

LUC BOEVA

Rien de plus international

**Towards a comparative and transnational historiography of
national movements**

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historiography of national movements*

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CONTENTS

Introduction	9
The Theoretical Framework	11
Ethnosymbolism	14
Other Explanatory Models	16
The Historical Framework	23
Conditions	26
Activities	33
The Research Environment	39
Methodology	41
Research Tool	43
References	49

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism has been an important factor of European history since the end of the 18th century. Today nationalism remains a complex phenomenon that has a major influence on cultural and political developments.

The participants in the field of nationalism, gathered into national movements, played a role in both state formation and state fragmentation through the processes of nation building and national identification. In this, the national movements in Europe demonstrate common characteristics. This fact is however insufficiently reflected in the academic research of the subject – a transnational and/or comparative approach is rarely adopted in the historiography of the national movements. Moreover, this research is hindered by the condition of the sources and by the unsatisfactory collection and accessibility of information pertaining to these national movements. Consequently, the prerequisite empirical basis for developing theories on nationalism is frequently lacking.

It is for this reason that the ADVN created the NISE project (*National movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe*). NISE is a scientific, heuristic, historiographical and archival instrument for researching national movements in Europe. It satisfies, within one project, a variety of needs with regard to research and sources.

This publication outlines the thematic framework within which NISE is located and the research environment wherein the project is undertaken. This includes the theoretical explanatory models (with, as example, some references to their application in Belgium/Flanders), the examination of factors that have made national movements successful (both a series of objective – political, social and cultural – conditions as well as national mobilisation campaigns) and the historiographical methodology, together with the tools benefitting studies within both types of research.

The objective of the publication or, as the case may be, the project is to facilitate a comparative and transnational approach to the history of national movements. There is, after all, “*rien de plus international que la formation des identités nationales*” (Thiesse 1999, 11).



The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch participating in a debate during the NISE Scientific Council on 13 May 2009 in the ADVN. [BE ADVN VEV128]

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the 18th century much thought has been devoted to the origin and the role of the nation as a concept, including by such thinkers as Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Gottfried von Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte. During the 19th century it was primarily normative concerns that dominated historical analysis (such as in the works of Lord Acton, John Stuart Mill, Giuseppe Mazzini, Ernest Renan). While the analysis did become more searching as of the start of the 20th century, it continued to be influenced by historical circumstances (as demonstrated in the works of Karl Renner, Otto Bauer, Max Weber, Friedrich Meinecke). The interwar period meanwhile saw various competing ideologies placing their stamps upon the field (like Carlton Hayes, Hans Kohn), and it was only after the Second World War that a more scientific approach came into being, especially in the English-speaking world (the first to follow suit on the continent was Eugen Lemberg in the early 1960s), which included expanding on explanatory models (readers containing the most important theoretical texts are: Balakrishnan 1996; Eley & Suny 1996; Woolf 1996).

The theoretical examination of nationalism, nation and national movements assumed immense quantitative and qualitative proportions towards the end of the 20th century (recent overviews can be found in Smith 2008b; Delanty & Kumar 2006; Hroch 2005; Lawrence 2005; Özkirimli 2005; Spencer & Wollman 2005; Day & Thompson 2004; De Wever, De Wever, Lambert & Van Ginderachter 2004; Kovacs & Lom 2004; Wehler 2004; Spencer & Wollman 2002; Guibernau & Hutchinson 2001; Özkirimli 2000; Smith 1998; Hutchinson & Smith 1995 and others). Today there are also websites providing overviews of the topic (such as the Nationalism Project 2009 and H-Nationalism 2007). A summary of the state of matters can also be found in specific encyclopaedic works (cf. Smith 1973; Deutsch & Merritt 1970); an up to date bibliography is however being planned by ASEN together with the ADVN. There are a number of specialised academic journals, the leading of which is *Nations and Nationalism*. *National Identities* focuses on the cultural and political factors that give shape to national identity while *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* principally deals with the political aspects of nationalism and ethnicity. The activities of major institutes must also be followed, with the most prominent being the aforementioned London-based Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN), the Association for the Study of Nationalism (ASN) in New York; the Nationalism Studies Program of the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest in turn specialises in Central and Eastern European affairs. In the considerable historiography pertaining to the Flemish movement and Flemish nationalism much attention is also paid to the theories devel-

oped abroad – especially those in the English-speaking world – with regard to nationalism. Various overviews have been published by Flemish historians (Boeva 2007; De Wever 2003, 140-142; Van Velthoven 2003, 279-281; Witte 2001, 176-178; Wils 1998; Vos 1997; Wils 1993, resumed in Wils 1994, 431-449). Flemish historiography differs dramatically herein to the Walloon counterpart (Van Ginderachter 2005a, 83 et seq.). Beyond Belgium's borders there are, aside from historians (Hobsbawm and Hroch, for example) many political and historical sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists that study nationalism. Flanders counts, inter alia, the political scientist Geert Van Den Bossche (such as Van Den Bossche 2003; cf. also Detrez & Blommaert 1994, with principal contributions from non-historians).

Whether this is used in Belgium to “pursue scholarly thought, by historic standards, in a relatively systematic manner” (Witte 2003, 97), or on the contrary, whether Belgian academics as yet insufficiently integrate the results of international research into their work (De Meester & Van Ginderachter 2000, 117, in a review by Deprez & Vos 1998 en Deprez & Vos 1999) is a matter of opinion. What is certain is that, in the focus on theorising, little or no original theoretical research into nationalism is undertaken.

Of the various explanatory models, ethnosymbolism is currently the flavour of the day. Ethnosymbolism followed on from the pioneering work of the anthropologist Fredrik Barth into the creation of ethnic groups through boundary mechanisms, for which symbols, myths and forms of communication acted to an equal extent as delimitations of the boundaries (Barth 1970). An important representative of ethnosymbolism is the British sociologist Anthony D. Smith, Professor of Ethnicity and Nationalism at the London School of Economics (LSE) and president of ASEN. In a recent publication he tackles the ‘genealogy’ of a nation, examining how far back one can trace the nation model and whether one can speak solely of ethnic groups (ethnic communities) in the pre-modern era (Smith 2004). For that matter, only the introduction (pp. 1-30: *Introduction: Paradigms of Nationalism*) was new, and was followed by eight essays previously published by Smith (between 1981 and 1997). The book does however form an excellent introduction to ethnosymbolism and to the other explanatory models Smith endeavours to refute, and is consequently employed here to start off with a brief outline of the theoretical framework.

The Declaration of Arbroath 1320



Poster “The Declaration of Arbroath”. Scottish independence was confirmed in the 1320 letter addressed by Scottish noblemen to the pope. The document constitutes an element in the debate concerning the existence of pre-modern nations. [BE ADVN VAFB496]

Ethnosymbolism

Anthony D. Smith posits, together with other ethnosymbolists like John Hutchinson, that there is a difference between ethnicity and nationhood, but that at the same time pre-modern nations can exist from both a historical and sociological perspective (inter alia, Grosby & Leoussi 2007; Guibernau & Hutchinson 2004; Smith 2001). For this purpose one must seek out broader ideal types for the concept of 'nation', ones not embedded in a specific cultural or historical environment. A nation is an amalgamation of the modern and the old and it contains various cultural, social and political elements. There are both differences and commonalities between ethnicity and nationhood.

Ethnosymbolists posit that national identity and nations should be considered as specialised developments of ethnicity and ethnic groups. When compared to the ethnic group, the nation has a much further developed public culture and a historical homeland, as well as common rights and obligations. Smith defines the nation, using the listed characteristics, as: *"a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories and symbols, have a distinctive public culture, are attached to a historic homeland and observe shared laws and customs"* (Smith 2004, 17; see also Kohn 1944). For the ethnosymbolists, a theory on nations and nationalism must assume that ethnicity is at the heart of the creation and continued existence of nations. On the one hand nations develop the characteristics of their ethnic core – which determines their 'age' – while on the other hand they go further through territorialisation, the dissemination of public culture and standards of law (albeit that the only difference therein between a nation and an ethnic group once again seems to be the presence of a state or any other form of government).

The ethnosymbolists distinguish between three types of relationships between an ethnic past and national present. Firstly, ethnicity and nation are considered to be recurring forms existing throughout history of collective cultural identities and of the organisation of a community – a model or template, in other words. Next, in some cases there exists a historical continuity of elements from the pre-modern core ethnicities in modern nations, or even a continuous nation from the Middle Ages onwards. Finally, there is the rediscovery and taking possession of the ethnic history of the community, mostly by intellectuals that select (or sometimes invent) an ethnic core or, as the case may be, symbols from the past. Rather than focussing on the presumed manipulation by an elite, as is generally the case, ethnosymbolists see an attempt at authentication herein and they endeavour to separate the new national categories and interpretations from those ethnic myths, symbols and values that already existed.

