Nationalism and historicity

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ABSTRACT. In this article the nation is shown to be a historical subject. As such, it is constructed and constantly reconstructed by discursive practices of power and knowledge. The author argues that the symbiotic interlinkage between nationalism and the organising knowledge principle of historicity, is an example of a power practice in the modern state. Throughout the article, it is shown that this practice is produced by interaction between the institutionally represented, sovereign or objective state and intellectual knowledge and its institutionalisation within the state as an academy, which acquires sovereignty in the production of objective truth. This peculiar discursive representation of making what really is personal interactions and struggles into official institutions has managed to produce the subject of the historical nation. The empirical case of Sweden is briefly discussed. During the age of great power, an exclusivist discourse of noble genealogical distinction of the 'Goths' was established. In modern Sweden, this genealogical myth is transformed to a popularnational myth of exclusivity, a myth with great power potentials in the 'national projects' of modern politics.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to discuss nationalism and historicity as they are seen as having entered into a symbiotic relationship (which appears 'natural'), in which they are simultaneously shaping and being shaped by different practices of power and knowledge. The article intends to show that the nation is not a historical subject, but instead a social relation of power and knowledge. However, this relation becomes represented as a discursive regime, where the nation appears to be the historical subject.

This process of representing things and people as 'national' is quite possible to analyse by focusing attention, first of all upon the discursive development of nationalism and historicity, and second by taking into consideration the interpersonal projects and networks which create and sustain the nation. By this method of inquiry, nations and nationalism are seen as concrete practices of power and knowledge, in contrast to a common stream of thinking which regards nations and nationalism as definable concepts, the contents of which are ready to be found 'out there' if only we were to refine our methods and theories. The abstraction of the nation as a subject of history, standing above the individuals who together

constitute the nation, is a correlation to the belief in an impersonal objective knowledge as well as an impersonal state power.

Since this perspective is a complex one, it is necessary to give a brief clarification (if not exact definitions) of the key concepts involved here. The power/knowledge perspective is a historical theory outlined by Michel Foucault (1979, part I; 1980). Foucault holds interaction by a surveilling, disciplinary power and standardised techniques of knowledge to be the dominant mode of social organisation in modern time (a mode of organisation first reflected in the army reforms of the seventeenth century). To put it briefly, this implies a view of power as constructive of realities. It also implies a view of knowledge where 'truths' are mediated through new scientific disciplines which, in turn, is a central technique in the production of control over defined individual subjects.

Knowledge operates through 'discourses', which I view as authorised systems of representation. For instance, the nation is a discourse which represents action as 'national'. It establishes itself through the creation of authoritative knowledge disciplines such as history, economy and so forth. Apart from this it also makes its way into 'common sense' by practical definitions of reality. This implies that we may see discourse either in the structuralist version as all-embracing systems, or we may restrict discourses to denote ideas and institutions which are constructed in relation to other discourses, and where the discourses only may represent human action in an imperfect way. The latter view is employed here.

Needless to say, there is more to the social world than discourses. Human beings exist, interacting in projects and networks, for which discourses are necessary, but not all-embracing. An important 'mediator' between discourses and concrete human interaction is institutionalisation. Through the formation of new institutions changes are reflected in the relationship between discourse and human practice. A number of discourses struggle to win influence over politics, and by establishing interdiscursive relations or coalitions they may create a kind of 'hegemony' over the sphere of politics.

Nationalism in modern times is an expression of a discursive hegemony: it represents political action by a wide range of subtle institutional methods (Billig 1995), and establishes norms which are very difficult to argue against, given the authority, universality and apparent self-evidence of the national state. The factor of institutionalisation (far too often overseen in theories of nationalism) has led commentators to the mistaken belief that nationalism does not even exist in developed Western states. However, nationalism lies at the basis of the institutional formations in the modern state.

Thus nationalism is here seen as a social relation of power and knowledge. Discourses interpellate subjects and thus define their appropriate relations by techniques of institutionalisation. Human beings (who, by the way, are not the same as 'discursive subjects') establish relations with each other through projects and networks, laden with discursive definitions.

Nevertheless, human beings also shape the discourses themselves. The power/knowledge relation is a relation between predominant institutions such as the state and the academy, but these relations are shaped on a concrete level, where the interpersonal interactions look very different from the relational systems of representative discourses. A peculiar quality of the power/knowledge symbiosis between nationalism and historicity is the image of unity it brings to bear upon the inherently dubious relational quality of politics in a 'post-religious' era. Hence the Nation as Historical Individual may be seen as a 'surrogate religion' of modern society (Hayes 1960; Anderson 1983: ch. 2).

Before going into detail of what is meant by the peculiar symbiosis between nationalism and historicity, let me give a short example. In 1740 Olof von Dalin, a historian and journalist, often called one of the first modern authors of Sweden, published his allegory Sagan om hästen ('The Tale of the Horse'). This short tale has been read by generations of Swedish school-children until this day. In the tale, the Swedish state is represented as a horse, Grålle, subsequently ridden by different kings. It begins with the 'father of the country' Gustav Vasa who in 1521 takes possession of the horse from the Danish king (the union between the Nordic countries, 1397–1521, was seen by Dalin, as all other Swedish commentators before modern times, as a Danish dictature). The highlights of the tale are when the warrior heroes Gustav II Adolf and Charles XII become horsemen. At last the bloody and torn great power horse returns to its old peaceful meadows.

