CULTURES IN COOPERATION:
REALITIES AND TENDENCIES

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CULTURES IN COOPERATION: REALITIES AND TENDENCIES

Edited by

Biserka Cvjetičanin and Nada Švob-Đokić

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FOREWORD

The *International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia* conference was held on 30th and 31st May 2019 in Rijeka, the European Capital of Culture 2020, gathering approximately 200 participants from European, African, Arab and Asian countries. The conference programme was divided into seven panels and round tables, with presentations and discussions organised around the following topics:

- The Role of Cultural Policies in Fostering International Cultural Cooperation,
- Culture-Powered City Diplomacy,
- Cultural Networks – The Expression of Cultural Change in International Relations,
- The Future of Intercontinental Cultural Cooperation between Europe and Africa,
- Croatia in International Cultural Cooperation,
- Models of Self-Sustainable Cultural Cooperation in South-East Europe,
- Cultural Diplomacy: Strengthening External Relations in a Globalised World.[1]

Some 18 months after the conference, we are happy to present the conference's collected papers. Considering the coronavirus pandemic which has caused delays in communication and our activities, we feel very much obliged to all the authors and contributors who were ready and willing to write and submit their papers, and thus take part in

[1] Cf., *International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia* conference programme, Rijeka, Croatia, 30-31 May 2019.

preparing these collected papers. We thank them cordially for their work, involvement and good will.

The topics that were planned and discussed at the conference are not fully reflected in the papers and contributions received. The authors evidently wrote in rather changed contexts, hallmarked by the coronavirus pandemic and hindered communication. As editors, we decided to organise the papers received according to their content, and not according to conference sessions and discussions. Accordingly, the contributions are presented in the following four chapters: **International Cultural Relations and Cultural Policies**; **International Cultural Cooperation and the Role of Networks**; **Croatia in the EU Context of International Cultural Cooperation**; and **Recollections/ Reminiscences**.

The first chapter, **International Cultural Relations and Cultural Policies**, discusses the increasingly plural 'politics of cultural relations' and their influence on cultural policies. The 'politics of relations' engender transversal strategies that associate cultures and interculturality with a number of social issues, and thus inspire a widening of the approaches of cultural policies to specialist areas and individual human communities. A growing number of "actors and types of cultural policies at different levels" has resulted from processes of 'cultural relations policies', and has strongly influenced cultural policies formatted within local, national, regional, European and global contexts. These new relations have been increasingly sustained by a 'soft power approach' to cultures and cultural policies. This approach has created the need for the re-definition, re-orientation, and active promotion of cultural policies. The role, operation and re-conceptualisation of cultural policies introduce the 'soft power approach' on the level of cultural sector, cultural cooperation and the integration of culture into various specialised areas of human activity. The two concepts – 'politics of relations' and 'soft power approach' – directly interact through cultural policies. At both EU and national level, they are communicated via and oriented through 'cultural diplomacy', that is, the alignments and misalignments between countries and nations,

which enrich transcultural dialogue in the sphere of cultural relations. The benefits of this dialogue include: learning about one another, the acquisition of new skills, broader audiences, increased funding, reflection, debate, research, experimentation, and co-creation. This is particularly visible in the activities carried out by the cultural institutes of European countries operating in Croatia. Their activities and role are analysed to show that these usually follow bilateral cultural cooperation agreements. This provides for concentrated cultural communication, and makes finding project partners – who often come from the civil society sector – effective and easy. However, foreign cultural centres primarily focus on the promotion of the presence and values of the cultures and countries that they represent. In this respect, they function as an integral part of their countries' diplomatic activities.

As an important initiator, promoter and supporter of new cultural relations between countries, the EU supports cultural relations both between its member states, and with countries and regions in other parts of the world. Cultural diplomacy is, therefore, supposed to establish and ease such relations with both European and non-European cultures, which is a demanding and difficult task. In parallel, a general cultural relations policy influences European 'inner' cultural cooperation practices, those between both "the 'old' and the 'new' EU member states". They may reflect either traditional cultural similarity (e.g., France and Spain) or cultural disparity (e.g., Slovakia and Croatia). 'Historical cultural lineages' differ from 'elective affinities' (similar to business relations). These are compared to existing economic relations to prove that external economic relations are much more dispersed than external cultural relations. However, although more expansive, economic ties are more superficial and are subject to periodical crises, while cultural ties tend to survive both political and economic crises. Both are discussed in the light of the primacy of culture in Europe (Monnet). Thus, cultural cooperation within the EU may be analysed within the context of a possible *Culture+* programme and the current COVID-19 pandemic, which already has repercussions on different areas of international relations in general, and on international cultural relations in particular.

The second chapter is devoted to **International Cultural Cooperation and the Role of Networks**. Networks play an essential intermediary role in today's globalised and inter-connected cultures. They provide the arts and culture with strategic relevance and recognition at EU and global level. As an important element of cultural cooperation within and beyond the EU, networks are seen to be multifunctional as they "substitute traditional diasporas in supporting the mobility of artists and cultural and creative operators worldwide". The multi-functionality of contemporary cultural networks is reflected in the EU's constructive relations with its southern neighbours. One of the EU's main assets in building bridges with its southern neighbours is the postulate that culture has an intrinsic public value. A set of projects illustrate the reality of cultural cooperation in southern regions, which is clearly seen in cities re-entering the international culture scene. Networks can reinforce international cultural cooperation through urban actions and events, such as festivals, exhibitions, specific cultural programmes, and various gatherings. Examples of the European Capital of Culture project testify to the transformation of relations between states, regions and cities, which is reflected in cities getting involved in international cooperation projects and relations developing between different decision-making levels. Planned cooperation between African cities and European Capitals of Culture indicates an evolvement of strategies to affirm communication between different cultures, cultural heritage and creativity assets. Such cooperation may be strengthened through the development of cultural networks and the evolvement of cooperation tools, including the development of informal training programmes for cultural and arts managers.

The third chapter, **Croatia in the EU Context of International Cultural Cooperation**, discusses Croatia's international cultural cooperation efforts and experiences. In this respect, lack of data is a problem. Croatia's international cultural cooperation is rather decentralised and involves partners on different levels (regions, cities), of different specialisations and different institutional standings. Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media supports participation in a number of programmes and projects, but it does not always keep a record of the

number of contacts made, the networks involved and the individual activities carried out within the framework of the programmes and projects it supports. It is, however, evident that Croatia's international cultural cooperation efforts have been oriented towards the establishment of closer ties with the EU and other European countries, while cultural communication with geographically distant regions has been on the decline. The inclusion of Croatian cultural operators in various European projects has increased. However, support is dominantly given to some projects and artists, in which project-to-project activities dominate. This hinders any long-term planning of cultural activities and the development of proactive approaches to stable cultural communication with foreign peers or international organisations. In general, Croatia's international cultural relations and opportunities within and beyond Europe are neither sufficiently supported by Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media, nor sustained by active cultural diplomacy. Cultural operators, therefore, have difficulties in identifying common interests and partners in international cultural cooperation activities. At the same time, given that artistic cooperative practices have entered city areas, streets and squares, the fate of cultural event locations and institutions has been brought into question.

The EU's strategic approaches and accompanying strategies have introduced intercultural dialogue and cultural interaction as new dimensions into international cultural relations. These have become welcome contributions to EU foreign policies. Although Croatia has invested efforts to follow such trends in cultural and foreign policy orientations, the results remain unknown. Inter-sectoral coordination between Croatian public policies and institutions needs to improve so as to find a place for cultural values and activities in Croatian foreign policy.

The fourth chapter, **Recollections/Reminiscences**, brings views and personal experiences in terms of cultural contacts, in terms of working in different times and different fields, and in terms of established ties between different participants in the global Culturelink network. The experiences differ, and different views on cultures and cultural cooperative practices are conveyed. Although these experiences often tend

to be personal in nature, they nevertheless testify to the understanding of culture as a key value of all societies.

As editors, we hope that the texts included in this book duly reflect the discussions held and the exchange of ideas and standpoints expressed at the conference. We thank the authors for their participation in the conference and their contributions.

The editors

International Cultural Relations and Cultural Policies

CULTURAL COOPERATION, THE FERMENT OF POLITICS OF RELATIONS FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL LEVEL

Jean-Pierre Saez

Abstract

From local to global level, cooperation is a basic principle of contemporary cultural policies. The registers and scales in which it is mobilised have become increasingly plural. From an international point of view, cooperation has long been the exclusive privilege of States. It was then largely taken over by local authorities. But it must be emphasised that civil society has always been at the forefront of this cooperation. We need cooperation to support the mobility of artists and works, to promote intercultural dialogue, to think about the issue of migration in a changing world, to develop transversal strategies that associate culture with other social issues, such as the environment, health, urban planning, digital transition, etc. What does the idea of cooperation mean? It is 'to do together in a fair relationship'. Cooperation also makes it possible to feel that any living culture is intercultural. It is a profoundly cultural act, but it does not concern the so-called cultural field alone. How do we translate its multiple occurrences into a global philosophical principle? How do we name the policy of cooperation policies? We could call it a *Politics of Relations*, and ask how culture and cultural policies can both embody and support it.

Globalisation

Contrary to popular belief, globalisation does not stop inventing twists that show that it can only be an unfinished process. Admittedly, it informs us that the world is no longer composed of isolated countries or closed territories. However, while facilitating exchanges or openness to the Other, it also stimulates particularisms, affirmations of identity, fallback reactions and sometimes legitimate protection, to put it simply. It is, at the same time, an instance of fierce competition, but also of all-out co-operation. While promoting the spread of standardised forms of culture, while threatening indigenous cultures, it also reveals cultural diversity. It manifests itself through multiple dimensions: economic, social, ecological, digital, etc. Moreover, it does not stop entangling them even more. Here, they are now completely interdependent. In other words, we live in a world turned upside down by the convergence of multiple ecological, numerical and political transitions. We understand that we have been changing times radically and that we need to invent a new model of cooperation, a more complex model to bring about a unifying civilisational project, a survival model for humanity. But, we keep beating about the bush. It must also be said that, at the heart of some of our common institutions, some forces prefer to construct "destructive forms of cooperation" to quote Richard Sennett (Sennett, 2012), that is, strategies of collusion that have been to the detriment of the greatest number. Furthermore, they are often the same – manufacturers of fake news who play the dangerous game of wanting to challenge the obvious.

Cooperation

Richard Sennett defines cooperation as "an exchange in which the participants benefit from the meeting". But why do we cooperate? Is it for ethical or practical reasons? Is it in line with common or particular interests? Both, without doubt. We cooperate through solidarity, a spirit of responsibility, a concern for efficiency, because it is often the best way to go further, where a personal interest is subsumed by a common interest. Cooperation demonstrates awareness of our interdependencies.

This admission of weakness is actually – power. According to Jeremy Rifkin, the third Industrial Revolution will be that of a cooperative economy symbolised by the networking of local energy productions. In the end, the only cultural act remaining is that of cooperation (Rifkin, 2011). In cooperation, we are asked to connect cultures, knowledge, values and know-hows. Every culture remains alive only if it cooperates, exchanges, borrows from other cultures. Cooperation is an act of collective intelligence, although it does not exclude competition between partners. It is a feature of our time that sees cooperation and competition combine in "coopetition". Cooperation is not without risk. It presupposes a principle of equity. Otherwise, it calls for sympathy between the protagonists, at the very least for a posture of empathy that leads one to work from the goals of the other. Cooperation is an act of adaptation, insurance for the future. Cooperation is a resource. Rather than seeing it as a Trojan Horse that eats away at its autonomy, it must be considered to be a method of securing one's destiny. In the context of today's multiplicity of changes, we need tools of all kinds, we need more culture, that is to say, dialogue, exchange, relations within society to better understand the world which we live in (Cvjetičanin, 2014). However, what we are seeing is an erosion of public effort for culture in many European countries, a loss of legitimacy of cultural policies in favour of market logic.

How do we stay on course with an emancipatory vision of culture? Which political ambition are our local, national, European and international institutions ready to give to culture to stimulate mutual knowledge, understanding of the Other, to be able to position ourselves better in a changing world? Since half a century ago, the idea of cooperation has been translated into an ever-richer eco-systemic lexicon – synergy, network (social), shared evaluation, mutualisation, governance, co-construction – and the history of vocabulary of organisations of the last decades tells the story of the changes and crises (state, democracy, etc.) which we are engaged in. However, we have the right to ask ourselves whether this language builds a path of sorts of salvation or whether it corresponds to yet another breviary still too empty of meaning, still denied by the most common practices?

Europe

Twelve years ago, Europe celebrated the Year of Intercultural Dialogue (Labadie, F. et al., 2009). What did Europe mean by that? It was felt that Europe needed to be boosted by supporting a climate of trust between Europeans. It was recalled that, some fifteen years earlier, Europe had failed to avoid deadly conflicts on European soil. It was observed that culture had been essentially under-mobilised as a relational ferment in Europe. It was foreseen that there was a certain degree of urgency in the need to create new symbolic bridges between Europeans and that, in this perspective, cultural exchanges in general and the arts in particular constituted a particularly interesting resource as a universal, mobile, shareable language, capable of bringing sensibilities together beyond language barriers. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was just ratified. The hope was that it would open new horizons (Cvjetičanin, 2006). The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue also intended to think of the Mediterranean Basin as a common geographical and cultural space, including Africa as a neighbouring continent which Europe is existentially linked to.

