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## Chapter 01

- / INTRODUCTION
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## THE FEELING OF BELONGING TO A GROUP IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEED. IS THIS CHANGING IN MODERN SOCIETY WITH THE INCREASE OF PROGRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM?

Through experiences traveling and living abroad the past five years, I've found a general tendency of people to identify with and describe themselves through their choices and life experiences and much less their citizenship. Yet in many of the people I met, I found an overwhelming sense of national or even regional pride, which often proved to be more of an automatic response and difficult to define as unique to that specific country. Thus a change in how we define ourselves within the great mix of modern borderless cultures is taking place. Particularly in Europe, I sense a sub-conscious national or even regional pride, yet to what extent does citizenship play a role in self-definition versus identity with a particular, often global subculture?

These observations and questions have led me to the question of cultural maintenance and globalization. Investigating how the maintenance of national cultures takes place in the midst of great influx in immigration in modern society, my research focuses on the contemporary and historical efforts of immigrated cultures and also majority cultures to sustain and define their national identity, among the influence of globalization and surrounding cultures. Further, I explore what role design and new media might play in maintaining national values while reinforcing the role of modern cultures in a global society, through cultural production.

## DEFINITIONS

Contemporary national cultures are becoming less geographic-based and more fragmented across political boundaries with the influence of globalized media. Rather, they are evolving into networked fragments of ideologies, experiences, preferences and traditions chosen by individuals and transformed by one's global, local, virtual and real surroundings. It is increasingly possible to feel part of a national community through digital media such as online news sources or blogs, satellite television, and interactive websites dedicated to particular sport, film or music genres.

These are all forms of cultural production, which also include real spatial interactions enforcing a sense of unity such as the neighborhood teahouse, Internet and phone café, bar, cinema or video rental shop. Are people thus beginning to define themselves less through their citizenship but rather on the types of choices they make, and which virtual or real communities they take part in most, thanks to global media? As Terry Eagleton so purely put it "Culture, in short is other people"<sup>1</sup>, alluding to Raymond Willams' equation "Masses is other people".

Cultural maintenance is the process of the creation of particularity or a sense of community. The aforesaid forms of cultural production, whether virtual or real, help to produce this 'feeling of locality' as Arjun Appadurai identifies it, often in opposition to the narrow heterogeneous ideals of the nation-state.<sup>2</sup> Majority and minority nationalities nowadays must struggle to define its national identity and values amongst the effects of globalization, such as global media, borderless information exchange, global migration and a world economy. We are seeing more and more nation-states put up an almost automatic resistance to change regarding cultural and national values. This is expressed through a variety of actions, including immigration and nationalization laws, exams and language requirements. Positive efforts of nation-states to preserve national culture might include investments in the arts, humanities, social sciences, preservation, heritage, and so forth.

It is my intention to research how this important issue of national maintenance historically developed, the difficult balance and structure of maintaining locality and global values in cultural production, the role of new media in nationalism today, and how locality is produced through global media.

## EXAMPLES

I have defined four examples of cultural production as a means of national maintenance, in order to give context to the beginning of my research. These examples give three varying perspectives on cultural production based on a majority culture, an immigrated culture and a diasporic national culture. In all four the relationship

1 / Terry Eagleton  
*The Idea of Culture* (2000)

2 / Arjun Appadurai  
*Modernity at Large* (1996)

between the local and global differ, providing intriguing and helpful research regarding cultural maintenance.

The first examples of cultural production are the cultural icons of the Dutch and their possibility of renewal. For example, do any Dutch youth genuinely identify with windmills and clogs? Are these cultural icons only of use to the tourism industry, in order to manifest the identity of modern European countries into a few colors, symbols and traits? Is there a possibility of re-inventing or updating these icons in order to more accurately reflect the modern national values of the Netherlands? Another fascinating means of cultural production is the communication design of transient communities in the Netherlands. How do foreign workers communicate with their home country in order to effectively sustain their culture? Can this be enhanced through utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> century technology? Thirdly, the language adaptation of Turkish immigrants in Holland could also be a possible case study on which to apply my research. How have the Dutch and Turkish languages of Turkish immigrants in Holland changed, as a means of conscious or unconscious cultural production? Lastly, the fashion of Moroccan women in Holland is another interesting example of cultural production. Are the fashion choices of these women, for example, the tying of a headscarf, an expression of the values of a minority culture and or a translation of its minority culture in Holland?

## Chapter 02

/ PAST RESEARCH  
/ ANTHROPOLOGICAL  
VIEWPOINT

## PAST RESEARCH

Researchers who have looked at the subject of cultural maintenance, whether directly or indirectly, are writer Benedict Anderson, art critic and writer Terry Eagleton, writer Arjun Appadurai and media theorist Marshall McLuhan. While discussing the topic of the origin and spread of nationalism in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson argues that nationalities, nation-ness and nationalism are by-products of culture and, as the book title expresses, are political communities largely imagined and reinforced by certain political or dynastic rulers. Anderson goes on to correlate various institutions with the rise of national consciousness, such as the development of the vernacular language, print-capitalism (or the emergence of the printing press under a system of capitalism), the map, the census and the museum. As media theorist Marshall McLuhan wrote “Print created individualism and nationalism in the sixteenth century.”<sup>3</sup> The emergence of vernacular print caused the middle class to become more informed and thus more pragmatic. McLuhan’s statement regarding nationalism is still true today, as fragmented national communities exist partly based on their use media, and in a contemporary sense, on digital media. This connection of a contemporary national culture and its use of media is an imperative aspect when researching cultural maintenance.

