

Nationalism and ideology in the Basque press during the Falklands War

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Abstract: This research article presents the results of the classification and analysis of the news items and subjective information (opinion articles and editorials) published by five of the most important newspapers in the Basque Autonomous Community about the war between Great Britain and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, during the 68 days that this conflict lasted. The study is based on the analysis of 309 issues published from 3 April to 22 June, 1982, which provided a total of 799 pages.

Keywords: Basque Press; nationalism; ideology; manipulation of information.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Objectives. 3. Hypotheses. 4. Object of study and time delimitation. 5. Methods. 6. Two points of agreement. 7. The nationalist issue. 8. Basque nationalism. 9. Spanish nationalism. 10. Conclusions. 11. References. 12. Notes. 13. Annexes.

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1. Introduction

On 2 April, 1982, Argentina's armed forces took possession of the Falkland Islands and proclaimed sovereignty over these territories. This action triggered Great Britain's dispatch of its naval task force and the start of a never-officially-declared war against Argentina. The commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War this year has motivated this research on the representation of this conflict by the Basque press. However, the analysis and classification of the news items and, particularly, the subjective information (opinion articles and editorials) published by the Basque press about and during the conflict over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, in order to establish their ideological positions, is not an easy task.

In this analysis we must keep in mind that both adversaries in the Falklands War had positive and negative features and that this made very difficult for people to choose which one was right. Given its institutional regime, Great Britain should have been, in theory, supported by all the self-considered democratic governments and people, regardless of their position towards Mrs Thatcher's Government, because it was fighting against a military dictatorship that was responsible for thousands of assassinations and had used its armed forces to attack the archipelago. However, Great

Britain also had a point against it: the fact that in this war it was not acting as a guarantor of freedoms but as a colonial power that ignored the international resolutions set by the UN General Assembly (2065/XX) to resolve peacefully its dispute with Argentina over the sovereignty of the archipelago. Argentina, whose military junta was, at least in theory, reviled worldwide, had in its favour the fact that it was fighting to recover a territory that was recognised as Argentinean by all nations, with the exception of Great Britain. Therefore it was very difficult to support any of the contenders without incurring in a contradiction: people could either support a democracy with colonialist purposes or a dictatorship that, in that case, was fighting for independence.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this research is to identify the positions taken by the different daily newspapers from the Basque Country towards the conflict that in 1982 led to the war in the South Atlantic, between Great Britain and the Argentine Republic over the possession and sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, and to determine whether these positions were conditioned by the newspapers' ideologies or based exclusively on the events that were taking place.

There are also more specific goals derived from this central objective:

1. To analyse the perspective used by newspapers to present this news event and establish their, true or false, neutrality or support towards the adversaries, based on the subjective pieces (opinion articles and editorials) published by each newspaper.
2. To classify the information in qualitative and quantitative terms.

3. Hypotheses

The hypotheses that we intend to verify at the end of the research are:

1. The ideology of each newspaper was decisive in their approach towards the conflict.
2. The most important thing for all newspapers was to show their readers a clear position, of support, opposition, or neutrality, towards the adversaries.
3. Newspapers used this foreign conflict that had no apparent connections to Spain or the Basque Country, to maintain and reinforce their own ideological positions, which would constitute a manipulation of the information.
4. The 'nationalist issue' (Basque or Spanish) is the central core on which the position of each newspaper revolves.

4. Object of study and time delimitation

The study is based on reliable data extracted from the analysis of the information published by the Basque newspapers during the development of the conflict. The period under analysis covers from 3 April, when the Argentine military occupation of the Islands started, to 22 June, 1982, when the new President of Argentina, the former

general Reynaldo Bignone, was elected. It is important to mention that although the hostilities actually ceased on 14 June and the Basque newspapers actually continued to publish information on the event after 22 June, the day of the designation of the new President was chosen as the date to close the analysis of the war based on its significance.

The newspapers selected for the study are: 1) *Deia* (“Call”); 2) *Tribuna Vasca* (Basque Tribune); 3) *Egin* (“To make”); 4) *La Gaceta del Norte* (“The Northern Gazette”); and 5) *El Correo Español–El Pueblo Vasco* (“The Spanish Mail-The Basque People”), which from now on will be referred only as *El Correo Español*.

In the case of *Tribuna Vasca*, the period of analysis started in 9 May, 1982, as the newspaper was launched this day. Despite this newspaper lacks five weeks of information on the subject, its inclusion in the study was considered necessary as it was the only Basque newspaper that during that time exhibited an ideological stance that was different from those exhibited by other papers.

The material used for the study consisted of a total of 309 issues of the five selected newspapers -all published between 3 April and 22 June, 1982.

