Summaries

Hans Hägerdal

An Asiatic mode of production?

For centuries, European scholarship developed the idea that Asian, Oriental, cultures showed a marked "otherness" compared to Western civilization. That is, they were supposed to be characterized by state ownership of land, lack of juridical constraints on the regime, religion instead of law, lack of hereditary nobility, isolated village communities, great public hydraulic works, historical immobility etc. All this would then result in an 'Asiatic mode of production' and, further, an 'Oriental despotism'. This complex set of ideas on Asiatic societies has come under heavy fire from historians and anthropologists during the post-war era, and the present article purports to be a review on work undertaken during the last years within a limited part of Asia, i.e. South-East Asia. This is an interesting area from several points of view, being stuck between Indian, Chinese, Muslim and European currents of civilization, and being late in developing its own historiography. In the research on pre-colonial states and societies we might consider two types of schools; one that lays stress on macro approaches with roots in Marx' and Wittfogel's writings, emphasizing despotism, hydraulic works and power founded on ritual rather than legal framework; and one anthropological/sociological that tries to avoid applying square western concepts and instead speaks in terms of negara (ceremonial centre of a society), mandala (inconstant rings of power arond a princely centre) and galactic polity (a society with minor components moving around an exemplary centre). Archaeological and epigraphical investigations in Thailand and on Java have recently cast doubts on the traditional school. For example, hydraulic works did not have the clear-cut relation to state power that many would think, since their development didn't follow the development of kingdoms. Also, the general assumption of an immobile, egalitarian structure of the villages is not supported by the evidence, since there was a considerable specialization and stratification. In more recent times, when we begin to have access to colonial documents, we can likewise see a much greater amount of variation than is usually presumed. Examples from Java, which was comparatively early colonized, are particularly illustative. A source of inspiration for many anthropologists has been Java's neighbour to the east, Bali, where an old Indian-Indonesian type of kingdom lived on until the present century. In the very last years a number of studies of traditional Balinese society have revealed a picture definitely closer to the anthropological/sociological model than the old macro-theoretical approaches. These last approaches may in fact be of some use for the study of certain aspects of Asian history; however, the way they have been taken for granted by many older authorities rather gives a point to the well-known Orientalism thesis of Edward Said: there is a discursive formation of old presuppositions about Oriental societies that has been extremely difficult to leave behind, and this may especially apply for a long-time overlooked area like South-East Asia.

Erling Sandmo

The soothing gaze of power

The social history of crime has become a large and dynamic field of historical research in Scandinavia during the last few decades. Initially influenced primarily by work done in Great Britain, Scandinavian historians are now becoming increasingly more interested in the "Grand Theories" of civilization, discipline and rationalization. This essay presents three such "Grand" theorists, each viewed through one of their main works.

The starting point is Norbert Elias and his work on *The Civilizing Process*, which, although first published in 1939, gained little attention among historians until the 1970s. Now, however, it has become a standard reference to such a degree that the term "civilizing process" is used more or less indiscriminately to describe any historical line of development characterized by falling rates of violence. However, Elias' thesis is rather more specific. The first part of the essay is devoted to the two main lines of argument in *The Civilizing Process*: firstly, that human behaviour becomes gradually more restrained and less spontaneous during the late medieval and early modern periods. This marks the birth of a new, more introvert and calculating Man, *homo clausus*. Secondly, Elias points to the way the modern European state emerges from a court culture. The sphere surrounding the ruler becomes pacified; civil, rational behaviour replaces violent prowess as a criterion of power and influence. Thus, "civilized" codes of action spread downwards, demanding acceptance by any class with political and cultural ambitions.

Elias' critics have attacked the strict linearity of this model, and its inherent potential for legitimizing Western imperialism by disguising it as the spread of civilization. Few, however, have gone against Elias' claim that the civilizing process has been a central feature of European history. A major exception is the German ethnologist Hans Peter Duerr, whose *The Myth of the Civilizing Process* (1988-) sets out to prove that shame, restraint and non-violent behaviour — central to Elias' view of modern European patterns of behaviour — are less, not more prominent in advanced than in so-called "primitive" societies. Duerr argues that the face-to-face social control of small, close-knit, "primitive" communities provides a more efficient check on deviant behaviour than the mechanisms of modern mass society.

