



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Stjórnmálafræðideild

BA-ritgerð

National Identity: The End or a New Beginning?

**Jóhannes Martin L. Sörensen
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Abstract

This thesis examines the roots of national identity, the relationship between the nation and the state, and how globalization is having an effect on that relationship. The changes in national identity, that come with these changes, are the main focus here.

With increased globalization there has been an increase in international organizations, multinational corporations and other supranational mechanisms. Also, there has been an effect of “glocalization”, where the role of the local community increases with globalization. These changes have an influence on the traditional function of the state. Consequently, national identity changes too.

It is difficult to say whether national identity is nearing the end or not. Several argue that a global identity is not a viable replacement because it lacks the cultural depth of national identity. But it is definitely undergoing changes and these changes are manifested in several ways. A strengthening of national identity itself is one. The resurgence of religious fundamentalism is another. A blending of different identities is yet another development, where a global identity is added to an individual’s local identity.

The examination of the relationship between the nation and the state reveals that the two concepts are not inseparable. Furthermore, there are possibilities for the existence of sub-state national identities within states, which would be important if national identity were to lose its importance, and if the traditional nation-state were to change the way it has monopolized identity and culture in many countries.

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Introduction

The research subject of this thesis is national identity and the changes it is going through today, in an age of globalization. Much has been written on the effect that globalization is having on the role and place of the nation-state in the modern world¹. Guibernau, for example argues that “The nation-state, after a long process of consolidation which has involved the construction of a symbolic image of the community endowed with a particular language and culture, and the creation of symbols and rituals destined to emphasize its unique character and the fixing of territorial borders, is being forced to respond to challenges from within”². By ‘forces from within’ he means territorial (or sub-state or regional) nationalisms. Another force that may force the nation-state to respond is religious identity. In some cases, when people experience the flux and uncertainty in their social structure that can follow globalization, they reach for something that provides them with stability and meaning, and these can often be alternative identities to national ones³. The intermingling of different forms of identities, hybrid identities, can also result in a change from national identities⁴.

The research question of this thesis is thus, primarily: What is likely to happen to national identity in this age of intense globalization and changing role of the nation-state? And also: Is it likely to disappear entirely? In that case, what would replace it? Or will it not disappear, but change shape, adapt to new social circumstances?

The hypothesis put forward is that national identity will not disappear altogether, but take on a new role. Information technology, developments in transport and increased migration of people are examples of the processes of globalization that allow people to communicate, move and do politics independently of the state. The increase in multinational corporations has also given the economy a supranational dimension. These changes are likely to be followed by the nation-state changing its place in the world. National identity is

¹ Scholte (2005). Castells (1997). Guibernau (1999). Habermas (1998). Keating (1996).

² Guibernau (1999), 17-18.

³ Arnett (2002). Esposito (1996). Castells (1997).

⁴ Arnett (2002). Scholte (2005).

open to changes too. People have the opportunity to participate in a global, supranational dimension, thereby increasing the chances they will feel less *national* and more *global*. At the same time, these developments may be accompanied by an increase in different types of identity, i.e. regional or religious ones. Thus, on the whole, national identity is likely to become less *absolute*. It may, along with the importance of the nation-state, give way to other feelings of belonging, whether global, local, religious or another.

At the beginning of such research, it is necessary to define these commonly used concepts. *Globalization* is by no means a new phenomenon. “When understood as transworld connectivity, globality has figured (at least marginally and in prototypical forms) in human history for centuries”⁵. However, since the middle of the 19th century, these developments attained unprecedented levels. Hálfðanarson, for example, notes a greatly increased expansion of railway tracks which occurred around the middle of the 19th century⁶. The most intense part of developments in global relations has however happened since the middle of the 20th century⁷. Indeed, Held and McGrew describe the 1960s and the 1970s as the “‘golden age’ of rapidly expanding political and economic interdependence”⁸. So what processes are we talking about when we say ‘globalization’? Held and McGrew suggest that globalization means more than just social interaction reaching further across the globe independently of borders, “for it suggests a growing magnitude or intensity of global flows such that states and societies become increasingly enmeshed in worldwide systems and networks of interaction”⁹. Due to this, people are more and more affected by each others actions, whether across streets or across continents. There is a change in the configuration of the social space in which people live, “towards the interregional or intercontinental scale”¹⁰. This thesis emphasizes this ‘social space’ aspect of globalization, rather than other aspects, such as economic, geopolitical or technological. Scholte considers that “globalization is best understood as

⁵ Scholte (2005), 85.

⁶ Hálfðanarson (2001), 227.

⁷ Scholte (2005), 85.

⁸ Held and McGrew (2000), 1.

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

reconfiguration of social geography marked by the growth of transplanetary and supraterritorial connections between people”¹¹. Similarly, Anthony Giddens defines ‘globalization’ as the “intensification of worldwide relations resulting in reciprocal interconnections between local happenings and distant events.”¹²

The concepts of *ethnicity*, *nation*, *state* and *nation-state* are very interrelated and when they overlap it can be hard to distinguish clear dividing lines. However, some clarifications are in order, as they will be used in this thesis to speak of separate elements. In particular between *ethnicity* and *nation* there can be vague separating lines. Smith defines ethnicity as a type of “cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions”¹³. This definition is very similar to the definition of a nation. ‘Ethnicity’ is used here to describe a community of people that have a consciousness of being a community, but before any claims for self-government are made. It is used to describe the origins of the nation. Adrian Hastings describes ethnicity as “a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language. It constitutes the major distinguishing element in all pre-national societies, but may survive as a strong subdivision with a loyalty of its own within established nations”¹⁴.

When the word ‘nation’ is used, we are getting closer to a connection with the state. Hastings classifies the nation as a “far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity. Formed from one or more ethnicities, and normally identified by a literature of its own, it possesses or claims the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory”¹⁵. Guibernau uses this definition: the nation is a “human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself”¹⁶. This ‘claiming the right to rule itself’ does not have to mean

¹¹ Scholte (2005), 8.

¹² Giddens, here cited in Habermas (1998), 120.

¹³ Smith (1991), 20.

¹⁴ Hastings (1997), 3.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Guibernau (1999), 13-14.

explicitly declaring independence, as we shall see, but can mean other levels of self-government.

So, to sum up, ethnicity is a self-conscious cultural group and a nation is a wider community, more self-conscious and claiming the right to autonomy. What is the state? The state is a different concept from nation, but the nation forms a part of it. “The term denotes the ensemble formed by combining government, population and territory”¹⁷. Guibernau (using Weber’s definition) defines the state as a “human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory”¹⁸.

Nation-state is a much used term in this context. Hastings uses the definition that a nation-state is a state which “identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as ‘subjects’ of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs”¹⁹. In this concept, there is thus an idea that the nation and the state are the same, directly connected. Each country contains only the people belonging to its nation²⁰. In a similar vein, Guibernau defines it as “a modern institution, characterized by the formation of a kind of state which has the monopoly of what it claims to be the legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the people subject to its rule by means of cultural homogenization”²¹. But, as we shall see further on, this idea is based more in myth than in reality, as most states include more than one ethnicity or nation²².

Finally, *national identity* is the individual’s sentiment that they belong to a nation. It is the feeling that ‘I am a part of this group of people’. As we shall see in the first chapter, nations, and thus national identity, are created to a great extent through imagining that the nation shares a common origin and is thus a united whole. It is thus a very subjective term and hard to measure. As Hastings puts it, “nationhood can survive only through an exercise in imagination, both collective

¹⁷ Hague & Harrop (2006), 7.

¹⁸ Guibernau (1999), 13.

¹⁹ Hastings (1997), 3.

²⁰ Hague & Harrop (2006), 10.

²¹ Guibernau (1999), 14.

²² Hastings (1997), 3. Miller (2000), 7. Smith (1991), 146. Guibernau (1991), 17. Connor (1994), 39: Connor cites a survey of 132 states in 1971 that showed that only 12 states (9.1%) could justifiably be described as nation-states.

and personal”²³. Walker Connor says that “defining and conceptualizing the nation is much more difficult [than defining the state] because the essence of a nation is intangible. This essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way”²⁴. What people believe is thus the crucial deciding factor about national belonging.

Upon embarking on an exploration of national identity and the changes it is undergoing today, it is wise to familiarize oneself well with the subject. Thus the first chapter of this thesis explores the roots of national identity; its formation and of what elements it is constructed. In order to realize what current developments might entail for political arrangements, an analysis of the place of the nation in the world would be useful. Chapter two reviews the relationship between the nation and the state. It includes a discussion on the self-determination of peoples, on the concept of citizenship, and on multiculturalism. Chapter three then goes on to investigate the impact that globalization is having on that relationship. Chapter four examines the results of that impact, namely the resurgence of different identities. These include the re-emergence of national identity itself, but also religious and regional identities. Also, identity hybridization is something that global developments are spurring. The fifth and last chapter looks at the possible emergence of a global identity.

²³ Hastings (1997), 27.

²⁴ Connor (1994), 36.

Chapter One • The Origins of National Identity

What is it, in fact, that makes a person say “I am an Icelander” or “I’m Australian”? What makes him identify with this particular nation? Where are the person’s sentiments rooted? This is not something that people ask themselves on a regular day. It’s something that people take for granted. But when faced with the complications that the modern world presents to such simple statements, the question becomes more relevant. It is natural to ask “Where does national identity come from?”. When knowing ‘where a person comes from’ is not enough to distinguish their nationality or national identity, and when the world is full of people who have parents that grew up in a country different from themselves, the parents perhaps not even being from the same country, one has to wonder. A different question might even become more common than “where are you from?” – maybe the question “with what nationality do you identify?” could become more useful. In this chapter the goal is to locate the roots of national identity. With a view to what may lie ahead for national identity, an attempt will be made to answer the question “What are the elements that form the basis for national identity?”.

