

Chapter Three

Applying the Theory: the Basque Case and the Queer Nationalism

Introduction

In chapter one I presented the theoretical framework concerning the way that ontological fear has been enhanced by the disruption of belonging links with a (reduced-in-power) state which I discussed in detail in chapter two. This chapter aims to present empirical confirmation of the central claim of this thesis that a slackening of feelings of affiliation and allegiance to the state has led several groups to search for new, or renewed modes of belonging elsewhere. This, I will show, has modified the allegiance and belonging links between certain social groups—which are neither small nor obscure—and the state itself.

To reach my objective I analyse here two examples in which people's allegiance to the state has been replaced or eclipsed by a new (or renewed) focus/referent of their collective identity around alternative focal points of belonging. By analysing these two examples I attempt to verify the claim made by my subhypothesis, which argues that the ontological question possesses a relation with the appearance and increasing importance of new international actors; since it allows a multiple and overlapping allegiances and belonging ties.

Taken together, these different examples should show how collective identities can respond differently to the crisis of identification produced by state's inability to provide ontological security and identification. Consequently, I hope to show that the reconfiguration of collective identities constructed over non-state-referents is an increasing contemporary tendency, as well as that people's allegiances to these belonging links are growing because of their ability to provide conformable 'nodes' around which stable collective identification can settle.

To achieve my goals this chapter must first look at the underlying principles of the shift in identification I have been arguing for throughout this thesis. In the first part of this

chapter I therefore reaffirm and expand what ‘traditional’ or ‘old’ belonging links to the state mean, and distinguish this mode of belonging from the ‘new’ belonging links (which I take to include ‘renewed’ ones, in those cases where non-state-referents may have been focal belonging points before the rise of the modern state). Once this is clarified, I show that the theoretical arguments constructed on the claims made in chapters one and two are confirmed by, and illuminated further by, the case of Basque nationalism in Spain and of ‘queer nationalism’ in general. I then identify the elements related to the decline of state that have produced a rupture of the traditional belonging link between people and state. Finally, the application of the theory to the evidence provided by those two examples sustains the plausibility of the theory defended by this thesis. At the same time, this analysis supports my claim that the reason that new belonging links are now placed over state in people’s levels of identification and allegiance.

In the third section I explore some outcomes of the reconfiguration of collective identities discussed in this thesis that have been considered by some to be negative outcomes. Here I focus on the multiplication of sources of identification in the construction of collective identities and contest the views of those who claim that the increase of sources of identities promote violent conflicts between diverse group identities and even discrimination and xenophobia.¹ Clearly, it is important for this thesis to acknowledge that such negative outcomes may well be possible consequences of the shift in belonging ties away from the state. However, it is still crucial to study and allow the new ways of belonging to evolve because these are the ones able to provide people with satisfactory identification in times

¹ See Georges Corm, “Dinámicas identitarias y geopolíticas en las relaciones entre el mundo árabe y Europa,” *Afers Internacionals*, no. 43-44 (1998 [cited feb. 20th 2008] *Revista CIDOB D’Afers Internacionals*): available from: <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/RevistaCIDOB/article/viewFile/28102/27936> Michael Billing in *Banal Nationalism* argues that nationalisms do not disappear due to excessive media attention on these issues. (London: Sage Publications, 1997). See also Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: BBC Books, 1993), and Carlton J. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968). For a version more focused in the creation of xenophobia and discrimination see Manuel Delgado Ruiz, “Dinámicas identitarias y espacios públicos,” *Afers Internacionals*, no. 43-44 (1998 [cited feb. 20th 2008] *Revista CIDOB D’Afers Internacionals*): available from: <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/RevistaCIDOB/article/viewFile/28101/27935>

when the decline of the state precludes the state from functioning in this way. For we all require the existence of a “home” where one can feel accepted and secure—whether the state provides this, or not—because that “home” provides us with a knowledge of what one’s role or place in the world is and the relations it has with the people surrounding it. And without a knowledge of that role or “place,” we have far fewer cues telling individuals cut adrift from their group how to behave toward each other.

Traditional and New Ways of Belonging to State: A Clarification

The first part of this chapter is devoted to a more extensive clarification of what I have called ‘old’ belonging links between states and people, to reach a better understanding of the whole depiction of the thesis and its main arguments as well as facilitate comprehension on the reasons that have motivated the disruption of state’s belonging links with people. I would like to point out that, given the limited time and space this thesis has, I cannot hope to cover adequately the huge quantity of studies dealing with concepts as collective identities, nation, and nation-state—all of which are highly complex subjects. The most I can hope to do is to give this brief, but direct, attempt to provide the reader with a discussion of how collective identities and the allegiances that pull them together are conceptualized and the necessary tools to understand this thesis in the appropriate way.

As I have claimed previously, and following a generally accepted position, identities “must be analyzed under the constructivist light that asserts a natural subjectivity on which identities are based.”² It is an *alive* concept that is in a permanent process of transformation to

² See Kristen R. Monroe, *Political Psychology*, (United States: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), 9. The position is a generally accepted one to hold. For example, see Eric Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (United States: Vintage, 1995), and Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization, Identity, and the Search for Chosen Traumas,” in *Future of Identity: Centennial Reflections on the Legacy of Erik Erikson*, ed. Kenneth R. Hoover (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2004), 111-37. The point is also an underlying assumption in such famous works as Benedict Anderson’s, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 8, Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), and Charles Taylor’s, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge and Oakley, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

adapt to people's needs, values, ideas, beliefs, traditions, and bloodlines in a determined context which is also permanently changing.³ But those values, needs, ideas, beliefs, traditions, bloodlines, etc. are closely related to the notion of what a nation is. Of course, and as I have mentioned, the complexity of such a concept makes the creation of a definition of nationalism accepted by everyone rather difficult. Stuart Hall can nevertheless be used to assist a brief discussion of the concept that must necessarily miss out on the finer details: “[i]n common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.”⁴ Hall's definition helps us realize the possibility of finding numerous ways of identification upon which rest numerous types of identities, since he makes clear that these are not based in an inflexible principle. It also confirms identity's dynamic character because people are not always the same, nor are their beliefs, values, ideas, and needs.

Another important concept used in this thesis is 'nation' which is related to the psychological factor and in some way the cultural aspects facilitating identification. Several seminal works, including those of Anderson, Gellner, Giddens, Hobsbawm and Croucher, cited on this page have given fairly similar definitions of 'nation' which, perhaps, makes it useful to draw attention to the view of 'nation' that Stalin cleverly used for his own purposes long before these academics. “A nation is a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.”⁵ Stalin's emphasis on the question of 'stability' is notable and particularly suitable for this thesis. Nevertheless, from this view, it is easy to confuse the concept of nation (or,

³ Stuart Hall, “Introduction,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage, 1997), 2. Sheila L. Croucher argues that there are many dimension fulfilling human need to belong and given that these needs vary along human evolution, identities does too see *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 40.

⁴ Hall, “Introduction,” 2.

