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Contemporary Research and Directions

Edited by Richard E. Lee and Gerhard Preyer

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NATIONAL IDENTITY AND GLOBALIZATION: POLICY
PATHS AND THE PROCESS OF REIMAGINING
COMMUNITY

Frank J. Lechner

Abstract

World culture legitimates the particularity of national identities yet globalization calls their viability into question. What are nations to do? This paper argues that identities undergo embattled redefinition by means of path-dependent renegotiation. The reproduction of national difference and the viability of national culture thus depend on “glocal” forms of identity work, fine-grained understanding of which is important to any analysis of culture in the world system. Proposing that processes of policy formation serve as useful markers of identity transformations, the paper illustrates how in policy arenas in the Netherlands national identity was enacted in meeting recently intensified global challenges with local paradigms while at the same time the content and viability of the national “project” were continually in question, leading to variation over time and by sector in the reimagining of national community.

[T]he centrality of national cultures, national identities and their institutions is challenged ... Cultural globalization is transforming the *context* in which and the *means* through which national cultures are produced and reproduced, but its particular impact on the nature and efficacy of national cultures ... is, as yet, harder to decipher.

– D. Held, A. McGrew, D. Goldblatt, and J. Perraton. *Global Transformations*.

As nation-states become enmeshed in ever-widening, ever-deepening transnational ties, their ability to fashion a distinct identity is called into question. What does it mean to be a “nation” in the global age? What does it take to constitute an “identity”? How could a “national identity” still matter? Drawing on contrasting views of the impact of globalization, I argue that while national identities are certainly challenged by globaliz-

ing trends, the culture of the world system also fosters creative identity work by national groups within their particular territories. In the global age, national identities undergo embattled redefinition, the pattern of which obviously depends on many contingent conditions. Linking two bodies of literature on national identity and public policy, I further suggest that such identity work occurs not only via the symbolic activity of intellectual elites but also through processes of policy formation. Viewed in this way, patterns in collective problem-solving represent useful markers of transformations in national identity.

To illustrate these arguments and begin to “decipher” the national impact of globalization, I briefly review shifts in three Dutch policy arenas in the period 1980-2000 that show how Dutch national identity is enacted in meeting recently intensified global challenges (as well as those stemming from European integration) with local paradigms, while at the same time the content and viability of the national “project,” as displayed in these policy arenas, are continually questioned. Even this summary account, drawn from a larger project in progress, suggests that the nature of identity work, demonstrated in at least partial paradigm shifts, varies by policy sector even in a relatively short period in a small nation. The example conveys two main points: that the reproduction of national difference and the viability of national culture depend on “glocalized” (Robertson 1992) forms of identity work, and that fine-grained interpretive understanding of such identity work is therefore important to any analysis of culture in the world system.

Scenarios

One way to answer contemporary questions about national identity is to argue that globalization entails the demise of the nation-state (cf. Guillén 2001). The nation-state is “in question” (Paul et al. 2003). As the state loses control over economic flows, as it is exposed to intensifying competition, its effective sovereignty diminishes; therefore, at least those nations shaped by a state apparatus are likely to find their identity weakened. The sheer force of cultural globalization also tends to overwhelm any national community’s efforts to maintain its distinctness. When people, products, and ideas wash in waves across particular places, when all boundaries become porous to outside influence, any group’s commit-

ment to “its” identity will have to be redefined. The point of having such an identity must change as well, for globalization fosters ties not bound to place or territory. Dividing the world into distinct nations once may have had a function in a competitive capitalist system, one inference suggested by world-system theory, but under modern circumstances accumulation needs no nations. Even where some semblance of national identity remains, it will become less central in people’s experience, less important in organizing social life. National cultures and national identities, once effective containers of much human activity, will become empty shells. So goes one scenario.

Straightforward though this scenario seems, it has a rival. According to the alternative view, the state is no organization bound to lose out in a struggle for influence but a globally legitimated institution imbued with special authority. As states necessarily retain control over people and territory, they also must define the identity of what they manage. Far from overwhelming nations, cultural globalization heightens their visibility and significance, for collectivities cannot live by global flows alone, as if without boundaries. Given their relative historic strengths, national identities are likely to become a stronger focus of loyalty in the global age. In fact, national difference has itself become a feature of world culture. The global injunction is and remains: thou shalt organize in particular nations. Globalization, in this view, entails heterogeneity, notably along national lines. This composite view is supported for different reasons by several influential accounts of globalization, including world-system theory (Wallerstein 1991), world polity theory (Meyer et al. 1997), and globalization theory (Robertson 1992).