Special problems arise when Elias' concept of the civilizing process is applied to Scandinavian history. Neither the court — crucial to Elias' thesis — nor the bourgeoisie play major roles in the Nordic countries in the 16th and 17th centuries, the centuries which have been seen as the breakthrough of the civilizing process in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Thus, both the dynamic and the mediating social groupings in Elias' scenario are almost absent from the Nordic early modern arena.

The second main part of the essay gives a reading of the last chapter of Michel Foucaults *The History of Sexuality. I: An Introduction* (1976). In this text, "Right of Death and Power over Life", Foucault sketches a major break in the history of power in the west. Before what Foucault calls "the classical age" — coinciding with the birth of modernity, or the early modern period — the prevailing mode of power was the power to seize; "seizure of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself". In spite of its cruelty and aggressiveness, this power is non-interventionist. It may kill, but it does not mould or shape people's ordinary lives in any detail. The classical age saw the rise of a new form of power, "the

power over life". Here, death as the ultimate threat is no longer at the source of power. The power over life is the power to intervene, to regulate populations and discipline individuals. The creation of normality takes over from the punishment of deviance. And this normality is the core of the modern subject.

The third part of the essay is devoted to Robert Muchembled, a historian who has made use of theories concerning power, discipline and civilizing processes in his studies of early modern France. His book *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400-1750* can to a large extent be read as a historical investigation of Foucault's thesis concerning the shift between the two modes of power which takes place at the time which Muchembled studies. Muchembled is concerned with how local popular culture erodes under absolutism — not as the result of any conscious strategy or a manifest wish to exterminate this culture, but because of mechanisms inherent in absolutism as such. In the hierarchical state where all power emanates from one source, centralization and acculturation become the necessary consequences of political rule.

However impressive, Muchembled's analysis also demonstrates the difficulties which arise from the use of Foucault's theory. There are traces of determinism in his work; his description of the older popular culture shows that it had to fall, with or without the intervention of state power. And this is every historian's dilemma: how are theories such as the ones presented here best put to use — and what are they "about"?

In conclusion, this essay argues that Elias' and Foucault's theories are not "about" the same thing, even though they may provide descriptions of similar aspects of the same European past. Many of the difficulties inherent in Elias' theory of the civilizing process arise from the fact that it is both a work of history and a humanitarian, antiviolent political manifesto from the 1930s. Thus, he is not compatible with the pessimistic anti-humanitarian Foucault. A synthesis of the two would miss the ethical aspect of their work, and that is, basically, their most important content. But read as history and moral philosophy, theories such as these may give the historian access to larger debates — and thereby serve to give our work a stronger contemporary bearing.

Asger Ousager

The Denationalization of Nations

In the disciplines of history, sociology, and political science in the past ten years in particular, there has been a flourishing view that both the nation and the nation state are relatively new phenomena which did not begin to appear until the end of the eighteenth century, or at least their doctrine, nationalism, was not formulated until this rather late and narrow period of time. Nation, nationalism, and nation state are supposed to have a common origin in — and to coincide in time with — political and industrial revolution, the development of the school system, and conscript armies.

This article analyses the main works in this research trend, works by Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Anthony D. Smith, and shows that the view is wrong: the claim by the modernists, or, to put it more broadly, the "denationalists", that these three phenomena are peculiar to modern times, is shown to be based on tautological statements or on observations of other characteristics of the rise of modern society, that is, mass society. These distinctive features are elevated by the denationalists ad hoc to constitute the innermost essence of nations, nationalism, and nation states, although the characteristics they single out are secondary to nationality. My critical survey of the authors in question seeks to reveal the core of nationality:

