

# Art, Entertainment, Culture, and Nation

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This article questions the popular and social science notion of (national) culture and the functions of culturespeak. An empirical analysis of the public discussion in Finland during the 1980s and 1990s on national arts and culture shows that culture is used as a word that refers to a national way of life and as a synonym for art or other cultural products. Due to changes related to globalization, both dimensions of culturespeak are becoming problematic. The expansion and deepening of market relations has not only made nation-state cultural protectionism ineffective or impossible but also problematized the high-low distinction and affected the underlying notions of the general public. The nationalist rhetoric creates another kind of problem—it is problematic to promote an ethnocultural conception of nationhood and citizenship in today's multicultural Europe and world.

How are national arts and popular culture affected by globalization? Has the transformation of the world into one single marketplace opened the floodgates for (American) mass entertainment? Will nation-states be able to preserve their national cultural heritage in this kind of environment? Are world cultures converging, or is there instead a process of polarization or hybridization going on? These are some of the questions that have recently drawn the attention of social scientists concerned with the impact of globalization on culture (Appadurai, 1990; Barber, 1995; Bhabha, 1994; Holton, 1998; Huntington, 1996; Ritzer, 1993, 1998). The same questions are also at the center of public debate around the world. For instance, in recent years, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries conducted negotiations on a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), with parties expected to commit themselves to treating foreign investors and their investments no less favorably than they treat their own investors. In short, the MAI was about enhancing globalization. However, several countries, particularly within the European Union, called for the exclusion from the MAI of national subsidy systems for art and culture. In Finland, for instance, Minister of Cultural Affairs Claes Andersson has said that national culture would find itself in a quagmire if “we were not allowed to exercise positive discrimination in favor of our own culture” (“MAI-Sopimus,” 1998, p. B1). As a consequence of such opposition, the whole agreement eventually fell apart.

Instead of addressing the same questions about the cultural effects of globalization, in this article I intend to question the popular and social science notion

of (national) culture itself. Although several globalization theories suggest that the nation-state and national identity are in decline, the general concern about the homogenization of national cultures shows that at least at that level nationhood is alive and well: It is treated as a self-evident fact and starting point. Yet, if people are asked to define a national culture or cultural identity, they cannot do much more than resort to national stereotypes, and it is even more difficult to assess how strong or weak its condition is. As Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) put it,

What is Swedish or German culture, how can we chart its changes? . . . Can we meaningfully gauge how Swedish the Swedes feel or how French the French? Even if we were able to do any of these things, could we track changes in the intensity of identification and relate it to shifts in cultural enmeshment? All of this line of argument rests on the assumption that there is in any case a definable, lived national culture. Yet we know that such an idea is, at least in part, an active ideological creation that masks profound cultural divisions of gender, race, class and region within a nation-state. (p. 369)

If we accept that (national) culture is indeed a social and ideological construct, we need to ask what it is used for. An obvious question would be that discourses of culture contribute to nation construction and mundane, everyday nationalism, but what are the ways in which it is done? And what other functions or unintended consequences does “culturespeak” (Hannerz, 1999) have? Already at the outset it is clear that culture has many meanings (e.g., see Williams, 1988, pp. 87-93) and that its different uses are related to various social and discursive practices. The question is, Do these different discourses or repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) form any totality, or is it just by coincidence that in public discussion one refers to separate things by using the same concept?

To address these questions, a sensible way to analyze how and for what purposes the concept of culture is used is to conduct an empirical analysis of its use in actual practice. Therefore, as an example of the uses of the concept of culture in public discussion, in this article I will use empirical material to analyze the discursive structures of the public discussion in Finland during the 1980s and 1990s on national arts and culture. The material consists for the main part of editorials published during the month of December in two major Finnish newspapers, *Aamulehti* and *Helsingin Sanomat*, from 1985 to 1995. The choice of December as the target month for this analysis meant that the material came to include quite a large number of articles with distinct national undertones: Finland celebrates Independence Day on December 6. This, however, is not just an unfortunate coincidence that distorts the material. On the contrary, my argument is that public talk about culture and arts often has an elevated and programmatic tone. This may apply to Finland in particular, but I argue that it also shows more generally how closely related public culturespeak is to the construction of national identity. High culture and arts complying with European

international standards have held a very special place in the nation-state ideology and in the building of nation-states.

The choice of the time span analyzed—from the 1980s until the end of the 1990s—links the local case study to the broader issues related to globalization. For instance, how is Finnish national culture articulated in the discussion, and what implications does that have for the fact that Finland is one of the European countries that has, especially from the 1990s onward, experienced a rapid growth in immigrant population? Second, during that time span the expansion and deepening of market relations (e.g., in the form of privatization) has in many ways changed the institutional context of public “culture spending.” That, in turn, can be expected to affect the related justifying or critical discourses that construct art and entertainment and the general public as the audience. Thus, through analyzing the uses of culture in public discussion, we are also dealing with techniques of what Foucault (1980) called “biopolitics,” that is, the means by which nation-states mold the people to fit the ideals of the elite and the needs of the national and global economy. A question related to that is, Are prevalent discourses of culture and art and the public changing because of the changing institutional contexts? Finally, the recent changes in the world system that now often go by the name of globalization also include the end of the cold war and the geopolitical effects it has had. As the case analysis will show, even this change has had a bearing on the Finnish public discourses on culture.

As to the methodological and theoretical framework used in this article, I employ a constructionist and discourse-analytic approach. Although the empirical material analyzed is texts, I emphasize that we are not dealing only with language, with how things are perceived and defined as opposed to how they are in reality. Such an opposition between language and reality is ill conceived. Language does not just describe material reality or practices; language use always is action, with various consequences. When things are defined or redefined in a certain way, it affects people’s action, and in that sense each turn in a conversation is indeed a turn, like a move in a game. This “speech act” (Austin, 1962) aspect of language also concerns actors themselves: Definitions of situation and definitions of self and others position human subjects and affect their action. In a way, one cannot even talk about human subjects apart from interaction and communication; a single institutional setting of interaction does not produce or determine the subjects, but in the long run humans are what they do in interaction with each other.

In this approach to analyzing texts, I am especially indebted to Michel Foucault, who was also interested in what he termed *discourses* or *discursive formations*. By that concept he referred to the complex role of language in human reality discussed above. He analyzed texts but insisted that in the contexts in which they were originally uttered they must be understood to represent much more than just language in the conventional sense. He does not treat discourses merely as groups of signs,

but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. (1972, p. 49)

I begin by looking at how national arts and popular culture are related to the nation-state ideology in general and in Finland in particular. I then move on to analyze the recent discussion in Finland on culture and arts. This provides the basis for my concluding remarks about the changing role and meaning of cultural policy in Finland. I will then extend that discussion to the political implications of culturespeak, especially in European nation-states.