Art critic and writer Terry Eagleton implores that the beginning to understanding the discriminating meanings of culture is to look at the divergence of the terms ‘civilization’ and ‘culture’ at the turn of the nineteenth century. In his book *The Idea of Culture* (2000), he states the conflict between these two terms “belonged to a full-blown quarrel between tradition and modernity”.<sup>4</sup> This is a relevant issue in the subject of cultural maintenance as the idea of nationhood was based on a nation’s traditions and its vision towards the future. Eagleton goes on to argue the major shift in meaning of culture defined as high-class, to culture in the more anthropological sense, relating to one’s identity, attributes to the lack of balance cultures now have of the so-called ‘particular’ and ‘universal’. This often paradoxical concept of the particular, or local and the universal, or global reiterates the question of how a contemporary culture can sustain national values while reinforcing its role in a global society.

3 / Marshall McLuhan  
*Understanding Media* (1964)

4 / Terry Eagleton  
*The Idea of Culture* (2000)

Appadurai addresses a similar question of where locality belongs in global cultural flow in his book *Modernity at Large* (1996), the essence of the struggle for contemporary cultural maintenance. Although somewhat unprecedented, the discussion surrounding the idea of cultural maintenance centers on the role of the nation-state and nationalism in the contemporary society and in the future, and the role of locality in the global world. There is still a large area of inquiry in the field of cultural maintenance focusing on insights into the contemporary effects of current technology on group dynamics and national maintenance in cultural production. Another concept of nationalism that is largely overlooked is the concept that nationality and cultures are becoming more fragmented and choice-based.

## ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT

One can consider cultural maintenance from several anthropological perspectives, often stemming from slightly different interpretations of culture. One extremely important historical facet of cultural maintenance is a traditional culture’s relationship with their environment versus the relationship of the majority culture with their land. The cultural agenda of a minority group is dependent upon the relationship to their environment in three main interconnected areas, namely, the geographic or natural environment, the social environment and the metaphysical environment, including the realms of religion or spirituality.<sup>5</sup> If one of these three fundamental aspects of the relationship with the environment becomes threatened then in fact the culture itself runs the risk of extinction. This foundation of traditional cultures was desecrated by the historic removal of rural communities from their land by white settlers in countries such as the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. These settlers had a drastically different view about land tenure and use, one rather based on social and economic status. Long after the systematic removal of these communities from their original settlements or nomadic lifestyle, present day traditional cultures such as the Aboriginals in Australia sustain their culture through strengthening their social, geographic and metaphysical relationship with their environment. Their cultural maintenance, similar to that of

5 / Brian Milton Bullivant  
*Pluralism, Cultural  
Maintenance and Evolution* (1984)

modern families, lies in generations of storytelling, language education and religious myths, songs and traditions.

A contemporary example of cultural production for the benefit of an Aboriginal culture, the community of Yanyuwa at Borroloola in Australia, is the song project from Monash University's Center for Australian Indigenous Studies. Thirty years ago almost 260 people spoke their traditional language and today, only a handful of community members remain fluent, the last guardians of ancient songs, stories and customs that are intrinsic to the endangered language. The project members worked with both the community members and digital animators to capture the community's oral traditions. Since most of the remaining Yanyuwa speakers are elderly, the need to capture the language was urgent. The team produced a digital song line, the equivalent of a digitally-animated short film, which features a recording of the traditional language supplemented by an animation that visualizes the story. It is just one of the community's many stories and songs, that provide a cultural declaration to more than 400 square kilometers of traditional land.<sup>6</sup>

The maintenance of deep-rooted minority cultures required the efforts of such projects against extinction because the culture became centered on these oral traditions after being removed from their original territory. Since many of these colonized cultures were adamantly forced from their original environment and into learning the language-of-state at colonial schools, their culture became ever more tied with their original linguistic oral traditions as a means of cultural survival. As McLuhan wrote "... of all the great hybrid unions ... there is none to surpass the meeting of literate and oral cultures. The giving of man of an eye for an ear by phonetic literacy is, socially and politically, probably the most radical explosion that can occur in any social structure."<sup>7</sup> McLuhan makes an important and relevant point about the nature of man's social development in connection with his use of linguistic media. Just as colonized cultures such as the Native Americans or Aboriginal Australians depended upon oral tradition in order to sustain their culture, modern man has come to utilize digital technology as a means of connecting with his fragmented cultural network. Thus, in a certain sense, all national cultures and its efforts of maintenance are thus determined by their use of media in cultural production to create a sense of community.

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6 / Shaunnagh O'Loughlin  
"Song Title" *Monash Magazine*,  
Monash University (#22, 2008)

7 / Marshall McLuhan  
*Understanding Media* (1964)

## Chapter 03

### / PARADOXES IN THE RISE OF NATIONALISM

AS THE AFOREMENTIONED, THERE WERE MANY PARADOXES IN THE RISE OF NATIONALISM THROUGHOUT HISTORY THAT LED TO THIS ISSUE OF NATIONAL MAINTENANCE. IN ORDER TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK THROUGH WHICH TO VIEW THE BALANCE OF THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL, IT IS CRITICAL TO FULLY COMPREHEND THE POWER OF NATIONALISM UNCONSCIOUSLY APPARENT IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURES' STRUGGLE FOR MAINTENANCE AGAINST GLOBAL FORCES.

