

# Globalization and National Identity in Japan

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**Abstract:** Globalization and national identity are two separate but important concepts in contemporary sociology; however, neither is well grounded. There is little consensus. Yet we need to establish a foundation for talking about globalization and national identity and the relationship between them. By reviewing literature, this paper presents many sides of the related controversies.

Globalization can be interpreted from many different perspectives: economic, social, psychological, political, even philosophical. There is little argument that globalization is now a major characteristic of our daily lives. Identity had its beginnings in psychology and was then superimposed upon social systems, thereby explicating local, regional and national identities: Who are we? We are like those people, but unlike those other people.

When considering complex concepts, we need to ask appropriate questions of both parents and their children (due to socialization). In the research study described in this paper, two sample data sets from Japan were used (N = 2,164), both employing an identical questionnaire: (a) a nationwide survey of parents and their children aged 15 through 17; and (b) a nationwide survey of adults. The two stage stratified sampling method was used.

The study revealed that Japanese children had more positive and open-minded attitudes toward "others" than did their parents and older adult groups. One's generation has an important impact on national identity among the Japanese. The findings also indicate that Japan is not a nation-state in which national identity plays a particularly significant role. The study also suggested numerous opportunities for future research.

**Keywords:** globalization, Japanese attitudes, national identity

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## Introduction

"Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity." (Castells, 1997: 1)

Globalization and national identity are two separate but important concepts in contemporary sociology. However, it must be stated at the outset that neither of these concepts is well grounded. There are nearly as many definitions of globalization and of national identity as there are authors who have tackled these subjects. Thus, in this paper, we are further compounding, and confounding, the

problem—we are dealing with two subjects on which there is very little consensus. Thus our present task is a formidable one. On the one hand we need to establish a foundation for talking about both globalization and national identity, and on the other hand we need to establish a foundation for talking about the relationship between the two.

Given these critical caveats, we will endeavor to present the topics in a manner which will facilitate understanding. This means that we will have to establish some groundwork for each of these two topics, so that we may synthesize the two as we move forward in relating them to the Japanese

experience. As we establish the groundwork, one should constantly keep in mind that our groundwork, in the overall scheme of sociology, will be contrived, if you will. Simply put, the lack of consensus among scholars on these two topics effectively renders our task impossible. Thus we must be willing to accept some scholars' ideas and reject others' in order to move forward with our synthesis of the two topics and with our relating of this synthesis to Japan.

We have a task and one must understand that in order for this task to be accomplished, for the results to make sense, we must deal with the ambiguities of the topics. It is our intention to present what is hopefully many of the sides of the controversies concerning these topics; however, in the final analysis, we will be adopting some and rejecting other approaches, for ultimately this is an empirical study, the nature of which requires that we establish the groundwork for interpreting our results in meaningful ways.

We will go into detail about our two topics in separate sections shortly. For the moment, let us briefly explore what globalization and national identity mean and where the two interconnect.

Globalization is many things and it can be interpreted from many different perspectives: economic, social, psychological, political, and even philosophical (see Woodward, 2002). There is little argument that globalization is now a major characteristic of our daily lives. There is quite a bit of argument about how long this phenomenon has been occurring; however, for the moment we will accept that globalization is endemic. Inherent to the process of globalization is conflict and stress: stress on what was once tradition, stress on individuals, stress on regions and stress on nation-states. In turn, this stress impacts what we have come to label as identity, be it individual, regional, racial, ethnic, or that of an entire nation-state. To some, globalization threatens these identities; to others, globalization enhances these identities; and to yet others globalization does both, is both posi-

tive and negative in its impacts upon identity (see Edensor, 2002).

Whereas some believe that globalization, in the sense of its negative impacts, has fostered a resurgence in emphasis on individual and national identities, others believe the impact to be positive in nature. Cvetkovich and Kellner (1997) take a close look at the dichotomies created between the global and the local, concluding that "it is a mistake to overlook focus on one side in favor of exclusive concern with the other" (p. 1). They go on to state that "Our challenge is to think through the relationship between the global and the local by observing how global forces influence and even structure ever more local situations" (pp. 1-2).

Woodward (2002: 55) comments on these dichotomies by stating that:

Discussion of identity in relation to globalization has often focused on the demise of the importance of the nation state or of local cultures in shaping identities. ... At the basis of this issue are questions about the extent to which it can be possible for people to rethink their identities and exercise any control over defining themselves, in the context of the all-encompassing forces of globalization.

Perhaps Edensor (2002: 29) summarizes the dichotomies best when he states:

Thus globalization and national identity should not be conceived in binary terms but as two inextricably linked processes. Global processes might diminish a sense of national identity or reinforce it. However, as global cultural flows become more extensive, they facilitate the expansion of national identities and also provide cultural resources which can be domesticated, enfolded within popular and everyday national cultures.

Edensor's remarks certainly reflect a positive spin on the impact of globalization to national (and other forms of) identity. While his arguments are compelling, it should be

pointed out that there are other scholars who disagree. For our purposes, however, it is undoubtedly best to acknowledge and accept the presence of globalization and the fact that its impacts upon national identity are significant in some dimensions, such as shared sets of values or beliefs. Indeed, these issues will be investigated here by using our nation-wide survey.

Held and McGrew (2000:2) take a somewhat more tempered look at the relationship between national identity and globalization. For globalization, they identify “globalists” and “skeptics.” Globalists see globalization as a very real phenomenon, while the skeptics see globalization as a mere “primarily ideological or social construction which has marginal explanatory value.” Held and McGrew (2000: 16) also note that while globalization creates “access to distant others,” this can also “generate an awareness of difference.... Although this awareness may enhance cultural understanding, it often leads to an accentuation of what is distinctive and idiosyncratic, further fragmenting cultural life.” Good or bad, then, as Held and McGrew (2000:18) point out, “While everyone has a local life, the ways people make sense of the world are now increasingly interpenetrated by developments and processes from diverse settings.” For further information on the relationship of these two phenomena, refer to: Boerner (1986), Castells (1997), Cvetkovich and Kellner (1997), and Smith (1991).

