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## Nature, modernity, and diversity: Swedish national identity in a touring association's yearbooks 1886–2013

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### ABSTRACT

Using a discourse analytical method, this paper explores how Sweden and Swedish national identity are expressed in the yearbooks from the Swedish Tourist Association, and if there have been any changes in the discursive constructions during 127 years of publications. The results indicate changing discursive strategies during the period. Around 1900, a homogeneous national identity was constructed through ideas about a common essence and culture. In the following decades, perpetuation strategies justified the identity by referring to a common history. A shift occurred around 2000, with transformation and deconstruction strategies that questioned the established ideas about Sweden and Swedishness.

### KEYWORDS

Critical discourse studies; diachronic change; discursive strategies; national identity; Sweden; travelogues


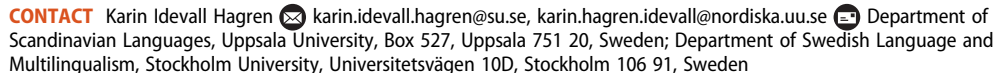
## Introduction

The more you probe into our beautiful, wide country, the more you learn to understand what treasures of nature poetry, of peculiar landscape formations and cultivation are hiding in out-lying districts, made accessible by new roads and means of communication. (Author's translation)

This description of Sweden can be found in the Swedish Tourist Association's yearbook from 1916 (p. 300), in a travelogue from Jämtland, a province in northern Sweden. The image that is evoked before the reader's inner sight is that of a beautiful, undisturbed landscape, wild but accessible, and genuinely Swedish.

In this article, I am interested in the construction of Swedish national identity, more specifically, how beliefs about what and who is Swedish have been traded over time and how discourses on Swedishness have been established. Following Anderson (1983), nations and national identities are considered to be imagined communities. 'Imagined communities' imply that national identity and nations are conceptions in people's consciousness. They are cultural artefacts which have been constructed and attributed meaning over time (Anderson, 1983). The rise and maintenance of nations, according to

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Anderson, is closely related to the emergence and development of printed language and the various possibilities for distributing texts that formulate narratives and myths of the nation and establish ideas of the nation's common history. The development of printed language offered an opportunity for people that would never meet in person to share a sense of identity from experiences such as reading the same books or papers.

Similarly to Anderson, Hall (1996, p. 612) describes nations as symbolic communities and emphasises the function of the national culture to construct identities by producing narratives and memories with which the people of the nation can identify.

An example of such narratives are travelogues that invite their readers to identify with a cultural heritage, a history and a landscape that is said to be typical for the nation. The Swedish Tourist Association's (STA's) yearbook is a publication that has offered a sense of common national identity for readers all over the country. Starting with a small audience, the publication increased its reach as the association grew to be the largest tourist association in Sweden. The present article aims to investigate discursive constructions of Swedishness in STA's yearbook from 1886–2013. How are Sweden and Swedish national identity expressed in the yearbooks? Have there been any changes in the discursive constructions over time?

According to Wodak et al. (2009), national identity is a context-dependent, staged identity, reproduced through various social practices, in particular *discursive* practice (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 29). Such practices are performed in everyday life, by the institutions and citizens of the nation. This is what Billig (1995) calls *banal nationalism*. In this study, travelogues are assumed to be an instance of banal nationalism, trading national identities through stories about the nation. Tourism, as the context where travelogues are produced, is understood not just to be a matter of economic activities, but a social and cultural practice (Rojek & Urry, 1997).

The oldest and largest tourist association in Sweden is STA, the Swedish Tourist Association (Svenska Turistföreningen), founded in 1885 and with 242,000 members<sup>1</sup> in 2020. The purpose of the association is, according to the original statutes (in Svenska Turistföreningens Årsskrift, 1886, p. 4), to 'develop and facilitate the tourist life in Sweden' and 'make more and more areas of our country available to tourists through planned exploration and work, whose results are published in the writings annually issued by the association' (author's translation). One of the publications brought out annually by the association is the yearbook, which was first published in 1886, and continued until 2013. The yearbooks contain travelogues, essays and informative texts about tourist attractions, certain provinces or cities, industries, persons of national interest and historical events. The yearbooks have a mass-educational purpose and through the yearbook the reader is offered an idea of what is considered to be typically Swedish, what is considered an exotic element in Sweden, how people in different parts of the country are thought of and what in Sweden is considered worthy of attention. The yearbooks were spread in large and constantly increasing editions. For example, the 1900 yearbook was printed in 29,000 copies (Svenska Turistföreningens Årsskrift, 1901, p. 28) and the 1944 yearbook in 165,000 copies (Svenska Turistföreningens Årsskrift, 1945, p. 370). According to the statutes quoted above, the yearbooks make public the results of the association's activities, but the texts also aim to inspire the readers to travel, and provide them with concrete instructions,

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<sup>1</sup>According to the webpage: <https://www.svenskatouristforeningen.se/om-stf/> (2 June 2020).

knowledge and recommendations. The yearbooks have had several editors and authors over the years.