### **Nationalism and European Cultural Heritage**

The building of nation-states and the nationalist sentiments inspired by this process used to be more or less exclusive territory for historical research. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and various other developments in recent years have offered an excellent opportunity to observe the growth of newly independent nation-states, a process in which culture and arts still seem to play a crucial part. For the researcher, the birth of a new nation-state virtually creates laboratory conditions for analyzing the processes set in train by the changes—it is much easier to see exactly what is happening in a new nation-state than in an old, naturalized one. This is true in spite of the fact that banal everyday nationalism (to use Michael Billig's [1995] term) remains firmly in place, even once the nation-state has been born and once it has established its place as a nation among nations. What appears to be a natural idea of "us" as a nation is something that is constantly maintained by the nation-state's institutions and its public sphere. Speeches and independence days are just the tip of the iceberg.

### ***Finland and Uzbekistan***

An interesting example is provided by the Central Asian state of Uzbekistan, which gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Laura Adams's (1999) study of the process of nation building in Uzbekistan revealed some intriguing similarities with the independence process in Finland in 1917.

Before it was incorporated as a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, the territory within Uzbekistan's borders was occupied by three feudal city-states and various nomadic tribes. Uzbeks and Tajiks were the dominant groups prior to the Russian conquest. Soviet national policy was to represent the Soviet Union as a multicultural country composed of several nationalities; Uzbekistan was to be shaped into one of these states. The policy was basically derived from European ideas of romantic nationalism: Each nation was seen as a cul-

ture that could be identified and separated from a group of others on the basis of distinctive customs, songs, dances, and cultural products on display in museums. The elements available were put together into a package that was in keeping with Soviet ideology. At galas introducing the cultures of different nationalities, “ancient” songs were performed, but with new lyrics that told about Lenin and labor. In other words, it was a very carefully orchestrated culture that was on show, but it was this Soviet national ideology that created in people’s minds the conception of an entity called Uzbekistan.

When the state of Uzbekistan gained independence in the early 1990s, its public image was changed. Old songs got their original lyrics back, and Islam was reinstated. The country’s socialist past was erased from the picture, partly because it would have been an embarrassing subject for the political and cultural elite in the country—this was largely the same elite that was there during Soviet rule. Cultural life in Uzbekistan is still 95% under state control. The Ministry of Culture continues to decide on all grants awarded to the performing arts and to issue guidelines for production. All arts and leisure activities, from sewing circles at a *kolkhoz*’s house of culture to the repertoire of the national opera and ballet theatre, are overseen by the Ministry of Culture. Every city and province has its own house of culture, and music and dance ensembles and other performing arts groups obtain their money from the Ministry complete with instructions as to what kind of products the decision makers want to see. National arts should be clearly distinguishable from the arts of other nationalities, but it is important not to convey too backward an image of the country to the outside world.

One of the ways in which feelings of nationalism have been strengthened in independent Uzbekistan has been through song contests. One of the winners of these contests was so popular that it was played at the Independence Day spectacle. “I Love You, Uzbekistan” was performed by a Russian singer in three languages: Russian, Uzbek, and English. The English version was included to highlight the country’s status on the international scene as a nation among nations.

The case of Uzbekistan may sound like a rather remote and exotic example of how a nation-state is built, yet on closer examination we can find quite a few familiar elements. Consider, for instance, the role and position of intellectuals. As a legacy of the country’s Soviet past, most of the people in high-ranking positions in Uzbekistan are Russian speakers, but the ongoing nationalist project draws heavily on the language and the cultural heritage of the Uzbeks, the country’s majority population. Having said that (and this is another legacy of the Soviet past), Uzbekistan is keen to underline the country’s multicultural identity—speeches on national holidays still repeat the theme of “friendship of the people” just as they did 20 years earlier. Laura Adams (1999) described how at an Independence Day gala in the Tashkent area, Russians dressed in the traditional Uzbek national costume perform in the Russian language a song about

their (new) homeland—although the only response they receive from the audience is a roar of laughter.

This could be compared with the position of Swedish speakers in Finnish nationalist ideology and the project to build the Finnish nation-state. As a legacy of its past under Swedish rule, the newly autonomous Finland had a civil service that consisted entirely of Swedish speakers. However, the nation-state ideology that gathered momentum among intellectuals was built on the foundation of the Finnish language that was spoken by the majority of people and on cultural elements from within the Finnish language. Unlike the Russian people in Uzbekistan who, according to Adams (1999), are reluctant to learn the language of the majority population of the newly independent region, large numbers of Swedish speakers in autonomous Finland were quite excited about the new Fennomanian ideology. Many of them learned the Finnish language, began speaking it in their homes, and even changed their names.

The two cases are not quite as different as one might be inclined to think at first glance. Attitudes toward the majority population in Finland and its cultural traits were contradictory. For instance, intellectuals inspired by the nationalist ideology began to collect runes and other materials from the cultural heritage of the Finnish-speaking population, but (just as in Uzbekistan) ethnographers and folklorists were highly selective in what they chose to include. Vulgar poems, songs, and jokes were all omitted, and Elias Lönnrot, author of the Finnish national epic, did quite a lot of editing and rewriting of the material he had collected to get the *Kalevala* read like its international examples.<sup>1</sup> The identification of intellectuals with the Finnish-speaking majority population was also contradictory. On one hand, the Fennomans decided to become Finns, but on the other hand it was thought that Finnish people and the Finnish culture were in need of development through a popular education project. The national elite at once identified with the majority population and set themselves apart from them. The observation by Matti Peltonen (1988) that even today reference to Finnish people and Finnish culture is understood as an allusion to Finnish people being backward and uncivilized has to do precisely with this educational and development project undertaken by the elite (Alasuutari, 1996, chap. 8).

One of the ambitions of the Finnish nationalist ideology was to create a national Finnish-language literature and other forms of art: theatre, opera, art music, and visual arts. In spite of the doubts voiced by some Swedish-speaking circles, the aim was to prove that grand ideas and grand emotions could in fact be conveyed in the Finnish language (Niemi, 1980, p. 334). Eventually, with the growth of Fennomanian science and arts associations and the introduction of state subsidies, “national representative arts” were successfully created (Tuomikoski-Leskelä, 1977, pp. 20-22).

