

BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal

Volume 5 | Issue 1

Article 2

October 2017

Subject – Not Only Object – of Study: Basque Studies

Aitor Anduaga

University of the Basque Country

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga>



Part of the [Basque Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Anduaga, Aitor (2017) "Subject – Not Only Object – of Study: Basque Studies," *BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

[10.18122/boga/vol5/iss1/2](https://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga/vol5/iss1/2)

Available at: <https://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/boga/vol5/iss1/2>



**SUBJECT--NOT ONLY OBJECT--OF STUDY:
BASQUE STUDIES**

Aitor Anduaga, PhD

To establish a discipline implies a responsibility. Whose is it? As *vascólogos* (or experts in Basque studies) and *vascófilos* (or scholars of the Basque language), preoccupied with the disciplinary recognition of these studies, our first reflection on how to address the issue is ours, not from others. But for historical and professional considerations we have not often grasped how much responsibility we have and how responsible we are. What is more, our first thought should be addressed to discern Basque studies as an object of study or as a subject of study. This distinction is fundamental. In the following paragraphs, I offer a principled basis for this distinction by drawing attention to a double mission incumbent on us rather than any other: instituting, not renouncing, Basque studies as a subject of study; defining, not stereotyping, Basque studies as an object of study.

1. INSTITUZIONALIZED DISCIPLINE: SINE QUA NON OF ESTABLISHED SCHOLARSHIP

Every discipline, like every other form of organization of learning and of production of knowledge, has explicit goals and challenges on its own nature, on what is and what it aims to. But as an academically institutionalized form of scholarly inquiry, every discipline has as an ultimate and implicit objective, scholarly performance, namely: the achievement and elevation of standards for research and teaching, the recognition and singularity of academic experience, and the attainment of legitimacy. As many authors openly acknowledge it, attaining disciplinary status has become the hallmark of legitimacy.

As a result of its etymological origin --the term comes from the Latin words *discipulus* (pupil) and *disciplina* (teaching)— it follows that such term has different meanings ranging from training to submission to an authority and finally to the control of behavior. In its different meanings, this ‘training’ denotes both a rigorous set of instructions and the enforcement of obedience, either regarding the strict compliance with military commands (military discipline), either the order imposed in the church (ecclesiastical discipline), or as regards the regime prescribed by a doctor to a patient (medical discipline). Whence then comes the legitimacy? What provides legitimate recognition to disciplined social and humanistic inquiry? Raising this question, we admit that what concerns us is not the control of certain behaviors or ways of thinking, but rather the achievement of the organization of learning and the systematic production of new knowledge.

Armin Krishnan distinguishes several criteria of significance which indicate if a field of knowledge is actually a distinct academic discipline.¹ First, every discipline has a particular object of research, even if said object is not exclusive of a single discipline; second, every discipline possesses a body of accumulated specialist knowledge that refers to its object of inquiry; third, it has concepts and theories that are able of organizing this knowledge effectively; four, it has a specific technical language; five, it develops specific research methods; and last and perhaps most important for Krishnan, every discipline must have some institutional presence.

¹ Armin Krishnan, *What are Academic Disciplines? Some Observations on the Disciplinarity vs. Interdisciplinarity Debate*. Economic & Social Research Council's National Centre for Research Methods. University of Southampton, 2009, NCRM Working Paper Series 03/09, pp. 9-10. Although all the disciplines are identified with taught subjects, not every subject taught at university can be regarded as discipline.

Our previous question—what provides legitimate recognition to a discipline—thus becomes, whence this importance given to institutionalization? Although it is not demonstrable except by appeal to logical considerations, it is increasingly accepted that the scholarly recognition of a discipline in social and humanistic studies is inseparable from the strengthening of institutional manifestations such as taught subjects, programs, departments, research centers, and even professional associations. In short, “only through institutionalization are disciplines able to reproduce themselves from one generation to the next.”²

In recognizing the significance of the institutional status of disciplines for their recognition and legitimacy in academe, we should distinguish between the field of knowledge as an object of study and the field of knowledge as a subject (or agent) performing the action. To the extent that such a distinction is possible, it is important that the arguments for or against each side are based on historically solid and well-founded evidence. This distinction itself is a defining criterion. It is also an assertion that inasmuch as scholarly object is primarily a matter of individual character and inquiry, so scholarly subject is primarily a matter of collective venture and responsibility.

For reasons we will adduce below, a century ago the promotion of the so-called *Basque studies* as an object of study was viewed as a pressing need, and their institutionalization as a necessary but almost unrealizable venture. Much of what was actually promoted then (the establishment of the *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos*, its periodical congresses, the journal *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos*, etc.) was the result of the will and character of a few individuals, and would not have taken place without the formation and promotion of discipline-oriented linguistic and philologic scholarship. The advancements in *vascológico* knowledge abroad, aspirations for internationality, the need for rigor, were driving forces for the production of knowledge --up to a point, the point in which the Basque element was promoted as an object of study. Nevertheless, the academic institutionalization of disciplined scholarship went beyond the scope of individual will and intellectual interest. The lack of a Basque university, of political autonomy, of academic freedom --to mention only a few factors—meant an obstacle to their materialization as a subject of study. Today, the lack of Basque universities is no longer an obstacle to the institutionalization of

² Leo Apostel quoted in Sinclair Goodlad, ‘What Is an Academic Discipline?’. In: Roy Cox (ed.), *Cooperation and Choice in Higher Education*. London: University of London Teaching Methods Unit, 1979, p. 11.

disciplined scholarship. Though we may be deterred by the challenge, we must accept the responsibility and historical debt concomitant with autonomy.³

2. OBJECT OF STUDY: WHAT CHARACTERIZES BASQUE STUDIES

Why is it that “we” as *vascófilos* and *vascólogos* are obliged, for the sake of Basque studies and advanced scholarship, to take the baton and shoulder the full weight of responsibility in the task of fostering the process of their institutionalization? To appeal, as I have above, to the distinction between object of study and subject of study, as well as to the difference in the effective factors behind their (individual and collective) orientations, does not offer a sufficiently satisfactory explanation to the reader.

What characterized historically Basque studies? *To be an object of study*, this is the answer. So as regarded, the Basqueness often acted as a scholarly seduction, a mystery, a motivation. As motive, it is something that is set before the scholar, the savant so as to be apprehended, known, investigated, and inquired. At first, it was the stimulus for apprehending the being and the essence of what was regarded as a millenary language and culture; then in the 1980s, it was the stimulus for discerning and delving into the issues that affected the contemporary society (economics, sociology, etc.), in addition to the ‘old’ topics (linguistics, anthropology, and prehistory); next, it was the stimulus for extending those and other concerns on transnational and intercultural scales (diaspora, migration and exile, identity transmission, cultural sustainability, etc.); in a word, it is the stimulus that led linguist Koldo Mitxelena to state: “the true mystery of the Basque language is its survival, not its origin.”⁴

By 1920, the first generation of promoters of Basque studies congratulated themselves on having established the institutional pillars in this field by constituting the *Sociedad de*

³ It has been often argued that there are various levels of engagement in *Basque studies*: Basque scholars studying Basque topics; scholars of non-Basque descent and Basque descent studying Basque topics; etc. All of them are welcome, necessary, and beneficial. All of them are included in the categories of *vascólogos* and *vascófilos*, without distinction or exception. However, the levels of engagement per se do not define what Basque studies are. A discipline is defined by its topics and research fields, more than anything else.