⁵ Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and the Nationalist Question,” (no date[cited 9 Apr. 2008] Stalin Internet Archive): available from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm>

more precisely, a sense of nationhood) with identity itself. This is, in part, because nations are, as Giddens has noted, a “social form,”⁶ a structure based on collective identities. Then collective identities at the same time are composed by the interaction of individual self⁷ with other individual selves.⁸ What differentiates them is the fact that collective identities (what I have sometimes referred to in this thesis as ‘belonging links’) do not need a face-to-face dynamic, because they can be impersonal.⁹ The impersonality of collective identities, as Brewer and Garner assess, refers to the level of inclusiveness that these are able to provide, this way “[p]rototypic interpersonal identities are those derive from intimate dyadic relationships such as parent—child, lovers and friendships...Collective social identities, on the other hand do not require personal relationships among group members.”¹⁰

It is now possible to give a deeper nuance to what I wish to convey with the term ‘belonging links’ I have been using up to this point. For me, belonging links are collective identities—in the sense discussed above—*experienced individually* by people who later *create* a sense of common belonging through recognizing their strong links with those they perceive as like them, or who they are like (I am like them, hence I belong with them / they are like me, hence I belong with them). However, some important points need to be mentioned here. First, there is not just one belonging link between a collectivity and the state, even though citizenship is usually identified as the only one.

In the first instance, there is not even only one concept of citizenship or only one way that citizens relate to a state. Different forms of citizenship have played this role in the small

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991). 15.

⁷ As I argued in the introduction of this thesis the self exists in relation to others. For a further reading on this topic see: Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Also Mary Gregor, ed., *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (United Kingdom & United States: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 228-240. And Taylor, *Sources of the Self*.

⁸ Marilyn B. Brewer and Wendi Garner, “Who is this ‘We’?: Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representations,” in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, ed. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 66.

⁹ Brewer and Garner, “Who is this ‘We’?”, 67.

¹⁰ Brewer and Garner, “Who is this ‘We’?”, 67.

city states of ancient Greece¹¹ as well as the connections between collectivities and their early modern states (think of the historical power of the symbolism and significance of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the psychological and political importance of the Gettysburg Address). However, not all forms of citizenship have the power to achieve or maintain a strong sense of belonging from the members of a late-modern state. One of those less compelling conceptions of citizenship is, in fact, the liberal democratic kind we are very familiar with. Because it is so often identified as a ‘thin’ conception of citizenship,¹² it is not particularly able to create a strong link between the people and their government and especially with their state. Indeed, it may well be that because liberals in theory and practice wish to ‘tame’ or ‘limit’ the great concentrated power of the state (to stop it from turning into absolutism or totalitarianism) their conception of citizenship or the relation between individual and state is equally limited.¹³ In other words, liberal citizens are ‘thin’ on purpose which could be another reason why the contemporary state is in decline.

The confusing idea that citizenship is the only way of belonging to the state is rooted in the conception of nation and state as a whole and relatively homogenous entity whose limits (boundaries) coincide. This corresponds to the idea of what is known as nation-state, a construction in which both, concepts—nation and state—coexist. In defining what nations are, Hobsbawm quotes Gellner’s view that nation is “primarily a principle which holds that political and national unit should be congruent.”¹⁴ Political and national are both often erroneously considered as synonyms of ‘state,’ which has certainly contributed to the general

¹¹ See the Funeral Oration of Pericles in Thucydides’ *A History of the Peloponnesian War*, book II, 431/0, (London: Penguin, 1954), 143-8, for an experience of citizenship that bonded the Athenian identity strongly with their own city state.

¹² For an overview of the thin liberal view of citizenship, see Diemut Bubeck’s, ‘Thick, Thin, and Feminist Conceptions of Citizenship,’ in *Contemporary Political Studies*, eds. J. Lovenduski and J. Stanyer, (Belfast: PSA, 1995). For an overview of the thin liberal view of the self that lays behind thin liberal citizenship see Norman’s *El yo político*, Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones Coyoacán, 2007, chapters 1 and 4. See also Paul Barry Clarke’s *Deep Citizenship* (London and Boulder, Co: Pluto Press, 1994) for a more historical perspective on liberal citizenship.

¹³ Norman, *El yo político*, 141.

¹⁴ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

view that nation and state have been considered as a whole for so long. The distinction between them has only been fully recognized and discussed in relatively recent decades,¹⁵ and one of the consequences of this has been the decline of the state which has led to the search for alternative centres of collective *political* identity construction.

In addition, for a long time it has been argued there was a strong relation between state and nation in which state was the provider of a well delimited territory,¹⁶ security¹⁷ and stable conditions in which nations (cultural communities) could develop.¹⁸ This conception of collective identity related to the state is the one to which I refer as the ‘old’ or ‘traditional’ belonging links with state. Yet, as I argued in chapter 2, globalization has hindered the state’s ability to adapt to the current circumstances,¹⁹ in part because it has allowed the proliferation of multiple cultural communities (collectivities brought together on the basis of something other than culture) within one state. Or, at the very least, globalization has made the differences between multiple communities more visible, more in contact with different others, or more powerful as non-state centres of belonging. Globalization has also affected the state’s capacity to obtain the necessary resources to cover popular needs,²⁰ indirectly strengthening the appeal and ability of non-state centres of belonging to provide for some popular needs.²¹ It was recognized that it is the ‘nation’ that provides more ontologically secure belonging than the state in the late-modern liberal democratic world.

¹⁵ See almost all the essays in Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*.

¹⁶ See Mathew Horsman & Andrew Marshall, *After the Nation-State: Citizens, Tribalism and the New World Disorder* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), 44 and Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1996), ix.

¹⁷ Security in both dimensions, physical and ontological (psychological). For further reading on this type of security see Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 33, 36.

¹⁸ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 80.

¹⁹ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security”, *Political Psychology* 25, no.5 (Oct. 2004 [cited Aug 17th 2007] EBSCO): available from: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=21&hid=118&sid=2ab8402f-97c0-4d7a-8986-c7767a35b09a%40sessionmgr101>
See also Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*.

²⁰ Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, 12. See also Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 100, 200.

²¹ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 31. Also Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 60-206.

The new or renewed ways of belonging are also collective identities that are expected to achieve more ontological security and provide people with a more up-to-date identity that is more sensitive to, and flexible with, the demands of globalization than the old one. As I have claimed in chapter 1, being devoid of certainty and the search for stability and security motivates people to search and/or construct new ways of belonging based in different groups of identification. Indeed, it may be that ontological insecurity has pushed individuals in modern western democracies to seek multiple non-state centres of belonging precisely because it makes them feel more secure—the psychological equivalent of not putting all one’s eggs in the same basket.

Security is also a much relevant element in the construction of identities, as Ignatieff has remarked. “Belonging, on this account, is first and foremost protection from violence. Where you belong is where you are safe; and where you are safe is where you belong.”²² The new ways of belonging are also expected to abate the insecurity by creating new collective identities based on categories able to provide comfortable identification and security.

Given that the task of new ways of belonging is to find a feasible level of ontological security, it can be very difficult (if not impossible) to affirm that there is a limited or already known number of them. However, some new ways of belonging are more evident than others. This is the case of contemporary nationalisms based on cultural, bloodlines or ethnic motivations. There are plenty of examples of new, or renewed, belonging links based on culture, ethnicity, bloodlines, clans, traditions, language, etc. that normally focus their group belonging links around a ‘nationalism’ of one kind or another. Good contemporary examples include Catalanian and Basque nationalism in Spain, the Quebecois cultural and linguistic centre in Canada, the *Lega Nord* in Italy, Nazism in the past, the Chechens in Russia, the

²² Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*. For a similar view see also Carlton J. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 4.

