



Finland from the air

Territorial Identities as Social Constructs

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ABSTRACT: Identity is one of the keywords of contemporary social and cultural science. Space and territory are social and cultural constructs that occupy a crucial position in the construction and maintenance of spatial identities. In spite of this fact their meanings have not been widely discussed in the literature. Identities and boundaries are two sides of the same coin: collective identities are typically constructed in the relations of one social grouping to another. Both identity and boundaries thus reflect power relations that are part of the social practices of inclusion and exclusion. As a concrete illustration of their conceptual analysis, this paper evaluates the interpretations of Finnish national identity. This has from the dawn of Finland's independence been constructed in relation to images of threat, particularly that of the Soviet Union/Russia. The new geopolitical context in Europe has in many ways challenged the constituents of former images, and a debate on Finnish identity emerged with entry into the European Union in 1995, leading to discussions of issues such as the existence of a specific Finnish national culture and identity, immigration, citizenship, sovereignty and security policy. This is therefore a fitting illustration of the tendencies for re-territorialization that occur in the current globalizing world.

Introduction

Culture, nature, the social world and daily life are organized in and through spatial relations and contexts, and power relations are crucial constituents of this organization. Recent interdisciplinary interest in the changing roles of territory, region, place and boundaries has revealed that spatiality is not something mythical, but rather is constitutive of and constituted by social life and human meanings (Lefebvre, 1991; Yager, 1996). This is the case with both diverging forms of social life and the powers that modify this life. As far as nation-states are concerned, different ideas on nationalism and national identity are among the most explicit expressions of the link between power and space/territory. Greenfeld and Chirot (1994) write that the term nationalism in its neutral, general sense, points to the set of ideas and sentiments which forms the conceptual framework for a national identity. It is common to see territory as

one of many constitutive 'ideas' of national identity, but while noting the significance of territory, researchers have not been interested to the same extent in the social and discursive construction of territory and territoriality, or in how these become a part of the narratives of a nation and of local daily life (Smith, 1991; Guiberbau, 1996).

Some scholars have been more explicitly interested in the links between territory and power, and therefore, instead of linking territoriality with 'instincts' as in some socio-biological speculations, they have been able to comprehend it explicitly as a human strategy that is employed to control people and resources, which emphasizes the role of boundaries in communicating territoriality (Sack, 1986). In more recent research, geographers have come to argue that identity and power are inextricably linked: identities are not neutral or naturally given but constructed for specific purposes (Jackson and Penrose, 1993; Yiftachel, 1997). Cultural researchers in particular have challenged the ideas of 'national cultures' as closed cells in a 'grid', entities that are culturally homogeneous and exclusive, and have suggested that identities are 'hybrids' that draw together influences that function across borders (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Agnew's (1998) idea of a 'territorial trap' condenses well the criticism leveled against approaches that have taken territory for granted and made a strict division between inside and outside. No wonder, then, that geographers have begun to call for ideas of place and territory that are not based on exclusiveness but rather comprehend these spaces as outcomes of processes and discourses coming from both inside and outside (Massey, 1995). This has led to efforts to map the links between political communities, identity and the cosmopolitan elements of place (Entrikin, 1999) as well as to identify transnational social spaces (Faist, 2000).

This paper's first aim is to discuss and evaluate the changing meanings of territory, territoriality and boundaries in a situation where the processes of globalization are said to be increasing all forms of economic, political, cultural and communication flows and altering and reducing the roles of place, boundaries and state sovereignty. The key argument is that in spite of the current interest in links between identities and space, the constitutive elements of territory/territoriality have not been reflected upon very much (see, however, Herb and Kaplan, 1999; Yiftachel, 2000). This reflection should be dynamic and take into account the perpetual transformation of territorial structures, identities and ideologies and the changing discourses on the meanings of the spatial categories that are used as frameworks for social life. One critical link operates between territory, identity and boundaries. Identities and boundaries are two sides of the same coin: collective identities are typically constructed in the relations of one social grouping to another (Eisenstadt and Giesen, 1995; Evans, 1996). Both identity and (symbolic) boundaries reflect power relations and are part of the social practices of spatial inclusion and exclusion.

Nationalism and identity discourses exist and manifest themselves simultaneously on different spatial scales (Herb and Kaplan, 1999) and become

reproduced in numerous boundary-producing practices in the spheres of foreign policy, national socialization and education, for instance. While nationalism is often understood as being one of the main instruments used by the state for exercising control over its territory, it also exists in banal forms that manifest themselves in various ways in people's daily lives. In spite of some publications and general comments on the roles of spatial scales in shaping identities (Knight, 1982; Herb and Kaplan, 1999), the question of scales has likewise been a neglected field in theoretizations on territory and identity. Therefore this paper will also explicitly evaluate social practices in which the local and personal become fused with the national, i.e. how personal and collective meanings are attached to spatial scales and how these scales are concomitantly used to draw social and cultural demarcations, inclusions and exclusions, between social collectivities, i.e. in structuring social identities. Particular objects of interest are the practices and discourses through which the narratives, symbols and institutions of national identity are created and how they become 'sediments' of everyday life, the ultimate basis on which collective forms of identity and territoriality are reproduced.

The third major aim is to illustrate how the theoretical ideas developed here can be used in analyzing a specific national context. Therefore the interpretations and historically contingent forms of *Finnishness* will be evaluated as a concrete illustration. This is a topical problem, since a lively debate on the future of Finnish identity emerged with Finland's entry into the European Union in 1995 after a plebiscite that was territorially sharply divided. This debate has touched upon issues such as the existence of a specific Finnish national culture and identity, immigration, citizenship, sovereignty and security policy. The Finnish state has, from the beginning of its independence (1917), been constructed in relation to images of threat, in particular the threat posed by the Soviet Union/Russia, and the new geopolitical context in Europe has in many ways challenged the constituents of former images. The state is now a part of a larger territorial structure, the European Union, which has not become a strong entity in terms of identity but has changed the content of the state's security policy. This has meant that links with Russia have increasingly become links between the EU and Russia and not merely between Finland and Russia as they were in the Cold War geopolitical order. The Finnish case is therefore a suitable illustration of the tendencies of de-territorialization and re-territorialization that are taking place in the contemporary, globalizing world.