⁴ Luis Michelena, ‘Los estudios vascos’. *Fontes Linguae Vasconum*, 1964, 26(65):187-201, p. 195: ‘Among the Basque studies, those pertaining to the language are certainly those that have aroused most interest in the world, and this interest has not decreased. The reason behind this fact is completely clear: whatever the interesting aspects offer the rest of particularities of the Basque people, their language is the *only* non-Indo-European language preserved in Western Europe. It is therefore a current phenomenon of exceptional significance, and, on the other hand, it offers a --more or less difficult-- possibility of serving as a key for the elucidation of highly important aspects of the European past’.

Estudios Vascos (SEV) and by holding its first congress in Oñati in 1918. This generation, headed by Julio de Urquijo, Resurrección María de Azkue, Telesforo de Aranzadi y Arturo Campión, aimed to further ‘the study and dissemination of the Basque culture in all its forms’.⁵ With an enthusiasm that may surprise more than one person today, this venture was inspired by a genuine purpose of internationality and institutionalization.⁶ Some decades later, in a posthumous tribute to Urquijo and the SEV, Mitxelena, still identifying himself with those promoters’ disciplinary goals, perceptively located the basis of Urquijo’s original contribution in his willingness ‘to integrate in Basque studies two intellectual traditions (local and external) which were then almost exclusively European’ – –that is, in the purpose of internationality.⁷ And he went further, stating that Urquijo ‘clearly saw’ that ‘the only way to ensure the future of linguistic studies was their academic institutionalization’, and such institutionalization had to be university.⁸

It is no coincidence that the purpose of internationality stood out among Urquijo’s goals to establish in 1907 the journal that forerun the SEV: the *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos* (RIEV).⁹ The reason for its foundation, Urquijo avowed, ‘was well understandable: We had seen that the foreign *vascológico* progress exerted a minimal and belated influence on similar studies carried out by the native *vascófilos*. Questions long ago resolved were still discussed here’. With the foundation of RIEV, ‘there is no doubt that we were able to strengthen the relations between the foreign *vascólogos* and those of the country, and attract eminent linguists to our studies, or keep them’.¹⁰

Through internationalization and the RIEV, *vascófilos* and *vascólogos* cultivated Basque studies as an object of research, and hence diversity and multidisciplinary, of said

⁵ Gregorio Arrien, J. Javier Granja Pascual. ‘Las ideas educativas europeas en los primeros congresos de Estudios Vascos’. In: *XI Congreso de Estudios Vascos: «Nuevas formulaciones culturales: Euskal Herria y Europa»*. Donostia: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 1992, 195-202, p. 197.

⁶ While it is true that the purpose of the SEV congress was to appeal for a Basque public university, it is also true that its promoters, especially Julio de Urquijo (and not only him), strongly advocated for the institutionalization of that embryonic field --or what they called ‘the study of the Basque culture in all its forms’. In the present article, I focus on Urquijo’s particular view rather than the aims of the congress.

⁷ Quoted in Gregorio Monreal Zia, ‘Una historia de la Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos (1907-2000)’. *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos*, 2001, 46(1):11-46, p. 16.

⁸ Luis Michelena, ‘Urquijo y la Sociedad de Estudios Vascos’. *Anuario del Seminario de Filología Vasca "Julio de Urquijo"*, 5 (1971):47-66, p. 51. As regards this question, Mitxelena mentions the work of *Eusko-Folklore* in the Diocesan Seminary in Vitoria, as well as the proposal by José Félix de Lequerica ‘to establish a section devoted to the study of Basque language at the *Centro de Estudios Históricos* in Madrid, and, if appropriate, of a chair on this language at the *Universidad Central* in due course’.

⁹ The RIEV’s role not only as the SEV’s precursor in time but also as its predecessor in character and forms, was highlighted by Mitxelena: ‘aspirations and goals --more modest in the *Revista* [RIEV], broader in the *Sociedad* [SEV]— are, after all, the same’ --quoted by Monreal (2001, p. 24).

¹⁰ Julio de Urquijo e Ibarra, *Estado actual de los estudios relativos a la lengua vasca: Discurso pronunciado en el Congreso de Oñate, el día 3 de septiembre de 1918*. Bilbao: Eléxpuru Hermanos, 1918, pp. 25-26.

object.¹¹ While during its first period (1907-1936) the core concern of the journal was the Basque language --and therefore, philology and linguistics, although in its historicist and positivist, rather than descriptive currents—, after the resumption of the journal in 1983 the new director Julio Caro Baroja proposed to turn the journal into ‘the expression of the highest level of consciousness in the country’,¹² and, consequently, to broaden its contents to the social sciences and the humanities (economics, history, sociology, and psychiatry, in addition to the abovementioned).

With the collapse of the RIEV and the SEV caused by the Civil War and the subsequent Franco regime, the new situation had seriously affected the pleiad of scholars and specialists in Basque studies. Of these only a praetorian guard held the fort of cultural *vasquismo* at the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País*.¹³ The overwhelming majority, a great committed and motivated force, sailed mentally and physically off to America and other countries in Europe with the will to shape and give continuity to the Basque cultural awareness.

Of this attachment to Basque studies as an object of research and inquiry, the priest, anthropologist and patriarch of the Basque culture, José Miguel de Barandiaran, bequeathed to us a beautiful testimony, when he noted the work of the exiled members of the SEV’s Section of Anthropology: “indeed, ethnographic and prehistoric research, with their corresponding means of expression, such as *Eusko-Folklore* and *Ikuska* and the journal of studies called *Eusko-Jakintza*, followed the *Eusko Ikaskuntza*’s [or SEV’s] plan.” Moreover, he added, “the congresses on Basque studies held in Biarritz and Bayona, the Ekin publishing house and the journal *Gernika* from Buenos Aires, the journal *Euzko-Gogoa* from Guatemala and other initiatives and publications by *Eusko-Ikaskuntza*’s members, are especially noteworthy.”¹⁴

The exiled Andrés de Irujo, his brother Manuel, and Bernardo Estornés Lasa went a remarkably long way with the mentioned Urquijo, Azkue and Aranzadi in their promotion

¹¹ Monreal (2001, p. 17): The RIEV ‘expressed initial willingness to project publication abroad. Given that its promoter was Urquijo, a man of a cosmopolitan character and lifestyle, the claim of internationality could not be understood as a rather inconsistent stance of affectation or snobbery: it reflected an intention of rigor, of passing the scientific production of the country through the sieve of current scientific criteria in the most advanced countries in the continent’.