The rival views are not mutually exclusive. The demise scenario is right to suggest that under the corrosive influence of globalization national identity becomes embattled as states lose control, global flows intensify, boundaries blur, and non-national ties increase. In some respects, the world unifies in a manner that transcends nations. The vitality scenario correctly points to the institutionalized features of world society that bolster national identity as the focus of legitimate state activity, a source of collective responses to cultural globalization, a type of identity more strongly entrenched than many others, and a form of globally sanctioned particularism. As the world unifies, it also diversifies. The centrality and viability of national identities are challenged, but they also can and must be redefined. The global common denominator, then, is continually

embattled refashioning. Of course, quite apart from such global considerations, the sheer weight of national loyalties and the vested interests of national elites often strongly bolster such refashioning.

If this middle way is plausible as a scenario in its own right, the analytical task shifts from arguing in global terms about what the fate of national identity might be to showing in particular instances how the dialectic of local and global, of being-embattled and reviving-difference, occurs. How, in short, can we best make sense of the way national cultures become enmeshed in globalization? National-level case studies offer one effective approach (cf. Paul et al. 2003). This strategy does carry risks. For example, it might seem to favor comparative ethnography over more systematic global analysis. My purpose, however, is to complement rather than to criticize the latter. Another risk has to do with the study of any single "case," for if we have entered the "global age" (Albrow 1997) it would not make sense to portray any nation as a pristinely self-contained unit suddenly confronting outside pressure. Though I focus below on the Netherlands as a unit, my purpose is to demonstrate the dynamics of enmeshment. On the positive side, globally-oriented case studies enable us to capture in more detail the actual global-local dialectic now under scrutiny in theoretical debate. While no single case can demonstrate a global pattern, it can serve to offer nuanced counterpoints to ambitious global scenarios familiar from the literature on globalization.

Frameworks

For all the scholarly disagreements over the meaning of "nation" and "national identity," there is in fact a common thrust that runs through much of the recent literature. According to the conventional wisdom, nations are socially constructed by new methods for particular purposes in modern times. They are "imagined communities," not primordial ones (Anderson 1991). Even if the peoples that make up particular nations have a long memory of common descent, they emerge in their contemporary form through narrative bootstrapping by elites who create the symbols around which national communities may coalesce. They are the product, rather than the source, of books and flags, schools and state bureaucracies. They represent deliberate efforts at boundary-drawing, increasingly common in a period of history when to count as an actor on

the world stage required such boundaries. And they are of recent vintage, modern inventions suited for the modern age (Gellner 1983).

This conventional wisdom, I suggest, is not so much wrong in principle as incomplete in practice: though it refers to the role of institutions in the creation of modern nations, scholars usually focus on the symbolic activity of intellectuals. In short, this literature offers a limited picture of the kind of identity work involved in fashioning nations, as mostly a matter of free-floating imagination. But for imagined communities to become actual nations requires some kind of institutional process. Of course, an older literature on "nation-building" recognized as much. More recently, scholars have begun to examine the "politics of discourse" as well. I propose to add to such work by arguing that we can study how national identity is made and expressed by analyzing how any national community, once organized in a state, engages in distinctive patterns of collective problem-solving. In forming policies that address shared problems, national identity gets enacted. Policy formation is also identity work, the work of pursuing a distinct national project.

Policy formation is the subject of another large literature. Students of comparative public policy have been especially interested in the way in which nation-states have shaped distinctive economic institutions, such as industrial relations, and moderated the effects of economic inequality, for example by income transfer programs (Crouch and Streeck 1997; Hicks 1999). Others have specifically examined the reverberations of global pressures, both economic and symbolic, and global flows, through media and migration, within domestic institutional settings (Campbell and Pedersen 2001; Joppke 1999; Price 2002; Swank 2002). The underlying assumption in such work, mostly focused on explaining policy outcomes rather than issues of identity, is that nation-states have a certain autonomy or "resilience" (Joppke 1999) in choosing their purposes and selecting methods to fulfill those purposes. Even within a generally capitalist environment, states have some degree of freedom in regulating their economies or redistributing goods. Capitalist welfare states compose variations on common themes. But the state is only relatively autonomous, for it is necessarily embedded in networks and institutions that are not part of the state apparatus itself. On the one hand, as neoinstitutionalist arguments would suggest, the state apparatus is itself shaped by a world polity, composed of institutions that incorporate global models. In that sense, no state polity is ever wholly national, yet one central,