Deia, *El Correo Español* and *Egin* reported daily on the subject during the 68 days, except on Mondays, when they were not published due to the then exclusive circulation of the *Hoja del Lunes* (“Monday’s Paper”) and on 10 April, when Good Friday was celebrated and newspapers were not published. *La Gaceta del Norte* only failed to report on the conflict on 17 April. For its part, *Tribuna Vasca* reported on the conflict only from 9 May onwards, and thus provided 38 relevant issues.

The 309 analysed issues contained a total of 799 pages dedicated, totally or partially, to the subject of study, including the front and back pages, the opinion and editorial pages, and the international and breaking news sections. The selected newspapers had the following number of pages:

Newspaper	Number of pages
<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	171
<i>El Correo Español</i>	220
<i>Deia</i>	172
<i>Egin</i>	171
<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	65

In order to make the study more plural and objective, the five chosen newspapers have different and perfectly delimited ideological tendencies. In fact, four of them were clearly linked to specific political parties. This is the case of *Deia* (linked to the Basque Nationalist Party), *Tribuna Vasca* (to the Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party),

Egin (to Herri Batasuna) and *La Gaceta del Norte* (to Alianza Popular, although not as notoriously as the other three). The fifth newspaper, *El Correo Español* did not seem to have any links to any party at that time, but its political views can certainly be placed in the centre-right of the political spectrum of the time.

Thus, the sample of newspapers had the following ideological frameworks:

Newspaper	Ideology
<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	National Conservative Right
<i>El Correo Español</i>	National Centre Right
<i>Deia</i>	Nationalist Right
<i>Egin</i>	Radical Nationalist Left
<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	National Moderate Left

In addition to being the most representative newspapers in the Basque Country at the time of the Falklands War, they also had the largest circulation. It is important to mention that the circulation of San Sebastian’s *Diario Vasco* (“Basque Newspaper”) also was one of the largest but was excluded from the study because it was owned by the same company publishing *El Correo Español* and, therefore, followed the same ideology and position as the latter newspaper.

As mentioned, the main objective of this research is to determine the position of the aforementioned newspapers towards the conflict in the South Atlantic, whether they supported one side and, if so, whether this support was conditioned by their institutional ideology. Therefore, other aspects that were reported about the war were not taken into account in this study, as they are not relevant to the main objective. Thus, for example, the study will not address such issues as: the impact of the war on NATO, the Common Market, the United Nations; the role played by the two superpowers, mainly the USA, whose final decision to unconditionally support Britain shocked its relations with Latin America; or (from the military point of view) the importance acquired by the Falklands War when it led many countries to test the tactics and weapons of their armed forces. Thus, while all these issues were covered at one time or another by the sample of newspapers, they will not be addressed in this work, unless it is strictly necessary.

5. Methods

The research method used for this analysis is the case study, which can allow us to understand the event and the specific context in which it unfolded. The information published about the conflict by the selected newspapers will be analysed from qualitative and quantitative perspectives, in order to be able to establish a complete image of the ideology and ideas reflected by the newspapers.

Two categories were established for the qualitative analysis, which include all the pieces of information suitable for analysis: editorials and opinion articles. Both types of information have traditionally defined the ideological line and position of a newspaper towards a specific event. What was said and how it was said were the only aspects examined to determine what, in our opinion, “was really meant”. We have to recognise that we do not have a very broad starting point because the editorials devoted to the subject are rather scarce and, in some cases, non-existent. However, we firmly believe that the editorials and the opinion articles will provide sufficient evidence to clarify which of the three possible positions was taken by each newspaper (support for Argentina, support for Great Britain, or neutrality).

Opinion articles will also help us to complete the final outline. Although many of these articles were written by prestigious commentators, the analysis was not influenced by the author’s fame and possible or known ideology, but was solely based on their content. Our first assumption was that, in theory, most articles agreed with the position taken by their newspaper. Regardless of their ideological alignment, these opinion articles will serve to draw the final conclusions.

There are some important and recurrent terms used in the reporting of this event and they must be defined before presenting the analysis of the selected texts. These terms are nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism.

Nationalism refers to an ideology that involves a strong identification of a group of people with a nation and its independence. Colonialism is understood as the “domination and administration of a territory by a foreign power. This domination can be political, military, informative, cultural, economic or ethnic” (DRAE 23rd edition). Finally, imperialism would be the “attitude and doctrine of those who advocate or practice the expansion of a country’s dominance over others by military, economic, or political force” (Ibid.). The common connection of the three terms is the ‘territorial claim’, as it happened in the Falklands conflict.

