backward glance to what has happened since the beginning of transition. To better understand its changes we can distinguish four periods: (3) the first one (1977-1979) is that of the Basque transition in the strict sense; the second (1980-1984), internal institution-building; third (1984-1986) crisis of the hegemonic nationalism with PNV's split; and the fourth (1986-1990) is the one that opens the phase of democratic consolidation.

2.1. 1977-1979: the Basque transition

This period goes from the first general election of 1977 until the regional referendum at the end of 1979 in which takes place the first Basque party system's main alignments. The celebration of the constitutional referendum (December 1978) which adds a conclusive differentiation factor between the Basque parties, takes place in these years as well as the second general election (March'79) and the first local and provincial elections (April'79) (4).

Chart1

In 1977 nationalism is not majoritarian in the Basque society yet -although

the PNV is already the first party- and the split within the abertzale left takes place on the issue of the reform acceptance. On the other side, the state-wide options emerge with relative strength as far as imposing a Socialist president (R. Rubial) at the pre-autonomous Consejo General Vasco (Basque General Council) formed by the parliamentary parties (PNV, UCD, PSOE and EE).

Besides this phase of pluralism and party-alignment is marked by the agreement politics namely the participation of the moderate nationalism in the discussion of the constitutional text, although keeping its non-voting reserve at the referendum, the acceptance of amnesty and reform by some of the radical nationalists (EE), the pre-autonomic concentration government and the statutory consensus just broken by the radical nationalist group that still rejects reform (HB).

The second general elections of March 1979 mean the emergence of the nationalist majority as a result both of the decline of the state-wide options and the competition of the newborn HB (HASI, ESB and ANV among others) for the first time. The provincial and local elections in April will confirm the nationalist hegemony and PNV's control of the institutions, proving the weak territorial introduction of the state-wide options, specially the center-right wing. This will force the Basque General Council's transformation that will be chaired from now on by C. Garaikoetxea. HB begins its participation at the polls but at the same time rejects its participation at the regional institutions thus insuring PNV's majority in them.

Chart2

2.2. 1980-1984: institution-building

This is the period of the first autonomous mandate during which all the institutional design begins to concretize not without some strains. It starts after the elections of May 1980 (5) that confirm PNV's majority. This party forms the first regional government by itself thanks to the majority guaranteed by HB's institutional non-participation. Thus this period begins with a nationalist control over all the local institutions that will accelerate even more the initial recession of all the state-wide options and even UCD's breakdown in the Basque Country. This situation, with the PNV competing against the center-right wing at the central government and HB contending with all the state-wide left for its space, will succeed -with their implantation and imposing their discourse promoting nationalist conflict- in temporally demobilizing the non-nationalist electorate (more than 48% of non-voting in 1980).

The PNV's control over the Basque institutions, a very weakened PSOE and an UCD in crisis in Madrid will spoil the first steps of a consociational politics; the coup attempt of 23-F in 1981, the Calvo Sotelo government and the new autonomic

policy established by the LOAPA, strongly supported by the rising Socialists, will mean a reactivation of nationalist conflict against the state at the height of the regional institution building process.

Between 1979 and 1980 the most decisive moment of the diverse terrorist organizations' activity takes place, specially that of ETA which sums up to 242 dead (a third of the total figure since the beginning of transition). In spite of all we cannot forget that in UCD's final period negotiations between the Home Office and ETA-pm took place and culminated in this group's disarmament in exchange of the so-called "social reintegration policy" which would radicalize and stress relations between HB and EE within the Abertzale left. This process will end with the constituent congress of Euskadiko Ezkerra, born from the uniting of EIA, PCE/EPK's majoritarian factions, a group of HASI's founders and some Socialists from ANV, ESEI and independents who abandon the marxist-leninist definition.

Table1

The Socialist success of 1982 (6) besides opening a new period in Spain means a reorientation of the centralist vote in the Basque Country as well as a new definition of relations between the Basque institutions and the central government. This change will be clear in the second local and provincial elections of 1983 (7) which ratify the nationalist hegemony as well as PNV's and EE's rise and PSOE's recovery and show a more pluralist panorama specially in the main industrial cities.

Discussion of the regional electoral laws and the postponing of the Ley de Territorios Históricos (LTH, Historic Territories Act) -which had to delimit competences, between Vitoria's government and the provincial councils- as well as the Ley de Normalización del Euskera (Euskera Standardization Act) or that of symbology would open a new front of tensions in the nationalist community at the same time as it sharpened the center-periphery conflict.

2.3. 1984-1986: the nationalist crisis

The second regional elections (1984) (8) will coincide with a strong dissent within the PNV and over the institutional patterns of the Basque autonomous community: relations between party and government, representativity and decision-making within the party, Arzalluz/Garaikoetxea leadership and the alliances politics which opens the crisis in Navarra after the regional elections of 1983.

We must add to this internal rarified atmosphere -to the point it obliged Garaikoetxea to present his proposal of resignation as the candidate to lendakari- the violent reaction of ETA's sections that killed the Socialist Senator Casas in the midst

of the electoral campaign, the first nine murders of GAL and the first deportations and extraditions of ETA members by the French government.

Chart3

Despite all this the PNV will renew its success in majority terms although PSOE's rise and the loss of relevance of HB's institutional non-participation because of its relative recession provoke a parliamentary 32-32 draw between Government and opposition which will difficult things for the single-colour government and oblige it to reach a term-agreement with the PSOE.

Few months after the beginning of this term the internal split of PNV grew until Garaikoetxea's resignation from the lendakari's post in 1985 being substituted by J.A. Ardanza. The electoral fall of the party in the general election of June 1986 will accelerate the rupture in the party and the parliamentary group which culminates in the emergence of a new nationalist party led by Garaikoetxea: Eusko Alkartasuna (EA).

1986 (9) will perhaps remain in Euskadi's political history as a crucial moment and a point of no return within the critical transition through which the Basque institutional system is going, whose main symptom is the lack of precise delimitation of the composition, electoral outline and ideological distribution of its party system. What seems to emerge in this crossroads is the exhaustion of a certain policy-making pattern of "adversary politics" (10) featured in this case by conflict maximization, constant confrontation, primordialist exclusiveness and the imposition of artificial single-party majorities.

2.4. 1986-1991: democratic consolidation

This last period begins in November 1986 (11) because of the advancement of the third Basque election after PNV's split, and is characterized by a bigger segmentation and pluralism in the party-system as a result of the distribution of PNV's votes between PNV and EA and of a heavier electoral weight of the nationalist left (EE and HB), all this resulting in PSOE's first parliamentary victory.

The new party-competition pattern means a total revolution in the Basque politics; with the imperious need of coalitions to govern institutions and the essential consensus among democratic forces to face the final phase of terrorist activity in a political agreement atmosphere. In the first case the search of a parliamentary majority culminates in the PNV-PSOE coalition government led by Ardanza; in the second, the agreement politics results in the Ajuria-Enea Pact against violence signed by all the Basque parliamentary parties (PNV, PSOE, EA, EE, PP and CDS)

except HB in January 1988.

At the same time the third local and provincial elections of May 1987 extend this pluralism to all the institutions, with important territorial differences leading to a new EA-EE coalition at the Diputación Foral de Guipúzcoa that matches another PNV-PSOE pact in Alava and Vizcaya.

Lastly the fourth regional elections of 1990 define a new picture with the PNV being the first party again thanks to the recession of EA and the rest of parliamentary parties -with the sole exception of PP, that shows a slight recuperation. Another significant fact of these elections is the parliamentary emergence of the old "alavesismo" as a differentiated political option (Unidad Alavesa).

Chart4

3. THE FOURTH REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF 1990

The fourth regional elections can be considered of continuity although they do introduce some significant changes that must be taken into account. The consolidation phase initiated during the last regional term rests on the recovery of the agreement politics in the legislative production, the improvement of relations between the democratic parties and relax of their tensions, the great pact legitimating and mobilizing against violence, the coalition policy, a larger coordination in the big investment plans, and specially the arrival of the economic growth and recuperation wave.

The electoral campaign for these elections has been characterized by a continuity political discourse and has focused on the several possibilities of the new coalition government, in which the PNV always appeared as a constant element, with the rest of parties competing for partnership. Except HB's confrontation against all the other parties, the programmatic shades and the hand-to-hand fight, essential in any campaign, have this time been conspicuously absent: one thing is -to excess- the disqualification politics and another -to default- not showing differences too much so that the distance to cover in the ensuing negotiations would result shorter.

To ideologize politics means to put it on grand words, symbols and orthodoxy, which leads global projects -no matter how far from reality they might be- to prevail over means to fulfil them. On the contrary, to depoliticize the public life means to shadow differences, emptying them of significance and collective meaning, and merely focusing on the instrumental part. We have gone from the extreme of ideological excesses -just rethorical many times- to a certain interested depoliticization disguised as pragmatism.

A non-voting rate of 39 % has probably been one of the most discussed and of largest electoral impact facts of the last regional elections. Its rise of 9 points in relation with the results of the elections of four years before has had different repercussions on the diverse political forces which probably means that has affected some social sectors to a larger extent than others. (See Figure1).

The fact that a 9% of the electoral roll is rejuvenated since 1986 makes us see the youngest sector as one of the most affected by this behaviour. At the same time, data show that non-voting rates go up to more than 40% in the province capitals and most industrial cities where three significative sectors are concentrated: workers, immigrants and the new middle classes.

The nationalist parties, representing two thirds of seats and votes, have lost about 200,000 votes and 2 seats on the whole; if we take into account that the PNV has won about 18,000 votes and HB lost 13,000 we have that nationalist non-voting comes specially from the political center (EA has lost 65,000 votes and 4 seats) and the moderate left (EE has lost 45,000 votes and 3 seats). Opposite to this, the state-wide parties have just lost 6 seats as a result of another 100,000 non-voters, half of them PSOE's followers. Nonetheless, the center and right sum up a little more than half of the voters and seats and have only lost a third of their total votes with different situations, namely: recuperation of votes and seats (+ 5) by PNV and PP (wins 4 seats and 28,000 votes at the expense of EA and CDS respectively); the curious fact in this block is the success of "alavesismo" as separated of the regional right which shows up in the three seats obtained by UA.

Our peculiar parliamentary pluralism -highly fragmented- designs a scene formed by seven political forces: four nationalist, two state-wide and one provincialist (UA in substitution of CDS); or four on the center and right and three on the left, and one anti-system opposite against all the rest.

The fact that none of the parties has the majority -with the first party (PNV) representing less than 30% of valid votes and about 17% of the electorate, demands a coalition government. The bipartisan PNV-PSOE coalition government was the one with more probabilities counting with the parliamentary support of half of the Chamber and the confidence of merely 30% of the electoral body or 48% of voters.