¹² Quoted in Monreal (2001, p. 35).

¹³ The linguist and historian Antonio Tovar holds that the *Boletín* of the Sociedad Bascongada, which published three volumes in homage to Urquijo from 1949 and 1951, ‘was born in a way to fill the gap’ left by the RIEV. Antonio Tovar, ‘El vascuence y la lingüística’. *Anuario del Seminario de Filología Vasca Julio de Urquijo*, 1971, 5(1):11-24, p. 13.

¹⁴ Quoted in Monreal (2001, pp. 27-28).

of Basque studies. However, their routes would not necessarily have to converge. For the latter, Basque studies responded to an unequivocal desire for internationalization and institutionalization, as well as a common, positivist concern for basing themselves on data and evidence rather than on myths and fantasies. For the exiles, Basque studies embodied the resistance abroad against the Franco dictatorship, as well as the refuge for the dissemination and furtherance of the Basque culture in its broadest sense.

The reorientation of the discipline from an academic view to a more political view was of the greatest import for Basque studies. To recover and maintain the prewar *euskaltzale* activity was the main concern of exiled nationalists in Argentina, Mexico, Guatemala and other countries.¹⁵ However, this concern produced a double effect: every object related to the Basqueness was studied, without this necessarily implying the existence of a common and stable object of study. So conceived, Basque studies enjoyed a prodigious dynamic activity, led by the publisher Ekin from Buenos Aires and its collection *Biblioteca de Cultura Vasca* (devoted to issues such as history, folklore, literature and political essay), as well as the *Instituto Americano de Estudios Vascos* and its careful *Boletín*, and other institutions.¹⁶

However much thematic diversification all this cultural activity may have had, the politico-cultural view of the exiles deserves our highest consideration, if only on account of their fundamental contribution to Basque migration and diaspora studies. It is much to the credit of exiled *vascófilos* and *vascólogos* that so many genealogical, sociological and historical studies expanded in the 1970s and the 1980s and that the Basque migration and new forms of ethnic identity were studied. A good expression of this is the collection *Urazandi Digital*, a project performed by Adriana Patrón and Alberto Irigoyen under the

¹⁵ Among cultural activities in exile, the Barandiaran school in Sara and the journal *Euzko-Gogoa* (1950-1959) promoted by Jesuit Father Jokín Zaitegi in Guatemala and Biarritz, are worth mentioning. See: José Angel Ascunce, María Luisa San Miguel, eds. *La cultura del exilio vasco*. Donostia-San Sebastián: Eusko Jaurlaritza - Gobierno Vasco, 1994, 2 vols.; José Miguel de Barandiarán. *Diario personal. Volumen II, (1936-1953): durante los años de su exilio en el País Vasco continental*. Ataur: Jose Miguel de Barandiaran Fundazioa, 2009; José Miguel de Barandiarán. *Eusko-Folklore. Materiales y cuestionarios*. Ataur: Jose Miguel de Barandiaran Fundazioa, 2006; Paulo Iztueta. *Erbesteko euskal pentsamendua. Bi belaunldikoen lekukoak: Euzko-Gogoa eta Zabal*. Donostia: Utriusque Vasconiae, 2001; Joseba Intxausti, 'Euzko-Gogoa'-ren lankideak: Zaitegi eta 'Euzko-Gogoa' (I). *Jakin*, 1979, 12:120-137; Joseba Intxausti, 'Hamar urteko lana (1950-1959): Zaitegi eta 'Euzko-gogoa' (eta II)'. *Jakin*, 1980, 13:96-113.

¹⁶ Some remarkable examples are the publishing house Amorrortu, the *Federación de Entidades Vasco-Argentinas*, and the *Fundación Vasco-Argentina Juan de Garay*. See: Gonzalo Javier Auza, 'El desarrollo de los estudios vascos en Argentina'. In: <http://www.euskonews.com/0262zkb/kosmo26202.html>; Oscar Álvarez Gil, 'La editorial "Ekin" de Buenos Aires'. In: <http://www.euskonews.com/0072zkb/gaia7216es.html>

auspices of the Basque Government's General Secretariat for External Action in 2003.¹⁷ Considered as the greatest compilation of printed works by Basque collectivities from 1877 to 1977, it includes 130 publications from thirteen countries in three continents.¹⁸ In Patrón and Irigoyen's words, these publications 'could not but reflect the pain of a nation that was culturally and politically usurped'.¹⁹

Another no less creditable case is that of the Basque Studies Program from the University of Nevada, Reno. A result of the synergism among three men (William Douglass, Jon Bilbao, and Robert Laxalt), its founders devised a strategy that would ensure appropriate institutionalization of the program with guaranteed hopes of enduring survival. "That it was launched [in 1967] during the dark years of the Franco dictatorship within much of the Basque homeland itself," Douglass reminds us in his 1993 article on the history of said program, "served to heighten" its importance and "even confer upon it the historic mission of torchbearer and guardian of a sacred trust."²⁰ For Jon Bilbao, then involved in his monumental *Eusko-Bibliographia* and more interested in political activism and pedagogy, the program should be focused on conserving the Basque language in the US and, in so doing, molding American sentiment for the Basque nationalist cause. However, to blend scholarship with political interests was not without risks. For anthropologist Douglass, "a blurring of the line between advocacy and objectivity would undermine [their] academic respectability." Douglas confessed that advocacy "posed the danger of confounding our analytical gaze by becoming enmeshed in the maze of Basque affairs."²¹

The solution lay in the complementarity of their personal and professional agendas. Guided by Bilbao's strategy, Douglass believed, the program would have taken "the path to

¹⁷ In addition to the digital version, the *Colección Urazandi* consisting of 29 books on the history of Basque world centers (euskal etxeak and other institutions) was published. This collection is available in the Basque Government's web <http://urazandi.euskaletxeak.net/default.html>

¹⁸ See, for example, the second of the two volumes released to date, entitled *Hemeroteca de la Diáspora Vasca*, that includes 130 publications, among them the following journals: *Euzko Deya* from Mexico, *Eskual Herria* from Algeria, *Batasuna* from Chile, *Tierra Vasca* from Buenos Aires, *Euskadi Roja* from Mexico, *Euzko Gogoa* from Guatemala, *Euskadi Socialista-UGT* from Toulouse, *Anayak* from Paris, and *Ambos Mundos* from New York. See: José Ángel Ascunce, José Ramón Zabala, 'Fuentes para el estudio del exilio vasco'. *Migraciones y exilios*, 2007, 8:149-162, pp. 160-161.

¹⁹ Adriana Patrón, Alberto Irigoyen. 'Introducción'. In: *Hemeroteca de la Diáspora Vasca 01*. Colección Urazandi Digital. Gasteiz: Gobierno Vasco, 2007, pp. 22-23.