The concluding chapter will reflect the challenges that current tendencies of globalization and changing forms of identities will pose for a geographic understanding of place.

Nationalism and National Identity in the 'World of Flows'

The 'territorial trap' that characterizes many of our state-centered accounts in political geography and in the study of international relations also includes practices of nationalism and discourses of national identity. It is through these practices and discourses that the almost taken-for-granted link between citizens, the national community and the state has been created (cf. Agnew, 1998). Alker (1989:5) argues that nationalism does not exist as such, but rather that there is a multitude of manifestations of nationalism. However we define it, nationalism is nevertheless a specific, strategic form of territoriality and of competition for control over land and 'socio-spatial consciousness' (Paasi, 1996). Even though it may be seriously contested, nationalism typically aims at being a hegemonic form of territorial consciousness (Kaiser, 2000; Yiftachel, 2000). National identity refers to a number of elements which link the idea of territory with culture, language, history and memory, while nationalism typically legitimates national identity by tracing it back to a real or fictional common past of a territory and the (hegemonic) social group occupying this territory.

A sense of continuity, ideas of shared memories and beliefs in collective destiny are key dimensions in national identity discourses (Smith, 1991). While the analysts of national identity have identified the meaning of territory for identity, it is still often taken for granted in practice, or at least has not been theoreticized to the extent that some other elements such as history or culture have. The idea of a territorially based national identity may refer to at least two things: firstly to the identity and identification of the inhabitants with a given territory and its material and symbolic elements, and secondly to a set of 'narratives' or 'images' of the territory. The latter typically embrace visions of its history, its material and spiritual culture, economy, politics and inhabitants. These dimensions are commonly fused in national practices and discourses, where territory, its past and its present as a context for 'us', are merged into one.

In spite of the fact that both nationalism and national identity have been subjects of numerous definitions, they ultimately refer to complicated sets of social practices and discourses in which individual and collective forms of identity become fused in time and space-specific ways. Nationalism is therefore a specific, territorial form of ideology. This is obvious in the case of nation-states, where the state typically aims at constructing the limits of nationality, citizenship and identity in the course of defining the elements of inclusion and exclusion (Isin and Wood, 1999). Space and boundaries also make a difference in the construction of the ideas of citizenship, even though it is common to distinguish between certain constituent components of modern citizenship, such as civic responsibility, social trust, egalitarianism and a world-oriented individualism (Kalberg, 1993; Cesarani and Fulbrook, 1996). Whereas nationalism appears to be an integrative force unifying separate territorial units into a nation-state, it may also appear in many states in the form of a

disintegrative power which aims to emancipate and separate components of territorial entities from the larger territory of the existing state. The identification with a territory may occur in various more or less 'material' practices, e.g. in the spheres of economics or politics, and not purely at the level of mental acts and discourses.

It has been argued that the globalization tendencies will *de-territorialize* the modern world of bounded nation-states. The same world, however, features a simultaneous struggle to find and define places, territories and identities in the new globality. As an expression of the latter, nationalism and ethno-regionalism seem concomitantly to be establishing new boundaries and giving rise to conflicts between social groups, mainly on ethnic grounds. Ethnicity is often used as an 'explanatory variable' for interpreting the dividing lines in societies, whether as such or combined with other divisions such as class, caste or gender (cf. Yiftachel, 2000). The *re-territorialization* of the existing territorial system means, therefore, the emergence of new, perhaps overlapping and even conflicting forms of territoriality. As Turner (1993) reminds us, processes of globalization have also been crucial in the problematization of the ideas of citizenship that constitute the fixed point in the definition of the links between a state territory and a nation. The processes of globalization and the rise of new communication technologies, for instance, generate border crossings, these may challenge the traditional forms of exclusive territoriality and may also concomitantly provide a basis for new, more open forms of collective identities, forms that may cross national boundaries and challenge the ideas of places as closed entities. Such new forms of identities will be a logical result of the increasing flows of immigrants and refugees. On the other hand, as Held (1995: 225) reminds us, national identities and networks of interaction have always been 'criss-crossed by a variety of points of orientation and exchange'.

The construction of nationalism typically occurs within the nation-building process. This may take place within the framework of an existing state, or of integration/separation. The construction of new, meaningful places in the contemporary world means that existing places are transformed or destroyed and new practices are created while others are often excluded (Entrikin, 1999). This becomes obvious in the aim of nation-building, which is, as Alker (1989: 21) points out, 'to integrate and harmonize socially, regionally or even politically and institutionally divided sections of people'. The steps taken to promote nation-building can usually be divided into two categories (Birch, 1989): direct initiatives taken to foster integration and a sense of national identity and pride, and reactive measures taken by governments to minimize the political effects of ethnic and cultural gaps within society. Both strategies may be employed in cultural, political, economic and governmental practices and discourses, and typically there may be contested interpretations as to how these measures should be carried out. The idea of citizenship is instrumental in promoting the processes of nation-building, through which the physical and social space of a

nation is transposed onto cultural spaces which are then represented as being internally homogeneous homes of 'Us'. This homogenization and naturalization of the national territory typically takes place in relation to 'the Other' – which may be located both outside and inside the territory. Nationalism has therefore become an important constituent of our sense of identity, the latter being understood as a system of almost absolute values. This has also been one of the major constituents of the ideas of political communities as closed entities – one of the basic ideas behind the territorial trap (Agnew, 1998).