For the ethnosymbolist, the role of nationalism in the process of nation-formation is not that it 'invented' the nation, as a vehicle for an elite. Nationalism came into being during the process of secularisation, during which the religious traditions were transformed into ethnic characteristics (being chosen, on a mission, holy ground, sacrifices and fate). That process of secularisation reinforced and politicised the ethnic links, as a result of which the process of nation-forming was accelerated. Nationalists selected and codified the ethnic motives (myths, values, traditions, symbols, rituals, memories). Nationalism can also be defined as an ideological movement that endeavours to achieve and retain autonomy, unity and identity for a people, some of the members of which think that it is either a real or a potential nation. Thus it is more than just a collective feeling or discourse – it combines an ideology with a political movement.

In summary, while ethnosymbolists may regard nations as constructions, they are still more than a purely functional response to the requirements of modernity. According to Smith et al. ethnic groups already had an ancestral homeland, a collective name, origin myths and a (presumed) common history and culture, on top of feelings of solidarity (primarily amongst the elite). Moreover, nations have a clearly demarcated territory, a public culture, an economic unity and legal rights and obligations for everybody. It is true that many nations are modern, but at the same time there is a close connection between some nations and pre-modern ethnic groups. The distinction between ethnicity and nationhood, which is fundamental to ethnosymbolism, is not exempt from criticism. The Oxford medievalist Rees Davies postulates that collective identities also existed in the Middle Ages that can be called nations (and in some cases even nation-states) and for which one need not apply a different word (ethnic group). National identity is, after all, multidimensional and is not only determined by political and civil characteristics, but also by the ethnic, cultural and genealogical mythism. He advocates due regard for that which remains constant amongst the changes to terminology and the social and political forms (Davies 2004). That constant of concepts (i.e. the nation) that Davies asks to be heeded is in turn interpreted differently by the Dutch cultural historian, Joep Leerssen. He defines the linguistic struggle the county of Dalhem waged against the central Brabant government between the 14th and the 16th century as 'vertical' – in other words, a socio-political struggle between the central ruler (at the top) and local particularism (at the bottom). On the other hand, Leerssen labels the linguistic conflict in the Voeren region during the 20th century as 'horizontal', as the geo-cultural aspect determined the border between cultures. The first type of conflict, that of the local populace versus central rulers, is named "*heteronomism*" by the author – it is still alive today 'under' the second type ("*autonomism*"), in the

form of federalism. The example demonstrates, he believes, that any investigation of nationalism – the ideological current – must undoubtedly be contextualised within its time, given that what may appear to be a similar struggle on the face of it can, in different ages, have a very different sparking point and result (Leerssen 2004; see further, for example, Marx 2003; Stein 2002; Berding 1994).

Other explanatory models

In his published work, Smith's primary argument is with the schools of thought that have been the most popular in recent decades, including those prevalent amongst historians (Smith 1996): *constructivism* and *modernism*. According to these models, which had grown out of a sociological approach, nations were artificially 'constructed' by political elites to create 'imagined communities'. The latter phrase found general acceptance through the book by the historian Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1983: the 'imagined communities' in the book, which for the matter is largely devoted to objective, historical circumstances, were however misunderstood: the Marxist author-historian posited that a nation can only exist if the members can conceive of themselves belonging to a community in which they do not know most of the members, and thus not that one can 'invent' a nation at will).

The constructivists and modernists view nations as nothing more than cultural concoctions with 'invented traditions', the product of the nationalist ideology (for more on 'invented traditions', see Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). The modernist notion of the nation, with the British sociologist Ernest Gellner as one of its greatest advocates, considers the nation to be a fully modern concept, in other words a recent (starting with the French and American revolutions), new and consequently not rooted in history, and to be the product of modernisation, in other words embedded in the unique circumstances of the modern industrial society that is characterised by mobility, equality, secularisation and individualism (Gellner 1983: cf. the second edition in 2006, which contains an additional critical perspective by John Breuilly; see also: Gellner 1997). Nations and nationalism originated at the time of the transition from traditional *Gemeinschaft* to modern *Gesellschaft*. The concept 'nation' is in the first instance a political one to the modernist – the nation is territorial (and has legitimised and permanent borders), has common judicial-political rights and obligations (for all citizens), is culturally homogenous (with a uniform public culture), is sovereign, international (as a part of an international system of nation-states) and nationalistic (born out of and legitimised by nationalism). The nation is thus a component of the ideological construction of the nation-state that,

through nation-forming politics (alongside culture, education, media, religion, etc.), permeates the population and becomes a societal given. From the start of the 1980s, when the modernist model was at its zenith (for example, Breuilly 1993), there was a greater emphasis on the role of the state (with James Mayall, Michael Mann and Eric Hobsbawm later also following suite).

However, the constructivist-modernist explanation of the concept of 'nation' is not satisfactory for either Smith or Hroch. In practice it would mean that only a state can 'make' a nation. The nation thereby in reality becomes the product of a well-determined, Western, civil and territorial version of the nationalist ideology (state nationalism), which renders the application of the concept to nations beyond Europe's borders impossible and precludes all discussion on pre-modern nations. It is also problematic to explain the passions that can be evoked by nationalism through this paradigm.

Constructivism also caught on in Flanders (examples include De Meester 1997 and Detrez & Blommaert 1994, 8-29; one application is Reynebeau 1995, who provides an explanation of constructivism on pp. 19-51). At a later stage, however, warning bells were sounded with regard to instrumentalism and reductionism as well as reducing complex social phenomena to a clash of interests (Defoort 1996). The growth of constructivism into an absolute sometimes led to a new sense of unquestionably being right, wherein new national identifications were reduced to an ideology that the elites were solely persuaded of, a pure narrative discourse lacking in any social reality (Van Velthoven 2003, 280).

The constructivist theory was a response to *primordialism* or, as the case may be, *essentialism*. According to this notion, nations are 'natural' and a 'given' – they are not only elementary forms of human relationships, but are also an intrinsic component of human nature. Nations are 'natural', are made up of essences and contain organic characteristics that are unique to every group of people (the 'national spirit' or 'national character'). Nationalism is the collective expression of the belief in the primordial characteristics. And so, primordialists consider nations to be neither old nor modern – they are outside of the historical chronology as they are the same as humanity. Primordialism consequently sidesteps the debate on the age of the nation – the more it is emphasised biologically, by individuals such as the sociologist and anthropologist born of Belgian parents in the Belgian Congo, Pierre Van den Berghe, the more the historical 'superstructure' is ignored and thus also the historical and sociological distinction between ethnicity and nationhood (cf. Van den Berghe 1981, for example; another well-known anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, placed a greater emphasis on the cultural givens: for example, Geertz 1973).

After World War Two primordialism became scientifically discredited and self-con-

sciousness, or self-determination, came to be considered as paramount to nation-forming – the nation exists as a large group of people who acknowledge that they are a part of this group and it is thus primarily characterised by a feeling of affinity. From the point of view of *subjectivism*, the desire to be a part of a nation is the strongest contributing force to the formation of a nation. A nation exists as soon as people (want to) believe or consent that they belong to the nation (the French philosopher Ernest Renan labelled it a “*plébiscite de tous les jours*”). Postmodern de-constructivism, which considers a nation to be merely a lingual construct void of any reality, took subjectivism to (and over) the limit.

The Prague-born political scientist Karl W. Deutsch linked self-determination to an objective circumstance, but was ahead of his time. It was only once Gellner had formulated his thesis in more powerful terms that it found more widespread acceptance. A complementary social communication had to exist, as a cornerstone for the national consciousness of a community (Deutsch 1953). Mutual communication between the members of the nation as well as their shared fate linked them to each other to a greater extent than to members of another nation. Smith however asserts that there is a danger in the post-war subjective theory concerning self-determination that one speaks of a nation if somebody can convince others that they constitute a nation.

An intermediate explanatory model is *perennialism* (championed by the likes of Joshua Fishman and Donald Horowitz), in which nations are historical and social realities, but are not natural givens. The nation is a realised version of ethnic communities that have existed throughout history. So nations are not connected to a specific historical period, but can occur in any period and on every continent. There are various versions of perennialism. Recurrent perennialism sees nations not so much as a continuous phenomenon, but there is no distinction between nations today and those in history. Modern nations have however been formed by nationalism, as they all share the properties of ‘ethnicity’ (that is to say, the emotions, attitudes and perceptions, together with the myths, symbols and codes), that determine the nation-boundary of the ethnic group (such as Armstrong 1982). Another version is continuous perennialism, which emphasises the connection of some modern nations with their medieval roots. This theory also holds that the cultural factors, such as religion, language, myths, customs, art and historical memory make the connection, rather than political, social or economic factors. The theologian Adrian Hastings, for example, believes that the nation is of a European and Christian source – the world is made up of ethnic groups who share a language and who become nations thanks to the introduction of written versions of the national language, the core of which is the Bible. Nationalism in turn is a defence mechanism for nations (in other words, nations existed before nationalism)

(Hastings 1997). However, this approach is confronted by the fact that the nation concept is far too complex to be explained by one factor alone, while pre-modern nations also existed outside of the Christian sphere. Nevertheless, the nationalist ideology was most certainly conceived in Western Europe and it was strongly influenced by Judaeo-Christian religious convictions. The biblical Israelite nations did much duty as an example in the rise of national identities out of the European empires and in the later nationalist ideologies. Smith even went so far as to posit in a recent publication that the cultural heritage of prehistoric Middle Eastern civilisations and those in the Mediterranean in antiquity had a decisive influence upon the evolution of the nation concept. That secular notion cannot be understood, he says, without due regard for the Judaeo-Christian origin (Smith 2008a). The elites of the empires strove for social cohesion through stimulating ethnic-national consciousness. Smith sees three interwoven elements that have acted as the cultural sources for the concept of nation to this day: the hierarchical forms of the social organisation of prehistoric empires, the Jewish idea of a (religious) covenant (between the members of the community and with God) – a concept continued by the Christian churches, particularly the Protestant ones, who, says Smith, sounded the start of nationalism (where before that national ‘consciousness’ or ‘feeling’ were the sole issues) – and the Greco-Roman concept of the *polis* or republic, which was used to develop forms of nationalism, especially after the French Revolution, based on citizenship and equality. Has Smith managed to take the nation back to prehistoric times through his thesis?

