

Towards a Diasporic and Transnational Reading of Basque Identities in Time, Space and History

Pedro J. Oiarzabal
Center for Basque Studies
University of Nevada, Reno

“Prepared for delivery at the 2004 Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Las Vegas, Nevada October 7-9, 2004”

Introduction

Contemporary Basque identities are being reformulated in a globalized, transnational and diasporic context, emphasizing their distinctive content. Today, millions of Basques with an institutionalized presence in twenty countries share a collective identity worldwide. They are engaged in patterns of behavior and practices that theorists such as Totoricagüena (2000; 2003a; 2004) describe as ‘transnational’ and ‘diasporic’. This is also true not only for contemporary Basques but for those of past eras. However, Basque communities were not historically theorized as such. I argue that classical mainstream disciplinary approaches to identity and social formation were too dependent on the salience of the modern nation building and state configuration to notice alternative social forms of organization and spaces, which have preceded it, and are still cohabiting with the modern traditional national society and space.

Furthermore, I provide a concrete application of diaspora and transnational paradigms, as “fresh” approaches to understand the historical trajectory of Basque transoceanic/s spatial identities within the context of the collapse of the Hispanic Empire, the process of Spanish “nation and state formation,” and the “ever-present” Vascongadas/Basque question, between 1808 and c1903. Both concepts transcend the traditional framework of “nation-state” centered analysis offering alternative approaches toward Basque identities contextualized in space and time; i.e., in the historical processes of Modernity and the “nation-state” formation of Spain.

Therefore, I propose the concept of diaspora as a unit of analysis of cross-border and transnational Basque identities and relations structured “outside the process of history” of the modern existence of the Spanish multi-national-state (center-periphery paradigm) (Butler, 2001). History as a discipline assumed the enterprise of constructing the citizens of the state as the historical subjects of its modern discourse, that is, the construction of national histories: history of Spain, France, or Germany alongside the history of the Spanish, French or German people. Cánovas del Castillo stated, “if people without history are happy, the Basques have been happy for centuries and centuries.”¹ Similarly, the Basque incipient modern nationalist movement appropriated History to reconstruct Basque people as national, active and visible subjects of its own particular project of “nation-state” building. It was keen to claim the Basques as national-political-cultural “subjects of history” in its own way. “Outside history” does not refer to a timeless, unchanging process of the modern

¹ Cánovas del Castillo (1828-1897) was President of Spain. Cited in de Unamuno, Miguel. “Alma vasca.” *Alma Española*, Año II, No. 10, (Enero 1904): 3-5.

globalization era. It refers to the existence of identities and their discourses that never became fully integrated into the modernist project of conformation of (assumed) national homogeneous identities, and thereby remained sub-emerged and marginal within the national-cultural society; or that those were totally excluded of such a project e.g., migrants, nomadic peoples, colonized peoples, women. In other words, “outside history” signifies those identities that preceded the process of politico-cultural nationalization of identities, and cohabit with it. That is not about a people without history but a people found outside the modernist history of national peoples who are “written out” from the mainstream hegemonic historiography (Hall, 1997: 183).

This will require a “historical retrieval” (R. Smith, 2000), and a periodization of the Basque diaspora/s from transoceanic/s communities in the Hispanic Monarchy 1492-1820s to Basque transnational ‘nationalized’ communities, during several periods, 1820s-1903 (Roudometof, 2000) in the Spanish modern era². A. D. Smith (1992: 126) argues that one of the main goals of nationalist movements was/is to turn a “hitherto passive ethnies into an ethno-political community, a subject of history.”

1. Modernity: time, space and identity

2.1. On the Western historiographical conception of modernity: time and “nation-state”

Modernity, as an historical period, entailed among many other social changes, the cultural project of Enlightenment and the growth of the industrial era into a dominant capitalist society. The conception of Western history was born as a discipline of the past, as both process and product, as much an imaginative representation of the past as it is of conveying the “truth.” Modernity meant the rupture of the perception and an evaluation of the world and the past, as well as producing a new historical consciousness and a new sense of ‘time-space’ belonging (Turner, 1990). Within the industrial era, there was a possibility for a collective elaboration of a human discourse of time detached from the natural framework of the pre-industrial era. The historiography of modern traditions was based on the essential ideas of full objectivity, universality, and unidirectional teleology of the human past. It also implied the possibility to establish relations of causality (cause-and-effect relationships) and principles of regularity among the studied phenomena. There was an implicit causal explanation in the constructed stories/narratives through the sequential order of the events as they were selected and extracted from the documents. The written culture imposed itself as the main expression of this rational culture over an oral tradition embedded in the premodern era. Furthermore, it was directed to the future effects of action: for example, a universal civilizing and modernizing project through a European imperialist expansion in the nineteenth-century.

History was possible for to two dimensions of human life: the repetition of the identical (the thesis of subject), and the succession of the different (the thesis of

² The Basque presence in *las Americas* and its identity formation is related not only to the Hispanic Monarchy but also to the French and Portuguese Empires as well as development, particularly, of the French state during the modern era. The French Empire expanded to the New World (e.g., Louisiana, the Caribbean area, and Canada) and the Portuguese one to Brazil mainly. In 1822, Brazil settled peacefully its independence from Portugal. In 1885, a Basque organization called *Euskaldunak Orok Bat*, was established in Rio de Janeiro. Due to self-imposed constraints, I focus only on the Basque diasporic and transnational experiences and practices related to the Hispanic World and the Spanish state.

History) (Vidal Jiménez, 1999). The element that connected both dimensions was the idea of progress (time as a coherent, linear, continual, narrative movement). Identities and cultural identities were historically specific, that is, bound to an exact time and place. Modernity involved rationality and a new comprehensive order, providing lasting, stable, and predictable foundations for individual actions and choices. Positivist social sciences assumed that social reality could be explained in rational terms because, according to them, humans always act rationally. Reality was objective. This was held not as a paradigm but as the “truth” (Babbie, 2001). The idea of progress was the unilateral vision of history based on an absolute technological determinism: a concept of unlimited economic growth based on a continuous technological innovation, while moving towards a desirable and foreseeable future (a teleological end). The present was just a link between the past (accumulative experience of continuity) and the future (expectations). In sum, the social and historical time was perceived as continuous, ascending, irreversible, necessary, unitary, universal, and foreseeable (Giddens, 1990; Vidal Jiménez, 1999).

The Western “nation-state” model became the “container” for the aforementioned modern order system in Europe and throughout the world. A world formed by “nation-states” – a world of “polycentric uniqueness”; unique “nation-states” of unique and irreplaceable national cultures and pasts (A. D. Smith, 1992: 84). The state became the only recognized source of inter-national legitimacy (a world system of states). Mainstream academic disciplines such as anthropology, history or sociology contributed intensively to this governing system of modernity. The modern social sciences’ hegemonic discourses perceived the “nation-state” as the naturally given and basic unit of social analysis: a “compartmentalization of the social science project into different [territorial] ‘national academic fields’” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: 302, 306). These authors define this phenomenon as “methodological nationalism,” i.e., “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world.”