Twelve years later, we cannot say that the balance sheet is very positive. Some Europeans certainly do enjoy the benefits of their share of Europe: through travels, studies, through the Schengen Area for those who benefit from it, through participation in cultural life. This part of Europe often practises interculturality easily, both with its neighbourhood and on a European scale. But the other party chooses withdrawal, not only for fear or rejection of the other, but also for fear of information of the world today, of changes that we do not understand, that we are poorly prepared for. This part of Europeans take refuge in nationalisms or populisms that know how to offer simplistic remedies to the anxieties of this Europe, by making them believe that everyone can get by on their own, seeking to give a kind face to the nationalist idea and failing to recall how history ends when nationalisms govern.

Two areas of application of the politics of relations

Europe and refugees

How did we get here? There are necessarily many reasons and, indeed, Europe lacked a political project that would have enabled it to face certain difficulties. So far, Europe has not succeeded in managing the migration crisis. But, this crisis calls for a political and cultural revolution in the way in which it manages the difficulties it embodies. Developing and adopting the following is a matter of utmost urgency:

- a concerted reception policy that respects the basic principles of human rights (Chamoiseau, 2017). We do not have a concerted policy and, all too often, human rights are flouted on European soil against political or climate change refugees;
- a policy that fights climate change, given that many migrants are victims of a process related to our development model;
- a common diplomacy framework that eases inter-state or inter-ethnic tensions;
- an ambitious strategy for sustainable economic development in the countries concerned;
- a policy based on contractual principles, so that results can be evaluated independently and corruption prevented;
- a policy that works diligently on the integration of refugees currently in Europe through a vast programme of educational and cultural work not only because it is in our interest, but because it is also our duty. We can now see the meaning that can be given to the idea of politics of relations: it is simply a question of considering the interdependence of the problems that humanity is facing and of designing convergent policies that take reality into account.

Arts and cultural education as a field of application of the politics of relations

Artistic and cultural education (ACE) can be a great field in which a politics of relations can be applied and in which it *resonates* (Rosa,

2016). To develop as people, every person, every child needs a global education, which takes into account both the imperatives of formal education and the needs of non-formal and informal education. Artistic and cultural education represents a great tool for developing oneself, understanding the world and opening up to others. In this spirit, it is not only a means of awakening sensitivity and of stimulating creativity, but also a means of deepening intercultural relations by making them more intelligible. Establishing the diagnosis that European citizenship is broken is not enough. It is necessary to propose concrete ways of giving it new chances. ACE is undoubtedly one such track to be explored.

Therefore, it should not be considered as the icing on the cake, but as the leaven in the dough of education. How do we translate this idea into fact in a truly democratic way? My conviction is that we must work on integrating arts and cultural education into common law, aiming to consider it a cultural right of every individual from an early age (Saez, Schneider, Bordeaux, Hartmann-Fritsch, 2014).

Why and how do we place culture at the heart of what is called the "knowledge society" project? How do we align artistic and cultural education with the development of digital culture? How do we promote learning about Europe if not through concrete experiences of encounters and projects involving young people from diverse backgrounds in joint artistic practices? How do we awaken the idea of European citizenship so that all become aware that their community of destiny does not stop at the borders of their country?

These are some challenges that require inventing new solutions, residences of cross artists, trainings, joint ACE workshops with educators and artists to share our experiences, their effects, their difficulties, the conditions of success. I have been dreaming of much more for a long time: an ERASMUS programme for artistic and cultural education, an ERASMUS programme that is not reserved for the most deserving students, but for entire classes in all their diversity, so that young Europeans could experience together and protect the values of democracy, peace, solidarity, freedom of expression, and freedom – all the common good that Europe embodies!

Cultural and transversal cooperation

The implementation of such an ambition requires that we adopt a transversal perspective on cooperation. Here again, the politics of relations takes on its full meaning, while culture is intended to be its 'fuel'. A policy of cultural cooperation has many virtues. When it becomes the subject matter of cooperation, culture opens up space for dialogue, but also new imaginary space for co-operators, including space for freedom, while a policy that isolates cultural cooperation from other forms of cooperation can only yield limited results. Much like the way in which ecological, civic, economic and social policies need a cultural ferment to go further. The reasoning that precedes calls for a philosophy of action that I call politics of relations is an extension of Édouard Glissant's "poetics of relation" (Glissant, 1990). One could also say of this policy that it is 'of civilisation', in the sense in which Edgar Morin gives this formula when he concludes that it is necessary to connect knowledge and strategies to face the challenges of an ever more interdependent world which continues to cultivate a lack of care for others (Morin, 2002).

Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau invite us to consider the beauty of the idea and the act of relation, that is, to understand it as a poetic idea and act. This would be the first step towards a relations policy. They argue that tomorrow "any policy will be estimated at its intensity in a relationship". This is both exhilarating and necessary because, "by touching and exchanging, worlds have created spaces where we must learn to live". Europe could be this 'Relations State' that associates nation-states in a perspective of overcoming obstacles which does not deny them.

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THE SOFT POWER APPROACH THROUGH CULTURAL POLICIES*

Nada Švob-Đokić

Abstract

The role, operation and re-conceptualisation of cultural policies (CPs) are invoked to indicate a possible involvement of the *soft power approach* in processes of reshaping CPs. In this respect, the concept of *soft power approach* is introduced in brief with reference to S. J. Nye (2004, 2011), T. Flew (2016), S. Hall (1973, 1980), and *The Soft Power Report* (Portland, 2018 and 2019). Acceptance of the *soft power approach* through CPs is presented on three levels: on the level of cultural sector, on the level of cultural exchange and on the level of integration of culture into various other specialised areas and activities. Instruments and infrastructures supportive of the *soft power approach* through cultural policies are mentioned. It is concluded that CPs may internalise the *soft power approach*, which was developed within political and policy studies, so as to strengthen and facilitate cultural interactions within all cultural domains.

The soft power approach through cultural policies

Today's cultural and art practices, the issues related to cultural heritage, cultural values and symbolic meanings that these include and

* This text is based on a PowerPoint presentation on the soft power approach through cultural policies which I gave at the "International Cultural Relations of the EU – Europe, the World, Croatia" conference, 30-31 May 2019.

develop through technological, economic and overall social changes bring forward the need to rethink and reshape cultural policies (CPs) as these address the human existential environment directly. The efforts invested in analyses and discussions of the present-day role and reshaping of cultural policies have been contextualised by contemporary social, economic and political developments. Systems of governance of culture (UNESCO, 2018)[1] have become subjects of research developed within the humanities and social sciences with the aim of promoting informed, transparent and participatory efforts that bring forward a soft approach to ideas and actual cultural and art practices. A soft approach may facilitate an open and forward-looking analysis of cultural governance.

Cultural context and power concepts

The same as all public policies, cultural policies, too, are moulded by often unstructured historical processes and explained through real or fictional power relations, which are mostly studied by history and political sciences. The role and types of power relations in human societies have always been an attractive subject of analyses for many authors. By the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, the discussion of the types of power in the contemporary world had already been well articulated by Joseph Samuel Nye and Robert Keohane in their book *Power and Interdependence. World Politics in Transition* (1977), in which they developed the concepts of hard, soft and smart power. Elaborations and discussions of these concepts have been contextualised within the international relations theory of neo-liberalism.

The concept of 'soft power' was further developed by J. S. Nye (2011) through three pillars: culture, political values and foreign policies. It is described as the ability to get "others to want the outcomes you want" and "the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion" (Nye 2004: 5).

[1] Cf.: UNESCO (2018), 2005 Convention Global Report. *Re | Shaping Cultural Policies: Advancing Creativity for Development*.

In line with liberalised cultural exchanges, the elements of Nye and Keohane's political analyses were introduced into cultural and media studies about a decade or so later, and mostly in the context of globalised cultural and media communication. Terry Flew (2016), for instance, discusses the soft power concept in relation to communication and cultural studies (relational power) in the context of the post-globalisation international media expansion in China. The author uses the term 'cultural power' as it includes an understanding of reception contexts (Hall, 1973)[2] and cross-cultural communications. Both media and cultural consumption are "strongly shaped by contexts of local and national reception as well as by the availability of content around the world" (Flew 2016: 287, 291). Therefore, cross-cultural communication is shaped, to a certain extent, by reception contexts that largely define our understanding and acceptance of cultural contents. Cultures, being integrated bodies of practices and (symbolic) values, function as a framework for human life, creativity and communication, i.e. for our acquaintance with diversified contents and values.

The discussion of the soft power approach through cultural policies starts with understanding cultural policies as supporters and organisers of cultural and arts production, consumption, value formation, heritage preservation and cultural management. As public policies, cultural policies originated from Western civilisations, from European national cultures, to be exact. Their present-day global spread has been moulded by digital technologies that presently support almost all types of cultural production, facilitate cultural consumption, enable dynamic value formation, heritage preservation, overall cultural communication, and cultural management and governance.

The role and influence of cultural policies

Cultural policies (CPs) operate on *different levels*:

- on the level of cultural sector (the position of culture within society and its social role; organisation and regulation of cultural

[2] Stuart Hall, Reception Theory (1973, 1980).

production and cultural activities; investments in culture and cultural infrastructure, etc.);
- on the level of cultural exchange and communication which is open, non-biased, value-oriented and easily integrated into other activities, such as education, science, tourism, promotion of democracy and human rights, all types of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, diplomacy, etc.

Such involvement of cultural policies in other activities and areas of specialisation is based on soft power resources that multiply quickly and may include all varieties of cultural and scientific achievements (in music, literature, theatrical and other arts), cultural heritage, various international cooperative projects and programmes that are the substance of international cultural exchange and cooperation.

The influence and role of cultural policies (CPs) is reflected in their involvement and activities in the following:
- CPs conceptualise and directly influence cultural development and cultural communication through legal, infrastructural and financial means;
- CPs inspire and organise the democratic regulation of the (social) position of culture and cultural creativity, cultural transformations and changes in cultural value;
- CPs support intercultural communication, general cultural relations, cultural exchange and trade;
- CPs help provide for contexts (city, local, sub-regional, national, regional, global) in which a set of particular cultural values is constituted, established, observed and promoted as a cultural identity;
- CPs incite and support creativity that shapes innovative approaches to all human activity and life;
- CPs promote and organise the preservation of cultural heritage;
- CPs foster international cultural cooperation and exchanges, and thus promote a soft approach to international relations.

In line with dynamic growth, and the widening and diversifying of local and national cultural achievements and interests, CPs are re-conceptualised so as to meet and support local creativity and introduce the

global level with local values. In this respect, the soft power approach is applied to meet particular cultural achievements and traditions, and make these globally accessible. Particular places and their particular historical, economic and political environments have increasingly been included in cultural policy projects and programmes, making the efforts to support open regional and global cultural exchanges through the soft power approach evident.

CPs, therefore, internalise the soft power approach in all the areas that they influence (i.e., cultural production, consumption and exchange) and in the areas that are interconnected with culture (i.e., education, scientific research, sports, tourism, etc.). Technologically driven cultural interconnectivity dominates and hallmarks contemporary cultural exchanges, which is best seen in the dynamic rise of cultural industries, media influences and audio-visual productions. As these dominate and hallmark contemporary cultural exchanges, they also promote overall cultural connectivity directly and through cultural and digital diplomacy. In such an environment, "soft power strategies"[3] seek to draw on organic resources that make a community or a country attractive and interesting at global level, and that incite opening up to the global level. That enables CPs to integrate soft power strategies into our understanding of arts and creativity through efforts 'to stand out and reach out'.

Such 'organic resources' that make a place attractive are cities and urban communities. By introducing their heritage, histories and perspectives into global cultural communication, these places start engaging with the international community proactively. Their resources are best adapted to communicate the values of their cultural identity and to simultaneously accept the interventions of newcomers, be they nationals or foreigners. Partnership, cooperation and inclusion are the values shared within a city and community. Cities are also manageable in the sense that they have their own internal organisation (traffic, services, availability of goods, housing, etc.). This is why the future of the soft power approach is rooted in cities, and why cultural city

[3] Cf.: The Soft Power Report 2018, www.softpower30.com.

policies facilitate the introduction of the soft power approach through cultural institutions, such as museums, orchestras, theatre companies, libraries, etc. A city's shared values best reflect its citizens' interests in urbanised life and cultural values.

Finally, it could also be said that cultural policies (CPs) may introduce the soft power approach as an incentive that helps to support openly and functionally the aims and operation of CPs. This may be identified on three levels:

- on the level of cultural sector: cultural strategies and priorities, cultural production and consumption, (re)creation of cultural values and creation of cultural identities;
- on the level of cultural exchanges: national and international cultural cooperation projects and programmes, cultural globalisation, networking and cultural diplomacy;
- on the level of integration of culture into other specialised areas and activities, such as education, ecology, scientific research, technological development, tourism, festivals, etc.