The PNV is the rising plurality which must assume this government's leadership knowing that it is hegemonic within the center-right and that counts with this social sector's economic support but also that it is one of four nationalist options and represents just the 43 % of this sector's expressed vote. The PSOE, having lost the 20% of its electorate formed specially by workers and immigrants, leads the state government and has experience in policy-performing but, just like the PNV,

represents just the 40% of the votes of a not less dispersed left although it agglutinates two thirds of the state-wide parties' vote.

Opposite to them, the opposition, parliamentary or not, should represent the other 52% of voters and a wider variety of social sensibilities.

3.1. Provincial differences

One of the Basque Country historical and political features is its provincial differentiation that is reflected in the party-system and electoral behaviour. This became more acute at the 1986 regional and the 1987 local and provincial elections, specially by PNV's split and the emergence of EA. In the last elections this fact has not changed, specially in Alava by the unexpected success of Unidad Alavesa (UA) after the abandonment of PP by some of its leaders.

Table2

Participation levels are very similar in the three provinces -around 60%- with a fall of a little more than 10 points in Alava and Vizcaya and of 7 points in Guipúzcoa, which reaches the higher rate of participation (62.3%).

The nationalist options holding majority in all the provinces, define relative positions clearly differentiated. The nationalist vote keeps it highest rate in Guipúzcoa (71.6%) with a loss of a little more than 1 point, while in Vizcaya it remains at about two thirds (66.4%) with a fall of 0.6 and Alava gets the lowest 50.3% after falling more than 8 points. While the PNV recovers voters in the three provinces -with a rise of 5.7 points in Vizcaya, 5 in Guipúzcoa and 2 in Alava- the other nationalist parties lose, either in a slight and homogeneous way, as HB, or significantly and differentially as EE and EA. EA loses 49 % of its voters in Alava, 40% in Vizcaya and even 30% in Guipúzcoa; EE follows a parallel line with a fall of 44 % in Alava, 37 % in Vizcaya and 33 % in Guipúzcoa.

The center-right recovers majority in Alava (55.2%), with a rise of more than 5 points, and Vizcaya (52.3 %) increasing 3 points, while the advancement of 1 point in Guipúzcoa is not enough to snatch majority from the left, that keeps a 53.6% of the votes. Alava's recuperation is due both to EE, PSOE and HB's losses and the net balances collected by PP (4 points) and the UA phenomenon (11.2% of votes). In Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa the PP absorbs CDS' lost: vote while the PNV cannot absorb all EA's losses, which reflects that the advancement of the center-right block results from the net losses of the left. We must now add to the nationalist options' recessions those affecting the PSOE -which loses 14% of its electorate in

Guipúzcoa, 22% in Vizcaya and 23% in Alava.

All these changes produce a differentiated political map for each province. This diversity and the electoral fractionalization increase in all the provinces can be seen summarized in Map 1. In Alava, the PNV wrenches the first place to the PSOE with just one point of distance, followed at some distance by HB, UA and PP which move EA and EE from the third and fifth places respectively to the sixth and seventh.

In Guipúzcoa the larger fractionalization between the four main parties makes changes draw more attention: HB moves from the second to the first position, PNV from the fourth to the second while EA falls from the first to the fourth and PSOE, EE and PP keep the third, fifth and sixth places respectively. In Vizcaya, however, there are no changes at the top, with PNV, PSOE and HB maintaining their positions and only EA and EE moving backwards due to PP's rise to the fourth position. What is significant in this province is the increase in distance between the PNV and PSOE which changes from 6 to more than 14 points while the distance between the PSOE and HB shortens from 7 to 4 and the other three get similar rates around the 8%.

3.2. Diversity of the Basque electoral geography

We cannot extend ourselves here with a detailed analysis of each province and must content with reducing all district data to a vision of the main features of the Basque electoral geography, as can be seen in Map 2.

We can deduce from the new 1990 regional district map the following conclusions: first, the permanence of the electoral ring between the different metropolitan areas with mainstays in the industrial-urban and immigration centres where non-voting has been proportionally higher (San Sebastián, the industrial area of the middle Deba, Oria, Goierri, Duranguesado, the greater Bilbao, the industrial area of the Ayala valley and Vitoria) and where other situations also stand out: high electoral fractionalization, political pluralism and change among the dominant positions -which on the other side characterize the respective provinces in their whole, given this ring's demographic weight. Secondly, it is featured by a majority of the nationalist vote, except in Vitoria, and the left-wing options, except in Alava; besides, HB gets the top position in the aforementioned districts of Guipúzcoa, the PSOE gets it in Vitoria and the PNV in all the rest.

As for the changes in the main electorates in relation with 1986 we underline the following data from Maps 3 to 9: The PNV recovers majority in Uribecosta, obtaining more than 40% in the rest of Vizcaya's districts with the exceptions of

greater Bilbao and Duranguesado, as well as in the Western Mountains and Valleys of Alava; it gets a third of the votes in the rest of Vizcaya, in the Urola of Guipúzcoa and the foothills of Gorbea, the Llanada and Rioja of Alava, surpasses the 20% in the rest of Guipúzcoa and the Ayala valley and, lastly it positions itself under this rate in the metropolitan areas of Vitoria and San Sebastián.

The PSOE obtains its maximum rate of 31 % at the industrial areas of the Nervión estuary left bank and surpasses 20% in Bilbao, the industrial area of the high Nervión and the greater San Sebastián.

Herri Batasuna gets its best results in Lea-Artibai (35 %) and the middle Oria (32%) and surpasses 20% in the other districts of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya with the exceptions of the greater Bilbao and the Encartaciones as well as the Ayala valley and foothills of Gorbea in Alava.

Eusko Alkartasuna's best result (24%) is at Urola (Guipúzcoa), getting more than 20% in the middle Oria and Goierri and almost this rate at the Gorbea of Alava and the district of Busturia in Vizcaya.

Euskadiko Ezkerra surpasses its provincial means in Goierri (11%), the greater San Sebastián (10%), Bilbao and the estuary banks (8%) and Vitoria (7%).

The best results of the PP are Alava's, surpassing its mean of 11% in Vitoria, the Western Valleys, the mountain and Rioja of Alava; in Vizcaya it gets more than the mean (9%) in Bilbao and the right bank of the estuary (Getxo) and the greater San Sebastián where it also surpasses the mean of Guipúzcoa (7%).

Lastly Unidad Alavesa counted only on the vote of Alava, with a very differentiated distribution in the different areas of this province: 15% of the vote in the Western valleys and Vitoria, 11% in the Rioja, 7% in the Llanada and the Mountain, 5% in Gorbea and 1% in the Ayala valley.

Maps 3 to 9 show the district distribution of the main electorates and non-voting in 1990.

The nationalist vote as a whole, that surpasses 90% in the coast districts of Busturia and Lea-Artibai, does not reach 50% in Vitoria, getting better results in the middle Oria, high Deba, Goierri, Lea and Duranguesado; it keeps the same positions in the middle Deba, Urola, Encartaciones, Arratia, Uribe and Busturia and, lastly, moves backward in the greater San Sebastián, greater Bilbao and all the districts of Alava. The left-wing vote reaches its top rate of 55% in the greater San Sebastián and the left bank, surpasses 50% in the high Nervión and all the districts of Guipúzcoa except Urola, where it gets over 40% together with the greater Bilbao

as a whole, Vitoria, Duranguesado, Lea and the Ayala valley; 30% is surpassed in the rest of Vizcaya and Alava with the exceptions of the minimum rates of the Western valleys (24%) and the mountains of Alava (22%).

4. THE PARTY-SYSTEM: FRACTIONALIZATION AND, POLARIZATION

In few issues there exists such a unanimity as in the definition of the Basque party-system as "polarized pluralism" (12): a mean of seven principal parties, two majoritarian parties that do not reach 49% of the valid vote, a parliamentary fractionalization index of 0.81, important ideological tensions and an anti-system party (HB) with more than 15% of the votes and which competes to occupy the second position with an uncovert support of the violent strategy make a series of indicators and dimensions that explain the accuracy of this definition.

Fractionalization would not be specially relevant were it not paralleled by an ideological remoteness between the extreme parties that count which affects their competition space and also admits different levels and ways of intervention of the opposite conception of the social system, the political institutions acceptance or rejection or the identities and symbol systems' confrontation, among others.

4.1. The Basque fractionalization

One of the first indicators to be analyzed is the number of relevant parties either by their coalition or blackmail potential, according to Sartori's criteria. The role played by the different Basque parties and the space achieved by each of them after a long decade and specially the coalitions and agreements game initiated in the last term allow us to assert the relevance of seven parliamentary parties, which is one previous condition of the extreme pluralism and has a different realization in each province.

Table3

As we can see in Table 3 despite the changes that have taken place in the internal structure of the Basque party-system, the same high fractionalization level remains as one constant feature. Together with it, the parliamentary forces have slightly increased its dispersion although without changing its pluralism and at the same time not allowing the emergence of majorities, and still less the hegemony of any of the parties.

The PNV-PSE coalition government experience has slightly increased the parliamentary concentration of the first two parties to the point of reaching majority

but, at the same time, the fact that this change is the result just of PNV's rise and its promotion to the system's first position has paradoxically increased the minor parties' relevance up to making realistically possible up to six alternative coalitions: PNV-PSOE, PNV-EE-PSOE, PNV-EE-EA, PNV-EE-EA-PP, the more improbable PNV-EE-PP and even the transitional minority PNV-EE government. We can see that this set of possible coalitions only excludes HB because of its anti-system definition and UA which has occupied CDS' place at Parliament and will probably play an important role in Alava's institutions after its consolidation in the 1991 provincial and local elections.

The PNV, recovered from its 1986 crisis, is the central -if not dominant force again, leading the three provincial Diputaciones and most of the country's town councils with the support of different coalitions, being the most relevant formula that of PNV-PSE (Alava and Vizcaya) with the addition of EE (Basque government) or PP (Guipúzcoa). It was precisely the- alliance politics after the local and provincial elections and PNV-EA rivalry what provoked the rupture of the ephemeral PNV-EA-EE coalition government in Vitoria, with the substitution of EA by the PSE. This crisis triggered at the same time EE's internal split which had been hatching since the 1990 electoral recession and the division at the IV Congress in 1991.