Modernization implies a process by which people disengage from pre-industrial attachments (or “primordial ties” according to primordialists such as Connor, 1994) and engage in associations, nations and states, through new attachments. The nation becomes the main domain of identity. As Cohen (1997a: 175) states in other words, “what nineteenth-century nationalists wanted was a “space” for each “race,” a territorializing of each social identity.” The nationalist doctrine enforced the combination on nation and state, and culture and power, establishing the identification between nation and culture, and state and power. Therefore, national identity became the source of the state power and the state became the safe-keeper of the national culture, the justification for sovereignty (Jusdanis, 1996: 142; see also Malkki, 1992). Citizenship in the “nation-state” became the “natural” and ideal way of being and belonging, while excluding those “others” (“the outsiders” e.g., foreigners and minorities within) who did not participate of the newly re/constructed national society, history and symbolism. This national society was viewed as a free, static, immutable, uniform, united cohesive territorial/spatial, and as an internal homogeneous social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identity. According to A. D. Smith (1992: 74) the main elements of the nationalist ideology were/are the nation as the source of all political and social power while stating that “loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances,” that is, the exclusive identification of the nationals with the nation “if they want to be free,” according to a “rational self-interest” (Connor, 2002). Consequently, the “nation-state” attempted to suppress and/or

overlay cultural and political differences of heterogeneous populations within its borders. The state became a system of inclusion and exclusion by regulating migration policy and citizens rights (Bauman, 1991: 64). It regulated who was and who was not part of the nation as a territorial and political community (nationals versus non-nationals, foreigners; e.g., immigrants). This exclusion was also extended to those nationals residing outside the “national territory” – “nationals outside the homeland were deemed to be ‘lost’” (A. D. Smith, 1992: 75).

2.1. A critical account of modernity

Bauman (1991, 1992, 1997) argues that the firm foundations of modernity – the universalizing grand rational narratives, the absolutist claims of Enlightenment, the “nation-state,” history itself, and the epistemological and ideological motivations of the social sciences in general, are being called into question by “uncertainty, ambiguity, and inconsistency.” The late-modern (following Fredric Jameson’s terminology) “global” world (others refer to it as “post-modernity”; Bauman, 1991, 1992; Lyon, 1994) challenges Modernity and attempts to deconstruct the assumptions of its matrix discourses, for example in relation to the role of academic disciplines such as history, and in the meanings of identity, culture and nation.

History suffers the impact of a deep crisis of comprehension of the world as a product of rationality, detachment, and objectivity. The liberal ideology and culture of Modernity are no longer viewed as being lead by rationality and progress (universality and objectivity –understood as neutrality, commitment to the ‘truth’, and independent of interpretation-; Haskell, 1990). Now, knowledge is just considered another ideological perspective. The great rationalistic theories are gradually replaced by particularistic and relativistic projects. Furthermore, the lineal connection between the events and the evolution of universal human categories disappear, as “post-modern” history is the sum of interruptions/ruptures and discontinuities. In the “post-modern” period a new specific temporal category is created, i.e., variation. A new conception of time is imposed, which is multi-dimensional, ambiguous, reversible, and polyvalent.

At the same time, the national political and cultural frontiers are becoming blurred and the very idea of the “nation-state,” as the self-evident “container” for social, economic, and cultural life and identity is being seriously questioned (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Cultures and peoples seem to be no longer tied to a unique territorial place and a localized community. The late-modern approach towards identity differs from the classical modern one as it is argued that identity is not exclusively confined to a ‘national territory’ (Giddens, 1991). It is not an ‘objective’ reality independent of one ‘subjective’ experience: Nothing is ‘objective’; thereby everything is ‘subjective’. There is not a unique way to describe objectively the reality in its totality, the facts, the different existing realities, the different existing truths. It is about interpretation. “What was regarded as objectivity in Western Social Science was actually an agreement primarily among white middle-class European men. Other minority experiences have no room in that agreed reality” (Babbie, 2001: 51). Currently, it is argued that identity is based on the individual’s subjective definition of personal identity (individual’s own narrative –the narrative self-). That is, identity as a subjective discursive production –self-identification, versus imposed ascriptions (see Totoricagüena, 2000: 28, 32, 34; 2003a; 2004). In sum, the traditional “western taxonomy” on imposed neatly identity categories –race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, kinship-, established according to a “set of predetermined labels,” are being

deconstructed slowly (Meskell, 2001: 187-188). Identities began to be redefined as ever-changing, overlapping, multiple, mobile, contested, and negotiable, “never completed” (Hall, 1992; Gilroy, 1993). Identities are viewed as “an on-going project of social construction” through social interaction (identity as an interactional accomplishment, Schneider, 2003) as well as ways of interpretation (Sökefeld, 2002; Giddens, 1991).

Classical social approaches and theories on migration focusing particularly on “immigrants integration” (e.g., the Chicago School of Sociology; Sanberg’s, 1974, “straight line theory”; Alba and Nee, 1997), and state policy-makers assumed that migrants and their descendants tend to break their ties and loyalties to their states of origin due to processes of integration, or “inevitable” assimilation and acculturation of migrants into their new uniform ‘homogeneous’ host societies (turning immigrants into ‘nationals’). That is, immigrants become described “as potential [national] security risks, as culturally others, as socially marginal and as an exception to the rule of territorial confinement.” Consequently, “all evidence of transnational connections were defined as transitory phenomena that would disappear in the wake of a natural process of assimilation” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: 310-311, 317). By the end of the Cold War, Western social scientists began to challenge severely those assumptions. New approaches which include diaspora and transnationalism, contributed to this challenge: not all immigrants did become assimilated and many were tied to their homelands. Heisler (2001: 237) affirms that “migration tends to attenuate territorial sovereignty, monolithic order and identitive solidarity” (see also Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Gordon 1964). In other words, migration confronts and alters what Albert et al (eds. 2001) coin as “identities-borders-orders”; understood as territorial identities demarcated by a conventional “nation-state” border where a specific socio-political order has been established (see Vertovec, 2003). Some of the reasons that have challenged the modernity assumptions related to space and identity are:

- A. The awareness of transnationalism and cultural hybridity inflicted by the processes of contemporary forms of globalization (Morley & Robins, 1995; Friedland & Boden, 1995; Glick Schiller, 1999). The concept of transnationalism is defined as a “process involving cultural practices and experiences that are no longer confined within state boundaries and local territoriality bound traditions (conventionally understood as representing the authentic culture of people)” (Roudometof, 2000: 362) (see also Basch et al., 1994)³.
- B. “Nation-states,” regions, and even communities cannot longer be regarded as a “natural” bounded place or territory (an identity tied to a particular place): “what they [nationalists] have got instead is a chain of cosmopolitan cities and an increasing proliferation of subnational and transnational identities that

³ Some of the reasons that are increasing our awareness are: Increasing migrant’s movements across national borders; the influence of non-state actors at a trans-, sub-, and supra-national level; transnational character of capitalist accumulation; and the new information and communication technologies once confined and designed to produce national cultures were no longer obeying these fixed boundaries. These technologies provoke a disruption of place as a self-evident reference for cultural distinctiveness and belonging: creating a global interconnected and shared space (Giddens, 1990). Echoing Clifford Geertz’s reference of cultures as “*webs of significance*,” Zulaika (2000: 6-7) points out “*the new technologies of the Internet have suddenly forced upon us a new awareness of the extent to which cultures are all encompassing webs of meaning and information.*”

cannot easily be contained in the nation-state system” (Cohen, 1997a: 175). Postmodern anthropologists (Appadurai, 1990, 1991), and sociologists began defining social and cultural construction-production, and reconstruction-reproduction as transnational, dislocated, diasporic, uprooted, and deterritorialized, i.e., a “topsy-turvy world” (Brunn, 2001).

In this sense, Appadurai (1990) defines this ‘deterritorialization’ and rootlessness of culture and identity, as the transformation of the modern conception of ‘place’ (characterized by territory, history and continuity) to ‘space’ (not described by territory, potentially global and dispersed) as the basis for cultural reproduction. This author uproots the notion of culture from its identification with a particular place. The territory loses its weight as a determinant element to conform criteria of belonging, while the possibilities of exchange of identitarian qualities (values, attitudes, beliefs), more intangible and symbolic, expand. Moreover, Perlmutter (1991) “depicts the world as being organized vertically by nation-states and regions, but horizontally by an overlapping, permeable, multiple systems of interactions –communities not of place but of interest” (see also Jusdanis, 1996).