Having laid the groundwork for the interplay between globalization and national identity, let us move on and explore each concept in some detail. After doing so, we will revisit this relationship between the two, hopefully with the greater insight gained by closer examination of each phenomenon separately.

## Globalization

Our first task here should be an attempt to define globalization; however, as we stated at

the outset, this is a precarious proposition at best. There are nearly as many definitions of globalization as there are scholars writing about it.

Yamashita and Eades (2003:4) make an attempt as follows: “Like other popular catchwords, the meaning of the term ‘globalization’ is vague and elusive. I follow Roland Robertson (1992b:8) who defines it as a ‘compression of the world’ due to increased global (international/interregional) interdependence.” Also cf. Giddens (1991).

Woodward (2002:54) formulates an extensive list of components which make up the globalization process. These include the fact that globalization is “a multifaceted process whereby connections between people ... are becoming faster and more closely linked.” Globalization is further characterized by “movement of people, goods and services and information across the globe,” each “characterized by scope, intensity and velocity.” Woodward sees the “explosion of global trade” to be an important component of globalization, with “a vast expansion in exports, employment and technology investment.” Attendant to globalization, in Woodward’s view, is the “reduction of sovereignty of nation states,” as well as “global migration,” and “environmental crises.” The environmental crises, he points out, exacerbate “the perception of risk.”

Other scholars, Schaeffer (2003: 3), in particular, point to such things as the spread of Western culture, the “adoption of English as the lingua franca by people around the world, and the associated decline of national languages, regional dialects, and indigenous languages,” which he points out are “seen by some as another cultural expression of globalization.” Schaeffer also points out that to understand “what is meant by ‘globalization’ it is important first to ask, ‘What is being globalized?’”

To address globalization theories, we need to take a look at a few more aspects of the debate about globalization itself. Is it a new phenomenon? Does it create a more homogeneous world? and finally, is it inevitable?

There is considerable discussion in the literature about whether globalization is new. Is it a phenomenon unique to our times (i.e., the last two or three decades), or is the phenomenon merely being named and redefined? Even those who say it has just recently been given a name cannot agree on whether globalization began in the 16th or the 19th or the 20th centuries. "World system analysts such as Immanuel Wallerstein have argued that globalization is 'old,' that the developments associated with it date back to the sixteenth century, and that globalization is just the most contemporary expression of familiar processes" (Schaeffer, 2003: 9). Schaeffer goes on to explain that "In the last few years, another group of scholars, both world system and neoliberal, have argued that globalization is not entirely new, that it closely resembles a similar period of globalization at the beginning of the twentieth century." Schaeffer also points out that "globalization in the earlier period was associated with rivalry and world war, while globalization in the current era is associated with growing cooperation and a declining risk of world war. These are large and significant differences" (Schaeffer, 2003: 10).

Hence there are three schools of thought just on the age of the concept of globalization. Whereas the arguments of those who see globalization as a re-expression of prior similar circumstances are somewhat compelling, we believe that taken as a whole, scholars lean toward the view that globalization is a new phenomenon.

Does globalization create a more homogeneous world? Schaeffer (2003: 11) asks: Has Marshall McLuhan's vision of the "global village" come "to pass as a result of globalization"? "Most observers argue that the spread of investment, trade, production, technology, and democracy has made the world a more 'homogeneous' or singular place" (Schaeffer, 2003: 10). The question is a critical one, especially as we begin to explore the interconnectivity of globalization and national identity. Schaeffer emphasizes

that there is considerable agreement on the point of globalization creating homogeneity; however, he also emphasizes that not all scholars see this as a positive development. "Proponents of neoliberalism and globalization argue that it is a positive development, providing capital, job opportunities, consumer choice, and political freedom" (Schaeffer, 2003: 11). The flip side, Schaeffer explains, is that these "uniform consequences" are seen as "largely negative, producing inequality and poverty. The destruction of local languages, diets, species, and culture ... is not a universal good but a global wrong" (Schaeffer, 2003: 11).

Schaeffer actually concludes that:

Globalization does not have uniform consequences or create a more "homogeneous" world. Instead, globalization has had diverse consequences that were not anticipated in advance.... Moreover, the diverse consequences are not uniformly positive or negative but simultaneously good for some and bad for others. (Schaeffer, 2003: 11)

Indeed, there are compelling reasons to question whether globalization creates a more homogeneous world. What it may come down to is the fact that the jury is still out on this question. The economic and semipolitical consolidation of the European Community is an excellent case in point. Ostensibly, it would seem that these countries' consolidation will inevitably lead to greater homogeneity; however, it is certainly way too soon to tell. If we could gaze into a crystal ball, ahead 20 or 50 or even one hundred years, for instance, we could probably answer this question, but for the time being, it must be said that the question of globalization begetting homogeneity remains an open one. And this fact, or at least consideration if you will, has important implications for our study of the potential interconnectedness of national identity and globalization. If homogeneity is an inevitable outcome of globalization, then it follows logically that national identities

will ultimately converge to at least a somewhat more homogeneous state.

Following Schaeffer's astute analysis, the last question about globalization is whether or not it is inevitable. Here there seems to be relatively good agreement that the answer is yes. "Globalization, Anthony Giddens has written, 'has now a speed, inevitability, and force that it has not had before'" (Schaeffer, 2003: 12). Schaeffer sees scholars generally lining up on the "secular" rather than the "cyclical" side of the fence, seeing globalization as a *process* which "grows stronger and endures" (Schaeffer, 2003: 12).

No discussion of globalization would be complete without reference to at least a few of the prevailing current theories: Immanuel Wallerstein, John Meyer and Roland Robertson, as they each approach the subject from different perspectives: economic, political, and cultural, respectively. (It should be pointed out that there are other possible perspectives of potentially equal importance, such as the technological (including biotechnological), industrial, ecological or environmental, and a perspective which we would loosely say is based on new social inequalities (cf. Beck (1997) and Beyer (1994)). As Beck (1997: 31) points out, "It is in the interplay of these perspectives that a plural sociology of globalization comes into view".

Wallerstein's conceptualization of globalization:

understands the modern global system as first and foremost an economy, specifically a capitalist economy based on market trade and commodification. For Wallerstein, the capitalist world-economy is now the global social context that conditions all other aspects of social life, namely politics and culture" (Beyer, 1994: 16).

