

MODERNIZING THE NATION - NATIONALIZING MODERNITY

ORVAR LÖFGREN
Dept. of European Ethnology
Finnngatan 8
22362 Lund, Sweden

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Cyprus gives the impression of being more westernized than Greece and the influence of the British way of life cannot be overlooked. In contrast to Greece, water for bathing in the better hotels is available at all hours of the day and night; there are no fights with dripping taps and the meals are served hot. Despite heavy traffic there are no loud arguments about right of way and one does not encounter the proverbial Greek unpunctuality... (Tappe, 1981:109)

The author discusses the project of modernity - both from the aspect of modernity as an internationalizing and westernizing force and from the aspect of nationalizing practices of modernity. This tension between homogenizing and heterogenizing processes forms the focus of this paper. After an introductory discussion of the cultural organization of nation-building and the images of modernity, the author sketches some traits in the remaking of 20th century Sweden, using the American experience as an analytical contrast.

As in this enthusiastic presentation of Cypriot culture, the project of modernity is mostly seen as an internationalizing or westernizing force which draws backward nations into the modern world system, providing them with paved roads along which modern citizens hasten toward the future dressed in practical business suits and rational values, worrying about punctuality.* The language of modernity becomes a *lingua franca* which can be understood in Montevideo as well as in Novosibirsk.

The birth date of modernity has been transported around in history (cf. Faubion, 1988), but what interests me here are the ways in which different periods or stages of modernity during the last two centuries often have been described in terms of international waves threatening the national project.

There is, however, another aspect to this movement: the ways in which the rhetoric and practices of modernity are nationalized and thus become part of a differentiating culture-building. It is this tension between homogenizing and heterogenizing processes, which forms the focus of this paper, which is part of a larger, comparative project.¹ After an introductory discussion of the cultural organization of nation-building and the images of modernity, I move on to sketch some traits in the remaking of 20th century Sweden, using the American experience as an analytical contrast.

THE CULTURAL GRAMMAR OF NATION-BUILDING

The interesting paradox in the emergence of modern nationalism from the end of the eighteenth century onward is that it is an international ideology which is imported for national ends. This was the case at the end of the eighteenth century, when the revolutionary national experiments in Northern and Southern America inspired European intellectuals on the other side of the Atlantic, and this is still the case at the end of the twentieth century, when new national movements appear in the Third World or old national projects are called to life in the disintegrating Second World.

In this perspective we may view the ideology of nationalism as a gigantic do-it-yourself kit. Gradually a more and more detailed list of ideas is developed as to what elements make up a proper nation. Fixed conceptions emerged in the nineteenth century about how a cultural heritage should be shaped, how a national anthem should sound, and when the flag should be waved. National galleries were founded; national mentalities discovered. In this parallel work of nation-building, cultural matrices were freely borrowed across national frontiers. For example, national museums of folk culture were built in Europe, following the model in Berlin, and areas of native beauty were selected for transformation - after an American idea - into national parks. The important point here is the ways in which national projects are made transnational, are imported and transformed into new, unique national settings. In an earlier paper (Löfgren, 1989) I have argued that the comparative study of the ways in which nations are turned into cultural formations may benefit from separating three levels. First of all there exists what could be called an *international cultural grammar* of nationhood, with a thesaurus of general ideas about the cultural ingredients needed to form a nation, a kind of cultural check list produced mainly during the nineteenth century and including for example a symbolic estate (flag, anthem, sacred texts, etc.), ideas about a national heritage (a common history and folk culture, a pantheon of national heroes and villains, etc.), and notions of national character, values, and tastes.

The international thesaurus is transformed into a specific *national lexicon*, local forms of cultural expression, which tend to vary from nation to nation. In this field we can observe how national rhetoric and symbols may be located in different arenas, emphasized in different historical periods or social situations. The third term, *dialect vocabulary*, focuses on the internal divisions within the nation: conflicting groups and interests using national arguments and rhetoric, sometimes also creating different styles of national discourse.²

Such an analysis of grammatical transformations needs to be carried out with a historical and comparative approach. How is the grammar confronted with specific historical and local conditions and experiences?

First of all, there is the crucial problem of timing. Some nations manage to appear as self-evident, God-given creations rather than historical accidents, while others make their claims at the wrong time and in the wrong form. That is why many of today's nations include a number of failed or frustrated national projects, which either

bide their time or have given up completely. It is this national latency that constanly causes political surprises - sudden revivals and new confrontations.

The problem is simply that the nations which see themselves as "old" products of natural growth can easily adopt an ironizing, big-brother attitude to more recent nation-building. This aloof stance often contains a more or less conscious evolutionary idea: the nationalists in the remains of Eastern Europe or in the Third World are often seen as representatives of an old-fashioned (or in more evolutionary terms "a primitive") national rhetoric: they parade in folk costume and wave their flags in a way that we abandoned long ago. It is this evolutionary idea which make people mistakenly talk about Eastern European nationalism as being "frozen" during Soviet rule and thus reappearing from a state of conservation today, "lagging behind" the present. This image of "un-modern" nationalism is illustrated by this cartoon, which appeared in *The Guardian* during the summer of 1991.

It represents a kind of North-European ironizing with a long tradition. When Ernest Gellner in his book *Nations and Nationalism* illustrates the mechanics of nation-building by telling the story of how small Ruritania breaks away from the disintegrating empire of Megalomania, he (unconsciously) joins the same genre of ironic "Balkanization", which for over a century has been used for musical comedies, satire and science-fiction stories. "Down there" all kind of peoples: serbs, albanians, croatians, bulgarians or whatever they called themselves were busy killing each others, creating an eternal mess. Their national ambitions were seen, not only as unrealistic, but as slightly comical.

Southeastern Europe thus became the operetta stage of nationalism, which many authors used for creating imagined nations. Englishmen like Saki wrote sarcastic novels about the eternal Balkan warfare at the turn of the century, while his fellow countryman Buchanan produced adventure stories about young British gentlemen fighting for the freedom of Evallonia. On the screen the Marx Brothers came to the rescue of another of these fictive nations, while Tintin was busy solving mysteries in Syldavia.

In an indirect way this genre makes the cultural grammar of nation-building stand out very clearly, as well as illustrating some of its evolutionary narrative structure, but in the following I will be more interested in the temporalities of national experiences than national narratives. What kinds of transformations are possible in a given situation and at a given time? What it is that makes certain attempts at national rhetoric or practices seem totally outmoded and doomed to failure in one situation, when they were quite successful in another?