now globally legitimate object of any state is also to form a distinct nation. Domestically, on the other hand, such embeddedness can take different forms, depending on whether the state is closely tied to specific societal groups and whether the state assumes extensive responsibility for the regulation of economic life. Such embeddedness only sets the stage for policy formation, which is generally a fluid process in which many actors get involved. In the institutional process of shaping policy, such actors identify their interests, but they also make claims about the nature of the public good. Making policy is at least in part a discursive process, an intellectual exercise in which ideas acquire power (cf. Kjær and Pedersen 2001). Such discourse, in turn, is shaped by the legacy of past policies, dependent on paths chosen previously. Each nation-state, according to one influential version of the argument, has its own policy paradigms (Hall 1993). Most policy-making occurs within the bounds set by such paradigms. Only occasionally, under the pressure of perceived crises, do their strictures give way to change and learning. But even when states undergo wrenching change, they are still engaged in a national project, shaping a national community by the way state institutions resolve the nation's problems.

This brief gloss on a large literature is intended to make the point that the comparative study of public policy complements the conventional study of national identity. These literatures have thematic affinities – both wrestle with the problems of distinctiveness and continuity under pressure from a challenging environment, both recognize the weight of historical precedent in paradigmatically shaping identities or policy-making, both conceive of the nation as in part a discursive artefact. The heuristics developed by students of national identity provide tools for a fresh interpretation of the meaning of policy-making in nation-states. By the same token, comparative public policy gives substance and a new focus to the analysis of national identity. As nation-state actors make public policy, they demonstrate who they are and what they want the nation to be. As they apply distinctive paradigms by means of a globally legitimated apparatus, they enact an identity. Their institutional process is a form of identity work. A “cultural” reading of policy processes therefore promises to go beyond the constraints of two current literatures.¹

1 This approach builds on precedents set by Dobbin (1994) in explaining national variation in the forging of industrial policy and by Kjær and Pedersen (2001) in apply-

Focusing on policy has an additional advantage, namely to decompose, as it were, both the work of the nation and the thrust of globalization. Instead of treating nation and globalization in the abstract, as artefacts of discourse, this type of analysis makes it possible to examine more precisely the intricacies of enmeshment. As a heuristic guide, it suggests that globalization's effects may vary. For example, globalization poses different challenges to a nation-state's capacity to guarantee collective welfare, to its efforts to integrate minority groups, and to its control over television broadcasting – challenges not described in detail here for lack of space. National responses in social policy, minority policy, and media policy similarly may vary, depending on the relevant paradigm policy makers bring to bear. Analyzing varied responses to different challenges through policy formation in several arenas, as instances of embattled reconstructions of identity, enables us to move beyond the particular versions of the demise and vitality scenarios applicable to each policy sphere and thereby bolsters the overall argument about national identity stated above.

Dutch Social Policy²

By 1980, the Dutch welfare state had become one of the most generous in the world (Bannink 1999). After a late start in extending social provision to the ill, disabled and unemployed, the Netherlands had caught up by creating universal entitlements that provided security against market shifts and personal misfortune. Income transfers now claimed a high proportion of public resources, in fact one of the highest in the world. This generosity was the outcome of the collaborative efforts of many political and social groups. For several decades, they had assumed that the state had a responsibility to ensure solidarity by extending minimal security to all citizens. Welfare, broadly conceived, was not a privilege,

ing “discursive institutionalism” to the reception of neoliberalism in Denmark (cf. also Hay 2001). It complements other work examining “what states can do now” (Ikenberry 2003) but shifts attention more explicitly to problems of identity and culture.

