

Between Cultural Promotion and Nation Building: Analysing the Drivers of Basque Public Television Consumption over a Decade

Jaume Doménech-Beltrán, University of Valencia, Spain

Lidia Valera-Ordaz, University of Valencia, Spain

Abstract

Public broadcasting systems are tasked with providing citizens with high-quality information and exposing them to diversity, based on professional autonomy and political independence. In polarised pluralist systems like that of Spain, public broadcasters often face politicisation, and political attitudes are strong predictors of media exposure. In Spain – alongside the national public broadcasting service (RTVE) – several regional broadcasting systems were established by regional governments during the decentralisation of the 1980s to strengthen regional cultural identities and promote minority languages. However, the predictors driving the consumption of these regional broadcasts have remained unexplored.

This paper addresses this gap by analysing the predictors of exposure to Basque public television (EiTB) over an 11-year period (2009–2020), drawing on four post-electoral studies and covering four Basque regional elections. Through logistic

regression analysis, we examine how national identity, Basque nationalism, mother tongue, and place of birth predict EITB consumption, while controlling for variables such as age, sex, education level, and ideological position on the left-right spectrum. The findings reveal that voting for Basque nationalist parties and feeling exclusively Basque are the key consistent predictors for EITB consumption over time. We discuss the normative implications of these findings and argue that the role of Basque public television has fluctuated between cultural promotion and nation building.

Keywords

Regional public broadcasting, public television, public service mission, selective exposure, crosscutting exposure, media consumption.

1. Introduction

The primary role of public broadcasting is to deliver high-quality information while ensuring exposure to political and cultural diversity – tasks that are not always upheld by private news media, particularly in the context of media systems' platformisation (Nielsen and Fletcher, 2023). However, this mission is often compromised by the politicisation of public broadcasters in contexts with high political parallelism, like Spain.

Existing literature on selective exposure shows that consumption of Spanish national public television (TVE) is significantly influenced by ideology and partisanship (Humanes, 2014; Humanes and Valera-Ordaz, 2023). Indeed, the ideological composition of TVE's audience changes depending on the ruling party (Fraile and Meilán, 2012; Doménech-Beltrán, 2024). Among regional broadcasters, the Catalan system is the most extensively studied, with findings indicating that individuals who identify exclusively as Catalan and support independence are much more likely to watch the Catalan public channel (TV3), than those having dual national identities and not supporting independence (Valera-Ordaz, 2018; 2023; Sintés-Olivella et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the factors driving exposure to most regional public broadcasters in Spain remain unexplored. This paper aims to address this gap by focusing on Basque public television (EiTB). It seeks to: 1) identify the main predictors of consumption of Basque public television over time, and 2) to compare the explanatory weight of cultural attributes versus political attitudes to understand the extent to which EiTB facilitates exposure to political pluralism and cultural diversity.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Public service mission and crosscutting exposure

The mission of public media is to provide high-quality information, promote cultural diversity and ensure journalistic autonomy (Nissen, 2006). This mandate entails delivering content of social value that can inform public debate (Iosifidis, 2011) and foster citizen participation (Vanhaeght and Donders, 2015).

Despite their diversity, European public media face common challenges such as declining credibility, reputational attacks and accountability problems (Schulze, 2020, Valencia-Bermúdez and Campos-Freire, 2016), while the rise of media platformisation (Nielsen and Fletcher, 2023) forces them to redefine their public service role in the digital age (Saldaña and Llorens-Maluquer, 2022) and to assert their distinctive value in comparison to private media (Cañedo and Segovia, 2022).

A central objective of public broadcasting corporations is to provide diverse information that encourages a plurality of voices within the public sphere (Moragas and Prado, 2000). They are expected to promote crosscutting exposure and facilitate access to non-likeminded information to foster social empathy and political tolerance (Mutz, 2002; Pattie and Johnston, 2008).

However, the degree of cross-media exposure that takes place in the public sphere varies significantly across media contexts (Goldman and Mutz, 2011), as it is shaped by the structure of opportunities provided by each media system, including

the media supply, the degree of political parallelism and the role played by the public news media (Skovsgaard et al., 2016).

In Europe, public broadcasting systems exhibit considerable variation in terms of politicisation, regulatory frameworks, and management structures (Brüggemann et al., 2014). In less politicised systems, where professionals and/or relevant social organisations have greater involvement in management, citizens experience greater cross-media exposure to public television, as shown by comparative research (Castro-Herrero et al., 2018). This implies that robust broadcasting services are linked to increased cross-media exposure.

Conversely, in polarised pluralistic systems like Spain (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), public media are highly politicised (Arriaza-Ibarra, 2013) and tend to attract more partisan audiences (Fraile and Meilán, 2012; Humanes, 2014). Several studies indicate that the consumption of Spanish national public television (RTVE) is influenced by ideology and partisanship (Humanes and Valera-Ordaz, 2023), with the ideological composition of RTVE's audiences shifting over time depending on the political party in power (Doménech-Beltrán, 2024).

2.2. Regional public broadcasting in Spain

There is no single model for regional broadcasting in Europe, as their development varies considerably across historical and political contexts (Moragas and López, 1994). In Spain, there are currently 13 regional television channels managed by regional governments,¹ which were established after the Spanish transition to democracy from the 1980s onwards. However, they display significant differences in terms of budget, organisation, governance and audience (Miguel de Bustos and Casado del Río, 2012).

This Spanish regional broadcasting network is only comparable to that of Germany, Belgium, or Switzerland (Miguel de Bustos and Casado del Río, 2015). However, the trust in regional public broadcasters and the perception of their social value are significantly higher in Germany and Belgium (Van den Bulck and Raats, 2022). Instead, Spanish regional broadcasters are among the least credible news sources among Spaniards (Masip et al., 2020) and are widely perceived as politicised (Azurmendi et al., 2018). Indeed, the role of regional broadcasters in Spain is being increasingly questioned by different political actors (Marzal-Felici and Zallo, 2016).

The reason behind this is that political parallelism extends beyond the national broadcasting system and regional governments have systematically leveraged

¹ All autonomous communities have at least one publicly managed television channel, except La Rioja, Castilla y León, Navarre and Cantabria, where the regional operators are privately owned.

regional media for political purposes (Arriaza-Ibarra, 2013). This is evident in audience behaviour, as voting for the ruling party in each region correlates with consuming regional television in most territories (Humanes, 2014).

In addition, the politicisation of regional broadcasting in Spain features certain particularities in regions with nationalistic conflicts, such as Catalonia or the Basque region. Here, regional broadcasters were created in open conflict with the central government (Mezo-Aranzibia, 1990; Maxwell, 1995) and were conceived by nationalist elites as strategic tools for promoting linguistic integration (Gifreu, 2014; Miguel de Bustos et al., 2017), given the potential of the media to promote minority languages (Riggins, 1992; Gifreu, 1992; Fernández Parratt, 2002). The idea was to create a communicative space around the regional language and culture as opposed to the Spanish media system (Gifreu and Corominas, 1991) and help national (re)construction (Guimerà, 2014).