National practices and discourses are therefore typically contested, so that different ethnic and other minorities have a sense of identity that is often separate from the dominant, hegemonic one, and these minorities often aim at promoting their own 'voices' within the national agenda. There are less than 200 states in the world, but perhaps more than 6000 ethnic groups living in this fixed territorial framework, often in diaspora (Schaeffer, 1997). This means that nationalism and the physical and symbolic violence used both by the existing states and the groups that are struggling to obtain a state of their own will also be with us in the future. Traditional state-centred ideas of national identity and nationalism may also be increasingly matched by territorial identities that cross the traditional state borders, what Roger Brubaker (1996: 5) labels transborder nationalisms. New technological devices such as the Internet make cross-border interaction easier for those who have these facilities (Brunn, 1999). The world is deeply divided in this respect, however, since most Internet links are between technologically advanced areas.

All in all, nationalism is very much a hidden element in our contemporary life, and 'national identity' or 'patriotism', or love for one's homeland, are much more typically used expressions. This is perhaps not surprising, since nationalism often carries negative connotations in public discourse, whereas 'national identity' and patriotism are typically positively laden words. National identity became one of the key words in social and cultural studies during the 1990s (Lash and Friedman, 1992; Cohen, 1994; Michael, 1996), and geographers have increasingly been paying attention to this idea as well (Hooson, 1994; Dijkink, 1996; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996). Identity is thus one of the catchwords that characterize our current times. How should 'identity' be understood in the contemporary world of flows, where not only ideas and goods move but also human beings, and where interaction between people living in diaspora is becoming easier because of the development of new technologies?

Fragmented identities?

It is increasingly common to emphasize that identities are not fixed and permanent but constructed by people in personal, unique ways, using alternative 'materials' and experiences in various discourses and practices (Hall, 1996; Hall and Du Gay, 1996). This discussion places emphasis on the dynamics and change that characterize the ideas of individual, personal identity typically

discussed under the label 'self'. In an attempt to avoid essentialism in their ideas of identities, scholars remind us that identities are never unified, but rather increasingly fragmented and fractured, never singular but rather multiply constructed across diverging, intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions (Hall, 1996: 3-4). Others have pointed out that a subject position such as citizenship should, in fact, be theorized as one of the many subject positions that people occupy as members of diversely spatialized, partly overlapping/non-overlapping collectivities (Gupta, cited in Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996: 24). Class, gender, political opinions, sexual orientations, 'race' and the generations, for instance, are perpetually creating social and spatial boundaries inside societies. Yuval-Davis (1997) speaks of hybrid identities to illustrate the complicated and fragmented nature of current identities, which are increasingly becoming based on forced, exile and displacement (cf. Faist, 2000). According to UNHCR statistics, the world currently harbors more than 22 million refugees and displaced people.

In spite of this fragmentation, territorial identities seem to persist, which must be based on their 'sedimentation' in numerous practices, habits and discourses occurring on various spatial scales. I have suggested elsewhere (Paasi, 1999a) a perspective on nationalism and national identity that resembles Billig's (1995) ideas of 'banal nationalism' and perhaps could provide a more sensitive basis for understanding how different spatial scales become fused in identity discourses. Banal nationalism points to the role of daily life as the basis where nations become reproduced. Billig argues that nationalism is not a permanent entity but is perpetually 'flagged' through routine symbols and habits of language, and he points out that in the established nations the media in particular indulge in a continual 'flagging', or reiteration, of nationhood and national identity. Billig's perspective places stress on the meaning of discourse, and he argues that to have a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood. This means, for its part, that national communities must have a kind of 'nationalized vocabulary' that defines the inclusive and exclusive forms of territoriality and which is employed in 'nation-talk' (Jenkins and Sofos, 1996). Billig is not alone in his arguments, as Palmer (1998) also writes that what keeps the national imagination going are the habits and routines of people's lives. The reproduction of these habits and routines inevitably takes place on a local scale, but they may well represent practices and discourses that originate on other spatial scales.

Collective identities are not static, however, even though their main function is to create continuity. Tradition and the collective memory will allow events, issues and symbols from the past to accumulate and merge with the present, but each generation gives its own interpretations to these elements, and identities change. Collective identities (or *representations* of collective identities) are therefore socially constructed and historically contingent. If we think of territories and regions as institutional structures, it is easier to

understand that the narratives of the identities of these units may remain even if the territorial identities of their inhabitants change as a consequence of migration, for instance. This is particularly the case with nation-states, which constitute the most powerful imagined, narrated communities (Anderson, 1991; Bhabha, 1990; Guibernau, 1996). An 'imagined community' does not mean, as the word 'imagined' might perhaps imply, that the idea of this community is somehow false or that its identity should be based on the sum of individual identities. The classics of sociology, particularly the works of Émile Durkheim, already laid great emphasis on the roles of the collective forms of consciousness and solidarity as the 'glue' of societies. Even though their role may diminish in the current globalizing society, narratives and practices reproducing imagined communities would still exist. Nationalism in particular (as well as socialism) is typically based on a collective political ontology in which individuals come logically after the community (cf. Pulkkinen, 1998). This means that the crucial question for our analysis is how the community and individuals 'come together'. In this respect it is necessary to evaluate the links between 'identity' and another crucial category, ideology.