If we compare the Basque party-system with the Spanish or the rest of communities' according to some indicators of their structure we find that: first, its seven parliamentary parties put the Laakso and Taagepera's effective party number index (13) up to 5.3 which is the highest among all the communities and only surpassed by Belgium (6.42) in the whole of the European countries;(14) secondly, Rae's parliamentary fractionalization index (15) is also the highest (0.81); thirdly, the seats proportion of the first party is the lowest (29%) as well as the addition of the first and second (51%) but, lastly, the percentage of seats obtained by the nationalist or region-wide parties is nonetheless maximum (71%).

Most of the times these structures have relation with the respective electoral law's effects. In the case of the Basque Country these are the following: the voters-seats ratio in the largest district is 4.4 times higher than at the smallest -the highest among all the Spanish Communities with the exception of Canarias due to its insularity; nonetheless the Lijphart's global disproportionality index(16) is 1.3, much lower than the Spanish 6.6 and the lowest among all the Autonomous Communities, equal to that of Belgium and Sweden and lower than most of European countries';(17) finally, the proportion of votes that do not get any representation is of 5 % which places the Basque country among the six Communities that waste a smaller number of votes by the combined effect of disproportion and thresholds.

4.2. The Basque polarization

Although we do not have any post-electoral sample data about the present positions of parties on the main dimensions of ideological distance we do not think there has been any significant change and will use those obtained in our 1987 polls. We feel that the centripetal trend of most of the electorate and the change of discourse of and relations between the parliamentary parties, which have seen themselves committed to pacts and coalitions during the last term, will have reduced the polarization level, but we will be able to see it later and verify the hypothesis that this moderation hides behind the higher non-voting level at the last regional elections.

The space occupied by the parties on the right-left dimension is very similar to that of the beginning of the 1980 autonomous process although UCD's disappearance and PNV's split define new ideological ubications.

Table4

Table 4 confirms the central position of the PNV, the instability and duality of the state-wide center and right that will not solve the virtual electoral disappearance of CDS, EA's center-left ubication between PNV and PSOE which also moderates in a centripetal sense as well as the left position occupied by EE, verifying HB's most extreme position. PNV's and EE's electorates, with a centripetal movement of 0.4 appear as the most moderate.

We cannot refer to the independence-centralism dimension in relation to the 1980 election because we lack this indicator but we have that of the 1982 general elections in which UCD had already been substituted by CP and CDS. Although working at different electoral levels -regional and state-wide- and shortening the evolution time, we can deduce some changes in the ideological polarization of this basic dimension of the Basque political behaviour. (See Figure 2).

Table5

There still is a distance of 2 points between the electorates of nationalist and state-wide options which is not compensated by the PNV's centripetal displacement because this same movement takes place simultaneously at the view of the autonomous policy developed by the PSOE in these first years. We could think that the experience of the PNV-PSOE coalition government should have reduced that distance with a change of trend, more centripetal, but this is just a hypothesis for the moment. EE's regionalist position adjusts still more to PNV's, with EA's ubication at the open space between this party and HB as it happens with CDS between the PSOE and CP. On the contrary, CP and HB keep their extreme positions almost still so that their isolation becomes evident, sharpened in the case of HB by its anti-system position and its collusion with ETA's violence.

The polarization indexes which result from dividing the distance between the extreme parties by the maximum distance possible show us that this feature maintains high levels and has even sharpened.

On one side, UCD's disappearance and the right reorganization has increased the polarization of the left-right dimension, which recovers some of its lost protagonism in front of the other dimension's prevalence. The independence-centralism polarization stands at the same time almost untouched by the regionalist policy of PSOE since its arrival at government, EA's emergence after the internal split in the PNV and the anti-system radicalization.

Table6

The space of political competition between the relevant parties is delimited by the aforeanalyzed dimensions and defines the electoral strategy of the different parties. If we compare our figures with those studied by J. Linz for 1977, 1979 and 1980 we can see that the system complexity remains constant and that there still are some differences which difficult agreement. Nonetheless, we can observe in Figure 3 a certain regrouping at the center-left and the moderate nationalism since 1986, as well as a larger isolation of the extreme options. This reorientation, partly centripetal, has a double effect: on one side it is facilitating the relation between the parties and, on the other it seems to augur a greater unstability within the party-system as it increases the possibilities of volatility among parties. (See Figure 4).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Lacking the necessary post-electoral sample studies that would allow us to measure the changes produced in the last term, the temporal perspective and the unforeseen indicators endorse the conclusion of a permanence of the basic constants which feature the Basque polarized pluralism.

Although the last regional elections can be defined as "of continuity" we cannot ignore the existence of an important electoral unstability background, compiled for the moment in the big non-voting bag. The PNV, euphoric about the triumph and its victory over EA's rivalry, must evaluate not without inner tensions the results of its political turn and its alliance politics. The PSOE has just closed the Damborenea crisis and its short opposition experience after an important electoral defeat.

HB must keep its anti-system discourse active but also needs some moderation to hold off the slow but constant electoral erosion. EA gives up in its fight

for substituting the PNV at the top of nationalism and sees itself obliged to evaluate the results of its turn toward radical nationalism without this meaning that a movement towards socialdemocracy would guarantee better results than the assumption of the role of necessary complement of the traditional nationalism within a Catalan-type coalition. EE faces its fifth Congress and the arrival to the regional power in its worse electoral moment and after the split of the so-called "Auñamendi" sector, supporter of a nationalist identity and alignment to create a new nationalist and progressive political force together with EA and hypothetical sectors of HB. PP's provisional recovery does not close the endemic crises of the state-wide center-right in the Basque Country, which must now face another organic outbreak of one of its characteristic features, namely the "foralismo" or provincialism, in this case of UA in Alava and even UV (Unidad Vizcaína) in Vizcaya.

The phase of political normalization -or consolidation- led by the PNV-PSOE coalition from the government and by the EA-EE peripheric but alternative coalition from the opposition, and also by the Ajuria-Enea Pact, has allowed to revitalize the left-right axis and has at the same time sharpened the system's centripetal trends. If we add to this the shy transformation of the political discourse and the change of the governmental scene protagonists we may foresee a background of important electoral instability and thus the absence of definitive crystallization of the party-system.

Although we have not directly mentioned the terrorist violence, we cannot forget that ETA and the social movement it leads through HB constitute an essential actor of the Basque political system whose democratic consolidation will require the political defeat and eradication of the violent subculture it has generated, feeding and reproducing the social and political segmentation factors.

Government and opposition are the two sides of the same political game. A majority that gives its support to government is as necessary as a strong parliamentary opposition that controls the power practice, representing its voters, and showing the possibilities of alternance in government. They both share the task of consolidating the Basque political system, based upon the integration of the diverse political subcultures and social sectors generated by the Basque society and whose energies' addition will have to make possible the majority unity around a common project, fed by the political culture and democracy values.

Such a consolidation will allow the Basque society to do the necessary transformation to face the challenges of a historic decade: the final exit out from our industrial crisis, the impact of the Single Market, Euskad's political ubication in the European political union, the end of terrorism as well as the modernisation of our physical, technological, educative and welfare infrastructures.

Chart1

Chart 1: Electoral evolution of the Basque community between the general elections of 1977-1989

Party	G.E. J-77			G.E. M-79			G.E. O-82			G.E. J-86			G.E. O-89		
	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)
PNV	290.297	21.3	28.8	275.292	17.8	27.6	380.983	25.1	32.0	304.675	18.5	28.0	252.119	15.2	22.7
HB(1)	43.304	3.2	4.3	149.685	9.7	15.0	176.117	11.6	14.8	193.724	11.8	17.8	186.646	11.2	16.8
EE	62.725	4.6	6.3	80.098	5.2	8.0	92.219	6.1	7.7	99.408	6.1	9.1	97.289	6.0	8.8
EA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	123.613	7.4	11.1
Nationalist	396326	29.1	39.3	505.075	37.7	50.6	649.319	42.8	54.5	597.807	36.4	54.9	659.667	39.8	59.4
PSOE(2)	283.203	20.8	28.1	190.235	12.3	19.1	349.531	23.0	29.4	287.918	17.5	26.4	233.650	14.0	21.0
PP(3)	71.132	5.3	6.4	34.108	2.2	3.4	138.984	9.2	11.7	114.927	7.0	10.5	103.697	6.2	9.3
CCD/CDS(4)	175.551	13.1	17.3	168.607	10.9	16.9	22.123	1.5	1.9	54.724	3.3	5.0	38.313	2.3	3.4
PCE/IU(5)	49.994	3.7	4.9	45.893	2.9	4.6	21.071	1.4	1.8	13.640	0.8	1.2	33.323	2.0	3.0
Others	36.111	2.6	3.6	52.986	3.5	5.5	10.776	0.7	0.9	20.313	1.2	1.9	30.826	2.0	2.8
State-wide	616.991	44.5	60.3	491.829	31.8	49.5	642.491	35.7	45.5	491.522	29.9	45.1	439.802	26.5	39.5
Left	474.929	34.8	46.9	505.934	32.3	50.8	647.935	42.7	54.4	614.252	37.4	56.4	673.253	34.3	52.1
Center/Right	537.388	39.4	53.1	490.970	31.3	49.2	543.875	35.8	45.6	475.077	28.9	43.6	526.223	31.5	47.9
Voters	1.042.000	76.4	--	1.033.000	65.9	--	1.223.199	80.6	--	1.113.447	67.8	--	1.116.034	66.9	--
Rol	1.363.377	100.0	--	1.567.437	100.0	--	1.518.402	100.0	--	1.643.001	100.0	--	1.668.407	100.0	--

1. HB did not exist in 1977. Its votes belong to ANV+ESB
2. For 1977 the votes of PSP, PSOE(H) and ASD have been added
3. 1977 (A.P-GU), 1979 (UFPV), 1982-86 (CP), 1989 (PP)
4. 1977 (UCD, DCV and DN), 1979 (UCD) and 1986-89 (CDS)
5. IU appears in 1986
Elaborated by the author from Juntas Electorales data

Chart2

Chart 2: Electoral evolution of the Basque community between the general elections of 1980-1990