The emphasis on language was closely intertwined with that of nation building given that substate nationalist movements conceived it as an essential tool for nationalisation (Barrera González, 1997), placing it at the core of their political project (Romay et al., 1999; Azurmendi, 1998). In these multilingual contexts, language often functions as a social marker that shapes feelings of group identification and national identity (Azurmendi, 2003).

Numerous studies have therefore shown that Catalan public television (TV3) was conceived as an instrument for national construction by Jordi Pujol's successive nationalist governments (Jones, 2007; Guimerà, 2014; 2018). More recent studies have demonstrated that the consumption of TV3 increases the likelihood of supporting Catalan independence (Serrano, 2013) and strengthens national identification with Catalonia (Hierro, 2012). However, most regional broadcasters in Spain remain unexplored by researchers, despite some of them being managed by the same party for decades.

2.3. Basque public television as a case study

Founded in 1982, Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB) was the first regional broadcasting system established in Spain. It was created by the Basque government one year before the Third Channel Law, an initiative of the Spanish central government to create a third television channel that would operate in the Spanish regions under the jurisdiction of the national broadcasting corporation Radio Televisión Española (RTVE) following the example of the French legal framework (Maxwell, 1995). The Spanish government's benchmark was France 3, the third public television channel of the ORTF (Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française) launched in 1972. This channel operates within the national public broadcasting system, but it features

regional disconnections that provide a diverse range of programming (news, culture, and entertainment) tailored to the French regions.

However, the regional governments of the so-called historic nationalities – Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia – went ahead and created their own regional broadcasters using their own legal framework, enhancing a decentralised network of regional broadcasters beyond RTVE (Maxwell, 1995; López et al., 1999; Bustamante, 2013), which they considered inadequate to satisfy their demands for autonomy (Olmo López and Navarro Moreno, 2015). For most intellectuals, the creation of regional broadcasters in Spain was associated with recovering political and cultural pluralism after the dictatorship (Gilabert, 1988; Zallo, 2013), as it was seen as an ‘act of self-government’ of the newly created autonomous communities (Maneiro-Vila, 1990: p.33).

Against this backdrop, EITB emerged with a dual purpose of 1) providing high-quality local information and promoting pluralism – as any public broadcasting system –, and 2) promoting the Basque culture and language. Its public service obligations, therefore, combined respecting the principles of equality, and political, religious, social, cultural, and linguistic pluralism; and promoting Basque culture and language.

Regarding organisation, the institutional design and management of EITB is subject to significant political influence. It is governed by two bodies: a board of directors, whose members are proposed by the parliamentary groups within the Basque Parliament, and a Director-General, who reports directly to the Basque Parliament. The EITB corporation includes the generalist channel ETB1 (in Basque) and ETB2 (in Spanish), two thematic channels (ETB3 and ETB4) and the international channel ETB Basque. In the last decade, the combined audience share of both generalist channels has fluctuated between 9.2 and 12.4% (Barlovento Comunicación, 2024).

As for content, some authors have criticised the ‘governmentalism drift’ (Zallo, 2023: p.130), by which EITB’s news services offer biased news coverage aligned with the arguments of the Basque nationalist party (Pastor González, 2014). Indeed, the Basque regional government has been in hands of the Basque nationalist party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco) for decades almost without interruption – between 1980 and 2009 and from 2012 onwards. Given the history of the creation of EITB and the politicisation of public broadcasters in Spain, we formulate two hypotheses and a research question.

H1: Political attitudes linked to the Basque political context will significantly influence EITB consumption over time.

H2: Cultural attributes associated with the Basque regional culture will predict EiTb exposure, though their effect size will be smaller compared to that of political attitudes.

RQ1: To what extent is EiTb's public service mission being fulfilled, considering the factors influencing its consumption?

3. Methods

3.1. Data Source

As data sources, we use four post-electoral studies from the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), conducted after the Basque regional elections in 2009, 2012, 2016, and 2020. These surveys draw on representative samples of Basque society², and encompass questions regarding media consumption, in addition to extensive data on respondents' political attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics. Datasets are publicly available on the CIS website (see Appendix 1 for more information).

² CIS implemented a multistage sampling methodology, stratifying by clusters according to municipality size. Primary sampling units (municipalities) were selected through random proportional allocation, while the final sampling units (individuals) were chosen based on sex and age quotas. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, except in 2020, when they were carried out via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfortunately, the post-electoral surveys conducted in the Basque Country prior to 2009 do not contain questions on media consumption. Still, the data cover a period of 11 years. It is important to note that all the selected data sources contain identical questions – ensuring that the results remain comparable across the study period with one exception. The question about respondents' origin is absent in the 2009 study, but available in the following surveys.

3.2. Research design

We used binomial logistic regression analysis, since it enables the predictors of EITB's consumption to be examined and allows the explanatory weight of each variable to be isolated while controlling for the effects of all other relevant variables included in the model. In other words, logistic regression allows us to model the probability of an event occurring -which in this case is the preference for consuming EITB- based on different variables and assess whether the variables included in the model have a positive, negative, or no impact on it.

For the dependent variable, we used an open question about interviewees' preferred television channel for following political information during the campaign. The four studies included such an open question, which respondents answered spontaneously, and responses were coded afterwards. To avoid the zero-cell

problem and ensure an adequate sample size for multivariate analysis (Cea d'Ancona, 2002), we combined all responses related to Basque public television (ETB1, ETB2, and unspecified EiTb) into a single category. As a result, responses about the preferred television channel were recoded into a new variable with two categories: (a) state channels (whether public or private) and (b) channels belonging to the Basque public broadcasting corporation (ETB1, ETB2, or unspecified EiTb).

Additionally, several questions were used as independent variables. Cultural attributes such as respondents' mother tongue (Basque vs Spanish) and birthplace (inside or outside the Basque region) were considered, as they are likely to influence media consumption. Since Basque speakers have significantly fewer media options at their disposal, it is likely to expect them to be more inclined to watch EiTb.

Several political attitudes along the centre-periphery axis were also included: voting for Basque nationalist parties vs voting to any other state-level party (see Appendix 2 for more detailed information), national identity (feeling Basque, Spanish, or dual), and the intensity of Basque nationalist sentiment (measured on a scale of 1 to 10).

Finally, a few control variables strongly associated with media consumption were included in the analysis: ideology on the left-right axis, age, sex, educational level,

and social class (Humanes and Valera-Ordaz, 2023; Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012). As for ideology, three dichotomous variables were created based on respondents' self-placement on a scale from 1 to 10: left, centre, and right. Additionally, the rest of the control variables – age, sex, educational level, and social class – were recoded for inclusion in the regression models (see Table 1).