The rhetoric of nationalism includes a notion of the everlasting and organic nature of the nation²⁵. The nation existed even before the king or president took office and before the nation acquired the status of an independent state. The nation is an organic whole that has its roots deep in the forgotten past and it has a certain future that continues from our lives today²⁶. This is, in a way, what people are taught when they are young. They learn about the past, how it led to the present, and how it’s all connected somehow. Life is seen in these terms. This becomes the view of the world and it is rarely questioned. However the issue is not quite this simple.

Different groups of people have always existed, groups that share particularities like culture, appearance and language. At first they were based on

²⁵ Smith (1991).

²⁶ Ibid.

large families, then later in larger groups, whether culturally or geographically connected. Being a part of a cultural group creates a strong feeling of affinity. As for the formation of identities of nationality, opinions are split here. Two important schools of thought must be mentioned: modernism and perennialism (or ethnicism). The perennialist approach views national identity as part of the human link of affinity that has always been an intrinsic part of human society. The modernist view, however, sees no such organic origin for it. It is true that cultural groups have always existed, but national identity was never a natural part of it. It is an imaginary construct that is actually quite recent in history, according to modernists, as is the concept of *nation* and *nationalism*. So, whereas the perennialists reserve a place for national identity in the minds and hearts of people, as they form groups and grow affinity for each other, the modernists argue that it is a concept made out of thin air and that it has no real roots within the person²⁷.

Anthony D. Smith, a scholar who has written extensively on this topic, agrees with the modernists' view that national identity is not something that has its origin before modernity, something that is inherent in human social groups. To him, the concept of *nation*, and therefore *national identity*, are inventions – they were not created spontaneously. He does not however subscribe to the modernists' view much further than that. He doesn't agree with the fact that it is created out of absolutely nothing. On the contrary, Smith places emphasis on the *ethnic* origins of nations²⁸. According to Smith, nations are not formed out of thin air, but they have deep roots in ethnic communities. He defines an ethnic community as a "cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions"²⁹. Icelandic historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson captures Smith's idea succinctly when he summarizes that "they [the nations] are not intrinsic in people's nature, but they are nonetheless natural to man"³⁰.

²⁷ Hálfðanarson (2001).

²⁸ Smith (1991).

²⁹ Ibid., 20.

³⁰ Hálfðanarson (2001), 28. „Þær eru ekki hluti af eðli manna, en þær eru þó manninum eðlilegar“.

Such ethnic groups can then go on to form nations. This process is not a simple one and nations have not been made in the same way in every part of the world. However the focus here will be on the factors that make up the identity that has a hold on people's hearts, and the process by which a nation comes about will not be discussed at length.

All ethnic groups need not even seek to become autonomous as nations, as Hálfðanarson's comparative research of the Icelandic culture, on the one hand, and the Breton culture in France, on the other, has shown³¹. He finds that these two ethnic groups are similar in many ways: they have their unique language, sentiments of being one group of people and have their roots in a particular land. Nevertheless, they react to efforts by a centralized force to assimilate them into a nation in very different ways. Eventually, the Icelanders sought to become an independent nation in their own right, but the Bretons accepted to become a part of the French Republic. This example shows that the shift from being an ethnic group to becoming a nation is not an evident one. Different factors come into that equation, including geography, the local political culture, external pressure, popular public figures and possibly coincidental events. It is difficult –if not impossible– to pinpoint what exactly it is that leads to that change, or as Hálfðanarson puts it: “After all, one has to admit that even though nationality is the most important form of political affinity in our time, one can hardly find any substantial explanation as to why an ethnic community decides to see itself as a nation or how it distinguishes itself from other nations”³².

When these ethnic groups become nations, they do so after attaining a certain degree of consciousness about themselves. These groups can exist for a long time without ever being conscious of themselves as being a particular group of their own. Often, the move towards seeking autonomy comes from certain *ethnic cores*. Smith describes these as being gradually formed through the acts of “the priests, scribes and bards, often organized into guilds and castes, who recount, re-enact and codify traditions”³³. They came to form an élite group that

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 37. „Að öllu samanlögðu verður að viðurkennast að þótt hægt sé að fullyrða að þjóðerni sé mikilvægasta form pólitískrar samkenndar í heiminum á okkar dögum er tæpast hægt að finna nokkra eina haldbæra skýringu á því hvers vegna þjóðfélagshópur tekur upp á því að líta á sig sem þjóð eða hvernig hann afmarkar sig frá öðrum þjóðum“.

³³ Smith (1991), 38.

selected the elements to be highlighted in the new and forming nationalities. Even though most nations are made up of different ethnic groups, most were also formed around these ethnic cores, that annexed or attracted other ethnic groups into the state they were forming.

As the nation and the state took form, the selected ‘elements of the nation’ were held high and taught to people or even forced upon them³⁴. Language was often standardized and made uniform³⁵. A certain version of a common history of the people and the land was created, often through selecting certain parts, forgetting others, and glorifying certain other ones too. The role of myth has been much spoken of in this context, as the different people of the nation didn’t usually share any real, unified history nor had they any unique characteristics which applied to everyone³⁶. The vision of an uninterrupted timeline in the existence of the nation, stretching from the ancient times, of symbolic heroes and forefathers that fought for the country and made ‘the dream of unity and sovereignty possible’, and of how the ‘homeland’ had always been the rightful home to the people, were all important for the nation. A ‘collective memory’ of the people made up from these myths was thus created. It was important that the people see themselves as one group, belonging together and belonging to their land. The accuracy of these myths, of course, varied.

Hálfðanarson gives us the perfect example of this in his article *Collective Memory, History, and National Identity*, where he reviews the argument made by Icelandic nationalists upon the founding of the Icelandic Republic in 1944. Here the notion that the Icelandic people were reclaiming a long lost freedom after years of being under the sovereignty of foreign power was dramatized:

The most important elements of these myths were, firstly, the idea that the republic was an Icelandic institution rather than a foreign import. [...] Secondly, the emphasis on the struggle for freedom, which the nationalists saw as the core of Icelandic history, served as proof that love for the fatherland, or the desire for self-determination, was a primordial sentiment in the nation. [...] The notion of the resurrection of an ancient republic in Iceland was thus intended to convince the Icelandic nation of the unbroken continuity of its history and to draw a distinct line

³⁴ Guibernau (1999).

³⁵ Miller (1995).

³⁶ Habermas (1998), 105. Miller (1995), 127, says that national identities are “above all ‘imagined’ identities, where the content of the imagining changes with time”.

between ‘us’, the Icelanders, and ‘them’, the rest of the world. [...] while the story of the restoration of an old republic was obviously not historically correct, it made perfect sense as a ‘collective memory’³⁷.

It became the role of the state to uphold these important elements and to pass them on to new citizens of the nation. The education system serves as an important beacon of the national light still today, teaching children the selected parts of their history, the arts, the values, some of the traditions and customs, that bind the individuals of the nation together³⁸.

Smith sums up his fundamental features of national identity in a list of five points:

1. an historic territory, or homeland
2. common myths and historical memories
3. a common, mass public culture
4. common legal rights and duties for all members
5. a common economy with territorial mobility for members³⁹.

According to him a nation is, therefore, “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”⁴⁰.

We must note, upon seeing Smith’s definition, that not all nations live in a territory of their own. An example of this are the Jews and the Kurds. Some ethnicities or nationalities have spread out and settled in different countries, not having a territory of their own. But according to Smith, even though these nationalities don’t live in a land of their own, they still *belong* in a particular land, at least according to themselves. The memory or the dream of a homeland is enough to justify the existence of nation belonging to that country.

Smith leaves out another feature of cultures that has been discussed by others, namely language. Language is also a feature closely linked to ethnic groups and nationalities. Many know from experience that it is hard to understand a foreign culture without speaking the language, and thus acquiring a key to open the door into the culture. Some people might even define their national identities

³⁷ Hálfðanarson (2006), 90-91.

³⁸ Guibernau (1999).

³⁹ Smith (1991), 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

in large part based on their mothertongue⁴¹. Even still, countries exist today where more than one language is spoken, for example Switzerland, that has four official languages. So how large a part does language play in shaping national identity?

Johann Gottfried Herder was an 18th century German philosopher and was one of the first theorists of nationalism. To him, language was a fundamental factor when it came to the self-consciousness of the individual. Language and reason were inseparable concepts: “Each nation speaks in the manner it thinks and thinks in the manner it speaks... We cannot think without words”⁴². To continue with Herder’s understanding of it, language gives people a way to articulate their feelings and experiences. Our whole way of seeing the world and understanding what we go through is conditioned by our native language. It is thus a crucial factor in shaping ourselves and our lives. It provides a frame of reference for everything. Since language has this essential role in our understanding of life, it is obvious that culture will be conditioned by this as well. People that speak the same language have similar worldviews and share the way they express themselves, through music, dance, symbols, lore, superstition, etc⁴³.

To Herder, this cultural basis, formed through language, was the most important factor when it came to forming nations. Indeed, he considered it to be the only ‘natural’ way for nations to be. His theory about nations obviously has an ethnicist tone, as he believed that nations (he used the German word ‘*Volk*’) were formed in an organic way, spontaneously. According to him, the best way for a state to organize itself was around a single *Volk* only, around one linguistic group. This is because, in his view, the best way for a cultural group to exist was in a manner where they could be themselves, without intermixing or interfering with other groups, and where they could govern themselves. Herder was all for diversity, and felt that was the natural way of things, as created by God, but he felt that states should be organized along these lines⁴⁴.

Ross Poole, in his article *National Identity and Citizenship*, describes his view of the importance of language. He subscribes to Herder’s idea about the power of language to shape the way we perceive the world and think. And

⁴¹ Castells (1997).

⁴² Barnard (1967), 56.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 57-59.

because language has this force in our consciousness, it has proved very fruitful for the state to fuse in itself language, culture and polity. This fusion “has so entered our conception of ourselves that it becomes difficult to address the question of who we are except in terms which presuppose that we already have a national identity”⁴⁵. In other words, we define ourselves on the basis of nationality. In the spirit of Herder and Poole, this can be attributed to the close union of language, nation and state.