²⁰ William A. Douglass, 'In the mirror: Reflections on the origins of the Basque Studies Program'. *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos*, 1993, 38(1):185-198, p. 195. See also: Jesús M^a. Eguiluz *et al.*, 'Homenaje al Basque Studies Program de la Universidad de Reno (Nevada) en su XXV aniversario'. *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos*, 1993, 38(1):303-319.

²¹ Douglass (1993, p. 195). In the so-called 'ethnic studies', at large misgivings about the loss of academic independence are, as we should expect, most clearly articulated by the scholars involved, as is the case with Douglass: 'For the anthropologist of my day, participant observation might mean gaining experience *in* a cultural context but there was also the admonition or warning against becoming *of* it'.

perdition experienced by many of the ethnic studies initiatives of the late 1960s and 1970s.” Guided by his own strategy, he admitted, the program “would have remained excessively academic, insular and esoteric.”²² At this juncture, they sought the best of both views: a share of the exiles’ cultural preoccupations, while retaining their scholarly independence by methodologically defining the object of study. So conceived, the Basque Studies Program enjoyed its own Book Series within the University of Nevada press, which became, in Douglass’ words, “one of the most successful specialized publishing endeavors in the annals of university press publishing.”²³

With equal enthusiasm that we found in Reno, new forces joined the push for Basque studies in France between the 1940s and the 1970s. These forces were inspired by the tradition of linguistic studies which René Lafon inherited from his chair of Basque language and literature at the University of Bordeaux --created in 1948, the only one in France.²⁴ His course offered the possibility of obtaining a *Diplôme Approfondi d’Études Basques*, followed by a doctorate in said field. Later, in 1969, the banner of the scholarly discipline was borne by Jean Haritschelhar, his successor in the chair. But Haritschelhar’s conception of Basque studies as an object of research, inquiry and dissemination went further than his predecessor’s teaching project; and during the next decades, in his most emblematic initiatives the nascent community with degrees in Basque studies in the North Basque Country found a model, an identity, and a mission.²⁵ Among his initiatives are the *Institut d’Études Basques* in Bayonne (reconverted into the *Département Interuniversitaire d’Études Basques* in 1986), his decisive role in *Euskaltzaindia* or the Royal Academy of the Basque Language (director from 1989 to 2005) and in the Basque Museum of Bayonne (director from 1962 to 1986, where he edited the *Bulletin du Musée Basque*), and his tremendous work on toponymy, grammar, onomastics, etc. (over 405 works until 2006).

In the mid 1990s the young generation of specialists in Basque studies was proud to have radically altered the course of these studies by an emphasis on the offer of diplomas and degrees and on the application of scientific methods, based on Lafon’s and Haritschelhar’s linguistic works. This baton was taken—concurrently but independently—by Pierre

²² Douglass (1993, p. 196).

²³ William A. Douglass, ‘Through the looking glass or becoming the datum’. *Revista Internacional de los Estudios Vascos*, 1993, 38(2):49-61, p. 58: ‘The Basque Series constitutes the single most important source of information for New World-born Basques regarding both their Old World ethnic heritage and the Basque-American experience’.

²⁴ Pierre Lafitte, ‘René Lafon zenaz zombait hitz’. *Euskera*, 1974, 19:5-8.

²⁵ See: *Jean Haritschelhar-i omenaldia = Homenaje a Jean Haritschelhar*. Bilbo: Euskaltzaindia, 2008, which includes his extensive bibliography; and Pierre Charriton, *Jean Haritschelhar*. Donostia: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 2005.

Bidart, a social anthropologist and ethnologist who scrutinized the Basque society as an object of analysis and reflection through his seminal work *La singularité basque* (Paris, 2001) and other works and conferences.²⁶ Recognizing that social anthropology—the search for affirmation and self-image of social groups—should always be high on the agenda of scholars and consumers of Basque studies, Bidart saw the need for such studies to develop specific research methods, as well as concepts and theories that could effectively organize the accumulated knowledge.

Of this commitment to develop both a method and a stable object of research, the *Centre de recherche sur la langue et les textes basques* (IKER) offers us a striking recent example.²⁷ Established as a *Unité Mixte de Recherche* (UMR) in 1999, upon the initiative of the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) and the universities of Bordeaux Montaigne and of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), it is the only specialized structure in Basque studies in France. Its promoters, among others Haritschelhar, Bidart and Jean-Baptiste Orpustan, were well aware that the status of the field of research and inquiry of Basque studies was directly connected with the development of an unifying, definable, and stable object of study, as well as own specific methodologies. Among the research lines that shape this object are textology, comparative literature, epistemology of literary stories, and the arts of theatre—all of them relating to the Basque language.²⁸

Unlike IKER and the Center for Basque Studies in Reno, characterized by the vitality and dynamism of their activities, the *Instituto de Estudios Vascos* at the University of Deusto is fighting for survival. Established in 1979 as the successor of the *Departamento de Estudios Vizcaínos*, it founded the Euskaldok Basque documentation center fifteen years later, which soon excelled as one of the most important providers regarding reference, information and advice on Basque topics.²⁹ Today, the Institute has a still incipient

²⁶ Jean-Baptiste Orpustan, 'Professeur Pierre Bidart'. *Lapurdum*, 2011, 15:149-151. Available in: <http://lapurdum.revues.org/2337>

²⁷ Jean-Philippe Talec, 'Apport d'un centre de documentation dans la vie d'un laboratoire'. *Lapurdum*, 2012, 16:117-135. Available in: <http://lapurdum.revues.org/2367>

²⁸ Although the focus of interest is the Basque language, grammatical studies are often carried out from a typological and comparatist perspective, while historical and lexicographical studies are carried out from a perspective focusing on analyzing the cultural and sociological contexts. Jean-Baptiste Coyos, 'Artxiker: l'Archive de la Recherche pour la Langue basque et les Langues typologiquement proches'. *Lapurdum*, 2010, 10:343-349. Available in: <http://lapurdum.revues.org/201>

²⁹ Perhaps the clearest expression of the importance and significance that the Institute of Deusto had for decades was the illustrious *Biblioteca de Estudios Vascos* (Basque Studies Library), promoted by Andrés de Mañaricúa, that was fatefully for *vascólogos* dissolved as a thematic entity with the establishment of the new library of the University of Deusto in 2009. With this loss it also ceased to exist the Aurkinet bibliographical search engine, developed by Euskaldok (<http://aurkinet.deusto.es/euskaldok.asp>). This database offered as many as 3478 summaries from 139 journals specialized in Basque topics. See: María Carmen Santamaría

research team, whose research line ‘Sociocultural transformations in the Basque context’ constitutes one of the units defined in the project Deusto Campus Mundus 2015.³⁰