Ideology as a Link Between Individual and Collective

My aim has been to expand the idea of banal nationalism so that it refers to something more than specific forms of national representations or material culture. Rather, as I have argued elsewhere (Paasi, 1999a), in order to better understand the territorial elements involved in the construction of national identity, it is important to know how these (national) representations and elements of material culture become 'spatialized', i.e. receive territorialized meanings. It is therefore important to stress specific institutionalized forms of nationalism and national identity discourse in which territorial dimensions are present (cf. Brubaker, 1996). This points to the sedimentation of nationalist ideals in the operation of such institutions as the economy, administration, religion, education, media, national defense, sport, etc. It is particularly interesting how the interaction of actors with these institutions reproduces the forms of territoriality and power that are structured in the very existence of such institutions. It is typical for these institutions to exist simultaneously, so that the media are in a crucial position in lending a nationalist shape to discourses, or territorializing them, whether discussing sport events or reproducing foreign policy or national defense rhetoric. Similarly, the teaching of various subjects in schools effectively creates images of a nationalized territoriality and simultaneously typically produces and reproduces the linguistic basis of citizenship. This is most obvious in the case of geography and history teaching.

Perhaps the major function of social and cultural institutions is to establish stable structures for human interaction and in this way reduce uncertainty and increase ontological security. People know how to proceed in everyday life when participating in institutional practices. Social institutions do

not, therefore, operate behind the backs of individuals but the individuals produce and reproduce them actively in their everyday lives. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the *social function* of institutions may, partly unconsciously, become sedimented in the routines of daily life, so that the 'historical logic' of institutions does not inevitably manifest itself in such routines. The institutionalization of territories as 'homes' or sources of identification of 'us' consists of the emergence of territorial boundaries, symbols and institutions that together make the territory 'exist' in different institutional practices and forms of social consciousness (Paasi, 1996).

National discourses often have a strong rhetorical content. Billig (1995: 61) states that one should not ask 'What is national identity?' but 'What does it mean to claim to have a national identity?' This points to the fact that national identity must inevitably be a contextual and contested category. It is therefore crucial to reflect how discourses and representations of (national) identity are created and whose 'plots' dominate the discourses through which the nation is represented as constituting an exclusive spatial unit. The idea of national identity, particularly when it is generated and maintained by existing states, therefore comes very close to the concept of ideology, and specifically the ideology of constructing territorial inclusions and exclusions on various spatial scales. As Thompson (1990) shows, the concept of ideology has been used in innumerable ways to denote ideas and beliefs, misrepresentations, illusions, false consciousness etc. In connection with national identity, ideology points, above all, to the process of producing meanings, signs and values in socio-spatial life – the process of signification (Paasi, 1996). Ideologies tell people what is possible and what is not, what is right and what is wrong. They are, therefore, always contested and reflect the power relations in society. The link between ideology and discourses of national identity, like the social practices through which these discourses become materialized, is based on the fact that these discourses are crucial instruments of social integration and control for a territorially bounded social group. As Campbell (1992) has shown, this typically takes place in the processes of "Othering", where power-holding élites use the images of external 'enemies' to create solidarity inside a territory. Identity discourses, therefore, are also linked with the physical and symbolic violence that each state practices in order to maintain social control and various forms of social integration.

It is also important to note that national identity is only one of the purposes of 'national socialization', and that other major aims are connected with more 'material' elements, e.g. reproduction of the economic and political structures of society. Thus, ideology is not merely a set of ideas or beliefs but rather a complicated set of social practices and discourses that manifest themselves in institutions such as religion (the system of churches), education (private and public schools), the family, the judiciary, politics (the political system and parties), communication (the media) and culture (literature, art,

sport). As Warren (1991) points out, ideologies should be seen as 'conceptual structures', and if they are to have an impact, they must become meaningful for individuals by being reproduced by them. In a territorial or regional context I have used the term 'structures of expectations', borrowed from linguistics, to depict this idea. These structures point to time-space-specific, territorially bounded, institutionally embedded schemes of perception, conception and action that are usually part of the hegemonic narrative accounts of the territory in question and which serve as significant structures in the classification of space. These structures 'tell' citizens where the territory has come from and where it is going to (Paasi, 1996).

While ideologies are specific structures, they should not be understood as being purely deterministic. Human beings are creative agents, not merely puppets, and so they actively produce and reproduce these structures. It is clear that many of the ideological institutions operate in the field of the *symbolic economy* (Bourdieu, 1998), which points to the exchange of symbolic goods and 'gifts'. The idea of symbolic exchange implies specific deference, a social relation that converts power relations into moral ones which the individuals link with themselves. In line with this, Bloom (1990) states that political ideologies and ideas of nationalism cannot themselves evoke identification. Identification comes only if 'it interprets and provides an appropriate attitude for an experienced reality'. Bloom points out that this experience may be politically manipulated, but any symbol or ideology without a relevant experience is 'meaningless and impotent only in terms of evoking identification'. This suggests that symbolic change is possible only if participants have identical categories for observation and appreciation. Now, as far as the basic elements of a collective national identity, i.e. social solidarity and social order are concerned, it is easy to see that symbolic exchange between individuals and the state is crucially linked with the basic elements of citizenship, since the rights and duties of citizens manifest themselves precisely in this exchange: to be accepted as part of a state community, the citizen has to follow the rules. Citizenship of a national territory, therefore, becomes a crucial part of the 'civil religion'.

Mapping the Spatial and Other Elements of National Identity

On the basis of the previous analysis we may conclude that there is no such general, essentialist phenomenon as 'national identity' (Paasi, 1999a). What identity discourses mean in different contexts and how and in what social and cultural practices they are manifested, is always a constellation of certain general 'elements' plus other contextually unique elements. National identity simply means different things in different spatial and temporal contexts and discourses.