2. The Basque “ethno-diaspora/s” and transnational spaces

To what extent do overseas Basques constitute “ethno-diaspora/s”? How and to what extent do Basques outside the Basque homeland develop a strong sense of separate diasporic and transnational consciousness? Answering these questions depends partially on the definition of the term ‘diaspora’. Kimt & Lubkemann (2002: 150-151) argue that “the meaning of diasporic consciousness involves an interplay among many different levels of social organization, from the familial and the local to the state and the supranational [...] Identity becomes a multisited and multilevel negotiation [...] Ultimately, the extent to which local identities become more or less diasporic depends on the complex interplay among local-level, identity micro-politics and the macro-politics of multiple state and the supranational identities.”

Following Tölölyan (1996: 14), Glick Schiller (1999), and Sheffer (1999), I define “ethno-diasporas”⁴ or “national diasporas” as scattered deterritorialized ethnic people that form a distinctive collective identity to their host societies’ dominant culture, where they have instituted specific “ethno-diaspora” social identities, institutions and networks across spaces and over time. According to this definition, Basques do constitute “ethno-diasporas,” and furthermore, they constitute historical “ethno-diasporas” as I will evidence in the following pages. I consider Basque “ethno-diasporas,” as plural cultural realities, not as monolithic and homogeneous communities. They integrate and accommodate migrants from diverse times, generations (consecutive or not) and regional places who bring their own sense of Basqueness and thereby help to reshape existing meanings of identity within their new host Basque diasporic communities (see Butler, 2001; Schnapper, 1999).

Glick Schiller et al (1992a: 1) introduced for the first time the concept of transnationalism as a new analytic framework for understanding migration past and present. The authors define it as a process “by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement” (see also Glick Schiller et al, 1992b; and Glick Schiller, 1999). Transnationalism is also

⁴ Ethnic, derived from the Greek word “ethnos,” is defined as a group characterized by common descent, ancestry. That is a nation according to Connor (1994, 2002) –a “*gemeinschaft*,” an association resting upon a sense of kinship, real or imagined”-.

defined as “the capacity to shift the frame and move between varying range of foci, the capacity to handle a range of symbolic material out of which various identities can be formed and reformed in different situations, which is relevant in the contemporary global situation” (Featherstone, 1995: 110). It refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the border of states (e.g., transmigration) (Klint & Lubkemann, 2002: 152). In this sense, Basques are physically connected to the host countries where they currently live and emotionally and psychologically connected to an ancestral homeland (Totoricagüena, 2000; 2003a; 2004). Roudometof (2000: 365-366) strongly argues that transnationalism is inherently connected to the worldwide international system of nations and states formed since the end of the nineteenth-century, and consequently “it is only after populations were bounded and nationalized that we can speak of people being “out of place” –transmigrants, migrants, refugees, and other forms of transnational peoples.” However, other authors (Foner, 1997; Karim, 1998; R. Smith, 2000; Vertovec, 1999) sustain those transnational practices as long-distances networks precede the formation of the “nation-state” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: 324).

I argue not only about the historical continuity of Basque identities, the reinvention of their overlapping traditions (shared cultural past), but also about the formation and maintenance of those identities as transmigrants, deterritorialized, and diasporic communities for over five hundred years in the New World. There are compelling arguments that specify Basque collective actions and transoceanic/s networks (transnational since the creation of “nation-states” according to Roudometof’s aforementioned arguments) established along likely cohesive ethnic/kinships (or collective cultural, sentimental ties –emotional commitment-) lines, real or imagined, that linked Basque communities and the homeland throughout the Hispanic Empire, the Old and New Worlds since 1500s (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975). I evidence these arguments by specifying those collective actions networks. Those multi-directional networks (from individual to individual, from village to village, from institutions such as Basque diaspora Centers to homeland institutions) triggered a chain migration between two worlds that lasted over five hundred years. America became idealized as “el Dorado” in the imagination of the homeland Basques. It was portrayed as the place to quickly become rich (“hacer las Americas”). The Basque “adventurer,” the “indianuak” figure, was replaced later by the images of the “Amerikanuak,” as the pragmatic and realistic new “adventurers” whose primary goal was to save money to go back home (Pescador, 2004). Subsequent Basque migrations have benefited from the important positive social status of the Basques as a collectivity and the existence of an institutional network that supported the newly arrived immigrants and help them to adapt to the new ways of the host societies.

Furthermore, I focus on the interconnectedness of both “worlds,” and the impact of the nationalization processes of the Spanish state and the American territories, the political mayhem of the Carlist Wars, the fuerismo and incipient nationalist ideologies. Interconnectedness is somehow viewed as a contemporary consequence of the globalization processes and the direct impact of new technological improvements. However, it is not a new occurrence. The interrelation and communication between both sides of the Atlantic were a norm rather than an exception due to the new successive waves of immigrants (particularly between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries), repatriates, exiles and refugees, epistolary communication, and oral literature, Particularly, the propagandistic written literature developed firstly

by the Carlismo, fuerismo, liberalism⁵, and later on by Spanish and Basque nationalist principles (the later since the beginning of the twentieth-century), contributed to interconnected peoples across space and time, while enhancing the imagination of those Basque and their descendants as part of a wider “Basque community.” That is, a Basque “long distance nationalism” (Anderson, 1991: 327) understood as “the ideology of belonging that extends homeland politics into transnational social fields” which “links together people living in various geographic locations and motivates them to action in relation to an ancestral territory and its government” promoting a “trans-border citizenry” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002: 316-323). According to Toticagüena (2004: 35, 69) by 1894, the Basque nationalist ideology was “widely known” in the diaspora “as printed in Basque newspapers in Argentina [...] By the early 1900s there were several Basque periodical consistently published in the Americas that promoted the fueros and ethnonationalist ideas.”⁶

A much different matter is the one related to the elusive meanings of Basqueness throughout time. I argue that every single meaning given to the conceptualization of Basqueness is an historical construct tailored to its spatial and temporal context (identity narratives of belonging and being). It is not until the end of the nineteenth-century (particularly after 1898 in the Spanish case) we are confronted with the first attempts of political and cultural reductionism and nationalization of local cultural collective identities that we become aware of the antagonistic clear-cut Spanish/French versus Basque identities. Prior to this simplistic identification of cultural identity with political identity during the modernity era, identities were understood not as a constraint of possibilities, but as inter-changeable, and overlapping world of opportunities. Challenged by the question, “Who was Juan de Oñate?⁷ –Spaniard? Hispanic? Basque? Gipuzkoan? Andalusian? Castilian? Jew?” Douglass (2000: 154) states, “he [Juan de Oñate] was all of the above and much more. Who he was likely to be, i.e. which of his identities was in play at any given moment, must be contextualized in time and space” [...] “Framed in such fashion, Juan de Oñate’s playing fields and personal strategies are but a microcosm and metaphor of other individual and collective displays, invocations, and appropriations of “Basqueness” for particular purposes, at particular times, in particular places, by particular persons and groups.” As Schneider (2003) states “we make claims about who and what we are by invoking particular categories at particular moments in interaction [...] Identities are invoked to address the exigencies of particular conversational interactions.”

I will now divide in three parts and take into account the historical context of the evolution of the Hispanic Monarchy into a Constitutional Spanish Monarchy in order to analyze Basque identities from a diasporic perspective.

