Chapter 9
Archaeology, Minorities, Identity, and Citizenship in the United States

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Identity, the Nation, and the State

The relationship between individual and group identity has been a topic of fundamental interest in anthropology since the early days of the discipline. Anthropology provides the theoretical frameworks that almost all archaeologists in the United States and many elsewhere use to interpret the data that they collect. Here, somewhat ironically, we use a theoretical framework provided by symbolic anthropology to examine the societal role that has been assigned to archaeologists in the United States and how that has contributed to an historical narrative that forms in large part the basis for a national identity.

This chapter originated with a joint Society for American Archaeology (SAA)/European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) session at the 2011 EAA conference in Oslo, Norway, which focused on, "… similarities as well as differences in methods, theories and objectives in the practice, research and teaching of archaeology within the field of contemporary cultural heritage in North America and Europe." These objectives have become of more immediate concern as globalization has accelerated. Human populations, ideas, and economic interests cross state boundaries with increasing ease. Populations that have resided for many generations within the boundaries of present-day political states sometimes regard this as a threat to national unity. Some new immigrants and many guest workers are uninterested in the history associated with the political state to which they have come, as it usually has little to do with the collective memory they carry with them. Many Europeans regard this as a crucial issue that grows apace with globalization, if not a completely new one, and one with which the citizenry and government of the

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United Stated has long dealt because almost all United States citizens can trace ancestry back to an immigrant.

The balance of this chapter will, first, consider the persistence of the nation as a broadly cultural entity, one that is different from the political state. I will argue that in a multicultural state, history, especially in its form as narrative, is the only means by which to form a pan-cultural sense of nationhood. This is because the multicultural state must accommodate religious differences and tolerate some degree of linguistic diversity or risk schisms along these cultural fault lines. I will then offer examples of how archaeology has been used to develop a national narrative in the United States and describe the ways in which its contribution has been unique and effective.

The Persistence of the Nation

In his classic work, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), Durkheim (1993) argued that social solidarity in smaller, traditional societies depended upon a "collective consciousness," which included shared norms and beliefs. In contrast, economic interdependence, especially the need to integrate the diverse realms of specialized labor, created solidarity in larger, complex societies. Social solidarity in traditional societies Durkheim termed *mechanical*, social solidarity on modern ones Durkheim called *organic*.

Durkheim read widely about non-Western societies and was influenced by this. He is considered the father of sociology, not anthropology, however, probably because he saw society as the legitimate and most productive focal point for the study of human organizations. In anthropology, that focal point is culture, many anthropologists regard society as an outcome of culture. Culture, according to Clifford Geertz, is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89).

Durkheim considered collective consciousness a weak force in maintaining order and solidarity in society and one that would ultimately be overwhelmed as an organizing factor by the framework of law. Members of complex societies would understand the need for law as a means by which to maintain and regulate the interdependence that would improve the quality of human life. This is at variance with the anthropological view that individuals in complex societies remain constrained in their behaviors by patterns of meaning and symbols, which ultimately determine social behavior, just as they have since human ancestors first evolved the capability to assign symbols and meanings. Culture is no more or less important in the formation of social solidarity today than it has been in the past. All of this is not to say that Durkheim thought that collective consciousness or, more broadly, nonrational realms of human behavior such as religion would disappear, only that they would decrease in importance as means by which to organize society. Nonetheless, the divide between the primacy of society vs. the primacy of culture remained, and Durkheim's position would greatly influence scholarship in many fields.

Contemporary Perceptions of the State

Some scholars have argued that Durkheim's misunderstanding of culture has led to misunderstandings about the nature of the state. The absolute preeminence of the state, as the criticism goes, was propagated by a school of thought that in political science is known as "realism" (Barkdull 1995; Sampson 2002). Among the foremost realists is Waltz (1959, 2008), who presented his argument most fully in *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz is not an anthropologist, but while formulating his version of realist theory, he borrowed from what he regarded as anthropological literature. He was particularly influenced by Durkheim's descriptions of mechanical and organic solidarity. His understanding of Durkheim led him to draw an analogy between the relationships among states who must act in the global political arena to the relationships among individuals in organic societies (Waltz 1986: 323). Both he saw as "anarchic" and belonging to the "realm of self-help." To Waltz, the absence of law to which an individual in a mechanical culture might appeal was analogous to the absence of a political entity with more power than the state. In the absence of such a higher authority, each state advanced its interests at the expense of other states.

While anthropologists might not agree on how exactly to define culture, it is safe to say that all have seen culture as an organizing factor in human groups of all sizes and at all times in ways that prevented anarchy. Further, anthropological fieldwork consistently identified kinship as an important means by which culture was passed from one generation of humans to the next. Kinship was defined by lineage but also by marriage, adoption, and ritual. These last three were defined as "fictive kinship," which nonetheless carried with it sets of obligations that were the same or very similar to those that were culturally mandated by of blood kinship (Morgan 1871). Anthropologists observed that kinship obligations, which included sharing food and other assets and assistance in child rearing, were strictly observed. Thus, there was no anarchy in societies that Durkheim had designated as mechanical; there was instead interdependence.