Sociologist Manuel Castells agrees with the view that language is a crucial factor in creating national identity. He says that “language, and particularly a fully developed language, is a fundamental attribute of self-recognition, and of the establishment of an invisible national boundary less arbitrary than territoriality, and less exclusive than ethnicity”⁴⁶. After Fichte and others used Herder’s theories to construct German nationalism, they have been somewhat demoted for having inspired disaster. Despite this, Castells makes the point that we cannot ignore a certain presence of linguistic nationalism in our world today: “If nationalism is, most often, a reaction against a threatened autonomous identity, then, in a world submitted to cultural homogenization by the ideology of modernization and the power of global media, language, as the direct expression of culture, becomes the trench of cultural resistance, the last bastion of self-control, the refuge of identifiable meaning”⁴⁷.

But language has also been used by the state or the élite group to standardize the nation and to reinforce the myth of a common origin (and perhaps it is no small coincidence, since language is such an intimate factor in our identity). At the birth (or construction) of the Czech nation, the Czech language was elevated from a language spoken by peasants to a literary language, whereas the nobility spoke German. Two manuscripts from the Middle Ages containing Czech poetry were supposed to have been found, but were later shown to be forgeries. “Meanwhile they performed an important role in fostering the illusion that the Czech language – and by implication the Czech people – had deep historical roots”⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Poole (2003), 272.

⁴⁶ Castells (1997), 52.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Miller (1995), 33.

Smith's list of national identity's fundamental features includes important elements, especially those of collective memory and devotion to a particular territory. As we have seen, language should perhaps have been added to that list. After summarizing these points, it must be noted, however, that different elements vary in importance for each country.

In summary, national identity is the feeling of an individual that he belongs to a community that shares a history, a language and a culture. The extent to which this sentiment is based in reality is debated, but by most considered mostly the object of imagination.

Chapter Two • The Relationship Between the Nation and the State

What is the relationship between the nation and the state? Are they two unseparable units? If not, what possibilities are there for different combinations of the two? What about states that contain more than one nation? With a view to later discovering if this relationship is changing and what that may mean for both concepts, this issue will be probed in this chapter.

It is a well known fact that a nation that encounters resistance or has its identity threatened responds by boldening its identity and by going back to its roots⁴⁹. This also happens with different forms of identity when societal developments prove to bring less prosperity than they promised and cause turmoil, as is Castells' point in his writing about religious fundamentalism⁵⁰. In the case of

⁴⁹ Miller. 20. Here, Miller talks about ethnic groups under these circumstances making a claim to be nations, but the same can be deducted safely about existing nations. "*Where an ethnic group finds its identity being threatened or its legitimate political aspirations being denied, it would be quite surprising if it did not begin to think of itself as a nation and to express those aspirations in nationalist terms*". See also Weiler (1997): "*the continued pull of the state, and the success in many societies of extreme forms of nationalism [...] are, in part of course, due to the fact that the nation and state are such powerful vehicles in responding to the existential craving for meaning and purpose which modernity and post-modernity seem to deny.*"

⁵⁰ Castells (1997).

national identity, this often entails a wave of nationalism. It's a method of emphasizing what people regard as common among themselves, of reminding themselves of their pride and glories, and of bringing people together.

Nationalism has been defined as the “sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life, and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny”⁵¹. Here, *the will to decide upon a common destiny* is key, because nationalism is more than just the common feeling of belonging. That would be close to the definition of national identity. Nationalism is the doctrine that nations have a right to determine their own destiny and to govern themselves⁵². It is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’”⁵³.

On the topic of nationalism, Joseph H. H. Weiler makes an interesting argument concerning boundaries of nations. Nations can draw boundaries for themselves of many different types: linguistic, ethnic, geographic, etc. These boundaries then become important for the nation, because they are drawn around its defining characteristics. But the boundaries serve just that purpose, to mark off the nation and underline it. There is the possibility that the boundaries become natural in the minds of the people. They can then assume a life of their own, or so to speak. Weiler describes this as the *abuse of boundaries*, which

is most egregious when the state comes to be seen not as instrumental for individuals and society to realize their potentials but as an end in itself. Less egregiously, the State might induce a ‘laziness’ in the nation – banal Statal symbols and instrumentalities becoming a substitute to a meaningful sense of belonging. An allegiance to the State can replace human affinity, empathy, loyalty and sense of shared fate with the people of the State.⁵⁴

Hálfðanarson makes the same point and takes the example of the conflicts in the Balkans, where the intensity of the struggle reminds us that the nations there have

⁵¹ Guibernau (1999). 14.

⁵² Hague & Harrop (2006). 10.

⁵³ Smith (1991). 73.

⁵⁴ Weiler (1997), 16.

really acquired a life of their own and turned into a kind of lifeform that is supposed to enjoy the same right to life as individuals⁵⁵.

Self-determination

The nation is often defined as a group that proclaims itself a nation and desires to govern itself. Indeed, self-determination is considered to be a basic right of a nation. Article 1 in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁵⁶ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁵⁷ include a clause on this. Both read: “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” In many cases, nations will want to establish states of their own, that will protect the culture and character of its people. However, self-determination need not mean the founding of an independent state. The idea is perhaps left intentionally vague in the UN documents. The possibility remains that a nation can uphold its culture through a degree of independence or self-government that doesn’t amount to a unique, sovereign state. A discussion of nations and national identity cannot overlook this issue.

Self-determination of peoples was important in the years and decades after the colonization period, as many nations were shaking loose the oppressive bonds of their colonial masters. Many of them regained their independence or founded new states. Some, however, continued to be part of a state, but reserved a certain autonomy. This is still the case today, in, for example, the Faroe Islands, Scotland and Catalunya.

David Miller discusses national self-determination extensively in his book *On Nationality*⁵⁸. In his view, the nation has certain definite advantages in acquiring self-determination. The first reason for a nation to want it is based on the idea of social justice. The nation is a self-conscious group that shares certain resources and produces certain goods. It would only be fair for the nation to be

⁵⁵ Hálfðanarson (2001), 234. „Harka átakanna þar minnir okkur á að smám saman hafa þjóðirnar öðlast sjálfstætt líf og hafa umbreytt í eins konar lífverur sem teljast eiga sama náttúrurétt til frelsis og einstaklingarnir.“

⁵⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

⁵⁷ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

⁵⁸ Miller (1995).

able to enjoy the fruit of their labor, that is to say manage its production, distribute its riches among the people, safeguard its resources, etc. A society naturally has norms and rules by which it behaves. The state (or another comparable authority) would be best suited to enforce these rules and ensure that people fulfill their ethical duties towards other members. The second reason for a nation's claim to autonomy is simply that of protection of its national culture. Miller says that

if we think of national culture not as implying complete uniformity but as a set of overlapping cultural characteristics – beliefs, practices, sensibilities – which different member exhibit in different combinations and to different degrees, then [...] it is reasonably clear that distinct national cultures do exist. Moreover, it is valuable to the members in question that they should continue to do so. A common culture of this sort not only gives its bearers a sense of where they belong and provides an historical identity, but also provides them with a background against which more individual choices about how to live can be made.⁵⁹

Aside from nations' benefit of keeping a certain national culture intact, it is important that people have a say in how their matters are managed. Self-determination meets a call for collective autonomy. This argument supposes that people have an interest in forging the world in association with others with whom they identify⁶⁰. Given this fact, we can see how it is in the interest of the people of a nation to participate in the management of its affairs. This is simply the old democratic principle of the representation of the people, and it must also be guarded here that the representation is as much in concert with the will of the nation as a whole as possible, and not a representation of a certain class or a certain ethnic group.

For a nation, preservation of its culture and the ability for the people to practice their customs and be themselves is most important. When they do not enjoy this cultural freedom they will resort to measures to reclaim and protect it. Secession from the state of which it is a part is one option for nation that wants increased acknowledgement of its culture and a greater degree of self-determination. When a part of a country decides to secede it is hardly ever an easy, painless process. Before the secession, the nation (or state) might have gone through great labor to construct an identity for the people, out of perhaps different

⁵⁹ Ibid., 85-86.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 88.

ethnicities, languages or religion, then emphasizing those aspects which were in common with everyone. But it is mainly in the case of oppression or great lack of respect for its culture that a nation is definitely better off governing itself, than under the roof of a different state. Miller speaks of three categories of cases in which a different arrangement of self-determination is more feasible than outright declaration of independence. One is where the nationality or the territory where it resides is very small and therefore perhaps unable to sustain an independent state. The second is where the territory that would secede contains a considerable number of people that identify with the nationality of the state. Their right to a nation would be taken from them in this case. The third case of categories is when a part of the people consider themselves to be part of both nationalities, the state nationality and the minority one⁶¹. This is the case of Catalunya, for example, which will be reviewed in greater detail below.

Complete state sovereignty has been the norm in politics for the last decades in history⁶². State sovereignty is closely connected to the idea of centralization and is “understood as full control over all matters concerning the social, political and economic life of the citizens living within its boundaries”⁶³. But pressure on that centralization, and therefore sovereignty, is increasing today. This is Montserrat Guibernau’s argument in *Nations without States*⁶⁴. He talks of ‘pressure from above’, following the increasing number of international organizations, multinational companies, supranational social movements and the technical sophistication of modern warfare. To this pressure are added internal challenges to the state’s sovereignty, namely demands for self-determination: “The state [...] lays itself open to increasing internal strain to modify its traditional centralist nature and acknowledge the existence of territorially circumscribed cultural communities within itself which show a varying degree of national self-consciousness and put forward different socio-political demands”⁶⁵.

⁶¹ Ibid., 116.

⁶² Guibernau (1999), 151.