Table 1. Measures

CONCEPT	SURVEY QUESTION	VARIABLE
DEPENDENT VARIABLE		
Basque public TV consumption	Preferred TV channel to follow political information during the election campaign	Consumption of TV channels: - National channels (0) - ETB channels (1)
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Ideology	Self-positioning on a left-right scale from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)	Ideology: - Left (1 and 0) - Centre (1 and 0) - Right (1 and 0)
Language	Respondent's mother tongue	Mother tongue: - Spanish (0) - Basque (1)
Place of birth	Place of birth	Origin: - Outside the Basque Country (0) - In the Basque Country (1)
National identity	National identification: only Spanish, only Basque or as Basque as Spanish	National identity: - Spanish (1 and 0) - Dual (1 and 0) - Basque (1 and 0)

Vote	Voting recall in regional elections	Voting for: - State parties (0) - Basque nationalist parties (1)
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	Self-placement on a scale from 1 (minimum degree of nationalism) to 10 (maximum degree of nationalism)	Nationalist intensity (scale from 1 to 10)
CONTROL VARIABLES		
Age	Number of years last birthday	Age
Sex	Sex	Sex: - Male (0) - Female (1)
Social class	Subjective social class	Social class: - Low (1 and 0) - Middle (1 and 0) - Upper (1 and 0)
Level of education	Highest level of education	Level of education: - Primary education (1 and 0) - Secondary education (1 and 0) - Higher education (1 and 0)

4. Results

The regression results are presented in Table 2. Four separate models³—one for each year under analysis—highlight which variables predict EITB consumption over time. Table 2 includes the antilogarithmic coefficients (odds ratios) and their

³ For a more exhaustive examination of the statistical analyses, the stepwise regression models for each year are provided in Appendix 3. This method is a variant of logistic regression in which predictor variables are added to the model progressively. This approach is particularly useful in revealing how a variable that initially appears significant may lose its relevance once other influential factors are incorporated into the model.

significance levels, which jointly show the importance of each predictor. Coefficients greater than 1 indicate a positive association (i.e., they increase the probability of EiTB consumption), while coefficients below 1 indicate a negative association (i.e., they decrease this probability of consuming EiTB). The distance from 1 reflects the strength of the association: values far above 1 or very close to 0 suggest stronger positive or negative associations, respectively. The closer to 1, the weaker the association.

But the coefficients must be interpreted in relation to the levels of statistical significance (or p-values), which indicate the probability that the observed relationship differs from zero. Each coefficient has its own p-value. In other words, p-values reflect the confidence level with which we can assert that the associations are significant: the lower the p-value, the higher the confidence that the observed relationship is statistically significant. We use standard confidence levels, as indicated below Table 2.

The 2009 results indicate that identifying exclusively as Basque and voting for Basque nationalist parties are the strongest predictors of EiTB consumption, as evidenced by the magnitude of their coefficients. On the one hand, individuals who identify solely as Basque are 3.6 times more likely to consume EiTB compared to

those with a dual national identity (Basque and Spanish). On the other hand, those who vote for nationalist parties are approximately 3.2 times more likely to consume EitB than supporters of state parties (regardless of their ideology). Similarly, the strength of Basque nationalist sentiment significantly increases the probability of consuming EitB.

Furthermore, having Basque as a mother tongue also doubles the likelihood of preferring EitB compared to those whose mother tongue is Spanish. In short, political preferences related to the centre-periphery axis are the main explanatory factors of EitB consumption in 2009, with Basque as a mother tongue also playing a meaningful role.

In contrast, some variables reduce the probability of exposure to EitB. Individuals from the upper class and those with a right-wing ideology are less likely to consume Basque public television than those belonging to the lower class and placing themselves at the ideological centre.

The 2012 results reveal a similar pattern. Political preferences have a greater impact on EitB consumption than cultural attributes, with voting for nationalist parties and feeling exclusively Basque being the strongest predictors of EitB consumption. However, some differences are worth noting. In 2012, voting for Basque nationalist

parties emerges as the strongest predictor of exposure, followed by having an exclusively Basque identity.

Table 2. Logistic regression models for EitB consumption over time.

	2009	2012	2016	2020
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Age	1.006	1.006	1.013*	1.008
Sex (ref.cat. = male)	1.060	0.853	0.714*	1.081
Social class (ref.cat. = low)				
Middle class	0.993	0.839	1.707**	1.198
Upper class	0.621*	0.406*	1.482	0.948
Level of education (ref.cat. = primary education)				
Secondary education	0.892	0.701	0.999	1.177
Higher education	1.165	0.910	0.952	1.352
Ideology (ref.cat. = centre)				
Left	1.108	1.064	1.123	1.208
Right	0.477*	0.523	0.567	1.213
Mother tongue: Basque (ref.cat. = Spanish)	1.971**	1.840**	2.032***	1.427 ⁽⁺⁾
Origin (ref. cat. = born outside the Basque country)	-	1.388	1.433	0.987
National identity (ref.cat. = dual)				
Basque	3.638***	1.993**	1.481*	1.718**
Spanish	0.937	0.709	0.794	0.974
Voting for Basque nationalist parties (ref.cat. = voting for state parties)	3.168***	2.651***	3.530***	1.964***
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	1.112*	1.181***	1.152***	1.151***

<i>R</i> ²	0.447	0.386	0.355	0.226
<i>N</i>	996	812	947	926

The levels of statistical significance are the following: ****p* < 0.001; ***p* < 0.01; **p* < 0.05; (+) *p* < 0.1.

Regarding cultural attributes, individuals whose mother tongue is Basque are more likely to consume EitB than those whose mother tongue is Spanish. However, place of birth is not associated with Basque public television consumption, as no significant differences are found between individuals born in the Basque Country and those born in other Spanish regions. As in 2009, individuals belonging to the upper class are less likely to consume EitB, and the intensity of Basque nationalist sentiment is strongly correlated with EitB exposure. However, no significant associations are observed between an individual's orientation on the left-right axis and his/her television preferences.

Consistently, the findings for 2016 show that voting behaviour is the strongest predictor of EitB consumption; individuals who vote for Basque nationalist parties are 3.5 times more likely to watch the Basque public broadcaster than those who vote for state parties.

Having Basque as a mother tongue has greater explanatory power than Basque national identity, in contrast to prior years, although both variables remain

important predictors of EITB consumption. Moreover, the strength of nationalist sentiment significantly increases the chance of watching EITB.