For Smith the definitions of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘nation’ that are missing in perennialism are symptomatic of the fact that the distinction between the two is neglected (see, for example, a ‘neo-perennialist’ such as Colette Beaune, who discerns a nation in medieval France: Beaune 1991). The assertion that cultural values change over the centuries but the symbolic borders they guard over do not is likewise illogical. Is it not exactly those clusters that create the distinction with other groups and do they not create exactly those border symbols? What perennialism does in reality is that it equates ethnic groups with the concept of nation, albeit that the historical context differs.

In summary ethnosymbolism, as opposed to modernism, considers the connection between nations and ethnic groups (or ethnic communities) to be central, but, contrary to primordialists and perennialists, it does not equate ethnicity to being a part of a nation. Nationalism provides a blueprint to ethnic groups for the transition from ethnic group to nation, which, says Smith, escapes perennialists and primordialists but is in turn greatly exaggerated by modernists, as the latter group wishes to see nationalism as the source for all modern nations.

Furthermore, a degree of fragmentation has recently become visible in the academic world (Smith 2008b). As a result “*bietet sich die Problematik der Nation und des Nationalismus dem Wissenschaftler als höchst unübersichtliches Gelände dar, in dem er sich nur schwer zu orientieren vermag, zumal in terminologischer Hinsicht nur ein Minimalkonsens erreicht wurde*” (Hroch 2005, 11).

While it is true that most authors continue to work within a causal-historical research framework, such as the ethnosymbolists (Hutchinson 2005, for example), the *rational choice* approach, which is applied to individual members of the national movements, is now also influential (for example, Laitin 2007; Hechter 2000).

But there is also the influence of the *postmodern turn*, which rejects the ‘grand narratives’, historical causality and macro-analytical approaches, and which counters essentialism and naturalism with deconstructionism through, for example, the study of the ‘everyday’ or ‘banal nationalism’, or ‘*Alltägliche Patriotismus*’. Banal nationalism is nationalism in nation-states that is ingrained to such a degree in state structures and the public discourse (and through symbols like flags) that it is hardly perceived as such. What it does is to ensure that nation-states are assumed



Cover of *Försvenskningen av Sverige: det nationellas förvandlingar*, by B. Ehn, J. Frykman & O. Löfgren, Stockholm, 1993. This examination of the “Swedenisation of Sweden” discusses, inter alia, how national identity is continuously formed by ‘banal’ nationalism. [BE ADVN VB11072]

to be self-evident (Billig 1995). In this the preferences, the feelings and the perceptions amongst the people are studied.

Moreover, the same questions are posed from another point of approach, involving the role of the elite (*top down*) and the masses (*the view from below*) in nation-formation. Indeed, much research is still based upon a limited understanding of the constructivist paradigm, where national identity is considered a concept belonging to the middle and upper classes, who transfer that to the masses through a series of 'nationalising' media. The intention of the '*from below*' research ('worm's-eye view') is to uncover the extent of national consciousness amongst the masses (Van Ginderachter 2005a, 86-88; a recent example is Van Ginderachter 2005b; in 2008 an international conference was hosted in Ghent on "*National identification from below*": Boeva 2008).

The influence of other academic disciplines is also tangible. Smith lists gender studies (nationalism as, amongst other things, a masculine endeavour, linked to concepts such as the 'motherland' and 'a nation's honour' as the equivalent of feminine 'chastity': for example, Yuval-Davis 1997) and ethics (involving, for example, the civic nationalism/*ius soli* – ethnic nationalism/*ius sanguinis* dichotomy (Brubaker 1992, for example) and liberal and multicultural nationalism (such as Kymlicka 1997). A topic much-dealt with today is the relationship of nationalism to globalisation. After all, the traditional nation-state is not only being corroded from the inside by regional, national and ethnic pressures, but also by supranational and international institutes and trends. While globalisation offers the state new (technical) opportunities for furthering the cultural homogeneity of the population, it also opens the door to movements aiming to break up national monopolies on culture, which shall see the post-traditional nation-state transformed by means of a pluralistic redefinition of the national identity (see, for example, Guibernau 2007; Guibernau 1999).

Meanwhile a number of research questions continue to dominate the debate around the concepts of nation and nationalism. Does the nation consist of objective or subjective elements (the relationship between culture and politics in nationalism)? Is it a 'given' or a 'construct' and is a national movement an issue of an elite or is it a mass affair (the role of passion or calculation in national movements)? Are nations (pre-)modern? Do national movements have a positive or destructive effect (Smith 2008b; Van Ginderachter 2004)?

In considering these questions it is important to remember the warning from the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, who establishes a lack of terminological clarity in the development of theories (Hroch 2005, 11-47). The term 'nationalism' is used with a great degree of inconsistency and is often value-loaded. In this manner nationalism is presented as a 'Janus image' – both building the state, creating a sense

of community and liberating as well as expansionary and intolerant (for example, Nairn 1997). Hans Kohn drew a dichotomous distinction between Western/progressive and Eastern/reactionary types of nationalism (Kohn 1955). While he qualified that perspective later, it is nevertheless still applied by others (such as Greenfeld 1992). Another known typology of nationalism is Theodor Schieder's diachronic model, where the concept evolves from a progressive one (in the 19th century) to a destructive one (in the 20th century) (Schieder 1991). Hroch consequently believes that 'nationalism' as a notion is worthless for the development of scientific theories. It has become, particularly in the English-speaking world, a catchall word, which rather reflects personal feelings and is used across all eras and for all types of societies. The term hereby bears purely negative connotations for some (like Gellner and Hobsbawm; Flemish examples include Detrez & Blommaert 1994; see also: Dierickx 2002) and the phrases 'national feeling' and (especially) 'patriotism' were used for the positive expressions of national consciousness (*in-group* focussed as opposed to *out-group* focussed) (for terminology, cf. Spira 1999-2004).

It is not yet evident whether the terminology must indeed be re-examined, or whether it may even be time for a new paradigm (arising, maybe, from the '*from below*' research). However, the need for improved substantiation of the theoretical debate through empirical research is increasing. It consequently also becomes important to examine the study of events, i.e. the historical framework.

THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

In 2005 a book by Miroslav Hroch written in Czech was published in German, in which the author comparatively gauges the reasons behind the success of (*nation to state*) national movements (Hroch 2005; see also: Hroch 2004). He covered both the objective circumstances under which nation-formation can occur as well as the targeted actions that lead to the formation of the nation. The book was actually part three of an informal trilogy, with the author examining who the patriots are in the first part (Hroch 1968; see also: Hroch 1985 (2000)), while the second part dealt with what the objectives are (Hroch 2000). In the 2005 book, Hroch seeks a consensus in the research with respect to the genesis of the (European) nations during the ‘long’ 19th century. Given that this book is also a source for the research results achieved to date, we will use it here as a guideline for a brief overview of the study of the historical framework.

As stated previously, Miroslav Hroch’s allegiances lie with the ethnosymbolic explanatory model. He assumes that pre-modern collective, ‘ethnic’ identities existed, which were transformed by patriotism from the 18th century onwards into national identities, with “[...] *the consciousness of a common history [...], and a consensus on the political culture and the borders of the homeland*”. From his comparative investigation of national movements in Europe, Hroch infers that the modern nations are not a product of nationalism but that they were formed by a combination of, on the one hand, objective conditions and, on the other, by mobilising national activities. National identity could not be invented separately from the historical, political, social and cultural conditions – viz. the cultural relations, common experiences and historical ones rooted in the past as well as certain political attitudes or, as the case may be, institutionalised relations. Belonging to a nation was rather the result of individual human decisions within concrete historical circumstances – nation-formation is inconceivable without the positive attitude towards national identity. Nationalism in those terms was an expression (and consequently not the ‘prime mover’) of the process of national conceptualisation, which entailed the dissemination and the acceptance of national identity through a new type of community – the nation. Ernst Gellner’s notion of one-dimensional nationalists who are unconsciously subjected to a nationalism akin to a virus, as formulated by Hroch, is however still found amongst not a few authors (overviews of the history of nationalism and national movements include Weichlein 2006; Zimmer 2003; Hermet 1996; Pearson 1994; Bosch & Wessels 1992; Wessels & Bosch 1992; Hobsbawm 1990).