The analysis of the yearbooks can be understood as increasing our knowledge of how Swedish national identity has been constructed over time. Such knowledge could shed some light on the discourses about national identity that are present in the public and political debates of today, in Sweden as well as in large parts of the world.

### **Studies of discursive constructions of national identity**

The most significant work on the discursive construction of national identity is that of Wodak. Wodak's research on this issue has, besides the development of the theoretical framework (Wodak et al., 2009), resulted in extensive analysis of how national identity is constituted in Austria (Wodak et al., 2009), Hungary (Wodak & Kovács, 2003) and Europe in general (Wodak, 2002, 2004, 2012).

Following the Critical Discourse Studies tradition, research on how national identity in contemporary Europe is constituted has been made within various contexts, including the media (Costelloe, 2014; Li, 2009; Şahin, 2011), political discourse (Henderson & McEwen, 2005; Jensen, 2014), law discourse (Kjær & Palsbro, 2008), royal speeches (Demiri & Fangen, 2018) and focus group discussions (Clary-Lemon, 2010). National identity has also been studied from a historical perspective, analysing certain historical epochs, i.e. in Ireland (Cusack, 2001; Kane, 2000) and the UK (Blaazer, 2016). However, there are few studies of the discursive construction of Swedish national identity.

### **Discursive constructions of Swedishness**

The present study focuses on the discursive development of a Swedish national identity, thus exploring the development of an exclusive ideal that accordingly gives benefits to those perceived as normative Swedes (cf. de los Reyes & Kamali, 2005). Studies on discourses of Swedish national identity, however, have mostly focused on discrimination of the 'other', in discourses on e.g. immigration. For example, Hultén (2006) analyses how four Swedish newspapers during 1945–2002 write about strangers, immigration, and immigration policies, and what discourses of Swedish national identity that emerge in the texts. A discourse of Sweden as a benevolent and successful nation is recurrent throughout the time period, a discourse also shown by other studies that primarily focus on the representation of immigrants (Hagren Idevall, 2016).

For a long time, the indigenous people of Sweden, the Sámi, have been positioned as 'the other'. In a study by Hagström Yamamoto (2010), Sámi and Swedish identity in narratives about northern Sweden, from 1870 to 2000, are analysed, showing how Sámi are differentiated from Swedish people, who are constituted as a homogenous population with a common culture and a common history (Hagström Yamamoto, 2010, p. 34, 178). Hagström Yamamoto (2010, p. 75) shows how various contradictions in the descriptions of Swedish and Sámi people contribute to shape the national discourse, describing Swedes as representatives of the future, of residence, agriculture and civilisation, while Sámi are described as representatives of the past, of nomadism, reindeer husbandry and inability to develop. This dichotomous and discriminatory discourse can also be found in the construction of other national identities, for example in the othering of

Travellers in Ireland during the growth of nationalism in the late nineteenth century (MacLaughlin, 1998).

Discourses of the Sámi as 'the other' still occur, a point which is explored by Zhang and Müller (2018) in a study of how Sámi within the tourist business are represented in Swedish newspapers between 1982 and 2015. The study shows how Sámi are still portrayed as the 'exotic other' in the global travel industry, but also that tourism is an opportunity for the Sámi to challenge and transform such prejudices.

Though not concerned primarily with national identity, Erlandson-Hammargren (2006) shows how different perspectives on nature have been expressed in STA's yearbooks during the period 1886–1915. In the early years, a national romantic perspective is dominant; the texts emphasise the grand nature of, primarily northern, Sweden. National Romanticism had a large impact on Swedish art, culture and tourism at this time (Facos, 1998). Later on, the nature of the province is in focus. Erlandson-Hammargren (2006) explains the mythical descriptions of the native environments within the context of the unification and modernisation that was a part of the national project in Sweden at the time. Nature was used a means to arouse patriotic feelings and thereby unite the people and the nation (p. 380).

## Method

The theoretical and methodological framework of this study is that of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (Van Dijk, 2013; Wodak, 2016). Discourse is understood as social practices representing, creating and transforming the world (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Foucault, 1982). Discourse and society are mutually constitutive of each other, and analysing discursive events is a method for studying social phenomena, relations and power (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). As the social and institutional context change, discourses change, and discursive acts are responsible for the construction, maintenance, transformation and deconstruction of social conditions (Foucault, 1982; Wodak et al., 2009, p. 8). Within the context of the Swedish Touring Association as an institution within Swedish society, discourses reproduced in the yearbooks change as the institution and the society change, and power relations constitutive of inclusion and exclusion, for example, will fluctuate over time.