Breton and Corsican nationalism in France, the Flemish movement, Scottish nationalism, and the Irish separatist movement.

There are, in addition to these belonging centres based on shared *national* ties (i.e. cultural communities), other significant ways of belonging that are becoming vital due to the more secure and comfortable identification they are apparently able to provide better than the state can. One important example of such new ways of belonging is religious nationalism.²³ It could certainly be argued that religion has been a historically powerful and lasting non-state centre for group belonging and shared identity (at least until Henry VIII in England, who merged religion with the state) and, in some cases, the divide between religions follows a divide between rival states and/or nations as between Ireland and England, for example.

However, religious nationalism is finding new importance mostly after terrorist attacks of September 11, not only because of the religious factor in those attacks but because it combines ethnic and cultural factors²⁴ that makes them more inclusive than some other, older ways of belonging. By extension, Horsman and Marshall have argued for the existence of an economic nationalism²⁵ which claims that there is a “citizens’ lack of influence over economic conditions.”²⁶ Defined as a “set of measures aimed to eliminate [economical] dependence, and create a highly diversified economical base,”²⁷ economic nationalism refers to the public concern about the protection of one’s own (national) economy against more developed economies.²⁸ Concerns about the development and protection of the national economy re-acquired importance after the Cold War as has been argued by Christopher

²³ Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

²⁴ Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

²⁵ Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 89.

²⁶ Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 89.

²⁷ No author, “Diccionario de Economía y Finanzas,” (no date [cited 17 Apr. 2008] EUMEDNET): available from: <http://www.eumed.net/cursecon/dic/N.htm> [my translation].

²⁸ Mancur Olson, “Economic Nationalism and Economic Progress,” in *Politics and Rationality*, eds. William James Booth, Patrick James and Hudson Meadwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 217.

Baughn and Attila Yaprak.²⁹ Globalization also plays a major role in the spread of economic nationalism and its implementation by states; however this kind of nationalism must not be confounded with the protectionist practices implemented by states a long time ago. “[E]conomic nationalism is better understood as a generic phenomenon that can accommodate almost any doctrinal content, including economic liberalism. Economic nationalism is not so much about the economy as it is about the nation.”³⁰ Harry Binswanger extends the point by arguing that “[a]ccording to a recent poll, 80% of Americans think it their patriotic duty to give preference to American-made products.”³¹ I will not go deeper into this type of nationalism here, as it is not central to this thesis. Yet economical nationalism is just one of the multiple examples that can be found to show that referents for identity in which new or renewed collective identities are based, are not limited.

These new or renewed types of belonging demonstrate people’s dissatisfaction with the older ways of belonging related more closely with the state and the levels of ontological fear they experience that their belonging links with the state does not minimize. An additional new type of belonging, or category able to provide non-state identification, was introduced in chapter two when I discussed Ohmae’s work. Technology is becoming a central tool in what I would call a new way of belonging that facilitates new ways of relating to different people or groups than was possible before, and it facilitates relating to the same people in different ways. In this respect, Ohmae expands the point by claiming that “[t]here are now... millions of teenagers around the world, who having been raised in a multimedia-rich environment, have a lot more in common with each other than they do with members of older generations

²⁹ C. Christopher Baughn and Attila Yaprak, “Economic Nationalism: Conceptual and Empirical Development,” *Political Psychology* 17, no. 4 (December 1996): 759-78.

³⁰ Andreas Pickel, “Explaining and Explaining with, Economic Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no.1 (2003): 105-27.

³¹ Harry Binswanger, “‘Buy American’ is UN-American,” *Capitalism Magazine* (Sept. 5, 2003 [cited 17. Apr, 2008]Capitalism Magazine): available from: <http://www.capmag.com/article.asp?ID=576>

in their own cultures.”³² These Nintendo Kids,³³ as Ohmae decided to call them, are the proof that in our days “[n]othing need be accepted as unalterable *fait accompli*.”³⁴ And traditional ways of belonging related to state are not the exception, the new ways of belonging are already in construction. As the final part of this chapter will discuss, in the search for security where identities are becoming transformed in new and different ways, there will obviously be positive as well as negative outcomes derived from this situation. Before I can do so, however, it is useful to take a look at two very different examples of how non-state belonging centres have been created and have operated to provide some kind of non-state political identity to counter ontological fear and insecurity, for their members.

Below I present examples of two belonging links which had lost their connection with the state due to the increase of ontological fear that a weakened state produces. In the two cases that I explore, I will apply the theoretical framework discussed and developed earlier in this thesis concerning ontological fear and the decline of state to show that this framework is both plausible and practically useful. As a result of analyzing the Basque case and that of queer nationalism, I will be able to confirm that there the new ways of belonging are growing in importance because of their capacity to fulfil people’s needs for security and comfortable identification.

The Basque Case: A Renewed Belonging Link based on Ethnicity, Culture and Language

This is a much-studied case of nationalism and the dilemmas which emerged when people’s allegiance and security became invested in (re)new(ed) collective identities, other than those where the state is perceived as the main referent. As I argued in chapter two, the decline of the state has produced a weakening of the feelings of affiliation and allegiance to

³² Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, 15.

³³ Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, 35-7.

³⁴ Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, 36. [emphasis in the original].

the state. The point is captured perfectly by Horsman and Marshall when they affirm that “[i]f the glue that kept multi-ethnic nation-states together is weakened, the ties that bind co-religious, ethnic groups, or members of distinct cultural groups can only grow in strength.”³⁵ Ontological fear had been enhanced by the loss of a referent of stability and security, promoting the search for new ways of belonging able to give what people no longer find the state able to provide for them. As a result of new confidence being invested in new/renewed collective identities, the allegiance that people owed in the past to the state, have been modified too, and it is now placed in those new ways of belonging.

Nationalisms based on sets of cultural, linguistic, bloodlines, traditions and so on, are not a totally modern phenomenon. The persistence of the endurance of these ways of identification evidence that people are more satisfied and secure by having culture, language, traditions, a shared history, and bloodlines as referents for identity, than having a formal belonging tie (which implies the conferment of political rights and duties if we think of liberal democratic citizenship) where the state used as referent (and guarantor of those rights). Basque nationalism is a particularly interesting example of this kind of struggle in identification, not only because it illustrates many of the elements of a shift in belonging centres that I have talked about in this thesis, but also because it adds an additional dimension to them. That additional dimension concerns the struggle that the Basque nation has engaged in with the Spanish state *to be recognized* as an ethnic, linguistic, historical community diverse to the rest of the Spaniards³⁶—a point to which I return later.

A detailed historical account of how Basque nationalism emerged and evolved is not possible, or advised, to give in a thesis of this length and level. Nevertheless, there are several

³⁵ Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 187.

³⁶ Jeremy MacClancy, “Navarra,” in *Basque Politics and Nationalism on the Eve of the Millenium*, eds. William A. Douglass, Carmelo Urza, Linda White, and Joseba Zulaika (Reno: Nevada University Press, 1999), 27. For a historical defense of the Basque Nation see Agustín Chaho, “Viaje a Navarra durante la insurrección de los Vascos 1830-1835,” trans. Martín de Anguiozar (1976[cited 10 Apr. 2008]Euskomedia.org): available <http://www.euskomedia.org/PDFAnlt/riev/21098152.pdf> See also: Christiane Stallaert, *Etnogénesis y etnicidad en España: Una aproximación histórico-antropológica al casticismo* (Barcelona: Proyecto A Ediciones, 1998).

important points to highlight from this case that demonstrate the practical functioning of the ways in which some of the claims I have discussed are practically used.