A great deal of criticism has been levied at the work of cultural anthropologists who conducted their fieldwork in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of it justified. Many anthropologists indeed saw the world through a colonial lens, characterizing the groups that they studies as "primitive" and seeing their own as "civilized." Despite this, fieldwork was carried out in a period when many non-European cultures had not yet undergone dramatic transformations by means of frequent interaction with industrialized societies. What many anthropological field investigators did not recognize because of the lens of colonialism was that the agency of culture and the importance of kinship were as present in the societies to which they belonged as it was in those that they observed and documented.

During the late twentieth century, the explanatory power of cultural anthropology was somewhat discredited because of the obvious colonial bias displayed by some of the early field researchers. To be fair, this cannot be said about all, some were vigorous advocates for a "cultural relativism," which saw all cultures as appropriate adaptations to the environments they inhabited.

At the same time, the twentieth century seemed to provide ample evidence that the realist view of relations among states was correct. After two world wars, the United States and the Soviet Union vied for global hegemony. There was little interdependence among the hegemons; cultural and economic exchange was almost nonexistent. Yet, as others pointed out, even then there was interdependence among states aligned with one or the other of the two hegemons (Keohane and Nye 1987; Axelrod and Keohane 1985). Examples in the "free world" included the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT) and the European Union. Interdependence indicates that organizing forces are at work that transgresses the boundaries of political states. In one sense, this is obvious, but it opens the question once more of what and how strong other organizational forces are.

Waltz contends that international politics is an autonomous field of study and compares its development with that of economics, which emerged fully as a discipline in 1776 with the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith. Before this, he says, there was only attention to accounting procedures. Just as with the sociology defined by Durkheim, Waltz's focus on the state was a form of philosophical realism, which holds that reality exists independently of human thoughts and feelings about it. The state and society existed as separate, real entities. Such entities can be understood and explained by empirical observation and analysis, which need not to attend to other entities, especially those that cannot be directly observed.

Were the state such an entity, one would expect that it would not change in response to human thoughts and feelings about it. Yet the legal scholar and historian Phillip Bobbitt defines several levels of statehood. In chronological order, these are princely states, kingly states, state nations and nation-states (Bobbitt 2002: 79). Each of these, he says, is characterized by different expectations among the citizens of the state, which range from merely providing for the common defense to assurances of individual rights, equal opportunities, or provision of health and educational services.

Bobbitt suggests that in the age of globalization we have entered into a system of market states, in which the movement of people, ideas, and money cross state boundaries with ease. There are other ways of classifying states and tracing historic changes to states, but whichever one chooses, it is clear that changing relationships among states, individuals, and kin-based social entities, such as tribes or clans, can alter the prerogatives of those holding the reigns of power at the state level.

The Coexistence of the Nation and the State

Clearly, the political state has not put an end to the cultural nation; there is overlap between state and national identity, and it is to the benefit of the state to encourage this. The relationship between each individual and the state is more than a simple contract to adhere to a set of rules, to pay taxes, and to participate in activities for the benefit of the state, such as military service.

When the term "national identity" is used today, it often refers to an "imagined community" of the state as this is described by Anderson (1983). The modern state is constitutional in that it is defined by explicitly stated obligations and restraints, that is, by the laws and regulations that Durkheim thought would overshadow collective consciousness. The state establishes institutions that implement laws and regulations, and in theory these institutions ensure that this is done with as little regard as possible to culturally defined roles and obligations, most of which are meaningful in reference to a traditionally defined network of kinship. To the extent that this is done, individuals from vastly different kinship networks can be accommodated; they can participate freely in the economic and social activities of the state to the extent that they are perceived to benefit those activities and in so doing advance the objectives of the state.

Tension between the constitutional state and the nation (in the anthropological sense) is common. Nationalist movements emerge periodically even in the most well-established constitutional states and are based in the conviction that full citizenship should be enjoyed by only those sharing a certain common history, language, and religion, which is in effect a network of fictive kinship. They are prone to arise when events alter the relations between individuals, such fictive kinship networks, and the state.

Nation Building

The first definition for *nation* given in the Oxford Dictionary is "a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory," despite the fact that to many today this would seem archaic. Nations, in the sense above, predictably regard a certain place as a homeland. The nation can see the homeland as in danger of falling under the control of others. In other cases, the nation has been ejected from its homeland and must find its way back. Geopolitical states almost always include within their boundaries groups having different lines of descent and a variety of languages and religions or religious practices. The different groups also have differing shared memories. Halbwachs, known as a philosopher and sociologist influenced by Durkheim's work, went so far as to say "… individual memory … is a part or aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over—to the extent that it is connected with thoughts that come to us from the social milieu" (Halbwachs 1992: 53). Geertz would see the "thoughts that come from the social milieu" as being a facet of "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89). Political states are much more likely to be tenable if memories shared by groups within the state can be merged.