In keeping with his materialistic, Marxist view of history, *Hobsbawm* wishes to see the industrial revolution as the underlying cause of the political revolution in France and hence of nationalism and nations in general, since the French Revolution sparked off modern nationalism following the Napoleonic Wars. Unfortunately, he ignores the fact that the political, national revolution in France occurred long before the industrial revolution made its breakthrough there. The functionalist *Gellner* believes that nationalism was an indispensable contributory factor and an inevitable by-product in the creation of a viable, generally well educated workforce of use to industrial society; for nationalism is viewed by Gellner mainly as an awareness of the distinctiveness of whatever mother tongue a person is given, an awareness arising from learning with the aid of oral and especially written language. This special modern awareness — which is equivalent to nationalism — thus *invents* the nations, where they did not already exist. The forms of nationalism seen in earlier times should rather be called patriotism, according to Gellner, although the distinction between these two forms of nationalism is nothing but a modern construction, since it derives from the express antimonarchism peculiar to French revolutionary nationalism: patriotism at the beginning of the nineteenth century, unlike nationalism, became a term for loyalty to the monarch. Gellner ultimately sees the existence of the nation as dependent on an egalitarian mass society's *awareness* of its existence, although it must be obvious that the enlightenment of the masses cannot be a condition for the nation's existence. In former times the nobility could have been a decisive factor in favour of national awareness or nationalism.

A similar kind of subjective idealism can be found in *Anderson,* who speaks of all societies as in principle *imagined.* On the other hand, according to Anderson, some human actions can result from this imagination, and the imagination can be either strengthened or weakened, depending on whether the state treats its subjects as equal or not, with either a strong nation state or the secession of parts of the state as a result. According to

Anderson, then, it is the *state* that forms the nation, mainly by teaching its subjects a particular language, greatly assisted by the invention of printing. Since everyone in principle can learn any language, the nation does not rest on any community of blood. In this connection, Anderson is guilty of arguing in circles: he uses as a premiss in his argument the thing he wants to prove, namely, that the nation is nothing more than a linguistic community. He is right, however, to emphasize the historical aspect of the nation, namely, its partial dependence on the formative abilities of a state power, but here his hypothesis applies to the whole of history and not just modern times.

The denationalists then need new designations for national phenomena in pre-modern times, although this is theoretically uneconomical. While the other writers more or less try to ignore this, *Anthony Smith* is aware of the problem, but he prefers, for example, to rename the older nation an ethnie, with early nationalism becoming "ethnocentrism" and the early nation state an "ethnic state" instead. According to Smith, *ethnies* differ from nations in that, whereas an *ethnie* rests on the myth of blood community, a nation largely rests on a shared goal of equal civil rights for the population within a geographically defined area. His argument against the so-called primordialists (who believe that nations date back much earlier than the end of the eighteenth century) is confined to the claim that one cannot automatically equate modern nationalism with earlier phenomena, and when this is attempted one should be able in every single case to demonstrate historical continuity between a particular modern nation and an early precursor. However, it is shortsighted of Smith to revoke the timeless status of the concept of nation (and the concepts of nationalism and nation state). In principle, he has thus relativized to an unprecedented degree all concepts in relation to their times, making all scientific study impossible. In addition, it is true no less of a modern nation than of an early *ethnie* that it is based on a shared origin and the social cohesion of a people. A pure myth of a common origin is not enough, since fundamentally it is through biological self-replacement that the nation achieves any permanence at all through biological self-replacement. In this way we can defend radical primordialism: the nation is just as primeval as human community and can be said to consist of kinship in a certain extended sense, since the predominant recruitment through means of procreation is supplemented by immigration and conquest, which are both forms of adoption. The formula for national affiliation is therefore that *one is either born or adopted into a nation.* National affiliation is thus only in a secondary sense dependent on one's own choice.