Party	R.E. M-80			R.E. F-84			R.E. M-86			R.E. O-90		
	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)
PNV	349.102	22.0	38.0	451.448	28.4	42.0	271.209	16.4	23.7	289.701	17.2	28.5
HB	151.636	9.6	16.5	157.389	9.9	14.6	199.175	12.1	17.5	186.410	11.0	8.3
EE	89.953	5.7	9.8	85.671	5.4	8.0	124.423	7.5	10.9	79.105	4.7	7.8
EA	—	—	—	—	—	—	181.175	11.0	15.8	115.703	6.8	11.4
ESE/AUZOLAN (1)	8.280	0.5	0.9	10.714	0.7	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nationalist	598.971	37.8	65.2	705.222	44.4	65.6	776.707	47.0	67.9	670.919	39.7	66.0
PSOE	130.221	8.2	14.2	247.786	15.6	23.0	252.233	15.3	22.0	202.736	12.0	19.9
PP(2)	43.882	2.8	4.8	100.531	6.3	9.3	55.570	3.4	4.8	83.719	4.9	8.2
CDS/UCD(3)	78.174	5.0	8.5	—	—	—	40.442	2.4	3.5	6.680	3.9	0.7
UA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14.351	0.8	1.4
PCE/IU(5)	36.845	2.3	4.0	14.985	0.9	1.4	—	—	—	14.440	0.8	1.4
Others	30.392	1.9	3.3	5.274	0.3	0.7	19.042	1.1	1.7	23.874	1.4	2.4
State-wide	319.304	20.1	34.8	368.576	23.1	34.4	367.287	22.2	32.1	345.800	23.8	34.0
Left	445.861	28.1	48.6	521.819	32.9	48.6	595.598	36.0	52.1	499.880	29.6	49.2
Center/Right	472.414	29.8	51.4	551.979	34.8	51.4	548.396	33.2	47.9	516.839	30.6	50.8
Voters	932.371	58.8	—	1,085.293	68.1	—	1,161.802	70.4	—	1,029.457	60.9	—
Rol	1,584.577	100.0	—	1,586.574	100.0	—	1,650.696	100.0	—	1,687.936	100.0	—

1. ESEI (1980), AUZOLAN (1984)

2. Including CP, PDL and PDP

3. UCD (1980)

Elaborated by the author from Juntas Electorales data

Table1

Table 1
Figures of dead by terrorist actions in Spain (1968-1990)

Years	by ETA	by extreme right	by GAL	by others	total
1968	2	–	–	–	2
1969	1	–	–	–	1
1970	–	–	–	–	–
1971	–	–	–	1	1
1972	1	–	–	1	2
1973	7	–	–	1	8
1974	19	–	–	–	19
1975	16	–	–	10	26
1976	15	3	–	3	21
1977	12	6	–	10	28
1978	64	8	–	13	85
1979	78	22	–	11	111
1980	93	29	–	2	124
1981	30	4	–	4	38
1982	31	1	–	12	44
1983	34	–	2	8	44
1984	24	–	9	–	33
1985	31	–	11	1	43
1986	24	–	2	15	41
1987	49	–	1	8	58
1988	19	–	–	5	24
1989	19	1	–	5	25
1990	25	–	–	5	30
Total	594	74	25	115	808

Sources: Elaborated from data obtained in: M. Castells (1982:38ss), A. Casinello (1984:265-308), J.L. Piñuel (1986), Yearbooks of EGIN (1977-1990), Ministerio del Interior y Vasco Press.

Chart3

Chart 3: Electoral evolution of the Basque community between the general elections of 1979-1991

Party	P.E. A-79			P.E. M-83			P.E. J-87			P.E. M-91		
	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)	votes	Rol (%)	V.V. (%)
PNV	349.000	22.3	36.9	396.542	25.2	39.7	235.223	14.6	22.0	293.580	17.3	29.4
HB	186.000	11.9	19.7	143.711	9.1	4.4	207.382	12.9	19.4	172.238	10.2	17.2
EE	69.000	4.4	7.3	79.318	5.0	7.9	106.797	6.6	10.0	68.199	4.0	6.7
EA	—	—	—	—	—	—	190.010	11.8	17.7	123.437	7.3	12.3
Nationalist	604.000	38.6	63.9	619.571	39.3	62.0	739.412	45.9	69.1	657.454	38.8	66.5
PSOE	147.000	9.4	15.6	264.723	16.8	26.5	204.118	12.7	19.1	195.607	11.5	19.7
PP(1)	115.000	7.4	12.2	87.805	5.6	8.8	66.882	4.1	6.2	80.110	4.7	8.0
CDS	—	—	—	4.675	0.3	0.5	36.665	2.3	3.4	5.139	0.3	0.5
UA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22.341	1.3	2.2
PCE/IU	42.000	2.7	4.4	20.791	1.3	2.1	9.657	0.6	0.9	17.850	1.0	1.8
Others	37.000	2.3	3.9	690	0.4	—	13.710	0.8	1.3	9.792	0.6	1.0
State-wide	341.000	21.8	36.0	378.684	24.1	37.9	331.032	20.6	30.9	330.839	20.2	33.5
Left	481.000	30.7	50.9	509.233	32.3	51.0	538.976	33.5	50.3	463.888	27.4	46.9
Center/Right	464.000	29.6	49.1	489.022	31.0	49.0	531.468	33.0	49.7	524.607	31.0	53.1
Voters	970.000	61.8	—	1.016.413	64.5	—	1.088.472	67.7	—	1.002.498	59.2	—
Rol	1.567.437	100.0	—	1.575.508	100.0	—	1.608.267	100.0	—	1.693.537	100.0	—

1. 1979 (UCD+UFPV), 1983-87 (CP), 1991 (PP)

Elaborated by the author from Juntas Electorales data

Chart4

Chart 4: Evolution of the electoral and parliamentary party-system of the Basque community at the regional elections of 1980-1990

Party	1980			1984			1986			1990		
	V.V. (%)	T.	Seats (%)	V.V. (%)	T.	Seats (%)	V.V. (%)	T.	Seats (%)	V.V. (%)	T.	Seats (%)
PNV	38.0	25	41.7	42.0	32	42.7	23.7	17	22.7	28.5	22	29.3
HB	16.5	11	18.3	14.6	11	14.7	17.5	13	17.3	18.3	13	17.3
EE	9.8	6	10.0	8.0	6	8.0	10.9	9	12.0	7.8	6	8.0
EA	--	--	--	--	--	--	15.8	13	17.3	11.4	9	12.0
PSOE	14.2	9	15.0	23.0	19	25.3	22.0	19	25.3	19.9	16	21.3
PP	3.3	6	10.0	9.3	7	9.3	4.8	2	2.7	8.2	6	8.0
CDS/UCD	8.5	2	3.3	--	--	--	3.5	2	2.7	--	--	--
PCE/IU	4.0	1	1.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
UA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.4	3	4.0
Total	85.8	60	100	96.9	75	100	98.2	75	100	94.1	75	100

Elaborated by the author from Juntas Electorales data

Table2

Table 2: Electoral evolution of the Basque provinces between the regional elections of 1986 and 1990												
Party	Alava				Gulpúzcoa				Vizcaya			
	1986	%	1990	%	1986	%	1990	%	1986	%	1990	%
PNV	28.104	20	28.371	23	59.339	16	68.361	21	183.776	29	192.420	35
HB	17.912	13	16.057	13	80.255	22	79.288	24	101.733	16	90.932	16
EE	15.277	11	8.467	7	44.030	12	29.599	9	65.116	10	40.789	7
EA	20.349	15	10.316	8	85.905	23	60.459	18	74.921	12	44.988	8
PSE	34.806	25	26.755	21	74.040	20	63.357	19	143.387	23	111.495	20
PP	9.548	7	13.745	11	13.258	4	21.580	7	32.764	5	48.157	9
CDS	11.195	8	2.454	2	8.860	2	1.172	--	20.387	3	3.026	--
IU	429	--	1.430	1	1.266	--	3.319	1	5.055	1	9.523	2
UA	--	--	14.039	11	--	--	126	--	--	--	208	--
Others	1.408	1	4.081	3	3.092	1	5.157	1	7.842	1	14.548	3
Votes	140.797	71	127.590	60	374.090	70	336.561	62	646.915	71	563.450	61
Vol	199.427		211.727		537.195		540.887		914.074		928.315	

Table3

Table 3			
Parliamentary fractionalization and dispersion indicators in the Basque mandates of 1980, 1986 and 1990			
	1980	1986	1990
Parliamentary Fractionalization (Fp)	.81	.81	.81
Revised Parliamentary dispersion (Dp)	.874	.94	.945
Volatility (Vt)	--	25	11
Number of Parliamentary parties	7	7	7
% of seats of the first party	41.67	25.33	29.3
% of seats of the second party	18.33	22.66	21.3
Difference between both	23.34	2.67	8
% of seats of both	60	47.99	50.6
Minimum parliamentary majority	2	3	2
First party	PNV	PNV	PNV
Number of governmental parties	1 (PNV)	2 (PNV-PSE)	3(*)

(*) The first PNV-EA-EE coalition government broke in september 1991, with the substitution of EA by the PSE-PSOE

Table4

	1980 Mean	1986 Mean
CP	6.40	7.95
CDS	--	5.60
PNV	4.56	4.95
EA	--	4.28
PSOE	3.85	4.04
PCE	3.07	--
EE	3.07	3.50
HB	2.29	2.25

Table5

	1982 Mean	1986 Mean
CP	7.6	7.7
CDS	--	6.6
PSOE	5.5	5.7
PNV	3.2	3.4
EE	3.1	3.4
EA	--	3.
HB	1.6	1.8

Table6

Table 6			
polarization indexes on the left-right and independence-centralism dimensions among the Basque parties at the 1980, 1982 and 1986 elections			
	1980	1982	1986
Left / Right	.46	.55	.63
Independence / Centralism	.66	.69	.65

Figure1

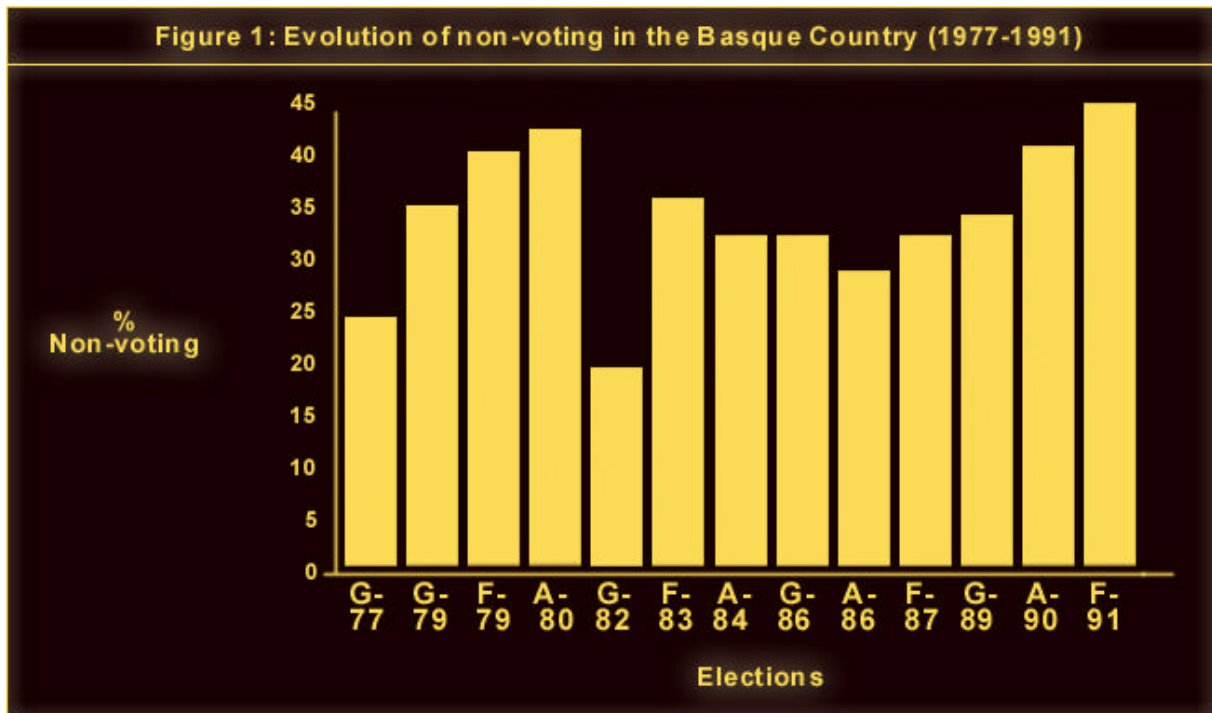


Figure2

Figure 2: Position of each party on the left-right dimension according to their electorate's self-ubication and in comparison with the sample distribution after the 1986 Basque regional elections