Both Anderson (1983) and Hobsbawm (1991) briefly touch this problem of different phases of nation-building. (In Hobsbawm's case with the use of epoch labels such as "proto-nationalism", "the apogee of nationalism", "late twentieth century nationalism".)

This perspective needs to be developed much further. We have to explore the interaction between available infrastructures in terms of media technology, market

systems, state institutions etc and local conditions of national culture-building. What kind of imaginations and processes of integration are actually occurring in what Benedict Anderson once termed "the imagined community of the nation". How is, for example, the cultural grammar activated in a situation of mass consumption or a media scene dominated by radio and television, as compared to Benedict Anderson's pioneer period of print capitalism?³

In the following I will look at a one such specific phase of nation-building, that of the national appropriation of twentieth-century international ideas of modernity and the new ways in which the modernizing nation state was materialized in the everyday life of its citizens.

NATIONAL MODERNITIES

In the same way as we can talk about an international grammar of nation-building, it is possible to sketch a cultural grammar of modernity - general ideas about how, when, where, and why to be modern.

I will not get into a general discussion of definitions of modernity, but as several scholars have pointed out (cf. Faubion, 1988; Friedman, n.d. and Giddens, 1991) few attempts have been made to try to synthesize the elements which are seen as adding up to modernity: what we tend to get are clusters of traits, usually in the forms of *x-isations* (industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, secularization, democratization etc) or *y-isms* (individualism, scientism, rationalism, cosmopolitanism, evolutionism, futurism, historicism etc).

Here I will focus on the level of cultural registers and arenas which seem to be very typical of the cultures of modernity: new conceptions of time and space as well as novel forms of organizing past and present, for example in the parallel cults of nostalgia and futurism,⁴ ideas about specific modern sensibilities, a strong focus on aesthetics (for example in design and architecture) as well as on health and hygiene, a love of technological metaphors of progress: from trains to computers.

If we compare the shopping-list of "the national" exemplified earlier, we may also see how traditional elements are given new and modern forms of meanings: how the gallery of national heroes is changed or the national iconography is redesigned, how definitions of citizenship alter, or how the national is gendered in new ways etc.

Such transformations are perhaps most easy to spot in a specific modern and futuristic genre: the utopian images of the perfect or "pure" modern society. There is a wealth of examples to draw from here, but let me argue for a special case from the 1930s: Jean De Brunhoff's picture book *King Babar*, in which Babar, after a special guest appearance in French civilization, returns to the elephant jungle to transform it into a model city. Camel caravans arrive, loaded with all the modern essentials, and they set to work felling trees, leveling ground, and laying out a grid of streets with geometrical symmetry.

Generations of children have been fascinated by this 1930s Utopia - a little, well-ordered community where everyone knows his place and is cheerful on Sundays, all in accordance with the King's command. In the new Célesteville, existence is based on a rational division into two spheres: the left half of the city is controlled from the House of Labor, the right half from the Palace of Pleasure. In this brand-new city, every elephant is assigned not only a practical little hut in functional style but also an appropriate job. They can be anything from general to street-sweeper - all jobs are equally important.

Looking at this from the 1990s, it is easier for us to see the totalitarian features in this overorganized city, where the terrifying monsters Stupidity, Laziness, Indolence, and Anger in Babar's dream are chased away by Diligence, Wisdom, Health, and Knowledge. But a closer look at Célesteville will reveal that it is not such a "pure" version of modernity after all. Reading Paul Rabinow's book on "French Modern" I was struck with how well Célesteville would have fitted into his ethnographic material.

As Rabinow shows in his studies of French colonial culture, modern urban planning - the spearhead of modernity - emerged in precisely these decades from the turn of the century to the 1930s. The colonial towns became a sort of laboratory or training ground for social planning on many levels. Out here in the colonies it was easier to realize the pet dream of the modernizers: to be able to start from scratch without the burden of tradition or routine - just to get going and clear the jungle. Here it was possible to experiment with new forms for the aesthetics of power and order. With the aid of the modernization of space in particular, new forms were developed for control, supervision, segregation, and hegemony. At the same time, the aim was to Frenchify, to materialize the mother country's ideals in avenues, splendid squares, prefectures, army barracks, and residential areas. (In a similar way the parades in Célesteville draw on the iconography and coreography of the French Republic.)

A pattern was set by the construction of Rabat, the new capital of Morocco, where the colonial administrator and innovator Hubert Lyautey and his staff of architects and planners tried to realize what they fondly called "a social modernity:" a model city filled with the zeal of social urbanism with everything planned in minute detail, from sewage systems to choices of building styles and colors. Hygienism was a primary metaphor in the work of planning, but efficiency and beauty were also linked, or as Lyautey expressed it: "You will arrange this busy hive in such a way as to avoid making barracks. It should be attractive and cheerful: no enormous constructions, but, as much as possible, pavilions swimming in greenery, conveniently linked by arcades or pergolas." (after Rabinow, 1989:297). He was describing Rabat, but it could as well had been Célesteville.

The French planning zeal points to a central contradiction in the modernization campaigns of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The international rhetoric and praxis of modernity can be domesticated and transformed into a central part of the culture-building and distinctive character of a nation. Célesteville was made modern in a

very French but also an elephantine way, as the encounter of the modern, French reality with the local, colonial reality created highly peculiar versions of what Paul Rabinow has called "French Modern:" the very national form of "middling modernity" that was developed here, with the special French constellation of thought, action, and passion.⁵

MODERNITY AND CITIZENSHIP

While the city planners were busy changing the suburbs of Paris and the local towns of the African colonies, another road to modernity was staked out in Sweden. At the beginning of the century "the national" was a hotly contested terrain in Swedish politics. The emerging labor movement and the Social Democratic Party was seen not only as a threat to the old social order but also as a threat to the nation: like their counterparts in other nations they were an internationalist movement which put class interests before national loyalties. The Social Democrats riposted by accusing the conservatives of using patriotic appeals to mask the interests of the old, ruling elite. The early twentieth century can thus be seen as a battle about who is acting in the best interests of the nation; compared to most other European left-wing movements, the Swedish party was much more successful in wresting the national argument from the hands of the conservatives.