2 This section generally relies on Bannink (1999), Roebroek and Hertogh (1998), Van der Veen and Trommel (1999), and Visser and Hemerijck (1997), as well as on primary government sources.

but a right. In securing welfare through transfer payments, the state could also moderate social inequality. Such shared purposes were reflected in an intricate institutional scheme, grounded in many distinct pieces of legislation. While the state controlled the purse strings, it relied on social groups in several ways. For example, in preparation for new policies, it requested the advice of the so-called social partners, representatives of unions and employers. In executing various insurance schemes, it relied on semi-public agencies run by the representatives of business, unions, or private (especially confessional) organizations. The process of making social policy, in short, had been highly corporatist, involving organized consultation with societal groups at all stages. Though conservatives had grumbled about the fairness and expense of redistribution for some years, this welfare state could count on broad support.

Then the crisis hit. The second oil shock of the late 1970s combined with a worsening international economy to produce especially severe consequences for the Netherlands, always greatly exposed to the vagaries of external change. Recession cut government income. Yet as unemployment grew, so did state expenditures. The result was a government budget out of control. At the same time, the very structure of welfare state programs seemed to reduce the state's flexibility to introduce change or to stimulate job growth. From a welfare state sensibly compensating for economic risk without jeopardizing its economic performance, the Netherlands became a state suffering from the "Dutch disease," its bloated budget and stifling welfare structure now aggravating its condition. Under increasing global pressure, it became clear, the Dutch welfare state might not be viable. Reform was in order.

The first priority of the new center-right government that came to office in 1982 was not to transform social policy but to achieve wage moderation in order to improve Dutch competitiveness and thereby increase employment. Such moderation also would indirectly alleviate the burden of transfer payments, since wages were linked to benefit levels. Under pressure from the cabinet, the leaders of the main employer and union organizations agreed on moderating wage demands in exchange for greater job security. But social policy commanded attention as well. Because the system expressed widely held values and retained strong support, the government gradually prepared the way for change. Expert reviews led to government reports, which led to parliamentary debate, which in turn led to new legislation and a closely contested vote in Par-

liament, which resulted not in structural change but in reduction of some kinds of benefits and more restricted eligibility criteria for some kinds of programs. Partial retrenchment contained the growth in costs but did not reform the system that produced those costs. It could not drastically reduce the demand for social protection and it could not make its administration more efficient. The numbers of beneficiaries kept growing (from 2.3 to 4 million between 1975 and 1990) and the ratio of inactive to working adults began to approach parity (Roebroek and Hertogh 1998: 339). The main disability insurance program, the WAO, in particular kept growing inexorably. Though the Dutch economy was improving, a burdensome and opaque welfare system that favored protection over work still seemed a drag on economic performance. Cost reduction therefore gradually gave way to reconsideration of the purpose of protection and to revision of its governance structure.

While the long-perceived problem of governance created an impetus for welfare revision, that revision received a strong intellectual stimulus from a report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), which stressed the idea that the purpose of policy should be to enable people to participate in the work force and that therefore social protection should facilitate (re)activation. Activation minimally required eliminating perverse incentives from insurance programs. Even against the recommendations of the social partners, a coalition of bureaucrats and party officials began to form in favor of more thorough change in welfare laws. In 1992, an unprecedented parliamentary inquiry, triggered by the continuing troubles of the disability program, resulted in strong recommendations for more effective execution of welfare laws and more responsible monitoring by relevant agencies. A substantial reform effort begun by a center-right coalition was continued by a left-right coalition that assumed power in 1994. This effort centered on reforming sickness and disability insurance programs by gradually introducing incentives to prevent entry into insurance programs, increasing employer and personal liability, expanding the kinds of work beneficiaries might have to accept, differentiating premiums and benefits, and the like. New agencies were devised to carry out some of the new laws; the executive role of municipalities also increased. By the year 2000, the Dutch government had reduced its responsibility for income maintenance, devolved executive responsibility to numerous other authorities, and imposed new responsibilities on workers, beneficiaries and employers.

What does this record tell us about Dutch national identity? Until 1990, not much changed: the Netherlands was still a society committed to generous welfare policies as an expression of solidarity. While the cost of programs had come under fire, consensus on the fairness of redistribution remained strong. The process of reform had not changed greatly from the period of building either: corporatist institutions were strong, consultation aimed at producing consensus was still common. Most of the old players and policies were in place. The upshot is that the impact of global pressure was processed within a framework that had a distinct national cast. The shock was accommodated by deliberate collective choices. But as external economic urgency diminished, the impetus toward internal reform intensified. In the twenty years after the initial crisis hit, the shape of Dutch social policy in fact changed quite substantially. Its discourse now routinely refers to individual responsibility, to the need for participation in work, to incentives and calculation. The justification for policies, in short, has shifted in a “neoliberal” direction. In this respect, the Netherlands clearly absorbed elements of a broader global discourse. The process of making policy also changed: the central state has taken strong action even against entrenched vested interests, new agencies have more clearly defined responsibilities not linked to particular social groups. New players are involved in formulating and executing policy. Policy content reflects new purposes and a new organization of responsibilities: the welfare acts of the 1990s would have been impossible to pass in 1980.