Just as Uzbekistan today, Finland in the late 19th century wanted to represent its national cultural heritage in a form that complied with international

standards. For instance, the opera department at the Finnish Theatre wanted to promote Finnish culture with a very traditionalist program with strong European overtones. The purpose was not so much to convey nationalist sentiments via the contents of the program but to prove that it was possible with the Finnish language to produce arts that lived up to international standards (Niemi, 1980, p. 338). The same applies to the romantic genre of Karelianism that evolved in domestic arts. Sibelius, for instance, dealt with national romantic themes, and it is said that he created a “national tone language”—but there is no doubt that first and foremost his music represents the tradition of European art music (Tirranen, 1980, p. 364). In the visual arts, too, the Karelianist period was characterized by exceptionally lively international contacts: Influences were sought not only from France, but also from Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, and England (Reitala, 1980).

As in the case of Uzbekistan, the project in Finland to create national arts was not only about inspiring feelings of national identity and cohesion but also about ambitions to change and shape the tastes and the customs of the majority population toward those prevailing among European intellectuals so that the new nation-state could be represented as a modern, advanced nation among others. That is why it was also a primary concern in Finland to make sure that all the art genres codified in Europe were on show: opera, ballet, the visual arts, and classical music.

The nation-state is an international idea that originated in Europe. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the ways in which it is represented are based on international standards codified in Western countries. Consider, for instance, state symbols: All countries are expected to have an official national flag that can be hoisted and that (usually) has the same proportions. And then there is the national hymn: On all continents and in all cultural spheres, the intonation and arrangement of most hymns follow the classical European music heritage. The purpose of national symbols and cultural products is to express the culture that is thought to be distinctive of that particular country, but at the same time that distinctiveness should be conveyed in a manner that stands up to international scrutiny.

It could be suggested that national symbols are based on random convention, that they are historical reminders of the fact that the nation-state ideology developed in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. But there is, in fact, more to these symbols. By favoring their national culture's forms of European art that comply with international standards, nation-states want to convey to the global community an image of themselves and their people as a modern, technologically advanced country that is a match for any other country competing in the international arena. The same message is conveyed to the people who are to become the new nation among nations: It is important that they should adopt the international standards of culture and the corresponding forms of mentality, because it is by following these standards that the nation will succeed

in the global competition. The public forms of representing national culture are always, to a lesser or greater extent, a matter of the national elite talking to the majority population.

### ***The Development of Finnish Cultural Policy***

As I pointed out earlier, the current nationalist project and cultural policy in the newly independent state of Uzbekistan can be compared with the situation that prevailed in Finland when the country gained independence in 1917. Since then, Finnish cultural policy (along with the policies in many other West European countries) has been through various stages before reaching the current situation where globalization has thrown up various challenges to national cultural policy. The main challenge is that the nature of the expertise and position of the national elite as intellectual leaders in their respective countries is in a state of flux. The kind of cultural protectionism that was typical of a more closed national economy and the popular education project are no longer viable options. On one hand, the problem for the national elite is that it is virtually impossible for them to lock out any influences that they consider alien or harmful or to control the volume and distribution of these influences as they used to. On the other hand, they can no longer resort to the same ways of legitimizing state policies aimed at steering the “intellectual state” of the nation and people’s leisure activities.

Dating from around the turn of the century, the policy of public subsidies for the arts has evolved during the past few decades into “welfare-state cultural policy,” and has recently run into a crisis. This has implied an expansion of the former, narrower concept of art policy into a more integral part of welfare state mechanisms. The sector that was responsible for supporting and promoting national representative arts now became part of public administration, with a broader responsibility for the everyday welfare of ordinary citizens.

From one point of view, this trend in development can be seen as a liberalization of conceptions of art. One of the indications of the more permissive attitude was that a much wider range of arts beyond the traditional field was now eligible for state support. Following the international example, with the Unesco conference in 1970 and the Eurocult conference in 1972 among the main influences (Ahponen, 1994, p. 103), this expanded field of cultural products was now referred to with the concept of culture. At the same time, the concept of art policy was gradually replaced by cultural policy, which in addition to arts came to comprise the mass media, popular education, organizations and associations, library services, research, and independent leisure pursuits. The emphasis shifted from products to activity, from the promotion of arts to the promotion of different artistic leisure interests. By the 1980s, the rhetoric of cultural policy was more comprehensive still. The former boundaries of high culture were called into question as popular culture, everyday culture, and sub-



cultures were compared with art culture. The key principles identified by the United Nations for the World Decade for Cultural Development from 1988 to 1997 were the reinforcement of cultural identity, the recognition of the cultural dimension in welfare development, and the expansion of cultural democracy (Ahponen, 1994, pp. 106-107).

On the other hand, this same history can also be interpreted as a development in which state measures have been applied to try and control in even greater detail what kind of influences people receive and the way they spend their leisure. From this point of view, conceptual innovations on how to define this activity are an attempt to make it less controlled and more democratic—to hide from view the paternalism of cultural policy. In practice, however, this has proved quite difficult, because state support is necessarily selective. This, in turn, means that certain cultural products or leisure activities have to be considered in one way or another as more valuable than others. From this vantage point, the development of cultural policy can be studied in terms of changes in the value premises by reference to which state support and control are justified. In traditional art policy, the criterion up to the 1960s was the artistry and aestheticism of cultural products, whereas since the inception of democratic and activating art policy, the key criterion was how cultural products “activated” people. This implied an expansion of the realm of cultural policy from products to the support of different kinds of civic activity and leisure interests; at the same time, the distinction between good and bad, high quality and low quality, or high and low culture, was expanded from the classical arts to popular culture—and from products to activity, to what kind of activity was worthy of public support and what was not.

Attempts to justify cultural policy in a manner that fits in with the prevailing intellectual climate, yet without sounding overly elitistic or paternalistic, have led to a paradoxical outcome. It has been easier to defend decisions to support what the elite regards as art when that has been part of a broader entity, but at the same time many other areas of social policy that used to be treated separately have appeared in a new light, that is, as part of the tradition of popular education. Public support for arts and the related project of popular art education could be seen through the concept of cultural policy as part of a much broader system including schools, the mass media, and health education—indeed, the whole arsenal of state biopolitics (Foucault, 1980) with which nation-states attempted to mold the people to fit the ideals of the elite. In many ways, the past 80 years of Finnish independence can be described as a golden era of this kind of popular education and cultural protectionism (Alasuutari, 1996, pp. 185-215), but its legitimacy has been undermined as matters belonging to the domain of this kind of biopolitics have been lumped together under one and the same heading in state documents and state administrative structures.

Clearly, then, the inference cannot be drawn that state biopolitics has a firmer grip than ever on people, that the state oversees to a much greater extent

than before what people think and how they spend their time—even though art policy, having transformed through discursive struggles and conceptual innovations over the past few decades into cultural policy or “civilization policy,” has now become a more important part of welfare state policy. Rather, the reason why the question of how people are influenced and how they spend their time has been the subject of such intense debate is that states now have to reckon with much fiercer competition than before. That competition is represented by a multinational entertainment and leisure industry.