⁶³ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Citizenship

To be a member of a national community is often, though not strictly in all cases, connected to being a citizen of the state. This link, or rather the lack thereof, is interesting in our discussion of national identity for its possibility of accommodating different nationalities. Indeed, Hague and Harrop's textbook *Comparative Government and Politics* defines it as referring to "the rights and obligations flowing from membership of a state; it represents a political and legal status which can, in principle, be shared by people with different national identities. In this way, citizenship can offer a protective roof under which different nationalities can live together"⁶⁶.

Miller calls this definition a *liberal* understanding of citizenship. He prefers the use of a *republican* version, where he adds other elements, besides only rights and duties. These elements are mainly the role of the citizen as an active participant in matters of the society, and the willingness to defend the rights of others and promote the common interests of the community⁶⁷. It is obvious that in Miller's understanding, it is more the idea of an active member of a community, which holds dear the values of solidarity and the well-being of the whole, that is in question.

Citizenship is, as explained above, the membership in a political community and rights and duties flowing there from. This political community can mean, and does in many cases, the state. This opens up the possibility of *belonging* to a certain nation and yet *being a member* of a state, and there doesn't have to be a direct link there between; it doesn't have to be a *state-nation*. This idea of a decoupling between nationality and citizenship opens up possibilities regarding the future of identity within the state. Habermas speaks of a "general political culture" that is in many countries, for historical reasons, fused with a "majority culture" and makes claims to be recognized by all citizens regardless of their cultural background⁶⁸. What he means is that this general political culture monopolizes the *true* citizenship. This fusion, of course, withholds the tension between *nation* and *state* that could be released to allow for a more flexible setting for cultural diversity, or as Habermas puts it, "this fusion must be dissolved if it is

⁶⁶ Hague and Harrop (2006), 11.

⁶⁷ Miller (2000), 82-83.

⁶⁸ Habermas (1998), 117-118.

to be possible for different cultural, ethnic, and religious forms of life to coexist and interact on equal terms within *the same* political community. The level of the shared political culture must be uncoupled from the level of subcultures and their prepolitical identities”⁶⁹.

Catalunya – an example

An interesting case study of the functioning of nationalism, self-determination and citizenship is provided by the Catalan nation in northern Spain. It is a nation that has been respected and allowed to flourish for a long time (although the same cannot be said about the Catalans living on the French side of the border). In an earlier time, the Catalans had to earn their respect, and there were periods of attempted annihilation of their language and special culture by the Spanish state, but in recent past, they have been provided with significant political and cultural autonomy⁷⁰. Catalunya makes for a very interesting sample of a culture that claims a level of self-determination, because they consider themselves to be a nation. They do not demand independence from the Spanish state (and it is unsure whether they would be populous enough or territorially large enough for it), like the Basques do, for example, but they want to be able to speak and use their own language in their land, to represent themselves politically on a national and European level, and to preserve their cultural richness⁷¹. Support for separatism in Catalunya has always been weak, despite strong nationalist aspirations. But nevertheless, there is general acceptance across the political spectrum (except for the far right) of the principle of Catalan self-determination⁷².

To Jordi Pujol, the Catalan language is the most important element of Catalan culture: “The identity of Catalunya is, to a large extent, linguistic and cultural. Catalunya has never claimed ethnic or religious specificity, nor has insisted on geography, or being strictly political. There are many components of our identity, but language and culture are its backbone”⁷³. Castells finds that another answer to why language is important to Catalans is a political one. It is because using the language is the easiest way to sustain the Catalan

⁶⁹ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁰ Castells (1997).

⁷¹ Ibid., 50.

⁷² Keating (1996), 126-127.

⁷³ Pujol, here cited in Castells (1997), 47-48.

population without resorting to means that could contradict elements in the Spanish state, like aspirations for territorial sovereignty⁷⁴.

Another very interesting thing to notice about Catalunya is its role as a region, as a nation, as a part of a state, and as a European actor. Catalunya poses as a prominent example of a future possibility for a European arrangement where national minorities and regions enjoy political rights. It is a nation that preserves its culture, and acts as that nation in some political deliberations. All the while, it is a part of the Spanish state, and has representation in the Spanish parliament. Castells phrases this thought eloquently:

Declaring Catalunya at the same time European, Mediterranean, and Hispanic, Catalan nationalists, while rejecting separatism from Spain, search for a new kind of state. It would be a state of variable geometry, bringing together respect for the historically inherited Spanish state with the growing autonomy of Catalan institutions in conducting public affairs, and the integration of both Spain and Catalunya in a broader entity, Europe, that translates not only into the European Union, but into various networks of regional and municipal governments, as well as of civic associations, that multiply horizontal relationships throughout Europe under the tenuous shell of modern nation-states.⁷⁵

This thinking of the state and the nation in separate terms is somewhat a new idea, at least when it comes to a normative case of it. It is, some scholars argue, the way the future of the European Union will or should be organized, and possibly the future of modern nation-states⁷⁶.

Multiculturalism

Does the fact that countries today display increased cultural variety (as opposed to cultural homogeneity) mean that the nation is being undermined? Does cultural diversity threaten the existence of a unified nation? Smith argues that this is not so, as examples will show. But first, one has to make clear what one means by 'nation' and what the nationalist movement aims for. In Smith's view, all nationalists aimed for "autonomy, unity and identity", but this did not "entail complete cultural homogenization"⁷⁷. The Swiss case, for example, shows this.

⁷⁴ Castells (1997), 49.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁶ Weiler (1997).

⁷⁷ Smith (1991), 146.

The Swiss people have managed to achieve political unity and retain a clear sense of historical individuality, despite linguistic, cantonal and religious divisions. They have resisted cultural homogenization, in spite of powerful sentiments of national identity that have amounted to armed neutrality⁷⁸. So according to Smith, as long as we do not aim for a culturally ‘pure’ nation, in the spirit of Herder in theory, and as certain extreme nationalists like Hitler have demonstrated in reality, the nation need not suffer from cultural diversity. It can be molded around it.

Miller examines the school of conservative nationalism, which is based on the idea that national identity integrally involves allegiance to authority⁷⁹. Inherent in the idea of allegiance to authority is the implication that certain institutions of society are recognized as expressions of the nation. This is necessary because the state draws its own authority from the nation. Miller takes the example of the Church. The state should give special rights and duties to the Church, recognizing it as an institution of the nation. At this point, it is obvious that this idea contradicts a society in which many different cultural expressions and traditions can exist together: “To say that the national identity, and its institutional expressions, should change and adapt to welcome the newcomers is, in conservative eyes, to abandon the very feature of nationality that makes it so valuable, namely its authority over the present generation”⁸⁰. Miller argues that this view is not wholly beneficial to the development of national identity. He emphasizes the fact that national identity is not cast in stone. It is in constant flux, even as ethnically homogeneous members discuss various elements of it and the shape they want it to take. He thinks that this process of change should consist in a collective conversation that many voices can participate in. And so, national identity has room for people of different ethnic backgrounds, and immigration should not be a problem. But it is to conservative nationalists: if a common national identity and allegiance to customary traditions are essential for political stability, then an inflow of immigrants that don’t share the same reverence for those traditions must be seen as harmful. Instead, seeing as national identity is not dependent on everlasting and unchanged myths and institutions, Miller proposes an open exchange where all that is asked of immigrants is “a willingness to accept

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Miller (1995), 124.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 126.

current political structures and to engage in dialogue with the host community so that a new common identity can be forged”⁸¹.

What about the idea of an overarching nation that incorporates several others? Can a federation sustain multiple cultures or nations within one boundary? This is not a new idea and history is full of examples. Smith finds that Yugoslavia presents us with a failed example of such an endeavour, as does the former Soviet Union⁸². Yugoslavia was supposed to be a federation of nations, comprising Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Macedonians and Montenegrins. It did not, as history has shown, live up to expectations, and broke down into smaller national unities. The Soviet Union also, was supposed to be a force of unification for many nations. Its new social order was supposed to be built on principles that superceded the national level, namely the union of all working people in one class, and therefore the Union allowed different ethnicities and nations to flourish, all under the common banner of the Soviet Empire⁸³. However, that union also broke down, leaving national sentiments in the people to take over. In the case of the Soviet Union, Castells and Smith both emphasize the strength of national identity, in the face of class unity and the allegiance to a federation. Smith states that, at the same time, the Soviet Union institutionalized national sentiments and provided the bases for the revival of nationalism in the cases where those sentiments were perceived to be threatened by neighbors or by the center. Ethnic ties and nationalist aspirations proved more durable and resilient than Marxist ideologies and parties⁸⁴.

Also, the Soviet Union may not have handled the ‘national question’ very well, allowing nations to exist, but relegating them to a subordinate position below loyalty to the communist cause. As Castell puts it, the issue was approached half-heartedly by Soviet rulers, and so after the collapse of the Union, this fragile system disintegrated and many conflicts surfaced in the new sovereign, ex-Soviet states. Artificial and half-hearted acknowledgment of nationalities by

⁸¹ Ibid., 130.

⁸² Smith (1991).

⁸³ Castells (1997).

⁸⁴ Smith (1991), 148-149.

Marxism-Leninism didn't just fail to solve historical conflicts, but actually made them more virulent⁸⁵.

It is clear from the previous review of the relationship between the state and the nation that these two concepts are not inseparable, even though they may have been parallel through most of history. Citizenship is mostly concerned with an association with the state whereas nationality can stand independently of it.

Drawing conclusions from Miller's observations about conservative nationalism and multiculturalism, it's possible to deduct that a state can accommodate more than one nation within its borders, if there is an open dialogue about the national identity and it's not defined in terms of allegiance to a homogeneous nation.

The Catalunyan case demonstrates how a state can accommodate a unique nation within its borders successfully.

Chapter Three • Globalization and its Effects on the Nation-State

In the previous chapter, in order to explore the importance of national identity for the state, the relationship between the nation and the state was examined, involving concepts like citizenship and self-determination. In this chapter the phenomenon of globalization will be under the microscope. Can it, and then how, have an effect on states in the world and therefore on nations as well? Is it having an eroding effect on the nation-state? What effect would a change in the state have on the nation?