But does this amount to a paradigm shift? If it does, has the image of the nation changed, at least insofar as expressed in the work of the social policy community? The results of 1990s policy reform in the Netherlands make sense as part of a new “responsibility” paradigm. But policy legacies still weigh heavily: the principle of universal solidarity remains important; corporatism has not disappeared (and may be strengthened as new agencies become entangled with the central state); and activation measures operate in a framework of still-generous transfer benefits. There has been no “big bang” (Visser and Hemerijck 1997), no change in the essential normative framework (Van der Veen and Trommel 1999). The very debate about the welfare state is still structured by corporatist notions (Cox 1993); the new links between state and society still fit with old notions of “subsidiarity” (Roebroek and Hertogh 1998). The festering problems of the disability insurance program, approaching one million ben-

eficiaries out of a population of sixteen million, demonstrate the limits of reform: faced with a choice between dramatic streamlining and balancing of incentives and security, the Netherlands thus far has chosen the latter. However great the practical problems they entail, such continuities are one mark of the efficacy of Dutch identity work. But even the discontinuity contains a message, for the significant reforms were carried out as part of a distinctly national project in which Dutch policy makers deliberately fashioned a Dutch response to a global predicament.

Dutch Minority Policy³

When newly arrived minorities were first widely perceived as a “problem” in the Netherlands in the late 1970s, the apparatus brought to bear on it was not new. The Scientific Council for Government Policy issued an influential report. Government bureaucrats studied the matter, laying the groundwork for a major policy statement by the responsible cabinet officer. Even in the absence of a full-fledged corporatist structure of organizations that focused on the subject and represented relevant groups, experts and officials worked to create a consensus for a particular kind of policy. Without direct representation of affected groups in the political center, government had to take the initiative. The policy’s main goal was to assist migrants to become fully emancipated while retaining their own culture and identity. In this respect, the proposed paradigm resembled the methods by which workers and Catholics had become full members of Dutch society in earlier periods. Like workers, the policy community argued, with increasing support from political parties, migrants were entitled to equality; like Catholics, they were entitled to maintain their own culture, supported by their own institutions. But this reasoning by historical analogy did not prevent the emerging public discourse, in hundreds of publications, from identifying the nation in a subtly new way: the Netherlands, many began to realize, was becoming a “country of immigration.”

The extensive discussions and analyses of minority problems in the 1980s gave rise to relatively few specific policies. To some extent, this was

3 This section generally relies on *Jaaroverzicht* (1998), Lucassen and Penninx (1994), and Tesser et al. (1999), as well as primary government documents.

by design: emancipation in the social-democratic mode required the extension of ordinary entitlements to minorities above all. In part, minority policy was general welfare policy given a special twist. To promote emancipation, a new education policy gave priority to children with disadvantages. But the state did little to promote minority employment, apart from stimulating minority hiring in government. One minority-specific measure was to strengthen support for a nationwide program to educate minority children in their own language and culture. In principle, the government also recognized the right of Muslim groups to found their own schools with public funding under the 1983 constitution's freedom of education provision, though initially few Islamic schools were founded. Subsidies began to flow to some minority organizations. Only a few measures indicated the influence of a global human rights regime. For example, permanent residence was eased in the mid-1980s; foreign residents obtained voting rights in local elections; and the constitution's anti-discrimination provision began to cleanse laws and regulations of ethnic and religious distinctions.