The findings for 2016 further suggest the ambiguous impact of cultural attributes, as no statistically significant association is found between place of birth and exposure to Basque public television. Interestingly, socio-demographic variables play a more prominent role than in previous years. Women and younger individuals are less likely to consume EITB compared to men and older people. Additionally, middle-class citizens are more inclined to watch Basque television than those from a lower social background.

Finally, the 2020 results show that voting for Basque nationalist parties remains the strongest predictor of EITB consumption; people who support these parties are twice as likely to watch EITB compared to those who vote for state parties.

Aligned with prior findings, both feeling exclusively Basque and having Basque as a mother tongue increase the likelihood of exposure. Again, the intensity of nationalist sentiment raises the probability of consuming Basque public television channels, while place of birth shows no significant association. In 2020, no associations are found between age, gender, or social class and EITB consumption.

In summary, the analysis of EITB consumption over a decade consistently shows that political preferences are the strongest predictors of exposure to Basque public television: voting for Basque nationalist parties emerges as the most significant predictor in each year except 2009, when identity exerts a slightly greater influence than voting. Moreover, an exclusively Basque identity (as opposed to a dual national identity) persistently ranks as the second most significant predictor throughout the entire study period.

Additionally, having Basque as a mother tongue plays a significant role as a predictor of EITB exposure, although its explanatory power is generally smaller than that of political preferences and national identity. Nevertheless, place of birth is not significantly related to EITB consumption, indicating that cultural attributes play an ambiguous role in predicting exposure to Basque television. Moreover, no stable associations are found in relation to left and right orientations or sociodemographic variables, as the associations observed in certain years do not hold throughout the analysed time frame.

Lastly, we have calculated the probability of preferring EITB for different social profiles based on the regression model specified for 2020. For a 40-year-old middle-class male with higher education, a centrist political ideology, born in the Basque

Country, whose mother tongue is Basque, who identifies exclusively as Basque and votes for Basque nationalist parties, the probability of consuming EiTb is 77.5%. However, if he identifies as both Basque and Spanish (instead of exclusively Basque), the probability decreases to 60.2%. Furthermore, if he votes for a state-level party (regardless of ideology) instead of a Basque nationalist party, the probability of consuming EiTb drops to 43.5%. This probability declines further to 36.1% if he identifies exclusively as Spanish. In other words, national identity and voting for Basque nationalist parties influence the likelihood of preferring EiTb by up to 40 percentage points.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the explanatory power of the model decreases over the study period. In 2009, the model accounted for 44% of the variance, whereas by 2020, it drops quite abruptly to 22%. This trend suggests that both political attitudes and cultural attributes become less relevant determinants of EiTb consumption over time, suggesting that there are probably other factors at stake that drive the consumption of EiTb over the last years.

5. Discussion

The findings provide empirical evidence that EiTb consumption is primarily driven by political attitudes linked to the Basque political context, since voting for Basque

nationalist parties and feeling uniquely Basque are the strongest predictors of EiTb exposure throughout the 11-year period, confirming H1.

In this regard, our results highlight the importance of partisan identity as the main driver of news media consumption in Spain (Humanes, 2014; Ramírez-Dueñas and Vinuesa-Tejero, 2021; Humanes and Valera-Ordaz, 2023). However, in this case, the partisan identities at stake do not stem from the left-right divide, but from the centre-periphery divide and national sentiments. Indeed, our study reflects the same dynamic observed by recent studies in Catalonia, where voting for nationalist parties and feeling exclusively Catalan consistently drive exposure to the Catalan public broadcaster (Valera-Ordaz, 2018; 2023; Sintes-Olivella et al., 2023). For the first time, our study empirically demonstrates that this is also true for Basque regional television, where consumption is significantly influenced by national identification and voting for Basque nationalist parties.

The role of cultural attributes is more ambiguous, and findings show that being born in the Basque region does not influence EiTb consumption, but having Basque as mother tongue is a consistent predictor, too. Its effect, however, is systematically lower than that of voting and national identity, which confirms H2. The fact that promoting Basque language and culture was essential in EiTb's creation in 1982

partially explains this result (Holtz-Bacha, 2015; Marzal-Felici, 2016; Zallo, 2016).

Those who have Basque as their mother tongue are particularly drawn to Basque public television, especially given the limited media choices in Basque and the predominant use of Spanish in the regional media landscape (Díaz Noci, 1998; Miguel de Bustos et al., 2017).

Taken together, our findings suggest that in regions with pronounced nationalist conflicts, regional public broadcasters, established by nationalist elites after the Spanish transition to democracy, have been instrumentalised for linguistic normalisation and nation-building purposes, and are perceived as such by audiences. The centrality of language in nationalist movements is well documented (Fishman, 1972; Blommaert and Verschueren, 1995; Wright, 2006) since language is often viewed as a tool for 'nationalisation' especially among substate nationalist movements (Barrera González, 1997). In contexts like the Basque region, language also serves as a category of group identification (Azurmendi, 1998). Thus, the relevance of Basque as a predictor likely reflects both its political significance and its role in group identification.

To what extent is the EITB's public service mission being fulfilled, and what are the normative implications of these findings? The crucial role of public media in

promoting cross-media exposure is well established, since strong public media can mitigate selective exposure and enhance citizens' access to counter-attitudinal information (Bos et al., 2016; Castro-Herrero et al., 2018), which, in turn, lead to more political tolerance and social empathy (Mutz, 2002; Pattie and Johnston, 2008). Our findings show that EITB does promote crosscutting exposure from a socio-demographic perspective as its consumption is not consistently determined by age, sex, social class, or level of education. They also indicate that EITB effectively attracts citizens whose mother tongue is Basque, thereby playing a key role in promoting Basque culture and language, as required by its public mission.

However, EITB's ability to foster political pluralism is significantly compromised. Rather than serving as a common and inclusive source of information for all Basque citizens, it demonstrates limited capacity to cater to all political groups, due to a pronounced political and identity-based segregation of audiences. The public broadcaster falls short in promoting political diversity, predominantly attracting audiences who identify exclusively as Basque and vote for Basque nationalist parties. As a result, the delicate balance between the mission of cultural promotion associated with its creation and the obligation to promote political pluralism is precarious, and audience behaviours suggest that the promotion of Basque culture

is achieved to a much greater extent than the obligation to provide exposure to diversity.

6. Conclusions

Through a case study focusing on the Basque public television, Euskal Irrati Telebista, this study demonstrates the significance of political attitudes as drivers of EitB consumption over an 11-year period (2009–2020). It, therefore, provides robust empirical evidence that voting for Basque nationalist parties and possessing a Basque national identity are stronger predictors of EitB consumption than cultural attributes such as an individual's mother tongue. Still, they also indicate that EitB effectively attracts citizens whose mother tongue is Basque.