CDS is a critical approach, which implies a problem-oriented perspective when analysing text, speech and images in their social contexts. From a CDS perspective, nations and national identities are constructed and maintained through discursive practices, which form social structures. National identities do not have an inherent status as self-evident, but must be taught and traded. This reproduction follows certain principal patterns, identified by Wodak et al. (2009):

[...] the discursive construction of national identity revolves around the three temporal axes of the past, the present and the future. In this context, origin, continuity/tradition, transformation, (essentialist) timelessness and anticipation are important ordering criteria. Spatial, territorial, and local dimensions (expanse, borders, nature, landscape, physical artefacts and intervention in 'natural space') are likewise significant in this discursive construction of national identity. (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 26)

Adding a discourse-historical frame to national identity means analysing how discourses have emerged, disappeared, been established, and been contested in different historical contexts (cf. Wodak, 2016). The present study aims to capture the development

of national identities 1886–2013, and to disassemble the myths about the nation that Anderson (1983) referred to.

In order to analyse how national identities are constituted in text and speech, Wodak et al. (2009) have developed a methodological framework, a model which combines a plurality of methods, and comprises several dimensions for analysis. The three-fold model is introduced below.

### **Content analysis**

Following Wodak et al. (2009, pp. 30–31), this study performs a thematic analysis. Using a hermeneutic-abductive approach (cf. Wodak et al., 2009, p. 3), the themes in the present study have been identified in the process of searching for keywords associated with Sweden and Swedes in the texts, while analysing strategies (Table 1) and linguistic realisations (Table 2).

### **Strategies**

Strategies for the construction of national identity are realised through goal oriented, but not necessarily intentional, discursive acts (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 32). Wodak et al. identify four macro-strategies: to construct national identity, to perpetuate and justify national identity, to transform national identity and to deconstruct national identity (p. 33). These macro-strategies are served by various other micro-strategies. Table 1 illustrates the strategies analysed; the model is based on Wodak et al. (2009, pp. 33–34), but some of the micro-strategies are adjusted to the Swedish data.

### **Means and forms of realisation**

Themes as well as strategies are realised linguistically on a lexical and syntactic level. In Table 2, a sample of the most salient features realising sameness, difference, transformation, continuity, and origin of Swedish national identity is introduced (cf. Wodak et al., 2009, p. 35).

### **Data**

The data consist of a sample of 23 yearbooks from STA. The books are each on average 250 pages long. Since 1916 and onwards each volume has a theme. The themes are for example Swedish provinces, such as *Dalarna* or *Norrbottnen*, a certain landscape type, such as *The Woods*, or retrospective themes, such as *STA 50 years*. The primary principle of selection has been to include a book from every seventh year, but some volumes have been added or removed due to their themes and contents. Volumes with Swedishness as an explicit theme (e.g. 2009, *Genuinely Swedish*) have therefore been added. The 23 books included in the data set are published in the following years: 1886, 1887, 1894, 1901, 1908, 1916, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1935, 1945, 1952, 1959, 1966, 1973, 1980, 1986, 1993, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2013.

From the data, excerpts were made of every section that in any way concerns Swedishness or Sweden. A list of key words has been used to identify relevant sections. The most central key words were *Sverige*, *svensk*, and *svenskhhet* (Sweden, Swede and Swedishness) in all grammatical forms, but also words like *norrlänning* (person from Norrland), *skåning*

**Table 1.** Discursive strategies (based on Wodak et al., 2009, pp. 33–34).

Macro-strategies	Constructive strategies	Perpetuation strategies	Transformation strategies	Destructive strategies
Purpose	To construct and establish a national identity	To maintain and reproduce a national identity	To transform established national identities into another identity	Dismantling or disparaging parts of an existing national identity without replacing it
Micro-strategies	1. Presupposition of sameness (a) Construction of a homogeneous ‘us’ (b) Positive self-presentation of Sweden, including the construction of an essential Swedishness (c) Unification of the Swedish identity through comparison to other nations (d) Unification through relations between the provinces in Sweden 2. Presupposition of difference (a) Swedes are contrasted to other groups, e.g. Sámis (b) Negative presentations of ‘the other’, including the construction of essentialist characteristics	1. Presupposition of sameness (a) The presupposition of essentialist features (b) Referring to a common ‘we’ (c) Referring to a common Swedish history and heritage	1. Challenging national discourses on Sweden (a) Challenging essentialist descriptions of Swedes and Sweden (b) Questioning the presuppositions of sameness 2. Transforming the meaning of being Swedish (a) New descriptions of who is included in the Swedish national identity	1. Questioning of the Swedish identity (a) Denying Swedishness (b) Distancing from the concept of something or someone being Swedish

**Table 2.** Means and forms of realisation (based on Wodak et al., 2009, p. 35).

Type	Linguistic realisation	Function
Perspective	Personal reference; anthroponymic generic terms; personal pronouns	Creating sameness and difference
Relations	Synecdoche; metonymy	Creating relations
Temporality	Temporal prepositions; adverbs of time	Constructing a Swedish history
Affect	Words indicating emotions	Unifying Sweden through the affect for the nation
Evaluation	Negative and positive evaluation	Creating sameness, difference and hierarchies
Characteristics	Nouns and verbs for personality, appearance, activities, occupation, mentality	Creating essentialist images of e.g. Swedes and Sámi
Definiteness	Definite and indefinite nouns	Realises presuppositions about e.g. Swedes
Negations	Not, never	Deconstruct national identity
Distancing	Quotation marks; questions	Transform and deconstruct national identity

(person from Skåne), *same* (Sámi), and the Swedish words for civilisation, nation and country (*civilisation*, *nation* and *land*).