Historically, the Basques claimed to be an ethnic and linguistic community diverse to the rest of Spaniards and even purer than them.³⁷ This claim has often been contested and even accused of being mere myths³⁸ to create and fortify the Basque nation. On the origins of the Basque country, G. Payne affirms that there “are several early ethnic groups in the Western Pyrenees area; their unit is based on language and culture rather than biology.”³⁹ We find a similar approach in Cameron Watson’s work. He considers that Basque claim for a different ethnicity is a myth because “Basque nationalism was specifically Bizkaian until 1897, when Arana began to conceive of its transcendence among the other Basque provinces.”⁴⁰ A more radical position is given by Jesús Azcona who considers that Basque nationalism intended in terms of ethnic differentiation is “an anthropological utopia.”⁴¹

Of course, that the Basque nation is partially a myth, an invented nation just as the American, French, English, German or Italian nations are, is an acceptable position to take since Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* became famous.⁴² Yet the validity of Basque identity cannot be discredited just because this has been constructed on myths. If the criteria to establish the validity of ‘nation’ took as its base ethnic homogeneity, the majority of contemporary states would qualify as utopias and myths. Given that, “[o]ntological security is maintained when home is able to provide a site of constancy in the social and material

³⁷ Stallaert, *Etnogénesis y etnicidad en España*, 76. Gershon Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Latvia and Estonia* (New York: State New York University, 1995), 98.

³⁸ Stanley G. Payne, *Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975), 9.

³⁹ Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 9.

⁴⁰ Cameron Watson, *Modern Basque History: Eighteen Century to the Present* (Reno: Nevada University Press, 2003) 191.

⁴¹ Jesús Azcona, *Etnia y nacionalismo vasco: Una aproximación desde la antropología* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial del Hombre, 1984).

⁴² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

environment,”⁴³ the use of myths and invented elements has as a goal to prove that social and material consistency, which—crucially for this thesis—is translated into security for people.

It is important to point out that these kinds of (mythical) affirmations are based on an essentialist position that identities have always existed in the same way they are now. Gellner radically disagrees with this conception and for that reason he asserted that,

[n]ations as natural, God-given way of classifying man, as an inherent tough long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one.⁴⁴

Identities cannot be fixed and remain the same forever. They are in a constant process of transformation and adaptation to changing contexts, changing needs, core values, ideals, and even people’s search for security.⁴⁵ Hence, Kinnvall has rightly argued that, “[g]oing back to an imagined past by using reconstructed symbols and cultural reference points is...a response to the destabilizing effects of changing patterns of global mobility and migration. It is an attempt to recreate a lost sense of security.”⁴⁶ Kinnvall makes this affirmation based on the contemporary global context; however, the Basque nation at the moment of its foundation and throughout its evolution has been involved in a context in which plenty of uncertainty and what seemed to be plenty of threats for the Basque identity have been persistent. I will return later to the point of external security and threats (real or invented). The point I want to make here is that the reasons that led to the construction of the Basque identity possess a parallel with the present conditions that produced the disruption of the old ways of belonging and the search for renewed ones.

⁴³ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

⁴⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), 47. [emphasis in the original].

⁴⁵ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 43.

⁴⁶ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

If it is correct that ontological fear, produced by the inadequacy of the Spanish state to provide for the needs of the Basque people, led to the invention and continual reconfiguration and reaffirmation of the Basque identity, the next step of my argument deals with the implications of ontological fear in the construction and evolution of Basque nationalism. I hope to show that a weakened Spanish state not only played the role as the *other* in the process of construction and evolution of the Basque nationalism, but also that the slackening of feelings of affiliation and allegiance to the state, the search for renewed, more psychologically fulfilling, modes of belonging has modified the allegiance of the Basque people with respect to how their collective identity relates to the Spanish state.

It will be remembered that I introduced this example by saying that the Basque nation has engaged in a struggle with the Spanish state *to be recognized* as an ethnic, linguistic, historical community diverse to the rest of the Spaniards.⁴⁷ An additional and important point to be made here is one that follows the social constructivist argument that identity is impossible without reference to an ‘other.’ In this case, that ‘other’ is the very state that is obstructing Basque self-determination as it has been recently asserted in the Ibarretxe Plan, which I discuss shortly.⁴⁸ What the Basque case adds to our discussion of avoiding ontological fear is that collective identity is not just discovered in finding new groups to accept us, take us in, provide a stable ‘place’ in the order of things that guides us in our social behaviour, provide a virtual or real place for us to put down roots and continue to share cultural practices and values. It is also discovered in having our group *recognised* (or at least attempting to) by other significant groups or powers. The non-state group identity centre in

⁴⁷ MacClancy, “Navarra,” 27. Also Chaho, “Viaje a Navarra durante la insurrección de los Vascos 1830-1835,” And Stallaert, *Etnogénesis y etnicidad en España*.

⁴⁸ See José J. Jiménez Sanchez, “Nationalism and the Spanish Dilemma: The Basque Case,” *Politics and Policy* vol. 34, no. 3 (September 2006): 532-55.

this case reaffirms its identity through that struggle, the Basques are identified, somehow, with their failure to be recognized politically in the way they desire.⁴⁹

The existence of an actor performing as *the other*, as I argued in the introduction of this thesis, both links and at the same time defines, separate collective identities. In this way the concept of the other makes the process of identification easier because it marks the divide between that-which-is-us and that-which-is-not-us ('them'). On this issue, Kinnvall argues that "individuals tend to favor their own group (ingroup) in relation to other groups (outgroups) even when the group formation per se is relatively meaningless."⁵⁰ For her, reaching identification is a question of individuals recognizing which group makes them feel more psychologically comfortable and materially secure with being part of a whole. This is the reason why the existence of the *other* is important in the construction of collective identities and the Basque case is not the exception.

The Basque's *other* is no one else but the Spanish nation (or at least the concept of it). The most the Spanish state looks for is to integrate the Basque Country; the most the Basques are doing is reaffirming the differences that divide them, which has implications for how easy or difficult coexistence might be. In fact, the recent agreements between the Spanish state and the Basque country have alleviated somewhat the tension of the *threatening other* between both nations, though not in a way that either party would really like and not in a way that settles the dispute over sovereignty that is ongoing in this case. In 1978 the Spanish state granted, by constitutional means, autonomy and the recognition as diverse political and

⁴⁹ It is not clear, however, how a successful outcome to the Basque separatist movement would affect the claims in this thesis. For the moment, if this thesis is correct, the suggestion would be that if the Ibarretxe Plan were successful and the Basque nation did become a self-determining state separate from Spain, then fairly soon we would find other forms or centres of belonging different from the (nation-)state springing up in the future to fill the gap that the state may not be able to supply.