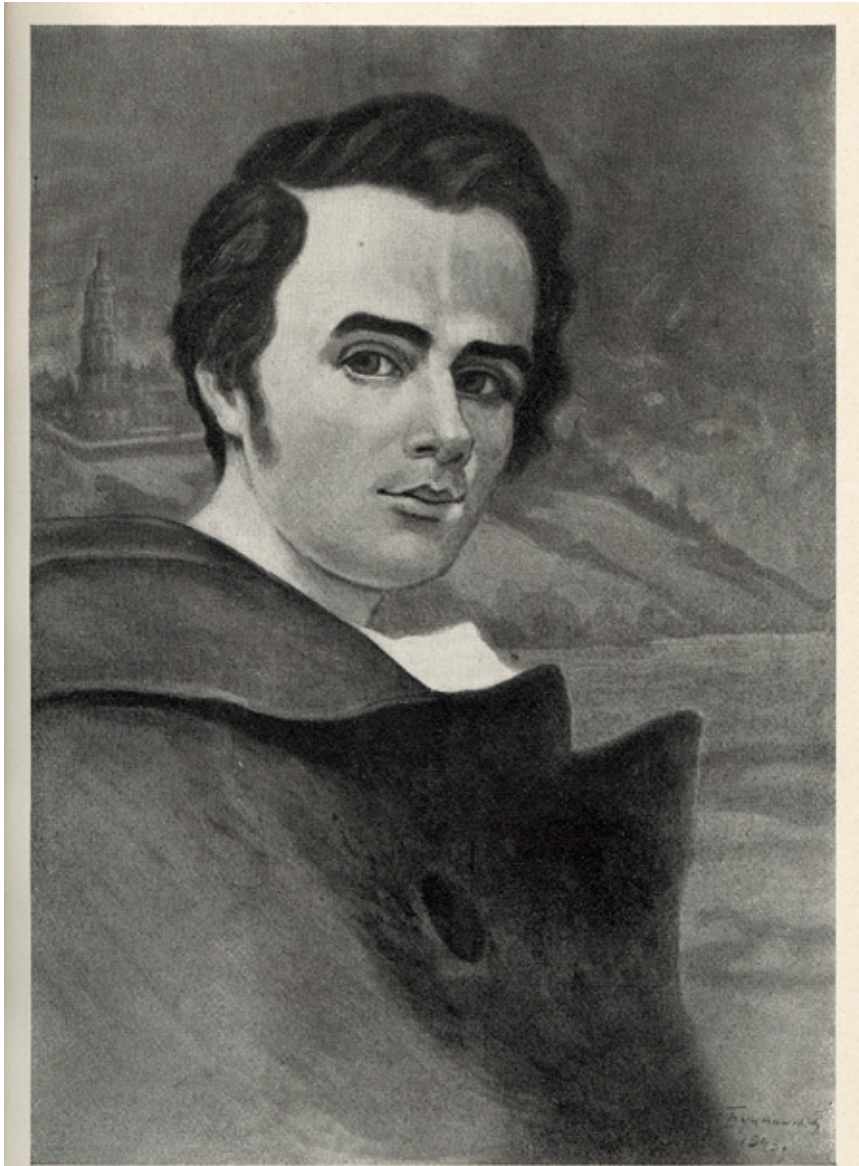
Below we will examine both the conditions and the activities.

It must first be stated that, in order to structure his description of the ‘national action’, Hroch introduced a typological distinction between ‘state-nations’ and ‘national movements’. While this is completely correct, it also seems to carry some ‘danger’ from a terminological perspective – the former, also repeatedly rejected by Hroch, as an illusory distinction between ‘ethnic’ and ‘civil’ nations, could once again creep in through the back door. Nevertheless, the state-nations also bring about ‘national movements’ and moreover they do this indirectly, by way of banal nationalism.

From the end of the 19th century, state nationalism became an all-encompassing project of the elite in order to resist the colonising, imperialistic transnationalism of competing states by means of the *top-down* construction of a strong political unit (Hedetoft 2004). Hedetoft posits that colonialism and imperialism were the cause of the rivalry between states that led to World War One, and not nationalism. The latter did however create the circumstances therefore and provided ideological justification. At that time state nationalism was a legitimate trend, with the national movements a *pars pro toto* for the national state (order). Things were very different in the post World War Two era, when nationalism, associated with the rivalries of the war, suffered legitimacy issues and was increasingly considered to be dated. The author believes that national movements have now even entered the museological phase. Globalisation had given the elite an increasing number of international and transnational reference points, bringing about cultural relativism and intercultural collaboration. However, given the fact that the elite’s basis was and is exclusively a national one, it utilises the ‘old’ national discourse when dealing with domestic reactions (here with regard to striving for cultural preservation) to the new challenges (immigration, religious terrorism, economic globalisation). That is why, as of the turn of the last century, we have encountered nation-states sans nationalism – i.e. rhetorically uncoupled from the concept of nationalism, but in reality still utilising national stereotypes and heterotypes in order to legitimise what is in reality a rigorous nationalist policy. On the other hand, those who still

Photo on the adjoining page:

Photo of a portrait painting of the Ukrainian poet and artist Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) (from O. Martovych, *Ukrainian Liberation Movement in Modern Times*, s.d., Edinburgh, p. 33). Shevchenko lay the foundations for modern Ukrainian literature and is even considered to be the initiator of present-day Ukrainian. His work contributed dramatically to the formation of a Ukrainian national identity and he is still honoured for this to this day. [BE ADVN VB11628]



Taras Shevchenko (1814 - 1861) The greatest poet of Ukraine

call themselves ‘nationalists’ are labelled as extremists and outdated (on the relationship to globalisation, see also: Calhoun 2007). The thesis moreover offers an interesting possible explanation for the aversion a part of the Flemish elite has to the concept of Flemish identity.

Conditions

In this section we will go through the objective conditions together with Hroch for the start and success of modern national movements in nation-formation. These are successively: historical consciousness, ethnic roots and the modernisation of society.

Those conditions fit into the three-phase model of the development of national movements designed by Hroch: Phase A involved intellectual interest in the culture (language, folklore, history), Phase B considers the agitation of a small group that wish to disseminate the modern national consciousness and Phase C entails the breakthrough of a mass national movement.

As the old identities fragmented at the conclusion of the ancien regime in the 18th century, the intellectual elite relied on the *past* in their search for a new identity. This was not an arbitrary process; it was based on the ‘experience’ of the past and the legacy. Hroch considers the opinion that history is solely ‘used’ in nation-formation to be an incorrect one – the members of the nation in formation considered the past to be not only true as a collective memory, but also in the form of institutional and objective (i.e. existing independently of their own desires and proposals) relics. Nation-formation in state-nations occurred through the ‘takeover’ of the already established state by the civil society in the making – the state culture became the national culture. What is then also symptomatic for countries such as France or the United Kingdom is that today ‘state’ is still frequently synonymous with ‘nation’. In multiethnic states the aspiring nations referred to political relics handed down from a previous form of statehood, such as borders, political centres, buildings, political and legal institutes, the religious organisation or the name of the country. According to Hroch, the cities and monuments took on that role in Flanders, just as they did in regions such as Catalonia. On the other hand there were medieval political entities that never became objects of national identification at a later stage (such as Lorraine or Aragon), and some nations in the making had no political past they could look back on (like the Finns and the Slovaks). Aside from the political institutes, the legacy of the past also consisted of spiritu-

al values and cultural elements. These were the Judaeo-Christian traditions of the 'promised land' and the 'chosen people', updated by the Reformation. Then there were also the prototypes of national identity that were adopted from the past, where the '*communis patria*' that was already mentioned in the chronicles in the 13th century was especially important. Once the homeland was no longer the personal property of the Medieval ruler, but it instead implied a permanent link between the bearers of political power and the state, an Enlightened patriotism came into being. The elite wanted to be responsible for the homeland, whereby they considered themselves obliged to learn the culture of the people (the 'national customs'). Another distinction from the old patriotism of the baroque era that was typical for state-nations was the interest in the Enlightenment concepts of rationalism, secularisation and equality, as opposed to absolutism. Hroch however warns against confusing patriotism with the 19th century national idea. The elitist patriots did not identify themselves with the people, nor did they advocate equality for all citizens (Dann, Hroch & Koll 2004; Wils 2004; Koll 2003; Van Den Bossche 2001).