The pressing need for this is indicated by Ricouer's argument (2004: 141–145) that shared memories can act as a medicine or a poison. An extreme case of the latter, one commonly cited, would be the shared memory constructed by the Nazi Party in Germany prior to the Second World War. This was an integral part of a cultural transformation that provided a rationale for ruthless oppression of all but those who shared the memories of the ruling fictive kinship network, which harkened by to the imagined past of the Arayan race. It is a cruel irony that Halbwachs was deported to Buchenwald as a socialist, where he died in 1945. Thus, while it is very likely necessary to form a shared memory in order to construct what Anderson (1983) has termed the "imagined community" of the state, the way in which this is done is crucial.

Archaeology and Shared Memory in the United States

It is likely that almost all citizens of the United States are somewhat familiar with the words engraved on a bronze plaque at the Statue of Liberty:

> "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
> With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

With the exception of Native Americans, who comprise roughly 1.5% of the population of the United States, US citizens are immigrants or can trace their lineage with little trouble to immigrants. The national narrative inescapably acknowledges this, yet waves of new immigrants have often been met with resentment borne of a nationalism resting in the shared memories of those already in the United States. Evidence for this is plentiful; it includes the establishment of the Know-Nothing Party of the 1850s, which sought to curb immigration, especially of Germans and Irish Catholics; the Philadelphia riots in 1884 that targeted Irish Catholics; the Immigration Restriction League established in 1894 to combat immigration from southern and eastern Europe; and the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882.

Developing the means by which to merge the shared memories of different groups is problematic. Humans are confronted with family and others within their fictive kinship network on a daily basis; the memories developed and recounted among these groups can simply overwhelm less immediate history. In November of 2011, the author visited the Octagon Earthworks, which are among the 14 Hopewell sites in Ohio nominated in 2008 to the World Heritage List. Constructed from 1,500 to 2,000 years ago, in 1910, the Newark Board of Trade leased them to the Mound Builders Country Club, which developed the site as a golf course and has since that time maintained the mounds. The Country Club has been the scene of numerous weddings, birthdays, and other family and club celebrations. Consequently, club members have formed a set of mutual memories associated with the site. They strongly resist any effort to deny them what is now their traditional use of the property. Given the nature

of this use, they limit visitation so as not to interfere with golf play and to maintain the condition of the course.

The power of collective experience is something that Durkheim addressed (Giddens 1972: 228–229):

> When individual minds are not isolated, but enter into a close relationship with, and act upon each other, from their synthesis arises a new kind of psychic life… Sentiments created and developed in the group have a greater energy than purely individual sentiments. A man who experiences such sentiments feels that he is dominated by forces which he does not recognize as his own, and which he is not the master of, but is led by, and everything in this situation in which he is submerged seems to be shot through with forces of the same kind …. Following the collectivity, the individual forgets himself for the common end and his conduct is directed by reference to a standard outside himself… It is, in fact, as such moments of collective ferment that are born the great ideals upon which civilizations rest. Nevertheless the ideals could not survive if they were not periodically revived.

Histories must be read and narratives must be heard to affect shared memory. What archaeology offers is instead immediate and tangible and can be experienced as a group. The contribution that archaeology makes is not in providing artifacts alone, but to the accurate depiction and presentation of landscapes and structures that humans experience in groups. Museums, historic parks and monuments, battlefields, and other historic sites therefore have a special role to play.

The Golden Spike National Historic Site is a case in point. The site itself is merely the place at which on 10 May 1869 the rails of the Union and Central Pacific Railroads were joined, alongside of which is a visitor center of contemporary design. Yet the experience of being there is structured by painstaking research that has made use of primary documents and archaeological research. This scholarship reveals a portion of the national narrative that otherwise would not be in evidence: the role of the laborers from China who were essential in the completion of the rail line. At Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, archaeology has also brought to light what was obscured for many years. Excavations there revealed the remains of a line of slave quarters very near the grand mansion. They would have been a part of the daily scene to Jefferson, impossible for visitors to ignore, and were the workplace of the slaves at the plantation. Restoring these structures has greatly influenced the shared memories taken away by visitors, which now include the reality of slavery, the role of slaves in the plantation system, and a better understanding of the relationship between plantation owners and slaves. The United States National Park Service has recognized as a historic site the place at which one of the most shameful events in American history occurred, the Sand Creek Massacre. At this place, a Colorado militia under the command of John Chivington attacked an encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho women, children, and elderly men while warriors were absent. By most estimates, more than 100 people were killed, and many were horribly mutilated. Archaeological investigations located the site of the massacre, and archaeological excavations were conducted with the assistance of Cheyenne and Arapaho people. Here, archaeological investigation not only made possible knowledge of the scene at which historic events that took place but, by the manner in which the excavation was conducted, also added meaning to the experience of visiting the place.

Commemoration, then, is an aspect of archaeological research. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) has explicitly recognized this. With the passage of this act, a societal role was assigned to archaeology. The Act established a National Register of Historic Places, and the criteria developed for use in evaluating sites for their suitability for listing on the National Register include associations with (a) events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and (b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. At least since that time, archaeology in the United States has had a role in developing an inclusive, shared memory in ways that transcend but include history and narrative.

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