Travelogues are produced within a context that most likely will hold certain discourses. It is expected to find positive discourses about the nation, since the association's aim is to attract tourists. Since the target group is Swedish citizens, it is also expected that the narratives invite identification, to strengthen the desire to explore one's own country. Considering the tourism context, it is also likely that nature and cultural and historic sites are highlighted.

## Results

One significant result is that there is a change in the discursive strategies for the constitution of national identity during the time period. Thus, the result is divided into three sections, each accounting for the dominant strategies and themes during a certain period of time.

### *1886–1930: towards a common Swedish identity*

The formation of nations and national identities is a major theme for the latter half of the nineteenth century (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983). Industrialism and modernity both facilitate and require greater coherence within nations. According to Gellner (1983), nationalism is a consequence of modernity, and can be considered an ideology that requires centralised services and cultural homogeneity. In Sweden, this is shown in the geographical unification and the development of the infrastructure, with railroads, traffic networks, and school systems (Elenius, 2001, p. 396). STA was a part of this modernisation process. For example, it was not until the railroad reached the north of Sweden that it became possible for tourists to go there. The homogenisation is prominent in the discursive constructions of national identity appearing in the STA's yearbooks during this time (cf. Erlandson-Hammargren, 2006).

Characteristic of this period is the dominance of constructive strategies, realised through the micro-strategies presupposition of sameness and presupposition of difference. The national identity is primarily constructed based on three themes: the love for the homeland (*fosterlandskärlek*: 'foster land love'<sup>2</sup>), nature and modernity. An overarching

<sup>2</sup>Some words will be literally translated from Swedish to English in order to make visible the meaning of their components.



theme is Swedish homogeneity, indicating a common essence, common characteristics and a common culture (cf. Wodak et al., 2009).

In the yearbooks published at the end of the nineteenth century and around the turn of the century, the love for the homeland and the love for the province are linked to each other through affect and synecdoche as a rhetorical trope for the unification of Sweden. The love of the nation goes through the love of the province, the place best known to ordinary people. In the travelogues, readers from all over Sweden get to know other provinces, and by illustrating the part, the local, an illustration of the whole, the nation, appears.

Nature plays a central role in this discourse. The love for the province and the nation goes via the love of nature, which was also shown by Erlandson-Hammargren (2006) who identified the representations of nature in STA's yearbooks as a patriotic project. A similar discourse can be found in the German-speaking nations, where ideas about *Heimat* (homeland, native region) have played a significant role in the construction of national identity since the late eighteenth century, represented by images of nature (Blickle, 2004).

The discourse is illustrated by example 1, an excerpt from the yearbook 1901, where the nature of the province Västergötland is said to display *a wealth of variety and beauty* and arouse emotions, *light the love*, within the people of Västergötland (all examples are translated by the author and old fashioned word forms have been changed in cases where this has no effect on the meaning of the word).

#### Example 1

I have deliberately sought out the most uncultivated and hidden districts of the neighbourhood of Västergötland, as they seem to be caught in the act in the ordinary everyday life. I have wanted to illustrate the neighbourhood in its poorness, the nature as it appears around us, where it is as least remarkable – and I have sought to show that even in this modest environment our landscape hides a wealth of variety and beauty that can well light the love of a landscape's son. In this sense alone, I have picked these simple flowers by the country road, as a simple little act of gratitude to the foster province that first taught me to love the foster land. (STA, 1901, p. 284)

On a lexical level, nature as a theme is realised through words such as *nature*, *environment* and *flowers*. The province is spoken of as *the neighbourhood [bygden] of Västergötland*, *landscape* and *foster province*. The last sentence shows how the flowers by the road become a symbol for gratitude towards the foster province which taught the writer to love the motherland. The emotional relations between nature, the province and the nation are part of a unifying construction, where sameness is presupposed. The use of the pronoun *we* is frequent, and refers to common experiences of the province and the country.

Modernity is another theme during this period. Towards the end of the period, the idea of Swedes as a modern, or highly cultured people (*kulturfolk*) is taken for granted. In example 2, this statement is realised with static verbs: the Swedes *are* a *kulturfolk*, Sweden *belongs* to the big world. However, it is not entirely taken for granted, since a supplement still has to explain that *it is known enough*. In addition, the distancing from ancient times when Sweden did not belong to *the great world* is a micro-strategy to justify the construction of Sweden as a modern nation at the time being.

