

THE OXFORD–UPPSALA PROGRAMME

RESEARCH

The research collaboration provides a shared interpretative approach to historical developments of common interest from the period of the early modern states and up to the twentieth century welfare states. By a selection of empirical cases, we explore the routes to modernity in modern Europe in the period 1600–2000. One particular interest is the study of the inter-relationship of empire, nation and local communities. Countries such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Habsburg Lands will be compared and analysed from a European point of view. For instance, non-revolutionary countries, such as Sweden and the United Kingdom, provide a contrast to countries like France, Germany and the Habsburg Lands, which have a history of revolutionary movements. This broad theoretical approach to the nature of state- and nation-building addresses the question of evolution and revolution, as institutionalised phenomena in early-modern and modern Europe. By analysing specific empirical cases, it is possible to explore why the European countries have chosen different routes to modernity and how these differences should be explained. Which institutions within and between countries can be seen as being more stabilising than others?

A: European warfare and the formation of states, 1600–1914.

More specifically, the research co-operation will be divided into three parts. The first part deals with the nature of the early modern state. The focus is on questions relating to the character of the state and how it appropriated, redistributed and used material resources as well as the societal effects of this system. But the system also works the other way round, which means that within the first theme questions dealing with how society and its different developments changed the states are also of paramount importance. Within the theme two major sub-themes have been identified as of special interest to Oxford and Uppsala. Both of them are, needless to say, central to modern historiography:

- 1) The ‘military-fiscal’ state of the 17th and 18th centuries and its relationship to the economy, landholding, military recruitment and poor relief.
- 2) The ‘military-industrial-welfare’ state of the 19th and 20th centuries and particularly the different routes taken by Great Britain, which was a belligerent power and industrialised early, and Sweden, which stayed out of war and major military alliances after 1814, industrialised later, but arrived at the welfare state before Great Britain.

The first sub-theme has, for a long time, been central for historical research in Sweden and Uppsala. It has also been the centre for international research on Swedish history. In this respect Michel Roberts especially ought to be mentioned. During the 19th century several issues related to the 17th century state were ideologically important to the formation of the 19th century Swedish nation. Hence these questions became a main task of Swedish nineteenth century historians, especially in Uppsala. This tradition is still strong although we also find it crucial to analyse the state from a critical perspective which raises new research questions.

For almost thirty years (1960–1980) the History Department in Uppsala paid a lot of attention to questions related to more military issues, economic and social aspects and effects of the “military-fiscal” state. During the 1980s the research interest began to shift towards more cultural and ideological approaches, which has grown stronger in the 1990s, as one might have expected. However, Uppsala still has a strong research tradition on problems related to warfare, the state and its resources. For instance, professor Lindegren has moved from the study of the social effects of warfare and state-formation towards the study of the state as a resource-allocation system. This research field deals with the question of how the state resources were appropriated and redistributed in society and finally utilised. This in turn has led over to questions on war and its importance for state-building processes and questions about the very warfare. Especially two topics related to warfare are of great interest. Firstly, our knowledge of logistics is flawed. War and warfare is usually understood from political, ideological and religious points of view. However, Lindegren would argue that the understanding of wars is often a misunderstanding. Instead, the wars seem mainly to have been powered by other kinds of logics. Most prominent among these were issues concerning military logistic and war finances. It is self-evident that this preliminary understanding of war, warfare, logistics, resources and state-building calls for comparative research. Within the framework of the first sub-theme, Uppsala is conducting research on military logistics, war finances and related issues. We are also in the phase of starting a new international comparative research project on the establishment and development of national debts from the 17th century and onwards. From a preliminary point of view, national debts must be seen as one of the most important factors of war finances and state-formation. We will also take into account other political, economical, financial and ideological aspects of the national debt. In some respect, the issue of national debt can serve as a link between the first and the second sub-theme.