Certainly there is significant merit in Wallerstein's focus on the importance and significance of a capitalist market economic engine as the motive force behind globalization; however, his relative disregard for

political and cultural qualities leads to considerable difficulty for many other scholars of globalization. To Wallerstein, apparently, political and cultural issues are merely subsumed under the omnipresence of the economic sphere.

John Meyer and colleagues at Stanford accept Wallerstein but build upon his world-system model to a significant extent, by adding "the analysis of a world-polity, particularly the global system of nation-states" (Beyer, 1994: 22). Meyer adds to the perspective an entire set of social services prescribed by the polity, as well as "other such agents, for instance religious and other cultural organizations" (Beyer, 1994: 22). The resulting "world political-economy" represents two separate and "relatively independent modes of value creation." Meyer's theory also stresses the role of education, bolstered in part by some empirical work on the subject.

Unquestionably, the political arena must be as important a part of the construct as the economic one. Thus, the fact that Meyer's work builds upon that of Wallerstein begs interesting questions about the ultimate focus of theoretical debate about globalization. and this certainly has implications for our exploration of the relationship between globalization and national identity. National identities based upon purely economic issues would seem to fall far short of what would really be required to create an overarching approach to elucidating that relationship. Indeed, the polity would seem logically to have much greater salience for national identity than would economy alone.

Roland Robertson provides a theoretical context of globalization which gives us perhaps the best opportunity to pull identity (of several specific sorts, and national identity in particular) into the picture. Robertson began by looking at the work on modernity of many early sociologists. In so doing, he brings to focus *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Whereas *Gemeinschaft* reflects the premodern era with its emphasis on the local and communal, *Gesellschaft* reflects a rise of the separation,

differentiation and distinction of the individual and society. Robertson sees that this creates a polarity between the individual's identity and the social (e.g., national) identity. In premodern times, the individual's identity was shaped merely by local forces, but with globalization there comes the influence of one's immediate social network being part of a much larger network of societies. This can also be stated in terms of national identity: because of globalization, a given national identity must now be considered relative to all other national identities with which the given identity interacts and relates (Robertson and Chirico, 1985).

Robertson thus expands upon Wallerstein's world society and Meyer's conceptualization by adding the *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* distinction and bringing into the focus the impact of self and personal identity as juxtaposed against local, regional and national identities, which themselves are, under the influence of globalization, forced to interrelate with all other national identities. This is a "relativizing" phenomenon; that is, one's self identity and one's corresponding national identity must be taken in the relative context of the globalizing world's other identities.

Robertson is quick to point out that, though globalization carries a clear trend toward the world as a "single place," he does not intend to imply that this also carries with it the demise of "nationally constituted societies" (Robertson, 1989: 8). Beyer goes on to explain:

[N]ational societies, for Robertson, now increasingly constitute themselves in terms of their own particular cultures, histories, traditions; but this inherited matter is only given form through a selective response to the global system of societies.... Globalization thus involves a double and somewhat paradoxical process. Because there is no common and dominant model to which societies can conform, each society creates its own particular image of global order by promoting, even inventing, its own national image of the good

society—in short, its own national identity. (Beyer, 1994: 20)

Clearly, Robertson's approach assists the present task: the exploration of the impact of globalization on national identity. He tells us that we need to see the process of globalization as impacting all identity, from the individual self to the nation-state and even international regions. In earlier times, one's identity was a local phenomenon, but now, as the world-system grows ever more influential, one's identity is relative to other identities, and of course the same can be said of identities at national and regional levels.

## National Identity

Demystifying the notion of identity is probably best begun with a discussion of identity at the individual level. Indeed, it would seem that the very concept had its beginnings in psychology, where scholars sought to explain the individual self. Of course, if one were literally alone in the world, there would be no need for the concept. Why does the need develop? Because individuals form their identities, their own concepts of their selves, by looking at other selves and comparing, relativizing. Who am I? I am like that other person, but I am unlike yet that other person. I am like that other person in these respects, but not those respects. Many early psychologists focused on these questions.

As the theoretical foundations for the psychological sense of self, or identity, were operationalized, the next step was to superimpose this view upon social systems. The result was the development of local identities, regional identities and national identities. These developed in much the same way as the individual self, the individual identity, except that now the questions became: Who are we? We are like those people, but unlike those other people. We are like those people in these respects, but not those respects.

It is thus probably safe to agree with Boerner (1986: 14) who stated that (national) identity is “mainly a concept developed by the social sciences and has gained acceptance particularly in recent research.” That said, let us now take a look at how some authors define identity, and national identity in particular.

Rosbach (1986: 187) states that:

... the conceptual content of the term national identity is so large and amorphous as to defy precise definition. And so we find concepts such as nation, national consciousness, national character, national feeling, or national mind used and understood by some authors as synonyms for national identity.

On the other hand, Smith (2001: 21) tells us that “... ‘national identity’ has become the preferred term for referring to the cultural and social psychological aspects of the nation and especially to a presumed stability in the relations between the members of a culturally defined population.” Indeed, Smith explicitly defines “national identity” as “the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions” (p. 30).

Munch (2001: 137) refers to “collective identity,” which he states “means the core of attitudes which all members of a collective have in common in their thoughts and behavior and which differentiates them from other collectives.” Smith (2001: 170) ties this back to his earlier remarks: “Today national identity is the main form of collective identification. Whatever the feelings of individuals, it provides the dominant criterion of culture and identity, the sole principle of government and the chief focus of social and economic activity.” McCrone and Surridge (1998: 1) echo this political slant on the definition by pointing out that the modern nation-

state is the “fundamental political identity that we have.”