### Example 2

The Swedes are a highly-cultured people, and Sweden belongs to the great world – that is known enough and does not need further explication. It is harder to say for how long the Swedes have been a ‘modern highly-cultured people’, but no one would say that our country belonged to the great world even during ancient times and the Middle Ages or even during the beginning of the new age. However, how far our country was situated, how exotic we actually were in the eyes of the ancient highly-cultured people, is something we rarely think about, and that could be a good thing for our self-esteem to ponder for a while. (STA, 1929, p. 89)

In example 2, Swedes are constructed as modern in relation to other modern people, positioning Sweden as part of the world. The most common strategy for constructing Swedes as a united modern people is otherwise the presupposition of difference from Sámi people, who are consistently constructed as ‘the other’ (cf. Hagström Yamamoto, 2010).

Discourses of racism appear in the descriptions of Sámi people in the early yearbooks. Scientific racism (*rasbiologi*) was an established and institutionalised ideology throughout Sweden during this period (Broberg, 1995). Studies of race were widely conducted, with the aim of mapping what was claimed to be different human races. Sámi and Swedes were not considered to belong to the same race at this time, and the Sámi were subjected to extensive assaults, including measurements and documentation of the skull and body (Broberg, 1995). Part of this pseudoscience aimed to identify innate characteristics, and in the texts of the yearbooks there are several examples of essentialist descriptions that construct a Swedish and a Sámi temper, appearance and behaviour. This is illustrated by example 3.

### Example 3

The skin of mountain Lapps, seamed by weather and wind, and their endamaged eyes cannot be seen among the forest Lapps, who look particularly light-skinned and differ little from the Swedes as far as the face colour is concerned. Broad faces are also often found among the pure Swedes up here, why that sign as well becomes rather uncertain. More certain signs are the flat neck and especially the smaller body height, which is quite distinct among the forest Lapps. But as for the rest, they look very Swedish, with pretty good beards or moustaches and occasionally with a not too small embonpoint, even in cases when one cannot suspect race-mixing. However, when it comes to temper they differ considerably from their Swedish neighbours in the Lappmark. Their dignity and inert self-consciousness are generally unfamiliar to the Lapps, who do not have such high thoughts about themselves. Instead, they are often simple and lively and considerably less dis-gracious than the Swedish settlers, but at the same time often lacking their seriousness and strength. (STA, 1894, pp. 63–64)

In this example, Sámi people are not included in the Swedish *we*, but are referred to as *they*. The racist discourse appears in the representations of purity, as in *the pure Swedes*, and impurity, as in descriptions of *race-mixing*. It is also prominent in the essentialist descriptions of *signs*. Appearance and character are reproduced through generalising descriptions, formulated in definite form, *the flat neck*, *the smaller body height*, and attributes realised through static verbs, such as saying that Sámi *are simple and lively*. These stereotypical descriptions of the ‘other’ distinguish Sámi and Swedes from each other, and simultaneously reveal and maintain the normative position of the privileged Swede (cf. Hagren Idevall, 2016; Hagström Yamamoto, 2010).

Example 3 also shows how the contrast between Swedes and Sámi is made from the perspective of the Swedes. It is the Sámi who *look very Swedish*. The comparisons could be understood in the context of the ‘Swedification process’, a political mission in the end of the nineteenth century. The process, also to be considered a process of homogenisation, was part of the modernist project, where the state had the ambition to assimilate minority groups, such as Sámi and Finns, into Swedish culture (Elenius, 2001). Moreover, the example reveals the gendered nature of national discourse (cf. Cusack, 2000). The formulation ‘they look very Swedish, with pretty good beards and moustaches’ presuppose a male norm for the Sámi population.

In the yearbooks from this time, the unification rather occurs between the provinces of Sweden, both by emphasising sameness and recognising difference between people from e.g. Dalarna, Småland and Skåne. This too could be related to the ongoing homogenisation process, and the official ambition to integrate the rural parts of the country into the Swedish national construct to increase the state’s international competitiveness (cf. Elenius, 2001). However, in the yearbooks, the assimilation of the rural provinces seem to be more inclusive than the Swedification of Sámi. Though ascribing the people of the provinces different characteristics and appearances, they are all presupposed to be Swedish.

### **1931–1970: upholding a common Swedish identity**

During this 40-year period, Europe undergoes World War II, and then the Cold War. In Sweden, the welfare society is built up, and improvements of the social standard in the whole country are in focus (Ottosson, 2008). Now, a different discursive strategy is dominant. The national identity is maintained by perpetuation strategies. History becomes a central theme, as Sweden’s history is constructed as a common heritage for the Swedish people. The modernisation, which during the first period was imminent in time, is now part of history, and Sweden is presupposed to be a modern society. In the continued construction of a united and homogeneous Sweden, these sustaining strategies play a significant role, as they consolidate the basis on which national identity remains.