In this regard, our findings add to the literature on the instrumentalization of public television in Spain through a previously unexplored case study, showing that it occurs not only at the state level (Azurmendi et al., 2018; Masip et al., 2020), but also at the regional level (Arriaza-Ibarra, 2013; Humanes, 2014; Valera-Ordaz, 2023). In particular, our findings indicate that some regional broadcasters in Spain were established as tools to advance linguistic integration and national construction under the control of regional governments in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity, such as Catalonia (Jones, 2007; Guimerà, 2018), reflecting the

significant role that television plays in nation-building processes (Guibernau, 2010; Bociurkiw, 2011; Anderson and Chakars, 2015).

They also underscore the decisive role of communication policies and institutional design in creating opportunity structures for cross-cutting exposure through public broadcasting systems. Much academic attention has focused on the potential of strong and politically independent national broadcasting systems to act as a centripetal force for social cohesion (Goldman and Mutz, 2011; Skovsgaard et al., 2016; Castro-Herrero et al., 2018). However, it is essential to expand the analysis to include public regional broadcasters, as the role of these corporations is crucial in ensuring both cultural and social integration within and across territories, especially in contexts where linguistic and cultural diversity is a source of political conflict.

The practical implications of our findings for media policy are complex, as effective policy must consider not only institutional design but also the informal norms and practices that shape the operations of such institutions. One significant step could be to involve relevant social organisations from Basque society in the management of EitB. Additionally, inviting professional journalist associations to oversee the

operations of the regional public broadcaster could further ensure its accountability and integrity.

Future research should investigate whether these dynamics are replicated in other media systems and European political contexts where national and regional media ecologies coexist alongside multiple national identities. For example, the case of Belgium is particularly interesting, as its media system is shaped by linguistic and political divisions (Donders et al., 2019), with separate public broadcasters serving the Flemish (VRT), French-speaking (RTBF), and German-speaking communities (BRF). Another interesting case for analysis is the United Kingdom, where the Welsh-language channel S4C and the Scottish Gaelic-language channel BBC Alba provide programming tailored to their respective linguistic communities, illustrating how public media can contribute to cultural and linguistic diversity (Willis, 2024). In Spain, it would be valuable to determine whether similar findings apply to regions with distinct linguistic communities such as Galicia or the Valencian Community. Examining these cases could provide further insights into the interplay between public broadcasting, the construction of regional and national identities, and language promotion.

Finally, we should emphasise some limitations of our study. First, the surveys used for the analyses were conducted after regional elections, which might have increased cognitive accessibility of political attitudes and overestimated their effects as drivers of media consumption (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012). Ideally, the results should be validated with data from non-election periods.

Second, our dependent variable is based on respondents' identification of a single preferred medium, which carries the risk of overestimating the effects of political selective exposure. It is likely that many Basque citizens engage with EITB content either regularly or sporadically, even if it is not their primary news source. Consequently, future studies should use more comprehensive data on individual media diets, combining, for instance, survey data with direct desktop and web browsing data to replicate this analysis and deepen our understanding.

Moreover, while our findings raise concerns about the politicisation of Basque public television and its capacity to foster crosscutting exposure, these results are bounded by not having directly examined EITB's programming content whose role is crucial in promoting the linguistic singularity of a community and reinforcing its distinct cultural heritage.

Hence, comprehensive assessments of this politicisation require further studies combining a diversity of methodological approaches, such as in-depth interviews and content analysis. In this regard, content analysis of its programming—news, entertainment, etc.—is crucial to assess if EitB is politically instrumentalized by the Basque regional government. For instance, studies could use framing analysis to explore the extent to which the news content produced by the Basque public broadcaster reflects the perspectives of the regional political parties compared to those of other political parties, analyzing how particular frames are sponsored and negotiated. Additionally, in-depth interviews with different media professionals (program directors, producers, journalists, etc.) working within the regional public broadcaster would provide valuable insights into the constraints and pressures (political, economic, etc.) they face in their everyday work. Only by combining all these approaches will we gain a more nuanced understanding of the extent to which EitB is fulfilling its public service of both cultural promotion and fostering political diversity. After all, our approach provides strong evidence that political attitudes drive EitB consumption, but further content analysis is needed to corroborate the existence of politicization.

The study also presents several strengths that warrant emphasis. First, it examines the drivers of consumption of an unexplored case study – Basque public television

– thereby making a significant contribution to the study of public regional broadcasting in Europe, which is less frequently addressed in the literature compared to national broadcasters.

Second, it spans a broad period (2009–2020), which allows a stable and consistent relationship between political attitudes and public television consumption to be observed over time. Third, the post electoral surveys used as data sources are representative of the Basque population, enabling the generalisation of the results to the entire Basque community. Additionally, by utilising secondary data, we significantly reduce the risk of confirmation bias influencing our questionnaire design or findings, despite the inherent limitations of working with secondary data.

Authors contributions

Both authors have equally contributed to all stages of the research, including the study design, data collection, analysis, manuscript writing, and final approval of the submitted version.

References

Anderson S, Chakars M (2015) *Modernization, nation-building, and television history*. New York: Routledge.

Arriaza-Ibarra K (2013) The situation of national and regional public television in Spain. *Nordicom Review* 34(1): 145-156. <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2013-0048>

Azurmendi A, Muñoz-Saldaña M, Ortega-Mohedano F (2018) Civic participation and independence from political power: Two requirements of public service broadcasters in Spain. *Communication & Society* 31(3): 111–140. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.31.3.111-138>

Azurmendi MJ (1998) *Hizkuntza eta talde-nortasuna*. Bilbao: UPV/EHU.

Azurmendi MJ (2003) Lengua e identidad: a propósito de una publicación reciente. *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos* 48(1): 409-429. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/11498977.pdf>

Barlovento Comunicación (2024) Análisis de la industria televisiva audiovisual 2023. Available at: https://barloventocomunicacion.es/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/INFORME-ANUAL-2023_BARLOVENTO.pdf

Barrera González A (1997) Lengua, identidad y nacionalismo en Cataluña durante la transición. *Revista de Antropología Social* 6: 109-137. Available at: <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/RASO/article/view/RASO9797110109A>

Blommaert J, Verschueren J (1995) The role of language in European nationalist ideologies. In: Schäffne C, Wenden AL (eds) *Language & Peace*. Routledge, pp. 163-188.

Bociurkiw M (2011). *Feeling Canadian: Television, nationalism, and affect*. Wilfrid Laurier Press.