Numerous scholars have written on the changing shape and role of traditional states, and many of these changes can be traced to ongoing processes of globalization⁸⁶. Hálfðanarson remarks that “the nation-state is less suited than

⁸⁵ Castells (1997), 38.

⁸⁶ Hálfðanarson (2001). Scholte (2005). Castells (1997).

in the past to deal with various problems, for example economic ones and ecological” and that “even though hardly any state was ever founded on a homogeneous nation, the current streams of migration in countries today are putting strain on the accepted parameters of the nation”⁸⁷. Habermas also sums up the state of affairs:

The nation-state at one time represented a cogent response to the historical challenge to find a functional equivalent for the early modern form of social integration which was in the process of disintegrating. Today we are confronting an analogous challenge. The globalization of commerce and communication, of economic production and finance, of the spread of technology and weapons, and above all of ecological and military risks, poses problems that can no longer be solved within the framework of nation-states or by the traditional method of agreements between sovereign states⁸⁸.

In a similar way, to Guibernau, “the relationship between nation and state seems to have shifted from a time which the state and its role in nation-building was given pre-eminence”⁸⁹. He traces these developments directly to the intensification of globalization processes and the transformations affecting the nation-state. For him, the attempt of states to base their legitimacy in their representation of a nation have largely failed, and that the re-emergence of nationalist movement in nations without states proves this. The state is no longer able to fulfill the needs of the people, and therefore they look elsewhere for institutions that work for them⁹⁰. Guibernau quotes Giddens’ definition of the nation-state: “The nation-state which exists in a complex of other nation-states is a set of institutional forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries (Borders), its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of the means of internal and external violence”⁹¹. He then goes on to say that the nation-state is undergoing transformations on these four dimensions Giddens mentioned: its existence within a nation-state system, its ability to employ administrative control, its power to legitimately monopolize violence, and its territoriality⁹².

⁸⁷ Hálfðanarson (2001), 233 and 235.

⁸⁸ Habermas (1998), 106.

⁸⁹ Guibernau (1999), 17.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Giddens, here cited in Guibernau (1999), 151-152.

⁹² Ibid.

Today, much human interaction is moving to a level of *supraterritoriality*⁹³. Jan Aart Scholte sets this development apart from *transplanetary connectivity*, which has been around for a much longer time. Scholte defines supraterritoriality as social connections that substantially transcend territorial geography. In this context, Scholte emphasizes *space*: “Space is a core feature – as both cause and effect – of social life”⁹⁴. Any human encounter or activity takes place at a certain location, in a certain sort of venue. The environment we live, work and play in largely defines our actions. Consequently, a transformation of social space is likely to entail changes in society, because “a reconfiguration of social geography is intimately interlinked with shifts in patterns of knowledge, production, governance, identity, and social ecology”⁹⁵.

Such developments undermine the function of the state through the multiplication of international activities, processes and organizations. In a way, international mechanisms can now serve to complete the tasks of the state in a more efficient way⁹⁶. Thus, globalization is having an eroding effect on the state as we know it today⁹⁷. Guibernau says that “the increasing porousness of the nation-state’s borders signals the end of its monopoly over the state’s economy and stands as a distinctive feature of the post-traditional nation-state within which cultural homogeneity is no longer attainable”⁹⁸. Guibernau uses the term *post-traditional nation-state* to distinguish modern nation-states that are in transformation from traditional nation-states as we’ve known them so far. To him, the state is changing from being a center of political decision-making, an economic unit, and a self-contained cultural recipient⁹⁹.

Environmental issues are a perfect example of a problem that the state by itself is unable to efficiently deal with. “*The slogan ‘think global, act local’ may be rather difficult to turn into practical policy, but it does reflect the ineffectiveness of states in managing the environmental challenge*”¹⁰⁰. Michael Keating mentions other factors that challenge the state. American cultural

⁹³ Scholte (2005), 60-64.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 60.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Guibernau (1999).

⁹⁷ Scholte (2005). Guibernau (1999).

⁹⁸ Guibernau (1999), 157.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Keating (1996), 34.

hegemony is a challenge, in his opinion, to the state, in that it may undermine popular cultures. This effect also leads to a discussion about the contents of national culture, empowering minority cultures by letting them redefine the terms of their participation in political and economic life. Another challenge to the state comes through institutional change: the growth of international regimes (in bodies like the EU, NAFTA, NATO and the OSCE) alters the balance of power. Another dimension of institutional change involves devolution of powers, in the form of decentralized government, establishing regions and handing down powers to federal units¹⁰¹.

As can be seen, the modern state is facing challenges to its form and function, many of which move its tasks to an above-the-state level. But the developments are not only in this particular direction. These developments do not only *delocalize* everyday life and move them to a supraterritorial dimension. Globalization, as well as adding a transnational dimension, also gives importance to localized activity¹⁰². This has been called *glocalization*¹⁰³, as it is globalization that has this double effect of internationalization *and* localization. In this way, globalization is not only taking away the functions of the state and elevating them to a transnational level, but also relegating them to a more local level. For example, international regimes have “stimulated regional and local mobilization and helped place the issue of territory back on the political agenda”¹⁰⁴. Kenichi Ohmae argues that, more and more, the concerns requiring international attention do not figure on the sphere of activity of states, because “they are for the most part, problems having to do not with *realpolitik* or the balance of power, but with the daily lives – and the daily quality of life – of ordinary people in ordinary settings. [...] As a practical matter, people do not live and work in countries. Day to day, their relevant sphere of life is local or regional”¹⁰⁵. Scholte demonstrates how the addition of the supraterritorial dimension has not obviated territorial aspects¹⁰⁶. On the contrary, sub-state nationalisms are on the rise¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 37.

¹⁰² Scholte (2005), 76.

¹⁰³ Yamada (2002), 61.

¹⁰⁴ Keating (1996), 49.

¹⁰⁵ Ohmae, here cited in Guibernau (1999), 153.

¹⁰⁶ Scholte (2005), 76.

¹⁰⁷ Guibernau (1999), 19.

Guibernau describes nations that exist within or across territories of states, but not as recognized nations *of* the state. For example, he describes the Catalan, Basque and Quebecois populations. He argues that, as a consequence of the decreasing power of nation-states and the waning relevance of their borders, these *nations without states* are gaining ground in the world:

The nation-state's territory is steadily losing its relevance as a frame for political, economic, social and cultural life. In such a context, some nations without states, understood as cultural communities able and happy to live and develop within larger institutional frameworks, are beginning to establish quite a distinctive relationship with their territory. [...] [P]olitical decentralization, and with it the transfer of power to regional bodies, emphasizes once more the need to redefine territoriality as a key element in the post-traditional nation-state. Through it the state's territory is subdivided into regions, some of them endowed with a strong sense of shared identity and struggling to become economically competitive within an environment which extends well beyond the state's borders¹⁰⁸.

It must be noted however, that not all states are welcoming this process. This enhancing importance of sub-national elements has given the state a reason to reaffirm their place in the world. Thus several states have taken measures to protect their national languages, some countries have blocked or prohibited unlimited media communication, and some European countries have resisted the integration processes of the European Union by using popular referenda¹⁰⁹.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that globalization is clearly affecting the state. The traditional role of the state is in substantial part being transported to a level above or below the state level, to transnational mechanisms and local actors.

Observing this shift in importance away from the state level, it can be deducted that loyalty and identity will shift as well, or at least that national identity will have to adapt to the changes. Which shape exactly the new identities will take is the topic of the next chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Guibernau (1999), 157-158.

¹⁰⁹ Scholte (2005), 231-232.

Chapter Four • The Resurgence of Identities

The effects of globalization on states have now been reviewed and the alteration it's having on social landscape. This leads to a heightened degree of uncertainty and flux in people's lives, which can then result in confusion. This sparks a response, as people grasp for stability, for firm land under their existence¹¹⁰. How is this expressed in national identity? Are we likely to see a boldened sense of national identity in the face of change? Or will it give way to other forms of identity, like regional, religious, or something yet different?

Several identity types

People identify with different things. One may see himself to be first and foremost Muslim, before being a country's national, and somebody may consider themselves to be Catalunyan, long before ever committing to being French or Spanish. Several categories of such identifications have been drawn up by scholars. The most notable ones are gender, social class, religion and space or territory (as in regional loyalties)¹¹¹. These are examples of identities that exist on a worldwide scale. That is not to say that they all run equally deep in people's psyches or function in the same way. *Gender* is obviously the most universal, as no-one can escape being one of the two sexes. But also, because of its encompassing nature, it is too broad for people ever to make a fulfilling identity out of it¹¹². Scholte does, however, point to the fact that globalization has enabled the establishment of formal organizations with an explicit focus on gender (mainly female)¹¹³. He points to an "unprecedented proliferation and growth of transworld networks that are devoted specifically to the advancement of women's interests" since the 1970s¹¹⁴.

Identification with *local geographic and cultural areas* can be a strong one. However, this also depends on whether and to what extent regions correspond

¹¹⁰ Arnett (2002). Castells (1997).

¹¹¹ Smith (1991). Scholte (2005).

¹¹² Smith (1991), 4.

¹¹³ Scholte (2005), 248.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

with strongly culturally defined areas, as we can see by looking at Brittany in France. Many other regions in France do not share the same cultural distinctness. After the entry on scene of the nation-state, regional identities' strength waned considerably¹¹⁵. Some regions, however, remained strong, and they sometimes preserved their customs and uniqueness. Examples of this would be Scotland, which still maintains a level of autonomy from the British government¹¹⁶. Some regions have for decades been in constant struggle with the imposing national force, not accepting to become part of the nation completely and letting go of their regional identity, for example the Basque Country in Spain. One interesting question to ask about regional identity is whether the European Union weakens the importance of the nation-states and provides an environment in which the regions of Europe can flourish, surpassing the levels they were able to attain when the nation-state was all-dominant.