The way of addressing this topic is, indeed, a novel approach. The underlying question strongly suggests that at least Swedish research has overlooked the link between state-resources and war as well as the link between economic development and war in 19th century historiography. The prevailing views on the relations between society change and change in the state is that the former totally propelled the latter. In Swedish historiography, we have tended to regard the problem of change in the state in a remarkable reductionistic way, focusing on economic, political, and ideological factors and on how these affected the state. However, the simple way of formulating the topic shows us that it is necessary to consider the development of the state-resources and its uses. This prospect is thrilling and proves that a closer co-operation between Oxford and Uppsala will be very fruitful. Within the first sub-theme Uppsala’s expertise is extremely strong. Therefore, it will be challenging to co-operate with Oxford on the second sub-theme in order to strengthen our insights on national debts and address the second sub-theme.

B: Empire, nation and local community

The second research topic deals with mobilisation of resources and support during the 19th and 20th century nation-building processes. The first main question has its focus on the inter-relationship between the empire, the nation and the local communities. Up to the mid-twentieth century, especially Great Britain, but also France and Germany, were economically and politically strong states with colonies in other parts of the world. The colonies, first of all, supported the colonial powers with raw-materials and labour. Through the military based colonial policy, which included narratives about the inhabitants, their living conditions and the world of ideas in the colonies, the people in the developed western societies got their conceptions of the world and an obvious feeling of superiority. This confirmed the right to use military units in order to maintain the colonial power. These conceptions and feelings were strongly challenged from the mid-twentieth century and onwards, during the period of decolonisation, but have not completely faded away. In the aftermath of the geopolitical transformation, since the end of the 1980s, and the ongoing globalisation conceptions of “the other” are growing in the Western world and have become a part of the political rhetoric in many European countries.

In contrast to Great Britain, France and Germany, Sweden, as the other Nordic countries, is a small country, in terms of inhabitants, with a late industrialisation and a widespread poverty to the beginning of the 20th century. However, between 1814 and 1905 Sweden and Norway was connected through a union with the Swedish King, who was also the King of Norway. The Norwegian Prime Minister's Office was divided in two sections; one located in Kristiania (Oslo) and one in Stockholm. At the same time, the Norwegian parliament (Stortinget) decided over taxes and who should be its president. The Swedish King decided over the foreign policy and the armed forces in the two countries. The union was peacefully dissolved in 1905 and the two countries could then develop on their own, which not excluded a close economic collaboration and exchange of people and ideas. However, there has also been a deep-rooted "enviousness" and a "struggle" to be the economic prosperous and most influential political power in Scandinavia. Important questions for this topic are, for instance, how far, and with which methods, were the notions of empire and nation disseminated downwards to local communities during the years of empire? What happen with the narratives and conceptions after the breaking up of the empires (and the union)? How far was local/popular folklore nationalised as part of the national myth of one country with its special characteristics? Did growing centralisation to underpin military power undermine the power of local communities or did nations coexist with a vigorous notion of the Heimat, petit patrie and hembygd/native district? In what way did national leaders underpin and use special notions in the local community in the creation of an idea of a historical and natural limited nation inhabited of a homogeneous people? What were excluded and what happen when people from the (former) colonies immigrated and demanded to be accepted as citizen with the same rights as the rest of the inhabitants?

The second main question concerns the mobilisation of resources and democratic support for building of the welfare states in Europe during the 20th century. Different solutions have been used to finance the modern welfare states. In Sweden, as well as in the other Nordic countries, the system has principally been built on taxes and have had a general compass, including all citizens, irrespective of their economic and social situation, while many other European countries, and the United States, have used a combination of taxes and private insurances. The level of taxes has been higher in Sweden then in other comparable countries. At the same time the inhabitants and companies have had to decide how much money they could and wanted to put in private insurances. In a situation when the general taxes-based welfare system is questioned because of the high burden of taxes, which has diminishing the public support and lead to tax evasion, is it both of scientific and political interest to look deeper on how the ruling parties in different European countries during the 20th century have mobilized support for their policy. Which kind of political messages/rhetoric got a wide support, and which messages did not? Did local politicians use the same kind of messages as the politicians on the national level or did they change it in order to match conceptions in the local societies; how was the inter-relationship between the local and the national level in order to get support for the welfare state?