#### PRACTICALITY VS. SACREDNESS

The first encounter of conflicting nature in the history of nationalism was that of the practicality of vernacular languages with the sacredness of the Latin language in the sixteenth century. According to Anderson, the rise of national consciousness was the result of the vernacularizing of Latin in medieval Europe, which was a consequence of the increasingly arcane and alienating status of Latin. Anderson reinforces this with the apparent decreasing belief in the cultural conception of "the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth."<sup>8</sup> This in turn led to the rise of and vernacularizing of print-capitalism as a so-called 'imagining' tool of nations. The novel and the newspaper provided speakers of various vernaculars with the tools to imagine their union with other speakers of the same language. The European religious communities and dynastic realms which had gained this linguistic diversity in the Middle Ages then returned to the linguistic tie of nationalism and cultural maintenance in the 1800's following the lead of the American nationalist revolution. This is still true today of the efforts of modern cultures to sustain their cultural or national values through often language-based print media but mainly digital media, creating cultural networks pieced together with language-based media regarding film, music, sports, and

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<sup>8</sup> / Benedict Anderson  
*Imagined Communities* (1983)

communication. Often modern nations struggle to find the balance of the same paradoxical nature, namely maintaining the sacredness of their language in a world that revolves around the practicality of a universal language.

A contemporary example of this effort is the Académie Française, the long-established official association on issues pertaining to the French language.<sup>9</sup> Officially founded in 1638, it is the main authority on French vocabulary, grammar, and usages, aiming to prevent the anglicization and germanization of its language. As recently as in June 2008 the organization protested the constitutional protection for regional languages such as Basque, Breton, Catalan and Corsican. The efforts of the Académie Française alludes to the more general question of how modern nations find a balance between local or national values and a global role within contemporary society.

A historical example of efforts to propagate the idea of the practicality of a universal language is the creation of the constructed language Esperanto in 1887 by Dr. Ludovic Lazarus Zamenhof. Zamenhof was a Jewish ophthalmologist from Bialystok, at the time part of the Russian Empire, and created the language to foster harmony between people from different countries. The distinct language separation of the Jewish, German, Polish and Russian inhabitants of Zamenhof's hometown sparked the idea of an international language. As a constructed language, Esperanto takes its vocabulary from the Romantic and Germanic languages and its phonology from Slavic languages. The number of speakers grew rapidly over the decades after its first publication by Zamenhof in 1887, at first primarily in the Russian empire and Eastern Europe, then in Western Europe, the Americas, China, and Japan. Historically it attracted suspicion from totalitarian states such as Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan and the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin because of its potential use for international tolerance. Currently there are an estimate of 100,000 to 2 million fluent speakers of Esperanto and approximately one thousand first-language speakers, although no country has officially adopted the language. Modeled somewhat after the Académie Française, the Akademio de Esperanto is an independent body intended to control the evolution of the language Esperanto by keeping it consistent with its fundamental principles.<sup>10</sup>

9 / Official website of the Académie Française <http://www.academie-francaise.fr>

10 / Official website of the Akademio de Esperanto <http://www.akademioesperanto.org>

Although Esperanto is more closely related to both the Romantic and Slovak languages, and despite efforts of organizations like the Académie Française, many people around the world have invested time and effort into learning English in the past half century, quickly making it the most internationally recognized language of communication in both business and social environments. The development of two translation methods for foreign audiences in film is a contemporary example of how different societies dealt with this issue of the practicality of a universal language versus the sacredness of one's native language. The preference for the two different methods within different nation states is largely based on decisions taken in the late 1920's an early 1930's, reflecting the political atmosphere in certain countries. With the arrival of sound in film came the question of whether to use subtitles or the 'dubbing' method, in which other foreign actors record over the voices of the original actors, in order to translate films for a foreign audience. Film importers in Germany, Italy, France and Spain decided to use the dubbing technique while the rest of Europe opted to use translated subtitles. This decision was largely due to financial reasons, as using subtitles is inexpensive and quick, while dubbing requires a larger amount of money but during the 1930's the preference quickly became political in countries opting for the dubbing method. Dubbing became "an expedient form of censorship that ensured that foreign views and ideas could be stopped from reaching the local audience, as dubbing makes it possible to create a dialogue which is totally different from the original."<sup>11</sup> For example, under Franco's dictatorship in the late 1930's and 40's, dubbing began compulsory in Spain, encouraging the use of the Spanish language among non-Spanish speaking citizens, in a time when languages such as Catalan and Basque were forbidden. In these four countries, dubbing is still the norm yet once local television around the world began televising American and British TV series, shows and movies, the preference for subtitling grew due to the acceptance among younger generations who are better readers and have a basic knowledge of English, thus preferring to hear the original dialogue.