When the Social Democrats finally came to power in 1932 they created a new political rhetoric and practice, which was based upon a rather internationalist cosmology of modernity. The Social Democrats wanted to develop a welfare state based upon new ties between Swedes and the State, new forms of collective action and cultural sharing. In this phase of nation-building three concepts became central: democracy, citizenship, and modernity.

There is large, interdisciplinary debate on the interesting relationships between nationalism and democracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, among others, has discussed how the nationalization of the state blended the issue of political loyalty and trustworthiness with that of assimilation and cultural homogenization. In this process citizenship and cultural conformity tended to merge - "the second was perceived as the condition, but also as a means to attain the first" (Bauman, 1990:161).

The concept of citizenship was a child of the French Revolution and carried the idea of a new form of relationship between state and individual. The old allegiance to the king was to give way to a more abstract loyalty to the nation-state. The traditional loyal *subject* to the king should be transformed into a modern citizen - a mature democratic individual with certain civic rights and obligations. The rhetoric of citizenship and the actual production of citizens took different forms in different national settings during the nineteenth century,⁶ but a crucial feature of the process was the idea of reciprocity between the state and the individual. Only the state could offer (or withdraw) the rights of citizenship, but this gift had a counterclaim built into it, a claim to certain duties and loyalties.

In Sweden, where voting rights were extended to all groups as late as 1921, the concept of the democratic citizen became especially powerful during the twenties and thirties. Here we also find the linking of the idea of the democratic citizen with that of the modern individual. Louis Dumont has pointed out that the democratic nation state is usually defined both as a *collection of individuals* (a bounded group of equals sharing "national" traits) and as a *collective individual* (the nation as a single subject with a will, a destiny); cf. the discussion in Handler & Linnekin, 1984:277 ff.

This paradoxical link between individualism and a new collectivism, as subjects are transformed into citizens, is very evident in Swedish interwar politics. The Social Democrats had visions of a new nation - a people's home as it was called - populated by modern individuals, who first had to be freed from traditional collective loyalties and identities in order to be nationalized into the new collective of modern citizens: a process of decollectivization and re-collectivization.

In this project the importance of being modern was crucial. The making of the new welfare state carried the idea of collective progress: a nation moving united into the future. Old habits and traditions had to be discarded, old rhetoric about the glorious past had to be exchanged for visions of a common future. The good Swede was a modern Swede, looking forward rather than backward. To be a traditionalist was to lag behind, to slow down the pace of modernization and to let the nation down. Such accusations could be directed towards the old elite clinging to traditional privileges, but also to peasants who were suspicious of modern times.

It has often been said that the Social Democrats replaced old national values and heritage with an ideology of internationalism and modernity, but I would argue that they developed new and even more powerful tools of homogenization and nationalization. Modernity became a very Swedish project, taking on national forms, which were very effective because they were based more on everyday practice than on ideological statements or national rhetoric. In the making of the new Sweden, there emerged new ties of dependance, loyalty and sharing, as well as a new national pride.

NEW HEROES, NEW HABITS

A modern nation also called for new and more modern national heroes. The old martial kings could no longer serve as models. In their place came explorers, scientists, and industrialists: the men who gave Sweden international fame and prestige. The old warmongering kings lost their appeal as national rallying points, the new national pride focused on the industrial products that conquered the world: from ball-bearings to Volvos. In the national pantheon the modern hydroelectric plants were placed side by side with the old historical monuments. The new nation was symbolized not only by the wild forces of water being tamed by engineering and concrete but also by other types of images, such as the group of slim and well-trained gymnasts posing out in the open air. In this transformation the national folk culture also changed profile. Whereas the nineteenth-century ethnologists and folklorists had underlined the kingly love of the

peasantry, now their democratic and "modern" qualities were stressed. They became good examples of "a natural, pragmatic, and simple lifestyle" - examples of functionalist living before functionalism. This was evident, for example, in the debate about modern marriage and modern family life, where the pragmatic partnership of farmer and farmer's wife was seen as a model to emulate and the 'natural' attitude to sexuality in traditional village communities was stressed, for example in the writings of Alva Myrdal (cf. Frykman, 1981). Great emphasis was placed upon the *democratic* traditions of Sweden (and above all the Swedish peasantry). The ethnologists joined in this redefinition. The traditional villages could now be described as the cradles of democracy, as "the moulds in which the Swedish folk mentality had been shaped, the setting in which our people has gained its basic social instincts" (after Johansson, 1987:7).

Above all, the new national heroes were created in the expanding arena of sports. It is no coincidence that sport, modernity, and a new nationalism were linked in Sweden, as well as in other modern nations. Sport signaled many of the virtues of modernity: it was based upon the democratic principle of letting the best man win, it created new career paths from the logger's cabin or the working-class neighborhood to the top of the winner's stand. Elite sportsmen were the result of serious, rational training - modern minds in modern bodies. During the first decades of the twentieth century a national rhetoric developed which not only celebrated Swedish triumphs in international competitions, but also stressed how Swedish these new heroes were. The secrets of their success could often be traced to their national virtues: their blue-eyed sense of fair play and team-spirit, their taciturn Viking toughness, their highly becoming modesty and emotional self-control. They knew how to keep a cool head on the race track and in the penalty area. As Billy Ehn (1989) has pointed out, this has meant that we may still find a national rhetoric on the sports pages, which would be judged as far too bombastic or chauvinist in other circumstances.

Again, it is important to see this integration process as occurring on very different levels. Through schools and mass media a new civic spirit was fostered. Novel kinds of symbolic or mental images of the nation were produced, creating a new kind of imagery and a new kind of "imagined community". Even more important than this "mentalizing of the nation" were the ways in which the welfare state was materialized in administrative routines and bureaucratic procedures. The new modern citizens found messages, claims, and gifts from the State in their mail more and more frequently, learned to fill in tax returns and apply for home building loans or pensions, had their health tested, answered questionnaires from the school about their children, and so forth (cf. Frykman & Löfgren, 1985).

Another often overlooked dimension of integration was the construction of new physical structures, linking households to wider systems. The welfare state became most visible in new sewage projects, in national radio broadcasts, in road construction, and in the installation of electricity and telephones lines. Isolated villages and individual homes were linked in very concrete ways with the new society and this modernization process was often described in symbolic terms of binding the nation together.