⁵⁰ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 40.

administrative entities to the nationalities and regions compounding the Spanish state.⁵¹ The Basque country was recognized by the constitution as a “Historical Community,”⁵² therefore in 1979 the Basque Political Statute of Autonomy was ratified granting the Basque country the status of Autonomous Community and the power of self-governance (according in what it is disposed by the Spanish Constitution of 1978).⁵³ In 2005 the Basque Parliament presented the Basque Parliament's Proposal for Coexistence in the Basque Country (also known as *Plan Ibarretxe*)⁵⁴ to the Spanish Parliament; however the proposal was refused by the Spanish State in February 2005.⁵⁵

The Basques’ interpretation of the Spanish nation as *other/enemy* according to contemporary events, and thus an alleviation of the tension between both actors, can be noticed through the statistical information recollected by the *Euskobarómetro*.⁵⁶ Right after the refusal of the Ibarretxe Plan the *Euskobarómetro* of November 2005 registered a percentage of 40% of Basques defining themselves as Basque nationalists, while 53% considered themselves as non-nationalists.⁵⁷ After two years, Basque nationalists increased by 2% to reach 42% against 51% non-nationalists.⁵⁸ The increase in Basque people considering themselves as nationalist seems to confirm what the 2005 *Euskobarómetro* concluded concerning the refusal of the Ibarretxe Plan: nationalist Basques and non-nationalist consider it crucial to achieve a similar or a greater consensus concerning the possibility of self-

⁵¹ See “*Constitución Española de 27 de Diciembre de 1978*,” *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 311 (Dec. 29, 1978 [cited 11 Apr. 2008]) *Boletín Oficial del Estado*: available from http://www.boe.es/g/es/bases_datos/doc.php?coleccion=iberlex&id=1978/31229

⁵² “*Constitución Española de 27 de Diciembre de 1978*.”

⁵³ “Estatuto de Autonomía,” (2004[cited 11 Apr. 2008]) *Euzkadi.net*: available http://www.euskadi.net/r33-288/es/contenidos/informacion/estatuto_guernica/es_455/estatu_c.html

⁵⁴ See “*Propuesta de Estatuto Político de la Comunidad de Euskadi*,” (25 Oct. 2003 [cited 11 Apr. 2008]) *Gobierno vasco*: available http://www.nuevoestatutodeeuskadi.net/docs/estatutovasco_cas.pdf

⁵⁵ See Jiménez Sanchez, ‘Nationalism and the Spanish Dilemma,’ 540-544.

⁵⁶ Name of the sociological statistical survey conducted by the Euskal Herriko Unibersitatea every six months in the Basque Country.

⁵⁷ Francisco José Llera Ramos, “Euskobarómetro noviembre 2007,” *Euskobarómetro* (Nov.2005[cited 11 Apr. 2008]) *Euskal Herriko Unibersitatea*: available <http://www.ehu.es/cpvweb/paginas/euskos/euskob%202005-11.pdf>

⁵⁸ Llera Ramos, “Euskobarómetro noviembre 2007,”

government reforms.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the end of the conflict between Spain and the Basque country will not be easily achieved. I do not wish to suggest with this that existing or further Spanish constitutional concessions and granting of autonomous powers to the Basque Country will solve this historically difficult conflict. I merely wish to point out that while contemporary attempts to improve the relation between Spain and the Basque country is minimizing the Basque vision of the Spaniards as a threat, in the past the contrary happened. The Basque conception of Spanish nation as a ‘threatening other’ enhanced their ontological fear, reaffirmed their ethnic and cultural identity and galvanized their resistance to, and claims upon, the Spanish state.

Earlier I claimed that the Spanish state has not been a strong or stable enough referent for the Basque people to abandon their quest for self-government and pledge allegiance to the Spanish state. The next stage of my argument focuses on the relation between Basque identity and the Spanish state as a constant source of uncertainty and existential angst. As we shall see, the Spanish state has been much linked to the creation of a constantly uncertain panorama for Basque identity that has resulted in a renewal of this nation as a focal centre of belonging that is currently rivalling the Spanish state.

Of course, Basque nationalism is not entirely new. For Payne, the relationship between Basques and Spaniards “like that of Christian Spain as whole, essentially began in the aftermath of the Muslim conquest.”⁶⁰ The main purpose at the time was to make an alliance of both Catholic nations to carry out the Catholic Reconquest after the Arab invasion of Spain. This could be the beginning of a Hispano-Basque identity because the condition of the Arab conquest set a condition of otherness that made it possible to establish a link between Basques and the Castile kingdom as Catholics: a kind of religious alliance that became a

⁵⁹ Francisco José Llera Ramos, “Euskobarómetro noviembre 2007.”

⁶⁰ Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 11.

religious allegiance. There was a common project for both nations as Catholics and this was to expel the Muslim other or enemy.

In the process of overriding differences between two collective identities when these face a much more different *other*, Kinnvall establishes that “[i]ndividuals are said to be more likely to think of themselves as members of social groups under conditions in which that group membership maximizes the similarities between oneself and other group members.”⁶¹ However, at the end of the Reconquest, the belonging link between Basques and Castilians based on their mutual recognition as Catholics vanished and the Basques returned to their former belonging link based on the differences, rather than similarities, they had with those of Castilian ethnic origin. This belonging link shared more in common with the people inhabiting the French Pyrenees than with Castilians—presumably because this was able to provide a comfortable and secure identity. Furthermore, Castilian dominance over some Navarrese territories produced constant confrontations between Castilians and Basques. As a result, those confrontations contributed even more to the construction of (later-to-be) Spaniards as a threatening *other* and thus, the reaffirmation of Basques as different nation to the Castilian one.

The next decisive moment that distanced Spaniards and Basques concerned the Carlist Wars, which produced an uncertain panorama typically reigning in war periods, where the search for security becomes a major concern. Anthony David Smith’s argument that “[n]ationalism is the natural response of human beings whose social world has collapsed”⁶² became true for the construction of Basque identity. The Carlist Wars evidenced the Spanish collapse of the certain and established order which, as I have argued based on Kinnvall’s⁶³ and Giddens’s theories, is a key factor for the avoidance of ontological fear. The Basque

⁶¹ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

⁶² Anthony David Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nation and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 97.

⁶³ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

people then lost their “basic-trust”⁶⁴ in a world that they used to know when the war began. The lost security and stability would not, however, be recovered after the end of the Carlist war. The Carlist wars also evidenced a weakened Spanish kingdom that—in contrast to the contemporary decline of state—slackened Basque feeling of affiliation and allegiance to the Spanish kingdom in just the way the arguments for the decline of the state in chapter two suggest. The loss of the traditionalist band (to which Basques were allied) in the Carlist Wars resulted in an increment of the ontological fear of Basque people and the creation of an “abject,” personified by the Spaniards.

Recall from earlier in this thesis that abjection, according to Kinnvall, is “caused by that which disturbs identity, system, or order, such as traumatic changes in the light of globalization. Abject becomes a major ingredient of collective identity formation when the familiar “stranger” is suddenly recognized as a threat.”⁶⁵ It is precisely in the feeling of the Spanish as the abject and a threat on which Sabino Arana, one of the major fathers of Basque nationalism, based his claims of the Basque nation not only as a different nation to the Spanish one but a superior one.⁶⁶ From that moment, Basque identity not only faced the Spanish abject, it also had to face a modernizing panorama that, just as is happening now with globalization, became a source of uncertainty and insecurity.