On the other hand, the quantitative analysis was used for the quantification and classification of all the pieces of information provided by the newspapers. For instance: How much space was devoted to cover the event? How many news items were merely noticeable, objective, or subjective? How many editorials and opinion pieces were published on the subject? For this task, the most viable choice was a hemerographic study focused on measuring the space occupied by the pieces of information on the subject, not their number. The space was measured in square millimetres.

This hemerographic study is focused on establishing two things: each newspaper’s total volume of information and volume of international news. The analysis of the total volume of the newspaper will help us to obtain accurate data because the number of pages is usually very uniform. In fact, the days when supplements or booklets were inserted in the newspapers, they constituted additional

content to the newspapers' usual volume of information. Establishing the volume of the international information will not be a problem. The front and back pages and the subjective pieces placed outside the international section (for example, in the opinion section) will be treated separately.

Given the difficulties to retain the original copies of the newspapers for a prolonged time, the analysis has been conducted on reduced photocopies. Therefore, the resulting measures do not correspond to the actual size of the newspapers. However, this does not invalidate the study because the proportions of the pages are the same when measuring spaces, and thus the resulting percentages are real. The photocopy is 46% smaller than the actual size. Thus, the space considered per page in each newspaper in relation to its original format is as follows:

Newspaper	Surface/space
<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	42,500 mm ²
<i>El Correo Español</i>	46,800 mm ²
<i>Deia</i>	49,400 mm ²
<i>Egin</i>	48,100 mm ²
<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	43,350 mm ²

In order to establish the space dedicated by each newspaper in a particular day to the Falkland Islands, we counted all the items published that day on the subject. In other words, we counted the space dedicated to the subject in the front and back pages, in the international section, in the opinion and latest news sections, and in any other section of the newspaper. This count provided what we call “the total space dedicated to the Falklands”.

The “total international” space was obtained from the international news section and the international news items published on the front page. The back and the third pages, depending on each newspaper, were counted when they were dedicated to the Falklands or another international subject (like the Lebanon War), as part of the international section. For example, if a given day one newspaper had three pages in the international section and dedicated the last or third page to the Falklands or other content of the section, the section will be considered as having 4 pages that day. The analysis did not considered as part of the international section those international news items that appeared in other pages (economy, society, sports, etc.). That is why there may be some cases where the “total international space” is less than the total space dedicated to the Falklands, because the latter includes other spaces. However, we also calculated how much information on the Falklands appeared exclusively in the international section and this was classified as the “Falklands space in the international section”. Based on these data, the percentages will be presented in a summarised and comparative table [1].

6. Two points of agreement

The analysis of all the subjective information, editorials and opinion articles, published by the five Basque newspapers about the conflict indicates that all of these newspapers agreed in two points, which were not distorted by the newspapers' different ideological position.

Newspaper	Significant texts
<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editorial, <i>La invasión de las Islas Malvinas</i> (The invasion to the Falkland Islands), 4 April, p. 18. - Jesús Pérez Bilbao, <i>El trasfondo económico del conflicto de las Malvinas</i> (The economic backdrop of the conflict of the Falkland Islands), Special feature in Economy, 2 May. - Astur Morsella, <i>La cuarta invasión Inglesa a la Argentina</i> (The fourth English invasion to Argentina), 20 May, p. 19. - Editorial, <i>Ahora sí, la Guerra</i> (This time it is war), 21 May, p. 18. - Editorial, <i>El Papa y la Guerra del Atlántico Sur</i> (The Pope and the South Atlantic War), 29 May, p. 18. - Editorial, <i>Todos pierden</i> (Everybody loses), 2 June, p. 18. - Editorial, <i>Inseguridad en el Mundo</i> (insecurity in the World), 10 June, p. 16.
<i>El Correo Español</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harry Debelius, <i>Malvinas: todos van a perder</i> (Falkland Islands: everybody will lose), 29 May, p. 2. - Eduardo Sotillos, "El Folio" (The Page), 1 June, p. 1. - Luis Palmar, <i>La OTAN es un sí a la Sra. Thatcher</i> (NATO says yes to Mrs Thatcher), 4 June, p. 21. - Eduardo Sotillos, "El Folio" (The Page), 16 June, p. 1. - Luciano Rincón, <i>Thatcher, Margarita</i> (Margaret Thatcher), 18 June, p. 3.
<i>Deia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Francisco L. De Sepúlveda, <i>El riesgo de una guerra anacrónica</i> (The risk of an anachronistic war), 13 April, p. 16. - Vicente Talón, <i>El desairado papel de dos superpotencias</i> (The slighted role of two superpowers), 29 April, p. 16. - Oriol Montsant, <i>Una guerra en la que todos pueden perder y ninguno ganar</i> (A war in which everybody can lose and nobody can win), 1 May, p. 14. - Antonio Papell, <i>Morir por nada</i> (To die for nothing), 7 May, p. 19. - Raymond Aron, <i>¿Hasta dónde tiene que llegar la Gran Bretaña?</i> (How far does Great Britain have to go?), 11 May, p. 20. - Jesús Pardo, <i>La lección de las Malvinas</i> (The lesson of the Falkland Islands), 19 May, p. 19. - Ignacio Mendizábal, <i>Las Malvinas y la economía</i> (The Falkland Islands and the economy), 5 June, p. 27. - Anthony Sampson, <i>Lo más extraño de una extraña guerra</i> (The most bizarre things of a bizarre war), 10 June, p. 28.
<i>Egin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bidaiani, <i>Se les acabó la tranquilidad</i> (Their peace is over), 4 April, p. 3. - Basque Coordination of International Solidarity Committees, <i>Las Malvinas</i> (The Falkland Islands), 13 June, p. 21. - Editorial, <i>Muertos y pérdidas en una guerra estúpida</i> (Death and loses in a stupid war), 16 June, p. 21. - Jon Aguirre, <i>Imperialismo y sionismo son una misma causa</i> (Imperialism and Zionism are a same cause), 20 June, p. 28.
<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - José Luis Arriaga, <i>¿Histerismo anacrónico?</i> (Anachronistic hysteria), 16 April, p. 2. - J. Ramón Blázquez, <i>A criar Malvinas</i> (Let's raise the Falkland Islands), 4 May, p. 2. - J. Antonio Ayestaran Lecuona, <i>Salve Argentina</i> (Save Argentina), 6 May, p. 2. - Margarita Imaz, <i>La crisis del derecho y el caso de las Malvinas</i> (The crisis of law and the case of the Falkland Islands), 22 May, p. 3.