Bos L, Kruikemeier S, de Vreese C (2016) Nation binding: How public service broadcasting mitigates political selective exposure. *PloS ONE* 11(5). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0155112>

Brüggemann M, Engesser S, Büchel F, Humprecht E, Castro-Herrero L (2014) Hallin and Mancini revisited: Four empirical types of western media systems. *Journal of communication* 64(6): 1037-1065. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.2014.64.issue-6>

Bustamante E (2013) *Historia de la radio y la TV en España: Una asignatura pendiente de la democracia*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

Cañedo A, Segovia AI (2022) La plataformización de los medios de comunicación de servicio público. Una reflexión desde la economía política de la comunicación. In: Goyanes M, Campos-Rueda M (eds) *Gestión de medios públicos en el entorno digital: Nuevos valores, estrategias multiplataforma e internet de servicio público*. Tirant Humanidades, pp. 65-88.

Castro-Herrero L, Nir L, Skovsgaard M (2018) Bridging gaps in cross-cutting media exposure: The role of public service broadcasting. *Political communication* 35(4): 542-565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1476424>

Cea d'Ancona MA (2002) *Análisis multivariable: Teoría y práctica en la investigación social*. Madrid: Síntesis.

Díaz Noci J (1998) Los medios de comunicación y la normalización del euskera: balance de dieciséis años. *Revista Internacional de Estudios Vascos* 43(2): 441-459. Available at: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=3303693>

Doménech-Beltrán J (2024) Cross-cutting exposure to the Spanish public broadcasting system: influence of ideology, partisanship, and interest in politics on RTVE's consumption. *Communication & Society* 37(2): 19-33. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.37.2.19-33>

Donders K, Van den Bulck H, Raats T (2019) Public service media in a divided country: Governance and functioning of public broadcasters in Belgium. In: Połńska E, Beckett C (eds) *Public service broadcasting and media systems in troubled European democracies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 89-107.

Fernández Parrat S (2002). Medios de comunicación y bilingüismo. *Comunicar* 10(19): 97-101. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C19-2002-17>

Fishman JA (1972) *Language in Sociocultural Change*. California: Standford University Press.

Fraile M, Meilán X (2012) Los medios de comunicación y la información política en las elecciones europeas de 2009. In: Torcal M, Font J (eds) *Elecciones Europeas 2009*. Madrid: CIS, pp. 109-137.

Gifreu J, Corominas M (1991) *Construir l'espai català de comunicació*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación.

Gifreu J (1992). Estructura y política de la comunicación en Cataluña: una cuestión de Estado. *Telos: Cuadernos de comunicación e innovación*, (30), 54-61. Available at: <https://telos.fundaciontelefonica.com/archivo/numero030/una-cuestion-de-estado/?output=pdf>

Gifreu J (2014) *El català a l'espai de comunicació. El procés de normalització de la llengua als mitjans (1976-2013)*. Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, Universitat Pompeu Fabra y Publicacions de la Universitat de València.

Gilabert M (1988). La industria audiovisual: la televisión regional en España: la televisión valenciana. In: Fernández E (coord) *Identidades regionales y locales en la era de la comunicación transnacional*. Málaga: Debates, pp. 49-56.

Goldman SK, Mutz DC (2011) The friendly media phenomenon: A cross-national analysis of cross-cutting exposure. *Political Communication* 28: 42-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2010.544280>

Guibernau M (2010) *La identitat de les nacions*. Barcelona: Dèria

Guimerà JÀ (2014) *Les polítiques de mitjans de comunicació durant els governs de Jordi Pujol: Premsa, ràdio i televisió en el procés de construcció nacional de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Ediciones Proa.

Guimerà JÀ (2018) El papel de la comunicación en la construcción nacional de Cataluña: Jordi Pujol y la instrumentalización política de los medios (1968-1989). *Historia y Política* 40: 363–387. <https://doi.org/10.18042/hp.40.13>

Hallin DC, Mancini P (2004) *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Hierro MJ (2012) *Changes in national identification: The case of Catalonia*. PhD Thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. Available at: https://repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/10285/52319_Hierro_Maria_Jose.pdf?sequence=1

Holtz-Bacha C (2015) The role of public service media in nation-building. In Ibarra KA, Nowak E, Kuhn R (eds.) *Public service media in Europe: A comparative approach*. Routledge, pp. 27–40.

Humanes ML (2014) Exposición selectiva y partidismo de las audiencias en España. El consumo de información política durante las campañas electorales de 2008. *Palabra Clave* 17(3): 773–802. <https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2014.17.3.9>

Humanes ML, Valera-Ordaz L (2023) Partisanship, Ideology, and Selective Exposure: A Longitudinal Analysis of Media Consumption in Spain (2008-2019). *Media and Communication* 11(2):113-126. <https://www.doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6280>

Iosifidis P (2011) The public sphere, social networks and public service media. *Information, Communication & Society* 14(5): 619–637. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2010.514356>

Jones DE (2007) Pujol y la construcción de un espacio catalán de comunicación: interacciones entre instituciones políticas y empresas mediáticas (1980-2003). *Ámbitos* 16: 499–524. <https://doi.org/10.12795/ambitos.2007.i16.27>

Knobloch-Westerwick S, Kleinman SB (2012) Preelection selective exposure: Confirmation bias versus informational utility. *Communication Research* 39(2): 170–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211400597>

López B, Risquete-Sánchez J, Castelló E (1999) España: consolidación del modelo autonómico en la era multicanal. In: Moragas M de, Garitaonandía C, López B (eds) *Televisión de proximidad en Europa. Experiencias de descentralización en la era digital*. Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, pp. 141-191.

Maneiro-Vila A (1990) Función de los centros regionales de TVE y de las televisiones autonómicas en España. In: Linde E (ed) *Las radiotelevisiones en el espacio europeo*. Valencia: RTVV, pp. 151-173.

Marzal-Felici J (2016) *Las televisiones públicas autonómicas del siglo XXI: nuevos escenarios tras el cierre de RTVV* (Vol. 34). Universitat de València.

Marzal-Felici J, Zallo R (2016) Presentación: Las televisiones públicas de proximidad ante los retos de la sociedad digital. *Communication & Society* 29(4): 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.29.35802>

Masip P, Suau J, Ruiz-Caballero C (2020) Percepciones sobre medios de comunicación y desinformación: ideología y polarización del sistema mediático español. *Profesional de la Información* 29(5). <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.sep.27>

Maxwell, R (1995) *The Spectacle of Democracy. Spanish Television, Nationalism and Political Transition*. Minneapolis, EEUU: University of Minnesota Press.

Mezo-Aranzibia J (1990) *Organizaciones frente a políticos: el caso de la televisión vasca*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales del Instituto Juan March. Available at: https://epub.sub.uni-hamburg.de/epub/volltexte/2008/1932/pdf/1990_7_es.pdf

Miguel de Bustos JC, Casado del Río MA (2012) *Televisiones autonómicas. Evolución y crisis del modelo público de proximidad*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

Miguel de Bustos JC, Casado del Río MA (2015) La crisis de la radiotelevisión pública autonómica. In: Marzal-Felici J, Izquierdo-Castillo J, Caseró-Ripollés A (eds) *La crisis de la televisión pública: El caso de RTVV y los retos de una nueva gobernanza*. Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona: Servicio de Publicaciones, Universitat Jaume I: Servei de Comunicació i Publicacions, Universitat Pompeu Fabra: Servicio de Publicaciones, pp. 61-77.