From this point of view I then consider the views presented by the Danish denationalist *Uffe Østergård* in his discussion with the British philosopher and likewise denationalist, *Jonathan Rée:* Østergård's view of national identity, that it is nothing but what we say it is, is so subjective as to be unusable. Rée's view that the nation is based on the formation of conscript armies by states can similarly be dismissed. The idea is distortedly pacifist, since it is national sentiment that creates a will to defend, not the other way round; Rée reverses cause and effect. Against Østergård I try to show that universalized nationalism is a simple idea which Herder was scarcely the first to exergitate. The view that nations, nationalism, and nation states were historical driving forces long be fore the end of the eighteenth century can be supported by citing examples from Panhellenic Greece, from the biblical account of Israel during the Babylonian exile, from the kingdoms of the Germanic migrations, and from medieval Denmark as described for instance by Saxo.

The circumstance that modern nationalism has found it easier than pre-modern nationalism to achieve nation states in the real sense should not lead us to conclude that pre-

mod ern nations and pre-modern nationalism did not exist. The modern success of the nation derives precisely from characteristics associated with modernity: the development of international law and mass support for its principle of the nations' right to self-determination, and so on.

Bengt Nilson

Undén's "third way": Sweden in the cold war 1950—52

In autumn 1990 a lively debate broke out in Sweden about Swedish foreign policy in the Cold War. There were two opposing viewpoints: traditionalists versus revisionists. The former claimed that Sweden, in accordance with her officially declared doctrine, observed a strict policy of neutrality. This view was rejected by revisionist scholars, who argued that Sweden, through secret contacts with the USA and other NATO countries, was already a "*de facto* western ally" towards the end of the 1940s (Agrell). For the present study I have examined documents in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs from the years 1950—52 which were central in the Cold War perspective. The study shows that Sweden during these years gradually formed a "third way" in foreign policy, between strict neutrality and alliance with the western powers.

A strong Swedish defence was the cornerstone of foreign minister Östen Undén's neutrality policy. In 1950 Sweden had the third strongest air force in Europe and could be regarded as a regional great power in Northern Europe. The Swedish defence capacity required the import of high-technology munitions from the western powers, even though Sweden had a considerable defence industry of its own. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 meant that these imports were threatened. The western powers feared that Soviet communism was aiming for world domination and believed that the free world had to stand united and arm itself to the teeth. In this situation Sweden's traditional arms supplier, Britain, and the USA both gave priority to their own rearmament and supplies to allies in NATO. The Swedish defence capacity thus risked long-term weakening, and with it the cornerstone of Swedish neutrality policy.

The Swedes saw the seriousness of the situation and began a gradual adjustment of the content of foreign policy in accordance with the wishes of the western powers, but without joining any secret defence alliance. A significant step was taken in June 1951, when Sweden accepted secret participation in the economic warfare of the western powers against Eastern Europe, the COCOM policy. In return for this, the USA, which had pursued an increasingly restrictive trade policy towards Sweden after the start of the Korean War, relaxed its restrictions, although Sweden enjoyed lower priority as regards munitions than the NATO countries.

At the start of 1952, there were top-level deliberations in Washington about the significance of Sweden for the defence of Western Europe, in the light of the Swedish concessions in trade policy to the Soviet bloc. Since a well-armed, neutral Sweden *per se* was an important barrier against the Soviet Union, protecting NATO's vulnerable northern flank, it was in the interests of the western powers to see to it that the Swedish defence capacity was maintained. In July 1952 Sweden and the USA therefore concluded an agreement on the supply of munitions, according to which Sweden was equated with the NATO countries regarding priority in the purchase and delivery of American munitions. The agreement marked a change in the American view of Sweden, which made it possible for the Swedish government to order munitions from other NATO countries, chiefly Britain.

The Swedish concessions as regards trade with the Soviet bloc, in combination with a higher American evaluation of Sweden's significance for the defence of Western Europe, thus laid the foundation for Undén's "third way" in foreign policy. Since the USA ac-

cepted Sweden's military non-alliance between the power blocs, it being in the interest of the western powers to maintain the Swedish defence capacity, it was possible in Stockholm to begin secret preparations — but still within the framework of preserved neutrality without military ties — to secure the import of essential commodities for the national economy, chiefly oil, from the west, via Trondheim in the NATO state of Norway, in the event of Sweden being cut off during an east-west war.