Considering that the soft power approach has today entered the civic concept of arts and creativity, and that it has become reflected in the soft power strategies that affect cultural production, consumption and exchange, it may be said that the soft power approach has gradually become a built-in element of global cultural creativity and life. This is particularly characteristic of cities, which are becoming major players in cultural development and the cultural identification of billions of urban dwellers.

The role and influence of CPs affect the way CPs are conceptualised. The multiplicity and diversity of contemporary cultures within individual states in both Europe and the world create the opportunity to reshape their contexts and operation so as to adapt them to today's dynamic cultural changes and developments. The areas affected by CPs are no longer only arts and identities; today, areas affected by CPs also include fields of human activity that had not been previously considered to have much of a connection to cultural approaches, such as medicine, scientific research and technology, and trade. In this respect, CPs need to be redesigned continually in line with dynamic

growth, in line with the widening and diversifying of global impacts of new knowledge and technology, and in line with localised interests and opportunities of communities and individuals, particularly those living in cities.

The soft power approach through cultural policies

In line with the dynamic widening of the concepts and operation of CPs, the introduction of the soft power approach strengthens their continuous adaptation to new cultural environments and practices. It helps CPs to meet and manage a multiplicity of cultural productions and engender creative responses to new cultural challenges and environments. At the same time, the acceptance of the soft power approach encourages CPs to meet the specific demands of places, territories and communities.

Most contemporary cultures are today governed by CPs that are conceptualised and operate at different levels of states, international integrations, regions, cities, professional organisations, companies, institutions, associations, and different kinds of communities and civic organisations. Such a wide range of organisational backgrounds is in favour of inclusion and strengthens the soft power approach in:

- all areas that CPs influence or govern: cultural production, consumption and exchange;
- all areas that are connected to culture: education, research, sports, tourism, etc.;
- all cultural connectivity areas, such as cultural industries, media and audio-visual production.

The introduction of the soft power approach may be facilitated by cultural and digital diplomacy that generally helps the reshaping of CPs. In this respect, CPs rely on practices of public diplomacy, digital development and large cultural programmes of international reach, such as the EU's *European Capital of Culture* project.

Infrastructures able to support the integration of the soft power approach through CPs are cultural centres and cultural institutions (e.g., museums, theatre companies, exhibition halls, orchestras, networks,

etc.). These organisations functionally integrate the soft power approach into their own productions, activities and communication. Needless to say, they also include the creativity of individual artists and their achievements. The role of the media remains crucial in processes that connect and interlink all these infrastructural elements. The media can play a crucial role in the acceptance of the soft power approach in all these cultural infrastructures.

The development of effective soft power strategies harmonised with local cultural and human potentials is essentially influenced by CPs, particularly where they engender legal and financial regulations that govern the cultural field.

Today, the future of the soft power approach is increasingly localised in cities which have the capacity to engage with the international community proactively. When partnership, cooperation and inclusion become the shared values of city diplomacy, cities become more prepared to practice the soft power approach through cultural policies, institutions and infrastructures. Practicing such an approach supports civic cultural exchanges and makes cities attractive places to visit or live in.

If partnership, cooperation and inclusion are indeed the framework that can encompass and incite the restructuring of CPs, the soft power approach may be understood as a global approach that brings forward contemporary cultural interactions at global, regional, state and city level. Although it was conceived within political studies, this approach can be applied to almost all cultural practices and areas, as well as to cultural exchange and communication. Today, cultural interactions are instigated and conducted with the help of information technologies that have gained ground in different kinds of cultural productions and at all levels of operation of CPs. Given that cultures grow and prosper through cultural communication and cooperation which have been increasingly gaining in intensity, the acceptance of the soft power approach appears to be imminent. CPs, therefore, need to internalise, adapt and promote the soft power approach in domains and activities that they influence or govern.

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TRADITIONAL AND NEW CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF EU COUNTRIES. A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Vjeran Katunarić

Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of international cultural relations based on the example of four countries: France, Spain, Slovakia and Croatia. These countries arose from former empires and their peripheries. Furthermore, their cultural relations are divided into traditional and new cultural relations, whereby the traditional designates cultural similarity or familiarity that was, or still is, cherished within the selected countries, while new relations are more diffused and more similar to international business relations. The author departs from Monnet's putative assertion that, in the future, culture would represent the foundation of a new Europe. This idea is discussed in relation to data obtained from an analysis of the four cases of international cultural ties in Europe. The data does not support such cultural optimism, since culture seems subjected to other leading forces, namely historical-cultural lineages on the one hand, and 'elective affinities' on the other. The idea of the primacy of culture in Europe is also discussed in view of Juncker's revival of Monnet's idea, which the author reconceptualises as a *Culture+* programme. The last section of the paper is devoted to the impact of the current pandemic on cultural relations. The programmes following the *Culture+* idea might help in alleviating the long-term repercussions of the pandemic in many areas of international relations.

Introduction

It seems that every field of human activity produces misrepresentations that are similar to an original. For instance, this is the case with a statement attributed to Albert Einstein: "Logic will lead you from point A to point B. Imagination will take you everywhere." He said something very similar that aligns with this stylised statement.[1]

The most known platitude in Europe's policy discourse refers to Jean Monnet's alleged statement "If I were to do it again from scratch, I would start with culture." Notwithstanding the questionable authenticity of this statement, its meaning has become resilient at least in the sphere of cultural policy. Sometimes, however, it is reiterated in other spheres as well, including the very apex of the EU hierarchy. The most noted speaker who used Monnet's catch-phrase recently was Jean-Claude Juncker during a conference organised by the European Parliament on the past and the future of cultural heritage in Europe, which was held in Brussels in June 2018. Juncker also said something unexpected from a higher official of his profile. Culture is not only one of the pillars of the EU, but is, he asserted, the most important one. Juncker cited the young musicians of the European Union Youth Orchestra drawn from the Erasmus+ programme as an example of a highly successful project.[2]

In this paper, I will analyse international cultural ties in Europe from a realistic angle. Nevertheless, my commentary that follows the analysis makes a point about the importance of culture, which is similar to Monnet's questionable point. It is an idea concerning the *Culture+* programme that endorses the extraordinary importance of culture in Europe. Ideas of this sort are still far from being endorsed by current EU policies and will remain so, a mere ideal, as long as culture does not expand its transformative potential beyond its sectoral confines. In

[1] Albert Einstein, an excerpt from an interview from 1929: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." (cf.: "Fake Einstein Quotation Paperweight") http://hoaxes.org/weblog/comments/fake_einstein_quotation_paperweight.

[2] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/185363/CULT_Activity_Report_2014-2019_FINAL%20for%20web.pdf.

this regard, in the concluding section special attention will be given to how a more ambitious cultural policy may contribute to a redirection of future development in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, which is indeed globally disastrous. This concluding section will discuss how such a policy can contribute to strengthening the role of the public sector for the sake of a more balanced and holistic approach to human development.

Traditional and new international relations

In this section, I will first compare the traditional and new international relations in the cultural and economic cooperation between the four countries. Two of them make up the old core of Europe, namely France and Spain, and two of them are amongst the most recent members of the EU, namely Slovakia and Croatia. Such a choice of countries serves to illustrate more clearly the categories of traditional and new international relations.

What do traditional and new international relations mean in this case? Traditional international relations are based on the historical ties shared within multi-ethnic empires or multinational states. They represent a cultural and political kinship. In the case of France and Spain, these are ties that determine the line-up of Francophone and Hispano-phonic families of countries whose cooperative ties are already well established, and which are more frequent and more durable than other international ties in the field of culture.

By contrast, new (international) relations transcend these historical lineages. These may also be designated as 'elective affinities'. The latter is a phrase coined by Goethe in his novel *Elective Affinities* (*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, 1978[1809]). The plot revolves around flirtations outside two marriages. Sociologist Max Weber borrowed the phrase to designate the unusual proximity between Protestantism and capitalism, since in early Christianity engaging in trade was considered immoral (Weber (2001[1905]).

Official cultural policy is usually a faithful companion of the external and internal politics of a state or empire, although such policies are

not always simply linear. "My research brought me to the conclusion that these contingencies were more or less expected. This means that economic relations have new or elected rather than traditional affinities, while cultural relations are more traditional than elective. This will be illustrated with statistical data from several sources, including The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, showing a range of economic and cultural cooperation links."[3]

Data

A) Most external cultural cooperation ties between France and Spain have been established on the premise of their former empires, which are today transformed into large families of Francophone and Hispanic countries. The OIF (L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie) has 77 members,[4] and the HISPANEX programme focuses on four priority areas: America, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Mediterranean.[5]

B) At the same time, the international cooperative ties of Croatia[6] and Slovakia are balanced by combining old and new ties. For example, Croatia focuses on South-East Europe, Central Europe and the Quadrilateral Group (besides Croatia, comprising Italy, Slovenia and Hungary). Slovakia, in its own right, focuses on the Visegrád Group of countries,[7] which make the core of the common historical space of Central Europe. Both countries, then, are anxious to cooperate with other countries, yet not unilaterally or on a full scale, and least of all in terms of a possible 'federation', a term which is not welcome anymore either in Slovakia or Croatia.

On the one hand, the international economic relations in category A) countries are utilitarian by default in terms of their response to the contingencies of economic cycles. In Max Weber's vocabulary, these

[3] https://www.culturalpolicies.net/database/.

[4] http://francophonie.org/English.html.

[5] http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/en/servicios-al-ciudadano/catalogo/becas-ayudas-y-subvenciones/ayudas-y-subvenciones/cooperacion/programa-hispanex.html.

[6] https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Europe/Croatia-INTERNATIONAL-TRADE.html.

[7] https://www.nordeatrade.com/en/explore-new-market/slovakia/trade-profile.

relations are rationally purposive and relatively short-lived, rather than long-standing in terms of loyalty to traditional relations. However, this case is not entirely ideal or typical, or a pure exemplar, for sometimes tradition overlaps with, or outgrows economic rationality, as is the case with the (former) Commonwealth, in which certain forms of international economic assistance in the "family" surpass the frequency of economic assistance provided by the countries of the OECD to other countries (cf.: Brysk, Parsons and Sandholtz, 2002). On the other hand, in category B), with countries such as Croatia for example, the main export destinations are Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Belgium, Poland and Serbia are minor destinations. In this case, a mixture of old and new ties has been established, both with and without a longer historical tradition. The latter list currently includes a boom of import-export relations with China and, similarly, a rise in the number of tourists from Russia and other Asian countries.[8]

In Slovakia, besides exports to its traditional markets – Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland – there is a noticeable shift to non-traditional markets, such as France, the UK, Italy and Spain. This trend is similar to that of imports. In addition to exports to Germany and the Czech Republic, the other major exporters to Slovakia are China, South Korea and Vietnam. These trade dynamics are probably due to Slovakia's membership of the Schengen Area.[9]

On the other hand, France has trade relations with a large part of the world. It exports mostly to Germany, the USA, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the UK, China and Switzerland, while importing from numerous countries, including Singapore and Turkey.

Spanish trade relations are similar to the French. Spain exports mostly to France, Germany, Italy and seven other countries, including

[8] The data was valid until the outbreak of coronavirus, which subsequently blocked international exchanges by and large.

[9] Currently, the Schengen Area consists of 26 European countries (of which 22 are EU Member States): Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

the UK, the USA, Morocco and China, while it imports from fellow European countries. Asian trade partners supply 20% of import sales to Spain, while 8.4% account for providers from Africa.

Discussion

In all the selected countries, cultural cooperation ties are mapped out against their historical backgrounds, while their economic relations are more dispersed, and these are more so in France and Spain than in Slovakia and Croatia. In this regard, the research results are both theoretically and empirically expected, and the same tendencies may characterise other countries in both the Western and formerly Eastern part of the EU.

From a theoretical perspective, one may conclude that Max Weber was right. In contemporary European society, elective affinities are more frequent in the economy than in culture, but these elective affinities appear to be superficial. Economic interests are mostly motivated to perform for their own benefit and are contingent upon economic cycles, including crises, as opposed to political, social or cultural processes that are not necessarily cyclic and/or shaped by economic fluctuation. Very much like Goethe's original elective affinities, economic relations are culturally defined as flirtations without deeper or more permanent motives. In addition, modern economic ties are not of the household economy type. Economic ties must by default change and avoid permanence and lasting values. Cultural affinities are more familial and durable and, of course, conservative. As such, they paradoxically contain economic relations in terms of Immanuel Wallerstein's definition (earlier than Samuel Huntington). In his analysis of trade relations in early modern Europe, Wallerstein noted that cultural similarities – world religious rather than linguistic – facilitate international trade with both commodities and workforce (Wallerstein, 2011: 269).

Today, such tight correspondence between world religions and the economy becomes inconvenient for two fundamental reasons. One is that the expansion of the secular and creative cores of modern culture takes prominence over ritualistic and politically correct cultural cores.