Nevertheless, it is clear that to be meaningful for social communities, all national identity discourses must include at least the following temporal and

spatial dimensions. Firstly, the territorialization or spatialization of the nation, which refers to the construction of territoriality in cultural, environmental, security or other discourses. The fact that both nationalism and national identity are linked with territory and territoriality emphasizes the meanings of *boundaries*, which are typically employed in communicating the inclusive and exclusive forms of territoriality that in turn become part of the 'social glue' in the integration of the social community in question (Newman and Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 1999a). Secondly, they include the temporalization of the nation, i.e. construction of the narratives (and hence, memory) of the past, present and future.

Spatial and temporal dimensions come together in the symbolic narratives and material iconographies of a nation. It is within the framework of these general dimensions that the other building blocks and materials of national identity discourses and practices may be distinguished. These materials are often overlapping and may have different meanings on different spatial scales. The fundamental element must be a material-morphological basis, that is physical nature and landscape, which are often transformed into the 'national landscapes' of literature, painting and poetry (cf. Meinig, 1979). The second important element is the history of human-nature relations, which in national narratives often mean teleological explanations as to how we have come to be what we are, i.e. these narratives create a common purpose and destiny for the social collectivity. The third significant elements are communal institutions in the fields of economics, administration and governance, politics, culture and traditions that create continuity, social order and security for the national community, and the fourth is the system of territorial and national symbolism, which includes the national language and its regional dialects and the symbolic boundaries between 'us' and 'them' which are usually represented as distinguishing the national unit in question from all others. The fifth important element concerns the values and norms governing the social existence of the (national) community in question, and finally, one more cornerstone for this identity comprises the sometimes conflicting narratives of 'us' and 'our' identity that are typically produced and reproduced by the national literature, newspapers and education. The narratives of a nation are important in the construction of its historical memory when bringing the past into the present. They are also media that transform the spatial experience that has been built up in order to represent larger spatial-scale events (national) into local systems of symbols and meanings, and they may therefore give substance to practices and discourses that manifest these larger events locally in various symbols and rituals.

While national identities are perhaps the most important as far as the representations of social identities are concerned, spatial identities constitute a nested whole (Herb and Kaplan, 1999) and the broader the spatial scale, the more symbolic and non-personal these identities must be from the perspective of

everyday experience. As symbolic constructs, they are dynamite that can be mobilized in specific situations when national values or symbols can be represented as being threatened. One key to understanding the flexibility – and power – of territorial identities lies, therefore, in the recognition of their hierarchical nature and their connection with practices and discourses, norms and values which are not unambiguously local or non-local (Paasi, 1997). Typical examples are religious values or those linked with the dominant ideas of national landscape, nature or culture.

While national identities may be regarded as expressions of social consciousness and collective memory – how specific elements have been chosen to represent what is ‘national’ – the dimensions of identity and the meanings of history and heritage become much more complicated in everyday life, as part of ‘banal nationalism’. Identities are normally strongly represented by abstract or concrete ‘official’ symbols such as flags, anthems, memorial days, statues or certain ‘national’ constructions and buildings, such as the capital city, national museums and art galleries. Nevertheless the meanings of these typically state-engendered symbols are perpetually changing, because they are being interpreted in local everyday life. It may then be argued that the power of territorial identities does not lie in the national symbols as such, but rather in the fusion of social action and symbols into nationalized practices and discourses that are significant in terms of national identity. As Cohen (1982) points out, local experience mediates national identities. National identity, local experience and citizenship are therefore constitutive of each other.

National Identity in Context: Finland in the De-Territorializing World

So far this paper has tried to make ‘visible’ – in theoretical terms – the complicated nature and spatiality of national identities and show how they are always part of larger systems of representation, and not merely systems of representation but also social practice, discourse and power relations. We have seen that territory and territoriality are crucial elements in the construction of national identities, which are typically constructed both by emphasizing the inclusion of people in certain social groupings and by making exclusions by which ‘the other’ are defined as external, irrespective of whether they live physically outside or inside the territory in question. Dimensions of both time and space are important in this territorialization. These distinctions place an emphasis on diverging boundaries, whether physical, cultural or social.

The previous deconstruction of the dimensions of national identity showed the contextual and historically contingent nature of identity formation. To illustrate this, I shall try in this section to reflect on the question of national identity in one specific case, the state of Finland. As everywhere, the major producer and reproducer of the representations of national cultures and practices in Finland is the state, which continually creates and maintains social, political, economic and cultural institutions (and discourses) that foster identification

between the territory, nation and its subjects (cf. Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996). This occurs through spatial socialization in national institutions.

Historical Background

Finland became an autonomous state, a bounded territory and a meaningful place within the Russian Empire in 1809, after being an administrative part of Sweden - or rather a group of separate provinces belonging to it - for almost 600 years. This state then gained its independence in 1917. As a small nation-state with some 5 million inhabitants, its national identity has, for the last 100 hundred years or so, been based on concrete material and political processes and on the narratives of various collective phenomena. The nation was very much created by the state in the course of the 19th century and this took place by organizing the spatial infrastructure of its society, creating a public sphere, founding newspapers in which political discussion was possible and developing the educational system throughout the territory (cf. Jenkins and Sofos, 1996). National narratives, for their part, were promoted by leading politicians, academic researchers and other activists, and were concerned with the existence of a specific national, Finnish culture and folklore and set out to promote and construct images of a specifically Finnish national landscape, which is largely dominated by certain elements of nature, particularly lakes. These narratives, in most cases, emphasized on the internal homogeneity of the Finnish nation and state, in a way that combined local and regional features into a collective image of Finnishness. This is still very much the case in national ideologies that stress the relative homogeneity of the nation and common national values. The narrative of homogeneity has been a hegemonic one, so that internal frontiers and dividing lines - which inevitably characterize all societies - have never been important constituents of Finnish national ideology (cf. Yiftachel, 1997). The dividing lines in Finnish society, such as class division, which was very deep after the Civil War of spring 1918, have gradually eroded as a consequence of the emerging welfare state and the active roles of the labor movement and trade unions in promoting welfare and equality. Whereas political life is nowadays organized more or less on the basis of a consensus (i.e. the current governments include the right-wing Coalition Party, the Swedish People's Party, the Green Movement, the Social Democrats and the Left-Wing Alliance), new lines of distinction are perhaps emerging, between those who have jobs and those who do not, since unemployment rates have been high during the 1990s. Another possible dividing line in the national discourse may be emerging between the Finnish population and immigrants.