As discussed above, identity is relational (see also Isin and Wood, 1999): “The common identity of a collective is formed first by opportunities to differentiate itself from other collectives” (Munch, 2001: 139). Schlesinger (1987: 237) cites Melucci as stressing that “all identities are constituted within a system of social relations and require the reciprocal recognition of others. Identity, [Melucci] argues, is not to be considered a ‘thing’ but rather ‘a system of relations and representations.’ ”

National identity, according to Smith (1991: 14) is “fundamentally multidimensional; it can never be reduced to a single element... nor can it be easily or swiftly induced in a population by artificial means.” What are these multiple dimensions? In no particular order, we could list ethnicity, culture, territorial space, economy, legal and political systems, institutions of all sports, customs, beliefs, behaviors, myths, habits, attitudes, sentiments, emotions, traditions, heritage, symbols, memories, values. Thinking back to our discussion of individual identity, clearly all these and more influence and shape the development of individual and national identities. (See also, for example, Axford, 1995; Gustavsson and Lewin, 1996; Dieckhoff and Gutierrez, 2001.)

Fulbrook (1999: 1) gives an interesting spin to the definition of national identity in saying that:

National identity does not exist, as an essence to be sought for, found, and defined. It is a human construct, evident only when sufficient people believe in some version of collectivity identity for it to be a social reality, embodied in and transmitted through institutions, laws, customs, beliefs and practices.

Whether to agree with Fulbrook’s assertion that national identity really doesn’t exist is perhaps an open question; however, it should be clear that the relational and multidimensional aspects of national identity are included in his remarks.

There is another part of the definition of national identity which is of considerable importance: it is *process*. Schlesinger (1987: 254), for instance, sees national identity as a process of continual definition and redefinition. Smith (2001: 30) essentially concurs:

... "national identity" may be defined as the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions.

Edensor (2002: 24) further emphasizes that "identity is a process, not an essence, which is continually being remade in consistent ways, through an 'internal-external dialectic' involving a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and one's ascription by others (Jenkins, 1996: 20)." Edensor goes on to say that "In a globalizing world, national identity continually reconstitutes itself, becomes re-embedded, reterritorializes spaces, cultural forms and practice" (2002: 33).

Rosbach (1986: 191) perhaps summarizes this point about process best and most succinctly:

Since the definition of identity is a constant process of acceptance and rejection of archetypes and values, a continuous decision between what to include and what to exclude, identity can never be considered a static dimension; rather, it is an "ever-changing category," one that the researcher must continuously try to grasp and reify.

And how does the researcher do this? Identity is studied "with the tools of social psychology and survey research, made a central element in political development, and considered both a product of and necessary condition for the modernization of any society" (Grew, 1986: 32). Survey research has matured in recent decades and we now

have the tools and the data to pursue in-depth empirical studies of national identity. Longitudinal attitude surveys often include topics and questions which focus directly upon the issues which influence the formation and transition of national identities. Indeed, the present work will show how survey research has been applied to Japan, in an effort to ferret out the underlying components which mold Japan's "national identity"; very much akin to, if not quite functionally equivalent to, Japan's "national character," which has been studied continuously for the past 50 years (Hayashi, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2002; Hayashi *et al.*, 1992; Sasaki, 2001; Sasaki and Suzuki, 2002).

No discussion of national identity would be complete without at least some reference to the implications of postmodernity for national identity. Smith (2001: 32) tells us that while "ethnic and civic patterns of national identity have been the dominant and formative modes of collective identification in the last two centuries," and that they "still predominate today," they are likely to be replaced in postmodern societies. To Beck (1997: 107), the key questions of the secondary modernity are "Who am I? Where am I? Where and to whom do I belong?" In the introduction, we made reference to the European Community. Unfortunately there is not enough experience to predict the outcome of this extraordinary experiment in social conglomeration. Common sense would suggest that there will be long-term dramatic changes in the national identities of these postmodern, conjoined nations. But to attempt extrapolation at this point is undoubtedly premature.

## Globalization and National Identity

In the face of globalization, national identity can be seen as providing "a strong 'community of history and destiny' to save people from personal oblivion and restore collective

faith" (Smith, 1991: 161). Is this a backlash effect, which in turn, to Smith, would explain why national identity remains so "ubiquitous, multifaceted and pervasive"? We have certainly shown here that national identity is multifaceted. Whether it is truly ubiquitous and pervasive is perhaps best left to empirical research.

Tomlinson (1999: 113) talks about how:

... the globalization of mundane experience may make a stable sense of "local" cultural identity (including national identity) increasingly difficult to maintain, as our daily lives become more and more interwoven with, and penetrated by, influences and experiences that have their origins far away.

Clearly there is considerable disagreement as to the relationship between globalization and national identity. For instance, Edensor (2002: 29) states that "Globalization promotes the mutation of national identity resulting from 'the imposition of the conceptual grid of nationality on exchanges and interactions in the global arena' (Cubitt, 1998: 14)." Edensor goes on to emphasize that "global processes might diminish a sense of national identity or reinforce it." He stresses that one should examine the two as "interlinked processes" rather than as "binary terms."

To Beck (1997: 280), "Globalization both fosters form of cosmopolitan consciousness and stimulates feelings and expressions of ethnicity." Beck sees a psychological ambivalence wrought by the "dominant contemporary sociological conception of globalization" as a "Janus-faced process of global incorporation and local resistance." Kennedy and Danks (2002:18) ask, most astutely:

If there is indeed a crisis of identities augmented by globalization, then for whom does it matter, how much and why? There is surely a possibility that for some nations, collectivities and individuals, globalization is perceived and experienced less as something

innately threatening and disempowering and, rather more, as a force offering challenges which can be met and managed to advantage.

In the final analysis, Kennedy and Danks make the point that we made earlier: "Any attempt to think seriously about such questions is seriously hampered by the relative dearth of detailed case studies. Much more empirical work needs to be done" (2002: 18).

Where is this leading? It certainly is leading to conflict, to "significant identity crises—all over the world" (Cvetkovich and Kellner, 1997: 12). What will determine local and national identities? Will this involve "re-assertion of traditional modes of identity," resulting in "hybrid identities"? "Postmodernity and globalization therefore shake the foundations of older identities" (Roberts, 1999: 202). Roberts goes on to stress that a new approach to understand these phenomena is required, suggesting perhaps yet again that the contributions of empirical research will be important for the effort to understand.