At least in international cooperation, secularism and creativity have taken the lead. Of course, folklore and other traditional performative arts often take part in international events, such as festivals, and in doing so they represent the cultural treasures of different peoples and manifest ways of representing the sublime expression of their symbolic or group identity. On the other hand, new projects of modern culture performed by a group or individual artists within or outside different NGOs constitute a new layer of European cultural diversity.

The other reason for the inconvenience of traditional economic-cultural circuits concerns the nature of the modern world economy which is crisis-laden. From the early 20th century onwards, for instance, from 1918 to 2018,[10] deeper economic crises have caused equally deeper secular crises. These brought, as is known, two major catastrophes, i.e. two world wars, which started with the dissolution of Europe in terms of both interstate alliances and nation-states. In contemporary economic cooperation between various countries and other actors, cultural and artistic acts or performances rarely accompany the process.[11]

The main problem is that deep economic crises never end with what Schumpeter benevolently describes as 'creative destruction'. The current crises in Europe and other continents are destructive rather than fermentative on all counts: ecological, financial, social and political. Quite the contrary, the crises, whether cyclic or protracted, are centrifugal, and socially and politically disintegrative.

This is the point in which regeneration of the notion of culture and cultural practice is desperately needed. If this were to happen, it would be possible to adequately respond to the problems that economic crises and social institutions have left unsolved. One must repair what seems irreparable by the canon of TINA (There Is No Alternative). A peculiar

[10] Cf.: https://www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/dokumentation/279794/1918-1938-2018-beginnt-ein-autoritaeres-jahrhundert.

[11] One exception in this regard is certainly China. For example, couple of years ago, it hired a consultant from Croatia with the aim of organising performances for as many as 800 choir singers. The whole project was halted since no host could be found in the region of Central and South-East Europe (I was told this in a private interview). Other cultural events accompany international tourist festivals, but the performances are rather simple and serve as a backdrop to local foods and drinks served to guests.

feature of this economy is that it works against the interests of most people(s) both in upward and downward business cycles, e.g. when there is a shortage of money and when there is an abundance of it. In both cases, the winners are the same. These are mainly banking and/or financial entrepreneurs. On the other hand, many cultural policy thinkers and doers look for a culture of tolerance amidst the fact that people are in jeopardy of staying jobless and poor in the long-run.

This is, perhaps, not the right place for such theorising, but the merits of European vanguards should be recalled, from Romantic cosmopolitans, such as Hölderlin, to vanguard artists, primarily Picasso and Stravinsky who revoked the central significance of indigenous cultures as forms in which culture and art constitute all activities contributing to the common survival of these societies. In this respect, indigenous cultures and societies plead for an age when the contemporaries of their former colonisers will understand the key point, which is that culture is a holistic platform of the human life-world.[12]

On the other hand, we from the older generation of cultural policy thinkers and doers maybe wait in vain for Godot, which may become another great platitude of our cultural thought and practice, for which one can only express regret. Nonetheless, the younger generations of cultural thinkers and doers must also recognise that Europe owes other continents more than it contributed to its Age of Enlightenment. It must be something that would represent a step forward in the direction of common peace, development and creativity. After all, Europe is the continent most responsible for introducing the idea of zero-sum or *summum jus, summa injuria* – at one end of the scale we have Europe's Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and at the other we have its colonialism, racism and world wars (cf.: Bensoussan, 2006). There is no better opportunity or better time than this one for Europe to make a great return, this time with a culturally designed project for a sustainable world.

[12] D. Paul Schafer discusses "a new age of culture", cf.: Schafer, 2015.

For a *Culture+* in different areas

A project of cultural collaboration in many areas postulated (not elaborated) in this case designates a sense of creativity that may develop in full when taking part in a long-term process of peace and in expanding tolerance and inclusiveness. In this regard, a *Culture+* programme – to paraphrase Erasmus+ coupled with Monnet's hypothetical assertion – provides for an additional argument for uplifting "the wretched of the Earth", so to speak (Fanon, 1991 [1963]). What those people need most is a new cultural design in terms of Archimedes' principle of buoyancy: those who enter, metaphorically speaking, the waters of a peace culture will, in turn, raise their human dignity. Instead of water that forces the immersed body upwards, in this case a *Culture+* programme – to continue with the analogy – might contribute to an increase in human dignity in people at the bottom of the social pyramid, or in those who are struck by some other social or economic misfortune. Such a programme may offer both cultural education and employment in culture. The latter may range from assisting artists in their work for the public good to assisting in both the teaching and the learning of the fact that every culture in the world, including their own, had and still has knowledge and skills in the creation, maintenance and development of peace in different yet not always favourable conditions.

Admittedly, this might seem unrealistic on the whole or just be an expectation or a hope. However, what alternative can be proposed in place of such a high expectation from a cultural project? What exists is instead in line with TINA, the hegemonic worldview. This manifests itself, first and foremost, in the stubborn postponement, in fact cancellation, of all that goes against the (main)stream pronouncing notoriously that "it is not yet time for such ideas".[13] And when might that time come? Although there is no definite answer, the most probable one is, in this case – "never". So much for the current cynicism of non-doing.

[13] I heard such 'lessons' expressed by a veteran cultural policymaker at the end of the 1990s, when some members of the Croatian team drafting the national report on cultural policy proposed to introduce the idea of 'museums of reconciliation' in the report, museums which would be based on a multi-perspectival historiography.

Second, what we are facing is enormous cultural melancholy and pessimism of different varieties, from the conservative to the radical. Their common denominator is that there is no solution for any serious problem.[14] The third and by far the most notorious yet illusionary is the belief that some sectors or actors other than the arts and culture are more capable of initiating and orchestrating changes that will lead to a peaceful world of creativity. To name but a few: Big Business, national or continental parliaments, military and police organisations engaged in the war against terrorism, EU legislation, and active measures to secure the environmental protection of the continent. These are dangerous illusions, considering that they are meant to change or break the habits that created the current condition to begin with.[15]

Of course, *Culture+* cannot be a panacea in this situation either. Instead, it must be stressed that culture and arts, amongst other things, demonstrate, particularly in comparison to other sectors, a surplus of the will to transcend real existing situations.[16] What one can expect from a possible design of *Culture+* is to inject the spores of creativity leading to peace and, vice versa, the spores of peace leading to creativity through different activities. Some of these are sketched below. Similar ideas and projects that have been carried out so far have brought

[14] It seems that the helplessness which is currently demonstrated in many countries in their struggle with the coronavirus pandemic had its forerunner in a contagious cultural pessimism that moved from the West to the rest.

[15] "The current conditions did not become entirely and all of a sudden apocalyptic just because of the explosive virus disease. One must also consider that, except in China and a few other countries, capacities of the public health, as much as the public sector, on the whole, have been unprepared for such a big incidence. At least for the last couple of decades, the public sector has stubbornly been weakened by austerity measures directly or indirectly targeted to encourage unfettered growth of the private sector" (cf.: Dempsey, 2020).

[16] As an idea, *Culture+* is not without precedence and not the first attempt at risk of exaggerating the creative power of culture, of course. For instance, in Croatia there are tremendously ambitious and efficient NGOs in culture, in fact an umbrella of NGOs in culture, namely Kultura Nova, operating in the areas of former Yugoslavia. Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media provides support to this umbrella organisation associated with partners in the other countries of former Yugoslavia. Cf.: Programme area 4: Development of Cooperation Platforms in Southeastern Europe (https://kulturanova.hr/eng/grants/pa-4).

a lot of empirical knowledge about the pluses and minuses of such projects, which are considered here as well (cf.: Schafer, 2015; Boulding, 2013; Horváth, Adigüzel, van Herk, 2013; Ray and Anderson, 2001).

Culture+ belongs to the category of arts and culture of/for peace. It is another name for a holistic project aimed at restoring peace where it is chronically missing, like in many (post)conflict areas, as well as many other areas (in Europe and elsewhere) that have the desire to replace Military Enlightenment with an Aesthetic Enlightenment for the sake of making peace a durable way of life (cf.: Katunarić, 2020). Alternatively, this may consist of small- or large-scale projects of development with the components of arts and culture, which are of specific importance to a variety of regions or particular regions. Since I have some research experience in both perspectives, i.e. in studying post-conflict areas in South-East Europe (cf.: Katunarić, 2010) and in designing sustainability conceptually based on creativity in arts and culture (cf.: Katunarić, 2018; 2014), the following ideas (for a *Culture+* programme) draw on those experiences, while clarifying the importance of injecting cultural designs into other sectors of development.

Hence, *Culture+* may be incorporated into a series of long-term projects. The following list concerns different areas of (sustainable) development into which a *Culture+* programme might be incorporated, whereby the capacity of culture to (re)connect areas takes prominence:

1. First, any cultural design of sustainability must, of course, be applied in culture itself as a sector. And, indeed, cultural teams comprising different artists in their line-up can do much to bring about peace for humanity, such as Woodstock, *We are the World*, the concert for Hiroshima, etc.
2. Until the 17th century, arts and science constituted parts of high culture in European and non-European empires of the time. Thereafter, these two creative sectors were separated at the expense of both science and the arts. Science developed into Big Science, a part of which was incorporated into military-industrial complex/es co-responsible for imperialistic wars, while the arts became an aesthetic category and a symbolic sphere that had nothing to do with development, at least not directly. In the

interest of sustainability, a *Culture+* programme may recover the importance of the aesthetic dimension and its holism in the scientific representation of the world, which the use of analytics has desensitised and separated from its Faustian knowledge (cf.: Katunarić, 2020).

3. Aesthetic interest in the environment, which could curb impulsions aimed at transforming nature into an artificial or urbanised environment, might substantially contribute to reshaping the needs of both business and the active population as a whole in terms of sustainability.
4. Healthcare is a huge area in which a *Culture+* programme could contribute to reducing the high cost of contemporary pharmaceutical medicines by utilising both traditional medicine and art therapy groups. Of course, art forms alone cannot cure cancer and other serious diseases, yet, support groups (experimental, family, friends and others from close social circles) that provide alternative ways of interaction should not be dismissed just because their effects are not yet fully known. Essentially, the method is qualitative and grounded in theory. Dealing with 'big data' or population statistics in approaching individual patients, the way that ordinary medicine does, is of no use to any *Culture+* programme. Still, its qualitative approach may be adapted for many more patients, provided that funding for the training of groups within the project is secured. Of course, the amount of provision will depend on the results (including testing) of patients' state of health following months of treatment.
5. Last but not least, *Culture+* programmes may contribute to the revival of human manual work, especially artisanship coupled with skilfulness, both of which are required, although not sufficient, for the creation of works of art. The famous surplus-value – or added value in neoclassical terms – may today be explained much better than ever before, given that high technology has already entered almost all the fields of workmanship. In fact and reality, the latter has, in most cases, already been replaced by machine work.

Culture+ programmes may also be adapted to many more economies and other domains by, for example, relaxing the grip on the economy and the population in general. This grip comes from two imperatives. One is the increase of profits of private companies, and the other is the blending of a large part of the economy with a national security system, thus mobilising a nation's science and technology resources for permanent military primacy. Still, this paper is not focused on making a project proposal, for this is an enormous task, which involves the preparation of conceptual and empirical research designs, albeit the EU supposedly has such capacities in terms of both experts and funding. Nevertheless, the main point here was to make sense of Monnet's putative statement, which is – if culture is given a crucial role in the further development of the EU – more important than ever before in European history.

Notes on the cultural causes and consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic

The causes of the current pandemic are many and may even be more numerous and at present less known than one is ready to recognise.[17] One set of such causes is a composite consisting of wrong economic practices, high levels of consumerism, and long-term impairment of (bio and cultural) diversities. Let us begin with the last of these:

"Human actions, including deforestation, encroachment on wildlife habitats, intensified agriculture, and acceleration of climate change, have upset the delicate balance of nature. We have changed the system

[17] The present situation of the global pandemic which has struck the global economy and population bringing along with it many serious consequences is the most important reason for a cultural redesign of a holistic approach to development and for its adoption in all areas hit by the catastrophe. The main objective of such a redesign is twofold. One is the regeneration of a strong and rationally organised public sector. The other should focus on changing the habits and needs of people with regard to demand and supply of commodities, and on supporting the development of a more sensitive approach to others. In the latter case, a new and all-encompassing aesthetic education and practice in governance and productive work can largely contribute to the improvement of human life and to the outlook for life-world on the planet (cf.: Katunarić, 2020).

that would naturally protect us, and have created conditions that allow particular pathogens – including coronaviruses – to spread."[18]

In general, about 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic, meaning that they are transmitted to people by animals.[19] Why does this occurrence have a cultural cause as well? It is because it has been created by an anti-holistic concept of economy and practices determined by the frivolous lifestyle and consumerism of a tiny social class of the economically privileged. It has also been caused by the vast number of the poor who buy and consume the meat of wild animals in many countries, including China whose economy is highly developed, but poorly regulated in terms of health safety and other standards. Such seizure of new territories for production and consumption has become a constituent part of most contemporary cultures. However, we expand or dilute the concept of culture, we cannot deny that these practices are as much a constituent part of the same as are folk traditions or high-brow culture and art. Most importantly, just because such habits dismantle our living conditions and our cultural profiles – they are less and less diversified in favour of the expansion of such damaging production practices and consumption – our cultural policies must, in this regard, be broadly international and cooperative. Put simply, we cannot solve such problems by confining ourselves to local or national issues in the cultural and other domains. A wrong policy or practice that emerges in any corner of the world – including its tremendous global repercussions – can by no means be solved with the instruments which were useful in the past and which were under the auspices of local or national governments.