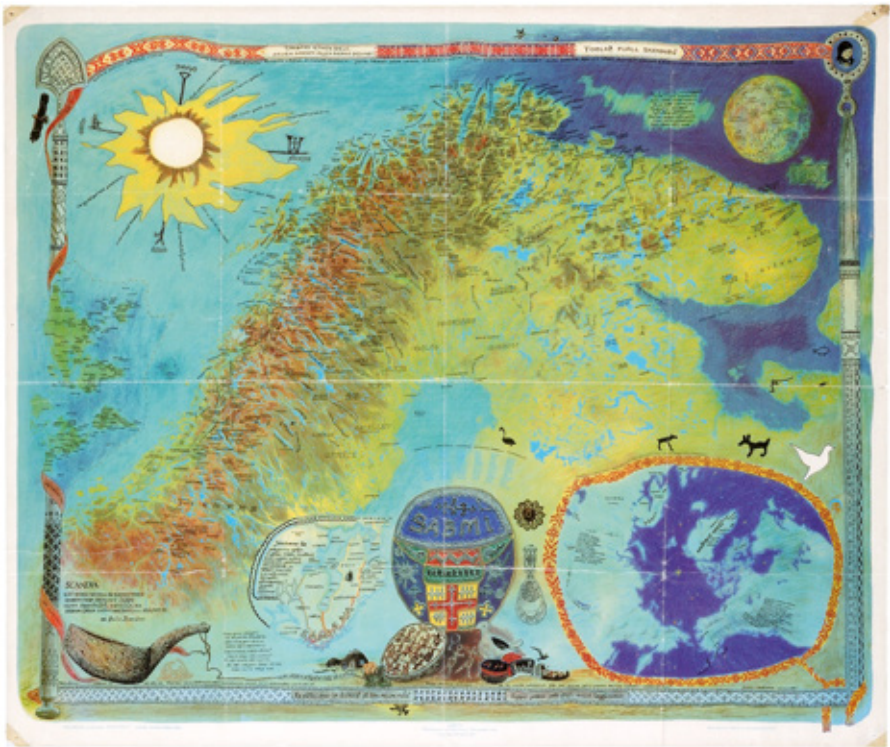
A second objective condition for the successful start of national movements is connected to the *ethnic* (in this case the *linguistic*) *roots*. The homogenisation of the language used in the early modern state, as a component of the absolute unification of all components of the social life, was important to the later occurrence or absence of nation-formation. Moreover, the 'printed word' in the absolutist state was rather an instrument to homogenise the subjects to the old, traditional values, while in the later revolutionary states the language had a higher symbolic value and served to create a 'new person'. At the onset of national movements, there were different forms of diglossia (languages with a higher or lower status; here Hroch follows the model created by the sociolinguist Joshua Fishman).

During the nation-formation phase, starting in the early 19th century, the ethnic groups distinguished themselves according to the developmental stage in which the 'national' language was. Aside from the languages that had been state languages since the Middle Ages (like English) or that had later developed to become the state language (like Swedish), Hroch also distinguishes between two types amongst the non-dominant ethnic groups. The one followed on from an older, weakened written tradition (such as Hungarian), while the other could not do so because the tradition had been severed or had never existed (such as Estonian). Hroch reports three cases where the national champions consequently appropriated a 'foreign' established 'printed language' with a long tradition – Danish by the Norwegians, English by the Irish and the Scots, and Dutch by the Flemings (Hroch 2005, 70; however, can the relationship between the 'Flemish' dialects and

(Northern) Dutch really be equated to those between Celtic Gaelic and Germanic English?). The ethnic groups also distinguish themselves by the degree of self-consciousness – Hroch here uses the typology introduced by A.D. Smith, differentiating between ethnic categories (where neighbouring groups distinguish themselves through objective differences in language and culture, without a clear affinity having developed, as in the case of the Frisians) and ethnic communities (who bear the characteristics of having their own name and a consciousness of the common descent, having a shared fate and elementary forms of solidarity, like the Flemings) and due observance of social stratification (according to the number of farmers and craftsmen, the lower middle class and the clergy). Towards the end of the 19th century, those ethnic communities had travelled different paths, with a few having become state-nations (the Bulgarians, for example), others having successfully undergone nation-formation (like the Hungarians) and yet others remaining at the level of ethnic communities (such as the Flemings). Hroch establishes that very small ethnic communities (*'relicts of people'*, with fewer than 500,000 members, such as the Friulians) could not lay claim to power, with the smallest successful national movement campaigning on behalf of at least one million members. So, since the Middle Ages ethnicity played an important role in the feeling of affinity. Language and dialect served as a means of communication in that and as a symbol of identity. The ethnic diversity in Europe, which has deep historical roots, was granted fixed contours in the 19th century and assumed the new national identities proffered by the national movements. Nevertheless, ethnic or linguistic differences are not enough when it comes to explaining why ethnic characteristics shift into a nation in one case and do not in another (cf. inter alia Fishman 1999; Barth 1990; Roosens 1989; general overviews include Sellier & Sellier 2006; Mackenzie 2005; Haarmann 2004; Sellier & Sellier 2002; Gonen 1993; for overviews of national minorities, see World s.d.; overviews of languages include Asher & Moseley 2007; Gordon 2005; Kloss 1974-1984. An example of available maps is *Völker in Europa*, published in 2003 by the Hamburgse Museum für Völkerkunde, the maps of the peoples and languages of Europe from the Catalanian organisation CIEMEN and the 1979 map by Manfred Straka, *Karte der Völker und Sprachen Europas unter besonderen Berücksichtigung der Volksgruppen*. An important, albeit engaged, periodical for following current developments is *Europa Ethnica*).

The **modernisation** of society constituted a third essential condition. During Phase A of the national movement, the 'scholars' had determined the characteristics of the future nation that distinguished it from others. At a given moment, the elite wishes to recruit the ethnic group for the new, national identity. Hroch outlines the context (not

linked to the nation) of the modernisation of society wherein the national movement could take the step to the following phase, Phase B, of national agitation by 'patriots'. Modernisation affected the state in a far-reaching manner and in various aspects. This included the expansion of the civil service, which was now loyal to the (national) state instead of to the monarch. Then there was also the increasing bu-reaucratistation, through which taxes and elections led to enhanced social communication. And then there was the introduction of military service, which led to



Map containing Sami names and symbolism, by the artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen (°1945), s.l., 1975. The number of Sami people remained far below the so-called 'critical mass' required to exercise power, according to Hroch. [BE ADVN VPLC11]

militiamen in multiethnic states becoming aware of being different and, later, to regarding the state as a foreign power.

This modernisation led, says the sociologist Michael Hechter, to a decrease in class consciousness to the benefit of cultural consciousness from the decade of the 1950s onwards. Where others explain that by the changes to the social basis of politics (the shift of the professional structure, the growth of prosperity etc.), Hechter looks to institutional causes. Where the 'indirect power' of the local/regional groups was responsible for the distribution of material and other goods before that time, the state – which generally comprises a cultural area – took that task over thanks to centralisation, which was itself the result of industrialisation and modernisation. 'Direct power' meant that not only the dominant status group was favoured, but the local cultural diversity also acquired political significance and cultural self-determination amongst minorities was stimulated. The minorities were mobilised against the central authorities by local elites, which sometimes culminated in nationalism (Hechter 2004).

But social emancipation also constituted a part of the modernisation process. Hroch sees a correlation between, for example, the emancipation of the peasants, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, and the national movement, although the causes of that are not unambiguous. Social emancipation was tied to the political emancipation, en route to a civil society with equal participation in and the politicisation of the social life – public opinion also developed from that. Hroch moreover posits that national movements were most certainly interested in political emancipation, given that they could best operate in free societies. On the other hand, however, that was no guarantee for success (Hroch uses Belgium as an *a contrario* example) and the fact that national movements' de facto campaigning was 'from the bottom up' did not automatically mean they were progressive (especially where the clergy played a role, as it did in Flanders). The uprising against the old order and for a new secularised legitimacy on the basis of the sovereign people and with freedom as the basic value was the only thing the national movements and the civil revolution clearly had in common (see also Calhoun 2004: for a critique of the thesis that the nation(-state) was a vehicle for the democratisation of society, cf. Spencer & Wollman 2006, for example).

Aside from the development of the state and politics or, as the case may be, social emancipation, a third component of modernisation – economic development – was coupled to the growth in social communication. However, the fact that Phase B commenced prior to industrialisation everywhere counters its presumed influence on nation-forming. Industrialisation was no condition for Phase C either. It is for this

reason that Hroch adopts the Gellnerian concept of economic development as an umbrella concept, i.e. the changes to the lifestyle and interhuman relationships in the proto-industrial (or trade capitalist) phase (manufacturing, home industries). He endeavours herein (in vain) to uncover an unambiguous link between the rapidity of this development and the speed of nation-forming. But the feeling of affinity amongst the pioneers of the national movement was not only engendered thanks to the expansion of the roads and postal links and the consequent increase in horizontal mobility that was coupled to the intensification of social communication. Hroch believes the rapid dissemination of information through the elite of teachers and pastors was a decisive factor for the spread of national consciousness amongst the masses. A public opinion was formed through newly-founded periodicals and associations that, for the very first time, turned against 'the others', which is to say it was no longer – on religious grounds – against a country or ruler, but against another people. Social communication functioned as an intermediary between the economic development and national agitation, but it was other factors that determined the rapidity with which new national identities were assumed in Europe.