### *Globalization and National Identity in Asia*

Several scholars have pointed out that there is considerable evidence of globalization in Asia (cf., Kiong and Fee, 2003; Yamashita and Eades, 2003; Cvetkovich and Kellner, 1997). Kiong and Fee (2003: 59), for instance, point to Singapore's experience, suggesting their near deliberate "construction of [a] national identity."<sup>1</sup> In turn, they compare the Malaysian and Indonesian experiences: Malaysia lags somewhat behind Singapore's significant strides, whereas Indonesia lags considerably behind, attributed in large part to the latter's "depth of cultural traditions."

Cvetkovich and Kellner (1997: 11) studied the globalizing experiences of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. In these nations, they state that "Traditional culture and religion continue to play an important role in everyday life, and compromises and syntheses are often constructed between traditional and modernizing global forces."

They do however, identify significant differences between these nations in the manner in which national identities are maintained and/or bolstered: "Singapore uses authoritarian state measures to protect traditional culture; Japan uses more paternalistic measures ... and Hong Kong and Taiwan are more open and laissez-faire."

For the Japanese case in particular, Inoguchi (2000: 231) sees that globalization will have little influence over national identity in Japan in at least the near term: "First, Japanese national identity has been very strong for years because of the success in writing an identity from the seventh century onwards, especially from 1868. Secondly, globalization works for codevelopment rather than fragmentation in Japan."

## Survey Design and Research Findings

When considering concepts as complex and multifaceted as globalization and national identity, we need to ask appropriate questions of both parents and their children. The reasoning behind such comparisons stems from the socialization process, whereby we propose that parents' attitudes (in this instance regarding globalization and national identity) are imparted to their children through the socialization process.<sup>2</sup>

Two sample data sets were used, both employing an identical questionnaire: (a) a nationwide survey of parents (sample size of 429, divided into two age groups: 30–49,<sup>3</sup>  $N = 337$  and 50–59,  $N = 92$ ; overall response rate 61.3%) and their children (one per parent) aged 15 through 17 (sample size of 401; overall response rate 57.3%); and (b) a nationwide survey of adults (1,334, divided into four age groups: 20–29,  $N = 135$ ; 30–49,  $N = 434$ ; 50–59,  $N = 327$ ; and 60+,  $N = 438$ ; overall response rate 66.7%).<sup>4</sup> The two data sets allowed us to differentiate any possible biases between the adults in the former data

set against those in the latter data set. The two stage stratified sampling method was utilized at 140 sampling points all over Japan. The interview surveys were conducted in September of 2003. In the following analyses, we present the data in three combinations: from the first data set, children and parents (broken into two age groups); and from the second data set, adults (broken into four age groups).

### *A Basis for National Identity*

Two questions were selected to target the issue of a Japanese national identity. These questions aim to identify those elements which make an individual Japanese, among a constellation of possible choices including citizenship, respect for traditional culture, having Japanese parents, and so on, and to ask the individual how they would feel if they were mistaken for being non-Japanese. Thus, the questions aim to identify traditional, modern and postmodern elements which one might relate to in terms of seeing oneself as Japanese. Other questions used in this analysis aim to elicit feelings about belongingness to a Japanese ethos, as well as tolerance and open-mindedness vs. intolerance for foreign elements. Yet others are used in this analysis to attempt to discern how individuals perceive Japan vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Table 1 shows the proportions of respondents in each group who said that particular attitudes were important to their "being Japanese" or to their thinking of themselves as Japanese.

From Table 1, on the important criteria to make a person Japanese, we see that "having Japanese citizenship" and "regarding oneself as Japanese" were identified as the most important criteria among all three respondent groups. It might be interesting to speculate that these responses reflect more civic-type attitudes than ethnic-type attitudes. Notably, there are differing proportions between parents and children. Whereas children had the highest percentage under "regarding oneself as Japanese," they had the lowest percentage

**Table 1. The importance of different factors in being Japanese<sup>5</sup>**

Q15 What are the important criteria that make a person Japanese? Multiple choices.							
Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15–17	30–49	50–59	20–29	30–49	50–59	60+
Being born in Japan	32.4	27.6	32.6	36.3	34.3	31.2	40.2
Having Japanese citizenship	55.9	60.8	71.7	62.2	59.7	59.0	66.4
Living in Japan for most of one's life	27.4	27.3	25.0	36.3	28.8	26.9	20.8
Respecting Japanese traditional culture	31.9	35.6	31.5	25.9	36.2	34.3	29.5
Respecting the Japanese political system and/or laws	20.2	35.3	34.8	22.2	30.9	37.3	24.4
Regarding oneself as Japanese	51.9	44.8	39.1	47.4	42.9	40.1	27.2
Giving the impression that one's face and/or behavior looks Japanese	9.7	5.3	7.6	5.9	7.4	5.8	5.7
Having Japanese parents	15.0	17.5	20.7	13.3	17.5	14.1	19.2
Being able to speak Japanese fluently	29.9	24.3	19.6	31.1	22.6	24.5	26.3
Others	0.5	0.3	–	–	–	–	0.2
Don't know	2.0	2.1	–	0.7	0.7	2.1	5.9

**Table 2. Feelings about being mistaken as non-Japanese**

Q2 Suppose you were traveling overseas and were mistaken as non-Japanese. What would you think?							
Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15–17	30–49	50–59	20–29	30–49	50–59	60+
I would not care	76.6	72.1	66.3	83.0	75.3	70.0	54.1
It would not be pleasant	19.0	23.7	30.4	14.8	21.7	24.2	38.8
I would be happy about it	2.7	0.9	1.1	0.7	1.4	1.2	1.1
Others	–	0.3	–	–	–	0.3	0.2
Don't know	1.7	3.0	2.2	1.5	1.6	4.3	5.7

under “having Japanese citizenship” among all groups (although the differences were comparatively small).

Table 2 gets at an important construct within the concept of national identity: how does one perceive oneself against others who are not like oneself? In this case, the specific question asks what one would think were one mistaken for being *non-Japanese*.

From Table 2, we can see that there is little difference between children and parents aged 30–49 regarding feelings about being mistaken as non-Japanese. Interestingly, adults in their 20s and 60s differ most markedly on both the “I would not care” and “It would not be pleasant” responses. We can see that age has a strong relationship with feelings about being mistaken as non-Japanese.