Elements of Identity Narratives

Culture and language in particular are perhaps the most crucial elements in the construction of identity narratives. Finland is officially a bilingual state with a large Finnish-speaking majority and a small Swedish-speaking minority

living in the coastal area and comprising some six percent of the population. Even though the minority population has been spatially rather well marked off from the majority, no major conflicts exist between the two groups. As Allardt and Miemois (1982) have pointed out, the Swedish-speaking population identifies with Finland as their 'mother country', i.e. their national identification is with Finland and not with Sweden. They conclude that 'from a comparative perspective, the Swedish-speaking population in Finland must be viewed as a linguistic minority integrated into their country of residence'. A fitting illustration is that the Swedish Party has been represented in most governments since Finland gained its independence. Other Finnish minorities, such as the Sami of northern Finland and the gypsies, have for a long time been pushed outside the 'official' representations of national culture (Paasi, 1997). Sami children were not allowed to use their own language in schools during the 1970s, but the rights of this population group are now gradually improving, and they have increased their possibilities for representing their own culture and not merely acting as deaf objects of other people's representations.

A very important part is played in national identity narratives in Finland by stories of violence, wars or images of threats based on relations between Finland and the Other. This brings a strong element of spatial demarcation into the narratives. The existence of a huge neighbor, Russia, later the leading socialist superpower, the Soviet Union, and again, since the early 1990s, Russia, has perpetually provided the raw material from which these narratives of exclusion are shaped. Other neighboring states, Sweden and Norway, have been in the background in these narratives, even though the Swedish element has been prominent in the creation of internal images of national culture.

The political, ideological, economic and physical border between Finland and Russia has therefore provided a major cornerstone for the continual territorialization and construction of Finnish national identity since 1917. This border is not merely located in the border area or on maps, but is deeply sedimented in practices and discourses concerning borders, foreign and defense policy, the Finnish Army, culture and Finnishness. In this specific sense, the border has 'spread' into the whole of Finnish society through the media, literature, education and the military. As in countries like Israel, compulsory military service has been an extremely effective instrument of national socialization (Falah and Newman, 1995; Paasi, 1999a). The nation's war history and military tradition manifest themselves in cemeteries, museums and monuments, which hence become a crucial part of the national(ized) landscape (cf. Johnson 1995). Dire historical episodes have thus been sedimented as a part of the nationalized landscapes, often long after the conflicts actually occurred. The earliest conflicts between Sweden-Finland and Russia that are recorded in monuments took place in the 16th century, while many of the monuments were erected in the 1920s and 1930s, soon after Finland gained its independence, and this process has continued since World War II (Tuomisto, 1990). All these

processes are effective examples of spatial socialization, which typically create and mediate images of the existence of a homogeneous national culture and context (Paasi, 1996).

The territorially bounded images of Finnishness, constructed in relation to Russia/the Soviet Union rather than the other neighboring states, Norway and Sweden, have therefore been an essential part of the national narratives, and also a part of the foreign policy discourses, the rhetoric of immigration officials, etc. Many of these latter discourses, too, have entered the daily lives of ordinary people through the media, national education and national practices such as various spectacles and celebrations, e.g. military parades.

Some key elements seem to constantly emerge in the narratives regarding the national identity of Finland. The texts often evaluate the varying roles of nationalism and such elements as the state church ideology, the will for independence and the difficult history, emphasizing the folkloristic traditions, national symbols and stereotypic depictions of the Finns themselves, often emphasizing their common values, moral and protestant work ethic. All of these are typical factors that have been instilled through the Finnish national ideology and all-round education and all of them have an important spatial component (Paasi, 1997). The elements are typically 'circulated' in the media and in the geography textbooks used in schools, for instance, and have hence become significant elements in reproducing the national narratives.

As far as the narratives put forward by Finnish scholars in various academic fields are concerned, there seem to be notable differences among them. Thus cultural historians and folklorists typically stress the significance of specific cultural symbols for national identity (the *Kalevala* epic and the Finnish language, for instance), while political historians often search for the roots of Finnish nationalism and emphasize the meaning of certain periods of crisis for national integration and how the unanimous nation has been able to overcome them. It is very typical to argue how the Winter War (1939-1940) still influences Finnish consciousness more than any other episode in the country's history and recalls how the divide between the Reds and the Whites in Finland - that emerged in spring 1918, soon after Finland had gained its independence - disappeared in the process. One important expression of the significance of war in narratives of the Finnish nation, is the major role of war novels in the national literature (Paasi, 1996, 1997). Year after year this literary genre occupies the minds of both old and new generations, year after year masses of war novels are sold. These narratives hence effectively reproduce the history of conflicts and the meanings associated with boundaries and the Other.

Current foreign policy relations between Finland and Russia are good and economic co-operation is also increasing across the border between the two states. This is a fitting illustration of the more general trend for a change in the exclusive forms of territoriality, so that - instead of one territoriality - it is perhaps better to talk about territorialities (Taylor, 1994). This is particularly

obvious in contemporary Europe, where both territorial and institutional structures are changing at an increasing pace, and where some scholars have been ready to talk about a 'new medievalism' typified by overlapping authorities and contested loyalties between nation-states and other institutions and agencies (Anderson, 1996).