Our interest to reflect how Basque studies is an example of a field historically regarded as an object of research must lead us to offer an explanation based on measurable parameters and quantifiable criteria. If we use the database formed by Google as a by-product of its book-scanning service, we will see how the term *estudios vascos* (or the translations into French and English, *études basques* and *Basque studies*) have had different histories of currency in those languages.³¹ While *estudios vascos* had a pronounced spike in the 1920s and a gradual increase in the frequency of occurrence in books in Spanish from 1880 to 2008, *études basques* showed a succession of peaks and troughs in a sharp curve, with a maximum in its occurrence in the period from 1981 to 1988 and a lower spike from 1998 to 2004. For its part, *Basque studies* remained at a frequency of almost zero until the 1970s, to later rise exponentially, quadrupling in frequency by 1995 and quintupling again by 2005.³²

More illustratively perhaps, this general pattern also holds for the subject headings created for library catalogs. The *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) are the most widely used worldwide.³³ As the cataloger seeks the headings that best represent the subjects of works, these headings tend to include all types of objects and concepts, such as disciplines, methods, activities, industries and classes of people. As figure 1 shows, the rise in the frequency of the appearance of the term *Basque* increased (since 1975) by a factor of two in 1986, by a factor of almost five in 2001 and by almost seven in 2016. Both the steepness and the lateness of this rise are astounding. More significant, however, for the thesis of this article is the comparison of the frequency of appearance of the term *Basque* relative to *Basque studies* or the disciplines called *studies* (such as *area studies*, *ethnic studies*, *cultural studies*, etc.). Although in the lists of LCHS the frequency of appearance of

García, ‘Biblioteca del Instituto de Estudios Vascos en la Universidad de Deusto’. *Sancho el Sabio: revista de cultura e investigación vasca = Euskal kultura eta ikerketa aldizkaria*, 1992, 2(2):345-352. On the Aurkinet database of summaries, see: Karmele Santa Maria, ‘Euskaldok, Centro de Documentación Vasca’. Available in: <http://www.euskonews.com/0351zbnk/gaia35104es.html>

³⁰ On the origins of the *Instituto de Estudios Vascos* in Deusto, see: Santa María (1992, pp. 346-347).

³¹ Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., ‘Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books’. *Science*, 2011, 331:176-182. (Readers may obtain their own graphs by inserting those terms in their search at <http://books.google.com/ngrams> [accessed July 2016].)

³² The graph arising from the search of *estudios vascos* over Google’s Spanish database shows a prolonged decrease in the period from 1997 to 2008. The graph arising from the search of Basque studies over Google’s English Fiction database is qualitatively similar to that of the English database, even if its frequency of occurrence is about one half lower in quantitative terms.

³³ Jacki Ganendran, Lynn Farkas. *Learn Library of Congress Subject Access*. Texas: Totalrecall Publications, Inc., 2007, 2 ed., p. 5.

Basque exponentially increases in the four decades 1975-2015 (either as categories or as subdivisions), there is hardly the faintest sign of appearance of the term *Basque* associated to, or within, the disciplines called *studies* in the same period.³⁴

The ever-increasing appearance of the word *Basque* among the categories and subdivisions of the list of the Library of Congress subject headings, and the absence of its link to the disciplines called 'studies', in the decades from 1975 to 2015, could be connected with the fact that, however clearly Basque studies had been regarded before the learned writers' eyes as an object of research and inquiry, the realization of this activity in scholarly practice remained far from the degree of institutionalization that came to be recognized to firmly established academic disciplines.

Bibliographical compilations on Basque studies in the last decades produce analogous examples of clear indicators reflecting the maturity of this field as an object of academic inquiry. Two of the most notorious examples are Gonzalo Javier Auza's work on the Basque bibliography in Argentina (1850-2007) and the work on Basque periodical publications printed in France from 1944 to 2004, compiled by the former director of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, Jean-Claude Poitelon.³⁵ Although it still remains to be seen whether there were theorization and specific methodologies, the fact of the increasing frequency of appearance in the LCSH lists and the prodigality and meticulousness of bibliographical compilations are both evidence that over the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century Basque studies were recognized by scholars as an object of research capable of generating an ever-growing corpus of own scholarship.

3. SUBJECT OF STUDY: ALL BUT BASQUE STUDIES?

Today, Basque studies are hardly established as a scholarly discipline in a handful of universities in the world. Their prodigality as an object of study notwithstanding, a

³⁴ The first edition of the US Library of Congress list was published in parts between 1909 and 1914. From its 8th edition in 1975 (the volume taken as a reference), its title changed to *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. Washington: Library of Congress. The headings that include the term 'Basque' in its 8th edition are: 'ballads and songs', 'drama', 'funeral rites and ceremonies', 'imprints', 'language', 'literature', 'philology', 'poetry', 'Basques', 'Basques in America', 'Basques in foreign countries', and 'Basques in literature' (p. 165).

³⁵ Gonzalo Javier Auza, 'Bibliografía vasca en Argentina, 1850-2007'. *Vasconia*, 2013, 39:27-100; Jean-Claude Poitelon, 'Bibliographie des publications périodiques du Pays Basque parues en France de 1944 à 2004'. *Lapurdium*, 2008, 12 (numéro spécial).

considerable effort would be required to go back to the minds of those early promoters of the *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos* in the 1920s and early 1930s when they were founding the pillars of what they then supposed that would be a recognized, legitimate and firmly established discipline.

Only now, in retrospect, it is clear how largely we confused the object of study with the subject of study. While achieving considerable progress as an object of research and inquiry, periodically organizing congresses with generalist approaches and seminars, and promoting scholarships and monographic and periodical publications, we were unmindful of the highly limited reach of their institutionalized presence in universities and other academic centers. Those few personalities with the intuition and audacity to take steps towards their institutionalization, as Julio de Urquijo did, were often deemed as eccentrics rather than as pioneers.

To appreciate just how backward is the development of Basque studies as a subject of study we must compare the institutionalized state of said field of knowledge with that of other fields with similar linguistic-cultural interests and orientations (Catalan, Celtic, Galician, etc.), as well as with that of related fields (Hispanic, Iberian, etc.). In proceeding to any comparative study of the scholarly disciplines established in Europe, we must bear in mind the Bologna Process, whereby their different university systems were unified and a three tier system of higher education was adopted: Bachelor's, Master's and PhD.

Consider first the resort to what is “most practical and handiest” in scholarly search. Many university users, whether they are students or researchers, for reasons of mobility or of search and comparison of scholarly offers, draw on StudyPortals, a comprehensive internet source where thousands of degree programs could be found and compared on an international level. This portal includes more than 2,000 participating universities around the world, and is supported by the European Commission and many national and state institutes, such as the British Council (UK), Universidad.es (Spain), and DAAD (Germany).³⁶ Our search in this portal has its Icarian dangers, especially the temptation to see oneself as descrying all existing academic programs from the great heights above. Although we cannot succumb to such temptations, our search produces some virtuoso performances, for it provides a first overview on the state of the art in the academic year

³⁶ <http://www.studyportals.com> As it can be read in its website, this portal gathers information about 52,478 Bachelor's degrees, 53,894 Master's degrees, and 4,564 PhD. degrees.