Going deeper into this parallel, the industrialization of the Basque country promoted a certain lessening of the territorial demarcations similar to the present de-territorialization, and of course an increment of Spanish migration to the Basque country. The massive migration of Spaniards to the Basque country increased the conception of the Spaniards as a threat to Basque people. In other words, it reaffirmed the idea of Spaniards as abject to Basques. Consequently, Basque nationalism intensified when borders that have always been conceived

⁶⁴ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 38.

⁶⁵ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

⁶⁶ Stallaert, *Etnogénesis y etnicidad en España*, 77-82.

as primary “condition for existence”⁶⁷ of states and nations became porous. Massive migration became a major concern at the Basque country because the sudden increase of people traditionally considered as a threatening *others* enhanced the existential angst of both Basques and Spaniards. Basques experienced some kind of discomfort because, as Greg Noble argues, “the home is the place where, we typically say, we are most free to be ourselves.”⁶⁸ But when “home” registers a rapid settlement of strangers, existential angst insecurity increases. Moreover, given that those strangers were the abject, the Basque people looked desperately for a secure belonging link. This secure identity was then found in the ethnic, cultural and linguistic nationalism defended by Arana.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, despite economic growth the Spanish state was not able to find or project stability, certainty and security. According to Watson, “[t]he government led by Maura, faced challenges from the military, from the continued direct political action of anarchism, and regionally from Catalunya and Hegoalde.”⁶⁹ From this we can gather that, once again, the Spanish state proved unable to become a strong referent for identity, weakening Basque affiliation and allegiance to the Spanish state and reinforcing Basque nationalism. However, Spanish uncertainty was about to affect once again the Basque people. As consequence of the events at Guernica,⁷⁰ Basque identity became reinforced as well as the conception of Spaniards as a threat for Basque nation. Again during the Spanish Civil War, the Spanish state evidenced an internal division that led to a period of war that, as I argued, destroys “basic-trust”⁷¹ in the surrounding context. In its place, uncertainty dominates the panorama affecting the conception of collective and individual security. The bombs over

⁶⁷ Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 44.

⁶⁸ Greg Noble, “The Discomfort of Strangers: Racism, Incivility and Ontological Security in a Relaxed and Comfortable Nation,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26, no.1 (February-May 2005): 114.

⁶⁹ Cameron Watson, *Modern Basque History: Eighteen Century to the Present* (Reno: Nevada University Press, 2003.) 197.

⁷⁰ Guernica, a relevant city for Basque people, suffered an aerial raid performed by Spanish airplanes helped by Nazi volunteers. Events took place on April 26, 1937. For further reading see Pauliina Raento and Cameron Watson, “Gernika, Guernica, Guernica? Contested Meanings of a Basque Place,” *Political Geography* 19, no.6 (August 2000):707-36.

⁷¹ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 38.

Guernica in 1936 were not only a “spectacular and criminal attack”⁷² but a source and a new confirmation that the relation with a weak and conflictive Spanish state often experiencing uncertainty was not able to provide more secure and comfortable identification than Basque identity. In fact, on the strengthening of Basque nationalism, Elorza concludes that “[d]espite the persecution of their language and symbols, nationalism kept its hegemony over Basque society.”⁷³ The posterior appearance of the ETA seems to confirm that the Spanish state-as-weakened-state, so often involved in uncertainty and conflicts, was no longer a more significant referent for identity than the Basque one. On the contrary, based on shared national similarities rather than shared state-political interests, the Basque identity proved to be effective in avoiding the ontological fear and uncertainty that Spanish state has so often produced for the Basque people.

There are still strong criticisms about Basque nationalism and their reluctance to establish a stronger belonging link with the Spanish state. Basque nationalism is a huge dilemma⁷⁴ whose resolution does not seem to be an easy task. Despite the criticism made by Jesús Azcona⁷⁵ on a Basque return to real or invented elements to maintain their collective identity, Basque identity seems to have at least some chance of prevailing over the Spanish one in the Basque country. Azcona argues that there is “a desire of Basque culture to survive even if for this purpose is necessary to inject the sap of its old culture in the new ways of living.”⁷⁶ The survival of the Basque identity is rooted in the ontological fear and uncertainty that it has experienced during its history. Following Stuart Hall’s work, Kinnvall asserts that “if we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct

⁷² Antonio Elorza, “País Vasco, historia de una identidad,” *Júbilo* (no date [cited 10 Apr. 2008]Júbilo.es): available from <http://www.jubilo.es/asp/pagina.asp?IDPagina=465> [my translation].

⁷³ Elorza, “País Vasco, historia de una identidad.”

⁷⁴ As the title and central argument of Jiménez Sanchez’s, “Nationalism and the Spanish Dilemma,” recognizes.

⁷⁵ Jesús Azcona, *Etnia y nacionalismo vasco: Una aproximación desde la antropología* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial del Hombre, 1984).

⁷⁶ Azcona, *Etnia y nacionalismo vasco*, 15-6. [my translation].

a comforting story or narrative about the self about ourselves.”⁷⁷ Then the return to the “old” roots and sources of the Basque nationalism show how comfortable this “renewed” belonging link is for the Basque people.

The persistence of Basque nationalism shows how much ontological security and comfort that emphasizing the Basque identity is able to provide in comparison with the modern multicultural Spanish identity. Attempts to make Basque nationalism fit into a framework based on a “Spanish citizen,” as José Jiménez Sánchez proposes,⁷⁸ might be viable according to the current situation of stability that Spain achieved with its inclusion in the European Union. However, the fact that the Spanish have historically played the role of the *other* for the Basque people—and were not just a counterpart but an enemy, a threat, an abject—may undermine Jiménez Sanchez’s optimism. Basque identity does seem to verify that the vacuum left by the slackening of belonging links and allegiance to state can and have been successfully fulfilled by a renewed mode of belonging more able to provide secure and comfortable collective identification.

The Case of Queer Nationalism:

A New Belonging Link Based on Homosexual Preference

The next stage of my argument attempts to show that another new belonging link has been created around homosexual orientation which has, in some cases, proven to be more able to provide ontological security and comfortable identification than the old belonging links related to state. This section argues that the modern western states and their liberal democratic citizenship were not able to provide homosexuals a safe and secure environment in which they could feel sufficiently identified and integrated. Rejection, uncertainty and the feeling of not belonging to, nor having all the rights conferred by, liberal democratic citizenry has been

⁷⁷ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

⁷⁸ Jiménez Sánchez, “Nationalism and the Spanish Dilemma,” 550.

a constant in the history of these two categories of identification: liberal democratic citizenship and the gay community.

The decline of the state not only enhanced the ontological fear of homosexual community, it also provided the adequate conditions for queer nationalism to emerge and strengthen. The diminution of state borders' importance alongside a more intense use of technology constitute two major opportunities allowing the creation of a queer⁷⁹ collective identity and its spread. One of Kinnvall's conclusions is that an "individual's or group's identity always emerges in relation to others and in the context of specific opportunities and constraints."⁸⁰ Yet she writes as if this 'other' always needs to be physically present. In fact, queer identity fits better in the description that Blake E. Ashforth and Fred Mael made of what a "psychological group"⁸¹ is, because a queer nation is based on neither a face-to-face interaction with other members, nor their approval to achieve ontological security.⁸²

Queer nationalism is proving to be a new mode of collective identity and group belonging that successfully provides more ontological security and certainty than the traditional liberal democratic ways of political belonging related to the state. If, as I have argued, new ways of belonging are more ontologically secure because they are more able to adapt to the psychological needs of people⁸³ and circumstances surrounding them, then this should apply as much to identities based on sexual preference as it does to identities based on

⁷⁹ This is word refers to the "increasingly widely preferred [term] of gay and lesbian self-identification." Bob Nowlan, "We're here, We're Queer, We're Fabulous, Get Used to It!: (Radical Queer Politics and Culture in the 1990's)," *The Alternative Orange* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1994[cited 12 Apr. 2008]ETEXT) available:

http://www.etext.org/Politics/AlternativeOrange/3/v3n3_whwq.html

⁸⁰ Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism."