Finland and the European Union

A remarkable change in the intensity with which Finnish national identity is discussed has occurred in relation to Europe and the European Union during the 1990s. The plebiscite carried out in 1994 showed that 57 percent of the population was in favor of membership and 43 percent opposed. The Social Democrats, Swedish People's Party and right-wing Coalition Party supported membership without reservations, whereas the Central Party was divided and the Green Party and Leftist alliance were partly against membership and the Christian Party entirely so. In terms of Finland's spatial structure, the basic dividing lines were between cities and rural areas and between the urbanized south of the country and the rural north and east. Finland became a member of the EU at the beginning of 1995, but four years later, in 1998, a Gallup poll showed the proportion of Finns against the EU to be 46% and those in favor also 46%, i.e. the opposition had become stronger. This means that the European Union can hardly be expected to represent a significant unit of territorial identification for the Finns in the near future.

On the other hand, the discourses put forward by many – mainly American - scholars regarding the disappearance of boundaries, sovereignty and states have been almost non-existent in the Finnish academic context. On the contrary, it is interesting that during the 1990s, and particularly since 1995, when Finland entered the EU, researchers in the fields of ethnology, folklore, history, sociology etc. have also organized a number of very prominent conferences in which they have discussed the contemporary forms of Finnishness and national identity. In a way, membership of the European Union and globalization have generated a new discourse on national identity in Finland (Alasuutari and Ruuska, 1998). Since the media (newspapers, TV) tend to reproduce the views expressed in such conferences, researchers are actively contributing to the current understanding of what Finnish identity is and how it should be studied using research materials of different kinds. As we saw above, the representatives of different academic disciplines have their own points of interest in national identity, but through the publications arising from the conferences, they are all effectively involved in creating and reproducing collective ideas of Finnishness.

'We' and 'the Other'

In spite of the fact that Finland belongs to the EU, it has been perhaps the most closed state in Europe up to recent years with respect to foreign refugees or

immigrants, and its contemporary immigrant policy seems to be continuing in this tradition. This also creates a very fixed image of what citizenship means in the Finnish context. This question has become increasingly important in modern Europe, where the aim is to remove barriers to the free movement of people, ideas and capital between the states. The following list of questions, set out by Cesarani and Fulbrook (1996: 1), is thus crucial in the Finnish case, too. Who is a citizen? Who is entitled to be a part of a national community? Who is excluded? Who may cross what boundaries and reside and work within particular states, and who may not? What perceptions do insiders have of outsiders? How do different communities within states behave towards each other and define, manipulate and act upon their mutual perceptions?

Finland has been a curious island among the Nordic Countries, in that only two percent of the present population, some 100,000 people, were born outside the country. Currently some 80,000 people - 1.5% of the whole population of some 5 million - are citizens of some other country, representing a total of about 120 states. The majority of these, some 30,000 are from former Soviet areas. The Finnish state has accepted refugees since 1973, and they now number about 15,500. This is not a true figure, however, since some refugees have now received Finnish citizenship and others have left the country. Anyway, these figures serve to demonstrate that the narrative of one homogeneous Finnish identity, or Finnishness, is increasingly being contested. This narrative also effectively forgets the fact that the Finns themselves were very active migrants from the mid-19th century onwards. Some 300,000 Finns moved to the USA before World War II, for instance, and some 530,000 to Sweden during the post-war period.

Finnish citizenship can be obtained in four ways; 1) by birth, 2) by legitimation, 3) by application and 4) by announcement. The first two and the fourth presuppose that the person's father and/or mother is a Finnish citizen and that the child fulfils some other criteria as well. The third is most typical of refugees, and it requires a residence qualification of at least 5 years, the ability to speak Finnish or Swedish (the second official language of Finland) and the ability to earn one's living and to live a 'respectable life'. Immigrants usually meet these requirements in quite different ways depending on their age and position in their family. This means that from the viewpoint of a family, citizenship is a *process* in which the members of the families may differ in their performance. Therefore, in addition to the spatial context, the temporal dimension, particularly mediated by the category of generation, is also crucial in the shaping of citizenship (Paasi, 1996).

Finland has been a very closed country compared to most European states, and there have been violent attacks against immigrant groups and their enterprises, as well as demands that they should 'go home', voiced mainly by young extremists, often in the name of defending 'Finnishness' and national identity. The position of immigrants has been a confused one, with the refugees

from African states in the worst position, since by tradition they have been represented very negatively as 'the Other' in the Finnish media and the national education system, especially in the teaching of geography (Paasi, 1999b). Even if the images have gradually become more favorable, particularly since the 1960s, deprecatory overtones are still strong. The problem is not confined to the sphere of images, however, as the attitudes of immigration officials have also been criticized at times as inflexible, i.e. it is claimed that they make effective use of their own powers to define the fuzzy limits of citizenship. According to a recent research report, the police and members of the border guard detachment have the most negative attitude towards foreigners (Ollikainen, 1999). In fact, the UN Committee following up racial discrimination condemned the Finnish authorities in the mid-1990s for underestimating this problem. This is illustrative of the problem of how to deal with questions of human rights in a foreign policy framework that emerges from an exclusive tradition of realism. It has been argued that the realist framework has dominated much of Finnish foreign policy, and that the link between human rights and foreign policy was particularly complicated and sensitive during the Cold War period, when Finland was in a way forced to be very careful in its relations with the Soviet Union (Luoto, 1997: 13).

One important part of Finnish culture, and I would say, of banal nationalism since the gaining of independence, has been the endless wondering at this closedness, and - as the other side of the coin - suggestions of the homogeneity of the national culture. As I have shown above, this discourse itself has become important for the construction of an exclusive identity. Academic researchers often suggest this, and at least implicitly reproduce the rhetoric attached to it. The argument advanced by Tarasti (1990) is typical of this. As a semiotician, he writes that the Finnish world of cultural signs is poor and that these signs can often be interpreted using the same, overlapping codes. This would, according to him, provide the background for a nationally homogeneous and exclusive culture. While this view is highly ahistorical, and in a way takes the exclusiveness of culture for granted and then tries to find an interpretation for it, it seems to persist in discourses on Finnish culture and national identity (see Saukkonen, 1999).