In the 1930s the collective individual was also created through new habits and routines. Swedes learned to do things together: singing, exercising, hiking. This was, for example, the great period of community singing and gymnastics through which new feelings of collectivity and national sharing became part of the body as well as the mind (cf. Frykman, 1991). In the new craze for biking and camping during the summer holidays, Swedes from different classes met on the roads, united in a common quest for Swedish sights and experiences. People *made* themselves Swedish and experienced the nation in new ways.

There are of course many parallels to this modernizing process, sometimes labeled "the nationalization of the masses", but on the whole the debate has tended to focus too much on processes of assimilation and social control, or on the more noticeable totalitarian aspects of this phase of nation-building, drawing, for example, on the German and Italian fascist experience.⁷

But the control aspect must not overshadow the fact that the making of the modern citizen had a very important emancipatory side as well. In becoming integrated through new and much denser relations with the state, citizens not only became more dependent but also acquired a new cultural competence in handling bureaucratic structures. People learned not only about their duties, but also how to stand up for their rights.

SWEDISH MODERN

For the interwar apostles of modernity, mass consumption held great promises. Through the art of modern design and modern living, people would be able to reorganize and rationalize their everyday lives. Functionalists waged the battle against bad taste and old tradition on all fronts: even the smallest detail could become an educational tool.⁸

In this battle against tradition, Swedish designers, architects, and planners saw themselves as an international vanguard. The great Stockholm exhibition of 1930 was a major manifestation of the new functionalist ideas of modern living and in an enthusiastic review of the Stockholm exhibition the English critic P. Morton Shand stated: "The world will look up to Sweden as the supreme exponent of a Modernism which has succeeded in finding its own soul and embellishing itself with a purely mechanistic grace." (quoted after Naylor 1990:164).

The Swedish author Ivar Lo-Johansson (1957:5) made a more realistic assessment of Swedish popular attitudes to modern living, as he observed that many of the visitors to the Stockholm exhibition flinched from the modern steel furniture and instead flocked around the old rocking chair, which had been placed in the corner of the model home as a bad example. In the new functionalist ideology such a piece of furniture symbolized a backward way of living. In the modern chrome chair your body was kept alert and upright, it was a piece of furniture for people on the move forward, not for those who thought that spare time should be frittered away by dozing in a rocking-chair or taking a nap on the kitchen sofa.

Swedish intellectuals continued their reform battle, and at the New York World Fair in 1939 the functionalist formula of Swedish Grace was presented:

We know that good homes can only be created by healthy people in hygienic dwellings through education and knowledge, with furnishings that are in harmony with the times. We know that beauty and comfort should be for everyone... This is, briefly, the idea of the Swedish Modern movement.

In this nationalization of modernity there was a heavy focus on home-improvement. A public and rather normative discourse on the art of good living emerged. Architects, planners, interior decorators and teachers of home economics were united in a crusade against "the unnecessary ugliness" of bad taste and old traditions, in which even the smallest detail - a kitchen utensil or a panorama window - could become an educational tool. The battle was carried out during the 1940's and 1950's in many arenas and with different means: evening classes, home exhibitions, school books, furniture catalogues and interior decoration hints in magazines. School children were trained to furnish model flats, while their fathers took part in photo competitions on the theme of hominess, and housewives went to evening classes to learn modern living. Here questions of taste in consumption and above all in interior decoration were discussed in great detail. The aesthetics of modernity could be expressed in the pedagogical task of making the right choice between two glass bowls. In these normative examples the beautiful was always the same as the utilitarian, the simple, the practical, the restrained.

The focus on aesthetics of everyday life were strongly linked to ideas about mentality and morality. The peaceful and light, the restrained and low-key, the orderly and practical home should create a setting for light-hearted, open-minded, harmonious and rational minds.

The reformers of the 1930's and 1940's, however, tended to talk to deaf ears. Their middle-class discourse on good taste and rational living was largely ignored in working-class homes - it was quite out of tune with everyday realities and ambitions.

It was not until the 50's and 60's that modern living really caught on, and then in forms which the intellectual avant-garde not always approved of. With increased spending power and shorter working hours, the working class acquired new opportunities to attain a modern life with the aid of the growing range of commodities on offer. By this time the international style of chrome chairs and naked walls had been confronted with Swedish traditions and emerged in new forms which were more acceptable to ordinary consumers. Already at the world exhibition in New York 1939 Swedish avant-garde modernism had been nationalized. In *House and Garden* a reviewer stated that Swedish Modern was "a simple unaffected style, developed in natural wood" and the chairs in tubular steel had quickly dropped out of the furniture catalogues during the 1930's. Swedish modernity was "peasantized" in interesting ways.

The optimistic faith in development was reflected in the post-war design: everyday life and consumption were to be imbued with speed, flair, and verve. During these years the importance of being modern became a standard argument in the marketing of everything from kitchen pans to ashtrays. In the advertisements the two most frequent adjectives used during the fifties and sixties were "new" and "modern".

There was an optimistic atmosphere of really going somewhere. The winds of change and rejuvenation would blow through the home, and the housewife was defined as the vanguard of modernity. In 1960 the Swedish marketing journal called her "Sweden's no. 1 consumer" and added: "compared with other European housewives, her habits are undoubtedly less conservative and she responds more quickly to new products and methods than most."

This enthusiasm cannot be reduced to the persuasive power of home economic teachers or the seductive techniques of marketing. A new space for creativity had emerged, a possibility to develop talents and interests among people who had lacked both time, money and energy to invest in their own home settings. During the 1950's and 1960's we find an aesthetification of everyday life. As never before people got busy fixing, improving and decorating their homes. The first generation of Do-It-Yourselfers was born.

MODERNITY AS AMERICANIZATION?

At the same time as the majority of Swedes got a chance to develop what was called a modern standard of living, intellectuals began to worry about what kinds of modernity were being imported. As working-class standards of living started to rise rapidly in the 1950s, consumption was turned into a national battleground. Now middle-class intellectuals increasingly talked about the ways in which Americanization threatened the Swedish way of life. This debate had started earlier and often centered around the new mass media, from magazines to films. The "Hollywoodization" of Swedish youth became a common complaint in the 1930s: the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* of 1 September 1929 warned of the approach of American talkies, a cultural peril that risked "casting all thinking and feeling in the mold of American thoughts and emotions..."