The fact that the Japanese as a whole are not especially sensitive to being perceived as

non-Japanese suggests that their sense of national identity is not particularly strong. As Boerner (1986: 15) put it, “The more intensely individual nations search for an identity or reflect upon it, the more sensitive they are to the way in which they are seen by other nations, positively as well as negatively.”

Overall, then, from Tables 1 and 2, we can see that whereas the Japanese do place emphasis on having citizenship as a criterion for a Japanese national identity as well as “regarding oneself as Japanese,” they are not particularly sensitive to being mistaken for non-Japanese.

### *Attachment to Geographic Places*

The next question, shown in Table 3, asked about respondents' identification with geographic places, in an attempt to ferret out better understanding of the significance of

**Table 3. Feelings of attachment to geographic areas**

Response by age group	Q3 To what geographic areas do you feel you attach most strongly?						
	Child 15–17	Parent		Adult (%)			
		30–49	50–59	20–29	30–49	50–59	60+
The town or city in which I presently live	41.6	55.8	53.3	40.0	54.3	57.2	67.6
The prefecture in which I presently live	24.2	17.1	15.2	23.7	18.7	13.1	10.0
The region ( <i>Chihou</i> ) in which I presently live	3.0	2.1	3.3	5.9	3.0	2.4	1.8
Japan	25.9	22.8	26.1	22.2	19.6	22.0	17.8
Asia	0.7	1.2	2.2	2.2	1.2	2.1	1.6
World	2.5	0.3	–	3.0	2.0	2.4	0.7
Others	–	–	–	–	–	0.3	–
Don't know	2.0	1.0	–	3.0	1.2	0.3	0.5

one's attachment to one's country as a signifier of the strength of a nation-state's national identity.

Regarding feelings of attachment to geographic areas, we can see from Table 3 that a high proportion of the Japanese have their strongest attachments to "the town or city in which they presently live," followed by "Japan" among all respondents groups. Children and parents do differ notably regarding their feelings of attachment to their town, city, or prefecture, but their feelings of attachment to Japan are very consistent. Children and adults in their 20s show the lowest proportion of respondents who chose "the town or city in which I presently live," as well as the highest proportion on "the prefecture in which I presently live." Further, we can see that aging has an impact on feelings of attachment for geographic places: the older Japanese adults are more likely to express attachment to their immediate locale as opposed to their prefecture or Japan in general. This is particularly noticeable when comparing the older age group with the children and adults in their 20s.

The findings revealed by Table 3 have interesting implications for Japanese national identity. The fact that only about a quarter of all the respondents feel a strong attachment to their nation-state should send a strong message to us regarding a Japanese national identity. Obviously it is one's most local geographic place which is most important to all

these respondents. This also indicates that the older one is, the less broad is one's perspective. These data demonstrate a marked de-emphasis on national identity in Japan.

#### *Attitudes Toward Non-Japanese People, Issues and Languages*

Six questions were asked to elicit respondents' attitudes toward foreigners and things foreign. Do the Japanese have a strong sense of "us" vs. "them"? The reasoning behind the construction of these questions stems in part from a statement by Kiong and Fee (2003: 59; also cf. Norris, 2000):

The limit of globalization is its inherent capacity to decontextualize social existence, and the nation-state plays an important role in countering the rootlessness of such existence. However, labor migrations and capital flows have been responsible for a recent phenomenon that is described as transnationalization. This raises the question of whether groups and individuals, caught in the full tide of these transnational flows, will develop multiple identities and loyalties, and whether this will pose an alternative to the nation-state.

From Table 4, we can see that children and parents have differing attitudes toward non-Japanese foreigners living and working in Japan. Children expressed more positive attitudes than parents toward foreigners. Adults in their 20s generally also had more

**Table 4. Attitudes towards Foreigners in Japan<sup>6</sup>**

Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15-17	30-49	50-59	20-29	30-49	50-59	60+
(a) Regarding foreigners who want to come to Japan to live, which one of the following is closest to your opinion?							
They deprive the Japanese of jobs	5.2	5.6	5.4	3.0	3.9	5.8	5.9
They contribute to Japan's economy	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.2	12.5	7.3
The number of crimes will increase	21.7	38.9	43.5	30.4	36.6	41.0	59.8
New thoughts and cultures will emerge	57.9	40.7	38.0	51.9	45.4	36.1	18.0
Others	-	0.6	1.1	-	0.7	0.3	0.2
Don't know	5.5	4.4	2.2	5.2	4.1	4.3	8.7
(b) Should foreigners who live in Japan acquire Japanese customs and/or traditions?							
They should	44.1	62.9	62.0	48.9	50.7	62.1	65.3
They should not	46.4	29.4	30.4	41.5	38.9	29.7	23.3
Others	2.5	3.3	3.3	3.7	4.6	2.1	1.8
Don't know	7.0	4.4	4.3	5.9	5.7	6.1	9.6
(c) Do you think it is better that the number of foreigners who come to Japan to live will increase?							
It is better that the number will increase	37.2	21.7	23.9	29.6	26.9	19.9	10.3
It is better at the present level	45.9	46.3	50.0	48.9	41.9	45.6	39.7
It is better that the number will decrease	10.7	23.7	19.6	17.0	21.9	29.7	41.1
Don't know	6.2	8.0	6.5	4.4	9.2	4.9	8.9
(d) Given a lack of sufficient employment opportunities, and given nearly equal capabilities, should the Japanese be given priority in hiring over foreigners?							
Yes	37.9	62.9	71.7	43.0	56.2	69.4	80.6
No	54.4	30.0	21.7	45.9	35.9	22.3	11.0
Others	1.2	2.1	5.4	0.7	2.3	2.8	0.9
Don't know	6.5	5.0	1.1	10.4	5.5	5.5	7.5

positive attitudes toward foreigners. In part (a), it is especially notable that children differ from their parents regarding the possibility of increased crime with an influx of foreigners. Those aged 60 and over were emphatic about that potential. Children, and to a lesser extent adults in their 20s, expressed that new thoughts and cultures will emerge with an influx of foreigners, whereas parents and especially those aged 60 and over were less likely to see such benefit.