Social class is a divide that has a long history. For example, Scholte maintains that the European aristocracy has for centuries functioned as a class network that spans across regions¹¹⁷. Still today, people are divided into classes, being well-off business people, middle class or poor, for example. Geertz argues that class has a significantly looser grip on people than does national identity. He says that conflicts within classes occur only within a "more or less fully accepted terminal community whose political integrity they do not, as a rule, put into question"¹¹⁸. "Economic or class or intellectual disaffection threatens revolution, but disaffection based on race, language, or culture threatens partition, irredentism, or merger, a redrawing of the very limits of the state", Geertz states, to underline the difference in depth that these identities provide¹¹⁹. Smith seems to agree. He says that this category is unlikely to possess enough depth to be something that people can really identify with, even though they may realize that they are a part of this or another social class. Its limited emotional appeal and lack of cultural depth prevents it from serving as a basis for an enduring collective identity¹²⁰.

¹¹⁵ Guibernau (1999), 151.

¹¹⁶ Keating (1996).

¹¹⁷ Scholte (2005), 246.

¹¹⁸ Geertz (1994), 32.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Smith (1991), 5.

Religion is another type of identity. It is important to note that religion has through history been closely tied with ethnic groups, and therefore its cultural imprint intertwines with the identity of ethnicities and nations¹²¹. Religion will be discussed below with regards to its impact in religious revivalism.

Other sources of identity are, for example, race and sexual orientation. Also, Geertz speaks of assumed blood ties (tribes), language and custom¹²².

Identities destabilizing

Scholte argues that “the currently ongoing shift away from territorialism in social geography has, not surprisingly, unfolded together with an attenuation of nationalism as the overriding basis of macro social identification”¹²³. According to him, supraterritorial connectivity has allowed people to join in associations of a truly supranational character. Different human associations and identities have now gained increased prominence and mixed in different ways (and this actually also includes nationality)¹²⁴.

Globalization has given prominence to local identities, both national and also sub-state national movements¹²⁵. To this we can add religious revivalism, which is clearly visible in the world today¹²⁶. There are two reasons for the resurgence of non-state-national identities today, and both are a result of globalization. One is the type that Scholte speaks frequently of, namely that globalization empowers these developments. He says that globalization has encouraged the growth of micro-nations (which are nations that exist within or across states) by reducing the power of the state and thereby further enabling ‘micro-nations’ to gain prominence, and in that ‘micro-national’ movements have used globalization to their own ends, using the internet, international organizations, etc. to further advance their cause¹²⁷. The other reason for these

¹²¹ Ibid., 6.

¹²² Geertz (1994), 32-34.

¹²³ Scholte (2005), 225.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Guibernau (1999). Scholte (2005).

¹²⁶ Castells (1997). Scholte (2005).

¹²⁷ Scholte (2005), 234.

resurgences is not that globalization has empowered this, but the opposite, that it is a defensive reaction against globalization¹²⁸.

Modernization and globalization have had an unstabilizing effect on people's lives. On the one hand, this is because people have become disillusioned with the developments that were supposed to bring wealth and prosperity¹²⁹. The modernization of economies and social systems didn't reach their goal in many countries, leaving people disappointed and feeling left out from these modern developments. Thus, Castells describes the roots of radical Muslim fundamentalism as deriving from "the combination of successful state-led modernization in the 1950s and 1960s and the failure of economic modernization in most Muslim countries during the 1970s and 1980s, as their economies could not adapt to the new conditions of global competition and technological revolution in the later period"¹³⁰.

On the other hand however, the resurgence of non-national (and national) identities is because globalization brings profound changes in the way we understand our environment. This happens through influence from very different cultures, and that of a global culture, that are brought close through the media. This cultural influence can be based on values that are very different from the traditional, local culture, and can thus have an uprooting effect: "Worldviews are based on ways of life; as traditional ways of life change in response to globalization, traditional worldviews may lack compelling emotional and ideological power for young people"¹³¹.

To demonstrate, Bame Nsamenang describes the developments in Africa: "The process of acculturation and globalization has bestowed on contemporary Africa a dual politico-economic and cultural system of old indigenous traditions and imported legacies This has produced a marginal population whose adults, teenagers and children are groping desperately to reconcile within individual and collective psyches the ambivalences and contradictions of a confusing cultural braid"¹³².

¹²⁸ Castells (1997). Scholte (2005).

¹²⁹ Castells (1997), 20. Esposito (1996), 18.

¹³⁰ Castells (1997), 18.

¹³¹ Arnett (2002), 778.

¹³² Nsamenang, here cited in Arnett (2002), 776.

So how exactly is globalization influencing identity formation today? Psychologist Jeffrey Jensen Arnett describes the *identity confusion* that takes place in individuals that do not manage to adapt to the changes brought on by globalization:

The images, values, and opportunities they perceive as being part of the global culture undermine their belief in the value of local cultural practices. At the same time, the ways of the global culture seem out of reach for them, too foreign to everything they know from their direct experience. Rather than becoming bicultural, they may experience themselves as excluded from both their local culture and the global culture, truly belonging to neither¹³³.

These individuals that do not successfully adapt to the global culture are thus lost, uprooted, displaced between their culture and the global one. This identity confusion can be reflected in problems such as depression, suicide, and substance abuse¹³⁴.

It is in the state of this confusion that people try to grasp at something to provide them with meaning. In this context, it is useful to think of how Castells categorizes identity building. He defines three categories: one category is *legitimizing identity* that is “introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis à vis social actors”. The second category is *resistance identity*, which is taken on by a social group that feels threatened by society’s mainstream logic, “thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society”. Thirdly, there is *project identity*, which presents itself in cases where certain social actors seek to redefine their position in society and consequently transform the overall social structure¹³⁵. As an example of project identity, Castells takes feminism, which has challenged patriarchy, and thus the entire structure of society which has been based on patriarchal families. The second and third categories are useful to bear in mind throughout this discussion.

Bearing in mind Arnett’s description of the identity confusion suffered by those that don’t adapt to changes following globalization, one can see how the impulse to hold on to a culture that is perceived as recognized and stable can

¹³³ Arnett (2002), 778.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 779.

¹³⁵ Castells (1997), 8.

follow. The identity formed through such a process could be classified as resistance identity. For those individuals that feel “excluded from or resisting the individualization of identity attached to life in the global networks of power and wealth, cultural communes of religious, national, or territorial foundation seem to provide the main alternative for the construction of meaning in our society”¹³⁶. The cultural communes that result from this are of various types, as Castells says. Manifestly, they can form through radical nationalisms¹³⁷, radical religious revivalism¹³⁸, an awakening of sub-state nationalisms¹³⁹, and probably others.

National identity

As already discussed, the nation-state as we’ve known it so far is undergoing changes. With it, national identity is changing as well. In some respects, it is becoming more salient and explicit as a direct response to the homogenizing force of globalization. Arnett mentions places as diverse as Russia, Latin America and the Arab World. He takes a good example of the Samoans, that have recently taken up an old tradition that involves tattooing adolescent males from the midsection to the knees with elaborate geometric patterns. This ritual used to serve the purpose of sexual attraction and of enabling the boys to enter the status of men. It is now seen as part of an explicit attempt to prevent their culture from being totally consumed by the global culture¹⁴⁰.

Smith also sees a clear boldening of national identity in the mixing of different cultures and religions in a harsher political climate. There is a revitalization of dominant ethnic groups and the return to “ethnic moorings amid moral panics and heightened competition for the nation’s resources, producing a xenophobic ethnic nationalism which sometimes verges on culturalist racism”¹⁴¹.

But there are also subtler changes taking place in national identity. In an interesting study on multicultural government policies, Varun Uberoi suggests that such policies can change national identity¹⁴². This is possible because, firstly,

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Smith (2007), 29.

¹³⁸ Castells (1997).

¹³⁹ Guibernau (1999).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 780.

¹⁴¹ Smith (2007), 29.

¹⁴² Uberoi (2008).

a national identity summarises what history, homeland, public culture, rights, duties etc. members of a nation share and helps differentiate them from others. Secondly, this knowledge comes from politicians, officials and intellectuals and they transmit to the general public what national history is, what kind of language is to be spoken, and so on. Through education, laws and general policies, the state marks off the national culture. So when this elite group decides to change the contents of national identity, that has an effect on the public. Uberoi takes Canada as an example. He argues that “What Canadians share has changed and one of the most important policies used to explain this was a policy of multiculturalism. Indeed, the effect that this policy has had on Canadians is so profound that Kymlicka claims that Canadians have ‘incorporated Canada’s policy of accommodating diversity into their sense of national identity’ and various surveys also suggest that this is true”¹⁴³.

Smith argues that one previously important element of nationalism has diminished, namely the *sanctity* which surrounded the nation in earlier times¹⁴⁴. It has been replaced by an enlarged field of the profane: materialism, consumerism and rationalism. This has then led to a deflated belief in the mythical origins of the nation, traditional national history and some national ceremonies. Effectively, what is taking place is that national identities are being redefined and reshaped, the steady flow of immigration is continuing, and the members of the nation discuss among themselves the meaning and role of their national identities. On the whole, Smith gathers that “as self-reflexive and self-celebrating communities, nations and nationalism are still very much alive”¹⁴⁵.

Religious identity

For the same reason, in reaction to uncertainty and loss of control over life following globalization, religious fundamentalist movements have been on the rise. Scholte argues that “contemporary globalization has provided a context for considerable religious resurgence across multiple confessions: Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Judaic, Sikh, and various so-called New Age faiths”¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 411.

¹⁴⁴ Smith (2007), 30.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Scholte (2005), 244.

According to him, global communications, global organizations, global finance among other factors have “allowed ideas of the transworld *umma* of Muslims and the universal Christian church to be given concrete shape as never before”¹⁴⁷.