The critics tended to overlook the ways in which the new media created new and intensified forms of national sharing. As people listened to the same broadcasts, went to the same movies, and read the same articles, a new mass-mediated national "we" was created. Through the radio people discovered that there was a Swedish weather and came to share opinions, ideas and jokes. The national media of radio and television came to play a crucial role as instruments of national integration and sharing from the pioneer days of the radio in the twenties and thirties to the first decades of national television in the fifties and sixties (cf. Löfgren, 1990).

After the Second World War the fears of Americanization became much more focused on consumerism. Middle-class observers singled out groups like teenagers, housewives, and working-class families as easy prey for the consumer dreams and fads that were imported across the Atlantic. In this debate there was a tendency to equate Americanization with increased consumption: America represented not only a utopia of modernity, informality, and efficiency, but also Hollywood vulgarity and low taste. The contemporary discussion about Americanization mirrored this ambivalence and a middle-class fear of losing the position as a clearing-house for the import of international fashions as well as the role of unquestioned arbiter of good taste. Through the new popular press the wrong kind of American ideas and ideals were now made available to everybody.⁹

Sweden was spoken of as "the most Americanized nation in the world", but in retrospect we can see how Swedes Americanized themselves in a very Swedish way. The new patterns of consumption turned out not only to open for international influences but also had a nationalizing effect: people could dream about an American refrigerator, a subscription to *Reader's Digest*, a glass of ice-cold Coca-Cola or an encounter with the Cartwright Brothers, but the end result was rather an increased homogenization of Swedish lifestyles. It was during the fifties and sixties that a Swedish style of living became not only an export commodity but also a shared aspiration in many social settings. Outsiders marveled at the homogeneous ways in which factory workers, office clerks, and academics decorated their homes and organized their family lives. It was not only the tone of family life which became sober and moderated, also the patterns of the wallpaper and the cover of the sofa. Swedish living meant a special taste for colors and materials as well as an emphasis on the practical, but also a certain set of attitudes towards family life, sex roles, and child rearing, as some observers noted. There was no way a Swedish living room or a Swedish day care center could be mistaken for a German or American one. The point is that, although Swedes became more international, modern living at the same time took on a distinct national flavor: a more marked national habitus of shared dispositions, understandings, routines and practices emerged.

Outside reactions varied from the congratulatory to the sceptical: Sweden as the utopia of brightness and warm caring, rationality and modernity or a too "clean and well-lit" dystopia with overtones of a chilling totalitarianism (cf. the discussion in Ruth, 1984).

THE FIRST MODERN NATION

The absurdity of talking about the Swedish road to modernity as a form of Americanization becomes obvious when one looks at the actual development in twentieth-century USA. Comparing the ways in which modernity has been nationalized in these two nations may well be like comparing apples and pears, but my point here is that the contrast has its analytical advantages.

If Sweden sometimes was labeled the 20th century proto-type of modern society, the USA has been seen as the first truly modern nation, a child of eighteenth-century modern nationalism and political thought. Here we find a laboratory where new forms of linkages between the nation-state and its citizens are forged. In this making of a modern (and very American) civic culture, the idea that being an American first and foremost meant being a member of a political community became very important, as Lawrence Fuchs has pointed out:

... immigrant settlers from Europe and their progeny were free to maintain affection for and loyalty to their ancestral religions and cultures while at the same time claiming an American identity by embracing the founding myths and participating in the political life of the republic...

... This new invention of Americans - voluntary pluralism - in which individuals were free to express their ancestral affections and sensibilities, to choose to be ethnic, however and whenever they wished or not at all by moving across group boundaries easily, was sanctioned and protected by a unifying civic culture based on the American founding myth, its institutions, heroes, rules, and rhetoric.

The system would not be severely tested as long as most immigrants were English and Scots. The new republic, as George Washington said in his farewell address, was united by 'the same religion, manners, habits and political principles'." (Fuchs, 1990:5)

As the cultural mix of immigrants became increasingly diverse during the nineteenth century, greater efforts at "Americanization" had to be made and the interesting concept of Un-American activities was born.¹⁰ (It is this negotiation about the rights and duties of citizenship we encountered in the Sweden of the 1930s, but there conducted in a totally different political and cultural context. The common denominator is, however, the idea that the status as a modern citizen calls for the sacrifice of old loyalties and traditions.)

The heritage of the first modern civic culture has become an important part of American identity-building (and myth-making). In this early stage of modernity the aesthetic of the new political culture was borrowed from antiquity and ideas about Greek democracy, and today there are still more classical pillars supporting American courthouses and other government buildings than elsewhere. There are, however, other forms through which the ideals of modern citizenship came to be expressed - in a very American way.

In a paper on symbolic landscapes, the geographer D. W. Meinig has discussed the idealization of American communities, stressing the central role two settings have acquired in American national iconography. He points out that a steepled church set in a frame of white houses, elms, and maples around a common has become the most common representation of traditional America. This New England scenery is found on Christmas cards, in children's books, in films and cartoons, often symbolizing the

national hearth and heart. The other setting is Main Street in Middle America, also mass-mediated in many versions. Both of them have been duplicated (in more or less conscious ways) in the architecture of later periods, from middle-class village suburbia to Californian shopping malls.

The New England village and Main Street are chosen not because they represent typical American settings, but because they are charged with specific moral meanings: the village often standing as a model for "an intimate, family-centered, Godfearing, morally conscious, industrious, thrifty, democratic community" (Meinig, 1976:165), and Main Street for the backbone of America, the landscape of small-town virtues.

One could analyze the ways in which these symbolic landscapes have been charged with different meanings, how they have been used as moral (and integrating) models, in both civics classes and immigrant education, but also how they have been parodied or ridiculed.

But these moral landscapes of the USA also tell us about a specific American style of national discourse: in these symbolic communities a specific type of cultural heritage was seen to be embedded, that of "American values:" democracy, freedom of choice, local political participation, equal opportunities, rugged individualism, distrust of the State and bureaucratic systems, and so on. Modernity, however, had its price, the heritage of this idealized civic culture and moral ethos was seen as threatened by later waves of modernization. Already in the nineteenth and all through the twentieth centuries we meet this kind of lament - albeit used by different groups for different interests: the nostalgia for "the loss of community". This devolutionary discourse is articulated at different periods and in different forms during the twentieth century, for example in the discussions of Talcott Parsons and other social scientists during the 1950s or Robert N. Bellah's writings of the 1980s (cf. Lidz, 1989 and Bellah et al., 1985).