2015-2016: according to this portal, only one university offers a PhD degree containing in its program references to Basque studies (PhD Modern Languages, Newcastle University);³⁷ and only six Master's degrees are offered, there being none on Basque literature or language exclusively, but rather as a part of general topics.³⁸ On the same portal, many PhD degrees related to Catalan studies (19), Hispanic (15), Iberian (6), Celtic (9), and Galician (1) can be found.

However significant, that first overview remains far from complete. The scholarly recognition of disciplines is frequently reflected by national agencies of academic exchange and promotion. In Spain, the *Servicio Español para la Internacionalización de la Educación* (SEPIE) is the body responsible for the management, dissemination, promotion, and impact studies of the program Erasmus+ and other European educational programs. The SEPIE provides a full scholarship search engine where the official degrees offered by the universities that make up the Spanish University System can be found. In France, a similar service is the *Agence française pour la promotion de l'enseignement supérieur, l'accueil et la mobilité internationale*. The *Agence* devised the portal Campus France with a view to promoting abroad the French higher education and vocational education systems. Finally, Germany developed the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD), the world's largest funding organization for the international exchange of students and researchers. The DAAD possesses a database of international programs in German universities.

By using the scholarship search engines developed by SEPIE, Campus France and DAAD, one quickly becomes aware that Basque studies are not the most common, and much less the first of the disciplines called "studies". Far behind "area studies" and "ethnic studies", Basque studies remains behind other minority studies, such as Catalan, Corse and Occitan. Take, as an instance, the case of the Spanish service SEPIE, whose search gives a single result: the degree in Basque Studies from the University of the Basque Country, which are imparted at the Faculty of Arts in Vitoria-Gasteiz by a resolution of December 20, 2010. The same search engine provides three degrees in Catalan studies (two Master's degrees) and seventeen degrees in Hispanic studies (eight Master's and four PHD degrees). In the case of the portal Campus France, a similar result is achieved: only one university

³⁷ See: <http://www.phdportal.eu/studies/34607/modern-languages.html>

³⁸ See: <http://www.mastersportal.eu>. These include: M.A. Portuguese and M.A. Hispanic Languages and Literature (University of California); M.Litt. Spanish and M.Phil. Modern Languages (Newcastle University); M.A. Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict (University College Dublin); and M.A. Spanish (California State University).

(*Université Pau et Pays de l'Adour*, UPPA) offers a master's degree specialized in *études basques*. This portal includes three degrees related to Corse language and culture, five related to Occitan language, and four degrees in Catalan studies. Lastly, the DAAD, through its search tool *Hochschulkompass*, offers two programs regarding Catalan studies, four Celtic studies programs, and nine Hispanic studies programs. No program related to Basque studies is offered.

Another indicator of the recognition of scholarly disciplines is the academic coding system. Given that it is very difficult to count the quality factor in processes of institutionalization, to count degrees is always a dubious exercise. A studies program or center can be, by itself, immensely more influential than a dozen of minor programs. All this makes it necessary to be highly cautious when quantitatively comparing the offer of degrees in different studies. These limitations notwithstanding, it is indeed possible to use a quantitative method to assess the degree of recognition of a discipline. With the aim of offering a characterization of the implementation of Basque studies in the Anglo-Saxon academic community, we have examined several coding and classifying systems of scholarly subjects used in America and the UK.

The examination was performed from the classification codes assigned by the following three systems: the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) and the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in the US; and the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) in the UK. Although these systems do not cover all manifestations of existing fields of study, they definitely enumerate all relevant degrees, programs and subjects for educational and research purposes. These classifying systems thus become a basic reference on disciplinarization in the Anglo-Saxon academic world. The CIP is the accepted statistical standard on instructional program classifications. Originally founded by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1980, it offers a taxonomy of academic disciplines at institutions of higher education in the US and Canada. The Carnegie Classification, for its part, identifies all accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities that are represented in the NCES' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Finally, the JACS classifies academic subjects by codes assigned to the subjects of both higher education courses and the individual modules within them in the UK.

The examination of the selected classifying systems yields the following result: The 2000 edition of the CIP mentions the term "Basque" only once, though not to classify it as a

discipline, but rather as an example of “unassigned” language in the general field of foreign languages.³⁹ As a point of reference, the Catalan, Celtic, Persian, and Tibetan languages and literatures receive “discipline” status.⁴⁰ For its part, JACS version 1.7 (created for use in 2002-03 collections onwards) identifies “Spanish language, literature & culture” as a subject, including the “Catalan”, “Iberian”, and “Hispanic Studies” within it; it does not mention the term “Basque.”⁴¹ Last but not least, there is no mention of Basque studies in the Carnegie Classification.⁴²

Equally damaging to the field of Basque studies—from the viewpoint of their scant institutionalization in the United States—is their non-participation or insertion in the so-called “area studies”, the well-known and highly widespread interdisciplinary fields of research and scholarship. It is here that the studies pertaining to particular cultural, regional, and national/federal realities, such as the Breton, Welsh, and Cornish studies (up to a total of 65 area studies) find their academic niche. Among the motives for their desirable inclusion is the fact that, in contrast to cultural studies, area studies frequently include diaspora and emigration among its contents.⁴³

To an extent and with an interest that we now find hard to understand, area studies were inspired by the foreign political agenda that the United States’ intelligence and military agencies implanted at the beginning of the Cold War era.⁴⁴ Earlier, the need for inversion in international studies had been expressed by the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In particular, the Ford Foundation established in 1950 the prestigious Foreign Area Fellowship Program, whereby it soon

³⁹ *Classification of Instructional Programs – 2000: (NCES 2002-165)* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, p. III-96. The code 16.9999 is assigned: ‘Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, Other. Any instructional program in foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics not listed above, including such unassigned languages as Basque and others’.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, p. III-90. ‘16.0907: *Catalan Language and Literature. (NEW)* A program that focuses on the Catalan language and related dialects. Includes instruction in Catalan philology, Modern Catalan, Catalan dialects, and applications in business, science/technology, and other settings’.

⁴¹ HESACODE-JACS Mapping in: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/jacs/>

⁴² It should be noted that not all institutions are included in the Carnegie classification: for example, in the academic year 2013-14 only those that awarded at least 20 research doctorates or at least 50 master’s degrees were included. See: *Mapping of CIP Codes to Disciplinary Domains*. In: <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/downloads.php>

⁴³ Kenneth J. Grieb, ‘Area Studies and the Traditional Disciplines’. *History Teacher*, 1974, 7(2):228-238; Hans Kuijper, ‘Area Studies Versus Disciplines Towards an Interdisciplinary, Systemic Country Approach’. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 2008, 3(7):205-215.