The fourth aspect of modernisation – that of schooling and national education – played a particularly important role in the creation of a national identity. Primary education was important to identity formation in this, but (because one can only conceive of an abstract concept like 'nation' from around the age of 11), the secondary schools and universities were of primary importance when it came to national mobilisation. Hroch concludes that the road to a modern nation could not be traversed unless a network of schools existed that were intensively attended, while courses containing content of national relevance (especially history, geography and literature) were given in the upper strata of education. It did not matter whether the language of instruction was the state language or not, but what did matter was whether one could follow higher education without being linguistically or nationally assimilated.

Hroch summarises all the preceding elements, which determine the position of the national movement in respect of the modernisation process, in a (complex) typology for state-nations on the one hand and national movements on the other. When it comes to successful disintegrational movements like the Flemish movement (and especially West European movements like the Catalanian one), the agitation commences only in the civil society and in the (partly) liberal political system. The champions of this type of movement often encounter problems with regard to disseminating national consciousness amongst the members of the population group and with self-determination (be it regional or national). Discord already frequently arises amongst those champions during Phase B. There are issues such a political polarisa-

tion and the struggle to acquire a place in the political arena, while the masses – the labour movements in particular – are reluctant to trust, which means that the start of the (mass movement) Phase C is delayed and occasionally does not even occur.



Poster from the Catalan nationalist party, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC). [BE ADVN VAFB479]

Activities

For the national movements the activities were just as indispensable as the conditions when it came to successful nation-formation. This involves the subjective factor in nation forming, that of the active and executive people, something for which there is far less consensus in the research than there is when it comes to the conditions. That agitation was, however, not sufficient to lead to automatic success – the nation still had to be constructed and people still had to identify with it.

In order to arrive at the mass movement phase (Phase C) one requires various mobilising factors, for which Hroch, incidentally, wants to introduce the term nationalism. We will go through these systematically.

The first factor is the presence of '*nation-builders*' (agitators, 'social climbers'). Where that may have been the learned elite as a matter of course in state-nations – who led the transformation to a civil society – this depended on the composition of the patriotic intelligentsia when it came to non-dominant ethnic groups. When a complete social structure exists, i.e. one with dominant classes, the entrepreneurial and educational elites dominated. When this was not the case it was (generally) the farmers and those from the rural environment that took the initiative. There are intermediate examples between these two extremes, like the Flemish movement, which Hroch believes held a large urbanised contingent, as with those of the liberal professions and the clergy. Their social background was reflected in the content of the national consciousness, the national agenda and the stereotypes, as well as in the ability to motivate others in terms of the nation. The author points out that much quantitative, empirical research is still required in this facet.

A second fundamental factor for national mobilisation is, Hroch believes, the presence of a *conflict of interests* that can be translated into national terms – that is to say, the relationship between social, economic and political interests and national/ethnic differences. The national movement formed a transmission system that translated those conflicts of interest into national demands and individuated them through national terms. But this was not an automatic process, as specific objective circumstances also had to be present. Sufficiently intense social communication aside, this primarily entailed the combination of a social, economic or political crisis together with a crisis of identity. For state-nations this was fulfilled through external threats (of war) from other states or nations (see, for example, Berger & Smith 1999; Pratt 2003 wishes to examine the class-bound movements and the national movements within the same analytical framework).

Another means for building a nation is to cultivate myths and memories – the **historical construction**. History became an important aspect of nation-formation in the 19th century, because the historical truth came to stand at the head of the system of national values. This resulted in the nation becoming ever more important according to its (preferably political, but also cultural) age. National history legitimised national existence and was the source of the national value system, while the individual was consequently granted an ersatz for immortality. But national history could only be constructed if it corresponded with the general historic consciousness and relied on the notion of a common past amongst a population (Hroch refers to the failed construction of an Austrian national history in the 19th century) (such as Berger 2007; Norton 2007; Rudolph 2006; examples can be found in: Berger, Donovan & Passmore, 1999).

National history was popularised by national myth-making. The myths, with their historical core of military actions and significant turning points in the history of famous people (heroes, artists, scientists), constituted a part of the contemporary reality and thus primarily served a social purpose (where to 'expose' them through the application of historical criticism is a futile task). The same held true for traditions (*invented* and *genuine old traditions*), but these were not part of the 'memory', but rather a continuation of the national history (Flacke 1998; Schöpflin & Hosking 1997; see also Morelli 1996; Geary 2002 blames the bad influence of myths, through the fatal cocktail of language and race, for an intellectual wasteland and the horrors of the 20th century. On the other hand, Hroch posits that myths are only essential to a minority of a population, and they serve a secondary purpose for the majority).

The role played by another factor in nation-formation – the struggle for a national language and culture, or the **linguistic conflict** – has been disputed by researchers who define the nation along political lines (including Rogers Brubaker, Charles Tilly, Michael Mann, John Breuilly, Ernst Gellner). Hroch however has called for investigation into the social function of the linguistic relationships and the symbolic value of language in nation forming. The connection between the objective function of ethnicity and the linguistic relationships should thus be combined with the subjective self-consciousness – how do ethnic and linguistic connections work and how do those involved explain their own behaviour? The author portrays the national (high) culture as an instrument for nation-formation (the 'low' (common) culture in turn became evidence for the national movements of the 'perpetual' nature of the nation, while this was nothing more than a peripheral phenomenon amongst state-nations) and was not only a means of communication for the national movements but was also an identification code, an instrument of national mobilisation (in the

19th century there were further examples, outside of Flanders, where the language was “*gansch het volk*” – one with the people). Furthermore, the gap between high and low culture continued to exist in state-nations, while both varieties permeated each other in the national movements. This is due to the fact that there was generally no cultural elite in the process of nation-formation, as a result of which the social roots of the leaders and the composition of the created ‘public’ differed from that of the state-nations.

The language movement followed five consecutive phases, from the defence and celebration of the language (in Phase A this focuses on the scholarly elite, in Phase B on the decision-makers, the authorities and the members of the movement) and the attempts to codify the language (starting in Phase A, with language puritanism following in Phase B), in the wake of the social modernisation that presumed cultural standardisation, through the ‘intellectualisation’ of the national language (i.e. through the media, literature, theatre) and the introduction of the national language into schools (so that the written language can fulfil its social and communicative role through all citizens becoming familiar with it), to the demand for linguistic equal rights (a utopian ideal in state-nations, but dependent in multiethnic states on the extent to which autonomy was based on ethnic principles). This means that the linguistic conflict was not voluntarism on the part of romantic intellectuals, but was instead moored in the social transformation. It predominated for national movements in Phase B in communities with an incomplete social structure, as they generally only had a political agenda as of Phase C, while conversely, national movements that agitated within communities that had a complete social structure, had already formulated a political programme in Phase B, in which the linguistic demands were either incidental or only became significant at a later stage. So the linguistic conflict often, but not always – contrary to what is today still stated – played an integrational role (Broomans, Jensma et al. 2008; an overview can be found in, for example, Breton 2003; an earlier one is Cocquereaux 1981).

Recent research has focussed little on the organisations or the social basis – the objective circumstances – but concentrated instead on the inner world of the actors. That is to say, instead of the intellect, the emotion (which is nothing new, as in reality that corresponds to the subjective definition of the nation). The success of the final factor in national agitation, that of **cultural construction** or the nation as an imagined community – Hroch notes that every community is only real when the members understand themselves as such – depends on the concrete circumstances (Berger, Eriksonas & Mycock 2008; Bhabha 2008; Hearn 2007; Leerssen 2006; Leerssen 1999; Thiesse 1999; Gillis 1994; Bloom 1993; Giesen 1991). Where the ‘psy-

chology of peoples' was previously studied (Peabody 1985; Miroglio & Miroglio 1978; there was also a *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples*), today it is the 'cultural dimensions' or 'cross-cultural psychology' (such as Hofstede & Hofstede 2004; Hofstede 2001) that are subjected to research. The construction here is based on, inter alia, emotions (no identification without emotion) that could arise from insecurity, a superiority or inferiority complex, the personification of the nation (also as a physical body, which is expressed in national costume, folklore and sporting manifestations such as gymnastics events and marches), as well as passions and instincts (including the territorial imperative; with regard to the territorial aspect, cf. infra). Then there are the symbols (upon which a group as numerous as a nation is dependent for communication and social interaction), public activities (celebrations and meetings) and verbal expressions such as slogans, songs and hymns (Grijp 1998, for example). In addition to that, there is also specific iconography – statues, paintings (Pil 1998; for example Morrison 2003) and flags (Jenkins & Eriksen 2007), while monuments (Seberechts 2003, for example), landscapes and locations (for example Tollebeek 2008; Nora 1997), literature (Carey-Webb 1998; Couttenier 1998, for example) and film (for example, Van de Winkel & Biltreyst 2008; Williams 2002) help to construct the 'national imagination'. Closely related to this are the stereotypes, which allow for turning abstract national ideas and values into a 'real', analytically tangible mentality and conduct. Abstract ideas and complex symbols could constitute points of departure for the national imagination by developing them into stereotypes, which clarify the distinction between 'us' and 'them'.