Neither can these problems be solved from a centralised world institution, such as the UN, UNESCO or WHO. It is time for action from the broadest international networks and their focal points, which are flexible and adaptive enough to react to specific situations and locations, and which follow steady and consistent mid- and long-term objectives. It is not only because of the nature of the causes and their

[18] https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/biodiversity-coronaviruses.

[19] https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/frontiers-2016-emerging-issues-environmental-concern.

emergent extensions that such an international response is needed. The same principle applies to the consequences. If some causes, like the ones described above, are delineated – so must be the consequences. Yet, delineating the consequences is more complicated because consequences penetrate into every pore of our shared life – from an individual's state of health to global environmental issues – and also raise cultural issues, such as the question of which cultural habits or capacities are particularly useful in the current crisis and which are not or, at least, not anymore.

To put these issues more clearly, I will try to clarify their magnitudes and complexities by means of a few examples to underscore the urgency of the need to design international cultural policy in terms of a *Culture+* programme, i.e. a new holism.

Here, a few short essays will be used from Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft E.V.[20] that deal with cultural policies during the coronavirus pandemic, and some ideas will also be proposed for the development of exit strategies for the sector of culture and other sectors:

1. Since the crisis is manifold and multiplying virtually in all dimensions of the contemporary world – healthcare-specific, economic, political, cultural, climatic and paradigmatic ("paradigm crisis") – the concept of culture must also be all-encompassing. It must create a sense of the general by balancing individual and collective needs, and must also make sense of sustainable development (*Nachhaltige Entwicklung*, Weiss, 2020).
2. Covid-19 is a catalyst for two processes. One is re-establishing the capacity of the state to react promptly and efficiently in all crises. The other is rehabilitating the complexity of different sectors in culture and their penchant for holistic linking, particularly with the common and general interests of society and humanity as a whole. Otherwise, Covid-19 coupled with neoliberal economic policies becomes the 'catalyst' for the decline of culture and many other policies dependent on the state and the public sphere (Weigl, 2020).

[20] Available online at: https://kupoge.de/essays-zur-corona-krise/.

3. Are those working in culture relevant for the system? If they are, then why are people from other sectors reluctant to work with them, asks Jasmin Vogel (2020). She sees three solutions to this situation. One is understanding digitalisation as a socio-cultural process without the necessity for sharpening the divide between analogous and digital. The second solution is permanent self-reflection, including a critical re-examination of the existing institutional system. And the third is being prepared to re-write lines of action, that is, to show how deeply cultural and social life are linked and react in a very similar manner to challenges, such as pandemics, allowing in this potential interplay for new ideas and practices (Vogel, 2020).
4. Finally, closing down museums may be taken as an example of a living test for the continuing existence of a need for culture. The digitalisation of artworks and other objects instead of their "natural presentation" (Goethe) or, worse still, the reduction of the size and programme of cultural institutions and other organisations in the public sphere may be signs of an approaching dystopian future for culture. On the other hand, the number of new artists and other cultural workers is rising, and they are knocking on the door of streamlined institutions. Likewise, the number of people interested in participating in culture, at least as visitors, is also growing. It is imperative to reconcile these opposing tendencies for a future in which the quality and appropriate size of cultural organisations and programmes will prevail over exclusiveness, on the one hand, and massive proportions, on the other (Greve, 2020).

All these remarks speak equally in favour of the internal transformation of the culture sector and in favour of redesigning relations between the culture sector and other sectors. They are relevant for the understanding of both the increasing importance of international relations in culture and a *Culture+* concept in international cooperation, as has been expounded above. Let me source from both *Culture+* ideas and ideas from the essays:

- "First, any cultural design of sustainability must, of course, be applied in culture itself as a sector. And, indeed, cultural teams

comprising different artists in their line-up can do much to bring about peace for humanity, such as Woodstock, *We are the World*, the concert for Hiroshima, etc." This corresponds to a need for a paradigm shift in which cultural policy has more to say about how, on behalf of the general interest, individual and collective interests may be balanced without considerably reducing one or the other.

- "In the interest of sustainability, a *Culture+* programme may recover the importance of the aesthetic dimension and its holism in the scientific representation of the world, which the use of analytics has desensitised and separated from its Faustian knowledge". This demand may also be understood as an effort to bridge the gap between two categories of artefacts in human civilisation – objects made in the interest of the growth of power over nature, on the one hand, and objects that have an aesthetic dimension that highlights the need for balance and peace, on the other.
- "Healthcare is a huge area in which a *Culture+* programme could contribute to reducing the high cost of contemporary pharmaceutical medicines by utilising both traditional medicine and art therapy groups." Healthcare and culture are two sectors which are similar, at least in a number of important parts, in that they both search for holistic solutions. Curing patients in hospitals alone or by means of standard therapies that include medication is far from enough. To recover balance in the human organism, the support of other people is indispensable, and this is where culture may in many ways provide assistance. In this way, culture can contribute to the search for a new outlook for survival, which is, in its essence, peaceful and more interdependent than ever before. Of course, this is not only a must for healthcare policies, but also for all other policies, and culture here is pivotal on many counts.
- "*Culture+* programmes may contribute to the revival of human manual work, especially artisanship coupled with skilfulness, both of which are required, although not sufficient, for the creation of works of art." This demand may also correspond to the idea of overcoming the gap between the digital and the analogous, the numerical and the natural, and the technical and the

social aspects of life. In other words, the digital must become a component of the life-world and not a substitute for it. Put simply, the digital must not robotise human work and turn the natural into something artificial.

In place of a conclusion

In the four selected countries, their external economic relations are much more dispersed than their external cultural relations. This is a result of the expansiveness of modern economic relations, on the one hand, and of the retention of traditionally familial international relations in culture, on the other. Nevertheless, although more expansive, their economic ties are more superficial and subject to periodical crises.

The central issue discussed in this paper is how to re-actualise the idea of the crucial importance of culture in EU relations. In place of a conclusion, the idea is reinterpreted in terms of a *Culture+* programme, the idea of which is the same as in many other projects of cultural policy and development. In this case, some examples of incorporating cultural projects into other projects of European and broader importance have been given for the sake of demonstrating the possible positive externalities of cultural activities on expanding our outlook for a durable peace and sustainability in Europe and other continents. Of course, any such expected effect of culture must be tested or measured in each area. Globally known cultural spectacles in favour of peace have been taken as examples, as well as possible collaborations on projects in science for the sake of enhancing the aesthetic dimension in such areas as environmental protection, healthcare, revalorisation (of added value) of skilled manual work, collaborations which are then directed at decoupling the link of science and technology with military primacy. Also, many examples have been listed to demonstrate the possible positive effects of *Culture+* as a programme, but these may make sense only within a framework of projects proposed to the European Commission or the European Parliament.

Finally, to answer the question "What does culture want?" posed by colleagues from other sectors, primarily from economics and science – besides what has been discussed (at the end of this paper) about the pos-

sible cultural exits from the current and very complex situation caused by the pandemic – I may cite Umberto Eco's answer to a question he was asked. He said that culture "makes infinity comprehensible".[21] Indeed, it is the central task of culture to understand very complex issues when such an undertaking seems incomprehensible and when a synthesis of the complex looks impossible in practice. Nevertheless, culture coupled with art as its most creative organ is capable of providing for different modes of truth in its both theoretical and practical modes. This is something that most other sectors cannot do either because of their focus on specialisations or because of a lack of interest in presenting their ideas in terms of a common good or interest. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to culture in respect of its efforts to alleviate humanity of the worst consequences caused by the current coronavirus pandemic. This is true in terms of human health, but also in terms of the human economy and a successful recovery in general. Above all, it must be understood how a culture with all its diversities may contribute to the redirection of the future development of economic and cultural relations in general, and to strengthening the role of the public sector in particular.

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CULTURAL RELATIONS OR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: WHICH ONE AND FOR WHOSE AGENDA?

Yudhishthir Raj Isar

Abstract

When EU officials refer to 'external cultural relations', their main discursive purpose is to attain the interest-driven expected benefits of 'cultural diplomacy'. These benefits may also include ostensibly higher ends, such as the spreading of democracy and respect for human rights. But most cultural operators have a different agenda. They see their transnational connections as forging 'cultural relations', whose principal *raison d'être* is professional enrichment through on-the-ground transcultural dialogue. They seek such benefits or forms of value as mutual learning and new skills; broader audiences; increased funding; enhanced connectivity; space for joint reflection, debate, research and experimentation; and the co-creation of new work. Hence the question: are the purposes of cultural relations and cultural diplomacy complementary or are they misaligned? What forms of misalignment may arise? How are different interests and agendas being served as the paths of cultural relations and cultural diplomacy play out?

Background

The May 2019 conference convened in Rijeka to explore the topic of "International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia" was a most appropriate venue to review and rethink a

series of questions related to cultural relations and cultural diplomacy. In particular, since the conference took place exactly five years after the release of the report "Engaging the World: Towards Global Cultural Citizenship", which was the primary output of an EU Preparatory Action on "Culture in EU External Relations".[1] The Preparatory Action appeared already to have made a strong impact on the way European institutions and cultural operators envision the international cultural relations of the EU. Five years down the line, it was heartening to see that its recommendations had begun to reshape the EU's policy framework in the realm of international cultural relations.

At the time of the conference, this gradually unfolding process was also of direct academic interest for me personally, then a Robert Schuman Fellow at the European University Institute (EUI) in Fiesole, Italy. My research focus was on cultural relations and cultural diplomacy.[2] In fact, both my hosts at the EUI and I thought it would be productive to be in Rijeka so as to learn from the gathering, particularly since, like all the current European Capitals of Culture, Rijeka 2020 was going to be very much focused on both domains.

There are some key differences between the notion of cultural relations and that of *cultural diplomacy*. Already in 2014, the Preparatory Action explored the nuances of meaning that differentiate between the two terms. The European Commission, by the way, uses the term 'cultural relations' three times more often in its various communications – and I have counted – than it refers to 'cultural diplomacy'. This is not just a euphemism; it also reflects a value choice, as we shall see.

The term *cultural diplomacy* was coined in English fairly recently (although it emerged in French much earlier) in order to refer to the ways in which diplomats and other officials use cultural resources

1 European Union (2014) *Preparatory action 'culture in EU external relations'. Engaging the world: towards global cultural citizenship*. Brussels: European Union. Available from: www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu.

2 The focus on cultural relations and cultural diplomacy at the EUI was developed by the cultural pluralism research area in the Global Governance Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

to help advance the national interest, as seen by their governments.[3] *Cultural relations*, on the other hand, is a much older twentieth-century term; the processes it involves are based on cultural exchanges that are triggered naturally and organically *within* the field of cultural practice, usually without governmental prompting or intervention, yet often with governmental support.[4]

Nowadays, the distinction has become blurred. This used to bother me a lot. Today, much less. For whatever concepts we use, what counts is how they are actually embedded in practices. Policymakers and scholars offer definitions and framings. But cultural operators are the ones who make transcultural work actually happen, and they do this on the ground, in particular contexts, often aware of the nuances of definition, yet guided essentially by what they have to get done, not by the terms used. Across a range of players, from governments to funders, institutions, practitioners, publics, cultural diplomacy or cultural relations clearly mean different things to different actors and will be practised differently. Does this matter? Probably not. Surely what counts is what we believe they are doing, why we believe it worthwhile to do, what we expect the outcomes to be and what we think the true stakes are. Perhaps the conceptual confusion can even be an enabler of fertile flexibility.

Different stakes and forms of value

That said, my research had revealed, in the use of both terms, an emphasis across the EU on the North-South axis and a 'development' orientation, i.e. European cultural actors interacting with 'third country' actors, notably in the Global South. All my informants had made clear distinctions between what they were doing, which they saw as 'cul-

[3] But the practice of cultural diplomacy goes back millennia, well before the emergence of the modern nation-state, for kings, popes and princes have long used cultural assets to promote their aims and personal glory. See R. Arndt (2007) *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*. Washington DC: Potomac Books.

[4] See: I. Ang, Y.R. Isar and P. Mar (2015) "Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest?" *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21: 4, September 2015, pp 365-381.

tural relations', and the pursuit of cultural diplomacy. This stance was already noted in a 2015 analysis of Australia's Asialink arts residency programme.[5] As the author put it, "concerns such as positive image projection abroad are rarely high on the residents' list of priorities". Hence despite the increasing use of the 'cultural diplomacy' framing, cultural operators still prefer the term 'cultural relations', which more readily connotes a dialogical rather than a monologic approach – the one to which they all profess to aspire. These informants variously indicated how the pursuit of cultural relations affords them the benefits – or forms of value – that have long been identified and analyses in the course in the field of international cultural cooperation. These forms of value were also reiterated in a 2018 research report on the Cultural Value Project (referred to hereafter as CVP).[6] They will be revisited below.