Dalin is not one of the great nationalist intellectuals of Sweden. But still his tale points towards future national constructions of the past. The tale has a secular tone (religion should not be confused with public affairs), and presumes a historical progress; elements which are both new inventions in Swedish historiography. The Swedish state is represented as a continuous historical object, filled by conscious national actions of various kinds. This image presupposes a unitary meaning of history, where specific subjects are attached to it in the direct fashion of interlinking 'horse and rider'. The nation as an individual organism is foreshadowed quite some time before the invocation of the *Volksgeist* by the Romantics. In short, the formation of a unitary state, given consciousness by national history is an invention, within which we still live.

Historicity

History is 'no longer merely a collection of examples but rather the sole path to the true knowledge of our own condition' (Savigny 1815, quoted in Koselleck 1985: 38). According to the methodological principle of historicity everything has a history and is explainable according to its own singular emergence. History is a structure, which attributes moral and explanatory qualities to things, perceived as 'developing'. Thus history ought to be seen

as a structural potential inflicted upon the world of practice, a potential conceived as an individual development. On an aggregate level this principle leads to general stories of 'development' (for instance, national development) which define social and political relations as 'natural' or 'necessary' (in an era of Western self-adoration, there is even talk of an 'end' to this development since it is said to have reached its 'final' stage). It thus becomes apparent that historicity is an ordering principle with huge power potentials, which of course not only tells us stories about 'national' history, but also of the history of institutions, individuals and so on.

Thus historicity is a practice of individualisation, of conceiving things as emerging individual empirical states. Whether we think of nations, cultures or economies, we think of an individual marching progressively through time, even when we acknowledge the apparent fuzziness of every phenomena. Historical individualisations may thus be thought of as essences which through the workings of time become realised, or alternatively, as practices ordering relations between things operationalised as objects or subjects, such as institutions (Penrose 1995: 402–5). Indeed, the principle of historicity lies at the basis of modern anthropological knowledge, and must not be confused with the German project of 'historicism' (Iggers 1968), though this project has had importance in the development of historicity.

Koselleck (1985: xxiii, 200) has devoted much attention to historicity 'in and for itself' as an organising principle of knowledge. For him, this principle emerges by the separation of past, present and future by a modern secularised notion of time. Whereas time earlier on was limited by God, and history was taught to bring forth moral examples of life and living (historia magistra vitae), time now became domesticised and was consequently seen as a medium for a progressively marching history. The relevance of universal examples partly withered away, since one must learn the qualities in or the nature of historical development to be able to learn lessons, and, anyway, everything is always about to change into something qualitatively new. This makes necessary nothing less than a general world-historical outlook, a philosophy of history, in order to grasp the relation of every significant part to the progressive whole (Koselleck 1985: 246-59). The perfect manifestation of such a philosophy is of course the philosophy of Hegel, in which history becomes 'knowledge of itself', both subject and object (1985: 82).

Central to Koselleck is the grasp of the present as a period of transition to something qualitatively new, the future's past. Developing a prognosis of the future from a theoretical position becomes both possible and necessary (and of course a tremendous power potential). Here Koselleck has paid special attention to the emergence of concepts with social, political and scientific significances, such as 'revolution', 'modernity', 'socialism', 'liberalism' and 'conservatism'. These concepts, by forecasting the future through a theoretical position of the past, shapes this very future in our presence. This view of development signals an important discovery: different histories

do not take place 'at the same time'. Cultures, societies, nations, are in different 'stages' of development, which can be grasped only by a historical position. The discovery of relativism is indeed accompanied by its twin, the 'universalism', which 'relativism' is in symbiotic relation to (Koselleck 1985: 114-15, 200-4, 246-62).

Anderson (1983: 31) echoes this view with regard to nationalism. Since time is 'emptied' by the generalised 'subject' of God, it must be 'filled' with other subjects, such as the nation. According to Anderson (1983: 29) 'the medieval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present'. The universe was cosmically linked into a system of simultaneity, where past, present and future were just the same according to the divine plan. The cosmic simultaneity is substituted by the simultaneity of the national imagined community, and its relativist lack of simultaneity externally, vis-àvis other nations. For example, if we do not see our fellow countrymen, or hear about them, we know that they carry on, existing in a similar way to us, in the territory called Sweden. Eventually, with the arrival of ether media, the possibility of imagining simultaneity and oneness throughout the nation becomes greater than ever (Calhoun 1991: 110-11; Billig 1995). This quality of imagination is as important for space as it is for time; the modern world is permeated by non-physical demarcations of otherwise 'empty' spaces, in the forms of public and private, national and non-national spaces (Sack 1986).

In the modern world, the claims to truthfulness on the part of historiography, in comparison with older transmissions of tradition, grants a stronger sense of historical, individualised national development by lending it scientific authority (Shils 1981: 55). The search for the truth becomes 'a genetic and self-analyzing enquiry' (Berlin 1976: 57), providing the model for biological evolutionary theory as well as psycho-analytic practices. On the basis of scientific authority, intellectuals bring about a 'naturalisation' of the nation as historic individual. In the same mode as religion and nature was indivisible before, now history and nature become symbiotically related. If the nation is not in accordance with 'the natural world', it will exist in a state of chaos and alienate individuals from their societies (Giesen 1993: 54).

The thematics of this new academic, didactic, as well as fictional style of writing history, is to make both hero and followers into one historical person, the nation, who has its heroes and followers, but is a fundamentally equal person with a peculiar life history of golden ages and decays, for which 'dynastic' or 'strategic' motives are foreign. This nation fills the body of the state with spiritual life and will (the *Volksgeist*). No state actions are furthermore conceivable which do not influence, or are not influenced by, the will of the nation. The nationally defined historians and novelists engage in symbiotic interaction with a history which is *per se* defined as national by the very authority of knowledge.