Ever since the invention of radio and electronic sound reproduction, cultural policy in its present sense has largely been geared to controlling public access to mass media and other cultural products; this applies not only to Finland, but to other countries as well. As soon as radio broadcasting started in the mid-1920s, it was made a state monopoly, harnessed to the official objective of promoting popular education (Tulppo, 1976, p. 39). This has meant that both the music that is played on the radio and the films and all other program genres shown on television have been divided into “high” and “low” culture, into cultural products that comply with the ideals and those that run counter to them. Access to the latter has been restricted. However, various technological advances made it increasingly difficult to exercise this kind of control, and the startup of commercial television (which in Finland happened in 1957) complicated the situation even further. The breaking point came in the late 1980s when VCRs, cable channels, and satellite dishes made nonsense of state control over electronic mass communication. The Finnish state monopoly of radio broadcasting was dismantled in 1985, and in 1993 the country’s only commercial television station, MTV3, received its own operating license. Only a few years later, a second commercial television company was set up. The status and role of state-owned electronic media have changed quite profoundly. The state is no longer in a position to dictate what people are allowed to see and hear, but its educational program policy has to compete for viewers and listeners with commercial operators. At the same time, the public service broadcaster has to justify its existence to citizens, for they must pay for its upkeep in the form of annual license fees.

In the present situation, the old justifications for publicly supporting the production of culture are no longer valid. As we will see below in an analysis of the cultural policy debate in Finland from the late 1980s to the 1990s, one of the new discursive elements in the recent debate is to say that cultural policy is an economically viable business and to regard it as a long-term investment for the state. Another central theme in the Finnish and the international debate is to represent the policy of public support and control as a way of defending national independence and existence against mass entertainment and its stupidifying and homogenizing effects. This pushes to the sidelines all questions about hierarchies and their justification, about what is good or bad for people, how far people shall be protected against bad influences, and how these

decisions shall be made. Their place is taken by questions concerning the national versus the international. The specific, internally contradictory meaning given in the public debate to the concept of culture is crystallized precisely in this articulation.

### **The Repertoires of Cultural Policy**

Let us move on now to look at how art and culture are treated in the public debate in present-day Finland. What are people doing, and what exactly do they mean when they talk about art and culture? Why is so much of what they say so contradictory? Sometimes culture is used to refer to the performing arts (e.g., theatre, films, and music) and sometimes to lifestyle and the way that people perceive the world. What are the functions of talking about art and culture in this way?

### ***Culture and National Economy***

A recurring theme in the debate on culture and its role seems to be its relationship to economic policy. Whether directly or indirectly, commentators on cultural policy often start out from the premise that culture is supported from the public purse; a key issue, therefore, is deciding on what grounds culture should or should not be subsidized.

The most straightforward example is provided by the argumentation that the branch of cultural services is a profitable business, or at least beneficial to the national economy as a whole. Culture is seen as an investment by the state or local government in the future, an investment that in the long run will yield a profit.

Director of Cultural Services in Tampere, Mr Lassi Saressalo asks in *Kansan Uutiset* whether anyone can say what kind of long-term benefits children's art education will have for society. Or how many patients less come to the health centre on account of pensioners' clubs. A pinch of culture a day keeps the doctor away, Saressalo says.

Nor is culture always necessarily an expense item. German research suggests that every penny invested in culture produces a net profit of at least one and a half times over. Tampere Hall brings into the city an impressive FIM 230 million a year. ("Ripaus Kulttuuria," 1992, p. A2)

### ***Culture as a Source of Intellectual Activity***

The extract above refers to one of the arguments that is used to underline the positive effects of culture on the national economy. The idea here is that invest-

ments in culture contribute to people's mental health and in that way act to prevent other social costs. In addition, this repertoire stresses that intellectual activity also increases people's economic activity.

The report [on the national education strategy] displays a firm belief in the beneficial effects of education. The working group says that a national education strategy can help to overcome the intellectual recession and get the economy back on track. This is something we should not forget even at a time when people are queuing up for free bread. ("Lama-Suomesta," 1993, p. A2)

### ***Cultural and Education Services***

In the extracts above, the term *culture* is used to refer to the public support of cultural production and arts performances. However, this sector of state or municipal services is often linked up with education services. This link provides further legitimacy to calls for supporting culture—the same arguments that are used to justify the public science and educational system apply to culture as well. For instance, the 1993 national education strategy compiled by a Ministry of Education working group links up culture with the educational system:

The term itself refers to "the establishment of guidelines for the development of a cultural and educational infrastructure that will help us prepare for a future marked by uncertainty and rapid change." The components of this intellectual infrastructure are education, research, culture and civic activities. ("Lama-Suomesta," 1993, p. A2)

Here, the argument in favor of supporting cultural services is that arts help to maintain the national educational heritage. Culture, particularly when it is combined with the rest of the education sector, adds to human resources.

A small, remote country like Finland does not have very many options. Its success will primarily be based on human resources. When it is admitted that the only way forward for Finnish people is through self-development, the authorities can make a clear-cut decision: invest as much as possible into education, research and culture. ("Käyttövoimaksi," 1991, p. A4)

Highlighting as it does the civilizing effects of culture, this repertoire also raises the distinction between what kind of art or activity is civilizing and what is not. Whereas earlier the argument was that investments in culture will always pay back, in this case there is no reference to pensioners' clubs; the talk is now about high culture.

Finnish music is customarily regarded as our most international and also our "easiest" art genre. Without in any way denying this it is important to underline the role that Finnish-language literature has played in identity-building even at

times when the whole nation is preoccupied with the entirely futile exercise that is the TV channel reform. ("Päättökö Laman," 1992, p. A2)

In this extract, Finnish-language literature and concerns over its future are set against the establishment of a third commercial television channel, which at the time was quite hotly debated. This kind of futile exercise should be left alone, with all energies concentrated on supporting the production of such cultural products that cannot survive on commercial criteria alone.

The situation of literature is getting worse all the time. Publishers are bringing out less quality literature, with translations, lyric poetry and experiments by younger writers most particularly in the danger zone. At the same time there are plans to impose heavier taxes on all printed matter. ("Päättökö Laman," 1992, p. A2)

### ***Art and the Audience***

As far as high culture is concerned, commentators seem to feel a special obligation to explain and justify its value and high quality. The purpose is to find ways to justify the need to support such performing arts or such forms of writing that cannot be sustained on the basis of sales or box office revenues.