Now there is actually quite a lot of knowledge out there about the ways in which *officials*, whether national or at the EU level, conceive diplomacy of all kinds. But there has been little analysis of what cultural operators actually do transnationally, whatever they happen to call it. This is precisely the gap that needs filling. What might be the key research questions here? My own work has already singled out the following:

- What motivates civil society actors to carry out cultural diplomacy/cultural relations?
- What new connections and crossings are they forging?
- What sorts of transnational communities of commitment and expertise emerging?
- What are the power relationships in this universe? What are the asymmetries that persist?

[5] Bettina Rösler, "The case of Asialink's arts residency program: towards a critical cosmopolitan approach to cultural diplomacy". *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2015. Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 463-477.

[6] *Cultural Relations in Countries in Transition*. The Open University and The Hertie School of Governance, November 2018. The Cultural Value Project was commissioned by the British Council and the Goethe-Institut; it was designed and conducted by the Open University (UK) and the Hertie School of Governance (Germany).

- Are actually existing cultural relations marked by meaningful collaboration between state and non-state actors?
- How much autonomy do official agencies give to civil society actors in imagining and taking the pathways of cultural relations?
- With the continuing growth of diasporas and migratory flows, how are the cultural referents of the 'here' and the 'there', the 'us' and the 'them' being affected?
- Finally, as civil society cultural actors are mainly city-based, what sorts of new patterns of cooperation are emerging as city authorities operate autonomously from nation-states in this field?

I had begun to test the pertinence of such questions through a literature review (although scholarship on this topic is scant), together with semi-structured telephone interviews with arts activists and organisers on both sides of the Mediterranean, as well as in Africa and Asia. As has already been mentioned, my informants made a clear distinction between their pursuit of 'cultural relations' and the pursuit of cultural diplomacy. Often, they preferred the former term in that it more readily connotes a dialogical rather than a monologic approach – the one to which they all professed to aspire. Yet, needless to say, few of them turn their backs on cultural diplomacy, for readiness to help achieve governmental purposes is obviously an 'open sesame' for receiving official funding.

My informants also indicated in various ways how the pursuit of cultural relations affords them certain benefits – or forms of value. These include forms of value that I have myself observed in my international practice over the years and which were similarly reiterated in another piece of research also carried out for the British Council and the Goethe-Institut.[7] The list of forms of value that I was able to identify included the following:

- *Mutual learning*, together with space for joint reflection, debate, research and experimentation – which often lead to active co-creation of new work – as Dragan Klaić saw clearly over a decade ago:

[7] The study was published in 2018 as "Cultural Relations in an Age of Uncertainty: The Value of Cultural Relations in Societies in Transition".

Even the very best cultural organisation has sufficient reason to work internationally, not only in order to sustain its exemplary role and confirm it again and again, but as a matter of *professional solidarity* as well: by sharing some of its experiences and offering its own ingredients of excellence to other peer organisations and individual professionals, thus contributing to the professional development of the field on an international scale.[8]

- *Acquiring new skills*, mentioned by some two-thirds of organisations involved in the study, even though skills development *per se* was rarely the main focus. However, the suitability of the skills thus acquired is often called into question, as when European models of cultural entrepreneurship are unsuited to the particular Global South context.
- *Increasing organisational capacity.* Greater public interest, connectivity and outreach that are accrued through cultural relations projects were amongst the key benefits perceived. Extending audiences and increasing visibility transnationally contribute to their longer-term organisational capacities and the sustainability thereof.
- *Increased funding* is obviously amongst the most important benefits. Clearly, the funding provided through cooperation with European organisations – or with European partner cultural operators – boosts organisations and individuals. Yet, it is often short-term only, because the funders are wary of encouraging dependency. Sustainability is not assured. Besides, individuals and groups that do succeed in gaining funding (sometimes repeated funding) are often successful mainly because they master the fund-raising rhetoric, or have an intermediary able to do so for them. This is a familiar phenomenon: a 'happy few' who have learned how to talk the talk and flatter the self-regard of otherwise well-intentioned donors.

[8] Dragan Klaić. *Mobility of Imagination*. Budapest: Centre for Arts and Culture, Central European University. 2007, p. XX.

Multiple misalignments

Yet North-South cultural relations also present a range of negative dimensions. These focus on frequent *misalignments of goals and organisational cultures* between users, organisations, and funders. The misalignment issues confirmed in the CVP study include the following.

- For many cultural operators in the Global South, international cultural cooperation is far from being a 'level playing field'. The CVP report mentions how local participants in some projects sensed a *lack of reciprocity or mutuality*, which was associated with feeling undervalued by the foreign partner organisation.
- A recurring complaint, particularly in geographically large countries such as India, was a perceived *exclusivity* in terms of location, partners and types of beneficiaries. Capital cities take it all. Participants in the workshops focusing on British Council and Goethe-Institut activities not only singled out the big city bias, but also underlined it in terms of income, educational level and organisational profile. As the CVP report put it:
  In a country like Egypt, for example, where access to cultural goods and services beyond television is quite limited for most people, reaching broader audiences (in terms of location, socio-economic status, educational and cultural capital, gender, and so on) with activities geared towards reducing social or political tensions and enhancing understanding requires either significant resources or capacious ingenuity and remarkable creativity.[9]
- *Unclear rules of engagement* are often responsible for the misaligned expectations and goals between foreign actors, delivery teams and local participants. For example, partner organisations and users involved in the CVP case studies did not always understand funding constraints that their European partners took for granted. Often there was considerable disappointment at expectations not being met – sometimes on both sides.

[9] Open University and Hertie School of Governance, 2018, p. 121.

- Delivery teams and users bemoaned *the lack of follow-up support*. Clearly, EU organisations have a difficult trade-off to manage between offering financial support and avoiding the risk of generating dependency. The most successful projects were seen by beneficiaries as those that are sustainable either through opportunities to apply for further funding or through continued support.
- *Organisational hierarchies* can seriously hamper good relations, notably when they relegate local professionals and brokers to the lower echelons while their European peers tend to head up or take lead roles and receive higher salaries.
- When mutuality is a core goal (and it is not always), it may not be attained if either of the partners detects *the presence of instrumentality*. In the CVP study, differences emerged between policy and strategic teams about what they aspire to, what delivery teams do and what users expect. Certain Egyptian participants, for example, resented being treated as passive recipients of British culture, while having limited access to it – either though opportunities to travel to the UK, communicate with British people, or consume cultural and artistic products.
- The question of 'who benefits?' comes up repeatedly and has been debated extensively in the cultural management literature already, not only in terms of instrumental versus intrinsic value, but also as to whether new opportunities are being created.

The rather scant scholarly literature on our topic has been supplemented in a recent Routledge publication entitled *Managing Culture: Reflecting on Exchange in Global Times* (2020). One of the chapters, entitled "Challenging Assumptions in Intercultural Collaborations: Perspectives from India and the UK", is particularly germane to the issue at hand. The authors, Ruhi Jhunjhunwala and Amy Walker, both reflexive cultural managers, one Indian and the other British, have explored how many intercultural collaboration programmes perpetuate mistaken assumptions and create or maintain inequitable relationships. They have also looked at how cultural diplomacy and international development funding can reinforce practices that affect both structural elements (the

allocation of resources, leadership and delivery) and creative content. Can cultural managers and practitioners work within, navigate, and benefit from initiatives and opportunities whilst challenging international power dynamics and post-colonial or neo-colonial hierarchies, they ask? Citing the notion of 'fair cooperation', they also ask how the practice of cultural relations can actually produce challenging and experimental artistic work. A common critique of such efforts is that they are inherently paternalistic. Even the most well-intentioned agencies are often accused of determining what their partners need, rather than letting them articulate those needs themselves. Flows of resources are invariably one-way, creating imbalances that are perceived to enact hegemonic or imperialistic motivations, fostering dependency instead of empowerment. As a cultural manager from Nigeria asserts, "countries with bigger resources for promotion of their culture and methodology control the global discourse on culture."[10]

Frequently, what dictates the organisational structure or management of a project are assumptions about who has authority – and these assumptions are generally based on who provides funds. In this case, observe the authors, it is assumed that since the UK partner is bringing in the cash, they also need to control the project and are accountable for it both artistically and managerially, while the Indian partner is responsible primarily for logistical support to realise the project. This assumption can be traced back to the paternalistic nature of the funding, which is amplified by the colonial history between the two countries. Even when there is no overt display of power, it is easy for the recipient side to slip into forms of 'anticipatory obedience', complying with what it assumes the more powerful player expects in framing the issues, determining the challenges, in the language and terminology used, in the statement of goals, etc. Add to this the inevitable cultural conflicts in working styles, methodology and approaches to timelines.

[10] Cited in Ruhi Jhunjhunwala and Amy Walker. "Challenging Assumptions in Intercultural Collaborations: Perspectives from India and the UK" in Victoria Durrer and Raphaela Henze (eds.), *Managing Culture: Reflecting on Exchange in Global Times*, Routledge, 2020.

In any intercultural collaboration, the acknowledgement and affirmation of difference is part of the process. But all too often it deploys stereotypical enactments and representations that mobilise only the most easily recognisable images. In India-UK artistic collaborations, a handful of tried-and-tested themes, art forms or companies and artists of national repute have become the go-to choices for collaborations, often establishing a limited canon.

Whilst work from the UK is often promoted as 'contemporary and cutting-edge', with the big hitters like the Edinburgh Festivals or Tate Modern promoted extensively overseas, works referencing Indian culture fall back on the invented tradition of the tried motifs and imagery of an 'Incredible India'. Innumerable projects claimed to 'reimagine' India, but in fact incorporated the most obvious elements like Bollywood and/or Indian classical dance to the exclusion of innovative contemporary forms. This was particularly evident when the Indian High Commission in London organised the "India@UK 2017" cultural festival. While some experimental and contemporary work was shown, the big events showcased Indian traditional dance and Bollywood musicals. Conversely, the British Council announced special grants in 2014 to mark the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and in 2016 under the Shakespeare Lives project for the 400th anniversary of his death; the year 2013 also marked the 100th anniversary of Bollywood in India, and so both Shakespeare and Bollywood were commonplace in the collaborative projects. Also, many of these projects were conceived and produced by a UK partner who raised funds for them, with the Indian partner involved only in the final phase, bereft of the capacity to change or influence the scope.

In their concluding arguments, the authors assert that the deontology of arts managers requires them to be 'mediators and moderators', charged with opposing the instrumentalisation of culture for political and economic purposes – and official cultural diplomacy is one such purpose[11] – and with ensuring that assumptions and stereotypes are not institutionalised.

[11] Yet even the evils of the instrumental ought not to be exaggerated. See Melissa Nisbett,

Conclusion

Clearly, and I shall conclude on this similar note, we all need to ground our cultural relations work in higher values and visions. The most fundamental vision no doubt is the one expressed many years ago by the French sociologist Edgar Morin: "Our planetary culture requires the blossoming of cultures through complex forms of dialogical exchange." This was the vision that inspired the team that prepared the 2014 Preparatory Action and it is one that should guide us in everything we do with respect to international cultural relations, wherever we are located in the world.

"New Perspectives on Instrumentalism: An Empirical Study of Cultural Diplomacy". *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2013. Vol. 19, No. 5, pp. 557-575.

THE EU'S EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF FOREIGN CULTURAL INSTITUTES IN CROATIA*

Barbara Lovrinić

Abstract

For some time now, the academic and policy literature has been preoccupied with the scope, terminology and definitions of the multi-layered phenomenon of cultural diplomacy. In the EU, culture has been recognised as an integral part of the EU's external relations. The main objective of this paper is to analyse the EU's existing mechanisms for facilitating external cultural relations and, in this regard, observe the role of national cultural institutes in the youngest Member State – Croatia. Considering the institutes' long tradition of cultural communication and cultural influences, the questions were designed to find out whether their current objectives are nation-centred, or aimed at fostering European integration processes and international cultural relations. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews with cultural professionals in selected national cultural institutes in Zagreb were conducted. Additional information is provided based on a content analysis of the institutes' official websites and EUNIC as the main cooperation platform for European external cultural relations.

* This paper and the presentation are based on the article "Analysing the EU's External Cultural Relations: Case Study on the Role of National Cultural Institutes in Croatia", accepted for publication in the journal *Interkulturalnost*, No. 19 (2020), published by Kulturni centar Vojvodine "Miloš Crnjanski".

Introduction

The question of maximising the impact of culture in foreign policy has become a central theme of many recent discussions amongst the EU's commissioners. As repeatedly stated in different EU documents, culture has been recognised as an integral part of the EU's external relations. However, culture is only a non-exclusive competence of the EU, and the Member States hold the main competences concerning cultural policies.