These agreed points are that:

1. The Falkland Islands belonged without a doubt to Argentina.
2. The war was “stupid and colonial” and, whatever the outcome, all the parties involved would lose, directly or indirectly.

The following table lists some of the most significant texts that put forward these two points, their publishers, their authors, their original titles (with English translation), their genre, their publication date, and the pages in which they appeared.

7. The issue of nationalism

In our view, the most important aspect within the context of the Basque press, which constitutes the core of this work, is the issue of nationalism, which is the central part of the ideology that underpins each of the analysed newspapers.

In the context of this research, Basque nationalism is, in short, an ideology that advocates for the formation of a politically and culturally independent nation, Euskadi or Euskal Herria, as this territory is currently part of the Spanish and French States. The modern incarnation of this ideology emerged in the 19th century with the principles promoted by the founder of the EuzkoAlderdiJeltzalea (Basque Nationalist Party), Sabino de Arana y Goiri, in 1895.

Regarding the Spanish nationalism, two fundamental subjects were put forward by the five newspapers to assimilate the Falklands War with Spanish interests: Great Britain’s return of the Rock of Gibraltar to Spain and the situation of the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, located in Africa. Gibraltar was integrated to the Kingdom of Castile in the late 15th century and ceded by Spain to the British Crown after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession. However, since the mid-1950s Spain has tried to regain sovereignty over Gibraltar by appealing to the UN Decolonisation Committee. For its part, Spain’s rejection of the Moroccan claim over Ceuta and Melilla is based on the fact that when these cities were established the Kingdom of Morocco did not exist and therefore there was no territorial plundering or appropriation.

These situations are antagonistic as they cannot be defended and attacked simultaneously. In other words, if the possession of Gibraltar was a colonial act, the possession of Ceuta and Melilla was a colonial act too. This is why we can sense the 'informative manipulation' conducted by some newspapers when trying to justify opposing interests at the same time.

However, the analysis has revealed that the newspapers approached, conceptualised and interpreted these subjects from very different perspectives. The only newspaper from that did not touch this issue was *Tribuna Vasca*.

The other four newspapers form two clearly differentiated groups: the Basque nationalist group, formed by *Egin* and *Deia*, and the Spanish nationalist group, by *La Gaceta del Norte* and *El Correo Español*. The analysis of this issue clearly shows the weight of the newspapers' ideology on their news treatment and their different positions towards the same event. The analysis also detected how an internationally news event like the Falklands War, which had no apparent relation to the Basque context, was treated and even manipulated by the Basque newspaper to serve their different purposes.