⁵ Following Fernández Sebastián’s (1988: 184) arguments, one of the most important newspapers of its time in the *Vascongadas* and Navarre, the *Irurac-bat* (Bilbao, 1852-1858; moderate liberal ideology) was widely distributed to the Antilles (particularly Cuba) and the Philippines due to the influence of the local Basque communities residing in those places. By 1860, the paper printed 140,000 copies annually.

⁶ At the turn of the nineteenth-century “there was an established diaspora nationalist press and information nationalist journals” (Toticagüena, 2004: 83-84), for example: in Argentina there were *Laurak Bat* (1878, Buenos Aires); *La Baskonia* (1893, Buenos Aires), and *Irrintzi* (1903 Buenos Aires) published by a group of recently immigrated Basques who carried nationalist political convictions across the ocean, while in the United States, *Euzkotarra* (1907, New Orleans) was published.

⁷ Juan de Oñate (1550-1630) was the founder of the Hispanic New Mexico in the sixteenth-century.

2.1. From Hispanic Empire to the Spanish State, and the Vascongadas question, 1808-1903.

This sub-section briefly reviews, from a historiographical perspective, the entrance of Spain into modernity, and the problematic integration of the Basque provinces into the Spanish liberal state building and ‘national unity’ projects taken as temporal historical realities. It covers the period between 1808 (Napoleon’s invasion of the Hispanic Peninsula) and 1903 (the death of Arana Arana, the first ideologist of the modern Basque nationalism).

Amstrong (1996: 120-121) argues about the necessity to discern “between a collectivity that has maintained a sharp identity for centuries or millennia and one that is the product of the diffusion of nationalist ideology”. In this respect, I divide the diasporization process of the Basque communities in the world in different historical phases according to the period that the paper focuses on:

2.1. New World colonial transoceanic/s experiences (1492-1820s): Basque “ethno-diasporas” as transoceanic/s diasporic communities.

The independence of las Americas, postcolonial experiences, and “nation-state” building (from the 1820s): Basque “ethno-diasporas” as transnational ‘nationalized’ and deterritorialized spatial communities (Basques as national and territorial citizens of the states of Spain or France).

2.1. From Hispanic Empire to the Spanish State, and the Vascongadas question, 1808-1903:

At the beginning of this period, the three-hundred year-old Hispanic World was one of the largest Western Empires (or better conceptualized as Hispanic Monarchy; Portillo, 2004) on earth. Some 18,000 transoceanic/s territories that spread throughout four continents formed it⁸. However, throughout this period, a non-mutually-exclusive multi-ethnic, cultural and linguistic Empire had been transformed into an embryonic European modern liberal state, which expanded just over its original in-lands, i.e., the Iberian Peninsula –particularly on the “Castilian nucleus” (Portillo, 2004; Balfour, 1995, 1997; Carr, 1982)⁹. However, several authors (e.g., Boyd, 1997; de Pablo et al, 1999) argue that the processes of cultural and political nationalization within the modern borders of Spain were far from completed. At that time, the predominant Spanish national identity (culturally Castilian and Catholic, politically Spanish, and quite exclusive) was increasingly contested, largely since the last third of the nineteenth-century, by others incipient, and also exclusive, national formation projects of the so-called “regional peripheries” of Catalonia and the Basque Country (País Vasco) (Corcuera, 2002; de la Granja, 2002).

The 1812 Constitution of Cadiz became the first-ever “liberal” attempt to transform an Empire/Monarchy into a national community of “Spanish people on both hemispheres” (Article 1, i.e., the sovereignty resides on the nation). The 1812 Constitution was the first one to introduce the idea of exclusion and homogenization

⁸ At the beginning of the eighteenth-century, it is estimated that the Hispanic World’s population was 30 million people: the Hispanic Peninsula 8 million –*Vascongadas* 0.2m, Navarre 0.025m; the *Americas* 20 million (only 5 or 6 million people of European ancestry); and the rest of possessions 2 million.

⁹ It has to be notice that the Hispanic Monarchy has been slowly but progressively dismembered throughout the centuries: in the sixteenth-century it lost the Netherlands, and in mid-seventeenth-century Portugal.

in its definition of who was Spanish (Article 18, i.e., citizen versus subject). A European-Hispanic Peninsula origin (ancestry) and the Catholic religion defined the Spanish identity. Therefore, Article 18 of this Constitution excluded intentionally those others of non-Hispanic peninsular ancestry; non-Catholic; women; foreigners; slaves; and those settlers such as the Pueblo Indians that did not follow the “Euro-American” model of settlement. The successive Spanish liberal constitutions included political exclusion and cultural homogeneity as dominant characteristics of the modern “nation-state” project. This project will progressively and radically confronted by Basque and Catalan nationalists.

Under the auspices of radical and moderate liberal theoreticians, the shrinking Hispanic Monarchy became the new Constitutional Spanish Monarchy. This was one of the first steps towards the building of a Spanish modern state, almost completed, by the last third of nineteenth-century. However, this modernization was not politically and culturally uniform and homogeneous in its initial phase, and thereby some aspects of the Ancien Régime (according to the French historiographical terminology) found “refuge” at the Provincias Vascongadas and in Navarre’s *fueros* (foral systems or consuetudinary laws)¹⁰.

In this period, the metropolitan peninsular liberals found themselves embedded into two contradictory and problematic situations. On one hand, following the principles of liberalism, the American criollos elite (Creoles, many of whom were of Basque origin)¹¹ proposed to the Cadiz Cortes (Parliament), political autonomy and self-government for their diverse territories within a supra-transoceanic imperial parliament of equal representation for all “Spanish citizens” (i.e., those who have a Hispanic European ancestry) (Anna, 1998). Unforeseeable, the decisions taken by the liberals in Cadiz had drastic consequences. The Constitution of 1812 decided to exclude the Creoles elites and by extension the whole of Hispanic America, for full and equal participation in the new project of Hispanic liberal state. The euro-centric position of these metropolitan/peninsular liberals forced the colonies (led by the Creoles) to independence as their only viable solution to achieve the liberal’s ideals (Portillo, 2004).

On the other hand, the peninsular liberals opted for a different solution in relation to the “quasi-autonomous” territories of Provincias Vascongadas and Navarre – ruled by their Middle Age’s fiscal, legal, and administrative regimen (the *fueros*)-. The successive liberal governments decided on including those provinces in their liberal project, throughout the recognition of their *fueros* that granted them to some extent political autonomy in relation to the metropolitan central power (Absolutist Monarchy, or liberal constitutional governments). The Basque Provinces and Navarre took their own particular evolution toward modernity due to the atypical combination

¹⁰ These *fueros* also existed in other areas of the Hispanic Peninsula (e.g., Aragon, Balearic Islands, and Catalonia). However, they were abolished by King Philip V, in the eighteenth-century.

¹¹ “Since access to administrative posts and honorific positions was reserved for persons who could demonstrate “Old-Christian” genealogical credentials, which is to say those with a demonstrable claim to *limpieza de sangre* or “clean blood” (Douglass, 2000: 142). The claim of “universal nobility” and “pure blood” made by the inhabitants of the Basque Provinces, secured their access to administrative, military, and high positions throughout the Empire. Their descendents, the *criollos*, entangled a tight network of families that preserved their socio-economic and political status in the colonial and postcolonial eras (see Casaus, 1996; Garcia, 1996; Gonzalbo Aizpuru, 1996; and Ortiz de la Tabla & Ducase, 1996) (see also Douglass & Bilbao, 1975).

of fuerismo (from the 1830s) and liberalism. Two antagonistic ideologies: fuerismo¹² as the ideology that attempted to preserve the fueros as one of the last remnants of the premodern times' political establishment; and liberalism as a modern time ideology (Fernández Sebastián, 1991). By the end of the first Carlist War (1833-1839), the Law October 25, 1839 not only confirmed the fueros system, but regulated the relations between the Vascongadas, Navarre¹³, and the central power. However, after diverse failed attempts to modify the fueros, those were abolished by the Law July 21, 1876.