Miguel de Bustos JC, Zallo R, Casado MA (2017) *Las televisiones autonómicas públicas y privadas*. In: Gutiérrez-Montes E (ed) *Televisión Abierta: Situación actual y tendencias de futuro de la TDT*. Colegio Oficial de Ingenieros de Telecomunicación, pp. 59-71.

Moragas M, López B (1994) Les regions: una qüestió pendent en la política audiovisual europea. *Anàlisi: quaderns de comunicació i cultura* 17: 161-175. <https://raco.cat/index.php/Analisi/article/view/41229>

Moragas M, Prado E (2000) *La televisió pública a l'era digital*. Barcelona: Pòrtic comunicació.

Mutz D (2002) The consequences of cross-cutting networks for political participation. *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4): 838–855. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088437>

Nielsen RK, Fletcher R (2023) Comparing the platformization of news media systems: A cross-country analysis. *European Journal of Communication* 38(5): 484–499. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231189043>

Nissen CS (2006) *Les médias de service public dans la société de l'information*. Division Médias, Direction Générale des droits de l'homme, Conseil de l'Europe.

Olmo López A, Navarro Moreno JA (2015) Audiencia y servicio público en las televisiones autonómicas. *Ámbitos* 29: 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2015.i29.01>

Pastor González JM (2014) Un informativo, dos enfoques: la actualidad política vasca en EITB durante los mandatos de Ibarretxe y López. *Ámbitos: Revista Internacional de Comunicación* 26: 1-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2014.i26.22>

Pattie C, Johnston R (2008) It's Good To Talk: Talk, Disagreement and Tolerance. *British Journal of Political Science* 38(4): 677-698. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000331>

Ramírez-Dueñas JM, Vinuesa-Tejero ML (2021) How does selective exposure affect partisan polarization? Media consumption on electoral campaigns. *Journal of International communication* 27(2): 258-282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2021.1899957>

Riggins SH (1992) *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Romay J, García-Mira R, Azurmendi MJ (1999) Identidad y vitalidad etnolingüísticas en las Comunidades Autónomas Bilingües (CAB) de España. *International Journal*

of Social Psychology: Revista de Psicología Social 14: 87-106.
<https://doi.org/10.1174/021347499760260091>

Saldaña MM, Llorens-Maluquer C (2022) Public Service Media y políticas de la UE: de la centralidad económica a la regulación de plataformas. In: Goyanes M, Campos-Rueda M (eds) *Gestión de medios públicos en el entorno digital: Nuevos valores, estrategias multiplataforma e internet de servicio público*. Tirant Humanidades, pp. 281-311.

Schulze H (2020) Who uses right-wing alternative online media? An exploration of audience characteristics. *Politics and Governance* 8(3): 6-18.
<https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i3.2925>

Serrano I (2013) Just a matter of identity? Support for independence in Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies* 23(5): 523-545.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.775945>

Sintes-Olivella M, Fondevila-Gascón JF, Berbel-Giménez G (2023) Televisión e independentismo en Cataluña. Exposición selectiva de los televidentes catalanes durante el proceso independentista (2015-2020). *Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas* 181: 101-116. <https://doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.181.101>

Skovsgaard M, Shehata A, Strömbäck J (2016) Opportunity structures for selective exposure: Investigating selective exposure and learning in Swedish election campaigns using panel survey data. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 21(4): 527-546. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216658157>

Valencia-Bermúdez A, Campos Freire F (2016) Indicadores de valor para las RTV autonómicas: rendición de cuentas en EITB, CCMA y CRTVG. *Communication & Society* 29(4): 59-70. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15581/003.29.35806>

Valera-Ordaz L (2018) Media, National Identity & Selective Exposure: Predictors of Media Preferences among the Catalan Population. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 164: 135-154.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5477/cis/reis.164.135>

Valera-Ordaz L (2023) Political Identity and News Media Choice: The Polarizing Logic of Selective Exposure During the Catalan Independence Conflict. *Mass Communication and Society* 26(2): 326–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2022.2127366>

Van den Bulck H, Raats T (2022) Media policymaking and multistakeholder involvement: Matching audience, stakeholder and government expectations for public service media in Flanders. *European Journal of Communication* 38(2): 132–147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231221112199>

Vanhaeght AS, Donders K (2015) Interaction, co-creation and participation in PSM literature, policy and strategy: A comparative case study analysis of Flanders, the Netherlands, France and the UK. *Medijske studije* 6(12): 46–62. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/ojs/index.php/medijske-studije/article/view/6153>

Willis C (2024) Minority language broadcasting beyond the core audience: the approach of BBC Alba and S4C to non-speakers of Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 31(1): 82–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2024.2321256>

Wright S (2006) Language policy and language planning. In Llamas C, Mullany L, Stockwell P (eds) *The Routledge companion to sociolinguistics*. Routledge, pp. 184–192.

Zallo R (2016) *Tendencias en comunicación. Cultura digital y poder*. Anexo 2 “Radiotelevisiónes autonómicas: los casos de Radiotelevisió Valenciana y de Radio y Televisión de Canarias”. Gedisa: Barcelona.

Zallo R (2013) Polítiques de comunicació a les nacions sense estat: el cas espanyol. In: Civil i Serra M, Blasco Gil JJ, Guimerà i Orts JÀ (eds) *Informe de la Comunicació a Catalunya 2011-12*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, pp. 269–277.

Zallo R (2023) La comunicación en tiempos de violencia política: el caso vasco. *CIC: Cuadernos de información y comunicación* 28:117–140. <https://doi.org/10.5209/ciyc.89289>

Appendix 1. Data sources

Election date	Survey sample	Sample size (TV question)
1 March 2009	2,471	2,012
21 October 2012	1,898	1,409
25 September 2016	2,470	1,844
12 July 2020	3,000	1,942

Source: own elaboration.

Appendix 2. Categories of the variable “vote”.

POLITICAL PARTIES	
National parties	Basque nationalist parties
<i>PSE</i> (2009, 2012, 2016, 2020)	<i>PNV</i> (2009, 2012, 2016, 2020)
<i>PP</i> (2009, 2012, 2016, 2020)	<i>Aralar</i> (2009)
<i>UPyD</i> (2009, 2012)	<i>Eusko Alkartasuna</i> (2009)
<i>EB/IU</i> (2009)	<i>EH Bildu</i> (2012, 2016, 2020)
<i>IU-Ezker Anitza</i> (2012)	
<i>Elkarrekin Podemos</i> (2016, 2020)	
<i>Ciudadanos</i> (2016, in alliance with PP in 2020)	
<i>Vox</i> (2020)	

Source: own elaboration.