11 / Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtitles>

## MODERNITY VS. ANTIQUITY

A second paradox arose in the midst of the increase of national consciousness in eighteenth century Europe, the beginning of the concept of ‘modernity’ and the ideal vision of what ‘culture’ meant. As the birth of the first humanism fell upon late fourteenth century Europe, “there began to be a sense that the events of classical history and legend and also those of the Bible were not separated from the present by simply an extent of time but also by completely different conditions of life.”<sup>12</sup> Also with the increase of book production, readers in the late Middle Ages were taught the rules of rhetoric, including ‘typology’, the ability to “think in historical parallels”.<sup>13</sup> This introduction of so-called comparative history led to the juxtaposition and discussion of ‘modernity’ and ‘antiquity’, especially in French intellectual life. This idea of a nation’s historical past, often laden with patriotic paradoxes and mishaps, led to all the more increase in the imagined national communities. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher and writer Ernest Renan wrote that one essential element of a nation is that all its individuals must also have forgotten many things, alluding to historical wars, massacres, and general national mishaps. This issue of the nation’s abilities to remember and forget is further discussed in Michael Billig’s book *Banal Nationalism* (1995). He argues that we in developed nations are made to think that nationalism is only a potentially dangerous product of the periphery of global society and not that of established nation-states. Nationalistic thoughts present in every modern nation-state are enhanced unconsciously through a systematic, everyday and banal production of ‘flagging the homeland’, remembering selective national triumphs and forgetting embarrassing and often deadly national mishaps. This nationalism, apparent in every day activities from the weather report to the sports section in the newspaper to the use of the first person plural of local politicians, is ready at any time to be summoned by national leaders in the event of war.<sup>14</sup> Billig explains why so many modern citizens of nation-states have a deeply ingrained often-subconscious spirit of nationalism and

12 / Erich Auerbach  
*Mimesis: The Representation of  
Reality in Western Literature* (1935)

14 / Michael Billig  
*Banal Nationalism* (1995)

13 / Donald D. Norman  
*Things That Make Us Smart* (1993)

how we struggle to define it in the face of globalization. These examples of banal national production are examples of national forms and institutional efforts of national maintenance, which will be discussed later.

Thus the ambiguous conflict between accurate historical events and the way it’s represented in a nation’s educational system and above all in the minds of the members of these nations seems to be a construction of national genealogies. Contemporarily one can argue that much of national and culture maintenance has to do with this issue of the education of a historical past, the canon of knowledge, and how one relates it to a modern cultural identity. While the density of our history in one lifetime grows the past seems to grow further and further away, giving rise to the concept of ‘cultural amnesia’, as described by Clive James in his book of the same name. James writes “If the new humanism that makes civilization civilized is to be preserved into this new century, it will need advocates. Those advocates will need a memory, and part of that memory will need to be of an age in which they were not yet alive.”<sup>15</sup> James defines ‘new humanism’ as a return to the love of learning, and thus remembering, for learning’s sake. This of course leads to the difficult balance of antiquity versus modernity modern nations have in contemporary society, in terms of national canons of knowledge, tradition, land-use, and heritage. The idea of the canon of knowledge will be further discussed in a later chapter.

## CIVILIZATION VS. CULTURE

Another similar change in thinking arose in the distinction between the terms ‘civilization’ and ‘culture’, although much later at the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas once these terms were synonymous, the term ‘civilization’ became more and more attached to the imperialistic mindset, and the term ‘culture’ gained more value. Eagleton argues “another word was accordingly needed to denote how social life should be rather than how it was.”<sup>16</sup> This other word, culture, was borrowed from the French ‘culture’ which was in turn borrowed from the German ‘Kultur’.

15 / Clive James  
*Cultural Amnesia* (2007)

16 / Terry Eagleton  
*The Idea of Culture* (2000)

Anderson also argues that the nation became something “capable of being consciously aspired to from early on rather than a sharpening frame of vision.”<sup>17</sup> Members of the same nation rallied around the same idea of culture, creating a sense of community. Another way in which this modern paradox arose is found in the distinction between the very homogenous nature and intention of the nation-state and the developing nature of local life. As Appadurai argues “from the point of view from modern nationalism, neighborhoods exist principally to incubate and reproduce compliant national citizens – and not for the production of local subjects.”<sup>18</sup> This directly reflects the struggle of modern day countries to protect their national culture against the natural social and heterogeneous development of its citizens, often reflected in the institutional efforts of national maintenance made by the state. This natural, social and diverse development of modern society is a result of the phenomena of migration whether based on work or leisure.

Lastly, one of the most important points in understanding the contemporary conditions of national maintenance is the development of the non-territorial culture or nationality. For example, nowadays it’s possible to feel part of the Indian community while residing in the UK or America. This is in part due to mass migration of the past half-century of both a voluntary and forced nature, and the rapid flow of digital media, cultural movements and information sharing. The correlation of these two phenomena has resulted in the increasing of non-territorial nationalities, the roots of which began in the early nineteenth century with the rise of the Swiss nation without linguistic uniformity. This caused one to see the idea of nationhood more as an idea with shifting boundaries and less based on something as concrete as language, destroying language-based theories of nationalism.

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17 / Benedict Anderson  
*Imagined Communities* [1983]

18 / Arjun Appadurai  
*Modernity at Large* [1996]

## Chapter 04

### / ROLE OF NEW MEDIA / INSTITUTIONAL VS INDIVIDUAL MAINTENANCE

#### THE DEBATE ON CULTURAL MAINTENANCE MUST FOCUS MORE ON THE ROLE OF MEDIA, AND INCREASINGLY NEW MEDIA, IN THE PRODUC- TION OF A SENSE OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

As Anderson argues the beginning of the printed newspaper and novel in eighteenth century Europe created new ways to imagine nationalism and belonging to a community through introducing the concept of simultaneity or homogenous time. In newspaper articles or novels two things are happening simultaneously or in 'calendrical time' in two different areas, producing connections largely imagined through the medium of print. This sense of community in neighborhoods, nations or cities was produced through a large amount of people all reading the same magazine or newspaper, or listening to the same radio program. Nowadays people tend to get their information, customized through the Internet, the medium based on the individual's choices.