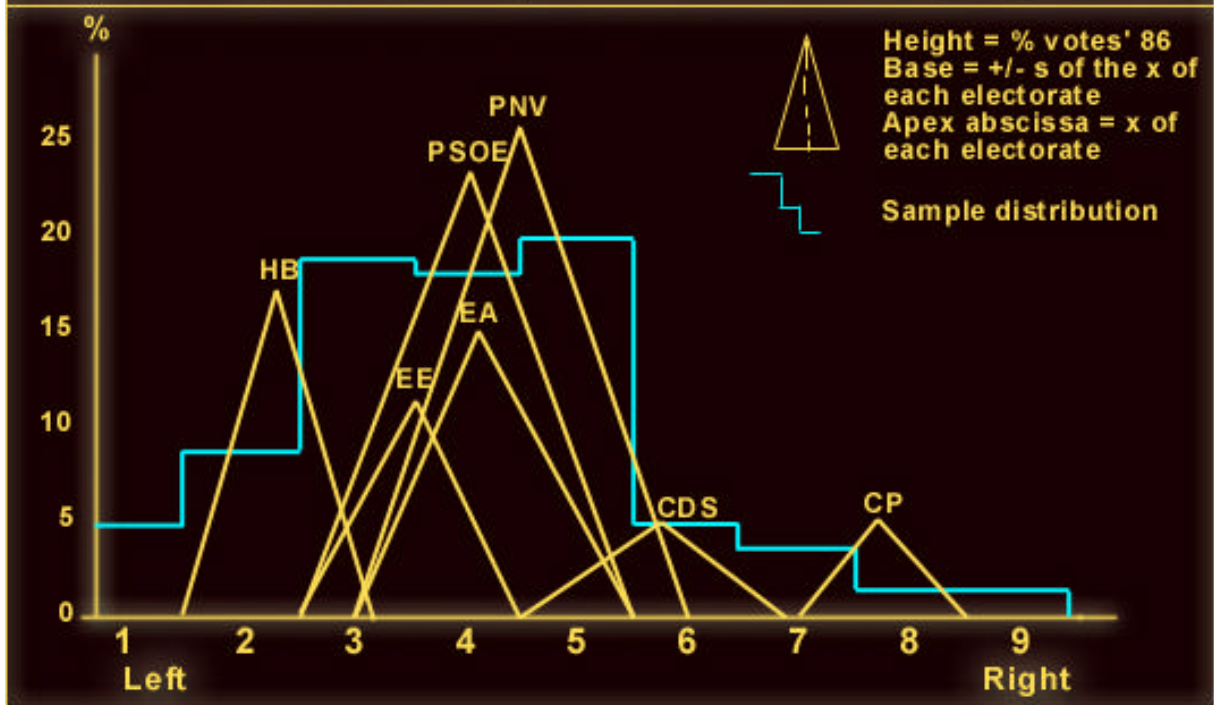


Figure3

Figure 3: Position of each party on the independence-centralism dimension according to their electorate's self-ubication and in comparison with the sample distribution after the 1986 Basque regional elections.

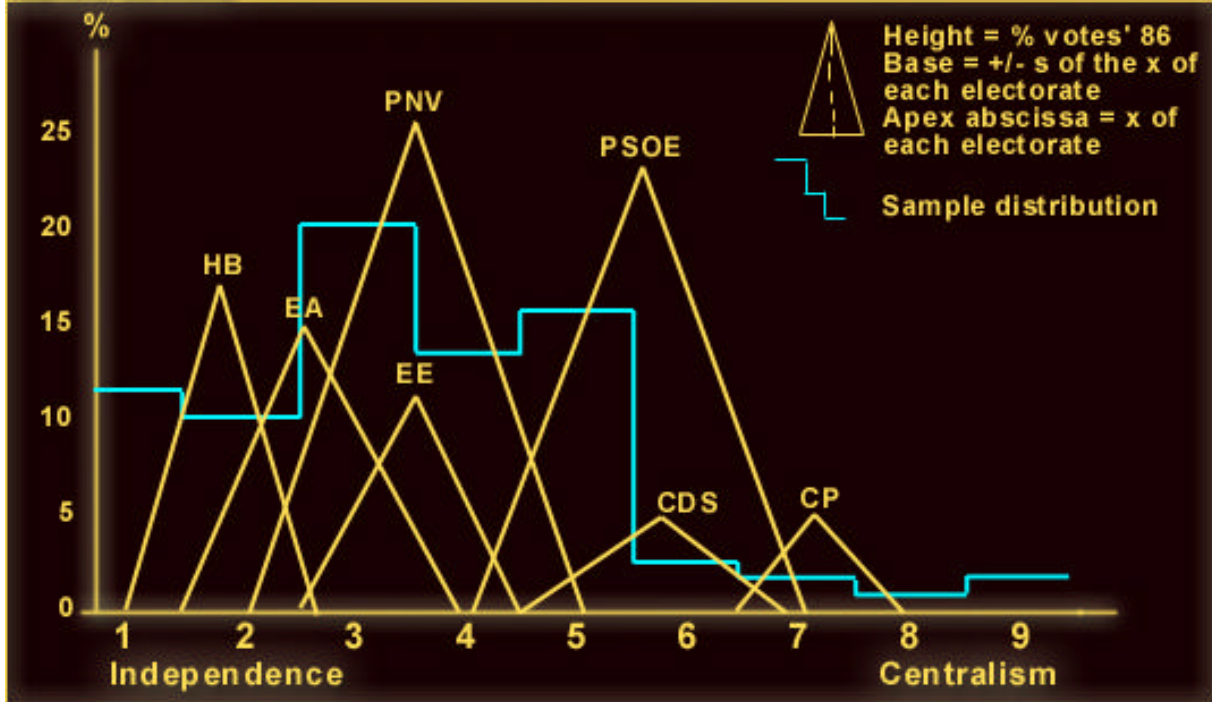
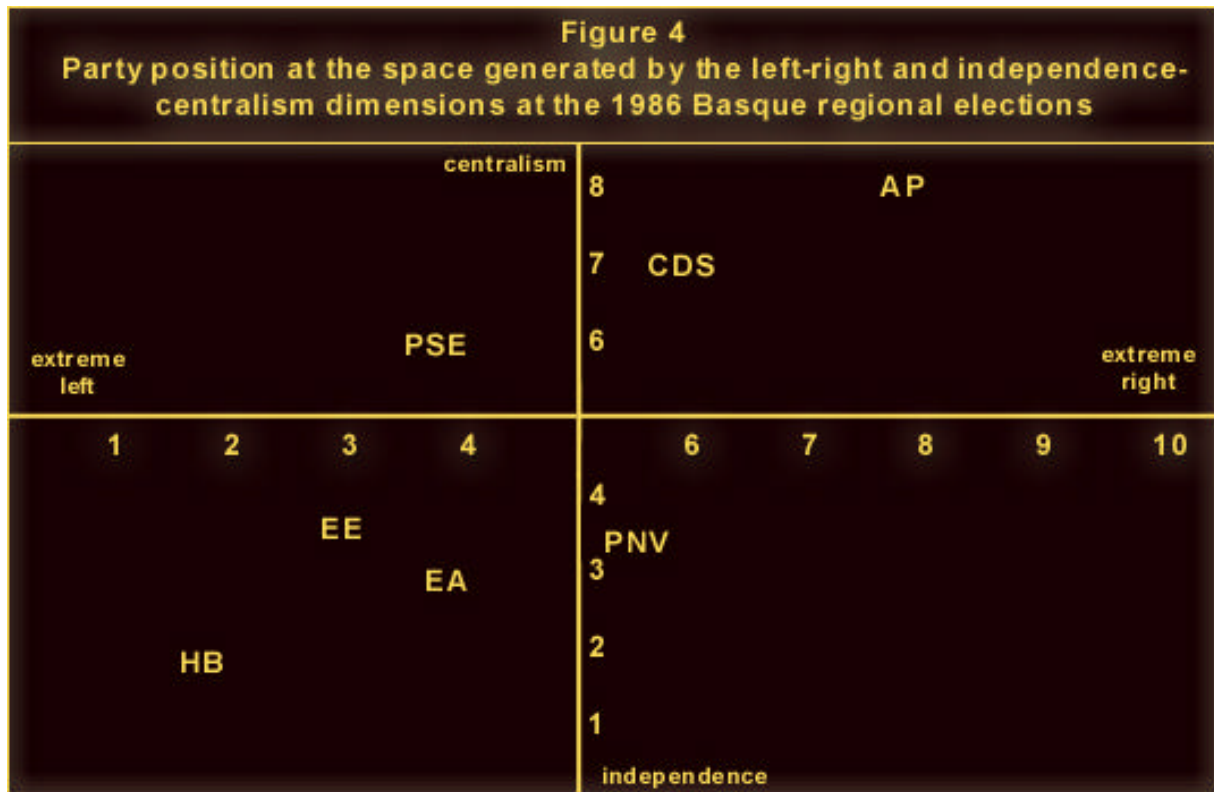
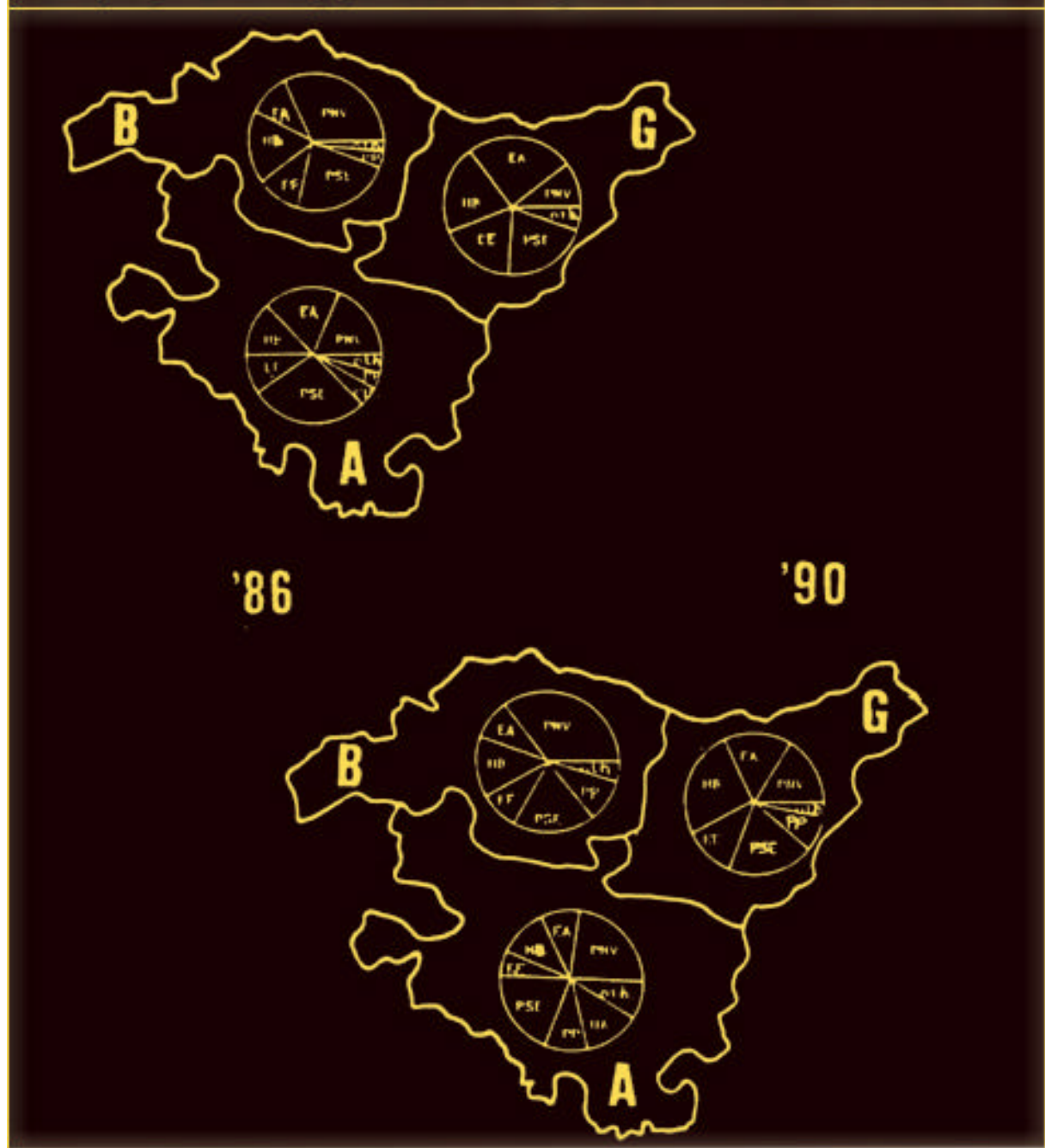