From part (b), parents and adults aged 50 and over were quite emphatic about foreigners acquiring Japanese customs and traditions, whereas children were effectively neutral on the issue (about half said yes and about half said no). In part (c), the majority seemed to think that the numbers of foreigners in Japan should remain at the status quo, with more children advocating an increase than any other respondent group. The

younger respondents were generally against the number decreasing, whereas the adults 60 and over were strongly represented in that regard. In part (d), the preponderance of the children felt that the Japanese should not be given priority in hiring over foreigners. No other respondent group felt that strongly, although the adults in their 20s were about evenly divided on the subject. Clearly, age has an effect on the responses in part (d): the older respondent groups are much more likely to favor hiring priority being given to the Japanese. Furthermore, we can assume that the younger respondent groups have stronger feelings about foreigners than do the older respondent groups.

From Table 5, we again can see differing attitudes between parents and their children. Parents, and the older adults, expressed greater reluctance to import and sell freely foreign products. The younger adults, on the

**Table 5. Attitudes toward foreign imports**

Q10 Regarding foreign imports, do you think it is better to set greater limits on foreign imports to protect Japan's domestic industries, or do you think it is better to freely import and sell foreign products in Japan?

Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15-17	30-49	50-59	20-29	30-49	50-59	60+
It is better to set greater limits on foreign imports	42.2	59.6	53.3	38.5	41.2	59.6	60.5
It is better to import and sell freely	46.1	32.6	37.0	50.4	47.5	30.9	24.0
Others	1.7	3.2	6.5	3.0	4.3	3.1	1.8
Don't know	9.7	4.1	3.3	8.1	6.9	6.4	13.7

**Table 6. Use of foreign languages**

Q11 Suppose you have an opportunity to speak with a foreigner in Japan. Even if you know the foreigner's language, do you prefer to use Japanese?

Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15-17	30-49	50-59	20-29	30-49	50-59	60+
I want to use Japanese	50.1	62.0	68.5	57.0	57.4	66.7	64.4
I do not want to use Japanese	43.6	30.6	23.9	34.1	35.3	26.6	20.5
Others	1.0	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.9	1.5	0.7
Don't know	5.2	6.5	6.5	8.1	6.5	5.2	14.4

other hand, interestingly expressed slightly less inclination to set greater limits than did children.

A foreign "element" of considerable importance in the world today is the growing dominance of English as the language of choice for communication in the globalizing world (cf. Held and McGrew, 2000). Do the Japanese people see their language as important, as an important component of their national identity? The following question deliberately does not focus on the English question, but rather simply asks whether one would prefer Japanese or a foreigner's own language when communicating with a non-Japanese.

From Table 6, children expressed different attitudes about foreign language use than did their parents and the other age groups. Children had the lowest proportion stating "I want to use Japanese" and the highest proportion stating "I do not want to use Japanese." We can also see that the older parent and adult age groups were the least inclined to use a foreign language.

### *What Japan Should Do for World Development*

The final question in this analysis addressed opinions and attitudes on a number of possible choices for Japan's future focus to contribute to world development.

From Table 7, we can see that all groups responded that "aggressively tackle global environmental problems" is the most important thing for Japan to do. However, children and parents differed on this issue in that children expressed this response least often among all the respondent groups. The adults in their 20s were slightly ahead of the children, but still below all the other groups on this issue. The second most often expressed opinion was "settle regional disputes or provide aid to refugees." Here the children led the respondent groups, although by a small margin compared especially to their younger parents and adults aged 30-49. The youngest groups generally also identified "aggressive implementation of aid to developing countries" notably more often than their older counterparts. Interestingly, for the two oldest

**Table 7. Key opinions on future world development**

In terms of world development from today forward, there are various opinions about what Japan should do. Which one of the following is the most important thing for Japan to do?

Response by age group	Child	Parent		Adult (%)			
	15–17	30–49	50–59	20–29	30–49	50–59	60+
Aggressive implementation of aid to developing countries	13.2	5.9	9.8	14.8	7.6	8.6	7.1
Aggressively tackle global environmental problems	40.9	58.5	51.1	43.7	52.8	56.6	52.7
Preservation of world cultural heritage and cultural exchange	2.5	1.8	1.1	–	2.1	2.8	2.3
Settle regional disputes or provide aid to refugees	20.7	17.5	14.1	14.1	18.0	9.8	6.4
Promotion of scientific and technological developments	2.7	3.0	4.3	3.0	4.1	0.9	3.0
Spread Japanese culture and traditions overseas	3.7	1.8	7.6	3.0	2.1	1.5	4.3
Progressively adopt various world cultures	2.0	1.5	2.2	5.9	2.5	3.1	2.7
Enrich foreign language education	4.7	3.0	3.3	4.4	3.0	2.8	1.8
Increase the number of Japanese language learners in the world	1.2	0.3	–	–	0.2	0.6	0.7
Progressive acceptance of foreign workers	1.2	0.3	–	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7
Aggressively expand economic activities	2.2	2.1	4.3	6.7	0.5	6.1	3.7
Others	0.2	0.9	–	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.5
Nothing specifically	1.5	1.5	1.1	2.2	1.2	2.4	2.7
Don't know	3.0	2.1	1.1	0.7	1.4	4.0	11.4

adult age groups, the environmental problems issue was overwhelmingly selected, while in the child and the 20–29 adult age groups the dominance of the environmental issue was not quite as strong, with aid to developing countries and refugees and settling regional disputes making noticeable showings, though certainly not as dramatically as the environmental issue.