The identification of fueros and the Carlist cause at the end of the second Carlist War (1872-1876) brought the fierce abolition of the foral regimen (Law July 21, 1876) resulting on the constitutional "unity" of Spain "at last." However, the President of Spain, at that time, Cánovas¹⁴ designed an autonomous privileged fiscal and administrative status for the Provincias Vascongadas, the so-called *Conciertos Económicos*, the Economic Agreements (Royal Decree February 28, 1878: the Basque Provincial Assemblies paid an annual quantity, *cupo*, to the Spanish Treasury Minister with indirect taxes) as the pragmatic transition between the fueros and the liberal regimen (Mina, 1990; Corcuera, 2002).

After the abolition of the fueros, and the creation of the Economic Agreements, the "foral question" became known as the "Vascongadas question." This change of terminology implied a change of strategy of the foral regimen defenders. It was not just a question of defending historical legal rights, but also a question of defending collective values that affected the whole Basque population. A new proto-/pre-nationalist ideology, *vasquismo*, was in place. This *vasquismo* matured from the foral pseudo-historical and romantic literature of premodern myths and legends that portrayed an idyllic and content Basque agrarian country, a perennial and harmonious Basque Arcadia (the authenticity of the Basque people reside in its antiquity). Consequently, the goals of this literature were twofold: to mobilize and activate politically the Basque people through an appeal to the community's alleged common past; and to enhance a distinctive Basque collective consciousness that was intrinsically tied to its particular "quasi-autonomous" and idiosyncratic foral regimen for hundred of years (A. D. Smith, 1992: 69; 126-127; Connor, 1994: 217; Horowitz, 1995: 72). It mystified the past and the fueros and thereby the Basque collective memory. The radical foral regimen defenders ('intransigent fuerismo'¹⁵) also

¹² Basque *fuerismo* is described as an anti-modern, anti-state, anti-central conservative ideology with two major goals (Fernández Sebastián, 1991; Rubio Pobes, 1996): To resist against the Spanish political modernization on the way particularly since 1837, i.e., judicial uniformity and administrative centralization; and to defend and protect the foral regimen; to legitimate and safeguard a particular judicial system of the *Ancien Régime* through a particular strategy, i.e., the adaptation of the traditional foral regimen to the new constitutional order, and to the diverse opportunistic political needs.

¹³ Navarre pleaded for the modification of its foral regimen after the first Carlist War. The Law August 16, 1841 (*Ley Paccionada*, the Pact Law) meant the abolition of the political foral traditional system, while creating a new judicial and political structure. It transformed the middle age old kingdom into a 'special' province with a particular fiscal and administrative status.

¹⁴ The moderate-conservative Liberal Union of Cánovas conceived Spain as (Cánovas del Castillo, 1997, c1882): An eternal, perennial, national identity based on the idea of persistence of a Spanish national consciousness developed in the eighteenth-century, and particularly during the Franco-Hispanic Independence War, and the 1812 Constitution of Cadiz era; a natural given, primordial community of one race, language, and territory; and a unique national state (versus a multi-national state that could coexist with the Basque and Catalan national projects), tied to the idea of cultural and political civilized superiority. The function of the state was to guarantee the defense of the nation, in its struggle between equality and liberty. Cánovas understood equality as dangerous for the nation.

¹⁵ The main representatives of this 'radical' *fuerismo* were the *Sociedad Euskalerrria de Bilbao* (1876), and the *Asociación Euskara de Navarra* (1877). Its motto, '*Laurak Bat*', promoted the unification of all

promoted a Basque cultural movement, a Basque socio-cultural, literary and linguistic “renaissance” (called Eusko Pizkundea, 1876-1914-1936) described by Corcuera (2002)¹⁶ as a pre-nationalist movement.

In this context, Arana (1865-1903) proposed a nationalist doctrine and a modern conception of the Basque Country as a nation which was heavily influenced by the aforementioned pre-nationalist literature and historicist cultural revival movements, and some sections of the fuerismo (such as Sociedad Euskalerra), and Carlist ideologies (e.g., their Catholic component). Authors such as Corcuera (2002), de la Granja (2002), de Pablo et al (1999) understand this first nationalism as a radical rejection of the modernization process, although not the only or primary cause of its existence. This rejection entailed a negative response to the new exponents of this modernization: industrialism, new liberal oligarchy –the local economic and political elite allied to Madrid-, immigrants, and new socio-cultural and political movements such as socialism (formally organized in Bilbao since 1886)¹⁷, and anti-clericalism (Glas, 1998). Arana viewed this modernization as a threat to the traditional “Basque ways of live” (mainly rural and Catholic). This provoked among some sections of the Basque population a crisis of identity and assumed traditional values.

Arana’s national identity discourse meant also an abrupt rupture with the traditional fuerismo ideology (see Elorza, 1978). Arana reinterpreted the fueros as the national constitutional laws of the Basques, expression of the independence and sovereignty (political unity of all Basques), not as regional laws (according to the fuerismo ideology). Therefore, Arana stressed the incompatibility of fueros and Spanish constitution, and by extent the Spanish “nation.” Consequently, he argued for the independence of the seven historical Basque Provinces (‘Zazpiak Bat’) under the motto of ‘Jaun-Goikua eta Lagi Zarra’ (God and the Old Law). According to de la Granja (2002) and Corcuera (2002), Basque nationalism was born as a confrontational ideology, as anti-Spanish and anti-liberal ideology. The definition of who was Basque defined perfectly this doctrine: Basques were those who had a Basque ancestry (race; euzkotarra) and were Catholic (conception of religion as public politics). Arana believed that Basque identity was a natural given –given by God-, and threaten by Spain, which attempted to influx Spanishness into the Basque people. The Basque language, Euskera, also become a clear differential factor and of great symbolic value for the national mission. Its political project was the creation of a Confederation of Basque States (‘Euzkadi’) for those Basques of pure race and Catholic religion.

In 1895, Arana founded the ‘Bizkai-Buru Batzar’ (the embryonic ‘Partido Nacionalista Vasco’, the Basque Nationalist Party). By August 1898, Spain had lost its last colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Philippines. The general outcry for the end of the Empire was still being heard when on September 11, 1898, Arana was elected Diputado Provincial (member of Diputación, provincial council) from the district of Bilbao, and demanded independence for Euzkadi¹⁸. As a result of the complete

southern Basque Provinces in one. Motto that will become a popular name for the first Basque diasporic associations in the New World, most likely, because of the influence of Carlist exiles (Totoricagüena, 2004: 33). Later on some sectors of these politico-cultural societies became sympathizers of the nationalist cause of Arana Arana (de Pablo et al, 1999).

¹⁶ This cultural revival is comparable to other contemporary cultural movements such as the Gaelic in Ireland, the Catalan *Renaixença* (1833-1885) or the Galizian *Rexurdimento* (beginning in 1863).

¹⁷ The PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers Party was created in Madrid in May 1879.

¹⁸ *Euzkadi*, Arana’s Basque *Patria* was formed not by the seven historical provinces on both sides of the Pyrenees (not so much as a territorial identity) but by those Basques of pure ancestry and Catholic

collapse of the Hispanic Monarchy by 1898, twenty-two independent political states (including Spain) were created. The simultaneous and polycentric processes of multi-nations-state building that took place throughout the old Empire's territories, established new approaches towards the problematic existence of multiculturalism, and overlapping and evolving identities within the newly bounded political spaces. The political homogenization and increasing state centralization, 'from above', of cultural and linguistic identities brought drastic consequences for non-Creoles of European origin within the American lands, as well as within the Spanish peninsular political turmoil that will characterize the following century.