Castells says of Christian fundamentalism, that soared in the 1980s and 1990s, that it is “as most fundamentalisms in history, a reactive movement, aiming at constructing social and personal identity on the basis of images of the past and projecting them into a utopian future, to overcome unbearable present times”¹⁴⁸. The menaces that Christian fundamentalism perceives in today’s society are the threat of globalization and the crisis of patriarchalism. Its construction seems to revolve around the attempt to reassert control over life, in response to uncontrollable globalizing processes that alter the traditional way of living¹⁴⁹.

Similarly, Arnett, citing a comparative research project done in the 1980s on fundamentalisms, describes fundamentalists as usually being a minority culture, composed of individuals who refuse to go along with current social changes, but instead search for unchanging eternal truths¹⁵⁰. He underlines the fact that these communities are often *self-selected* cultures. Individuals then join them voluntarily, because they are not satisfied with what the global culture has to offer them in terms of meaning and structure. A case in point are the ‘newly-Orthodox Jewish women’, who turned to Orthodox Judaism because the secular values of their upbringing failed to provide them with a solid foundation for living. They did this despite the strict sex roles in Orthodox Judaism “because it offered them the structure of a definite place in the world, the meaning conferred by Orthodox Jewish theology, and the roots of a long, durable tradition”¹⁵¹. Other examples of religious revivalism in the recent past include Iran’s Islamic revolution in 1978-1979 and Catholic liberation theology in Latin America¹⁵². These examples, in Esposito’s words, “remind us of the potential force of religion in the developing world in particular. They reveal the fragility of many nation-states and the issues

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Castells (1997), 25-26.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Arnett (2002), 780.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Esposito (1996).

of identity and legitimacy that contribute to the vulnerability of many governments”¹⁵³.

Regional identity

As has been reviewed in previous chapters, there are many places where unique cultures exist within states. Today, many of these nations are experiencing a certain revivalism, even nationalism. According to Guibernau, the globalization of the economy and of social relations which conduced to the weakening of the nation-state, also appears to have emboldened regional forms of nationalism¹⁵⁴. As with other kinds of revivalism, for sub-state nations it is also the “perceived threat of cultural homogenization [that] is one of the factors contributing to the revitalization of minority cultures struggling to find a niche in the global net”¹⁵⁵.

Examples of nations that have been gaining prominence in the last decades include the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which separated from merged Yugoslavia¹⁵⁶. The countries of the former Soviet Union feature here as well and they have been discussed previously in this text. Some micro-nationalist resistances have also sparked constitutional reforms without state fragmentation, for example, in Spain, Lebanon, and Belgium¹⁵⁷. Guibernau also notes that “in Western Europe, historically and culturally based sub-state national identities such as Catalan, Scottish or Welsh identity are gaining prominence”¹⁵⁸. He goes on to say that we are witnessing long dormant identities being awakened, and others being invented. Among those that are being invented are Rioja and Andalusian identities.

Hybridization

Another development in identity that is taking place today is the forming of *hybrid* identities¹⁵⁹. This kind of identities is the result of the successful merging of identities that happens, on the one hand, when people immigrate to a different

¹⁵³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵⁴ Guibernau (1999), 19.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁵⁶ Scholte (2005), 234.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Guibernau (1999), 164.

¹⁵⁹ Arnett (2002). Scholte (2005).

culture, and on the other hand, when global culture presents an added layer of identity¹⁶⁰. Indeed, Scholte maintains that “globalization has unfolded in tandem with – both reflecting and reinforcing – a broad shift in the reigning framework of identity from nationalism towards greater pluralism and hybridity”¹⁶¹.

Examples of this hybridization in popular culture are ethnic minority youth in Frankfurt-am-Main that have “combined aspects of African-American rap music and hip-hop culture with elements of their North African and Turkish heritages to create novel modes of expression for their hybrid identities in contemporary Germany”¹⁶². Kevin Robins also gives vivid examples: “Salma and Sabine are Pakistani sisters who sing Abba songs in Hindi; Rasta-Cymru is a Welsh-speaking reggae band; El Vez is a Latino Elvis impersonator with attitude; Cartel is a Turkish-German group appropriating US West-Coast rap music and style”¹⁶³.

The development of a second layer of identity, in addition to individuals’ local cultural identity, has been called *bicultural identities*¹⁶⁴. In youth, for example, this happens when “young people develop a global identity that gives them a sense of belonging to a worldwide culture and includes an awareness of the events, practices, styles, and information that are part of the global culture”¹⁶⁵. They do, nevertheless, maintain their local identity as well, which they use to communicate and interact with family members, friends and the local community. The addition of the global identity opens up a dimension for interaction with people when they travel abroad themselves, when people from different places travel to their home, and when they communicate through electronic media. Examples of such bicultural identities include young people in India. Many of them, despite being well educated and fully taking part in the competitive modern world, choose to have an arranged marriage, and care for their parents in old age, like Indian tradition dictates¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁰ Arnett (2002), 777.

¹⁶¹ Scholte (2005), 147.

¹⁶² Ibid., 81.

¹⁶³ Robins (2000), 196.

¹⁶⁴ Arnett (2002), 777.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

In summary, it is clear that globalization is bringing about change on many levels for identity. It is difficult to say for certain whether national identity is likely to give way completely for other forms of identity, although it is not probable. One can say for certain, nevertheless, that national identity is undergoing dramatic changes. In some cases it is being emboldened, and in others it's being modified and "updated". As the nation itself changes, with immigration for example, it's interesting to see that the national identity can change as well. Also, hybrid identities are an interesting development. In that case, a new global identity is added to a person's local identity.

Chapter Five • Global Identity

Can national identity be undone and replaced by something else? Is it possible that this idea could be blown away by another idea, a different sort of identity? Is globalization bringing about a new, global identity among all people on the globe? What would the implications of this be for national identity and the nation-state?

In an article titled *Cosmopolitanism*, Nicholas Rengger covers different strands of this school of thought. They are very different in content; some place emphasis on rights and obligations we have under the moral law, while others direct the view on the capabilities that each person has as a human being and that must be assured and respected by political institutions¹⁶⁷. However, what the majority of them have in common is that they are critical of the "state-centred state system", which they consider an imperfect way of political organization. "Even moral cosmopolitans, who may not be specifically critical of the institutions of the states system as such, usually end up criticizing the practice of states and especially so-called 'realist' or conservative modes of statecraft which emphasize military force, state interest and *realpolitik* as the guide to state behaviour"¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁷ Rengger (2003).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 327.

Cosmopolitanism has a strong appeal today, in a world where one can easily witness the shifting of state power, the decreasing importance of borders and the surfacing of politics that defy the use of traditional channels. In spite of this, many argue that it is a distant dream, especially when we look at national identity and nationalism, which still hold strong today. Rengger points to the primary opponents of the cosmopolitan vision: “The oldest argument against cosmopolitanism is that of self-confessed ‘realists’: that to hope for universal moral truth (and even more for a politics unmediated by force and fraud) is the worst of all delusions and more likely to encourage, rather than prevent, the very behaviour it seeks to avoid”¹⁶⁹.

Anthony Smith seems to agree, to a certain extent, with the realists, that the cosmopolitan vision is a distant dream¹⁷⁰. He is very sceptical of the emergence of a tangible global culture. As shown in the preceding pages, people’s identity is based in the imagined common past and a joint journey to the future, and these are manifested in myths and symbols (songs, literature, statues, memorial ceremonies, traditions, flags, colors, etc.). In their upbringing, people have been taught what these symbols mean. They know the history, the values, the heroes and the wars that stand behind these symbols. In other words, these national cultural elements have a *meaning*. Smith describes the new global culture as being

composed of a number of analytically discrete elements: effectively advertised mass commodities, a patchwork of folk or ethnic styles and motifs stripped of their context, some general ideological discourses concerned with ‘human rights and values’ and a standardized quantitative and ‘scientific’ language of communication and appraisal, all underpinned by the new information and telecommunications systems and their computerized technologies¹⁷¹.

He goes on to describe it as “universal and timeless ... fluid and shapeless ... it is here and now and everywhere. It boasts no history or histories; the folk motifs it uses are quarried for surface decoration of a present- and future-oriented ‘scientific’ and technical culture ... It is also a fundamentally artificial culture, and it lacks any emotional commitment to what is signified”¹⁷². It is thus clear that Smith considers this potential global culture that may be emerging as lacking in

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Smith (1991).

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 157.

¹⁷² Ibid., 158.

all those elements that give national identity its power to reach people at a deep, personal level. This culture would be lacking a collective past, thus not giving its members that convincing element of something in common. And the cultural symbols that this culture boasts would therefore not resonate with anything within its members. They would be meaningless. According to Smith, the attempt to forge such a culture would thus only result in the breaking down into its smaller constituent ethnic and cultural parts. “There is no global ‘identity-in-the-making’; a global culture could be only a memory-less construct or break up into its constituent national elements. But a memory-less culture is a contradiction; any attempt to create such a global culture would simply accentuate the plurality of folk memories and identities that have been plundered in order to constitute this giant *bricolage*”¹⁷³.

Chris Brown also wonders if a *world community* is a level of human consciousness and political organization that can be expected any time soon¹⁷⁴. He finds that, at first impression, the answer seems to be affirmative, when one looks at the increasing number of international organizations and ever tighter interdependence between countries. However, he finds that this is not so simple. Like Smith, he questions the authenticity of a consciousness that encompasses all the people on the globe. Brown points to the fact, as did Smith, that for a common identity to emerge between people of different cultures, something more than the use of the same electronic software, or the same type of jeans, is needed. A common identity requires “the moral impulse which creates a sense of common interests and identity. [...] This is not something that can be expected to emerge simply as a result of individuals and peoples coming to have more contact with one another, because such contact need not generate the essentially moral consciousness of common identity that is required. It could, instead, generate incomprehension or hatred – as seems to have been the case with initial contacts between Europeans and Aztecs”¹⁷⁵.