⁴⁴ For a historical review of the discipline that includes two phases (during the Cold War and after the collapse of Western communism), and that analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the ‘area’ boundaries, as well as the new emerging relationships between power and knowledge, see: Bruce Cumings, ‘Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War’. *Bulletin-Concerned Asian Scholars*, 1997, 29(1):6-26.

became the main player in shaping the area studies program in the United States.⁴⁵ But the Fordian conception of area studies as a seedbed of internationally oriented political scientists and economists soon found a ready-made niche and connivance in Washington governmental agencies, to whom it seemed, de facto, that area studies could help to control emerging political and societal structures during the Cold War.⁴⁶ It was in this context that the field of *hispanism* was forged within the European studies, dragging with it the Basque and Catalan themes, which were not subsequently able to separate themselves as individual area studies.⁴⁷ Be that as it may, as W. Schäfer states, in their subsequent evolution area studies seem to have not adapted sufficiently to the new global environment of academic and geopolitical borders: while gaining an apparently secure place in academe, they “became as inward-looking and boundary-conscious as regular university disciplines.”⁴⁸

This interest in interdisciplinary study, this heightened sensibility to understand local cultures by disciplines encompassing both the social sciences and the humanities, has not, of course, been limited to area studies. It has been developed far more efficiently and energetically in the field of ‘ethnic studies’ than in area studies. Defined as the critical study of difference (read race, ethnicity, indigeneity, nation, gender, etc.) and power, ethnic studies originated from the Civil Right Movement in the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and evolved towards a growing self-awareness of communities of color and

⁴⁵ As an example of this, from 1953 to 1966 the Ford Foundation donated \$270 million to 34 universities to promote area and language studies. See the introduction by Toby Alice Volkman to Ford Foundation, *Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Area Studies*. New York: Ford Foundation, 1999. See also: Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 178.

⁴⁶ David L. Szanton, ‘The Origin, Nature and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States’. In: David L. Szanton, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, 1-33, pp. 9-11.

⁴⁷ The following example clearly illustrates the difficulties and scholarly mistrusts faced by Basque studies in their institutionalization and disciplinarization. David Laitin, in his article ‘The political science discipline’, published by Edward D. Mansfield, Richard Sisson eds., *Democracy, Autonomy, and Conflict in Comparative and International Politics*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004, p. 14, criticizes the ‘proliferation of fields as if they were ethnicities’: ‘Rather than consolidating around a division of labor encompassing several well-defined fields, the discipline is fragmenting into an ever-increasing number of self-proclaimed fields [...] In the last throes of the Social Science Research Council, Koreanists broke from the Asia committee to have their own research community. Universities, with support of political scientists, are creating centers for Afghanistan studies (University of Nebraska, Omaha) and centers for Basque studies (University of Nevada, Reno).’

⁴⁸ Wolf Schäfer, ‘Reconfiguring Area Studies for the Global Age’. *Globality Studies Journal*, 31 December 2010, 22:1-27, p. 2. Since their inception, area studies were subject to severe critiques, including by area specialists themselves. For many, they are indeed multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary (in several respects) rather than interdisciplinary. ‘The U.S. tradition of area studies’, J.T. Klein states, ‘has been a “nonenclaved endeavor” characterized by a loose definition of expertise. Programs often resemble a cafeteria of courses in many disciplines. Blending is often left to the students, and the overwhelming proportion of their courses lies within their major disciplines’. Julie Thompson Klein, *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity*. Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 1996, pp. 113-114.

towards representation and racialization issues.⁴⁹ By virtue of their definition and evolution, minorities of European origin, such as the Basque and Irish, remained on the sidelines of ethnic studies.⁵⁰

While the disciplines called “studies” usually denote a relatively new origin (post Second World War) and an incomplete status as a body of scholarship, as Armin Krishnan reminds us, universities are “moving more and more to a post-disciplinary world of shifting specializations and special interest areas.”⁵¹ Thus the last decade has seen a drastic restructuring of the forms of organization and production of knowledge, like the “clusters” of research and scholarship, which have enabled universities to remain competitive by focusing on expertise in niche fields rather than on broad competences in numerous disciplines.

4. DISCIPLINIZATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION FOR BASQUE STUDIES

The essential historical characteristic underlying the scholarly field of Basque studies, as we have seen, is its status as an object of study; the essential deficiency, its status as a subject.⁵² The two statuses are intrinsically related to the processes of disciplinization and institutionalization in every scholarship. Furthermore, these processes are fundamentally complementary. Disciplinization implies the establishment of a “defined field of objects of knowledge and of a set of methods designed to study it in a regulated and intersubjectively verifiable manner” in order to create a stable body of information and to insure its diachronic transmission to future researchers. Again, institutionalization denotes the

⁴⁹ On the history of ethnic studies, as well as their sub-disciplines and methodology, see: Philip Q. Yang, *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 1-38. See also: David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos eds., *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002.

⁵⁰ In contrast, questions such as ethnic conflict, ethnonational group, nationalism, autonomy, or human rights claims, have received considerable attention in ethnic studies literature. See: Ellis Cashmore, *Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 141, 148-150, 170, 193.

⁵¹ Krishnan (2009, p. 40). See also: Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Schwartzman, Peter Scott, Martin Trow, *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: SAGE Publications, 1994.

⁵² There are historical reasons that could explain this “imbalance”. But it is not my intention here to go to the heart of the causal matter. I do not think the reasons usually adduced for the Basque case—a small population, the lack of a status of nation-state—are determining to their institutionalization. In fact, many of the comparative groups mentioned above were never a nation-state; and, in some cases, their population size could be relatively comparable to the Basque case, if one considers not only the domestic residents, but also the number of emigrants and their descendents. But even so, they historically achieved a more reasonable “balance”.

creation of organizational systems (such as programs, departments, centers, associations, etc.) for the furtherance of the study and research of the discipline.⁵³

The disproportion between the status of object and subject has historically had far-reaching consequences for Basque studies. Bridging the gap was the overriding academic goal pursued by the *Sociedad de Estudios Vascos'* promoters in the 1920s. They pursued a universally recognized criterion of excellence: *unity-in-variety* and *variety-in-unity* for Basque studies. So understood, the only way, as Mitxelena reminded us (endorsing Urquijo's words), to ensure the future of linguistic studies—read here also Basque studies—is their university institutionalization.

Nevertheless, the object of study, though characteristic and predominant, was always undefined, always in some degree ambiguous and blurred. Consciously or unconsciously, its researchers made contributions to a generic field, without these being necessarily attached to such field. The outcome was a multidisciplinary field in character: its studies were disjointed and off-centered, and consisting of juxtaposed partial works. This undefinedness of the object of study has historically proved damaging to the scholarly disciplinization of Basque studies.⁵⁴

Yet disciplinization is theorization and methodological formulation. Through theoretical thinking and methodology, scholars define a stable object, and hence they gain the recognition and legitimacy of the discipline. The status of a discipline and its advanced scholarship are intricately intertwined with its focus on theory. While through their individual efforts they may well have produced a valuable series of fragmented studies, scholars sacrifice, with their renunciation of theorization and methodological formulation, the overarching and integrated view of their partial studies. This renunciation has pernicious effects for the discipline: as Krishnan states, “disciplines are now identified more through the methodology they apply to topics or research fields, rather than through the topics or research fields themselves.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Glenn W. Most, *Disciplining Classics - Altertumswissenschaft als Beruf*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002, pp. vii-viii.