New media creates innovative resources and disciplines for the creation of imagined identities and worlds beyond political boundaries, leading to the fragmentation of national cultures and the creation of diasporic public spheres.<sup>19</sup> As Lev Manovich argues, the logic of new media reflects a new social logic. He states "... new media technology acts as the most perfect realization of the utopia of an ideal society composed of unique individuals."<sup>20</sup>

New media such as the development of the computer interface and the Internet browser merged two former separate spheres, work and leisure, sparking the transformation from the industrial to the information age and a change in which people define themselves, their communities and daily activities. As Manovich writes "Today the subject of the information society is engaged in even more activities during a typical day; ... running simulations, searching the Internet, playing computer games, watching streaming videos, listening to music, trading stocks online ... and so on."<sup>21</sup> This shift also marked the change in the society that began to value individuality and customization over conformity.

The concept of 'institutional individualism'<sup>22</sup> a term coined by Ulrich Beck, drastically alters the connection to nationality in

19 / Arjun Appadurai  
*Modernity at Large* (1996)

22 / Ulrich Beck  
*Individualization* (2002)

20 / Lev Manovich  
21 *The Language of New Media* (2001)

self-identity. Individualization is the disintegration of previously existing social forms resulting in the fragility of categories such as social status, gender roles and nationality. The question thus arises, which new modes of life are developing and taking the place of the old ones, previously governed by religion, state or national traditions? Beck writes that the trademark of modern society is casting members of society as individuals, which is re-enacted in their daily lives. With this he implies that people aren't born into their identities anymore, instead we as individuals are challenged to create our own biographies through our actions and choices. There are no longer traditional guidelines to be used as a simple framework for life, involving few choices and life paths. As a result, members of society are defining themselves and writing their 'elective' biography based on their actions and choices, instead of based on previously central and factual categories such as nationality.

Now more than ever, people are beginning to consider a wide set of possible lives through the use of their imagination, supported and sustained by the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information through new media.<sup>23</sup> These possibilities contain new and exciting opportunities and challenges imagined outside of the political boundaries of their homeland, most often based on choice and freedom informed through global media, bloggers, chat room discussions and real examples of "success stories", often based in one own social neighborhood. This Appadurai argues is due to the blurring of mediascapes, the line between reality and fiction, work and leisure. Fantasy scenarios have nowadays entered one's mind as actual life possibilities, whereas before it was constrained to leisure practices. This results in more and more people defining themselves through their choice of avatar and lifestyle in Second Life, their preference of news sources or their preferences of daily blogs. As Ulrich Beck writes "any attempt to create a new sense of social coherence has to start from the recognition that individualism, diversity and skepticism are written into Western culture."<sup>24</sup> But to what extent do these choices of the individual include nationality or national values? Where does one find or produce ones locality in this global flow of information? Is the particular becoming the universal? Are all national cultures becoming customizable to each individual?

23 / Arjun Appadurai  
*Modernity at Large* (1996)

24 / Ulrich Beck  
*Individualization* (2002)

## INSTITUTIONAL VS. INDIVIDUAL MAINTENANCE

Another element in this framework for viewing cultural maintenance is the difference between contemporary efforts of national maintenance made on an institutional level and on an individual level. Further, one must look at the fragmentation or variation of media-use and of the intended national values, the proposed global or local audience, and the scale and the nature of the effort itself. The balance of all these somewhat paradoxical elements is essential in studying contemporary national maintenance.

On the individual level of national maintenance, there is a varying balance between the production of locality and the use of global media between efforts of maintenance from minority diasporic national communities and from citizens of majority nation-states. These efforts of national maintenance may or may not be of a conscious nature. The difference is to be found in the intended audience and the fragmentation of either the media or definitions of the concerning national values. For example, a group of young environmentalists in Holland might want to sustain the Dutch national value of wind energy through a global campaign highlighting the country's efforts in the wind energy. This is executed in order to produce and sustain a global view of the values of the nation-state, with an external audience in mind. The fragmentation or variation here lies in the definition of national values and in a way the local ideas of what it means to be Dutch becomes globalized. On the other hand, the fragmentational use of the global media of diasporic communities, such as Indian nationals living in the US or the UK and taking part in internet gossip about the newest Bollywood actors or cricket players, helps to produce the feeling of locality with an internal intended audience. It is important here to mention that nationalistic ties are often strengthened with the distance one is from their nation-state, through the production of locality. In this way, the global ideas of what it means to be part of a fragmented national community ultimately becoming localized. Thus the fragmentation in the production of locality occurs on different levels between minority and majority nationalities on the individual level of national maintenance.

An example of national maintenance happening on an individual level is the project 'Minneapolis and St. Paul are East African Cities' by the 2002 artist-in-resident Julie Mehretu at the Walker Art Center.



Package given to participants, 'Minneapolis and St. Paul are East African Cities' by Julie Mehretu, courtesy of Walker Art Center

After arriving for the first time in Minneapolis, a city typically known for its overwhelming Scandinavian background, she was surprised to get into a political debate about current events in Somalia with her fellow East African cab driver. Researching further, she discovered that Minneapolis was home to the largest population of Somalians outside East Africa and that a growing number of residents are from East Africa by birth. Mehretu worked with 30 Minneapolis high schoolers of East African descent, all of whom were asked to create two projects, photographing sites that mattered to them in the city and make an audio recording of the importance of the image, locating the image on a map. Once this had been done, the Belgium-based group Entropy8Zuper! was commissioned to design a map interface of the relevant data. The interface is an interactive audio-visual tour of the stories of these students, providing the user with the tools to follow one or more stories, leaving traces of their route behind on the map. The map however does not utilize geographic coordinates thus providing an impressionistic re-mapping of the city based on the participants' stories.<sup>25</sup> In this way, the project sustains the modern regional culture of Minneapolis through the personal stories of Somalian-Americans in a global interface with a global audience. One is able to view the city formerly known for its Scandinavian background through the eyes of individual members of its increasing immigrant group, thus re-shaping and sustaining its regional diverse culture. Yet while this project has transformative powers for the participants and the city self, one can't help but question its value to viewers outside the region. As Steve Dietz wrote in *Else/Where Mapping*, "is there a way to create a wider base of experience without becoming prescriptive, to honor the individual point of view while ending up with an overall point of view that has value for more people than just the participants?"