The term 'the EU's external cultural relations' is primarily employed by the EU's institutions – notably, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC) – and it refers to the EU's cultural relations with third countries.[1] In short, 'European external cultural relations' signifies the provision of support to cultural exchanges, but also includes the cultural dimension in other aspects of external and developmental policy. The EU's external cultural relations could be considered to be part of its cultural policy or foreign policy. However, no particular department is responsible for external cultural relations. Different programmes and instruments, which fall under the responsibility of different entities, are supporting the EU's external cultural relations. The activities of many Directorates-General (DGs) in the EU include the cultural dimension, but it is not their responsibility to develop external cultural relations.

The actors who are engaged in international cultural relations and are state-sponsored are national cultural institutes. Considering that an important aspect of cultural diplomacy in Europe was related to the establishment of national cultural institutes abroad during the 20th century, the question arises whether their goals today are nation-centred, or aimed at fostering European integration processes and international cultural relations.

[1] See the glossary of the European Commission's *Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU External Relations'. Engaging the World: towards global cultural citizenship* (2014). Besides, the term 'third countries' "refers to all non-Member State countries, and as such, they can be European or non-European countries". See also Lisack (2014: 11).

Models of the EU's external cultural relations

Two models of EU cultural relations can be identified based on governments' implementations of strategies and actions for culture in external relations. About two-thirds of the EU Member States have a decentralised model (the so-called 'arm's length' model) while one-third of them employ a centralised model. To illustrate with an example, France, Germany and the United Kingdom are undoubtedly the most successful countries in Europe and worldwide when it comes to cultural diplomacy.[2] The fact that France has a centralised model and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) acts as a supervisor of all cultural activities conducted by French agencies or cultural institutes and offices, such as the Alliance française or the Institut français, also means that the Institut français in Paris is not responsible for the numerous offices of Institut français abroad – they are under the direct supervision of the MFA. On the other hand, both Germany and the UK have a decentralised model in which the implementation of cultural and educational policies is performed independently, for example by the Goethe-Institut or the British Council. Despite their autonomy, they naturally operate within the general scope of priorities defined by their governments. In addition, the principal actors engaged in cultural relations in most EU Member States are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Culture (MoC) which act abroad through their embassies and/or cultural institutes and centres (European Commission, 2014: 30-31).

Clearly, such a diversity of governance models cannot easily satisfy the objectives of European external cultural relations. Considering the EU's focus on placing culture at the heart of EU policies, and the national cultural institutes' long tradition of exporting culture, the following section highlights some of the main findings from the

[2] According to "The Soft Power 30" report on global ranking based on a country's soft power in 2017 (available online at https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2017-Web-1.pdf), France secured the top spot for the year 2017, while the UK maintained its second position two years running. In comparison to 2016, the US fell to third place, Germany slid down one place to fourth, and Canada came in fifth.

semi-structured interviews conducted with cultural professionals in the selected cultural institutes in Zagreb, Croatia.

Core activities of selected national cultural institutes in Zagreb, Croatia[3]

The promotion of national culture and language is the core activity of most cultural institutes, regardless of their size (Smits et al., 2016). Yet the activities of cultural institutes go beyond a mere presentation of their national cultures, as they nurture bilateral relations and encourage cooperation with the civil society sector, the cultural sector and artists in the host countries. Director of the Goethe-Institut in Zagreb highlighted that the interest of the Institute is not to present "the culture of Germany", but rather "culture from Germany" and "artists from Germany". According to him, national branding is a task of foreign offices, not cultural institutes. In the interview, he brought attention to the Institute's commitment to create space for cultural dialogue and the exchange of ideas between nation states. As a cultural expert, and not a diplomat as he says, he is concerned with European cultural development and interested in the creation of regional projects.

When discussing different kinds of cooperation, the question arises whether cultural relations should be considered as a possibly efficient means of gaining partners in the political and/or economic sense. "The Belgian Days are a perfect example of a hybrid between cultural and economic diplomacy", says the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Belgium. The idea of this event is to gather all important

[3] Three directors, one cultural attaché and one project manager who participated in this research came from the following cultural institutes: Balassi Intézet (interview held on 15 February 2018); Goethe-Institut (interview held on 2 March 2018); Instituto Camões (interview held on 3 April 2018); Institut français (interview held on 8 March 2018); Österreichische Kulturforen (email correspondence from 28 February 2018). Apart from these, two diplomatic representatives, one from the Embassy of Belgium (interview held on 19 March 2018) and one from the Embassy of Sweden (email correspondence on 13 and 14 March 2018) gave their thoughts on this topic. Considering the fact that some countries of the EU did not establish their own cultural institutes in Zagreb, I tried to obtain at least some information from relevant embassies (cultural attachés if possible) regarding the topic of the EU's external cultural relations.

trade representatives in the region, promote gastronomic tourism, and organise diverse cultural activities.

Offering language courses and issuing language certificates seems to be the most prominent and profitable activity of cultural institutes. For example, activities such as teaching English, exam organisation and other language-related activities earn the British Council approximately 550 million EUR a year, which represents about 46% of the British Council's budget. By comparison, Institut français accumulates 73 million EUR from language courses, certifications and local cultural sponsorships (Smits et al., 2016: 47). In practice, it often happens that the double role of director and language teacher is appointed by a country's Foreign Office. For example, the director of the Instituto Camões in Zagreb works with students as a lecturer of the Portuguese language and literature at the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences in both Zagreb and in Zadar. Located at the heart of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, the main objective of the Institute comes as no surprise. The Instituto Camões in Zagreb is the central Balkan point where official language certificates are issued.[4]

Promotion of European values[5]

All cultural institutes (regardless of the model applied) are aligned with their national policies. However, the European dimension is also strongly present and thus cannot be neglected by the Member States. Several cultural institutes do mention a sustained effort to promote EU values in their mission statements.

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[4] Instituto Camões in Belgrade and Ljubljana offer language courses, but do not have the authority to issue certificates.

[5] According to Article 3(5) and 21 of the Treaty of the European Union (available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012M%2FTXT): "(the Union) shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter."

The Österreichische Kulturforen of Austria speaks about "contributing proactively to promoting the process of European integration"; the mission of the Institut français is to "affirm the European dimension of cultural action outside of France" (Smits et al., 2016: 53). However, the majority of cultural institutes do not mention the promotion of the EU and its values in their statements or statutes. Thus, the level of promotion of the EU can only be measured by observing and analysing their actions. All the interviewees from cultural institutes mentioned that they have been preparing diverse activities to support the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and Rijeka 2020, European Capital of Culture. For most of them, Rijeka 2020 is an absolute priority in organising institute activities. It appears that larger institutes are more likely to promote European values and are generally more aware of the possibilities of EU-funded projects and European programmes in third countries in which they participate.

The representatives of both the French and German institutes highlighted in the interview the role of the Franco-German Cultural Fund in supporting European projects. The Fund was established on 22 January 2003, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, sealing the friendship between France and Germany. It has enabled both countries to encourage and support co-operative initiatives conducted jointly by the French and German diplomatic networks in third countries. This programme illustrates the determination of France and Germany to strengthen their cooperation in the cultural field, but also and above all, to affirm their commitment to European integration.

In 2016, the Institut français and the Goethe-Institut together with three other partners launched the Cultural Diplomacy Platform, aimed at developing and strengthening the European Union's external cultural relations. In addition, this European dimension can be observed through membership of the European Network of National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) and its clusters. When it comes to the link between EUNIC and cultural institutes in Zagreb, all interviewees mentioned collaboration amongst members within the framework of

EUNIC Croatia[6] in the implementation of projects related to relevant 'European' topics.

Thematic priorities

The thematic priorities of the cultural institutes are consistent with those of the European Union: migration and refugees, preventing youth radicalisation, promotion of fundamental values (e.g., freedom of speech, gender equality etc.), cultural diversity, interreligious dialogue, social cohesion/inclusion, conflict/crisis resolution, and support for the capacity development of CCS. The *new* focus on cultural diplomacy can be seen in the engagement of cultural institutes in intercultural dialogue with the civil society sector in third countries. Migration is currently the most pressing issue on the agenda of the national cultural institutes in Zagreb. Nearly all of the interviewees confirmed their participation in the "Borders: Separation, Transition and Sharing" event organised by EUNIC Croatia.[7]

Geographical outreach

The geographical outreach is of particular importance for cultural institutes. However, a study of European cultural institutes (Smits et al., 2016) shows that only large institutes have a wide network of offices established around the world. To be more precise, 13 out of 29 have less than 40 offices abroad. In total, European cultural institutes abroad constitute a network of 1253 offices in 184 territories, with 156 offices outside the European Union. It turns out that the oldest and largest cultural institutes in Europe have the highest number of offices – the Alliance française (819 offices in 137 countries), the Società Dante

[6] Comprising the Austrian Cultural Forum, the Institut français, the Goethe-Institut, the Hungarian Balassi Institute, the Italian Cultural Institute, the Institut Cervantes, the Instituto Camões, and the British Council.

[7] Organised in partnership with the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Rijeka 2020, the City of Rijeka, the University of Rijeka, Kino Tuškanac in Zagreb, Art Kino in Rijeka and Živi Atelje DK, with support from the European Commission and EUNIC's global fund. From 5 to 15 June 2017, three round tables accompanied by three exhibitions, and a film programme were held in Zagreb and Rijeka.

Alighieri (423 offices in 60 countries), the Institut français (145 offices across 37 countries), the Istituto Italiano di Cultura (45 offices in 83 countries) and the British Council (191 offices in 110 countries). The Österreichische Kulturforen seems to be most interested in being present in the Balkans: "The region of the Western Balkans is extremely important for Austria – both economically and culturally. As part of its focus on the Western Balkans, Austria's Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs has paid particular attention to this region with annual, culturally favoured country priorities", says the Director of the Institute. The year 2017 was the Croatia-Austria Year of Culture, in which both countries were represented under the motto "Experiencing Culture Together". The Hungarian Institute has opened its doors practically at the same time in Croatia and Serbia. In total, Hungary's culture is represented by 23 Hungarian cultural institutes in 21 countries. Outside of Europe, the Institutes are based in New York, New Delhi and Cairo. The Balassi Intézet in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Moscow and Belgrade also function as a Collegium Hungaricum, an international research and science centre.

Conclusion

The idea of EU's external cultural relations is a much broader notion than 'cultural diplomacy' practiced by nation-states, as it includes both cultural cooperation and cultural relations. The paradigm shift in which culture is placed at the heart of the EU's external relations is obvious not only in terms of the different narratives or terminologies, whereby cultural diplomacy has been used instead of cooperation or relations, but also in the fact that bilateral has turned into multilateral, and national into European.

Regardless of whether they are under the supervision of their respective ministries of foreign affairs or can act independently, national cultural institutes are still aligned with their national policies. The work of the national cultural institutes in Croatia is not yet adapted to the concept of cultural diplomacy, which is now more broadly understood and has been moving away from formal spaces. It seems that the cultural institutes are taken for granted when it comes to their role

in being agents for the EU's external cultural relations. Regardless of what the mission statements of the cultural institutes are, the work they perform follows the traditional pattern of maintaining cultural (bilateral) relations, combined with traces of newly formed collaborations and partnerships, which often involve the civil society sector. The latter activities are usually encouraged either by the directors of the institutes that enjoy enough autonomy, or are motivated by the budget received from the central European Network of National Institutes for Culture, EUNIC, or in some cases, both.

On the one hand, we are experiencing a hyper production of strategies and agendas coming from the 'official' EU, while on the other, there are researchers and expert communities who raise their voice against the instrumentalisation of culture. Yet, the engagement of multiple actors in the EU's cultural relations has resulted in the creation of networks and platforms, which facilitate cultural exchanges. This phenomenon not only shows that the place of Europe on the international scene is changing, but also that cultural and any kind of external relations is not a unique phenomenon, but rather a set of planned actions which take place in a much broader context. In order to tackle the challenges introduced by the new actors on the international scene, the institutional framework of the EU has no other option but to provide a strong communication infrastructure for European cultural cooperation.

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International Cultural Cooperation and the Role of Networks

NETWORKS AS CONTEMPORARY DIASPORAS REVISITED (2009-2019): NEW SCENARIOS AND CHALLENGES FOR MOBILITY

Cristina Farinha

Abstract

For the last decade, networks have been substituting traditional diasporas in supporting the mobility of artists, cultural and creative operators worldwide. Meanwhile, new actors and global scenarios have introduced changes in mobility concepts and logic at cultural, social, environmental, economic, technological and political level. Despite today's globalised and digitally connected cultures, networks still play an essential intermediary role between professionals and complex legislative and funding frameworks. In terms of what appears in the mobility agenda, there is, on the one hand, an enthusiastically linked arts and culture world parallel to a gradual strategic relevance and recognition at EU and international level. On the other, mobility of professionals and their works still faces diverse obstacles and reveals geographical and economic discrepancies and imbalances, particularly in times of rising nationalism and fear of migration.

In November 2009, I spoke in Zagreb at the 3rd World Culturelink Conference entitled *Networks: The Evolving Aspects of Culture in the 21st Century* on the issue of the role of networks in supporting cultural sector mobility. Ten years later, I had the opportunity to revisit

this issue within the framework of the session "Cultural Networks – The Expression of Cultural Change in International Relations" at the *International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia* conference, which took place in 2019 in Rijeka. Revisiting my paper[1] from a decade ago, I realised that it still reads very pertinently. I propose thus to pinpoint here some actual changes, contexts and challenges of mobility today in a global perspective.