Example 4 shows how Swedish identity is shaped and maintained through references to a common Swedish heritage, in the form of *petroglyphs, menhirs, medieval churches, castles and courthouses*. This heritage is described as *memories of our country*, presupposing sameness and a common origin. The insight in the history of the nation is said to give a *broadened horizon to the feeling of Swedishness*. This feeling is realised in definite form and is presupposed to pre-exist within the reader.

#### Example 4

The motto of STA: get to know your country! Exceptionally similar to the motto of the Nordic Museum and Skansen, formulated by Artur Hazelius: Know yourself! We cannot gain such knowledge without burying ourselves in the memories of our country. Petroglyphs, menhirs, medieval churches, burgs from the Vasa era, castles and entails from the period of greatness and courthouses from the Age of Liberty are scattered along our roads and could make our journey tremendously richer, if we learn to listen to what they have to tell us about how people lived and looked at themselves and their lives in former times. Such things are worth remembering, because it gives a broadened horizon to the feeling of Swedishness. It must also become an obligation for all of us to safeguard

these national monuments, so that they are not distressed by the traffic and the juggernaut of effectiveness, but get to live on among us and our children and enrich the image of the land we have inherited from hordes of migrants and Vikings, Caroline warriors and Linnean flower cultivators, Gustavian cavalry, the craftsmen and timeless peasant families. (STA, 1945, p. 13)

Swedish history is illustrated by references to great men in the past, such as the botanist Carl von Linné, the ethnologist Artur Hazelius, the sixteenth-century king Gustav Vasa and his sons, and the seventeenth-century kings Karl XI and Karl XII. These men recur in many texts as ideal types of the common Swedish history. Once again, a male norm is assumed and men are presupposed to be creators of the nation and the citizens (cf. Cusack, 2000). Biographical descriptions and tributes to people of national interest refer almost exclusively to men, and thus the reader gets the impression that the national project has been accomplished by men, not women.

In research, nationalism has often been characterised as either 'ethnic', with emphasis on a shared cultural heritage, or 'civic', focusing on the nation as political territory (Nairn, 1999). The perpetuation strategies of this period is dominated by the ethnic side of nationalism. Cultural and historical aspects are significant in this backward-looking perspective. The use of history and national memories in the construction and perpetuation of national identity has been shown by previous research (Cusack, 2011; Wodak et al., 2009), especially handling war and post-war periods as a part of the national identity (Kulyk, 2011). But unlike most other European nations, Sweden has been at peace for over 200 years, and the historical focus goes far back to 'golden ages' such as the Vasa era and Caroline era. Situating an idyllic past in such 'golden ages' is a means to strengthen the shared national identity (cf. Cusack, 2011, p. 223). The unified Swedish national identity is also strengthened by the connections made between the past, the present and the future (cf. Wodak et al., 2009, p. 26), when the nation is said to be something we have taken over from e.g. *Vikings* and *Caroline warriors*, and which we in our turn will hand over to our children.

In addition, Example 4 indicates that modernity, that has previously been a central theme for constructing Swedish identity, at this point is more of a hindrance to the maintenance of the national identity. The *traffic and the juggernaut of effectiveness* threatens to destroy those national historical monuments that during this period is part of the perpetuation of the nation. This reaction to modernity could be understood in the context of STA being a tourist association that cherishes nature, as a tourist destination and as a central part of national identity.

The unification of Sweden is perpetuated during this period, and Example 5 illustrates the unifying purpose of STA, where national identity is constructed through a common goal for the future.

#### Example 5

Home, home province [*hembygd*] and fosterland! No one can demand that the meaning of these words shall be clearly understood by them, who spend all their life in the dull everyday and that have seen little or nothing of their country. But we shall unite, and vitalise these words to all of our people. In this, the association for which I now speak, also wants to take part, as much as it can. If that goal could be achieved, we would reach each other's hands more easily above the alarm of today's battles, and with collective strength, but without too much effort, solve the national problems that the future might give us. For

then, all of us have understood, just like the captured Caroline warrior, what it means to be home. (STA, 1935, p. 22)

In the first two sentences of example 5, it is presupposed that the common Swedish identity exists, but that the meaning of it must be understood. Such an understanding is achieved through the unification of the country's various parts, which is facilitated by people experiencing their country. This experience can be offered by STA. The home, the province and the nation are constructed as a unit with a special meaning that can be made alive if *we* all, Swedes, are united. The *goal*, the common future, is reached through cooperation, but also with reference to the common history, represented by the captive warrior of the Caroline era.

### **1971–2013: the formation of a new national identity**

During this period, all four strategies occur. Earlier discursive constructions of Swedish national identity are maintained, while a new Swedishness takes shape, both through new constructions and changes of old identities.