The argumentation for the need to value and maintain high culture (i.e., art that artists can only produce if they have public support) tends to be somewhat circular. Art has to be supported and valued because it is of a high quality and standard.

If the audience does not understand that art is of a high quality, then the problem has to lie in the audience itself; experts certainly are capable of making the distinction between good art and bad art. The solution that can be suggested is art education.

One of the proposed forms of art education is to make good art accessible to the general public, even though there is no money to be made in this. This may be justified by reference to the principle of equality: Art performances should not be so expensive that only the rich and wealthy can afford to go and see them. From this it follows that the state has to subsidize art.

In the practice of art policy, this problem of high-quality art having a limited audience is often reversed: If it is too straightforward to suggest that a performance or cultural product that does not make a profit has to be a form of high culture, then at least it will cease to be defined by the state as art as soon as it does begin to generate a profit. Or the other way around: "In the practice of cultural policy, a form of art is redefined as non-commercial and non-entertainment as soon as it becomes eligible for public support" (Liikkanen, 1994, p. 13). This is how the state acts in the world of art to uphold the distinction between high and low, between cultural products for a narrow and a broad audience.

For the people who are involved in making cultural products that represent high culture, the need to adhere to a form of artistic expression that is different and therefore appeals only to a certain narrow audience segment is grounded in forces that lie within art itself. Even if the artist wanted to have a larger audience, he or she cannot compromise because to do so would mean that the end product, according to the criteria of the art itself, would no longer qualify as art. To simplify, this inherent constraint comes from the idea that to qualify as art, cultural products have to find new forms of expression, something that has not been done before. From this point of view, a small audience is a drawback—an unfortunate fact, but there is nothing really that the artist can do about it. This is what Seppo Heikinheimo writes about the dilemma:

Among novelists I would imagine that living authors probably control something like 50-80 per cent of the field, whereas the situation in classical music is probably more than the opposite: I would be surprised if contemporary composers accounted for five per cent of all programmes. ("Säveltäminen," 1995, p. B3)

The main reason for this is that concert audiences do not feel comfortable with atonal music, which wants to break down old conventions. According to Heikinheimo, there is no going back, however: "On the other hand we have to realize that naive composition quite simply is something that is not on any more" ("Säveltäminen," 1995, p. B3).

This argument for supporting art is also circular in the sense that it does not explain why "naive" composition (which complies with traditional forms and structures) is no longer possible. It does set out certain formal criteria for evaluating whether art is good or bad in saying that good music, for instance, has more depth and more layers to it than bad music; but this does not yet explain why the audience should resort to art education to learn to appreciate all those layers in the light of the history of art music. The innovative nature of art should be accepted as a value in itself. It is assumed that the audience considers art as such a high value that studying it is required so that the audience can understand what it is all about.

The relationship between the taste of the general public and the form language of high culture has, however, become increasingly problematic during the 1980s and 1990s. The world of art has had to pay more attention to its relationship with the tastes and preferences of the general public. The argumentation that art deserves public support because "art is art" is no longer taken for granted to the same extent as it was in earlier decades.

This is not to say that there has been any major revolution or about-face, but the objective of trying to please the audience, to offer people aesthetic experiences, has been added alongside the old art discourse. This additional perspective is clearly in evidence in an editorial in which *Helsingin Sanomat* analyzes a report published in 1994 by an international group of experts of Finnish cultural policy:

The strengths of our cultural policy, according to the group of international experts, are its high level of public support, its grants and copyright system, the comprehensive and established network of cultural institutions, and the large number of visitors to cultural events. Indeed the interest of the general public is in the end the ultimate and the best indicator of the quality of cultural services offered. ("Maan Kulttuuripolitiikka," 1994, p. A4)

### ***Art and Nationalism***

One way to defend the position of state-subsidized art is to say that it is patriotic to hold it in high regard, that this is an indication of strong nationalist feelings. By holding art in high regard and by showing our appreciation through public support, we are expressing our appreciation for Finland, Finnish culture, and Finland's cultural heritage:

The steady steps of welfare also lean on education and national culture. Material well-being is a slender legacy indeed to leave to future generations if that is not complemented by the new achievements of Finnish culture, art and science and a solid appreciation of culture. ("Jälkimaailma," 1991, p. A2)

Arguments in favor of support for high-culture products often point out that this is an important way of supporting and treasuring national identity.

The roots of our independence go back more than 75 years. During the first (1899-1905) and the second (1908-1917) period of oppression Finland built up its identity on the strength of its culture. Today there is no more oppression, in the proper sense of the word. Yet at least symbolically we can still speak of oppression by the force of money: with the ongoing economic recession we do tend to be preoccupied with economic values. This may give rise to an illusion.

In an interview in today's *Aamulehti*, Chairman of our Independence Jubilee Committee Mr Kalevi Sorsa emphasizes the importance of intellectual values and specifically of Finnish-language literature. The age of the Kalevala, Aleksis Kivi and Väinö Linna is by no means over, but is going strong under new emblems, with new literature.

The development of our cultural heritage cannot be halted by one recession. ("Päättöykö Laman," 1992, p. A2)

What exactly does "national identity" mean in this discourse? One of its meanings is national difference; it refers to something that sets the Finnish people apart from other peoples. On the other hand, it seems that the reference is also to such national characteristics of which Finnish people are aware and with which we identify. It is about a national sense of unity, of national spirit, which according to the editorial above requires the "support of print material, living culture." According to this repertoire, we can be proud of being Finnish when we have something we can be proud about. That something is art.

### ***National and International***

The nationalist perspective that appears in the repertoire discussed above is contrasted with excessive nationalism. Here it is stressed that nationalism must not be allowed to spill over into parochialism or intolerance toward other nationalities. This is how *Aamulehti* summed up the national education strategy that was published in 1993:

The working group's ideal is a cultured Finland that should "understand and appreciate national traditions and create new traditions, but at the same time respect difference; a cultural society where there is flourishing material and intellectual activity and lively international interaction." ("Lama-Suomesta," 1993, p. A2)

The accent on internationalism as a counterbalance to nationalism is also connected with the knowledge that modern businesspeople need different cultures. In this repertoire, this kind of multicultural awareness is presented as an important competitive asset in the world markets and as part of the nation's educational policy.