An example of a contemporary institutional attempt of nation-states to maintain national values and at the same time reinforcing its position in global society is the general trend of branding a country, city or region. Often these identity systems are produced by the nation-state as a marketing tool for the tourism industry and are often not very telling about the complexities of the nation or city at hand, and thus remain rather superficial and general. Take for instance the new graphic national identity for Qatar, designed by Tarek Atrissi. An independent nation-state since 1971, Qatar previously had a logo,



Qatar national identity,  
Tarek Atrissi  
www.atrissi.com

25 / Janet Abcans, Peter Hall, et al  
*Else/Where Mapping: New Cartographies  
of Networks and Territories* (2006)

consisting of all the clichés from Middle Eastern countries; a camel, sun, and the overall feeling of a desert oasis. At a time when Qatar was gearing up for a massive program of developing its infrastructure and diplomacy, it needed a new identity with which to catch the attention of the Western investors. The graphic identity Atrissi designed was an attempt at representing Qatar as a bridge between the West and the East, a progressive and modern country yet simultaneously in line with surrounding traditional Arab countries. Shannon Mattern writes "The contradictions ultimately prove too much for a typeface – even for a nation – to sustain."<sup>26</sup> Instead of embracing its own contradictions of ethnic diversity, its struggles to represent Qatar both internally and externally, and hopelessly controls and subdues its differences. The logo reduces the nation of Qatar down to two lines of opposing separating text, one in a typical Arabic script and the other Romanization of 'Qatar' in Baskerville typeface, neither dissolving one culture into another nor placing diverse cultures in contrast. It presents Oatar thus less as a diverse and unique independent country but rather as an economic industry happened to be based in the Middle East. Mattern states "this lack of contrast is not necessarily a symptom of harmony, it may be a symptom of an unhealthy lack of internal resistance."<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, branding a nation, city or region can result in an expressive and engaging production of locality, as is the case with the 'Typeface: Twin Cities' project. The University of Minnesota Design Institute proposed the question "Can a typeface convey the unique character of a city?" when it began the project 'Typeface: Twin Cities' and commissioned six teams of talented typographers to create a custom font for Minneapolis and St. Paul. Dutch designers LettError designed the Twin font, accompanied by a software program that can link the typeface via the Internet with live databases detailing the Twin Cities' unique and extreme urban conditions—wind, temperature, traffic congestion—and these variations visibly affect the type's appearance.<sup>28</sup> Due to the regional content and the creativity-driven nature of the project, instead of a market-driven national graphic identity, the font utilizes local information and global media in order to generate a piece of locality.

It can be argued that this type of regional branding project could be applied to various cities or regions in the world, yet it wasn't. The project was specifically developed through a cultural institution,



Example of environmental factors of the Twin Cities incorporated in the letter forms, Twin Cities Typeface, LettError, www.letterror.com

26 & 27 / Shannon Mattern  
"Font of a Nation" *Journal of  
Public Culture*, Duke Univ. (2008)

28 / Deborah Littlejohn  
*Metzo Letters: a Typeface  
for the Twin Cities* (2004)

the Design Institute at the University of Minnesota, dedicated to the advancement of design within the Twin Cities and globally. The 'Typeface: Twin Cities' project's type of regional branding works in an aesthetic way on macro level while discussing local- or microstructures within and acts as an expressive tool for the region. While this branding project is all-inclusive to the region's growing diversity, Qatar's logo acts as an oversimplification of a complex nation-state.

Large-scale national maintenance projects produced on an institutional level, like Qatar's new graphic identity, rely on self-definition in contrast to 'others', whether internal or external. Yet there are limits to the elasticity of a nation's borders and its sovereignty, two defining characteristics of a nation, as Anderson argues. These large-scale national projects often graphically portray their nation with an acceptable degree of otherness but exclude whatever clashes with their role in the global market.<sup>29</sup> Thus often these projects sustain the values of the foreign investors or visitors to the nation and less and less the majority of the population, the other 'others'. As Appadurai argues, nation-states and projects such as the Qatar brand exercise taxonomic control over difference, often domesticating it to the tune of their own liking. As more national cultures adopt the ways of the globalized world, it is important to examine the value of nation-branding techniques through an examination of the contradictions on the national and local levels.

In all of the aforementioned institutional and individual efforts of national maintenance, the paradox of the global versus local appears. While in the institutional projects of maintenance, the universal or the global succeed, the particular or the local often triumphs in the individual efforts of maintenance.

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29 / Shannon Mattern  
"Font of a Nation" *Journal of  
Public Culture*, Duke Univ. [2008]

## Chapter 05

### / GLOBAL VS NATIONAL CULTURAL PRODUCTION / THE NEW NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE CHALLENGE NOWADAYS, IN ORDER TO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND CULTURAL MAINTENANCE, IS TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR RELATING THE GLOBAL AND THE NATIONAL IN THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN CONSTRUCTING COMMUNITIES.