The high hopes of the early 1980s were not fulfilled. A decade of policy-making did not result in substantial equality between majority and minorities. Even if the expectations themselves had been unrealistically high, the continued minority disadvantage in education and economy and the rising ethnic segregation in major cities around 1990 gave the impetus to a shift in public discourse. Initiated by the political right, treated with skepticism by the governing center-left coalition, a new theme began to pervade minority discourse: integration. The shift in emphasis did not mean that old policies were jettisoned. In fact, the commitment to emancipation remained strong. It translated into new laws to promote affirmative action by private employers and an overhaul of educational disadvantage policy. The process of policy-making also became more regular, in the sense that organized group interests became part of policy deliberations at the national level. A special ministry, instituted in 1998, came to focus on minority issues. But the very name of the ministry conveyed the change: it was devoted to "Large Cities and Integration Policy." Hallmark of the new thrust was a law, long in the making, to require newcomers to undergo "civic integration." While public funding to Islamic schools continued, education in ethnic cultures was scaled back to concentrate only on "living minority languages." A final integrative step was to permit foreign residents to hold dual citizenship under

some circumstances, thereby encouraging naturalization. But the greater emphasis on integration did not undermine the equally growing recognition, made explicit in the platform of the coalition that took office in 1998, that the Netherlands had indeed become a country of immigration and a multicultural society. Minorities now had to be integrated into a society that had itself changed profoundly in just a few decades.

By 2000, what it meant to be Dutch differed from what it had meant in 1980. But this is not to say that migration simply caused a dissolution of national identity. Judged by the record of twenty years of policy-making, the Dutch have been engaged in the redefinition of national identity within a distinct national framework, as a self-consciously national project. The very emphasis on integration indicates an overriding commitment to maintaining the integrity of a national community. The extensive discourse and the welter of policy actions that emerge also confirm an unquestioned interest in using minority policy as a way to shape the nation in accord with "Dutch values." That the Netherlands is and must remain a viable nation is taken for granted. Important continuities in policy-making reinforce this national focus. At least some of the principles that underlie current policy are adapted versions of principles already at the center of Dutch welfare state expansion in earlier decades. The engrained method of trying to operate by consensus also has been amply applied to minority issues. The weight of official consensus in fact has created a certain sensitivity about issues that deviate from the common view of minority problems, a view that has become more negatively colored across the political spectrum. In some respects, it is now clear, ethnic minority problems really do differ from those of native Dutch minorities. Yet the apparatus for dealing with them looks increasingly Dutch, that is to say, intricately corporatist. If nothing else, minorities are being integrated by becoming objects of policy, by being represented officially in policy consultations. Making minority or integration policy is itself a form of nation-building.

Dutch Media Policy⁴

For many decades, as one participant once put it, media policy has been a national parlor game in the Netherlands. When radio emerged as a new medium, the strongly organized “pillars” of Dutch society (Catholics and Protestants especially, socialists more hesitantly) established radio broadcast organizations to reflect their respective interests and worldviews. They used their political clout to gain state support for their right to broadcast time and resources. The path of a pillarized, privately organized yet publicly funded broadcasting system, once established, strongly shaped all subsequent policy into the television age. The parlor game consisted of finding ways to adapt to new circumstances while respecting the vested organizational interests. Participants in the game included, besides state officials, experts within political parties that were strongly tied to particular broadcasters, whose representatives also claimed a strong voice in all media matters. When the threat of commercialization had become more real by the early 1980s, in part due to the spread of cable systems, the responsible cabinet officer appeared to want to change the rules of the game. In fact, the new legislation he prepared, and for which he mobilized support in the political and media community, favored the rights of the old broadcasters and prohibited commercial TV channels or networks. The chief justification was that commerce would threaten the diversity of cultural expression, which would harm the public good. The Media Act of 1988, the outcome of years of debate, thus showed a national policy community in a holding pattern, attempting to preserve a distinct national broadcasting tradition.

But in 1989 the work of the previous decade came undone. Taking advantage of a European rule on fair competition in cable television, a commercial broadcasting company based in Luxembourg established a foothold in a Dutch cable system. When it became clear that the government could not prohibit its broadcasts, the era of commercialization had officially arrived. The policy fall-out was significant. Faced with a new kind of competition, the publicly supported broadcasters became even more embattled, at a time when their historic political support declined due to broader depillarization. Their traditional voice in policy-making

weakened. After a 1991 law formally allowed commercial broadcasting, their market share declined to less than fifty percent of the TV audience. As a result, advertising income for the public channels declined, producing budget shortfalls. To deal with those troubled finances, the government then took the initiative to impose a reorganization on the public broadcasters, reallocating programming slots and giving a new channel to the national television programming service. The traditional organizations received new support, in the form of licensing and financing, but had to accept several restrictive rules. Behind the 1990s amendments to the 1988 law was a new kind of justification for the state role in managing media: diversity of expression was still important, to be sure, but so was enabling fair competition. Although in the process the central government used a heavy hand, the ostensible purpose was to reduce political involvement in running Dutch television, to reduce state entanglements.