Even if the discussion in this section has been carried out in terms of the 'ancient/modern-debate', I can see no point in becoming too embroiled in it. Even if we recognise quite new developments in the nationalist discourse (such as its populist dimension), and its tight linkages with authoritative knowledge in the form of historicity during the nineteenth century, it is perfectly clear that the nation as well as history have been important categories before 'the Modern Age', as will be shown in the next section. With regard to nationalism, Herder's discovery of the Volksgeist as well as Hegel's recognition of the identity between the individual spirit of the nation and the forces of history are very important intellectual developments, as well as the spread of general education and mass communication, which are extremely important on the practical level. But an exclusive focus upon modernity will neglect important formative periods in the development of many European states, and their continuously developing state tradition.

Historicity, nationalism and the state in Sweden: the Gothic myth

At the Church Council in Basel, 1434, there were (as usual) huge disputes about the placing of the delegates in order of precedence and prestige. The Swedish delegate, Bishop Nicolaus Ragvaldi, was heavily engaged in these quarrels. He insisted upon himself taking the principal position at the Council. The reasons why a delegate from remote Sweden could make such a claim, were given to the surprised delegates in a short oration. Therein, for the first time in Swedish history, a coherent national myth was put forward: the Gothic myth. In the dawn of history, Sweden had in fact conquered all the nations involved in this quarrel of rank. Hence it was self-evident that the Swedish bishop should receive the best position. Otherwise, he concluded, he would be pleased with the second best (Ragvaldi in Petreio 1614).

Sweden was domesticised by the Goths under their first king, Magog Japhetson, the grandson of Noa. According to the Byzantine historian, Jordanes (the primary source of this myth), these Goths were later to spread over Europe 'as swarms out of a beehive', led by their great king Beric. They conquered large parts of Europe and Asia, fought in the Trojan war, against Cyrus, Alexander the Great (a great Amazonic/Gothic queen even gave birth to his son) and Rome, and at last they established great kingdoms in Italy and Spain. As Jordanes said, Sweden was the 'mother's womb of the peoples'.

This theme was to be developed. When in exile in Italy, Johannes Magnus, the last Catholic Archbishop of Sweden, wrote his Gothorum sveonumque historia (1554). Before the eyes of an astonished learned world, a complete Swedish list of 143 monarchs from Magog Japhetson (88 after the Flood) to the present times was put forward in excellent Latin. But, most prominently, the successive emigrations of all Gothic peoples from

Scythians and Amazones to Langobards were described in detail. Their deeds in the Trojan war, against Hercules and Alexander the Great, and of course, their occupation of Italy and Spain was retold at length, and made an integral part of national history.

Although a 'papist', the work of Johannes Magnus became the authoritative work of Swedish history, tremendously important in the political and scientific rhetoric of Great Power Sweden (1630–1718). For instance, we have many proofs that the great Swedish king, Gustav II Adolf, was seen as, and apparently viewed himself as, the new Beric, making a reentrance into European great power politics when he landed in Germany in 1630 to take part in The Thirty Years War (Nordström 1934: 70).

But Johannes Magnus was to be surpassed by one of the most distinguished natural scientists in the late seventeenth century. Between 1679 and 1702, Olof Rudbeck published the four volumes of his astonishing Atlantica, one of the most ingenious and terrifying works of Swedish scientific history. Profiting from the methodological development in ethymology, archaeology and the natural sciences, Rudbeck managed to prove that Sweden was identical with the Atlantis of Plato. But most important of all, Sweden was the island of the mystic Hyperboreans of whom Herodotus and other Greek authors had spoken; the people from whom Apollo came to Delphi, and the people from whom Hercules stole the three golden apples - symbolising for Rudbeck the letters and the classical arts. Finally, Rudbeck revealed the secret truth which no one before him had realised: all human knowledge had spread from Sweden, which, according to Rudbeck, was traceable in both classical and contemporary languages. In fact, all of these languages were of Swedish origin (Rudbeck 1937: part 1; Nordström 1934).

If Johannes Magnus indicated the political priority of Sweden over all other nations, Rudbeck added their priority in the sphere of knowledge, which is important for my purposes. There is an omnipotence in the grandiose claims put forward by Rudbeck. It is like the discovery of a new Genesis. This omnipotent claim, I would argue, has certain political and intellectual significance. It is not by chance that Sweden at the same time develops from the medieval household-state into an impersonal and unitary sovereign state. And it is not by chance that the development of a rational and secular science takes place at the same time. Here nationalism and historicity have extremely suggestive roles to play in the state as political project, linked to the intellectual project of shaping superior ('omnipotent') and distinguished knowledge.

However, it is important to point out that the state or knowledge should not only be discussed in the form of discourses. We must not forget that knowledge also entails concrete projects involving concrete persons acting in concrete networks. As 'projects' I see everything from individual plans to highly complex, collective strategies. Projects are articulated within discourses. They combine these discourses in new ways, delimiting and

changing them under way. This implies that it is not possible for one single actor to obtain superior control over any project. Nevertheless, change is possible through new constellations of projects and networks, and their institutionalisation. One such project undergoing tremendous change is the state, having reached a very high degree of discursive and institutional complexity. Though this must not lead us to believe that the state 'exists' in any mode other than discursively; it still consists in practice in personal networks of interaction and political projects.