There has been much focus recently on the territorial aspect. What this refers to is the process of territorialisation – the occupation of well-defined historical areas or ancestral homelands and the collective attachment thereto. Hroch provides a historic outline of the projection of the (state) national community in spatial terms, a portion of which became, irrespective of whether or not it was enclosed by a state border, became a 'national landscape' in the 19th century, a cultural product, a '*Gedächtnisraum*' with nationally relevant places ('*lieux de mémoire*' or memorial sites) serving as mythological shrines, battles, birthplaces and residences of well-known individuals and a certain type of landscape. For state-nations, the state borders left over from the early modern period in the process of nation forming were nationalised and increasingly considered to be a natural border with regard to other nations. The borders of the national state were 'naturalised', projected as perpetually retrospective and upgraded to the level of a symbol, in order to attain the homogenisation and the territorial socialisation of the national community (Hroch 2005, 227-234). From the 1990s onwards the study of the spatial aspect was scientifically cleared by ethnosymbolism, after De Smet, amongst others, cast Nazism upon

geopolitics resulting in decades of negligence. The study of nationalism is, for that matter, primarily the engagement of political scientists and sociologists, not of geographers. Nevertheless, nationalism is distinguished from other social movements by the territorial aspect. Nationalism is a territorial ideology, which grants the members of the nation a fundamental space-time identity. Territoriality has long been considered to be a natural, instinctive phenomenon, while in reality it is a geographic strategy that connects community and space. It is a source of power and served as the fundamental basis over the last two centuries for defining a group, a replacement of the pre-modern hierarchical subordination. Nationalism is a historically innovational form of territoriality. Neither the territorial identity of a state nor the cultural identity of the nation can explain the power of nationalism on their own. The success of nationalism is based on a combination of the pre-modern cultural with the modern territorial (White 2007; Penrose 2002; Boeva 1998; Hooson 1994; see also: Donnan &



Photo of the procession during the so-called Rodenbachfeesten in September 1919 in Roeselare (Flanders/Belgium), during the re-unveiling of the statue of Albrecht Rodenbach (1856-1880), which was moved to Ghent during World War One (the banner reads: “No peace nor rest without self-determination”). Past and (desired) future came together in the demonstration around the iconic Flemish student leader. [BE ADVN VFA7338]

Wilson 1998 and Tuan 1974). There is also interest in the spatial aspects of social processes outside of the study of nationalism. Historians, for example, are called upon when selecting subjects to not only consider the relevant period-allocation but also the spatial classification. This would mean, after the '*linguistic turn*', that it was time for a '*spatial turn*' in the history books. This inclination is now also being followed in the study of nationalism. The '*spatial turn*' is to relieve the '*linguistic*' or '*cultural turn*', with which the social sciences placed a greater emphasis on significance and culture, especially since the 1960s, as opposed to the focus on politics or the economy prior to that (Schuurman 2005; in response to: Knotter 2005).

From the overviews of the theoretical and historical frameworks, one could conclude that much research has been undertaken and is still being undertaken. But that research demonstrates a fundamental gap. In the final section of this publication we will examine the research environment and discuss the methodology and the tools for remedying the situation.

THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

In the profusion of theoretical and empirical contributions emanating from a rich diversity of approaches and schools of thought, one must nevertheless conclude that the required empirical basis is still absent when it comes to the development of theories.

Moreover, the studies are frequently monologues. In the historiography of national movements a transnational and comparative approach is rarely employed, while national movements are pre-eminently transnational. Charting the personal and institutional relationships between national movements will enable researchers to trace political and cultural transfers. How did national symbols, representations and practices migrate from one region to another? How were they absorbed, transformed and appropriated in the specific social context within which they were transferred? There are various reasons behind the gaps in the research. Thus the information concerning the sources for the study of nationalistic trends generally relies on unverified data that are not systematically presented. The results from other national movements or linguistic regions are also frequently unknown to the researchers.

Furthermore, the (historical) information about national movements in Europe is locked in records and documentation. Those sources are, by virtue of the specific history of their creation and context, characterised by a number of dangers when it comes to storing and releasing them.

As a rule, national movements are heterogeneous in their composition and generally do not have a central leadership. Over the course of their existence and development they did not in most cases have a centralised storage area for their records and documentation. The sources from and relating to national movements are consequently also those of its intermediary structures and the persons connected thereto. The upshot of this is that there is no legally regulated and publically organised transfer of sources to official archival institutions. Moreover, the private status of the sources means that the archival centres must be thoroughly proactive in sourcing and collecting the sources. Finally, in some cases the archivists operated clandestinely for a brief or lengthy period. They worked in and agitated with clubs, associations and organisations. The private nature of most archival sources in this matter constitutes a serious obstacle with regard to collecting, storing and describing them, as a result of which many sources are under threat of being lost. In many cases there was, over an extended period and sometimes even still today, no interest on the part of the authorities in the sources. Also there was, certainly initially and once again in some cases still today, a certain degree of mistrust on the



Photo of the Serbski Institut/Sorbisches Institut in Budyšin/Bautzen (Germany). [DE SI]

part of archivists with regard to official bodies or, as the case may be, movements. The situation varies depending on the national movement. In Flanders, the growth of historical research into the nationalist trends over the last 20 years is partly due to the presence of a centre such as the ADVN, which is funded by the Flemish authorities and which collects, describes and makes available for academic research all forms of sources pertaining to nationalism, as well as engages in research and public activities itself. In this manner the ADVN ensures that the records, the iconography and the literature produced by and about an important segment of 19th and 20th century society is retained, that all information pertaining thereto is centralised and that academic research is both supported and encouraged.

But there are also national movements whose records and the release and use thereof for the purposes of academic research leave much to be desired. Between these two extremes there exists a wide range of varieties and degrees when it comes to

the availability of sources and research into them. It is consequently possible that many sources are scattered, neglected and/or destroyed. To date, however, no coordinated effort has been undertaken at a European level to collect and store in a scientific manner records, documentation and information pertaining to this subject and release them for the purposes of research. At the same time, there is a need for advice and support when it comes to storing and releasing these sources.

The present heuristic conditions for researching nationalism in Europe are thus anything but perfect. This is why there is a need for an initiative that employs as its point of departure the collection, verification and structuring of data on nationalistic trends in Europe over the last two centuries. The research must have “*authority files*” that provide information in a structural and accessible manner. The information must be able to be freely consulted by the public, thus enabling comparative studies.

Methodology

Because there is neither a universal key nor an unchanging framework of statistical principles that includes all nations and forms of nationalism, comparative analyses become indispensable. This is applicable to, for example, the study of manifold modes of nation-formation, specifically the manners for developing the (little-elaborated by Benedict Anderson) substrate of the imagined community in the discourse, the conventions, the images and symbols. Or in investigating the pre-modern identities, for which a start was already made earlier (Hastings 1997, who considers the nation as a Christian given or secular religion).

Hroch demonstrates that the comparative method is the proper one when it comes to, as he puts it, *sine ira et studio*, studying nationalism. Such investigation starts with data that can be placed side-by-side rather than with theories (for example, Hroch 2007; cf. also Bouchard 2000, for example). The argument is also being made elsewhere to grant the empirical greater space in the study of nationalism (such as Laponce 2008; Langewiesche 2006; Leerssen 2006).

The comparative method is a relative newcomer to the historiography (for example, in the inter-university Berliner Kolleg für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas (BKVGE); cf. for example, Haupt & Kocka 1996; Siegrist 2003). In the historical study of nationalism and national trends, the international comparative aspect is neglected, with very few exceptions (Koll 2005; Nationale Bewegungen 2005; Dann, Hroch & Koll 2003; Smith 2003; Breuilly 1993; Schieder & Dann 1978; Snyder 1976). That is no surprise, one needs to master at least two historiographies, amongst other things,

and engage in extensive archival research. Moreover, it is not simply about comparing or writing parallel histories. It requires systematic comparisons between two or more societies and presenting the results in a comparative format. The comparative method is a highly complex historiographical working method that can easily lead to mistakes and misunderstandings. It entails a range of procedures and techniques that are intended to lead to a comparative analysis so that it can be used to develop a comparative narrative (Fredrickson 1997). The subject of research must consequently be determined very precisely, while the objective of the application of the comparative method must be specified, the criteria for the analysis of the topics determined and the relationship of the procedure to the time axis (the historical chronology) likewise clarified (Hroch 2000, 18-21). An additional problem is that data are only sporadically collected in a controlled manner, such as was the case with the data involving cultural nationalism in the *Philologists and National Learning* project (Leerssen 2003). The information provided on nationalistic trends as a result is mostly based on uncontrolled data that are offered in an unstructured and non-systematic manner. Because comparative works consequently must often be undertaken on disparate data that were collected in various ways, the comparative basis becomes a precarious one (for example Hroch 2005; Dann, Hroch & Koll 2003; Thiesse 1999; Schulze 1994 deals solely with state nationalism) or, despite the best of intentions, it is completely omitted (Hagendoorn & Pepels 2000, for example).