Figure4



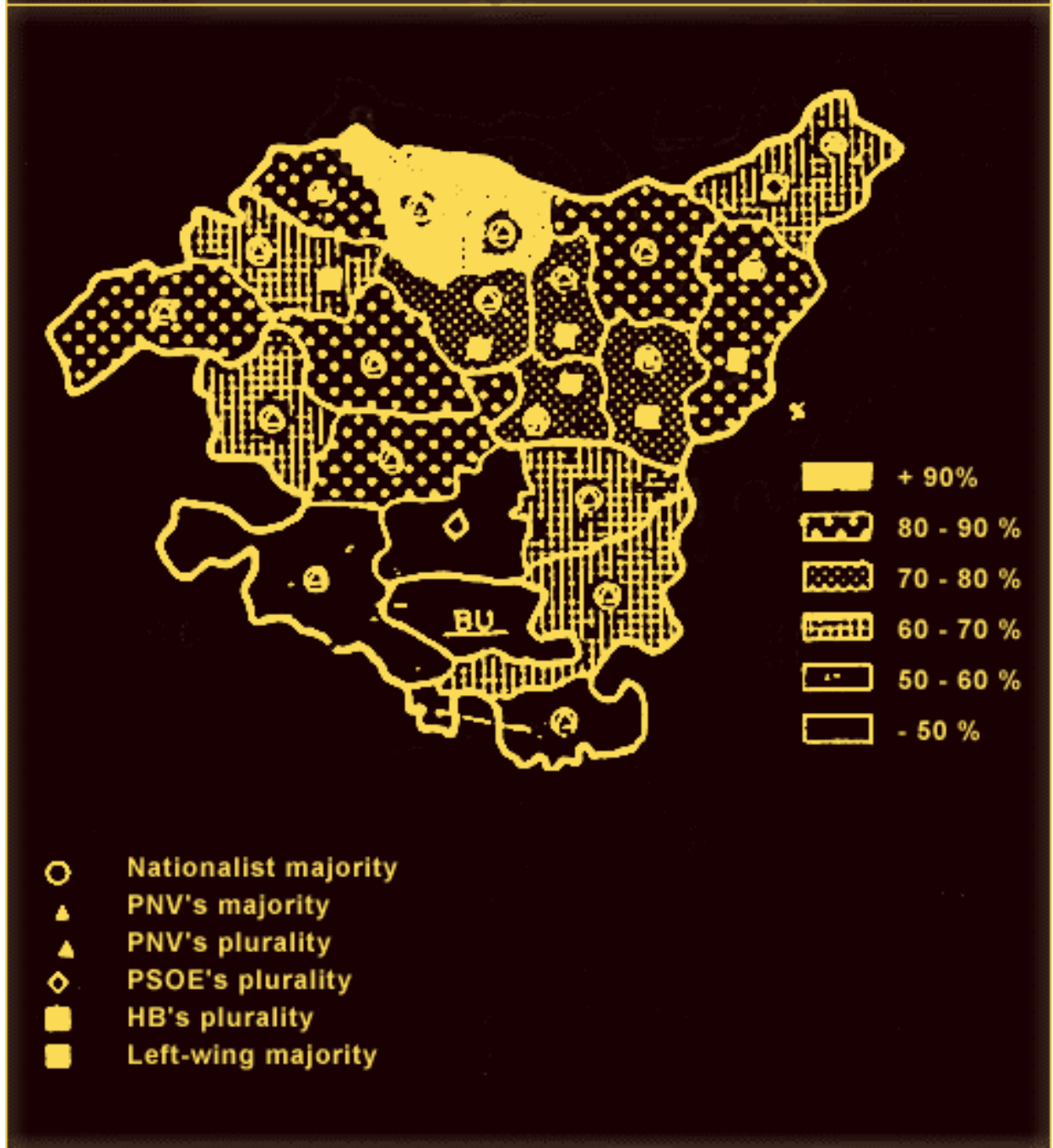
Map1

Map 1
Evolution of the provincial electoral implantation (% of valid vote) of the Basque parliamentary parties in the regional elections of 1986 and 1990



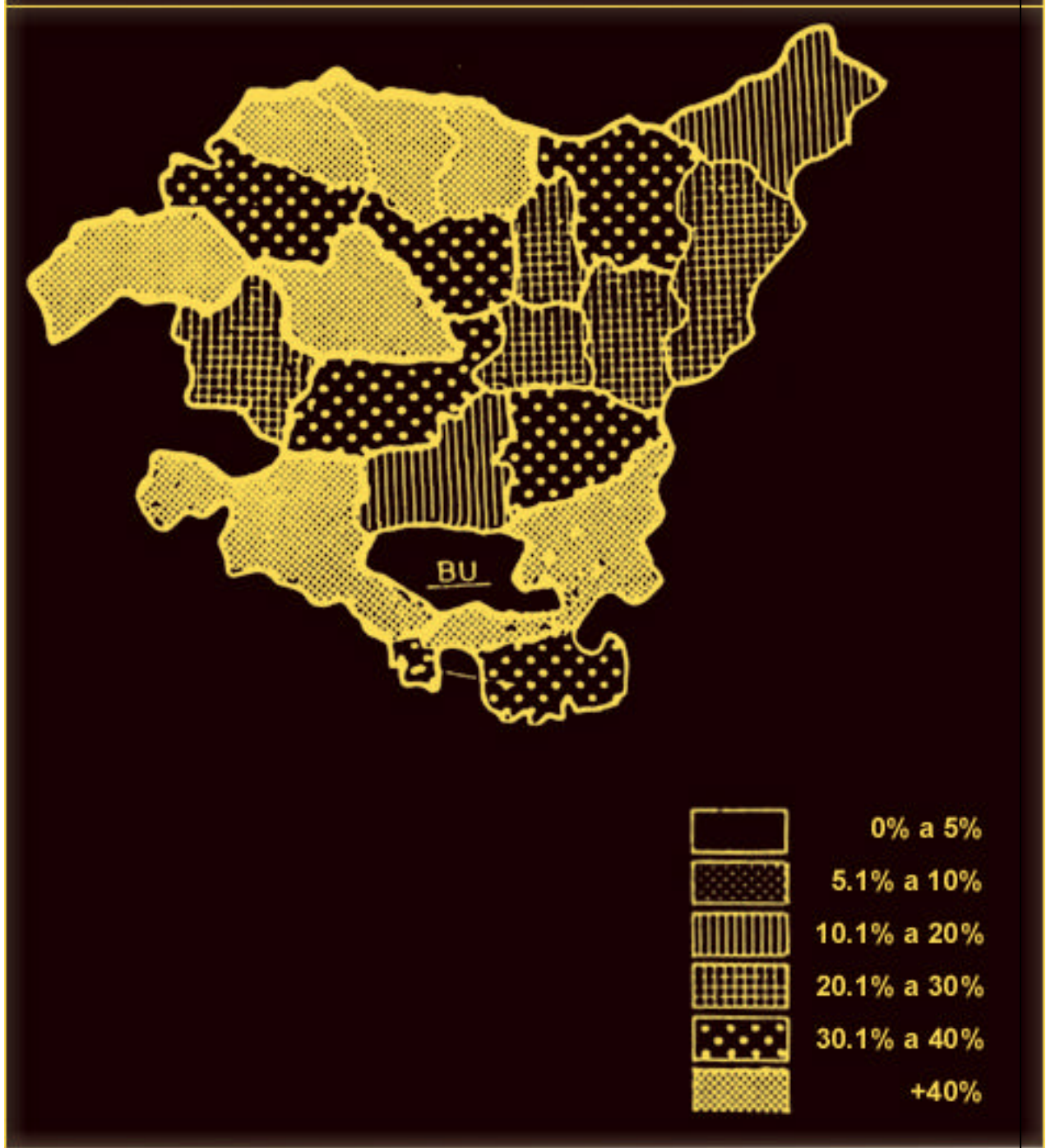
Map2

Map 2
District distribution of the Basque parties' competence structure at the regional elections of 1990