⁵⁴ Gonzalo Javier Auza, in his work on the development of Basque studies in Argentina (<http://www.euskonews.com/0262zbk/kosmo26202.html>), notes with concern this lack of definition, and opens the door to address this deficiency in the future: The category of Basque studies ‘does not necessarily imply the existence of a common object of study or a shared epistemological view among the set of researchers of the mentioned disciplines’. Even so, the generic definition of this field ‘can be consolidated with better outlines in the future’.

⁵⁵ Krishnan (2009, p. 35).

If sensing these deficiencies, the *vascólogo* renounces theorization and methodological formulation, then Basque studies is reduced, for want of a broader intellectual motivation, to an *undefined* field of varied objects of knowledge, devoid of specific methods. Thus *vascólogos* find themselves in the awkward position of hoisting with a hand the flag of a 'field' that they admire (that related to the Basques), while with the other hand they cover the lights of the holistic and integrated views derived from the theoretical frameworks that they renounce.⁵⁶

It is no coincidence that the network of chairs established by the Etxepare Basque Institute provides an example of these questions. Since 2010, this institute has established five university chairs in Europe and America in order to promote the Basque language and culture internationally.⁵⁷ While the Institute has devoted considerable efforts and resources to the furtherance of Basque studies, its thematic program of chairs is so vast (ranging from Basque linguistics and literature to the Basque arts, to finish with politics and Basque diaspora), and its research production on theorization and methods in this field is so scant (up to the present day), that the definition of the objects of knowledge and methods (and hence the disciplinization of Basque studies) seems highly difficult, if not impossible.⁵⁸

What we learn from this illustrative example is that disciplinization and institutionalization must go hand in hand. This is so both when we understand the result of disciplinization as a well-defined field of objects of knowledge, theories and methods, and when we understand the result of institutionalization as a multi-organizational

⁵⁶ The institutionalization of a discipline largely depends on the particular contexts in which it evolves. I regard the current state of the discipline of Basque Studies as the result of the research of individual efforts rather than collective ventures. However, the fact that the historical development of our discipline as an object of individual study is a strength should not necessarily lead to a neglect of its institutionalization. Or, to put in another way, the success as an object of study is perfectly compatible with the success as a subject of study, as demonstrated in other groups mentioned in the present work.

⁵⁷ The university-chairs of Basque Studies for visiting professors established by the Etxepare Basque Institute include: Basque Literature and Linguistics (cf. the Bernardo Atxaga Chair at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York), Basque Studies (cf. the Koldo Mitxelena Chair at the University of Chicago), Basque Arts (cf. the Eduardo Chillida Chair at the Goethe University of Frankfurt), Basque Politics (cf. the Manuel de Irujo Chair at the University of Liverpool, UK), and the Basque Diaspora (cf. the Jon Bilbao Chair at the Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno). See: Mari Jose Olaziregi, 'The International Location of Basque Studies'. *BOGA: Basque Studies Consortium Journal*, 2015, 3(1):1-12, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Scholars outside the Basque Country are usually tied into larger academic agendas; for them the Basque experience can be useful to elucidate interesting questions regarding other broader issues. This fact has been a constant feature in the history of Basque studies. But at the same time, this very fact is reflective of the state of the discipline and of what I want to prove. If all scholars (*vascólogos* and *vascófilos*) outside the Basque Country are tied into larger academic agendas, this means that the discipline of Basque Studies is not sufficiently institutionalized to constitute its own academic agenda. And if there are exceptions who obtain funds from other paths and can exclusively focus on Basque studies, we should expect from them research work, theorization, and methodological formulation.

system for the production, validation and transmission of knowledge. Not in vain is scholarship in a discipline closely related to rigorous and credible research, as well as to well-developed and supported theories.

Considering therefore these distinctive features of the recognized academic disciplines, we can suggest certain perspectives appropriate to the field of Basque studies.

First, as we have seen, scholarship in Basque studies does not have the authority of a defined and stable object of study transcending the enterprises of the individual researcher. By contrast, other fields called 'studies', which have been successful in achieving recognition as disciplines, their success being the result of collective cognitive enterprises, have also been specially successful in persuading their scholars to understand this field as a subject --and not only object— of study and to pursue ends that are geared towards the theorization and methodological reflection of the discipline itself.

Second, in Basque studies interdisciplinarity was often confounded with (mono- or) multidisciplinary. One cannot bring many partial studies together and transcend them, if there is no reflection on the common theoretical and methodological framework. Unlike multidisciplinary, that often implies a mere concatenation of one-sided exercises, interdisciplinarity entails the organization of concepts, terminology, methodology, procedures, and research and teaching programs in a large field. By their nature and formation, Basque studies should gather interdisciplinary groups with different training, organized into a common effort on common issues.⁵⁹

Admittedly, the foregoing description of appropriate qualities for Basque studies is partial. Interdisciplinarity is not the sole approach to integrate diverse fields of study; indeed, transdisciplinarity, that entails a research strategy that crosses many disciplinary boundaries, also implies a unity of knowledge beyond disciplines. Nonetheless, interdisciplinarity, which is based on the awareness that disciplines are complementary and interdependent, clearly incorporates holistic (rather than reductive) thinking and synergetic (rather than one-sided) effort that I have ascribed to Basque studies. Perhaps here we should mention Blaise Pascal's aphorism: "I hold that it is as impossible to know

⁵⁹ Here my concern is not so much the lack of a common theoretical framework and methodology (for many disciplines have not), as the lack of reflections and awareness of the need of theoretical frameworks; especially when one attempts to bring many partial studies together and transcend them, as has often been the case in the discipline of Basque studies.

the parts without knowing the whole as it is to know the whole without detailed knowledge of the parts.”⁶⁰

We must acknowledge that in the last decades Basque studies have changed. We have seen above shifts from the prehistory to diaspora history, from the “old” to the “new” Basque world, from ethnography to social anthropology, from traditional to real Vasconia, from literary history to textology. Yet we must also acknowledge that we *vascólogos* have not changed to the sound of Basque studies. For common to all these shifts there is, in my view, a crucial feature that defines both us and the Basque studies: our renunciation of their status of subject.

Much more worrying is that in failing to recognize our role in the disciplinary immaturity of Basque studies, we have also failed to recognize the course of our historical role and consequently we have allowed others define them for us. Our attachment to the *Basqueness* has been so often an act of faith and has been taken so much for granted in our profession as *vascólogos* that, in considering ourselves the heirs to an extraordinarily historical language and culture (even millenary), we have become simply *ahistorical*. The more we understand our responsibility in this renunciation, just so much clearer is it that we assume the historical responsibility that is inseparable from the legacy of our predecessors: the obligation to make Basque studies a discipline that deserves to be studied *per se* and from itself, rather than by others and from outside.

⁶⁰ Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts: Selected and Translated by Moritz Kaufmann*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 8.