In the development of the modern state, we may find a rather low degree of discursive and institutional complexity before the seventeenth century. It is here that the fundamental development takes place, by which the state becomes abstracted from the people in charge of it:

The decisive shift was made from the idea of the ruler 'maintaining his state' – where this simply meant upholding his own position – to the idea that there is a separate legal and constitutional order, that of the State, which the ruler has a duty to maintain. One effect of this transformation was that the power of the State, not that of the ruler, came to be envisaged as the basis of government. (Skinner 1978: ix-x)

This does imply a historicising of the state discourse. The state becomes an object of history, apprehended as one and indivisible, within inviolable territorial integrity. An important point of development along these lines was the first manifestation of international law and principles for mutual recognition with the Westphalian Peace Treaty 1648. The treaty indicates the formation of a sovereign state discourse in European affairs during the seventeenth century (Ringmar 1995). Likewise, in the internal affairs of Sweden, the state becomes institutionally represented by the establishment of councils in 1634 (originally five: the State Council, War Council, Admiral Council, Tax Council and the High Court). The state becomes divided from the personal household of the king, and 'state officials' are appointed. Thus an altogether new discursive field for personal and institutional interactions, quests for power, and invocations of knowledge is established.

Indeed these types of formative moments are of extraordinary importance in the life cycles of all institutions, since conflicts over appropriate conduct, meaning, roles and norms are likely to be visible at early stages, while subsequently becoming partly hidden. These often highly personal conflicts between different projects and networks do carry on, but in the disguise of the representational discourses: in the case of the state, for instance its various institutions, the academic disciplines and the official discourse of nationalism. The state is a complex constellation of forces in the tension-ridden area between theory and practice; where the very intellectual speculation of the state as well as political practices within it, partly *shapes* the state:

There is, in other words, a complex interaction between theory and practice and between the state as an institution that rests on an ideology, the articulate ideas that politicians, administrators and lawyers have about it and theories of the state, that are held by intellectuals ... Experience of living within a particular kind of inherited institutional and cultural framework shapes the manner in which the character of political, legal and societal arrangements is considered. Equally, intellectual characterizations of these arrangements provide an orientation for elites towards the framework within which they operate and a distinct vocabulary in terms of which public affairs can be considered. (Dyson 1980: 81)

This discursive-institutional approach on the state is in my view left out of some of the most influential analyses of the role of the state in relation to nationalism (Tilly et al. 1975; Breuilly 1982; Brass 1991). These analyses are instrumental, and view the discourse of nationalism as instrumental to the interests of rational state elites. However, this 'rationality' is only rational in its relation to a discursive field of institutions, projects and networks. In other words, even if the Gothic war propaganda could be seen to be 'instrumental' to the Swedish state in the seventeenth century, this instrumentality is projected backwards by current analyses, while notions of noble exclusivity, honour, and distinguished moral quality were normative contexts (greatly influenced by religion) towards which the persons in charge had to orient themselves. The 'instrumentality' of these measures may only be recognised when a developed state-national discourse exists.

Thus the problem facing an agent who wishes to legitimate what he is doing at the same time as gaining what he wants cannot simply be the instrumental problem of tailoring his normative language in order to fit his projects. It must in part be the problem of tailoring his projects in order to fit the available normative language. (Skinner 1978, I: xii-iii)

Thus the very notion of the state having 'interests' – using 'instruments' such as nationalism to make internal subjects or external state subjects respond 'instrumentally' to these interpellations – are themselves shaped by a modern nationalist discourse. Skinner's (1978) point when investigating the development of the modern state discourse is to conceive of the normative discussion of the state not as efforts to come up with solutions to the 'eternal problems' of political thought, but rather as practical discussions oriented towards concrete problems in a peculiar political and intellectual context. Reification of the state is thus to a large extent effectuated by practices of self-reflexivity among intellectuals as well as other key actor groups. Historicity becomes a central practice of self-reflexivity within the state as well as in the reflexively monitored relations between states (Giddens 1985: 212).

In the light of this discussion we may see the Gothic myth in Sweden and its explosion in the *Atlantica* as a rhetoric of exclusivity, where a distinguished over-individual or genealogy of the state is in a formative moment. In the words of Koselleck (1985: 160), 'a given group makes an exclusive claim to generality', and thus they singularise a unitary agency on the part of the nation. This exclusivity does of course lack many of the populist qualities developed in modern nationalism. Even if there is a

certain admiration for the primitive and puritan life of the Goths as compared to that of the 'decadent' Greeks and Romans, the Gothic warriors are all depicted as noblemen. In an era obsessed by personal genealogy, the actual nobility is linked to the Gothic heroes by blood 'chains'. This exclusive genealogy will later melt into national history-writing and become abstracted into the spirit of the *Volksgeist*.

For Rudbeck, this genealogical exclusivity of the Gothic descendants is indistinguishable from their exclusivity in knowledge. By spreading over Europe and Asia, the Goths brought with them the classical arts (erroneously attributed to the Greeks), rememberances of a godly original revelation. Although Rudbeck uses the methods of a developing rational science; comparative ethymology, archaeological excavation (it is shown that Sweden has the deepest layer of vegetable mould in the world, and is thus the first cultivated land after the Flood), and biological observations (since there are more fish in the Nordic countries than anywhere else, all peoples must have settled here first after the Flood), he is also obsessed with giving Sweden its rightful place in the Bible. For instance, by cabbalistic methods it is possible to show that many biblical references concern Sweden. Hence, at this stage the sacral quality and the rational secularity of the national mythology cannot be separated.