MAINSTREAMING THE NATION

So much for some striking differences in the Swedish and American nationalization of modernity. In both countries a new kind of imaginary community was developed through the idea of an individual collective of modern citizens with similar aspirations, habits, and standards of normality, especially during the interwar years.

Let me just give one example of this parallel development. In 1930 the big commercial fair in Stockholm carried the message of modern functionalism to its visitors, but more important this fair also emphasized new standards of normality, through an exhibition of "the typical Swede", jokingly termed Mr "Medelvensson" ("Middle-Swanson"). This message was similar to that of the New York's World Fair of 1939-1940, which, as Warren Susman (1984:214) has pointed out, was marketed as everyman's fair, exploring the life of "the plain American citizen."¹¹

As in Sweden, an increased self-consciousness and self-exploration emerged in the public debate, especially during the twenties and thirties.

The new cultural language of national unity is mirrored in an interest in two personalities: *the average American*, living in "typical America," and the *common American*, residing in "real America." In the contemporary debate these two national characters sometimes tend to merge, but I think it is worth keeping them apart.

The Warren Susman has also stressed how concepts like "the American way of life", "the American Dream", and "the man on the street" were invented or became more popular during these years. There was an idea of a basic unity in American society:

Divisions within society seemed superficial. Somehow, if they could only be allowed to talk or be instructed in what to say, the people could easily speak out in one voice. Perhaps because there seemed to be so many things that did divide, the idea of unity seemed crucial. A search was launched for some method of measuring and defining this unity and therefore of dealing with it properly. Statistics might very well prove the key. The concept of the average was born, a kind of statistical accounting of the people seen as a unit. For a culture that originally had enshrined individualism as its key virtue, interest in the average was now overwhelming... Increasingly this statistical creature - the Average American - became central to cultural thinking and planning. He or she was soon invested as well with the sentimental aura that went with the more mystical notion of the people." (Susman, 1984:213)

This was the period when Mr Gallup started to survey how the nation thought, acted, and lived, and also a time when the media and market focused on the idea of the standardization and homogenization of American life.

As Roland Marchand has pointed out in his study of consumption and modernity 1920-1940, there developed a strong emphasis on standards of normality in marketing and in the media. A language of conformity evolved which stressed the need to bow "to the demands of society." Self-improvement and learning the skills of getting along with others or keeping up with the Joneses became important (cf. Marchand, 1985). There was a need to measure yourself, judging the behavior of others, looking for standards of "American life" to find out if you were a good American.

If opinion polls and market research signaled one contribution of the social sciences to national self-understanding, anthropology provided the other. There was a general shift away from High Culture to American cultures, a new ethnographic interest emphasized in the frequent use of concepts like "plain Americans", "ordinary life", and "common folks" (cf. the discussion in Perry, 1984:319 ff.). Parallel with the search for "the typical America" there developed an ethnographic quest for "real America", a different kind of main-stream, symbolized by projects like Lynd's *Middletown* and Warner's *Yankee City*. This was a search for a different kind of "folk" than that of the folklorist's expeditions to the Appalachians at the turn of the century. At that time the

quest was for the authentic English heritage, a folk culture which had to be salvaged and reproduced in order to stem the disintegrating forces both from Tin Pan Alley and from the new waves of proletarian immigrants (cf. Wishnant, 1983).

We may talk here of new forms of reifying the national, as the traditional and more heroic rhetoric of "the national soul", "the national destiny or heritage" is abandoned for an emphasis on the new collective individual in Mr Gallup's sense: the nation thinks, lives, wants...

A striking difference between the American and Swedish road to modernity during these years was the role of the intellectuals and the media. Although intellectuals (and especially the new social sciences) played an important role in the public debate on and planning of modern life, Swedish intellectuals were to a greater extent servants not only of modernity but also of the State (cf. the discussion in Eyerman, 1991). The idea of the welfare state played a much stronger role in the homogenization process in Sweden, while the market and the new media had a more important role in the interwar USA, where mass consumption and mass media were more highly developed.

Although both nations have developed a strong rhetoric of a common citizens' destiny, the history and form of this integrative element is quite different. In Sweden the idea of building a "people's home" was a child of modernity and welfare politics, while the idea of an American dream or an American way of life as a common goal or uniting symbol draws on much older images of the promised land.

The Swedish modern experience produced a strong integration between the state, the nation, and civil society. Since the 1930s the concept of "Swedish society" is frequently used as a synonym for the state in public debate, in a way which we do not find in the US, where state and nation more often become polarized concepts.

COMPARING THE NATIONAL

When Swedes look at the national rhetoric of the US it is often described as much louder and more patriotic (or even chauvinist) than back home. American politicians are seen as using a language that would be utterly out of place in the Swedish public debate, and in comparison with the very tame celebrations of the Swedish national holiday, the Fourth of July stands out as a massive outburst of rhetoric, festivity, and fireworks.

Such comparisons may get trapped in measurements of patriotic fervor or chauvinist tendencies. As I have tried to show they rather illustrate national variations and traditions in the discourse of "the national". Swedishness and Americanness are expressed in different cultural registers and through different symbolic languages.

My examples have been chosen in order to illustrate how the siting (and constant relocation) of "the national" may vary between the US and Sweden, in the definitions of citizenship, in the making of a national symbolic capital, and so on. By using a historical perspective I have tried to see the nationalization of modernity as a specific

stage of Swedish nation-building, with some striking differences from the US situation. In the Swedish case we find a much more distinct continuity between the ideas and policies of the twenties and thirties and the post-war politics of the fifties and sixties. In a forthcoming paper on "Competing Modernities" Ron Eyerman looks at the different road American life and politics took during these post-war decades. The ideal of a standard American way of life, produced through the melting pot, gradually gave way to the ideas of multi-culturalism.

Such comparisons need to be carried out in much more detail if we want to develop a systematic analysis of the cultural politics of nation-building. The comparative perspective may help us to understand the when, where, how, and why of the national experience, the arenas and situations in which national loyalty is materialized, expressed, or contested. The historical perspective makes it possible to see how each new generation creates its own definition not only of the national heritage but also of national loyalty. Such a perspective may enable us to escape a narrative structure in which nations are born, age, or disintegrate, and instead focus on the constantly changing patterns of national culture-building.