Contacts will not transform into good cooperation without an in-depth knowledge of different cultures. Indeed experts are now asking, with good reason, whether Finnish universities are providing people with the training they need to understand the movements of peoples and cultures in the rapidly changing environment that is Europe. They may be doing so, but the numbers are still far too small. ("Käyttövoimaksi," 1991, p. A4)

To an extent, then, the accent on the national cultural heritage is contrasted with respect for difference and multiculturalism: Because nationalism is considered to signify respect for and pride in national culture, it is realized that there is also the possibility of the nation feeling superior to other cultures. This, in turn, may easily lead to racist attitudes, and it is for this reason that mentions of nationalism are closely followed by mentions of the value of multiculturalism. National cultures are thus contrasted with one another as if they were competing with one another; they are compared with one another as rivals. Part of this competition is the ability of the Finnish system of higher education to provide people with the training they need to understand different cultures. In this case, the results of the competition are distributed through the results achieved in international business.

This competition perspective is based on an understanding of culture as composed of everything significant that the nation has achieved. On one hand, it is a collection of works of art and other achievements by the nation's great men and women; on the other hand, it refers to the level of education and civilization in the nation. This helps to explain the paradox that the cultural products which are thought to be distinctive of national culture are in fact part of a



universal or, more correctly, a pan-European tradition of art. If the cultural products that serve as the symbols of domestic culture and that are the source of national pride did not represent universally recognized art genres, it would be much harder to compare them with the achievements of other nations. That is why culture is also considered an export product: If it fares well in the competition with the works of art produced by other nations, that is a good advertisement for the nation and an indication of the high standards of its culture.

This international display of national cultures and works of art does not take the form of rivalry on commercial export markets or competition among the culture industries of different countries. Instead, each nation-state is competing in its own league. In each case, the principal audience consists of a relatively narrow national cultural elite. Exports and imports of arts very rarely work on a purely commercial basis without government subsidies. This is why the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe damaged the export prospects of Finnish arts—all these states simply withdrew from the market.

Exports of Finnish literature are also not doing very well; now that the countries of former Eastern Europe have become market economies, one of the losers is Finnish literature. For instance, while socialist Hungary used to publish Mika Waltari in print runs of up to 150,000 copies, this year's harvest is one single collection of short novels—and even that would not have been possible without the support of the Finnish government. There are plenty of examples. ("Päättöykö Laman," 1992, p. A2)

### ***The Reverse Side of Cultured: Uncivilized Common People***

Even when culture is used in the public debate to refer to people's lifestyles and way of thinking, the concept of culture is hierarchic. For instance, discussions about Finnish traffic or conversation culture are usually concerned with assessing how good or bad it is, or to what extent we have a culture in this or that sphere of life. Culture refers to the sophistication of our customs; it is synonymous with civilization. The following extract from *Aamulehti* is about "lager louts" and their behavior abroad.

Finland is a cultured nation. Everyone who is over seven years of age can read.

It is quite appalling to see how as soon as Finnish people cross the border into a foreign country, all signs of culture and civilization are immediately washed away. It is a national disgrace that Finnish people behave on their trips to Lenin-grad and Tallinn the way they do. Semi-conscious, rowdy lager louts are making nonsense of all the efforts to build up a positive image of Finland as a modern nation. ("Renttuturismia," 1988, p. A2)

In this account, culture is represented as an outcome of a good, proper education. It is a thicker or thinner layer that accumulates with popular education on the creature who without that education would remain in a natural state. Culture here refers to

the norms or rules of behavior that guarantee that the individual is polite and considerate toward others. On the other hand, real humanity is only reached through the kind of behavior that complies with cultural (but what are assumed to be universal) norms:

The great majority of Finnish people know how to behave even when they are abroad. This also has to do with them, with how they are allowed to enjoy themselves.

Who is responsible? ("Renttuturismia," 1988, p. A2)

In this repertoire, the behavior of certain Finnish people becomes a national issue that may be used to justify state alcohol control, for instance.

It is not only the patient people of Leningrad and Tallinn who have to witness the behavior of our lager louts. Travellers from all over the world share hotels with these people. The accounts they take home of Finnish people are incredible. Incredible yet unfortunately true.

Is there really nothing we can do to interfere in this behavior which brings discredit on us as a people and which is an insult to other peoples? Do we just have to wait until the patience of the militia in our neighbouring country runs out? ("Renttuturismia," 1988, p. A2)

In this editorial, the citizens of all other countries are represented as decent, well-behaved, patient people who have never seen such barbarism before and who are deeply offended. Travelers are portrayed as members of different "peoples," each people with its own set of distinctive cultural features. Although the editor starts out by saying that it is Finnish people in general who are guilty of this kind of uncivilized behavior, washing down all signs of culture and civilization as soon as they cross the national border, by the end of the editorial the culprits are no more than a small minority of people. Be this as it may, the image that is repeated in accounts of Finnish people as uncivilized, rowdy lager louts serves as a justification for the need for popular education and state art policy. This is how *Aamulehti* comments on the final report of the committee on international communication in 1990:

The aim must be to create an atmosphere which will endorse all open-minded solutions that are necessary for art policy, which will support marginal cultures and aim to increase the individual's everyday life-satisfaction.

The sound foundation for these main proposals is the idea that the image that is projected to the outside world of Finland cannot be more pristine than the reality that this image reflects, and it is easy to subscribe to the views put forward by the committee. However, if you have happened to be listening again to what MPs are suggesting in Parliament about changing the names of educational institutions and about lowering the language proficiency requirements in Finland, one may well ask where the necessary political will can be found to raise the level of education. ("Suomi Paremmaksi," 1990, p. A2)

This extract provides another example of how the objective of raising the level of education in Finland (which is often justified by arguments of improving the national economy's international competitiveness) is tied up with arguments for keeping up state subsidies for arts by speaking in more general terms about raising the level of education or supporting culture.

The committee says that investments need to be made most especially in education, the environment and culture. Finland should be made into the best-educated nation in Europe and a model country for environmental policy which also has a thriving culture. ("Suomi-Kuva," 1990, p. A4)

The "uncivilized" behavior of Finnish tourists provides a very useful justification for state education and art policy in the sense that a single bad example is thought to be enough to ruin the positive image of Finland. It is hardly conceivable that all Finnish people even in the future will in each and every situation behave in a manner that is conducive to a more favorable image of the country.

### ***Public Image and the Europeanness of Finnish People***

Why has the presumed backwardness and lack of civilization of the majority population and international perceptions of Finland become such an important national question for Finns? Why is it that the remedy suggested for all this is to invest in European-influenced art? One of the reasons may be that Finland's geopolitical position in the postwar period has not been very clear to the international audience. Politically, Finland has often been considered to form part of the Eastern bloc, and in terms of our language, culture, and even biological heritage, the links have also been assumed to be stronger toward Asia rather than Western Europe. Supporting art that complies with the classical European standards has been part of a campaign aimed at demonstrating that at least as far as culture is concerned, Finland is an integral part of Europe.