Overall, from all the above data, we can see that children had the most positive and open-minded attitudes towards “others” (i.e., non-Japanese or foreigners) than did their parents and the older adult groups. In many instances, the children’s responses aligned most closely to those of the adults in their 20s, while for the most part the older age groups, both parents and adults, were notably aligned in their opinions and attitudes. Thus we can say that aging has an important impact on national identity among the Japanese, suggesting that globalization is a phenomenon more welcomed by the younger generations than the older ones. Of course, this is not an especially surprising finding. These findings also certainly indicate that Japan could not be considered a nation-state in

which national identity plays a particularly significant role. As expected, the older age groups maintain a higher sense of national identity (though undoubtedly still a lesser sense than were we to compare it to that of many other nations in the world). The older age groups also exhibit opinions and attitudes which suggest that they are not as excited about the prospects accompanying globalization.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Yamashita and Eades (2003: 15) have astutely propounded that: “It is clear now that globalization does not necessarily involve cultural homogenization throughout the world, nor is it opposed to localization. Rather, globalization results in hybridization and the localization of culture.” The notions of hybridization and localization of culture have been exhibited in the data we have just reviewed. Although Yamashita and Eades see these phenomena as generally having adverse consequences, not everyone agrees. Of course, as always, perhaps it is best to

regard the consequences within the context of a zero-sum game: some elements of globalization are good for some while bad for others. Indeed, Shaeffer (2003: 11) argues that:

Globalization does not have uniform consequences or create a more “homogeneous” world. Instead, globalization has had diverse consequences that were not anticipated in advance. Moreover, the diverse consequences are not uniformly positive or negative but simultaneously good for some and bad for others.

Returning to our earlier discussion of Robertson (see also Robertson, 1999a):

... globalization repeats the tension between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* across contemporary societies and not just within them. To the intrasocietal problem it adds a concomitant intersocietal one. For Robertson globalization is a process that is bringing about a single social world. This leads to the relativization of all self/society dualisms with reference to an encompassing world-system-of-societies/humankind dualism (Beyer, 1994: 26–27).

This duality between the premodern, *Gemeinschaft* ethos and the modern/postmodern *Gesellschaft* ethos is expressed at the individual level by a shift away from the local shaping of one’s identity to the larger societies’ (or society’s) shaping of one’s identity. The polarities between the individual’s identity and the social (or national) identity are well exhibited in the data above. Globalization is impacting the attitudes and opinions of the younger generations as these data reflect a preponderance of “global” attitudes in those younger generations. That is, as stated earlier, one’s self identity and one’s corresponding national identity must be taken in the relative context of the globalizing world’s other identities.

Whereas we have identified trends suggesting that Japan’s younger generations are

more postmodern in their attitudes and opinions about the rest of the world, we also see that none of the Japanese are significantly excited about the global over the local in terms of attachment to geographic place. The modern notion suggests that there should be an erosion of attachment to the local, but the postmodern notion does contain elements which suggest that attachment to the local is acceptable even when individuals are identified as positively responding to globalization. Though Japanese national identity clearly is not especially strong, neither does this suggest that there is some inherent rejection of globalization as an integral component of the postmodern world. And the idea that globalization causes a fading away of one’s identity with and attachment to the local is clearly contraindicated in the present data. This suggests that perhaps we must rethink the demise of the local identity vis-à-vis globalization. Does this have implications for the world as a more homogeneous place? Perhaps not. Our data imply that the Japanese do not see themselves as part of a larger homogeneous “global village.” Yet, there is some evidence here of an acceptance of the inevitability of that trend. Smith (2001: 32) has suggested that a “plural pattern may become the model of future national identities,” and the present data would seem to mirror that possibility. Japan’s population is age oriented; i.e., the current model of Japan’s national identity may well shift over time as the younger generations, with their attitudes and opinions about globalization and to a lesser extent national identity, begin to have greater and greater influence upon the full Japanese population, as they become middle-aged and thus representing a greater proportion of the national population. Time and more research will be needed before we can answer these questions more adequately.

This study has adopted an approach not often seen in sociological survey research, that of parent-child pairings to examine the socialization hypothesis. From the comparatively

brief findings discussed above, it is perhaps premature to make sweeping statements; however, all the data would seem to suggest that the children responding did not respond in a manner consistent with that of their parents. In turn, the implication here is that the socialization process is not as strong as it is usually purported to be. What we would probably see if we were to take this study to a more elaborate level is that the opinions and attitudes of children only align with those of their parents in limited instances. Certainly in this study, with its relatively narrow focus and limited number of questions evaluated, there is little evidence to suggest that socialization is operating to align the attitudes and opinions of children and their parents; rather, conversely, there is considerable evidence to suggest that, at least for the issues examined here, socialization is not evident, children and their parents do not agree on the topics and issues assessed.

It is probably reasonable to state that this study has raised more questions than it has answered; however, it has certainly provided some indications of the directions that future research should take. We are reminded of Edensor's (2002: 33) remarks cited earlier: "In a globalizing world, national identity continually reconstitutes itself, becomes re-embedded, reterritorializes spaces, cultural forms and practices." But this is the nature of the beast. As we asked earlier: what will determine local and national identities? Will this involve "reassertion of traditional modes of identity," resulting in "hybrid identities"? (Roberts, 1999: 202) And all of this is assumed to rest within the context of globalization, which itself poses considerable difficulties for researchers.

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## Notes

- 1 For additional literature on national identity, see A Chun (1996), 'Discourse of identity in the changing spaces of public culture in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore,' *Theory, Culture and Society* 13:51–75; Alan M. Wachman (1994), *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc.; Peter Nosco (1997) *Japanese Identity*, Denver, CO: Teikyo Loretto Heights University; DR Sardesai, (1992), *Vietnam: The Struggle for National Identity*, New York, NY: Perseus Books; SL Sharma, *Nation and National Identity in South Asia*, London: Sangam Books; Baogang He and Yingjie Guo (2000), *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China*, Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate; Edward Friedman (1995), *National Identity and Democratic Prospects in Socialist China*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe Inc.; Michael Kelly Connors (2003), *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, London: Routledge, 2003.
- 2 The selection of parent-child pairs has great advantage, minimizing the chance that irrelevant sampling factors might distort the estimates of continuity and change.
- 3 As the number of sampled parents aged 30–49 years old was only 21, we combined them with the 40–49 year old age group.
- 4 As subgrouping by age partitions creates relatively large sampling errors, we must be cautious about interpreting the data.
- 5 Except for adults over 60, the rank order for all subgroups is the same.
- 6 When asking about non-Japanese in survey questions, the Japanese term *gaikokujin* is used for the word "foreigner," which implies a broad and general image and does not specify which foreigners, such as Chinese, Korean, European.

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