Instead of looking at "the national" just as a cultural category or a social identity we might view it as an arena on which different interests, loyalties and strategies are acted out, an arena where the national is played off against, fused with, contrasted to, combined with other kinds of identities: class, gender, region, religion, generation etc. It is this cameleonic nature of the national which also may create a false continuity: "the national question" is always rephrased and reorganised according to the contemporary situation.

My focus on modernity thus represents one such process: the ways in which an international cultural grammar has been nationalized in C elesteville, Stockholm, or New York. In the twenties and thirties city planners, architects, home economic teachers, engineers, and social scientists in countries like France, Sweden, and the USA were busy envisaging, designing, and defining a cosmopolitan Futureland, drawing on the same grammar, but producing very distinct national lexicons, or in some cases conflicting intra-national dialects of modern life.¹² New modern heroes and symbolic landscapes replaced old, the cultural heritage was redefined, national mentalities were exchanged for ideas about 'national normalities' and so on. The result is not only a very French Modern, but a Swedish Modern and an American Modern as well.

During the same period we may also compare how modern mass consumption became part of national culture-building in radically different ways in, say the USA and Sweden or Mussolini's Italy (sec de Gracia, n.d.). Here we find alternative linkages between market, state, movement and forms of life, to use Ulf Hannerz' (1992) four categories.

Comparing post-war growth of suburbia in the USA and Sweden, we may for example trace processes of national homogenization which are based upon totally different interactions between state and market. By the 60's "the casual suburban visitor

would have a difficult time deciphering whether she was in the environs of Boston and Dallas" as the models from Lewittown and the "ranch-style" colonized America, as Kenneth T. Jackson wrote on the standardization of the American landscape (after Ewen, 1988:230). The point here, however, is that the visitor would have no trouble in knowing that this was American modernity, not Swedish or French modern suburban life.

The homogenization of Swedish suburbia was a quite different process and one in which the state was highly involved not only in urban planning and structuring the market but also to a rather unprecedented extent being pre-occupied with the aesthetics of modern life.

My argument is that such variations become more visible on the level of everyday practice than on that of rhetoric or ideology. As I have tried to show, the specific Swedishness of the national road to modernity is best observed in activities like home-making, consumption, and leisure. Compared to the social and cultural organization of national expressions in the USA, "the national" has become less visible in Swedish public life over the last fifty years. National identity and emotions are articulated more in private, embedded in the routines of everyday life. While the symbolic capital called "American values" is constantly called into battle, Swedish values are much more hidden in a common-sense language of modernity and rationality.¹³ The inderection of this national language makes it in many ways a very powerful instrument of Swedification: there are many written but far more unwritten rules about how to be a good - and modern - Swede.

POSTSCRIPT

"Sweden is unique!" ran the slogan of the Social Democrats in the 1991 Swedish election. The message was that only the Social Democrats had the strength and will to safeguard the very special and Swedish version of the Welfare State as the nation now was advancing into Europe and the Common Market. This stress on national uniqueness signaled a shift from a tradition of representing the Swedish way of life as Modernity rather than Nationality. While Sweden in the 1930s could be depicted as the first modern nation, it could in the early 1990s be jokingly described as "a museum of modernity" or "a cute little island of modernity in the European post-modern ocean" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991:16). The election campaign carried a fairly traditional iconography of modernity. The slogan above was illustrated by a blond youngster being hurled into the air by a smiling father - perhaps the most classic image of 20th century modernity - a scene which has been reproduced in hundreds of versions all over the world from the 1930s onward, symbolizing the youthful optimism of the future.

The Social democrats lost the election to the Conservatives and their coalition partners. Against the motto of keeping Sweden unique and safeguarding the welfare state, the Conservatives put an internationalist message of Europeanization. Thus the two parties have changed sides in their rhetorical battle over "the national", compared with the situation seventy years ago.

FOOTNOTES

* Paper presented at the workshop "Defining the National", Lund, April 26-28th 1992.

¹ "National and transnational cultural processes" is an interdisciplinary research project financed by HSFR (The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences.) This paper is a revised and expanded version of an earlier one ("Nationalizing Modernity").

² In a comment on these linguistic metaphors Foster (1991:252 ff) has pointed out that one more level above the first could be introduced, in order to differentiate between European and Non-European national ontologies.

³ Eugene Weber has analyzed the specific French and (centralist) use of primary education and military service etc in his analysis of the nationalization of rural France for a later period (1870-1914), while Victoria de Grazia has looked at the role of consumption in "the nationalizing of women" in Mussolini's Italy (1992), to name a few examples of such interdependencies.

In an earlier paper I have looked at the 20th century role of radio and television as media of national integration and explored the striking differences between countries like Sweden, with strong state control, and countries like the USA dominated by commercial networks (Löfgren, 1990).

⁴ A good case-study of this process is found in Létourneau's analysis from Quebec (1989).

⁵ A comparison with the ways in which Mussolini created an Italian *modernità* in Lybia and Ethiopia, underlines this difference, see Fuller, 1988.

⁶ Cf. the discussion in Bendix, 1964 and Hammar, 1990.

⁷ There is a tendency to overemphasize the element of social control in national homogenization, as Bauman (1990) does. Similar tendencies are found in Mosse's analysis of the nationalization of the German masses (1975) and Weber's study of France (1976).

⁸ In England the art historian Nikolaus Pevsner launched the chocolate box as the symbol of outmoded Victorian design and aesthetics. In an attempt to translate the German term "kitsch" he defined it as anything "over-sentimental, over-sweet, luscious, in short 'chocolate-boxy'" (see Barthel, 1989:429).

⁹ Cf. also Ulf Hannerz' discussion of the metaphorical meanings of the concept of "Americanization" (Hannerz, n.d.).

¹⁰ In a way the US is an interesting example of how to combine ethnic pluralism with an ideology of national homogeneity and unity. Cf. the discussion in Alba (1990) about the very specific ways in which ethnic identity is organized within the framework of American life and national belonging.

¹¹ This interest in Mr (rarely Mrs) Average National Citizen is of course found in many other national settings of the period, for example in the ideology underlining the contemporary British craze "Mass Observation." My point is that such projects of modernity are carried out within a specific national framework and often become important parts in an ongoing cultural nation-building. (Cf. also Paul Rabinow's discussion of the birth of the *l'homme moyen* in nineteenth-century France, 1989:63 ff.).