The omnipotence of Swedish political and intellectual achievements, as discovered by Rudbeck, is parallel to the institutionalisation of an omnipotent and sovereign state discourse. This state discourse was not depersonalised at this moment. Sovereignty was still to a great extent attributed to the person of the king. The methods of a secular historicity are not developed, and history-writing is a kind of grandiose personal genealogy. It was when the state was first thought of as an abstract historical object, that the abstract individual of the *Volksgeist*, and thus modern nationalism, is born. These claims to omnipotence and sovereignty (or exclusivity) are formative moments of national historiography, when the state as historical object, and the particular people attached to it (the Swedes), may be described and explained by reliable methods of a national and institutionalised (or exclusivist) science. The national and the historical are merged together by the powerful method of scientific truth.

The academy and the intellectuals

A political or intellectual project may be observed at a microscopic level, for instance, when a social scientist takes advantage of the state sector to do research on it. But here a general state project is also mirrored, which it is arguably possible to call 'a hegemonic state project' (Jessop 1990: 207-12). According to Jessop there can never be only one state project. However, one project may be dominant, as, for example, 'the welfare state project' in Sweden. Intellectuals possess a key role in making such projects appear to

confirm a 'substantive' unity of the state: 'it is typically the role of organic intellectuals ... to elaborate hegemonic projects, rather than members of the economically dominant class or class fraction' (Jessop 1990: 214). They 'interpellate subjects, endow them with interests and organize them in conjecturally specific ways' (Jessop 1990: 217). In line with this argument, the state is a social relation, and is only on a discursive level objectified and substantial. Here a crucial interaction between politics and science is established:

Time and again, the social sciences have profited from such interaction in terms of institutional support. They have been able to portray themselves as contributing to the solution of social problems by scholarly means, i.e. means that only they could provide, and were honoured by policy-makers with institutional recognition and resources. The policy-makers, in turn ... used the recourse to scientific argument to bolster their position in political argumentation and struggle. (Wagner and Wittrock 1991: 334)

Hence intellectual projects of scientific or professional kinds cannot be grasped as 'advances' in the process towards the fulfillment of sciences, but instead they are formed within the tensions of intellectual and political domains and linked to the local constellation of forces at work (Wagner and Wittrock 1991: 345). In the modern welfare state, the discourse coalitions between power and knowledge have reached a high degree of both thematic affinity, formal cooperation, and ad hoc interaction. Of course, these processes may vary a great deal between different contexts (ibid.). However, Wagner and Wittrock (1991: 332–3) have discussed academic development within the social sciences very generally in the terms of scientisation and professionalisation.

Scientisation is, first, the project by which academic and non-academic discourses are categorically separated, with the academy becoming authoritatively recognised as holding the monopoly of true or reliable knowledge (Wagner and Wittrock 1991: 332–3). But, second, it is also, and importantly so, a process by which distinctions appear between different disciplines, which are categorically separated into different institutions within the academy, often with strong barriers between them, shaping concrete identities and knowledge-monopolies within different peculiar domains. According to Bourdieu (1988: 95), these distinctions imply an institutional refusal of all non-institutional thought and an exalted belief in 'academic reliability'.

Professionalisation is the method by which a community of scientific specialists is shaped out of solitary intellectuals. Professionals within the academy can broadly be seen to perform two roles: the first role is concerned with the mainly self-referential discourses of science; the second is concerned with educating and training groups of people from the outside world (within the sphere of the social sciences typically for posts in the vast state apparatus). Of course these two roles may be performed perfectly by

the same person, but this also lays the ground for outright conflict between 'the scientists' and 'the educating professionals' (among other things, conflicts about the appropriate role of the academy); what Bourdieu (1988: 48) has called a conflict between the cultural hierarchy and the social hierarchy of the academy. As Bourdieu (1988: 56–7) has pointed out, a peculiar *habitus* is formed within academic professions. This *habitus* is a combination of acting, speaking and writing in distinct ways, which is reproduced internally and it is the most serious obstacle for groups from the lower classes who want to enter the discourses of the academy. This behavioral structure is equally important for both the scientist and the professionalist strategies.

This discussion could be seen as a specification of Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, discussed in the introductory section. Foucault, in his empirical works (1979) studies this process as a part of what he labels the 'power/knowledge-sequence'. Power, by its disciplinary techniques, shapes an ordered cohort of knowledge out of chaos and confusion, and brings forward technicians, who carry out its meticulous rituals. Knowledge, in its turn, is awarded ordered domains where subjects of power and new authoritative knowledge are to be shaped.

Of course, there is a degree of functionalism inherent in Foucault's model, as well as in the types discussed above. The argument does not seem to allow for any opposition against the power of the state, an opposition which we know often emanated from intellectual circles. We may see the argument of Wagner and Wittrock as a model for the institutionalisation of the hegemonic project of the state in the sphere of knowledge, and not as an accurate description of what exactly has happened. However it serves as a useful counter-point to the still prevailing myth of scientific 'freedom' and 'development' (a myth which obviously hides the social power at work within the discourses of knowledge). But what is of importance here is the implications of this project for nationalism and historicity.

Intellectuals have always been interested in defining and distinguishing themselves. Such self-defining activities reinforce 'a given (or claimed) status for the group' (Bauman 1987: 8–9). In fact, as Habermas (1989: 43) has argued, the very notion of the 'public' emerges from such intellectual self-definitions in the seventeenth century. But with the establishment and considerable growth of the modern academy from the late eighteenth century onwards, this distinction takes on a new quality. Scientists and professional intellectuals are henceforth 'national' intellectuals with the role of producing, reflecting, and transmitting authoritative knowledge for the nation. The intellectual melts into the state and seems to disappear (with few exceptions) as an individual.