⁸¹ Blake E. Ashforth and Fred Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, ed. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 139.

⁸² Ashforth and Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," 139.

⁸³ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 38.

See also David L. Rousseau, *Identifying Threats and Threatening Identities: The Social Construction of Realism and Liberalism* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 40. Also Catarina Kinnvall: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *Political Psychology* 25, no.5 (Oct. 2004 [cited Aug 17th 2007] EBSCO): available from:

<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=21&hid=118&sid=2ab8402f-97c0-4d7a-8986-c7767a35b09a%40sessionmgr101>.

cultural, territorial, historical or ethnic similarities. “[S]ame-sex sexual interaction”⁸⁴ is an old-aged question⁸⁵ that has incited rejection from the heteronormative group, discriminatory practices, denial of basic and some citizenship rights (e.g., concerning same-sex marriage and inheritance) and major disinformation. Reaction to rejection has formed the main basis of the homosexual community for a very long time; homosexuals have been discriminated not only by society, state, and many religions, but also by other modes of belonging that challenge the traditional belonging link related with the state. In other words, queer nationalism has, paradoxically, been challenged by other types of nationalism that similarly attempt to bypass belonging ties with the state.⁸⁶ However, Jyoti Puri has found that there is a deep relation between questions of nationalism and sexual preference because, as both are part of the vast sources of identification, both are able to provide ontological security and comfortable identification. In Puri’s words, “[t]he most obvious reason, of course, to consider the connections between nationalisms and sexualities is that along with gender, race, and ethnicity, national and sexual identities are crucial markers of our selves.”⁸⁷ Sexual preference, as well as race, ethnicity, culture or religious beliefs, is a question much-related to the psychological dimension inherent to humans, and it is to these categories that individuals return when the external context lacks certainty.⁸⁸

Rejection constituted a very important marker in the construction and evolution of queer identity because it implies the idea of psychological homelessness.⁸⁹ The psychological idea of home is profoundly related to the concept of security because it is at home that the

⁸⁴ Nowlan, “We’re Here, We’re Queer, We’re Fabulous, Get Used to It!”

⁸⁵ For a historical perspective on homosexuality see: David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁸⁶ Jyoti Puri, “Nationalism Has a Lot to Do with It: Unraveling Questions of Nationalism and Transnationalism in Lesbian/Gay Studies,” in *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, eds. Diane Richardson and Steve Seidman (London: SAGE, 2002), 427-31.

⁸⁷ Puri, “Nationalism Has a Lot to Do with It,” 427.

⁸⁸ Kinnvall “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.” See also Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 33-4.

⁸⁹ Noble, “The Discomfort of Strangers,” 113-4.

individual can be themselves; home is a safe place to be myself.⁹⁰ Kinnvall might have added that, for some, home is the *only* place to be one's self. But it is still the case that, for many homosexuals living in modern western liberal societies, the true self cannot even emerge at home. No wonder, then, that a sense of belonging to a group that would not provide such obstructions to freedom of identity should seem so appealing. And no wonder, then, that homosexuals have strived so hard to create these centres of belonging. Even liberal democratic states have been unable to provide adequate conditions for homosexuals to feel at home when fighting for the cause of their group identity and group rights through formal (thin) liberal democratic citizenship channels. For sure, as a liberal citizen one can vote for gay rights, maybe eventually even getting a result. But there is undoubtedly much more psychological fulfilment in pursuing group rights and in performing a group identity, through participating in, belonging to, and being fully accepted by a gay community.

Despite the fact that homosexuality is not a new question, it has experienced harsher times of rejection often said to begin in the Middle Ages⁹¹ and continuing until approximately the 1990s. It was then that queer nationalism emerged in the attempt to create and maintain a homosexual 'community'—a *group* identity—that avoided ontological fear implicit in the rejection homosexuals have customarily received.⁹² Homosexuality is not, of course, a new practice and its origins can be traced to before the time of the ancient Greeks.⁹³ At that time, homosexual preference was not so criticised. Nevertheless, in the Middle Ages where political life was still so entangled with religious beliefs that homosexual practices and preferences⁹⁴ were condemned. When the Enlightenment began and tried to abate superstitions and beliefs through reason, the concept of homosexuality transformed from been considered a sin to the

⁹⁰ Kinnvall "Globalization and Religious Nationalism."

⁹¹ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 91-168.

⁹² Scott Bravmann, "Postmodernism and Queer Identities," in *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, eds. Diane Richardson and Steve Seidman (London: SAGE, 2002), 335.

⁹³ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁹⁴ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 94 .

notion of a pathology, a term that implied illness⁹⁵ and “abnormality.” This new high peak of intolerance about “same-sex sexual interaction”⁹⁶ led to the social discrimination of homosexuals who were referred to by “normal” people as “distorted.” Rejection and discrimination would then constitute an important source for uncertainty and ontological fear for homosexuals of that time. The idea of a gay ‘community’ in which a ‘gay or LGBT’⁹⁷ group identity’ is implicit is nevertheless a contemporary idea.

Daily positive routines as Kinnvall⁹⁸ and Jim Marlow⁹⁹ have asserted lead to a basic trust in one’s surrounding world and in the rest of people living in it. In this respect Giddens clearly notes that “[i]n so far as they concern the basic substance of everyday interaction – through control of bodily gesture, the face and the gaze, and the use of language – they [rituals] touch on the most basic aspects of ontological security.”¹⁰⁰ In consequence, rejection and discrimination as daily routines produce the contrary effect to positive routines, this is to say uncertainty, and fear of not belonging.

Among the first theories of homosexuality was that of Heinrich Ulrichs¹⁰¹ who dedicated most of his life to defend the claim that homosexuality was neither an illness, nor a sin. His works are central to the construction of the queer collective identity. Ulrich’s claim of the existence of a “Third Sex”¹⁰² different to “the masculine” and “the feminine” (both of which contemporary queer theory also designates as imaginaries or constructions) promoted one of the first modern backgrounds for the construction of the varied category of

⁹⁵ Richard Parker, “Masculinity, Femininity and Homosexuality: On the Anthropological Interpretation of Sexual Meanings in Brazil,” *Anthropology and Homosexual Behavior* 11, no 12 (Summer 1985): 158. Also Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 45. And David F. Greenberg and Marcia H. Bystryn, “Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Male Homosexuality,” in *Queer Theory/Sociology*, ed. Steve Seidman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 88-92.

⁹⁶ Nowlan, “We’re here, We’re Queer, We’re Fabulous, Get Used to It!”

⁹⁷ LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-sexual (sometimes Transvestite).

⁹⁸ Kinnvall “Globalization and Religious Nationalism.”