8. Basque nationalism

Deia and *Egin* tried to connect the Falklands War with the “reality” of the Basque Country and even compared the colonial situation of the Falkland Islands with the situation of the Basque Provinces. However, even within a similar type of nationalism, there are some significant differences. Thus, for *Deia* the colonial problem of the Falkland Islands is similar to that of the Basque Country and the common point in both cases lies in the occupation of the territory. Both the Falkland Islands and the Basque Country had already experienced past military occupations that had been consolidated and maintained, by the English and Spanish governments, respectively. For *Egin*, however, it was more important to emphasise the identity oppression, repression and suppression faced by some nations subjugated by force by other countries. In this context, *Egin* used the Falklands War to remind people about the damages and injustices committed by the Spanish colonialism in the Americas and Euskadi.

But although the approach of these two newspapers was different, both had the same goal: to clearly differentiate the existence of two races and cultures, the “euskaldun” and the “Spanish”, and to emphasize the Basque people's desire for independence and inalienable right to achieve their freedom. Perhaps the two clearest examples in this regard are the articles written by José de Abasolo Mendibil and Xabier Kintana for *Deia* and *Egin*, respectively: *Colonialismo y soberanía* (Colonialism and sovereignty) and *Falklandsirlengerraz* (The war in the Falkland Islands), which were published on the 20th and 30th of May, respectively.

In the first of these articles, Abasolo narrates a story that in his view is related to the problem derived from colonialism. He describes how on 25 May, 1902 (80 years before the Falklands War), Sabino Arana Goiri, the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party, wrote a cablegram to the then President of the USA, Theodore Roosevelt, to congratulate him on the independence of Cuba and five days later was imprisoned for this insolence, even though the message was never sent.

Meanwhile, in his long article, Xabier Kintana defends the indigenous cultures of the Americas and affirms that the territories belong to the people who live there and contribute to their prosperity. He criticises the Spanish colonisation of the Americas and the “arrogant Spaniard ideology” that some Basque people who settled there have

suddenly revealed when showing unreserved support for the Argentine people. For him, it is difficult to understand how these Basque people criticise the Spanish oppression on Euskadi when they had lived here and then dismissed the rights of the primitive peoples of the Americas, by adopting there a neo-colonialist attitude of arrogance towards these native cultures.

None of these ‘Basque nationalist’ newspapers showed clear support for one of the adversaries. However, *Deia* showed some sympathy for the Argentine side, but always by connecting its ideas to the Basque dimension and from the political perspective of the Basque Nationalist Party. It never connected its arguments to the ties between Spain and Latin America. Thus, for example, J. Antonio Ayestaran Lecuona affirmed that “If there is any country where the Basque blood floods and fertilizes a society and a history with greater ardour and passion, that country is Argentina” (*Salve Argentina*, May 6, p. 2).

Egin’s postulates were much more populist, just like the political scheme of Herri Batasuna at that time, and were constantly based on the concepts of “colonialism” and “imperialism”. These postulates prevented this newspaper from supporting one side or another, because while it attacked harshly the “British colonialism” and the “American imperialism” (‘the greatest enemy of humanity’, according to Jon Agirre, the international politics commentator in this newspaper), its rejection of the dictatorial regime of Buenos Aires did not allow it to support the Argentinean people. But the fact that Argentina used its armed forces in the Falkland Islands was not what prevented this newspaper from supporting this country, because both Herri Batasuna and the newspaper itself defended “the armed fight for liberation” not only in the Basque Country but also in other cases like the Salvadoran guerrillas. The only thing that prevented the newspaper from supporting Argentina was the Military Junta, which was the antithesis of the Government that supported the newspaper’s ideology. Regarding the situations of Gibraltar or Ceuta and Melilla, they were ignored by the two Basque nationalist newspapers because they were perceived as unrelated to them and as Spanish problems.

9. Spanish nationalism

Opposing this conception of Basque nationalism, *La Gaceta del Norte* and *El Correo Español* offered their own version of another type of nationalism: the Spanish one. They used the argument that, according to their ideological position, connected the Spanish reality to the Falklands War the most: the situation of Gibraltar.

For these newspapers, the situation of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar were identical, particularly because the author of the offenses to the sovereignty of these countries was the same: the British Empire. Some of the texts that clearly reflected this opinion are:

Newspaper	Significant texts
<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Servicio de Documentación, <i>El Gibraltar Argentino</i> (The Argentinean Gibraltar), 4 April, p. 16. - Editorial, <i>La invasión de las Malvinas</i> (The invasion to the Falkland Islands), 4 April, p. 18. - Abel Hernández, <i>Las islas y el Peñón</i> (The islands and the Rock), 6 April, p. 14. - Vicente Copa, <i>El nacionalismo Español</i> (The Spanish nationalism), 15 April, p. 14. - Emilio Romero, <i>Siglo XX cambalache...</i> (20th century swap...), 4 May, p. 15. - Josep Meliá, <i>Con las Malvinas al fondo</i> (With the Falkland Islands in the background), 16 June, p. 17.
<i>El Correo Español</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antxon Sarasqueta, <i>Las Malvinas y Gibraltar</i> (The Falkland Islands and Gibraltar), 6 April, p. 26. - Ignacio Mendizabal, <i>La lección de las Malvinas</i> (The lesson of the Falkland Islands), 21 April, p. 29. - Luis Malvar, <i>España con Argentina</i> (Spain supports Argentina), 2 May, p. 19. - Carlos Sagasta, <i>Gibraltar y las Malvinas</i> (Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands), 7 May, p. 20. - Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, <i>Otra vez Ingleses contra Españoles</i> (Once again English people against Spaniards), 16 May, p. 30. - Carlos Sentís, <i>Evocación Argentina</i> (Argentine evocation), 20 June, p. 32.

These articles revealed the unquestionable parallelism that, for these newspapers, existed between the conflicts over the Falklands and Gibraltar, and put forward their ideas of what the Spanish nationalism was or should be, and the relationship between the “Motherland” and the “sister nations” in Latin America, without ever disguising their support for Argentina in the conflict.

The opinion articles published by *El Correo Español* also supported unreservedly the Argentine claim. Words of affection, like “*gayego*”, “flesh of our flesh”, and “*muchachada*” (youth), were used by this newspaper’s columnists to refer to the Argentines to tighten their ties with them even more and to show their sympathy for their “beloved and fraternal country”. The references to “the parallelisms” with Gibraltar were also continuous in this paper. It criticised “the two historical injustices (Gibraltar and Falklands) caused by the armed forces of Great Britain” and defended the alignment of their “diplomacy with Buenos Aires towards London” as it “responded to the wishes and expectations of the majority of the Spanish public opinion”.

For its part, *La Gaceta del Norte* was very consistent with its ideology and put more emphasis on the defence of the Spanish nationalist tenets, and even suggested that it would not be so unreasonable for the Spanish government to consider using the armed forces to recover Gibraltar. This idea was reinforced by the use of typical nationalist concepts like “national unity” and “territorial integrity” in its first editorial

on the conflict (4 April). However, despite the markedly anti-colonialist criticism of these texts, this newspaper showed some contradictions. Thus, in clear opposition to the statements of Xabier Kintana in *Egin*, *La Gaceta del Norte* defended the Spanish conquest of the Americas. An article by Gilberto Freyre (*Un colonizador simbiótico: el ibérico* - A symbiotic coloniser: the Iberian, 4 May) praised the Iberian coloniser by making a subtle difference between ‘colonisation’ and ‘colonialism’. Freyre’s defence, which is diametrically opposed to Kintana’s theory of the identity suppression suffered by the American indigenous cultures during the Spanish conquest, clearly reaffirms the support of *La Gaceta del Norte* towards the Spanish nationalism. For this newspaper, the Spanish colonisation was never similar to the colonialism of other countries, particularly that of Great Britain, because although it had some flaws, the Spanish colonisation was much more human.

These two newspapers naturally made the obliged references to Ceuta and Melilla, a transcendental subject in the Spanish nationalism. However, these references were motivated by reasons that were completely opposed to the situation of Gibraltar. In other words, they fell into a clear contradiction. Perhaps for this reason, the subject was addressed very marginally, but both newspapers agreed on keeping the Spanish claim, one way or another, on these territories. Thus, in *La Gaceta del Norte*, Abel Hernández claimed that “any similitude with what is happening in the South Atlantic [and Ceuta and Melilla] is irritating to the Spaniards” (*El juego de las sutilezas* - *The game of the subtle differences*, 28 April, p. 18). For his part, Francisco L. De Sepúlveda commented in *El Correo Español* that he believed that “the lessons” learnt from the Falklands “point to another direction: towards North Africa. We fully know about the negotiations with NATO and the USA, and we must not forget where Ceuta and Melilla are. Spain should demand certain rewards in compensation to what it will contribute to the Atlantic Alliance” (*El riesgo de una guerra anacrónica* - *The risk of an anachronistic war*, 13 April, p. 16).

In both quotes the columnists used some arguments to defend the Spanish position on Ceuta and Melilla, but do not accepted the use of those same arguments by Great Britain to assert its sovereignty over the Falklands and Gibraltar. Thus, the first quote argued that “any parallelism [with Ceuta and Melilla] is irritating” but assumed as valid the parallelisms between the Falklands and Gibraltar. The second quote approves the request for help made by Spain to NATO and the USA to win its claim over Morocco, but rejected and criticised the use of the same requests by Great Britain in relation to Argentina.