This can be illustrated, for instance, by official government reports in Sweden. These reports are an integral aspect of the state with, in some cases, great importance for the activities of government, parliament and

bureaucracy. By fading into invisibility, intellectual knowledge becomes an integral part of official power. However, this knowledge is produced by methods which are by no means neutral. Of course, we have the same case within general education. 'Official' knowledge supported by the state has the peculiarity of concealing its particularity. It becomes apparent then, that there is a parallel between official knowledge and the state. Official knowledge is sovereign in the same manner as the state is the sovereign political power (Bartelson 1993: 5). Hence it is only institutional definitions which separate the academy and the state in modern states.

To return to the Swedish case, we observe that Swedish history was seen as a state matter before the late eighteenth century (Lindroth 1975: 242–56, 320–7, 338–44). The office of 'state historiographer' (installed in 1644) and the official institutions of the Antiquity Council (1666) and the Custodian of National Monuments (1630), with the public record office, were all concerned with Swedish documents and monuments, as well as with writing officially sanctioned national histories. This indicates that a special importance was attached to history, or rather, that national history was not just an academic discipline but an integral part of the state. When the highly internationalised pre-modern science was exchanged for a rigid and disciplinary national science, history could be introduced into this new structure, built on institutional identities of biology, physics, economy and so forth.

The academic discipline of history developed from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Generally, it distinguished itself from the natural sciences and the mechanistic world-view of the Enlightenment, and instead proclaimed history itself as 'the key to the understanding of man as a social and political being' (Iggers 1968: 33). Needless to say, the outlook of the discipline came to differ a lot from country to country. However, what is general is the new position of a defined group of intellectuals authorised to proclaim official narratives; narratives which have great importance in most Western countries when mass education becomes institutionalised. What is of interest here however, is the general principle of historicity, with the institutionalisation of the historical discipline as only part of it.

Historicising individual subjects as part of a developing whole thus becomes a macro practice of knowledge. There is not only a 'national history' as part of a 'world history', but there is also history of literature, culture, religion, economy and natural sciences as parts of national history. And there is a decentralised historicisation of all institutions as developing parts of the societal unit. Institutions are not conceived of as interpersonal networks but as developing objects or subjects, where the historicity of the social welfare office or the department of treasury have great discursive power both for themselves and in relation to the public whole. The discursive representation these institutions perform disguises the interpersonal interaction within and between them. Such a discursive system of institutional representations is inconceivable without official historicity.

Hence historicity by its categorical separation of developing official bodies conceals the level of interpersonal practice:

people have come increasingly to conceive of themselves as members of very large collectivities linked primarily by common identities but minimally by networks of directly interpersonal relationships – nations, races, classes, genders, Republicans, Muslims, and 'civilized people'. (Calhoun 1991: 95-6)

We may make the list longer by adding the most ordinary social institutions; ordinary but still inconceivable as official representations, without a peculiar historicity to themselves, but, primarily, in relation to the national whole. Hence the 'self-evidence' (or 'banality', see Billig 1995) of nationalism in modern Western states. The intellectual construction of historicity in practice has become hidden by an intellectual inclusion in the state under the banner of 'official truth'. 'Die in der monologischen Reflexion geschaffenen Codes haben so die Spuren ihres Entstehens verwischt und werden als Elemente eines ungebundenen symbolischen Universums für viele Situationen verfügbar' (Giesen 1993: 82). The nation is such a categorical concept, hiding the contexts of its construction, imagined as a historical object or subject in and for itself, but also shaping objects and subjects in contemporary social practices.

Historicity, nationalism and the state in Sweden: the populist myth

In the same mode as abstract, individualised bodies of knowledge are created, the state develops from person to institution, from physical concretion to abstraction. The body of the state becomes superior and precedent to the body of the king. The state acquires a historicity of its own, divided from the genealogy of the dynasty. When the state starts taking precedence over living beings, when it contains more than the land and its inhabitants, masters as well as servants, it becomes an abstract object moving through history in its own peculiar development. From this, different kinds of policy orientations could be derived, such as political ideologies, educational programmes for its citizens, reform programmes such as infrastructure, predictable systems of coercion, extraction, jurisdiction and the like (for a superb analysis of France, see Weber 1976). The appropriate rules, operations and outcomes of these processes are categorised and explained by the scientific professionals, who also earn their living from the continuing existence of this superior being.

As has been indicated throughout this article, the state becomes continuous and abstracted from the people in charge of it. By the growth of institutions within the state sphere, a growing number of people are employed in the public sphere. Specifically, as I have shown, the development of bodies of categorised knowledge within academies brings forward a scientist and professional intelligentsia, whose members devote themselves

to intellectual distinction and disciplinary historicism. In this situation, abstract discourses of the state and knowledge come into being, which could be grasped as normative orientations for action and interpretation. The earlier preoccupation with relating oneself to a genealogy gives way to an individualised historicity. Here, the state and the nation are action subjects in their own right. On the discursive level, the nation as a living organism of history is brought forward to fill the empty shell of the state as 'a ghost in a machine' (Tivey 1981: 70), and will be observable by distinct historical knowledge. However, on the practical level, something else also happens.