The third main question deals with one important constituent of the welfare states endeavours, which was the expansion of school systems more or less marked by egalitarian educational policies and ideologies. From the 1950s when the Swedish unified comprehensive school, "enhetsskolan" (nine years, including lower secondary school) was introduced, the "Swedish model" of schooling rapidly came to serve as a European model – or alternatively, as a warning against excesses in egalitarianism. The upper secondary school system also became unified in Sweden, and in 1977 all university and other post-secondary education was assembled into one organisation. In Sweden these integrating processes have been reversed in recent years, and even before the educational strategies of different social classes and groups were in fact not as homogenous as the egalitarian ideology and the uniform organisational arrangements might suggest. There are significant differences in how more and less well-off groups use the educational system, and there are also interesting differences between groups in possession of different species of resources, including economic, cultural, and political capital. In Sweden, such differences have been less visible, although perhaps no weaker in impact,

than in more manifestly segregated countries such as England or France. There has been much comparative research on the organisational development of European educational systems and on the related policies. Less effort, however, has been put into comparative studies on the actual uses of the educational system, its significance for societal development, the basis for its legitimacy and especially the relations between educational policies at the national level and the legitimating mechanisms in regional and local communities.

To sum up, an important question is to analyse how – and on which contextual ground – modern European states created the welfare state. The main task is to explain why different countries have chosen different solutions for their social institutions and how they have reached support. The educational system might also be seen from this very perspective. The main sources will be political statements from different levels in the societies, expressed in speeches, political programmes, investigations, governmental decisions and official publications of various kinds. In the studies on the development of educational institutions statistical data-sets will be used. The ambition is to publish a number of articles and at least one anthology.

C: Gender regimes and the nation state

The third research topic deals the issue of gender regimes and the nation-state. Although in many ways different, early modern Sweden and England/Britain shared a number of important traits. They were Protestant countries, and Protestantism was an important part of the national identity. The notion of freedom was also very important in both countries: Swedes and Britons thought of themselves as being free in a number of respects (politically, religiously, legally), and believed that freedom was what distinguished them from many other peoples. They were also belligerent countries, in the sense that warfare had a pervasive influence on both societies; at the same time, they shared the experience of rarely having been invaded (not at all, or only very briefly) [Colley 1992; Ågren 2007]. Socio-economically, they were both affected by the north western European marriage pattern, and they both experienced dramatic population increase (although not at exactly the same time). Above all, of course, they were both countries in a process of modernisation and consequently, countries which had to muster new resources and mobilise new support for themselves in order to be successful. In the twentieth century, Sweden and Britain both established democracy and the welfare state, although in slightly different ways.

These similarities make it interesting from a scholarly point of view to investigate how gender regimes interacted with the nation-building and welfare state processes. Modern research has convincingly shown how gender was (and is) inscribed in institutions (like law); in this way, gender has had a profound effect upon all parts of social and economic life (property law, labour legislation, etc). Moreover, gender was (and is) also a crucial component of cultural representations (think of Britannia, Moder Svea, etc). Therefore, there is every reason to believe that when the early modern nation-state established itself in Sweden and England/Britain, it interacted with various gender regimes when it sought to muster resources and to mobilise support, and the same was true for the later welfare state. The ways in which this interaction took place in the two countries are the chief focus of the third part of the research programme. To some extent, the scholars involved will be able to build on previous research to make broad, synthetic comparisons; however, the programme also presupposes new original research based on the use of primary sources.

Mustering of resources will be analysed in three fields: how labour and know-how was acquired and organised, how property rights were (re)constructed, and how reproduction (i.e., bearing and bringing up children) was safeguarded. Mobilisation of support will also look at these three fields, but will address them from a somewhat different angle where political life, the public sphere, and cultural representations of the sexes play an important role. Needless to say, no strict dividing lines should be drawn up here. Mustering of resources usually presupposes mobilisation of support, while mobilisation of support can be an integral part of resource mustering.

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