Because Dutch media policy changed in justification, process, and substance, it is fair to describe its record as a paradigm shift (De Goede 1999). The dam put up in the 1980s broke. Media policy in the 1990s could not put it together again. In the face of new constraints, the very significance of the parlor game itself diminished, as the state challenged the vested interests. If the hallmark of the old media policy was to create and preserve a distinctly national system for the expression of the diversity within a distinctly national culture, then certainly the record of media policy shows that the “centrality” of the national has declined. But even in this arena, where outside pressure clearly had a transforming effect, two important caveats are in order. First, in the paradigm shift some features of the old system were preserved. The traditional broadcasters still receive public support for a public task; they still provide varied, at least partly noncommercial programming. Residues of the old pillarized system survive. Second, actual changes in Dutch media policy were not simply the result of outside pressure. For example, the support for the traditional broadcasters was declining for reasons of Dutch domestic change. They could no longer count on large groups of people or political parties who believed in their mission. Even the paradigm shift, then, resulted from a subtle interaction between global and domestic forces.

4 This section generally relies on Bardoel (1994), Commissie Publieke Omroep (1996), and De Goede (1999), as well as primary government documents.

Conclusions

Interpreting shifts in Dutch policy formation as markers of ongoing national identity work in an effort to decipher the impact of globalization on the centrality of one national culture, this paper briefly described how Dutch identity gets enacted in meeting global challenges with local paradigms. Across the three arenas in recent decades policy-making remained a deliberate and viable national project. But just as the challenges varied, so did the particular paradigm-shaped responses. In the case of social policy, partial reform in the 1980s gave way to significant restructuring in the 1990s, at least partly under the influence of a global neoliberal discourse, but the new "responsibility paradigm" incorporated many features of earlier episodes of policy-making. In minority policy, the relatively modest attempts of the 1980s to respond to waves of migration with multicultural emancipation were succeeded by a new set of policies partly intended to bring about integration. In media policy, the old nationally distinctive approach to a diverse, public-private broadcasting system could not contain the pressures of transnational commercialization and was drastically transformed in the 1990s. The Netherlands thus "processed," as it were, globalizing economic, migration, and media challenges in variable ways. In two sectors, continuity in content and form balanced a shift in policy purpose and instruments; in a third field, full-fledged paradigm change became more evident. Insofar as the collective formation of public policy helps to shape a nation's identity, institutional sectors and their attendant intellectual and policy elites thus fashioned slightly different answers to the question of what it meant to be Dutch in 2000.

The refashioning of national identity certainly depends on the culture of the world system, broadly conceived. In carrying out its identity work through public policy, a nation-state already draws on an apparatus that has global legitimacy. The very task of defining the nation is itself a global charge to any nation-state, and therefore any definition of national identity is always more-than-national. The actual process of globalization, insofar as it undermines a nation's settled ways or self-understanding, heightens the significance of that task. Even where the actual capacity of a nation to respond, or to hold on to any one tradition, is in question, the salience of national identity as a project may well increase. Nations can show resilience precisely in becoming embattled. Yet the actual work of

refashioning national identities, a form of culture in the world system, is more complex than any account of the culture of the world system can convey. For example, the degree to which a nation's identity becomes embattled and the particular way in which it shows resilience are shaped by its own historical trajectory of the interplay between globalizing forces and national sediments. The global-national dialectic is itself path-dependent. And the path is only a path if the relevant national actors decide to stay on it, usually after much context-bound argument. Therefore, no single case can fully illuminate the dynamics of what is now a global experience, framed by the culture of the world system yet taking the form of "many globalizations" (Berger and Huntington 2002). However, as this paper has shown by example, close contextual analysis of single cases can support a plausible global scenario for the evolution of national identity, demonstrate the strength of an analytical approach drawing on different bodies of scholarship, and explain how, through distinctive collective efforts to address shared problems, the enmeshment of national cultures in globalization generates heterogeneity.

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