During the 1980s and 1990s, this campaign to refresh the country's cultural image was complemented by a politico-economic strategy—as soon as this became possible following the decline of the Soviet Union. Together with two other neutral states, Austria and Sweden, Finland began to establish closer links with and eventually a full membership in the European Union—a solution that was out of the question for a neutral country during the heated years of the cold war. As far as the image problem is concerned, European integration has been considered an even better solution than image campaigns, as the following editorial indicates:

We would get much better and much cheaper results as far as the state and tax-payers are concerned via economic relations, which are really developing all

by themselves. For instance, Nokia's most recent acquisition conveys an image to all people in Western Europe of a modern industrial country. This image will be complemented when together with the other EFTA countries Finland begins to sort out its economic relations with the European Community. ("Rajallista," 1987, p. A2)

During the 1980s and 1990s, with Soviet influences decreasing and Finland becoming an integral part of the European economic area, we have seen new openings in the debate on Finnish people and Finnish culture. For instance, in 1993 *Aamulehti* took note of the argument made by Licentiate of Theology Jaana Hallamaa in *Helsingin Sanomat* that being Finnish is really an okay thing:

Hallamaa also wants to convince us that the emperor has no clothes. That is, she says that even the "Europeans" we admire so much are no more open-minded or laid-back than we are. People are steered by tradition and form all over the world.

People in Finland do suffer from anxiety, but so too do other people. Apparently the French are now going to psychoanalysis like they used to go to the hairdressers. ("Perussuomalaisuus," 1993, p. A2)

## Conclusion

It is clear from the analysis above that the word *culture* has many different meanings in public debate.<sup>2</sup> However, the different repertoires within which the word is used are by no means completely detached from one another. I will show that by reiterating the main results of the analysis and will then extend my discussion to the broader implications of *culturespeak* in the European and international context.

One feature of *culturespeak* is that culture is used as a word that refers to a national way of life and as a synonym for art or other cultural products. The former can be seen in the tacit assumption that national culture is by definition something unique and specific, that one identifies a nation by its culture. Thus, *culturespeak* is used to promote a distinct national identity. Mixed with this meaning of culture is talk where culture actually refers to certain artifacts, such as works of art. When the word *culture* is used in this way, the national particularity emphasis is often played down, because art and culture are seen as a field of competition. It is assumed that domestic art and other cultural products should live up to international standards. When culture is used in this way, there is also the underlying assumption that high culture and "cultural activities" worthy of state support are instruments that can improve specific mental or behavioral attributes of the general population (Bennett, 1992, p. 28).

When culture is thought of as a means of popular education and behavior modification of the general population, we are talking about a hierarchic conception of culture. Within it, high culture consists of those products that provide intellectual stimulus to the people, whereas low culture consists of products that offer no intellectual or educational inspiration. One distinctive

feature of this repertoire of culture is that the worlds of art, science, and the educational system and its products, such as the people's level of education or scientific innovations, are linked together. As a consequence of this articulation, the argument that says that it is necessary to support culture is backed up by the economic and industrial arguments that are used to justify the state's science and educational system.

This articulation is used because it is rhetorically effective, but to understand why, we need to discuss the modern category of art as a form of civic, secular religion. The distinction between arts and mass culture, between low and high culture, is comparable to the distinction that Durkheim (1965) said is common to all religions in the world, that is, that between sacred and profane. In other words, art and high culture products occupy a respected, sacred position in people's minds. The main idea behind the modern conception of high culture, the expectation that cultural products that deserve to be treated as art should not repeat old forms or conventions but should create something new, does not need any justification. Instead, the modern category of art lends an unquestioned and compelling sense of sacredness to the same principle needed also in other, more practical areas of life. Because of rapid, continuous social changes brought about by global market economy and technological development related to it, to survive and find an employment the modern individuals have to be ready to constantly adjust to changing conditions, to develop themselves, and to question given truths. Although such an attitude is in the self-interest of any individual who wants to be successful, it is far from a small requirement. It is rather typical of humans everywhere that we tend to develop routinized, "traditional" forms of thought and action and to build a feeling of continuity and self-identity around them. Therefore, for modern societies to be successful in instilling a readiness for change to the majority population, it needs a religious backing (in the Durkheimian sense), and art as a sacred category provides just that. Therefore, it is also in the interest of nation-states that try to be competitive in the global market to promote art, which thus serves as an element of popular education and overall behavior modification.

For politicians, governments, state officials, or the national elite to effectively justify that more efforts for behavior modification—such as education, control, and guidance—are needed, one needs to construct and to keep alive a negative image of (sections of) the general population. As was illustrated in the editorials analyzed in the previous sections, that can be done by showing how at least part of the population is uncivilized.

The hierarchic notion of culture that rests on sacredness of art is the key to understanding how seemingly different repertoires of culturespeak form a totality. Practically all discussions about culture and cultural policy are colored by it. However, the Enlightenment project still underlying current public culturespeak is faced with problems in the present global context, not only in Finland but in other European countries and throughout the world. The expansion and deepening of market relations, seen in privatization and deregulation,

lation of broadcasting, coupled with new developments in the area of communication technology, has not only made nation-state cultural protectionism ineffective or impossible but also has affected notions of the general public. For instance, state control of audiovisual production has dwindled very rapidly, and as a consequence there is now less the state can do to promote high culture or restrict what is regarded as a harmful content. The markets of cultural products and communication in general are increasingly based on demand and supply. Countries that used to strongly subscribe to the idea of high culture as a tool of popular education are now in a new situation: If producers are to retain even partial control of the audiovisual production markets, the people involved in cultural production have to make compromises. The old way of understanding the role of art has to give way; artists will have to listen to the audience and find out what their preferences are.