¹² A good example of these international exchanges and national transformations is Reyner Banham's study (1989) of the ways in which American industrial building traditions influenced the European avant-garde architects during the first decades of the 20th century.

¹³ For some good empirical examples of this, see Arnstberg, 1989 and Ehn, 1983.

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MODERNIZIRANJE NACIJE - NACIONALIZACIJA MODERNOSTI

Sažetak

Moderniziranje je u suvremenom političkom, žurnalističkom, pa i znanstvenom diskursu često neupitno pozitivan pojam, a znači uvođenje "zaostalih nacija" u moderni svjetski sustav preuzimanjem zacrtanih, na Zapadu već ostvarenih modela društvenog života utemeljenih na racionalnim vrijednostima. Pojam moderniziranja uključuje industrijalizaciju, urbanizaciju, birokratizaciju, sekularizaciju, demokratizaciju, kao i individualizam, scientizam, racionalizam, kozmopolitizam i dr.

U ovome članku autor razmatra načine na koje je tijekom protekla dva stoljeća moderniziranje predstavljeno kao prijetnja nacionalnim projektima. *Nacionalno* za njega nije oznaka kulturne kategorije ili društvenog identiteta, nego "arena u kojoj se iskazuju različiti interesi, lojalnosti i strategije", arena u kojoj se nacionalni identitet stapa, suprotstavlja ili kombinira s drugim vrstama identiteta: klasnim, spolnim, regionalnim, vjerskim, generacijskim. (Upravo ta "kameleonska priroda" nacionalnog omogućuje kreiranje lažnog kontinuiteta: "nacionalno pitanje" je uvijek re-formulirano u skladu sa situacijom, odnosno s potrebama onoga tko to pitanje postavlja.)

Autor upozorava na paradoksalnu pojavu vezanu uz nastanak modernog nacionalizma: od kraja 18. stoljeća na ovamo internacionalna je ideologija moderniziranja služila za ostvarenje nacionalnih ciljeva. Koristeći lingvističke metafore, autor teorijski određuje tri razine oblikovanja nacije kao kulturne tvorevine. Prva - "internacionalna kulturna gramatika" - sadrži opće ideje o kulturnim obilježjima nacionalnog bića, mahom zacrtane u 19. stoljeću. To su: simboli (zastava, himna, sveti tekstovi i dr.), nacionalno nasljeđe (zajednička historija i narodna kultura, panteon nacionalnih heroja i dr.), te poimanje nacionalnog karaktera, vrijednosti i ukusa. Drugu razinu oblikovanja nacije kao kulturne tvorevine autor naziva "nacionalni leksikon", a pod njim podrazumijeva lokalne nacionalne retorike i simbole specifične za pojedine nacije. Oni su u različitim društvenim i historijskim situacijama različito korišteni. Treća razina kulturnog konstituiranja nacije - "dijalektalni rječnik" - otkriva nutarnje diobe: suprotstavljene interesne grupe, svaka na svoj način koristeći nacionalne argumente, oblikuju različite nacionalne diskurse.

Autor se kritički osvrće na - čak i među teoretičarima nacionalizma vrlo prisutno - etiketiranje danas u istočnoj Europi i tzv. trećem svijetu razbuktalih nacionalnih retorika, nacionalizama i nacionalnih sukoba kao *zakašnjelih* i *primitivnih*. "Zamrznuti" na određenom historijskom stupnju, a danas ponovo djelatni, oni se iskazuju na ne-moderan, beznadno staromodan, "historijski naprednijem" Zapadu nerazumljiv način. *Balkanizacija* je stoga za moderni svijet pojam nabijen ironijom. Konkretna recentna zbivanja na Balkanu tek su - prema poimanju koje autor prepoznaje kao evolucionističko - već viđeni prizori historijske drame, donedavno često smatrane komedijom.

Autor se pita zašto su, u kojim situacijama i u kojim vremenima jedne nacionalne retorike i prakse staromodne i osuđene na neuspjeh, a neke druge pak same po sebi razumljive i uspješne. Suprotstavljajući primjere Švedske i SAD-a, objašnjava dinamiku kulturnih procesa internacionalne heterogenizacije i nacionalne homogenizacije. U kontekstu analize medijske tehnologije, tržišnih sistema i državnih institucija, pokazuje kako se internacionalna "kulturna gramatika modernoga" očitovala u svakodnevnom životu Šveđana i Amerikanaca tijekom 20. stoljeća. Posebnu pažnju posvećuje koncepcijama vremena i prostora, načinima poimanja prošlosti i sadašnjosti, definicijama modernog senzibiliteta, te usredotočenju na estetiku, zdravlje i higijenu.

U Švedskoj je *moderniziranje* već početkom 20. stoljeća postalo *nacionalni projekt*: putem škola i masovnih medija stare su nacionalne vrijednosti zamijenjene ideologijom internacionalizma i modernizacije, koja je postala snažnim instrumentom nacionalne homogenizacije. I nove navike i običaji utjecali su na kulturno određenje

nacije. Već tridesetih godina je pokret zbornog pjevanja, grupne tjelovježbe, planinarenja i biciklizma zahvatio najšire slojeve: pripadnici različitih klasa "sretali su se na cestama ujedinjenoj zajedničkom potragom za švedskim pogledima i iskustvima". Ljudi su *postajali* Šveđanima doživljavajući svoju naciju na nove načine. Biti *dobar Šveđanin* značilo je biti *moderan*. Nacionalna je homogenizacija vrednota i načina života bez sumnje značila (i znači) i visok stupanj društvene kontrole, no autor smatra da valja istaći i drugu, emancipacijsku stranu procesa nacionalne homogenizacije u Švedskoj. Država jest uvijek blizu Šveđanima, no oni su već tijekom prve polovice stoljeća postali kulturno kompetentni u odnosima s birokracijom: svjesni svojih dužnosti, ali i prava.

Pedesetih godina, Švedska je smatrana "najamerikaniziranijom nacijom" na svijetu. Autor međutim - usporedbom s moderniziranjem američke nacije - pokazuje da su se Šveđani amerikanizirali na vrlo švedski način. Rezultat američkih kulturnih utjecaja bilo je sve izraženije ujednačenje švedskih životnih stilova u pravcu van-klasnog *švedskog životnog stila*. Pojam *švedsko društvo* u javnom diskursu često zamjenjuje pojam države. Švedsko je moderniziranje snažno povezalo državu, civilno društvo i lojalnost naciji.