#### GLOBAL VS NATIONAL CULTURAL PRODUCTION

A key element in sustaining national cultures, as mentioned before, is cultural production, or the globalized form the production of particular cultures take. Yet this has taken on a radical shift in form, as have national identities, non-geographically based self-definition, and new media. Cultural production historically included mainly artifacts and manufactured products made from the surrounding environment and influenced by the particular landscape. However, today most of these traditional cultural rituals and artifacts are protected and valued outside of contemporary media, rarely interacting with modern society. Also, transgenerational knowledge is no longer an assumed form of cultural or national maintenance since often youth come to identify more with the global culture than with this alienated heritage of their particular country or ethnicity. These modern cultural movements, for example those based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, lifestyle, or music, rarely take place within national boundaries and arise within a local culture but quickly are circulated internationally by new media, becoming non-territorial cultures based on choice.

Thus as the former cultural artifacts take up house in isolated museums and the cultural landscape of cities across the globe begin to show more and more the results of a homogenized global market with the spread of McDonalds in every small town to H&M's worldwide, one must look to new forms of cultural production to attest to the real underlying idiosyncrasies of national or regional differences and new definitions of local values. These new forms of production include systems of thought, and vague non-gravitational items, such as the cultures they express. For example, the way people from various geographic locations take part in discussions about certain global, national or local issues through global media in chatrooms, message boards or media

sites. Often this production of locality, as Appadurai identifies it, is maintained through globalized methods and media. It is important to realize that often this locality is happening on an everyday, fragmented level and in no large-scale social project. In this sense, new media is becoming a filter for which all forms of cultural production, past and present, local and global are mediated.<sup>30</sup>

As previously mentioned, Michael Billig discusses the everyday national forms present in modern nation-states which systematically and unconsciously enhance nationalistic thoughts.

One of the largest conflicts in the rise of nationalism, Billig argues, is this development of the key themes of particularism and universalism in national sustainability. This in turn sparks debate and controversy within the so-called 'natural' context of nationalism. He cites one specific example of the national label or name of Macedonia that illustrates this paradox well. The Greek government claims that the republic of Macedonia has appropriated the name of Greek Macedonia. This controversy sparked thousands to protest in both Greece and Macedonia, both claiming 'the right' to occupy the name. As Billig argues, "in proclaiming the uniqueness of 'our' national name, 'we' are not just talking of 'our' own particularity. The imagining of this particularity forms part of a universal code for nationalist consciousness: no one should usurp another's name, nor their right to name themselves."<sup>31</sup> Billig argues further that banal forms of institutional national maintenance such as national anthems, national symbols, national flags and the use of the first person plural in national newspapers and by politicians all struggle with this contradiction, calling them 'universal signs of particularity'. For example, the national flag is a universal sign of particularity because the conventions demand that "the uniqueness of a nation be celebrated in a universally stylized manner."<sup>32</sup> Even while every national flag will have its own individual patterns or symbols, recognizing its particularity, it also represents its universality through its conventional rectangular pattern, announcing itself to be part of an established, recognizable series. Just as national forms like the newspaper, national canons of knowledge, anthems and flags are the tools for modern nation-state to produce a national sense of particularity within a universal form, so does the individual use new global forms to proclaim

30 / Lev Manovich  
*The Language of New Media* (2001)

31 / Michael Billig  
*Banal Nationalism* (1995)

his/her particularity. These global forms, mediated through new media, are platforms such as Facebook (or the national social network site equivalent), Twitter, Blogger and Flickr. These social networking, blogging and photo-sharing sites are universal frameworks enabling the individual to exhibit his/her own particularity, daily choices and actions within a sea of global individuals, reaching beyond one's locality or nationality. Thus, these new global forms utilized by the individual are replacing national forms as a means of genuine context-based cultural production, and therefore helping in certain contexts, to sustain national identities.

## THE NEW NATIONAL ARCHIVES

One thing I found very applicable today while researching the maintenance of national identities is the idea of the national archive, historically compiled by a select few, therefore ensuring a selective national memory of national events, victories and failures. With this in mind, I developed the concept for a computer application utilizing a 'bottom-up' method of generating data linked to modern national identities. I looked mainly at social networking and photo-sharing sites as the sources for this data, ultimately choosing Flickr and Twitter as the most easily accessible and wide-used sites.

The application once started will search on both Flickr and Twitter for images and text respectively, using the country's name as the main tag and secondly using the tags 'weather', 'language', 'sports' and 'politics'. I found that people become generally the most nationalistic concerning all of these subjects, except for the weather, which was the subject the most talked about on Twitter in connection with a specific country. The user is also able to add another subject, one which he/she feels reflects the identity of that specific country. These image and tweet combinations pop up as separate browser windows, enabling the user to essentially cast his/her vote on the certain subject. It should be noted that the application searches on Twitter only for pieces of text or 'tweets' from those users located within the specific country. Further, if a user clicks on a photo or a tweet, it will be saved on a database as part of this nation's new national archive, along with the users comment if applicable.

In short, 'the new national archives' challenges the unconsciousness of nationalism, and creates a new, real-time and flexible national archive, based on entirely on the individual's choice.