Insofar as the Finnish and the European system of state subsidies for the arts is really going to try and respond to the new consumer- and citizen-centered situation in cultural production, this might signify a shift in emphasis in state and European Union subsidies from the traditional arts of small elites toward audiovisual production aimed at larger audiences. If this is the case, then the definition of what is good and high quality production should in one way or another take into account the audience targeted and reached. So far, as we have seen, support for the arts has been directed specifically at commercially nonprofitable work (Alasuutari, 1996, pp. 216-244). Already it seems that the more consumer-oriented opinion climate has been affecting modern art in Finland and elsewhere. For instance, the long-standing avant-garde canon of modern art music—its serialism—was finally broken in the early 1990s, and “neotonalists” such as Arvo Pärt and Philip Glass achieved widespread popular acclaim with their work (something they had already enjoyed earlier among art music fans). The discussion on the tension between the serial tradition and neotonality concentrated largely on the audience’s preferences in relation to the “internal” quality and value criteria of arts. In the United States, this post-modern turn was compared with the velvet revolution that knocked the bottom out of state socialism in Eastern Europe. For instance, *The New York Times* columnist Michael Beckerman compared the composers of the serial tradition with Marxists, who described their supporters as progressive and their opponents as reactionary. In Finland, contemporary composer Magnus Lindberg said in an interview that he was “actually quite concerned that Tavener and Pärt are selling so well.” Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen had a similar comment on Glass’s music:

Glass is absolutely awful, it has never met any criteria of music. Millions of Glass fans can be wrong—and they are wrong. He is not a composer we should take seriously, whereas for instance Steve Reich or Prince are. (“Kolme Näkökulmaa,” 1995, p. B1)

Although current ideological trends have certainly been reflected in the arts scene and brought some minor changes in style, the system of public support for contemporary art has in practice remained unchanged throughout the 1990s. Yet, at a more general plane it could be said that the real weight of cultural policy, that is, of the system of state control aimed at influencing what people think and how they spend their time, has lessened compared with the preglobalization period. This does not mean to say that the debate on cultural policy is dying down or losing its general interest. Quite the contrary—as direct state control becomes more and more difficult, the only real option that remains is to try and influence public opinion. This is what has happened during the 1980s and 1990s with Finnish alcohol control, for instance. When the alcohol monopoly was first set up there were an education policy, price policy, control policy, and various measures to restrict access. Now, all that remains is education (Piispa, 1997).

On the other hand, the new situation also means that issues that were previously discussed behind closed doors and decided on in central administration are now out in the open, a matter for public debate. The old administrative routes for taking action and policy decisions are also blocked; the main vehicles for influencing people are various civic and consumer movements that directly lobby private business companies. An example is provided by the United States, where private operators are a far stronger force in the electronic media field than public service broadcasters. In the United States, there are various pressure groups that will try to influence programming contents by getting program producers to agree on certain rules with regard to showing sex or violence or the appearance of ethnic minorities.

Understood in the European sense as something rather valuable, if not sacred, art has served as a symbol of the state-centered and expert-dominated society and at the same time provided legitimacy for that society. The growing influence and control of market forces in society means that people will be able to take an easier attitude toward art and that the whole concept of art as an antithesis of entertainment or mass culture will be called into question. However, it is unlikely that the modernist concept of art will die even in the situation where all public money is withdrawn from cultural events and the private sector takes over. Instead of nation-states, or at least alongside nation-states, the arts will be sponsored by companies who will support products and events to make their name known in audience segments who are interested in, say, classical music and modern art—and who for many businesses represent a very interesting prospective customer segment.

Due to the developments related to globalization, the structural position of art and entertainment has indeed changed. For instance, within the European Union member states have realized that to maintain or strengthen European cultural production, the products need to be commercially competitive, that is,

able to attract large audiences. If not, there is no way to stop an ever bigger inflow of American production. Within the European Union, it has been clearly realized that the field of cultural production must be seen as part of European industrial policy rather than a form of popular education.

Yet, the rhetoric by which European cultural production is politically defended still appeals to the old nationalist and paternalist framework within which high art has been dealt with. For instance, when the issue of supporting audiovisual culture in the European Union is discussed, commentators frequently identify this with supporting the whole European way of life (Schlesinger, 1997, p. 372).

Schlesinger (1997, p. 376) said that this rather European way of talking about culture as synonymous with art is closely related to European nation-state thinking. Whereas the notion of what is distinctively American, for instance, is understood as a juridico-political image of the community, European nation-states have traditionally seen citizenship and nationality in terms of cultural similarity within the nation-state. This is why it is considered necessary to defend the national production of images; the idea is that if there is no national art, then the whole nation will cease to exist as well.

Apart from the problems created by mixing Enlightenment ideas of popular education with aims to develop a field of industry, this nationalist rhetoric creates another kind of problem. Many European countries, Finland included, have traditionally had a negative net migration rate: They have been countries from which people have migrated to the United States. Consequently, the remaining population has remained relatively homogeneous in terms of the ethnic and religious composition. However, during the past decades the situation has changed rapidly. For instance, in Finland the turn of the 1980s and 1990s was a clear turning point with many more immigrants, especially refugees, entering the country. Additionally, at the European level the expansion of the European Union means that the racial, ethnic, and religious heterogeneity of the European Union citizens is increasing. Yet, the rhetoric used by European Union politicians to try and create a feeling of solidarity among the citizens of the European Union repeatedly draws on an ethnocultural dimension that effectively excludes part of the population. For instance, according to the previous commission president Jacques Santer, the sources of the European "common cultural heritage—the heritage of the Western mind and tradition"—are "Greek, Latin and Judeo-Christian." Similarly, the European parliament has outlined present-day European culture as derived from "classical culture and Christianity" (Hansen, 2000, p. 153). This kind of traditional European nationalism is increasingly impossible in today's multicultural Europe. It is difficult even at the level of an individual European nation-state, let alone for the European Union as a whole. As Schlesinger (1997) pointed out, when the countries of the European Union say that audiovisual production must be supported for reasons of preserving the European cultural tradition, they are in fact applying the nationalist rhetoric in a rather problematic way to refer to a



highly heterogeneous community. This is of course understandable in view of the European tradition of nationalism, but it is not very likely that the European Union can succeed in creating a strong sense of internal cohesion by appealing to a common cultural heritage. As long as even top politicians and official documents resort to this kind of ethnocultural rhetoric in their attempts to construct European nationhood, the racist, right-wing attacks against the immigrants and “cultural others” are just an extreme continuation of the underlying everyday nationalism. In Europe—as in many parts of the world—the changing “ethnoscapes” (Appadurai, 1996) call for a rethinking of the seemingly sympathetic and analytically useful concepts of culture and nation.

## Notes

1. It is also important to note that within this framework of romantic nationalism, culture was understood in terms of cultural products that commanded respect and admiration, whether these were sleighs, fyke nets, and birch-bark pouches or runes and songs. The products were detached from their everyday contexts, and traditional rune singers were made into cultural heroes.

2. Sanna Talja (1998) has identified in the cultural policy debate several different interpretive repertoires that represent contradictory and historically different layers. For instance, the use of contradictory discourses in state documents is explained by the fact that repertoires are relevant in different ways in different contexts. Traditionally, the “unified culture” repertoire that defends one national (art) culture is applied in discourses about services available to citizens or in talk which falls in the category of “artist policy.” The “anti-commercialist” repertoire is used to justify support for material which has a low circulation. The “mosaic culture” repertoire, which stresses the equal diversity of different cultures in the world, is used to study what sort of cultural interests people have.

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