By the time of the death of Arana Arana (1903)¹⁹, Spain as a modern state and as a 'united nation' was still far from "completed." It lacked uniformity, alleged distinctiveness, and uniqueness theoretically to be present in a "classical nation" (Smith, 1992). It is argued that Spain was incapable of developing mechanisms of political, economic and cultural integration due to its weak oligarchic state, inadequate secular mass schooling system, a divided political class, and the triumph of national and liberal moderate positions (Boyd, 1997; de Pablo et al, 1999). In other words, the state failed to integrate the particular "regional and local loyalties" into the project of the Spanish state building²⁰.

Consequently, de Pablo et al (1999: 20) argue that "peripheral nationalism did not destroy the assumed Spanish national unity," but "the failure of Spanish nationalism in the nineteenth century, or the crisis of its social penetration" facilitated "the political success of alternative nationalisms." In the particular case of the modernization of Spain various conflicting, and intrinsically different alternative projects of "nation-state" were being developed. Those were the Spanish, the Catalan and the Basque (see Mar-Molinero and Smith, eds. 1996; de Pablo et al, 1999: 13-14). Rubio Pobes (1996: 375) strongly supported this argument, "the weak penetration of the Spanish state in the Basque Country during the nineteenth century allowed the development of a specified Basque [national] conscience." The loss of the *fueros* provoked a crisis of identity, the sense of loss of traditional symbolism and cultural values of the collective imaginary of the Basque society (particularly within the Biscayan society). Within this context, "Basque nationalism offered a new identity, a new sentiment of community, with their own symbolic references, emotional

religion. Therefore, the Basques in the diaspora become a 'natural' political target of the nationalist ideologists. Arana's *Patria* could not be seen contradictory for those Basques living abroad as their own redefinition of Basqueness would make them to conceive that you could be Basque without being born in the Basque Country.

¹⁹ Appreciably, the president of the Buenos Aires Basque Center, *Laurak Bat*, traveled to the Basque Country to explicitly attend Arana Arana's funeral ceremony (Larronde, 1977: 323-324).

²⁰ According to Boyd (1997), and de Pablo et al (1999) this incompleteness can be summarized as follows: A unique and unitarian judicial, fiscal and administrative system for the whole Spanish national territory was defied by the existence of the newly established bilateral Spanish-Basque Economic Agreements and by the "quasi-autonomous" governmental systems in *País Vasco* and Navarre; there was an inadequate Spanish national-cultural integration (national history, memories, myths, values and identity through processes of assimilation, i.e., 'Castilianization'). For example, Garcia de Cortázar (2003: 245) estimates that the number of illiterate male adults was 85% by 1860, while Boyd (1997: 302) states that in 1877, 62.7% of male adults, and 81% of female adults were still illiterate²⁰. Lower classes and women were far from being politically incorporated. In other words, they were politically excluded; and the Catholic Church became the main ideologist of the Spanish "secular" state. Since the 1840s, the Catholic Church has become the major 'national' cultural educator and homogenized force of a Spanish national identity (de Pablo et al, 1999: 18).

communitarian ties, and relationships and mechanisms of socialization” (de Pablo et al, 1999: 56-57)²¹.

I strongly argue that the nationalization of the Basque people (initially mainly in the provinces of Biscay and Gipuzkoa and later on throughout the rest of Basque territories and even in the diaspora) cannot only be viewed as a response to the Spanish one, but also following Juaristi (1997: 33), as an unresolved issue of the disintegration of the Hispanic Monarchy, that consequently unleashed the modernization of the Hispanic World.

2.2. New World colonial transoceanic/s experiences (1492-1820s): Basque “ethno-diasporas” as transoceanic/s diasporic communities:

Historical and socio-anthropological studies (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975; Douglass, 1989; Totoricagüena, 2000, 2003a, 2004) evidence that Basques were a self-aware distinctive ethnic or national cultural group (Connor, 1994: 42-43, 100-103) by the time they arrived into the New World in 1492. Douglass & Bilbao (1975: 74) illustrate that as early as their arrival in the new continent “this awareness was translated into collective actions, mutual assistance, a common stance towards outsiders that the Basques were set apart from other Iberian and Creole groups.”²²

Additionally, Douglass & Bilbao’s (1975) research evidence the socio-economic and political leading status of Basques throughout the Empire’s colonial and postcolonial eras. Those authors (1975: 64) argue how Basques “play[ed] a prominent role in the conquest and colonization of the New World as mercenaries, missionaries, mariners, and later on in high colonial and postcolonial administration positions.” Douglass & Bilbao (1975: 113-114) point out that “in their role of merchants Basques were seen [traditionally] as opportunists, middlemen who exchanged Mediterranean products and Castilian wools for the goods of northern Europe and who profited at everyone’s expense,” in the late Middle and early Modern times. This transactional trading network was based on networks of “similarity” ethnic/kinship solidarity and mutual trust. This traditional merchant role was exported and exponentially increased in the New World, while creating new transoceanic/s (although not exclusively) co-ethnic colonial trading and business networks (e.g., “La Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas” founded in 1728). That is a Basque “trade diaspora” established within the framework of the Hispanic Empire colonial diaspora (Totoricagüena, 2004: 55). Between 1520 and 1580, it is estimated that 80% of the trade of the New World was controlled by Basques, while in the next period 1580-1610, the trading networks controlled by Basques decreased to a 50% (!) (Lynch 1964: 35, cited in Totoricagüena, 2001: 16).

²¹ This newly Basque nationalized identity and awakened national conscience (being Basque was being nationalist, *‘abertzale’* –a patriot; essentially not being Spanish) was quickly “exported” to the Basque diasporic communities in America, as the *‘fuierismo’* and Carlist ideologies have previously been disseminated. The Basque Center, *Laurak Bat*, of Buenos Aires witnessed the ideological clashes between pro- and anti-nationalist factions, that is between the old *‘fuieristas’*, *‘Carlistas’* (*‘españolistas’*) and the *‘abertzales’* Aranistas (separatists). The *‘fuieristas’* were outnumbered at the diaspora Basque Centers. See Alvarez Gila, Oscar. (1996). “Vascos y vascongados”: luchas ideológicas entre carlistas y nacionalistas en los Centros vascos del Río de la Plata (1900-1930), in Escobedo, Ronald et al (eds.) *Emigración y redes sociales de los vascos en América*. Vitoria-Gasteiz: UPV.

²² It is widely reported the violent conflicts between Basques and non-Basques that occurred between the beginning of the fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries in the present day Peru and Bolivia due to economic and political parochial rivalries (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975).

This suggests that Basques despite being geographically dispersed, tended to actively promote and manage similar collective actions as a way to enhance their predominant status tied to cultural, ethnic, family, and kinship lines and networks, as well as a way to increase and maintain their historical-cultural ethnic consciousness and solidarity among themselves. This unmistakably implies the early constitution of a Basque “ethno-diaspora/s” that persisted historically (not necessarily in a linear and homogeneous way) until the present day. Several authors (Garcia Girádez, 1996; Gonzalbo Aizpuru, 1996; Herzog, 1996; Ortiz de la Tabla & Ducase, 1996) evidence those Basques and their descendants (criollos) constituted networks of powerful families that were the hegemonic socio-economic and political elites in the colonial and postcolonial eras. Casaus (1996: 298) estimates that in the eighteenth-century, 70% of the hegemonic elite in Centro America²³ were of Basque ancestry.