## Chapter 06

### / CHARTING NATIONALITY VISUAL RESEARCH

In order to discover what new forms of national cultural production are being created by the individual on both local and global levels, I designed an excel sheet to measure the balance and relationships between the local, national and global in three realms. These realms are general interests, daily habits and virtual habits. It was also designed to find to what extent these choices of the individual include nationality or national values on a daily and more general basis. Within the three realms were six lines, each containing a subject pertaining to the specific realm, such as 'politics, sports, fashion' or so on. The line ranged from local to global, national being in the middle. In order to fill in the chart, one had to disperse all ten points along the line depending on how strong his/her interest or habit was. I sent this chart as an excel sheet to a variety of people of all nationalities all living in Holland and in order to get a broader range of people I don't know personally, I also interviewed people on the street with a set of questions translated in Dutch.

In general I concluded that people lead very local, national or global lives, rather than provincial or regional. Within the general interest realm, I found that people have the largest global interest in the categories music, film and fashion. That is to say, they believe their music, film and fashion preferences are pertaining to a scene or genre outside of any world region and are thus global. Also, I found that people have the largest national interests in politics, sports and travel, and the largest local interest is sports and travel. On a daily scale, people's largest global habits is food. That is, the food they eat is outside of any specific world region, and is thus global. Also within the daily realm, people's language and the area of interest in the news articles they read are largely national. People's largest local habits in the daily realm are their social networking habits, shopping habits and their daily route. Surprisingly, out of the three different realms, people are the most consistently national in the virtual realm over a variety of subjects. That is to say they read almost equally national as global blogs, virtual magazines and online news articles. A blog, virtual magazine is classified as global or national depending on its area of origin or the area of origin of its writer/blogger. Only in the general online browsing do people tend to become more global. In the virtual environment, people lead almost equally global and national lives and thus the national and global use of new media is becoming one in the same.

Further, I separated these general findings into three types of citizens; native citizens (people living in their native country), immigrants (a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence) and expatriates (people choosing to live temporarily in another country). While researching, I focused on how minority cultures sustain their national identities versus majority cultures, and how that affected their daily choices as individuals. What I found through my visual research is that nationality has a large presence in the every day lives of many first generation immigrants. In general, their music, film, and fashion preferences and their eating habits all mainly came from their national culture, whereas in native citizens and expatriates these were mainly global. A large way in which many first generation immigrants sustain, stay current with national politics and connect with their home culture is through the medium of the news, whether online, printed or on television. As mentioned before, nationalistic ties are often strengthened with the distance one is from their home country, proven in the data collected. Yet there are another aspects within this conclusion, the elements of choice, ethnic communities and temporality.

I selected expatriates as a study group because I was interested in how choice and temporality plays a role in nationalism in the lives of minority cultures. For example, if a person leaves his/her home country by free will, how does this affect the persons nationalistic ties versus one who is forced to leave by economic or political conditions? Further, does living among one's own countrymen play a part in increasingly nationalistic feelings? Often immigrants relocate to communities with large populations of the same national, ethnic or religious background. Through the collected data I concluded that expatriates are indeed unconsciously yet less nationalistic than their immigrant counterparts in the various realms.

Right: *Charting Nationality*, first page of three excel sheets sent to participants, Kate Snow, May 2009

## CHARTING NATIONALITY

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Disperse 10 points per line to denote how strong / frequent your interests / habits are, accordingly.

2. Use all 10 points on each line.

NAME:  NATIONALITY:

3. Local = Utrecht  
 Provincial = Utrecht Province  
 National = the Netherlands
- Regional = a region of the world
- Local (Foreign) = a specific city in a country other than the Netherlands  
 Provincial (Foreign) = a specific area in a country other than the Netherlands  
 National (Foreign) = a specific country other than the Netherlands
- International = beyond the boundaries of the above-mentioned regions

## GENERAL INTERESTS

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
TRAVEL								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
POLITICS								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
SPORTS								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
MUSIC								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
FILM								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	POINTS LEFT: <input type="text"/>
local	provincial	national	regional (world)	local (foreign)	provincial (foreign)	national (foreign)	international	10
FASHION								

## Chapter 07

### / CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, THE UNIFORM COLLECTIVE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS NO LONGER A BASIS FOR STABLE INTEGRATION.<sup>33</sup>

The nation-state is far too narrow a framework to be able to sustain such increasingly diverse and numerous identities of contemporary countries. However, it is exactly the fragmentation of national cultures that provide the necessary conditions for the production of locality on which ultimately a national identity, although fragmented, survives. Thus, social integration and production of locality is rarely successfully achieved on an institutional level, rather so on a micro level focused around the individual. National cultural production should possess the notion of flexibility and be adaptable to the heterogeneous nature of social development. Products of national or local consciousness claiming to reflect the particularity of that region should be sensitive to the element of time, and in that be aware that this consciousness is constantly in flux. Just as nationalistic feelings are becoming more particular, mobile, and networked, so are forms of cultural production for the sake of national sustainability.

In the institutional projects of national maintenance, the universal or the global succeeds, often marginalizing the diversity of local social life. As the particular or the local triumphs in the individual efforts of national maintenance, the universalism or the global must also be addressed. This must be approached not just in the medium it takes but in the expression of global values or the commitment to global society the community or nation embraces. The production of locality is, as opposed to nation-states and its large-scale projects of national maintenance, a naturally-occurring, flexible, time-based phenomena. Rather than utilizing a 'top-down' method of cultural production, as seen in various institutional efforts of national maintenance, one must begin to view a 'bottom-up' method of national maintenance as the most sustainable method. Thus, the maintenance of a national culture is unconsciously dependent on the local and global choices of individuals in their spatial and virtual environments, respectively.

The feeling of belonging to a group is still a universal human need yet the group is becoming ever more particular to the individual.

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