On the practical level, the historicised nation does not only come into being as a consequence of intellectual discourses, but by concrete interactions between people in projects and networks. Nationalism as a project is performed by certain persons acting in certain contexts, with political, normative or other motives. Through their network interaction these persons may develop similar value orientations. The members of such interactions may see themselves as a 'national class', the bearers of the supreme national values, and the only ones with a general overview of how things are and ought to be ordered. Even though it may not be solely a need of the upper classes to manipulate or dominate the population at large, it may indeed have such consequences. In Sweden during the nineteenth century, workers were excluded from the national discourse, while the assiduous and unsophisticated yeoman for the first time in history was celebrated as the national hero (though typically the founders of the discourse were more diverted from agriculture than ever). Such features transmit important messages about the ideal society, and are echoed primarily within education. But they are not 'calculated' messages, or simply fakes; on the contrary, a real nation comes into existence by the very anticipation of it (Koselleck 1985: 94):

Nationalism helps naturalize the recency and contingency of the nation-state through providing its myths of origin. But at the same time, the discourse of national solidarity helps block off other possible discursive articulations of interest. The discursive arena of the modern polity treats what 'politics' is as inherently to do with the bounded sphere of the state. Thus if programmes of reform on the part of subordinate classes (or other groupings) are to succeed, they have normally to be made to appear in 'the national interest'. But dominant classes have much less difficulty representing their own policies as 'in the national interest' than do oppositional groups, since they have much more influence over the style and form of what can be discursively articulated. (Giddens 1985: 221; see also Jessop 1990: ch. 7)

In Germany, a well-researched area (Kohn 1944; Kedourie 1960; Berlin 1976: part II; Giesen 1993), the *people* as a collective, historical individual appears around 1800 in the writings of intellectuals such as Herder, Fichte and Jahn. The emergence of a historicist nationalism with sharp populist undertones in Germany has in some instances been explained as a reaction against the exclusion of the intellectuals from the mainly *Francophone* nobility and the humiliation of Germany in the Napoleonic war (Kedourie

1960; Greenfeld 1992). However, these explanations are far too specific to account for the enormous spread of historicist nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth century. In the case of idealist treatments of nationalism such as those of Kohn, Kedourie and Greenfeld, I suspect that the purpose is to blame the German romantic movement for all the catastrophes and holocausts to come (and, in the case of Greenfeld, to contrast this with the superb tradition, according to her, of American nationalism).

It is obvious that this new historicist nationalism was of great importance to many intellectual movements not yet recognised with the honour of 'national self-determination' in Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. A totally new interest in the traditions of 'the people', their folklore, tales, music and the like became an object of tremendous intellectual fascination (a fascination for 'the popular' or 'the common' which, it seems, is still with us, at least in matters of exotic cultures).

Sweden may lack the populist radicalism of the intellectual national movements in great parts of Europe. Still it contains a similar development of a historicist nationalism with a populist rhetoric within the frame of the existing state. The Gothic myth which culminated in Rudbeck's Atlantica (1937 [1679]) seems to have vanished. But, in my view, the exclusivity and omnipotence of this myth is brought into the modern national discourse in Sweden. However, now the humble man of the people, 'the yeoman', was awarded entrance in this national exclusivity, although on the conditions of the intellectual discourse (as was the case, of course, in the rest of Europe too). Genealogical exclusiveness becomes popular or national exclusiveness, with its characteristic categorical distinction between internal equality and external inequality. The warrior-kings of Sweden personify the people, not a noble Gothic distinctiveness.

In fact, the yeoman can be seen as the peaceful part of his warrior-twin, the viking, who by the discovery of the Icelandic tales entered the national myth. Hence it is no coincidence that the professor of history and conservative politician, Erik Gustaf Geijer, published the twin poems 'The Viking' and 'The Yeoman', standard reading for generations of Swedish schoolchildren, in the first article of *Iduna*, the journal of the Gothic Society (1811–45). The Gothic Society aimed at reviving 'the old Goths' spirit of liberty, manliness, and common sense' (quoted in Trägårdh 1990: 33). A large part of the cultural elite joined the society for ceremonious meetings where *mjöd* (the beer of the vikings) was consumed and the members hailed each other by old Norse names.

Though the society was an elitist network, it still cherished a myth of the equal peasant society, united under the king; an egalitarianism which is absent from the Great Power myth (Trägårdh 1990: 34). This populist myth may both be seen as a vision of democracy (as it was constantly used by the pro-democratic intellectuals at the last turn of the century, Stenkvist 1987), and a conservative vision of a stable alliance, a sort of contract, between king and people. In Geijer's mind the two meanings seem to merge in a

populist-national vision. The concept of 'the people', symbolised by the assiduous yeoman, asserts the rightful power of the king, but stands as one man when their ancient freedom is threatened. As in all populist myths significant exclusions are made of individuals not representative of this 'people'.

Geijer is the father of a modern nationalist history writing in Sweden. The image of history as an alliance between a metaphysical people (represented by 'nationally relevant' persons such as the yeomen) and their king (who represents all the best features of this 'people' in his own person) becomes a potent national representation in a popular era, communicated by education and mass media. Conflicts and crises are explained as instances when this alliance has been threatened, as most commonly by foreigners, but also by self-seeking noblemen and prelates. It is exactly this populist image which the intellectual critics of democracy reproduced at the turn of the last century, when they heavily attacked the 'party fanatics', who were said to know nothing of any fatherland, but only to recognise their own divisive interests.

It would be wrong to say, however, that this populist myth disappears with the anti-democratic arguments. The place of the yeoman is taken by 'the worker', 'the modern Swede', who departed from his earlier premodern stage, to build a new society. The place of the king is taken by 'the welfare state' which, by detailed planning and organisation, shapes an image of stability and predictability. This unity state/people managed much more thoroughly to alter the discursive system, supported by new systems of mass communication, than any earlier national myths. This popular nationalism has far from vanished, but rather it has become 'banalised' into everyday social practices, and it was not until recent years that the significant omissions of this nationalism (immigrants, the role of women) was problematised.