⁹⁹ Jim Marlow, “Governmentality, Ontological Security and Ideational Stability: Preliminary Observations on the Manner, Ritual and Logic of a Particular Art of Government,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 247.

¹⁰⁰ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 47.

¹⁰¹ Hubert Kennedy, “Karl Heinrich Ulrichs: First Theorist of Homosexuality,” in *Sciences and Homosexualities*, ed. Vernon Rosario (New York: Routledge, 1997), 26-45.

¹⁰² Kennedy, “Karl Heinrich Ulrichs: First Theorist of Homosexuality,” 26-45.

identification. Ulrich promoted the awareness that homosexual people were not abnormal, sick or sinner members of a collective identity related to state or to other groups of identification. They were, in his view, a diverse collective identity. The homosexual's acquisition of consciousness concerning their sexual preference as a category over which a collective identity could be constructed is a relevant first step toward ontological security because "[t]o be ontologically secure is to possess... 'answers' to fundamental existential questions."¹⁰³

However, the real construction of a collective identity based on homosexual preference still had a long way to go before its creation, meanwhile facing discrimination that this time served to reaffirm the homosexual "community's" conviction of as a distinctive identity. Two of the most difficult obstacles that challenged the homosexual community were the Nazi extermination¹⁰⁴ and the aftermath of the Second World War. A period which seemed to be reedited into "the fiction of individual identity as a solid building sustained in a stable work, (patriarchal) long-lasting family relations and relatively cultural homogeneous nations."¹⁰⁵ In the world after this war, women, ethnically diverse communities and the homosexual community seemed not to automatically return to the 'place' in the order of things they had once had, whether that 'place' was publicly or privately given. However, this situation would not continue for a long time for homosexual community, not even for women and ethnically diverse groups. The personification of "straight" people—particularly men, for whom there existed a definite 'place' in the liberal democratic universe—as the *other* fortified even more the conviction of the homosexual community that there must be a different way of identification that they could feel comfortable belonging to, and to which they could turn when mobilizing to achieve collective goals. The dialogue between 'the queer self and the

¹⁰³ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 47.

¹⁰⁴ Greenberg and Bystryn, "Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Male Homosexuality", 94.

¹⁰⁵ Carlos Revilla, "Los anclajes de la identidad personal," *Athenea Digital* 4(Autumn 2003[cited 11 Apr. 2008]Directory of Open Access Journal): available <http://antalya.uab.es/athenea/num4/revilla.pdf>

straight other' led during the subsequent decades to the reconfiguration of "symbols...and chosen traumas"¹⁰⁶ and the later construction of queer identity in the 1990s.

After homosexual awareness of a "distinctive homosexual identity"¹⁰⁷ captured massive attention the homosexual community realized the need of establishing a collective identity based on the "same-sex sexual interaction,"¹⁰⁸ as well as the need for a "home" to feel free and comfortable.¹⁰⁹ However, because homosexuality is not a condition limited by territorial borders, the homosexual community faced the dilemma of constructing a global community able to provide identification to the homosexual around the world, but not always face-to-face or side-by-side.

Up to this point I have argued that the state did play an important role in the construction and strengthening of queer collective identity. Nevertheless, the declining situation of state not only enhanced the ontological fear experienced by the homosexual community, it also provided very opportunities and tools required to build an alternative, new mode of belonging to rival the state's almost exclusive control of gay rights and practices and what is to be considered "normal." As I established earlier, the waning importance of geographical borders and technology are two deeply related processes.¹¹⁰ With the decline of state, the strengthening of queer nation, which fits into the definition of a "psychological group,"¹¹¹ and the advent of better telecommunications and technology, the face-to-face dynamic of past collectivities is no longer necessary. "Radio, and telecommunications cross borders effortlessly, beaming information and images into homes on either side of a concrete divide."¹¹² With the conformation of distinctive groups based on technology¹¹³ rather than

¹⁰⁶ Kinnvall "Globalization and Religious Nationalism."

¹⁰⁷ Bravmann, "Postmodernism and Queer Identities," 335.

¹⁰⁸ Nowlan, "We're here, We're Queer, We're Fabulous, Get Used to It!"

¹⁰⁹ Noble, "The Discomfort of Strangers." 113-4.

¹¹⁰ Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 47.

¹¹¹ Ashforth and Mael, "Social Identity Theory and the Organization," 139.

¹¹² Horsman & Marshall, *After the Nation-State*, 48.

citizenship, geographical proximity or cultural affinities, technology has been used to back the needs of homosexuals from around the world to communicate, find information, share ideas, beliefs, values and even establish or reinforce a strong belonging link with a queer identity able to provide ontological security.

This new kind of identity based on homosexual preference as a distinctive category of identification does not seek for their acceptance in other kinds of collective identities. On the contrary, as Nowlan remarks, queer identity is based on “queerity— or more precisely, intervention at the level of and directed against ‘(hetero)normal’ regimes for defining conceivable, desirable, and possible kinds and forms of (social-) sexual identity (and activity).”¹¹⁴ The aim of the new queer collective identity is the same of the other new ways of belonging: to provide a comfortable and ontologically secure identity. The point relates to Huysmans work where “interpreting security as a thick signifier brings us to an understanding of how the category ‘security’ articulates a particular way of organizing forms of life.”¹¹⁵ In this case, the search for ontological security drove to a new way of organizing life and a new way of belonging able to provide the security that the state could not, or would not, consistently offer to the homosexual community. For queer nationalism, the slackening of feelings of affiliation and allegiance to the state began at a lower level than with other new ways of belonging and the decline of the state has also affected queer nationalism in a diverse way. The decline of the state not only enhanced uncertainty and ontological fear of homosexual community, or merely evidenced that state was not an adequate referent of stability and certainty. It also confirmed the diversity of the queer community and finally gave it the tools to construct a new collective identity.

¹¹³ Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1996), 35-6.

¹¹⁴ Nowlan, “We’re here, We’re Queer, We’re Fabulous, Get Used to It!”

¹¹⁵ Jef Huysmans, “Security! What Do You Mean?: From Concept to Thick Signifier,” *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no.2 (1998 [cited 11 Apr. 2008] Sage Journals Online): available from: <http://ejt.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/4/2/226>

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented empirical confirmation of the theoretical arguments I have explored and developed in this thesis. I used two cases to verify my hypothesis that the slackening of feelings of affiliation and allegiance to the state I have examined has indeed led to the search for new (or renewed) modes of belonging that have certainly modified the allegiance and belonging links that these groups feel in their current relationships to the state. The two examples were chosen to demonstrate, in different ways, how divergent centres of belonging have been strengthened by the decline of the state enough to provide the very ontological security that the state now finds so difficult to provide. The examples of Basque nationalism and queer nationalism should demonstrate how ways of belonging different to, and often rivalrous to, the traditional ways of belonging to the state, are more successfully fulfilling one of major people's concern, ontologically secure identities. These examples confirmed my subhypothesis by showing that new ways of identification are reconfiguring collective identities around categories of identification diverse to state, and they illustrated a couple of the ways that this may be achieved. I concluded that achieving a secure identity capable of fitting in with rapidly-changing contemporary circumstances also seems necessary if a group is to reach a better conception of what is one's place and role in the complex net of collective identities and social relations that accompany the globalized world.