The following examples of Basque historical associationism and collective action and support, which signify bonds of solidarity among members of communities, illustrate and help us to understand the dynamics of diasporic identity formation and maintenance as cross-border, transoceanic/s ethnic collective networks. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Basques established several mutual-aid societies, confraternities, voluntary religious, cultural and ethnic solidarity organizations in the Hispanic territories, colonies as well in the Peninsula, soliciting benefactors and creating business networks on both sides of the Atlantic (Bilbao Azkarreta, ed. 1992; Escobedo et al. 1996)²⁴. The three most significant associations were:

1. The *Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu de México* (1681). This is definitely one of the most important organizations ever established by Basques in America. It remained open until 1860. It was significantly established in the second most important city of the Empire, Mexico City. The purpose of this fraternity was twofold: spread Christianity and assist Basque immigrants. It was independent from civil and ecclesiastical authority. Their members established transoceanic/s business networks (e.g., providing low-interest rate loans) among members and non-members; Basques and non-Basques within New Spain, Veracruz, Cuba, Philippines, and the Peninsula as well as among other Basque Fraternities such as the *Cofradía de San Ignacio* in Madrid (Luque Alcaide, 1996: 462-465).
2. The *Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas* (1728-1779) was a Basque-controlled trading company with Venezuela. It became a true ethnic monopoly within the late Hispanic Monarchy (Douglass & Bilbao: 1975: 88).
3. Finally, the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País* was established in the Vascongadas Provinces in 1765. It aimed at promoting the improvement of socio-economic conditions in the Basque Provinces. “Its major source of support was clearly the influential and wealthy Basques scattered throughout the empire.” It became a “worldwide ethnic organization” (Douglass & Bilbao,

²³ Today’s Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

²⁴ Another examples of Basque associationism were: *Fraternidad de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu de la Nación Vasca en Lima*, Perú (1612); *Confraternidad de la Nación Vasca en Arequipa*, Perú (1630); *Real Congregación de San Fermín de los Navarros*, Madrid (1683); *Congregación de Naturales y Originarios de las Provincias de Alava, Guipúzcoa y Vizcaya* (later known as *Congregación de San Ignacio*), Madrid (1713); and the *Colegio de San Ignacio (Colegio de la Vizcaínas, Mexico City*, was established by *Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu de México* in 1767, as an innovating initiative to educate women in New Spain. Originally it remained free of Catholic Church control. It is still opened today.

1975: 108-110). According to Totoricagüena (2004: 31), it is “one of the first concrete examples of institutionalized Basque transnationalism and diaspora consciousness.” By 1793, the majority of its membership resided in the New World, followed in numbers by the ones in the Peninsula (Cadiz, Seville, and Madrid), Europe, Philippines and Africa. According to these authors, its membership was formed by the Basques in the highest circles of the Empire’s socio-economic, political, administrative, and military elite.

2.3. Basque “ethno-diasporas” as transnational post-colonial ‘nationalized’ and deterritorialized spatial communities (Basques as national and territorial citizens of the states of Spain or France):

By 1825, all of the American continental or mainland former colonies had achieved their political autonomy, and the Spanish Monarchy’s influence in las Americas was reduced to the Antilles and the Philippines (Colomer, 1996: 43-57). Peninsular Spanish people were faced with the choice of either leaving the new Latin American countries or renouncing their Old World “citizenship.” Within this post-colonial and post-war context of assumed “anti-Spanishness,” peninsular immigrants could easily detach themselves from the negative stereotyping associated with the Spanish identity (as colonial, imperial etc.) by claiming other aspects of their multiple shared identities such as the Basque. At this particular time, being Spanish or being Basque were not yet redefined as hierarchical (national vs. provincial/regional) or mutually exclusive identities (being Basque is not being Spanish) as it will happen intensively by the end of the nineteenth-century. Similarly, Leal (2002) refers to the fact that Azorean identity increasingly grew, in the same period in Brazil because of the negative resentment perceived and associated to a generic and overarching Portuguese identity within its post-colonial context. Azoreans tended to claim their Azorean identity over the Portuguese one which held a negative connotation and negative social status.

It is evidenced that Basque Creoles continued to hold high socio-economic and political positions in the ex-colonies (Garcia Girádez, 1996), while Basque emigration continued to the Rio de la Plata (today’s Argentina and Uruguay) in the 1830s (“pull factor migration”). In this regard, “there was no discontinuity in the awareness of a former migratory tradition” (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975: 135). These authors argue that emigration was embedded in the collective memory of families and villages for the last four hundred years, and the independence of the former colonies was not viewed as an impediment to continue emigrating²⁵. Moreover, the Napoleonic military campaigns on the Basque territories, followed by the first and second Carlist wars and the famine of 1846-1847, forced many Basques to exile which implied an imposed departure and an impossibility to return home (Douglass, 1989; Totoricagüena, 2004: 61-63). In addition, the rise of capitalism and the demand for wage laborers pulled many Basques out of the Basque Country to countries such as the United States, Canada, Argentina or Australia, constituting a Basque labor diaspora.

From the 1850s, the newly independent countries of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile created discriminatory positive immigration policies that specifically requested Basques, among other European groups, as new settlers/pioneers and manual laborers

²⁵ Pescador’s (2004) clearly evidences this transatlantic migration pattern through the case study of fifteen generations of migration from a Basque village to the New World.

(Azcona, 1992; Iriani, 2000; Totoricagüena & Douglass, 1999; Totoricagüena, 2000; 2003a; 2004). By 1853 a Spanish Royal Order lifted previous restrictions on emigration, while Basques continued to establish and promote transoceanic/s, transnational ‘newly nationalized’ communities. The new loyalties to the new national host societies became part of the newly arrive emigrant identity. It is roughly estimated that nearly 200,000 Basques emigrated (legally) to the New World from the 1830s to the beginning of the twentieth-century (Azcona, 1992; Iriani, 2000)²⁶.

By 1848, gold had been discovered in California, and hundreds of thousands of people moved into the region. Basques were not aloof to this phenomenon. New waves of Basque immigrants coming from Latin America joined other well-established Basque families who populated this area since the colonial era (as a secondary migration). First many of them participated briefly in the mining industry, then they moved into the cattle industry expanding their businesses into the United States American West (e.g., Nevada, Idaho, Oregon) (Bieter & Bieter, 2000; Douglass & Bilbao, 1975; Douglass, 1979, 1987; Totoricagüena, 2003b). These new waves of Basque postcolonial modern migration established new ethnic cultural transnational organizations and networks across spaces and times to respond to similar necessities and demands of the Basque diasporic communities. Between the end of the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth-century, “in each [Latin American] country the Basques maintained their ethnic group self-awareness, which converted into formal organizations as they made concerted efforts to maintain Basque cultural traditions” [...] “The maintenance of ties with the Basque Country is reflected clearly in some of the activities of the Basque organizations in Latin America” (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975: 170)²⁷. “Their ethnic institutions have developed along similar patterns regardless of century and country [...] and regardless of the dates of initial Basque immigration” (Totoricagüena, 2004: 79).

The first Basque modern period socio-cultural organizations were created in Uruguay and Argentina as a response to the aforementioned abolition of the *fueros* in 1876 and the Carlismo influence in the “Basque-American” communities: The Laurac Bat was established in 1876 in Montevideo (see Irigoyen, 1998), and then a year later, La Sociedad Vasco-Española Laurac Bat (later on known as Laurak Bat) was established in Buenos Aires as a pro-*fueros* “political organization” celebrating annual protests against the abolition of *fueros* (Douglass, 1999; Totoricagüena, 2004: 68). Both organizations aimed at promoting Basque culture, and assisting Basque-Spanish emigrants. Consequently, the Centre Basque-Français (1895) and the Centro Navarro, both in Buenos Aires, were established to also attend their fellow “compatriots” necessities. The establishment of the Asociación Cultural y de Beneficencia Euskal Echea de Buenos Aires y de Lavallol (1901/1916) was a successful project to integrate all Basques from both sides of the Pyrenees in one cultural project, and soften their regional rivalries from back home. It was used as an asylum for Basque indigent elderly people and Basque orphans. It is still open. In 1882, Plaza Euskara was built in Buenos Aires as a frontón (Basque hand-ball court) (Cava Mesa et al,

²⁶ These numbers are extremely difficult to estimate because of poor record, and almost no records on those who returned to Europe or migrated to secondary destinations.