There is a lot going on in Sweden during this time, and it is reflected in the yearbooks. A central theme is migration and integration; Swedish society is populated to a greater extent than before by people who were not born in Sweden or whose parents were not born in Sweden. Another central theme is individualism. There is a larger focus on the individual, and a greater variety of perspectives is represented in the travelogues, e.g. in the form of interviews with different people. At the same time, Sweden is being constructed as part of a global world. The European community becomes stronger after the end of the Cold War, and Sweden joins the EC (later the EU) in 1994. New technology provides new conditions for the mobility and communication between different nations as well as the possibility to sell the national identity as a brand. Thus, commodification is yet another theme during this time. The construction and perpetuation of Swedish national identity have been going on for about a hundred years in the yearbooks, and the strategies are still ongoing. These strategies are dominant in the yearbooks published during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, while the yearbooks published in the new millennium contains all four strategies. In this section, I will focus on this shift in discourse, and the new perspectives on national identity that is reproduced.

Swedish identity is constructed in relation to other nations and to an international market. Swedish national identity is constructed as a brand, where the Swedish symbols that previously existed in constructions of a common heritage and a shared love for the homeland, now figure in commercial discourses where the unique Swedishness strengthen the links between Sweden and abroad, rather than the bonds within the country. A transformative strategy appears when established discourses on Swedish national identity are used from new perspectives, as in Example 6.

#### Example 6

Most contemporary 'Swedish' products – designed in Sweden, often produced in low-wage countries – are created by a generation of connected globetrotters, creators, innovators, imitators, samplers that use Swedishness as an advantage on the market, a rather odd angle. Saab's soul was described as 'quirky' – eccentric – by a leading American motor journalist; we ourselves think that Saab is the most common of common in the cool commercial

picture, surrounded by references such as curved wooden chairs, granite rocks and budding birches.

You could replace the car with anything in today's design market: laser cut tables, ecology chairs, catalogue homes, medicines, everything seems to fit into the background of Swedish nature and environmental awareness. In today's market, the national products are distributed as emotions and appeals. Sweden as a country associated with raw material has been a subtly floating, sellable idea about political transparency, environmental thinking, freedom of speech and social safety nets. (STA, 2009, p. 22)

In Example 6, the idea of a Swedish essence is questioned. The quotation marks on 'Swedish' products imply that what we believe to be Swedish is in fact not – the products are rarely manufactured in Sweden and the creators of these products are described as people directed towards the outside world, *globetrotters*. At the same time, phenomena typical of Sweden are listed: *political transparency, environmental thinking, freedom of speech* and *social safety nets*. The inside perspective is mixed up with an outside perspective that defines what is Swedish: it is *eccentric, odd*. And this transformed identity of Sweden is for sale.

Swedish nature as a theme is still to be found. The writer refers to *wooden chairs, granite rocks, budding birches* and *environmental awareness*. Even the emotions that have associated nature with Swedish national identity for almost a hundred and fifty years remain, but now for the purpose of selling: *In today's market, the national products are distributed as emotions and appeals*.

Among the symbols selling Sweden abroad are the Sámi, who are still constructed as something exotic (cf. Zhang & Müller, 2018). In the yearbook from 2005, a person in the tourist industry says in an interview that we can attract foreign tourists with 'the exotic and exclusive, such as dog sledding and meetings with Sámi culture' (author's translation). At the same time, there are several examples of articles written by the Sámi or where the Sámi themselves speak. A larger variety of voices and perspectives is now represented in the yearbooks.

The unity and homogeneity that were constructed in previous periods are taken for granted. There are no longer any strategies to construct or maintain the notion that the provinces are part of a whole. A new unity is about to be constructed, where people originating from other countries are to be integrated into Sweden. Integration is a central theme in the discursive transformations of Swedish identity in the yearbooks from 2000 and onwards. Example 7 is a quotation from an interview with a person working with an integration project that STA is involved in.

#### Example 7

I have worked with, and followed the immigration issues for more than fifteen years. I consider the increasing segregation a ticking bomb. It is, in my view, essential that adolescents originating from different countries, with different parental tongue, religion and culture get the opportunity to meet and get to know each other. Diversity enriches the society as well as the individuals. All inhabitants in Sweden, regardless of origin and background, should feel valuable and involved in society. (STA, 2003, p. 12)

In Example 7 there is no Swedish *we*. Rather, the perspective is individual; the interviewee's role as an actor within the project is in focus. Diversity is described by positive evaluations as something that *enriches both society and the individuals*. The unity that is

constructed here is also linked to emotions and the Swedish nation. But instead of considering either the feeling or the Swedishness as innate, the national identity is constructed as a citizen identity, where Sweden's citizens, regardless of *origin and background, parental tongue, religion and culture*, should achieve the sense of national identity through the meeting with each other. The sense of Swedishness is achieved by being *involved in society*. This construction of national identity corresponds with the notion of 'civic', rather than 'ethnic' nationalism (cf. Nairn, 1999). Thus, there is a shift in focus from the cultural and ethnic aspects of nationalism to the ones concerning the nation as a territory providing certain rights for its citizens.