In exploring the hypothesis that the sequence ‘kin, tribe, city, state’ will be completed with ‘world’, Brown finds that current developments are simply not clear enough to read that outcome from them. There is at work the “complex

¹⁷³ Ibid. 159

¹⁷⁴ Brown (2000).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 454.

interplay of forces in the modern world” that “simply do not readily sort themselves into those supporting and those opposing such a development”¹⁷⁶. But still, even if there isn’t visible evidence that *world* community is the next step, that is not to say that there isn’t “a widening and deepening sense of community” going on¹⁷⁷. So if it isn’t a world community, a global order, a common consciousness, that is evolving, what then can we expect? Smith, firmly believing in the strength of national identity and its ethnic/cultural roots, thinks that a possible development might be *pan-nationalisms*. He finds that national identity today exerts “a more potent and durable influence than other collective cultural identities; and that [...] this type of collective identity is likely to continue to command humanity’s allegiances for a long time to come, even when other larger-scale but looser forms of collective identity emerge alongside national ones”¹⁷⁸. So even with the continued hold of national identity, we could witness the emergence of associations of cultural families, which would include several or many nations. These larger groupings would be held together by the cultural characteristics that they share, for Smith finds that they have “frequent kinship in their social and political mores and institutions, including their basic political values”¹⁷⁹. Indeed, for Smith, the European Union is a prime example of this today. It is a union that started as an economic alliance, but is now reaching further, based on its common cultural “heritage of Roman law, Judeo-Christian ethics, Renaissance humanism and individualism, Enlightenment rationalism and science, artistic classicism and romanticism, and, above all, traditions of civil rights and democracy”¹⁸⁰.

Brown does not reject the idea that human societies are converging, at least up to a certain point, even though a world community might never exist because it would not cut deep enough in people’s hearts. For him, it is quite possible that many values and objectives are rising beyond traditional national boundaries, like respect for human rights and international rescue efforts for a localized disaster. So, considering the continued importance of local identities, and the fact that local problems are often best solved locally, and also considering the convergence of

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 457.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 458.

¹⁷⁸ Smith (1991), 175-176.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 173.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 174.

certain values and ways of thinking and doing, he presents the notion of *international society*, rather than world community¹⁸¹. He doesn't detail the political or technical implications of this, but such a "pluralistic conception of world order" would entail more "openness to the recognition and acceptance of difference" and "solidarity than conventional radicalism has to offer"¹⁸². It would have to be based upon the principle that each person has a duty to relieve suffering through aid, and thus it would mandate considerable income and wealth redistribution. The basic premise, however, would be that the pursuit of social justice and a deeper sense of community is more practical when applied on a global scale.

Some are more positive about the possibility of a global consciousness. Albrow, for example, argues that the nation-state as we know it today is not the only possible form of state nor the triumph of all political development¹⁸³. He introduces the concept *global state*, which is implicated in a new political order, spurred by the pulling apart of society and the nation-state. The global state exists "at every moment when the individual takes account of and seeks to act in the interests of a common interest spanning the globe"¹⁸⁴.

Richard Jenkins is sceptical about the idea that there is a unified, global identity forming in the world¹⁸⁵. In connection with this, he discusses the theory that a global consciousness can be formed among working classes, for example teachers, police officers and lawyers. He feels that such a consciousness would be very superficial, seeing as these people's reality is very different in each country, despite the fact that they do the same job. Four categories of people are excluded, though, and in those groups Jenkins considers there to be a possibility of a global consciousness forming. These are scientists, international businesspeople, engineers and members of multinational "superfamilies" of companies. As an example of such a multinational company he takes the example of Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America. For Jenkins, these organizations provide a venue for people to acquire a common consciousness across borders: "Perhaps the only social and organizational context where one can discern the beginnings of

¹⁸¹ Brown (2000).

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 460.

¹⁸³ Here cited in Guibernau (1999), 19.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Jenkins (2002).

something that might develop into a kind of authentically globalized collective social identity is that of transnational business and corporate activity”¹⁸⁶.

There is obviously no general agreement among scholars about the advent of a global identity. Globalization is without a doubt having an effect on the way people view the world, and this is likely to add a dimension of understanding among people, which could lead to the forming of identity. At the same time, however, Smith and Brown make a convincing argument about the lack of cultural depth that this global identity would have. It would lack the intimate factors that make national identity so relevant, like the idea of common history and a language that belongs to the nation. On the other hand, it could be argued that all the people in the world share in the history of the world. English has become a widespread language, reaching many corners of the world. And as for a common territory, Earth is everybody’s homeland. As Arnett argues, a plausible way would thus be that this “shallow” global identity would be an added identity, that would not replace a local identity, but complement it.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 79-80.

Conclusion

What is likely to happen to national identity in this age of intense globalization and changing role of the nation-state? Is it likely to disappear entirely? In that case, what would replace it? Or will it not disappear, but change shape, adapt to new social circumstances? These are questions that this thesis set out with.

As the chapter on the roots of national identity demonstrates, it is founded on *cultural* elements, like language, history and shared characteristics. Culture is a fact of life, something natural to human existence, something that forms when people come together in groups. This is why it is hard to imagine national identity vanishing entirely. People need roots. Having a culture, a way of life, provides people with a context for living. It gives a framework of existence outside of which life is stripped of meaning. But wait, let us pause here. Does this mean that national identity is essential to provide meaning in human lives? Because life did certainly have meaning before the concept *nation* existed. And also, as we have seen, the concept is in large part an intentionally constructed one, and not a natural fact. So, maybe it is not really so much the *national* identity that is necessary, but rather *a* stable, cultural identity. So what possibilities are we looking at in the future?

The conclusions from chapter two are interesting when it comes to imagining what may lie ahead. They were that a nation and a state should not be seen as inseparable twins, but more like a married couple, that have been enjoying a (mostly) fortunate relationship until now. It is a historical fact that they were combined in one, but not an inevitable arrangement. Neither is it sure to be permanent. On the contrary, different nations or cultures *can* exist within one state. Catalunya is a prime example of this. It's a cultural community that is respected by the 'hosting' state and it enjoys political rights and has a degree of self-government.

For this to happen successfully, the parameters of the state's national identity have to be adjusted accordingly, or there will be a conflict of ideas. This means that the criteria of *who* constitutes the 'official' nation has to adapt. The example of the multicultural policy in Canada demonstrates this. There, the idea of *who* is Canadian was changed to include cultural minorities that were the result

of immigration. It is obvious that conservative nationalism does not allow this. It is an ideology based on reverence for a fixed, traditional, system of values and institutions, and so does not view it possible for national identity to change shape.

Constant immigration is fact today. The European Union member countries have even removed the limiting effects of their borders, allowing goods, cash and people to flow between countries. It is thus obvious that a country, in today's world, that tries to maintain control of the 'official' idea of the nation in the style of conservative nationalism faces challenges, and social conflicts will arise. A more productive measure would probably be to give into these changes, and allow the definition of the nation to form as the nation itself changes form. A national identity that is meant to *lead* rather than to *follow* may even be seen to be fighting an impossible fight. The fact that a state's homogenizing efforts, for example in Spain, have not been successful in totally monopolizing national identity supports this. Sub-state identities that have long been dormant, and were perhaps thought to have been repressed, may even resurface at a later time, like today, when the foundation of the state shakes. In sum, it is the hitherto exclusive right of the state to dictate the *correct* or *true* national identity that must be relaxed, in order to have a multicultural, prosperous country.

One could say, therefore, that national identity can continue to serve as that cultural identity that people need, if it adapts and remains flexible to the open dialogue that its constituents are having about it. But this will probably not happen all too easily, because hold strongly on to those constructs that provide them with their identity. Furthermore, national identity has been firmly entrenched in society, especially perhaps in those places where the homogenizing efforts were the most stringent and extensive, like in France. There have indeed been conflicts over culture and national identity in France, with large groups of people emigrating from the former French colonies.

Parting from these points, a certain new type of political system can be envisioned. This system would give different cultures (different nations) their respect and their place in it. Citizenship would be seen as the membership of political community and not directly linked with the person cultural background. The gap between the nation and the state would be larger then we know today. The state would take on a more *technical* role, and not serve so much as the cultural beacon as it has in the past. In this system, the *national identity* as we

know it today would have a different meaning. It would not necessarily have a connection with the country an individual originates from, but simply be an indication of their cultural origins. This opens up the possibility that a person's culture can be self-selected.

The European Union presents an interesting example of current developments that could prove very meaningful for identity issues, especially sub-state or regional identities. The institutions of the Union are taking over some of the functions that were traditionally exclusively under the state. The currency is a good example. At the same time, there are efforts being made to further the well-being of the regions of Europe, with policies in place that transfer funds from the richer regions to the poorer ones. The rule of *subsidiarity* is also a principle in the EU, which dictates that any matter is best handled, and should be handled at the lowest possible administrative level. As partly demonstrated by the example of Catalunya, the regions now have an increased opportunity within the framework of the EU, which they didn't previously enjoy under the individual states.

Globalization also brings possibilities for identity formation. The emergence of a global, supranational, supraterritorial, dimension presents – and perhaps for the first time in history – the possibility of people joining together in a world community. This has been a conceptual idea, but can now be experienced to a much larger extent, as people communicate simultaneously anywhere on the globe and travel at great speeds from one corner of the planet to the next. People can thus realistically see themselves as global participants, and invent a suitable identity for themselves accordingly. This does not necessarily need to have a negative impact on the local culture, as the global identity possesses not many of the 'deep' cultural elements that enable the person to have roots. The global identity could just present an added identity, and exist alongside local identity. (This could be categorized as hybridization, as the individual would form his personal identity out of these two.) The exception would be when globalization presents problems in the form of identity confusion. In those cases the individuals do not successfully form an identity out of the different ones, but instead the result is a cultural disorientation.

This can then lead people to select to become members of a society that provides them with a strong tradition and a stable worldview. Some of these societies will be radical religious groups. Some people will also resort to fortifying

themselves in their good, old national traditions, albeit perhaps exaggerated and extreme.

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