²⁷ In the nineteenth-century Basques also created welfare associations, self-help groups, socio-cultural organizations such as the one in Manila, Philippines (1877); *Asociación Vasco-navarra de Beneficencia*, La Habana, Cuba (1878); *Sociedad Laurak Bat de Socorros Mutuos* (today’s *Unión Vasca de Socorros Mutuos*), Bahía Blanca, Argentina (1899); and *Centro Vasco*, Mexico City, Mexico (1907) (Cava Mesa, 1996; Márquez Ortiz, 1996; Totoricagüena, 2004: 68).

1992; Cava Mesa, 1996; Márquez Ortiz, 1996). Within this context, the boarding houses (ostatu Amerikanuak) and hotels established by Basques, and exclusively for a Basque clientele, created a network of Basque enclaves throughout Argentina, Uruguay and the US American West (Iriani, 2000; Echeverria, 1999). In the particular case of the boarding houses and hotels created throughout the eleven western states of the US (similar to the ones in Uruguay and Argentina), those functioned as “homes away from homes” (as surrogate home/families) as well as “cultural brokers” (Hoerder, 2002: 12) to ease the transition from the Old World to the New World for the newly arrived Basque immigrants. The boarding houses became the nucleus of Basque communities filled by old country values (Echeverria, 1999).

At the same time, several periodicals, popular modes of communication, began to be printed in America by and for the Basque diasporic communities. In Buenos Aires, La Vasconia – Revista Euskaro-Americana (1893-1901) later known as La Baskonia (1901-1943) was established. It was distributed in American areas populated by Basques as well as in Europe. Significantly, the first-ever, short-lived, published weekly newspapers in Basque language were printed in America: Escualdun Gazeta (1886, Los Angeles, California), Californiako Eskual Herria (1894-1897, Los Angeles, California, renamed in 1897 as Eskual Herria under the motto of “Yainkoa eta Sor-Lekuoa” –“God and the Homeland/Native Country”) also distributed in San Francisco, San Diego, Mexico City, La Havana, and Río de la Plata; and the bilingual (Basque and French) Euskal Herria – Journal Basque-Français du Rio de la Plata, Buenos Aires (1898, printed also in French)²⁸.

These periodicals connected Basques across spatial geographies and generations while offering not only general news on local communities but also contributing to the initial construction of a Basque diasporic consciousness among Basque immigrants’ communities and their descendents (Totoricagüena, 2003a: 60; 2004: 69). These periodicals increased the awareness of interconnectedness among Basques, across borders, in distant parts of America, and on both sides of the Atlantic, who shared common experiences of migration. That is, physical and psychological uprootedness (migration as trauma, crisis, and as loss, see Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), and physical and psychological adaptation (re-rooting, as gain). These experiences exemplify/ied a dialectical contradiction between becoming similar (assimilation) to those in their new country (which is to some extent unknown and unfamiliar) while remaining different (affirming their uniqueness and exclusiveness) within the new society and particularly in relation to other ethnic migrant groups. According to Leal (2002: 243-246) there is an “interethnic competition for identity and symbolic status” in order to revitalize their consciousness as different peoples. By all means, experiences of migration clearly affect migrants’ own sense of identity (i.e., burden and a gift). The contradictory tension between a temporal or permanent displacement and a temporal or permanent relocation; and between the country of origin and the country of residence, in some cases a dual nationality (formal status of state membership) and dual citizenship (rights and duties within the “nation-state”). In

²⁸ Other Basque diasporic and transnational periodicals were the weekly *Revista Sociedad Vascongada de Montevideo*, called *Laurak Bat*, (1877-1882, on Spanish language), and *Vascones*, (1898) both from Montevideo; *Revista de la Sociedad Vasco-Española de Buenos Aires*, called also *Laurak Bat* (1878-1893, 1911, 1921-1922, 1930-1931, 1960-1970, on Spanish), and *Haritza* (1899) both from Buenos Aires; and the weekly *Laurak Bat* (June 1886-August 1886, on Spanish language) from La Habana, Cuba, dedicated to the *Vasco-Navarros* and their beneficence societies (Douglass & Bilbao, 1975; Ruiz de Gauna, 1991).

the particular context of Basque immigration into Argentina and the assimilation issue, Totoricaguena & Douglass (1999) point out that “throughout every generation, the Basques have married with people of non-Basque origin, and to say the truth in a fast way. In addition, the children of mixed-marriages receive contradictory messages, alternative cultural exigencies that appeal to their personal loyalties.” Those were/are, according to Sheffer (1999), the greatest psychological and political questions confronting migrants. In addition, Vertovec (2001), Heisler (2001), and Levitt (2001) argue that the negotiation of identity in “transnational migrant communities” is shaped by the fact that they belong to more than one location and they are “embark on a process of making values from two worlds fit” (Levitt, 2001: 97, cited in Vertovec, 2002?: 11), “without having to renounce either to their homeland culture or to their new culture” (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989: 98). That is, this “diasporic consciousness” produces a “multiplicity of histories, communities, and selves” (Vertovec, 1997: 283).

In sum, the publications, distributed across different American countries, helped to promote a sense of a common Basque transnational and transatlantic cultural identity on a basis of a transnational consciousness. They helped to shape and articulate their own particular sense and understanding of Basqueness and culture, openly influenced by the interaction with the homeland (e.g., political and cultural ideologies), and by the cohabitation with other cultural groups in their host societies, resulting in multiple interpretations of a generic sense of being Basque.

Conclusions

I have critically reviewed the meaning of modernity and its understanding of time, space and the role played by the “nation-state” system towards the formation of homogeneous and territorial politico-cultural identities. The Spanish case was taken as an example to illustrate this argument. At the same time, theoretical approaches such as transnationalism and diaspora were empirically applied to understand the configuration and maintenance of the Basque identity within the historical context of the collapse of the Hispanic Empire and the emergence of the Spanish “nation-state” project, between 1808 and 1903.

I have provided a multi-approach towards the understanding of the formation and maintenance of ethnic identities. This historical approach is not centered on the “nation-state” framework of analysis, but is within transnational and diasporic perspectives, that enrich the late-modern discourse on Basque identity formation and maintenance.

Particularly, I have highlighted that identities such as the Basque are much better understood outside the traditional framework of analysis of “nation-states” that fall in a dialectical discourse of center-periphery (cultural identity production [“metropoli”] - reproduction [“colonies”]; authenticity-succedaneum, i.e., “cultural polinization”). On words of Hall (1997: 174) “the colonized other [and everybody else] was constituted within the regimes of representation of such a metropolitan center.” Therefore, Basque identity is explored “outside the process of history” of a hegemonic center which has been centered on the process of “nation-state” in the modernity era.

Furthermore, I have argued that studies on identities such as the Basque need to take into account the importance of being contextualized in time and space. Finally, I have also argued that transnationalism and diaspora (“ethno-diaspora/s”) need to be seen not as mere conceptualizations to address the “observed reality,” but also as

useful frameworks of analysis to analyze the historical formation and maintenance of identities such as the Basque.

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