Another strategy that has not occurred during the earlier periods is the deconstruction of Swedish national identity. The deconstruction is done by questioning that there is something genuinely Swedish. In example 8, an interviewee makes a reflection on the modern Sweden, bringing forth themes as modernity, history and Swedish culture. Words such as *myth* and *seemingly genuine* occur, as well as rejection by putting the word '*Swedish*' in brackets.

#### Example 8

Smoking chimneys signalled progress, development and work. When industrialism changed the nation's rural provinces and new societies and living conditions were created in a short time, identity was grounded in what was old and seemingly secure. The idea of Sweden as an ancient nation with a past of grand manner was born in the national exaltation of the late nineteenth century, when ideas simultaneously around Europe were formulated about nations united by language and common history, visible in folk tales, folk costumes and folk music.

- The feeling of becoming united appeared. People justified their existence with reference to what was old and seemingly genuine. It was a political endeavour that the nation should equal the state and that affinity creates the nation, says Cecilia Hammarlund-Larsson. (STA, 2009, p. 15)

Example 8 begins with a summary of how Swedish identity has emerged. The deconstruction of the national identity is evident in the renunciation of history as the legitimisation of a common identity: *what was old and seemingly secure*. The writer also calls the construction of a common Swedish history an *idea*. In the second paragraph, the essential Swedish identity is deconstructed when the authenticity of the old and *seemingly genuine* is questioned. Noteworthy is that the interviewee is the chief supervisor of the Nordic Museum, founded by Hazelius who earlier was made a representative for Swedish cultural heritage (see Example 4). This indicates that some institutions are still in a position to define the Swedish national identity.

## Concluding discussion

This article has investigated discursive constructions of Swedishness in the Swedish Tourist Association's yearbook 1886–2013, more specifically, how Sweden and Swedish national identity are expressed in the yearbooks and if there have been any changes in the discursive constructions over time.

The results show that there have indeed been changes. Around the turn of the century 1900, only constructive strategies are present. The national sentiment is built up and the

Swedes are unified through the idea of a homogeneous nation with a common essence and a common culture. The national identity is constructed by creating a feeling of 'us', e.g. by promoting the love of the motherland, through the love of the local and the nature (cf. Erlandson-Hammargren, 2006). In the mid-twentieth century, constructive as well as perpetuation strategies are current. The homogeneity is now the discursive ground for establishing a modern, Swedish identity, perpetuated by the narratives of a common past, present and future (cf. Wodak et al., 2009). Around the millennium, there is a new shift. What previously served as building material for creating and maintaining Swedishness has begun to be questioned and deconstructed. Our time is characterised by conflicting and polyphonic discourses that make up a new, heterogeneous image of Sweden.

National identities are context-dependent (Wodak et al., 2009), and the discourses about the Swedish nation are clearly following the development of Swedish society. Industrialism and modernity as social epochs have had great influence on the national project, and this is reflected in the yearbooks during the first decades of publications. Similarly, the idea of a collective, national community that had a perpetuation function in the middle period is replaced by an individualistic, and later also commercial discourse, which makes contemporary national identities multifaceted. The diversity in Swedish society also affects the constructions of national identity and the ideas about what it means to be Swedish. There is, moreover, a tendency for national identity to imply male gender and relate to male actors, which reflects and reproduces a male norm (cf. Cusack, 2000).

So far the social and historical context, but the institutional context responsible for the production of the yearbooks should also have an impact on the discourses on national identity. STA as a tourist association has an interest in Sweden as a geographical location. Considering this, it is not an unexpected result that nature and Swedish provinces are highlighted. Since the yearbooks are published in Swedish only, the target group is domestic tourists. STA's explicit goal has been to teach Swedes about Sweden. In order to encourage Swedes to explore their own country, emotions are appealed to, primarily through the creation of a shared love for the nature, the province and the nation (cf. Erlandson-Hammargren, 2006), and later for Swedish values, trademarks and social safety nets.

One risk with creating a homogeneous national identity is that some citizens might be excluded. The emphasis on a common history and a common culture excludes those who do not fulfil the criterions for being a part of 'us'. This can be compared to the exclusive idea of *Heimat*, suggested by Blickle (2004), and also with the discriminatory tradition-modernity continuum that for example have excluded Travellers from the national discourse in Ireland (MacLaughlin, 1998). In the early yearbooks, Sámi people were constructed as the exotic 'other', preventing them from counting as Swedes. This risk is still highly present in modern, multicultural societies, where immigrants are often positioned as 'the other' in contrast to those considered to be 'ethnic' (Hagren Idevall, 2016; Hultén, 2006).

During the period of investigation, STA seems to shift focus from 'ethnic nationalism' to 'civic nationalism', and a consequence of this appears to be a more inclusive understanding of who is Swedish. The value of diversity and integration are highlighted, and multiple perspectives on Swedishness are represented. Whether this is a consequence of the



association's policy or a reflection of a heterogeneous society with conflicting discourses on national identity will take further research to show.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes on contributor

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