As Giddens pointed out in the quotation above, dominant classes have great possibilities in representing their own projects as the national interest. A relevant example from the Swedish context is the case of the official report on emigration (compiled 1907–13). From an unproblematic acceptance of the huge emigration, after 1900 a growing concern for it developed among the political and educated elite. The idea that a large population was the foundation of a prosperous country was influential at the time. The loss of strength and vitality needed in the expanding Swedish industry was perceived as especially threatening. A National Society against Emigration was founded, interesting as a case since it was a network of 'national interest', with prominent members from the Riksdag, the academy, industry and the army. This network managed, by lobbying, to produce the report which was carried out by the statistician Gustav Sundbärg, himself being actively engaged in the National Society.

Sundbärg's conclusions provided a call for national integration, both mentally and practically, most developed in his aphorisms over *The Swedish Mentality* (1911), which, breaking the rules of common official reports,

became a huge best-seller, published in fourteen editions in ten years. Here, the tendency was as usual in the literature about national characters. The Swedish people possesses superb qualities but their self-assertion is weak, and they have a tendency to admire everything foreign. Only if we awake from our pre-national slumber, our young people will think it worthwhile to stay in the country. Parts of the report bear a clear resemblance, though in a democratic version, to the *nationalisme intégral*, originally advocated by the French right-wing party *Action Française* (Alter 1989: 28–40).

However, the report is not only an investigation of the Swedish soul, but also of the body. By advanced statistics (Sundbärg's population statistics over Sweden became internationally renowned and gained for him Sweden's first professor's chair in statistics, yet another example of the interactions between power and knowledge), Sundbärg produces a picture of the Swedish state as a national household, an organism, symbolising the new interactions of power and knowledge in obtaining control over the population, and giving the state an image of being predictable, of being subject to knowable laws of its operations and sequences of actions. What we see in the report is an early version of the Swedish welfare state, an image of a historically developing unitary state machine (this time given historical depth by the dull facts of statistics).

At this stage we have reached a new 'formative moment' of the state. Its institutional representations and its exclusivity or sovereignty as a historical object were first shaped during the seventeenth century. Now a kind of totalist official policy of rational prognosis is envisioned. The state must have an industrial policy, a social policy, a cultural policy, and all these undertakings ought to be based in authoritative knowledge. 'Alliances' (projects and networks) of national interest are formed in a variety of contexts, and subsequently given various institutional representations. This institutional complexity also means a tremendous spread of historicity as organising principle. Now the representational historic objects of people and state emerge in every area of society, more significantly observed in their parts than in a dubious centre. But on the discursive level the state is a household, a gigantic public household, which floats through history as a historical object, so self-evident in the order of things, that it never could be questioned.

Concluding reflections

It is not possible to investigate historicity and nationalism on the isolated level of representational discourse, but instead the motors behind discursive development in terms of concrete interactions between people in projects and networks must be dragged forward. Only then it is possible to show how different practices of power and knowledge continually reshape what the nation-state and its history is. As the example of the emigration report

shows, networks of influential people are able to present certain issues as representing a 'national interest'. Intellectual speculation on the national character shapes the historical subject of the Swede. Investigations of the state may shape new, powerful images of what the state historically has been and how 'it' currently ought to 'act'. Intellectual distinction in the form of scientisation and professionalisation profits from such powerknowledge interactions, in the case of the emigration report by being awarded a new scientific discipline.

Few theories recognise the importance of nationalism in contemporary social practices, for instance, the institutional practices of the modern state. Instead, nationalism is often theorised on the level of concrete political movements, often of an extreme character. But the national movements in, say, contemporary Yugoslavia could never have emerged as they have without an already defined discursive field of nationalism, without international principles of recognition, historical definitions of nationality, and normative expectations upon the relation between 'peoples' and the state. The importance of 'history' in the Yugoslav case is illuminating. Instead of accepting the violence and bloodshed at face value, one must, it is said, trace the 'historical roots' of the conflict. By such investigations, the conflict becomes 'explainable'. No example is more apt to prove the symbiotic interlinkages between nationalism and historicity, and thus between the state and knowledge.

The nation is not a subject of history, but is constructed as a historical subject out of discursive practices of power and knowledge. It is of the utmost importance to trace the practical logic of its construction, in order to understand which current political practices nationalism supports. Thus, nationalism does not contain anything 'natural' in itself (such as a genetic or psychological predisposition towards nationalism). And just because national identity is seen as a primary source of identification for individual beings and peoples, one cannot simply accept it as the ultimate basis of political community (such as some normative theories of nationalism suggest, e.g., Walzer 1995; Tamir 1993).

In this article, the interlinking of nationalism and historicity has been discussed and placed in relation to intellectual knowledge and the state. The scientisation and professionalisation of intellectuals into academies bring them into a new relation with the state, where they benefit from it as well as construct its categories. Intellectual distinction and category constructing have had a profound influence in making the singular emergence of the historicised nation seem to be a natural order of the modern world. In the modern context of today's Bosnia, we have made the conflict 'natural' by explaining it as the outcome of ancient ethnic hatred. This provides yet another victory for the naturalising orders of historicity and nationalism, which also clearly shows the huge normative problems inherent in these order; problems which lie beyond the scope of this article.

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