I have suggested (Paasi, 1997) that the idea put forward by the cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1988), that culture consists of different levels, provides a much more fruitful approach to the problem of national culture. He distinguishes between three nested levels in a culture. The dominant level is hegemonic and manifests itself in values, norms and interpretations of traditions. These practices and inherent discourses are numerous, and many of them are of institutional origin, i.e. they are not based on the everyday life and experience of individuals even though they are reproduced in daily life. The most important of them everywhere is without doubt national education, but there are also additional contextual factors, of which compulsory military service, a certain

anthropomorphism in language which defines the nation or state as a collective actor, for instance, and the definition of national spectacles, heroes and other symbols are crucial in most cases, including that of Finland. Similarly, the national media have been important in reproducing images of a closed national culture.

National education in schools provides clear codes, symbols and practices for understanding what the Finnish territory is, who the country's neighbors are, what the national culture is, who 'we' are as a national grouping and as citizens, and how 'the other' may be excluded. These elements are typically based on the stereotyping of nature and culture and the providing of ideal criteria for collective identity and behavior, i.e. what our rights and duties are. As a more concrete example, numerous military practices similarly maintain continual images of threat and defense and define ideal criteria for 'us'. These practices become one part of the construction of the geographies of exclusion, whether we like it or not.

There are also 'residual' features that have developed in the past and may still be an active force influencing the cultural process, both narratives and social practices, and 'emerging' features that reflect the fact that new meanings, values and practices are repeatedly being created. This is the case with most nationalized practices that are likely to be reproduced mainly through spectacles and celebrations of the past and present. The future influences the present in the form of 'nationalized plans', for instance, i.e. in plans concerned with how to organize 'national' relations with neighbors, the other Nordic Countries, the European Union, NATO and so on. Identification of these three 'levels' of culture in the manner suggested by Williams can clearly help us to understand the nationalization of everyday life and the discourses regarding the isolation of Finnish identity. It can also provide some conceptual elements for interpreting developments occurring in other contexts, too.

Epilogue

The aim of this article has been twofold: firstly, to conceptually analyze the spatial elements and links between identity narratives and narratives on territory that are produced and reproduced on various spatial scales, and secondly, to illustrate how these deeply contextual elements have been historically constructed and reproduced in the case of one specific (nation-)state, Finland. Particular attention was paid to analyzing the role of the state in engendering the crucial institutions of territory and identity making. The idea of close links between national territory and national culture/identity has for a long time been an ideal in nationalist thinking, but it is an illusion that ignores the fact that 'national cultures' and identities are always socially constructed and based mainly on cultural exchange. In the contemporary world these images of national, territorially closed identities are to an increasing degree being challenged by flows of people, goods and capital and by 'hybrid identities' that

are based on sources other than strictly nationally defined elements of identity, or identities that emerge on the basis of a territorially defined group, 'we'. Refugees and displaced people everywhere are adding elements of their own to the existing cultural mixes. Furthermore, they can be networked to an increasing extent using modern technology, such as the Internet and e-mail.

These tendencies also challenge our fixed images of national identity. What are we discussing when we talk about national identity? Is it the expression of a sincere reflection of national history and memories or is it an explicit nationalist effort to construct boundaries between cultures and distinguish 'us' from 'the Other'? Are we reflecting tradition and the past, or are we trying to find elements that can be employed actively in practices of exclusion to keep the Other away? These dimensions are probably two sides of the same coin, since inclusion means concomitantly exclusion. Thus we should always be cautious when discussing 'national' cultures and identities.

These tendencies also challenge our geographical categories, such as territory, region and place, which have often been used to make spatial distinctions between social groupings. Doreen Massey (1995) uses the concept of place to include all spatial scales. Place may then be a local, regional, national or global category. She also aptly reminds us that the identities of places - on whatever scale - are never 'pure'. This must be the case with national identities, too, even though the 'purification of space' (Sibley, 1995; Falah and Newman, 1995) through symbolic and physical violence appears to be a crucially important strategy in the construction of national identities and images of citizenship. While identity seems to be based on differentiation from Others, we can ask in the increasingly globalizing world - in Massey's words (1995:67) - 'Must it necessarily be a differentiation which takes the form of opposition, of drawing a hard boundary between 'us' and 'them', in other words the geography of rejection?'

This certainly forces us to reflect on the connections between territory, political community and democracy as well. Although we can agree with recent comments on the perpetual power of the national state in a globalizing system of states (Anderson, 1996), it is equally clear that future democratic societies - at least those that Held (1995) labels as 'cosmopolitan communities' - will inevitably require increasing openness and 'crossings' of cultural, symbolic, legal and physical boundaries between states. In his humanistically oriented account, Entrikin (1999) argues that the moral significance of place becomes evident when places are conceived not as locations in space, but rather as related to individual subjects. It is through the latter that place draws together the objective realms of nature, society and culture. While place has been by tradition associated with the local and particular - a major assumption in the construction of the territorial trap - a serious challenge is posed to this idea, Entrikin argues, by understanding place as a process mediating the particular and the

universal. This requires that we, as researchers, should be ready to deconstruct the constitutive, at times mystified, elements of spatial identities and territoriality. As Appadurai (1996, cf. Isin and Wood, 1999) points out, if nations are 'imagined communities', it is the imagination that will have to carry us beyond the nation to search for non-national, transnational, or postnational markets for loyalty.

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