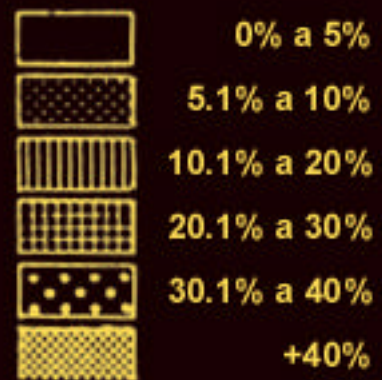
Map3

Map 3
District distribution of PNV's vote at the Basque regional elections of 1990



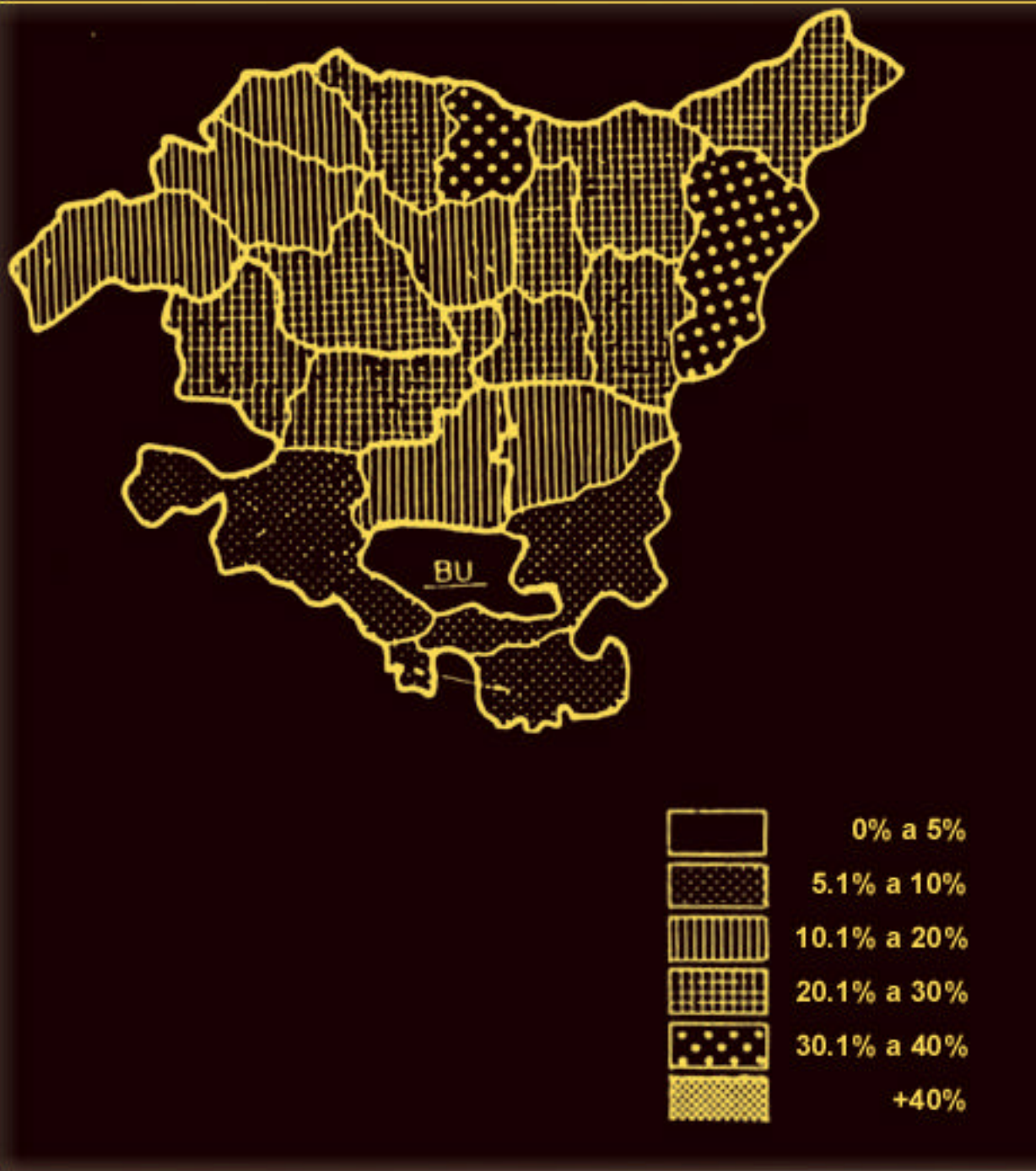
Map4

Map 4
District distribution of PSE-PSOE's vote at the Basque regional elections
of 1990



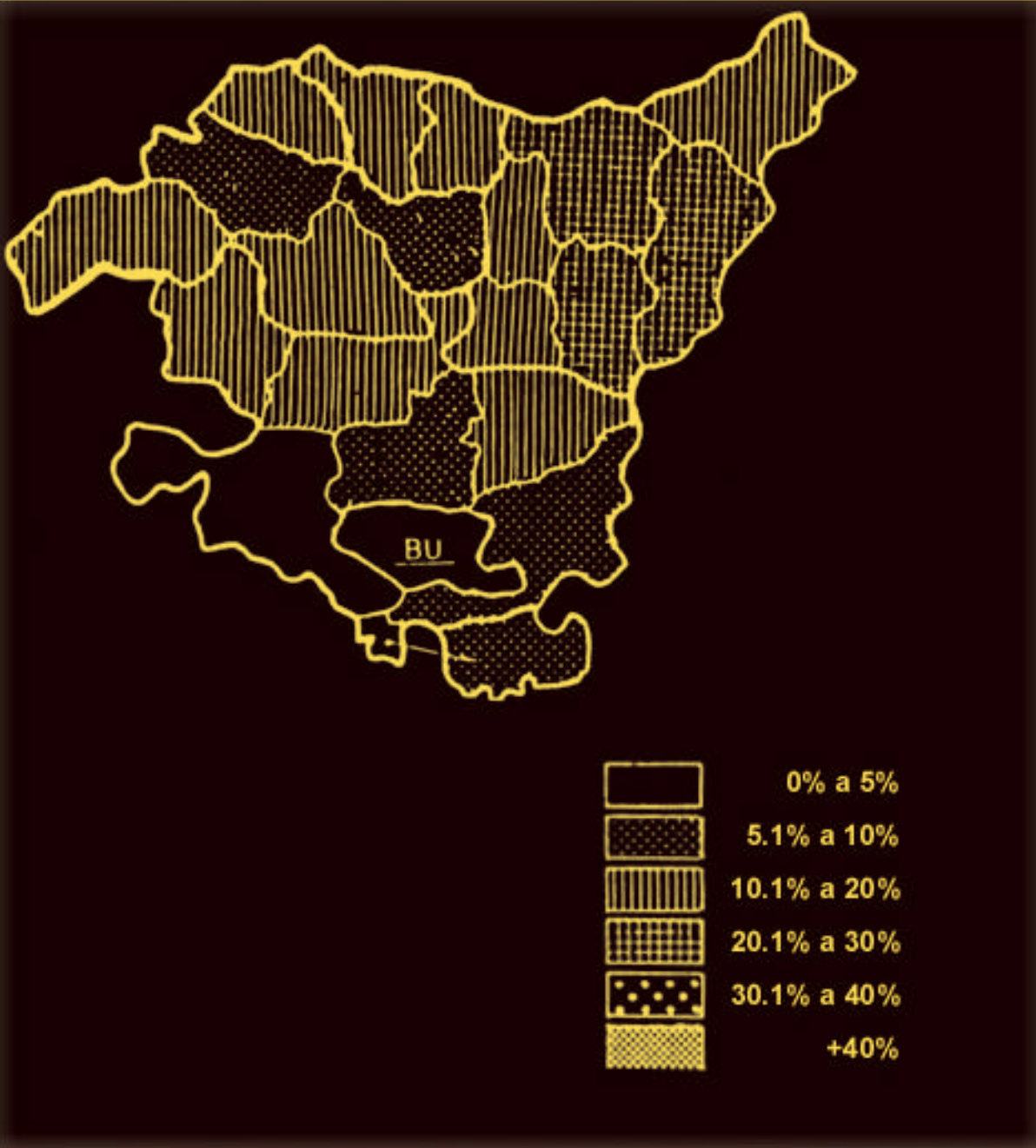
Map5

Map 5
District distribution of HB's vote at the Basque regional elections of 1990