10. Conclusions

The conclusions on the analysis of the information extracted from the sample of newspaper are divided in two major sections: 1) the conclusions on the analysis of the subjective information (editorials and opinion articles), which is the most important

type of information as it reflects the real position adopted by the newspapers during the conflict; and 2) the conclusions on the quantitative and hemerographic analysis.

The conclusions on the subjective information are:

1. The ideology of each newspaper did have a crucial influence in the approach used to address the conflict. In our view, there was a clear ideological manipulation in the presentation of the events that took place during the conflict. From this we can deduce that the manipulation of information occurred in a continuous basis when the reported events affected the line of thought of the newspapers.

2. The Basque and Spanish nationalist positions were crucial in establishment of these ideological stances and manipulations. The Falklands War had all the conditions that allowed all newspapers to approach its coverage from the point of view that suited them the most. The Falklands had been already occupied and colonised by force in the past, which allowed *Deia* to compare this situation with Euskadi. In another sense, it was a very clear situation of colonialism, which was exploited by *La Gaceta del Norte* and *El Correo Español* to claim the Spanish sovereignty over Gibraltar and to show their Spanish nationalist sentiment. As a situation of colonialism, the conflict also allowed *Egin* to attack ‘imperialism’, “the greatest enemy of humanity”, and to simultaneously confirm the existence of the Spanish imperialism in Euskadi. In other words, the same event allowed all newspapers and their analysts to defend their own positions and to draw diametrically opposed conclusions based on a theoretically identical event: the occupation of a territory by military forces.

3. The previous conclusion objectively reveals something that was already known: the Basque society, even more so at that time, was divided into two sectors, “Basque nationalists” and “Spanish nationalists”. Something that seemed so obvious was demonstrated consistently by the examination of the newspapers’ subjective pieces. The references and comparisons between Euskadi and the Falklands, and Gibraltar and the Falklands revealed the dividing line between these two sectors, which had their own media of information and propaganda, and their way of understanding the Basque reality of that time.

4. The second research hypothesis was inverted after the study. The most important thing for the newspapers was not to show a clear position towards the conflict (support for one of the contenders or neutrality), but to take advantage of the events generated by the conflict to strengthen their ideological stances. The important aspect for the newspapers was not to clarify which adversary was right, if that was possible, nor to clarify their position for or against one of them, but to use the war, the news event, as an excuse to perpetuate their own ideas.

5. However, the previous conclusion does not exclude the alliance of some newspapers with one of the adversaries. Thus, *La Gaceta del Norte* and *El Correo Español* showed some support for Argentina, motivated by the historic ties that united

Spain with the Latin American countries. Terms such as “sister nations”, “flesh of our flesh” and “people of our lineage”, among others, were abundant in both newspapers. *Deia* also sympathised with Argentina, but not for the same reasons. Its support was not motivated by the fraternal ties of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Its sympathy was based on the 'asylum' that the nationalists of the Basque Nationalist Party found in Argentina since the early days of the party's foundation.

In contrast, *Tribuna Vasca* was the only newspaper that openly criticised Argentina's actions over the Falkland Islands and the regime of Buenos Aires. In *El Folio*, the newspaper's opinion article that sometimes acted as editorial space, Eduardo Sotillos, the director, attacked the dictatorship in Argentina on the 1st of June, and then showed support for Great Britain's positions on the 16th of the same month.

Paradoxically, the supposedly most radical newspaper, *Egin*, was the one that maintained the most neutral attitude towards the conflict. Its criticism towards Argentina's military dictatorship and the English colonialism were equal and never showed support towards only one side. Neither the English or Argentine governments were aligned with *Egin*'s revolutionary ideology, and for this reason, once it established the similitudes between the Falklands and Euskadi, it did not show preference for any side.

The conclusions on the hemerographic analysis of the news items published during the almost three months that the war lasted are:

1. In terms of space, *Egin* was the newspaper that dedicated the largest space to the conflict, in comparison to the total space provided by its pages: a daily average of 4.74%. In contrast, *Egin* also ranked penultimate in the space dedicated to the war in the international section. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that *Egin* is the newspaper that dedicated the largest space to international news (a daily average of 10.57% of its pages, during the analysed period) but, however, within that total volume, the Falklands War was not the news event that received the largest space/coverage (see annexes about the percentages). The newspaper that dedicated the largest space to the Falklands War in the international section was *La Gaceta del Norte*, with a daily average of 53.97%. However, in May, *Deia* dedicated the highest percentage of space to the Falklands War: a daily average of 6.36% of the all the information and 65.81% of all the news in the international section.