Comparative historiography exhibits alternatives, thereby making clearer the significance of a given development, improving the ability to isolate variables responsible for local variations and allowing for historical generalisations. The fundamental importance of a comparative perspective is the fact that it sheds light on structural and cultural elements. We are able to discern similar forces and processes within a different national context. Hypotheses, such as those pertaining to the effect of a given circumstance upon a phenomenon, can be tested against another context through comparison. This means that the impact of specific variables (culture, economy, transnational tendencies) can also be distinguished, just as the factor that has the most impact in processes and events (like identical economic structures in very different cultural environments) (Slatta 2003). While comparative historiography transcends national, regional and local boundaries in examining concurrent and/or divergent developments and compares them, when it comes to transnational history, the cooperation between individuals and communities are the central point of focus (Budde, Conrad & Janz 2006; Clavin 2005). Here one studies the intercultural and inter-societal contacts, interaction and communication (*entangled histories* or *histoire croisée*).

This will be able to provide a significant empirical contribution to the development of theories on the nation and nationalism. Moreover, a greater emphasis will also be able to be placed on perspectives of comparative history, in contrast to the general theory, streamlined hypotheses of which figure so prominently in the debate (Arnason 2006; Arnason 2001). This allows for the identification of a recurrent, fundamental theory and a conceptual anchor for the comparative analysis of nations and forms of nationalism in their distinctive historical context (Calhoun 1997).

Research tool

ADVN sets up an international project for the application of comparative historiography to the national movements in Europe under the name of NISE (*National movements & Intermediary Structures in Europe*). The project encourages the historiography of intermediary structures and the persons and national movements in Europe connected thereto. For this purpose it is developing a research tool – with the aid of data contained in a databank, the parallels and the fundamental differences in the development and organisation can be detected. This also allows for the opportunity to isolate transnational aspects and formulate general conclusions. The project thus also encourages the preservation and release of the sources, and NISE is developing a databank and helpdesk for this purpose, holding information on published and unpublished sources for the study of the intermediary structures of nationalism in Europe. This allows one to draft plans of action for the structured and controlled collection, storage, description and making available for research of the relevant historical and contemporary sources.

NISE will thereby fulfil three types of objectives in due course: heuristic, historiographical and archival.

A databank is the central instrument for realising those objectives.

The data pertaining to historical and contemporary sources are collected, stored and described in a structured and controlled manner and made freely available to the public in the form of “*authority files*”.

A user-friendly databank will be where index cards, research tools and information on the archives and collections can be centralised and correlated with each other. The introduction of the databank will be in accordance with international standards. An OPAC is provided for consultation. The databank is available through a website (www.nise.eu).

The databank houses five types of records.

The starting point is the index card on the organisation, association, party, group or individual that is linked to a national movement. These index cards are collected

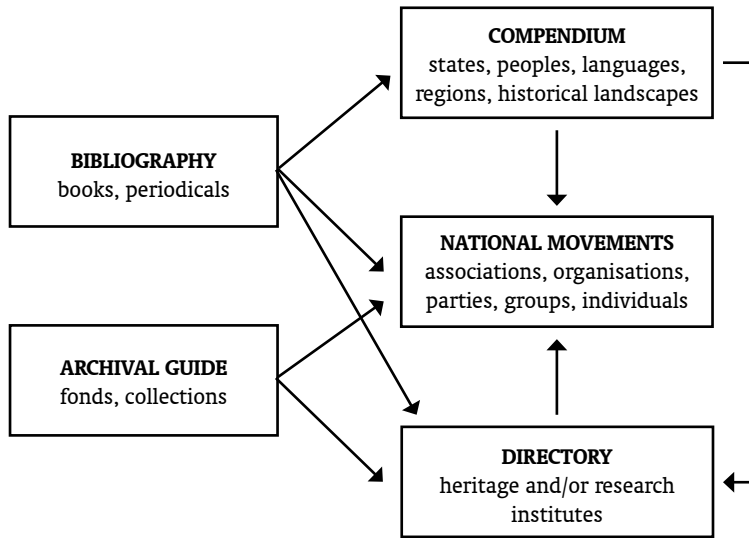
in the **National Movements** file. The data concerning the intermediary structures and individuals linked to national movements will be inputted in accordance with the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR(CPF)).

Four types of records are linked to the record in the *National Movements* file.

The first of these relates to the context wherein the organisations and activists operate – the people, the country, the regions, the language etc. – the **Compendium**. A data model *sui generis* is used for the inputting. Each record contains the basic information, such as the name of the entity in the relevant languages, the political, geographic and cultural setting and quantitative data. At a second level the political and territorial history and the history of the national movement constitute the points of focus. Space is also provided for a map and symbol (flag).

Two other types of records refer to the publications (**Bibliography**) and the records and documentation (**Archival Guide**) of and about the intermediary structures and individuals. In this way the researcher will be able to access two types of controlled and annotated heuristic sets of data for every national and regional movement. One of these concerns a selective list of bibliographic references to academic publications concerning the movement and the intermediary structures and individuals linked thereto. For this the General International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD(G)) is employed. The other provides an overview of the most important relevant archives, with comprehensive information on for every archive, including its location and the available means for accessing it. For this the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) is used. This enables the researcher to immediately list and localise the sources for his or her research, especially with regard to heuristics in the framework of comparative historiography. Moreover, as English will be the inputting language, access to the data from various language regions will be facilitated. With the aid of the databank, fundamental, empirical research into nations and nationalism will be encouraged. Also, a contribution will be made to the preservation and release of archival sources by and dealing with national movements in Europe. NISE will initially provide information on the archives. Subsequently, however, all archivists (both those who create and those who store archives) will be provided with advice on request by a helpdesk on all aspects pertaining to the administration of this specific type of archive. This administration entails prospecting, transferring, preserving, describing and providing access. Furthermore, NISE will develop initiatives of its own accord in order to safeguard archives and creating finding aids. The latter type of record refers to the heritage and research institutes in the field. The International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings (ISDIAH) will be used for inputting this **Directory**.

In its simplified form, the configuration of the databank looks like this:



The activities of NISE are structured into three bodies – a coordinating centre, a scientific council and a network of research and heritage institutes.

For the coordination of the project and so as to undertake administrative tasks, a **Coordinating Centre** is a prerequisite.

As the originator of the project, the ADVN will assume this task. The institute has built up knowhow over the last 25 years with regard to thematic knowledge, scientific methodology, constructing and managing data files and the practice of archiving, documentalism and librarianship. When it comes to the historiography of the Flemish case, *Wetenschappelijke tijdingen*, the ADVN periodical, has provided a forum for decades. The tools for this, i.e. the theoretical works and case studies, are available in the ADVN library, where an already extensive collection is constantly expanded.

When it comes to the scientific control of the project, a **Scientific Council** takes on the task. The council is composed of academics from various universities in Europe who are specialised in the topic. The job of the council is, amongst other things, to determine the themes for the inputting of the data file and checking the results.


Furthermore, the continuity of the project and the introduction of operational knowhow must be guaranteed by creating a structured collaboration within a **Network** of scientific institutes in Europe. On the one hand this will involve research institutes that employ nationalism as a general theme for research, while on the other it will involve heritage institutes that specialise in collecting and researching on a national movement. The heritage institutes will also work together in carrying out archival sub-projects.

A collective evaluation will be undertaken every three years for all partners in the project at a scientific **conference**. The conference proceedings will be published.

There is also the project **website** (www.nise.eu) where the data files can be accessed, information on the participants found and a helpdesk and forum for archival and historiographical assistance and the exchange of expertise respectively are available.

Thanks to its organisational structure, NISE allows for data concerning national movements in Europe to be compared to each other and thereby answer research questions. And this so that comparison can lead to verification.

NISE National movements & Intermediary Structures in Europe



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- NEWS
- PROJECT
- ORGANIZATION
- ACTIVITIES
- DATABASE
- CONTACT
- FORUM

SPOTLIGHT

- CLASH OF
- PROFILES

AGENDA

- 2009-2010-2011

[news] First NISE Conference

The first NISE Conference will be held on 27 and 28 May 2010 in Skopje (Macedonia). Host is the Institut za nacionalna istorija (the Institute for National History) of Macedonia.

[Read more >](#)

News 2nd, 2010

[news] Round Table

During the NISE Conference, a Round Table on the archives of national and regional movements will be held. The Round Table wants to draw up an inventory of the problems faced and the solutions applied by the institutes holding these kind of sources.

[Read more >](#)

News 2nd, 2010

[news] Workshop

In the first half of 2011 a workshop will be held in Antwerp co-jointly by NISE and SPIN on Choral Societies and Nationalist Mobilization in Nineteenth-Century Europe.

[Read more >](#)

News 2nd, 2010

[news] New Website on-line

NISE has launched its own website. It contains several sections and will provide easy access to the database.

[Read more >](#)

See Also, 2009

[Previous Entries](#)

NEWS BL...

NISE es una base de datos, una guía bibliográfica y un instrumento archivístico para la investigación comparativa transnacional de los movimientos nacionalistas en Europa. — Spanish

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SEARCH QUERY

SEARCH DATABASE


[under construction]

NEWSLETTER

Keep in touch with the latest developments of the NISE project and subscribe to the digital NISE newsletter. [Subscribe](#)

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Screenshot of the opening page of the NISE website.
(<http://www.nise.eu/en>) [7 April 2010]

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