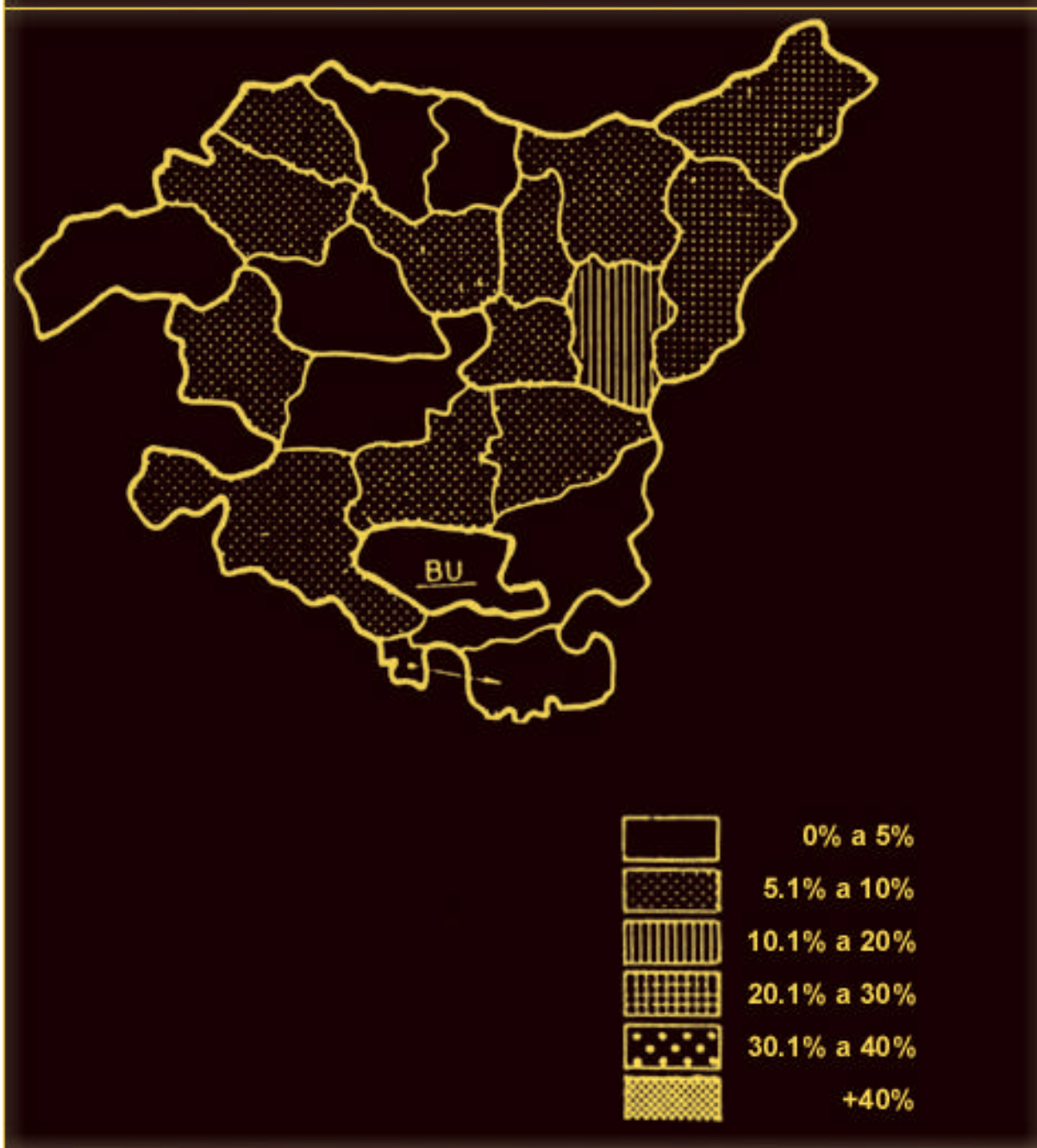
Map6

Map 6
District distribution of EA's vote at the Basque regional elections of 1990



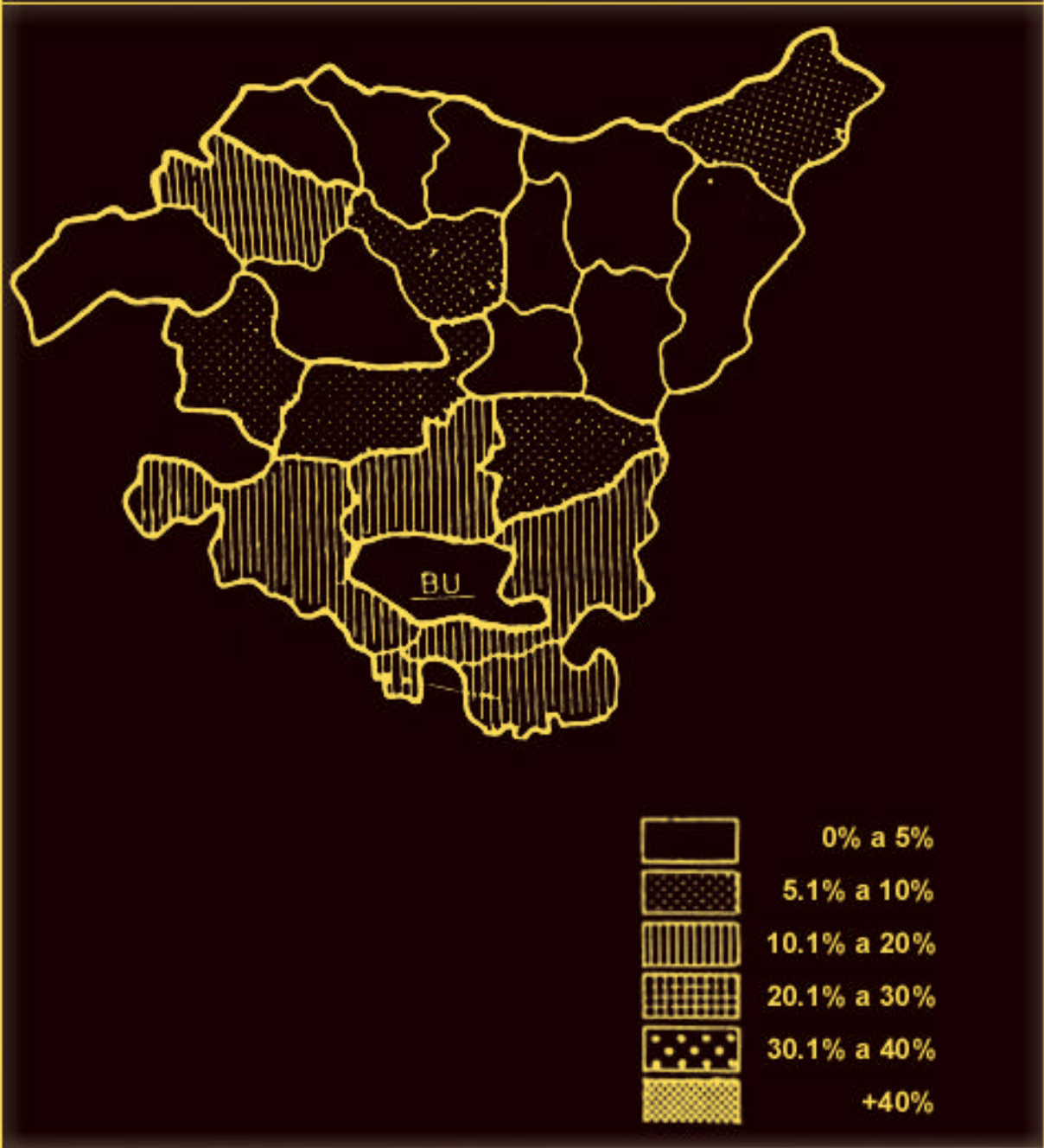
Map7

Map 7
District distribution of EE's vote at the Basque regional elections of 1990



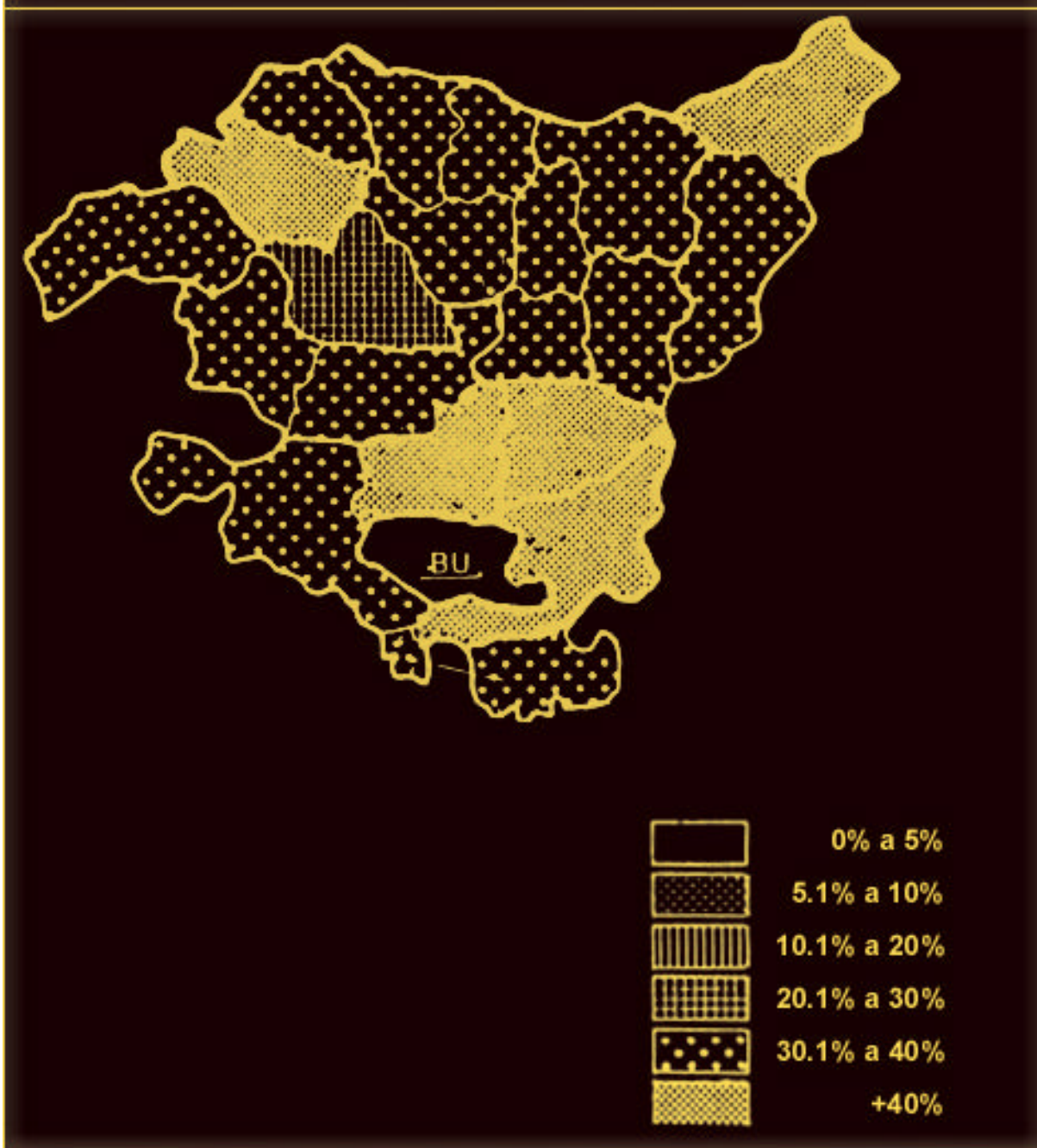
Map8

Map 8
District distribution of PP's vote at the Basque regional elections of 1990



Map9

Map 9
District distribution of non-voting at the Basque regional elections of 1990



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