Appendix 3. Stepwise regression models

Table 3. Logistic regression models for EitB consumption in 2009.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
Age	1.005	1.005	1.013***	1.008	1.006
Sex	1.077	1.029	1.030	1.060	1.060
(ref. cat. = male)					
Social class					
(ref. cat. = low)					
Middle class	0.988	0.951	0.940	0.993	0.993
Upper class	0.931	0.824	0.842	0.669 ⁽⁺⁾	0.621*
Level of education					
(ref. cat. = primary education)					
Secondary education	1.400*	1.305 ⁽⁺⁾	1.292	0.966	0.892
Higher education	1.275*	1.233	1.171	1.188	1.165
Ideology					
(ref. cat. = centre)					
Left	1.293**	1.319**	1.148	1.084	1.108
Right	0.783	0.570*	0.610*	0.534*	0.477*
Mother tongue: Basque	-	4.764***	2.198***	1.957**	1.971**
(ref. cat. = Spanish)					
National identity					

(ref. cat. = dual)					
Basque	-	-	6.562***	4.291***	3.638***
Spanish	-	-	0.613*	0.787	0.937
Voting for Basque nationalist parties	-	-	-	4.206***	3.168***
(ref. cat. = voting for state parties)					
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	-	-	-	-	1.112*
R^2	0.012	0.127	0.321	0.440	0.447
R^2 increase	-	0.115	0.194	0.119	0.007
N	1882	1805	1805	1046	996

The levels of statistical significance are the following: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; (+) $p < 0.1$.

Table 4. Logistic regression models for EitB consumption in 2012.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
Age	1.004	1.006	1.007	1.006	1.006
Sex	0.985	0.928	0.948	0.877	0.853
(ref. cat. = male)					
Social class					
(ref. cat. = low)					
Middle class	1.153	0.883	0.835	0.792	0.839
Upper class	0.563 ⁽⁺⁾	0.437*	0.385*	0.379*	0.406*

Level of education					
(ref. cat. = primary education)					
Secondary education	0.915	0.751	0.693 ⁽⁺⁾	0.648	0.701
Higher education	1.226	0.985	0.953	0.847	0.910
Ideology					
(ref. cat. = centre)					
Left	1.278*	1.271 ⁽⁺⁾	1.075	1.095	1.064
Right	0.385***	0.428**	0.482*	0.549	0.523
Mother tongue: Basque	-	4.713***	2.979***	2.093***	1.840**
(ref. cat. = Spanish)					
Origin	-	2.093***	1.306	1.476 ⁽⁺⁾	1.388
(ref. cat. = born outside the Basque country)					
National identity					
(ref. cat. = dual)					
Basque	-	-	4.151***	2.697***	1.993**
Spanish	-	-	0.567 ⁽⁺⁾	0.842	0.709
Voting for Basque nationalist parties	-	-	-	3.748***	2.651***
(ref. cat. = voting for state parties)					
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	-	-	-	-	1.181***
R^2	0.032	0.185	0.288	0.364	0.386
R^2 increase	-	0.153	0.103	0.076	0.022

<i>N</i>	<i>1348</i>	<i>1281</i>	<i>1281</i>	<i>843</i>	<i>812</i>
----------	-------------	-------------	-------------	------------	------------

The levels of statistical significance are the following: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; (+) $p < 0.1$.

Table 5. Logistic regression models for EitB consumption in 2016.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
Age	1.005	1.011**	1.012**	1.014**	1.013*
Sex	0.878	0.793*	0.814 ⁽⁺⁾	0.700*	0.714*
(ref. cat. = male)					
Social class					
(ref. cat. = low)					
Middle class	1.799***	1.548***	1.478**	1.692**	1.707**
Upper class	2.067***	1.453	1.474	1.633	1.482
Level of education					
(ref. cat. = primary education)					
Secondary education	0.925	0.860	0.820	0.965	0.999
Higher education	1.171	0.996	0.983	0.939	0.952
Ideology					
(ref. cat. = centre)					
Left	1.419***	1.281*	1.114	1.117	1.123
Right	0.653 ⁽⁺⁾	0.555*	0.604 ⁽⁺⁾	0.505*	0.567
Mother tongue: Basque	-	3.800***	2.648***	2.221***	2.032***

(ref. cat. = Spanish)					
Origin	-	2.202***	1.522**	1.351	1.433
(ref. cat. = born outside the Basque country)					
National identity					
(ref. cat. = dual)					
Basque	-	-	3.535***	2.153***	1.481*
Spanish	-	-	0.829	0.750	0.794
Voting for Basque nationalist parties	-	-	-	4.312***	3.530***
(ref. cat. = voting for state parties)					
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	-	-	-		1.152***
R^2	0.048	0.186	0.265	0.341	0.355
R^2 increase	-	0.138	0.079	0.076	0.014
N	1665	1555	1555	1009	947
The levels of statistical significance are the following: ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; (+) p < 0.1.					

Table 6. Logistic regression models for EitB consumption in 2020.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)	Exp (B)
Age	1.004	1.009*	1.008*	1.008	1.008

Sex	0.946	0.983	0.971	1.093	1.081
(ref. cat. = male)					
Social class					
(ref. cat. = low)					
Middle class	1.238*	1.299*	1.269*	1.183	1.198
Upper class	1.130	1.069	0.991	0.956	0.948
Level of education					
(ref. cat. = primary education)					
Secondary education	1.333	1.143	1.046	1.176	1.177
Higher education	1.567**	1.214	1.153	1.238	1.352
Ideology					
(ref. cat. = centre)					
Left	1.592***	1.473***	1.240 ⁽⁺⁾	1.315	1.208
Right	1.096	1.186	1.196	1.204	1.213
Mother tongue: Basque	-	2.819***	1.849***	1.461 ⁽⁺⁾	1.427 ⁽⁺⁾
(ref. cat. = Spanish)					
Origin	-	2.051***	1.479**	1.071	0.987
(ref. cat. = born outside the Basque country)					
National identity					
(ref. cat. = dual)					
Basque	-	-	2.748***	2.410***	1.718**
Spanish	-	-	0.584**	0.781	0.974

Voting for Basque nationalist parties (ref. cat. = voting for state parties)	-	-	-	2.532***	1.964***
Intensity of nationalist sentiment	-	-	-	-	1.151***
R^2	0.030	0.120	0.182	0.216	0.226
R^2 increase	-	0.090	0.062	0.034	0.010
N	1804	1601	1601	965	926

The levels of statistical significance are the following: ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; (+) p < 0.1.