2. Regarding the importance granted to the opinion articles, *El Correo Español* stood out remarkably above the others, as it dedicated a daily average of 11.13% of the subjective information to the war. On the contrary, *Deia* barely exceeded 1% in this sense. In terms of the editorials devoted to the war, *La Gaceta del Norte* broke all records, with 10; followed by *Tribuna Vasca* with 3 (all pieces were Eduardo Sotillos's opinions in its *Folio* column, which as mentioned also acted as editorial space in several occasions). *Egin* only dedicated one editorial, but this may be due to the fact that the use of the editorials in this newspaper was very rare at the time. A

stranger fact is that neither *Deia* nor *El Correo Español*, which used to regularly publish editorials on important events, dedicated any editorial to the Falklands War. This circumstance may indicate that none of these newspapers wanted to manifest clearly their position on the war, although their opinion articles were sufficiently significant in this regard.

The following table presents the quantitative part of the study. It shows, by months, the total space dedicated by each newspaper to the war; the space devoted to the war in the news sections, and in the opinion sections; and the percentages that the opinion pieces dedicated to the war constitute within the total space dedicated to the war.

Newspapers		Space dedicated to the Falklands War			
		Total space	In news sections	In opinion sections	Percentage of opinion pieces in the total space
April 1982	<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	1,216,850 mm ²	1,086,400 mm ²	130,450 mm ²	10.72 %
	<i>El Correo Español</i>	2,667,200 mm ²	2,341,400 mm ²	325,800 mm ²	12.21 %
	<i>Deia</i>	1,606,350 mm ²	1,579,450 mm ²	26,900 mm ²	1.67 %
	<i>Egin</i>	1,348,425 mm ²	1,335,475 mm ²	12,950 mm ²	0.96 %
	<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----
May 1982	<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	1,793,725 mm ²	1,681,375 mm ²	112,350 mm ²	6.26 %
	<i>El Correo Español</i>	2,867,500 mm ²	2,538,350 mm ²	329,150 mm ²	11.47%
	<i>Deia</i>	3,199,075 mm ²	3,150,800 mm ²	48,275 mm ²	1.50%
	<i>Egin</i>	2,116,250 mm ²	2,029,175 mm ²	87,075 mm ²	4.11%
	<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	893,090 mm ²	892,100 mm ²	990 mm ²	0.11 %
June 1982	<i>La Gaceta del Norte</i>	888,925 mm ²	817,475 mm ²	71,450 mm ²	8.03 %
	<i>El Correo Español</i>	1,280,750 mm ²	1,156,100 mm ²	124,650 mm ²	9.73 %
	<i>Deia</i>	1,133,600 mm ²	1,133,600 mm ²	-----	-----
	<i>Egin</i>	1,519,025 mm ²	1,408,850 mm ²	47,175 mm ²	3.10 %
	<i>Tribuna Vasca</i>	686,575 mm ²	643,750 mm ²	42,825 mm ²	6.23%

11. References

Given the specificity of the object of study of this research, the treatment given by the Basque press to the Falklands War in 1982, the list of references includes two types of documents. On the one hand, it includes academic articles that have analysed the treatment given by the national and regional daily press to specific topics (immigration, terrorism, elections, etc.) and have used quantitative and qualitative methods like this study. On the other hand, it includes books and academic articles that, from different perspectives, contextualise the situation of the Falkland Islands before, during and after the war, and provide sources that allow readers to form their own opinions on this matter.

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12. Note

1. All the statistical tables derived from this research are available in the annexes.

13. Annexes

1. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, April
2. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, May
3. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, June
4. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, data on surfaces, April
5. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, data on surfaces, May
6. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, data on surfaces, June
7. *Deia*, data on surfaces, April
8. *Deia*, data on surfaces, May
9. *Deia*, data on surfaces, June
10. *Egin*, data on surfaces, April
11. *Egin*, data on surfaces, May
12. *Egin*, data on surfaces, June
13. *Tribuna Vasca*, data on surfaces, April

14. *Tribuna Vasca*, data on surfaces, May
15. *Tribuna Vasca*, data on surfaces, June
16. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, April
17. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, May
18. *La Gaceta del Norte*, data on surfaces, June
19. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, percentages, April
20. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, percentages, May
21. *El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco*, percentages, June
22. *Deia*, percentages, April
23. *Deia*, percentages, May
24. *Deia*, percentages, June
25. *Egin*, percentages, April
26. *Egin*, percentages, May
27. *Egin*, percentages, June
28. *Tribuna Vasca*, percentages, April
29. *Tribuna Vasca*, percentages, May
30. *Tribuna Vasca*, percentages, June

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