Indeed, the main issues and obstacles to mobility reported 10 years ago are still valid and some have even been aggravated to a certain extent. We can still recognise the growing enthusiastic global community of artists and cultural operators, keen on cross-border collaboration from the very early stages of their careers. Their interests and dynamics have actually enlarged, and the community has gotten even more connected today due to more sophisticated digital means of communication and social networks, as well as easier and cheaper means of transportation. We can also still identify the persisting relevant role of cultural networks as intermediaries, advocates, information and knowledge conveyers, despite the intense networked culture we all live in.

Back then in 2009 in Europe, artists and cultural operators were still living in the "age of innocence", as the Finish artist and curator Taru Elfving described it in Joris Janssens's "reframing the international" analysis from 2018.[2] In 2009, we were still enchanted by our privileged EU freedom of movement, though concerned about making it even more accessible. We were dreaming about making it universal, as many considered and discussed mobility as a human right.[3] By then, the issue of visas and work permits for third countries nationals was recognised as a significant impediment (and remains so today). Furthermore, ERICarts' study "Mobility Matters. Programmes and schemes to promote the mobility of artists and cultural professionals" identified diverse intra-EU barriers to mobility,[4] spanning taxation, social security, copyright, recognition of qualifications and diplomas,

1 See Farinha, C. (2011).
2 See Janssens, J. (2018).
3 See Shaheed, F. (2013), the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights.
4 See ERICarts (2008).

but also information and skills. The EU single market was (and still is in most of the cases) a complex puzzle of different regulations in the above policy areas, where there is little integration. For artists and cultural operators moving throughout Europe and the world, in circular and/or irregular tours and journeys, accumulating different work statuses, profiles and projects, overcoming and managing these hindrances can be quite burdensome. Therefore, by then, the right to mobility had already been unbalanced due to diverse, and in most Member States fragile social and working conditions of artists and creative operators. Artists and creatives have been "performing" in the EU and the global stage without an effective and fair safety net.

Indeed, research[5] revealed mobility to be a resource only accessible to those already resourceful and in possession of adequate capital (to use Bourdieu's[6] terminology). The benefit of the right to mobility seems to act as a mirror reflecting citizens and/or professionals' actual capacity at different levels: whether having economical means, access to funding, benefit from favourable cultural and labour policies, and possessing right managerial and communicational skills (including networking).

Ten years later, thanks to the advocacy efforts of many cultural networks, mobility in the arts and culture gained momentum and entered into several policy agendas. Actually, at different governance levels and by diverse stakeholders, the relevance of mobility was recognised as essential to artistic careers development, whether for education and training, inspiration, market enlargement, audience diversification, and improvement of working and business conditions and opportunities. Moreover, mobility was also assumed to be fundamental as a means of intercultural dialogue and cultural relations in the face of today's globalised world and communities. In this respect, emphasis was placed on acknowledging and eliminating obstacles and inverting on capacity building and lifelong learning.

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5 See Farinha, C. (2015).

6 See Bourdieu, P. (1980).

Since the first *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* was published in 2007, mobility of artists and circulation of artworks has definitely been inscribed into the objectives of EU Culture programmes and policies. Most recently, the *New European Agenda for Culture* (2018) asked the Commission and Member States to commit to encouraging the mobility of cultural and creative professionals and to remove remaining obstacles, notably at administrative and fiscal level. It actually proposed to create a mobility scheme for professionals under the *Creative Europe* Programme (2018-2019), perhaps to finally give the green light to the long argued and awaited "Erasmus for Artists" in the upcoming framework programme post-2020. Indeed, an EU pilot project – i-Portunus – was developed in 2019-2020 to examine and test how to best fund mobility for individuals in the cultural and creative sector. Meanwhile, the European Parliament, in its resolution of 2017 *Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations*, has recognised the importance of mobility at international level and has called for a cultural visa programme for third country nationals (the same way it exists for scientists) to foster cultural relations and eliminate obstacles. Concurrently, UNESCO, through its *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, dating back to 2005, aims to support flows and mobility, calling for preferential treatment measures for artists from the developing world. The goal is to facilitate a more balanced flow of cultural goods and services and promote mobility and exchange of ideas, artists and cultural professionals around the world.

In this last decade, the world has changed at various levels, spanning economic, technological, social, cultural, political and environmental spheres, bringing about new practices and actors to the mobility rationale, experiences and scenarios. Most of these trends have actually strengthened the expectations and some of the means of greater global mobility.

Firstly, the acknowledgement and incorporation into political agendas of the economic dimension of culture and creative industries alongside the praise of innovation and entrepreneurship have raised expectations for cross-sectoral practices, as well as public

and private partnerships, intensifying the aspiration for international trade and cooperation in the arts and creativity value chains. In parallel, cross-disciplinary practices and transnational co-creation and co-productions are becoming more common in the arts and culture world, benefiting from economies of scale and mutual learning and experimentation. Moreover, the increasing importance of the digital world, coupled with the rise of virtual means of communication and information including social networks, has facilitated these connections, exchanges and participation. The enabling of mobility and the generation of new businesses has followed the demand for new skills and profiles addressing professionals and organisations, resulting in an increase in self-employment and, in many cases, the precarity of labour conditions. Consequently, new cultural and creative spaces and actors have emerged, such as those materialised into the creative hubs concept (namely incubators, co-working and makers spaces, fab labs, and other creative venues, clusters and platforms) as nests and supporters of cultural and creative professionals, many of them transnational digital nomads, where encounters, peer to peer learning and collaborations take place. In this interconnected world, decentralised and multi-governance patterns have evolved in which a growing number of cities, regions and countries have to assume and invest in culture and creativity as a distinctive territorial resource. Even in more rural regions, several towns of small and medium scale have begun to embrace cultural external relations, beyond standard town twinning, promoting international cooperation, as well as mobility and artists in residency funds and programmes.

Beyond Europe, some studies[7] have pointed to the parallel emergence of new trends, platforms and actors regarding mobility in the Global South. On the ground, there has been growing interest and investment, mostly from private and civil society initiatives, in supporting south-south peer to peer collaborations and networking via mobility funds, networks, touring platforms, biennials, music and art fairs, residency and presentation spaces, training programmes,

[7] See UNESCO (2017).

and policy groups. Advancements can also be seen in the number of south-south mobility opportunities, as well as some visa facilitation initiatives, such as from the African Union (as well as in East and West Africa), UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), and in the increase in the number of countries that can be accessed visa-free by passport holders from the Global South.

Nevertheless, structural inequalities regarding freedom of movement persist worldwide, reflected in the dominance of the Global North as a destination and source of income for most cultural professionals and the imbalance in global flows of cultural goods and services. In the Global South, despite the above reported dynamism, existing barriers persist, such as severe visa hindrances, poor transport infrastructures and complex intra-continental travel routes, difficult access to information and insufficient legal and political commitment from state institutions and authorities. Actually, the said calls from international organisations, such as the EU and UNESCO, to grant preferential treatment to those coming from the Global South have yielded insufficient results.

Essentially, artists, cultural and creative operators from the Global South have far fewer chances to access mobility funding opportunities, which is a crucial issue. When analysing the sources of mobility funds across the globe, one realises that the great majority comes from the Global North (88%), according to El Bennaoui[8] in the 2017 report on the implementation of the UNESCO 2005 Convention. In addition, 66% of the destination countries targeted and 57% of the eligible candidates are situated in the Global North.

On top of these severe global geographical imbalances, in the case of Europe, intra-continental asymmetries are also to be found. Despite the diversity and abundance of mobility funds, the On the Move[9] operational study for i-Portunus points out that over 50% of both offer-led and demand-led mobility funding opportunities originate and concentrate only on approximately 5 to 6 Western EU countries. More

[8] See UNESCO (2017).
[9] See On the Move (2019).

peripheral and non-EU countries have much fewer favourable contexts for mobility. Indeed, access to funding and to mobility is dependent on diverse factors that vary according to national, regional and local frameworks, notably on the existence of encouraging legislation and cultural policies; on the fund-raising skills and networking capacity of artists and cultural professionals; on the availability of information and transports. Mobility tools cannot be separated from the social, educational, economic and political contexts they are an integral part of. Thus, their nature, access and use reflect previous structures and inequalities, so it seems that mobility remains a right only accessible to those already resourceful.

In Europe ten years later, a number of obstacles persist,[10] including the above quoted EU intra-mobility barriers. Some progress has been achieved in the area of education and training in which mobility became quite mainstreamed. But the economic crisis of the past decade has provoked financial recession and consequent budget cuts. This, alongside complex and highly competitive funding procedures, has affected the sector particularly heavily all across Europe and the world. In this challenging context, cultural networks, artistic and creative platforms, as well as other civil society organisations remained as shelters, giving support and facilitating the pooling of resources. However, networks themselves have also been affected by diminishing budgets that imposed the need to try new business models. Moreover, networks struggle with the difficulty to gather data evidence to prove the immaterial added value of their own role and that of arts and culture, including of mobility.

At social and political level, mobility trends seem to be going in the opposite direction. Nationalism and xenophobia have been growing with regard to migratory flows, aggravated, most notably in Europe, by the refugee crisis of the past five years. The common perceptions regarding migrations associate them increasingly with fear and prejudices, from an economic and labour menace to a security issue,

[10] For one of the most recent analyses of the diverse obstacles to mobility, see EFA/PEARLE (2016, 2017 and 2018).

particularly fuelled by the media and social networks. This turn questions the "European safe haven", legitimising the return of some old borders, the reinforcement of visa restrictions and the questioning of the established Schengen Treaty. Alongside the restriction of freedom of movement, freedom of speech and human rights in general are also threatened worldwide, which again hits most notably the arts and culture community, as demonstrated by the reports and relevant work of civil society organisations and networks such as *Freemuse*, Artists at Risk, Pen International (Writers in Exile) and the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN).

Furthermore, there is a growing consciousness that current mobility expectations and practices have a significant carbon footprint, thus having a considerable impact on our environment. This new awareness questions mobility purposes and formats while more long-term, slower types of travel and engagement vis-à-vis visited territories and communities are being discussed and adopted. Artists and cultural professionals on the move are reclaiming time to create, produce and engage in contexts of transnational collaborations and cooperation.

Overall, the ongoing reflection[11] and design of the expected new EU mobility fund for the following framework programme (2021-2027) is deemed to take these ethical considerations into account, placing mobility in a broader context. The social, economic and environmental issues at stake will have to be acknowledged and counterbalanced. Values such as well-being, shared responsibility, social justice, cultural participation, solidarity, decentralisation and complementarity have been identified to guide the conception and implementation of future mobility funds, as well as cooperation and external cultural relations policies and actions. To navigate these seemingly difficult times ahead, as we have lost "innocence" with regard to the promotion of mobility in the cultural sector, networks and other civil society platforms and organisations continue to be key stakeholders, as advocacy, exchanges, information and knowledge sharing remain crucial.

[11] See On the Move (2019) and i-Portunus (2020).

Addendum

Approximately one year after this conference took place, while its proceedings are still being prepared, the world of mobility and that of cultural networks came to a halt due to the current global COVID-19 pandemic. All of a sudden, a factor that was unexpected at the time of our discussion back 2019 in Rijeka, questions all the expectations, projects and practices of the cultural and creative sector in the framework of (transnational) touring, partnerships and collaborations.

A significant amount of activities moved to the digital format, allowing many planned meetings, conferences, events, showcases and performances to still take place despite physical distance. This way, many cultural international networks kept on tirelessly sustaining their mission to support the sector by providing platforms for encounters, mutual learning and contacts. As a matter of fact, the sector realises the existing need to improve and develop common cross-border platforms to present and distribute cultural and creative contents free from commercial and market constraints. In addition, the exponential rise of digitisation has also intensified the urge to invest seriously in digital literacy and accessibility, both for professionals and audiences, as well as in developing fairer ways of remuneration for artists and cultural operators.

Though there is confidence that we will sooner or later obtain the necessary immunity against this virus, another point seems also most certain: the pandemic experience will inevitably bring structural changes to our societies and the way we see the world and our work. It seems to have accelerated trends that were emerging already, adding on new features and making the return to "past normality" an illusion. Thus, the cultural and creative sector, one of the most affected by the current pandemic, would need to acknowledge, anticipate and prepare for the upcoming changes, leading the way and contributing actively to the discussions and formulation of potential new scenarios and practices.

Mobility will most definitely remain crucial for the EU integration project, as well as for the cultural and creative sector. Though digital technologies have proven to be excellent tools that substitute a great

deal of physical encounters, face-to-face interaction, displacement and human touch remain essential. However, from now on, the way transnational projects and the mobility of professionals and their works are conceived and planned need to be re-thought, including objectives and mission, programme, management and communication, as well as partnerships.

The broad concept of mobility discussed in literature[12] now takes on a new relevance for operators as well. Indeed, mobility can be looked at with wider lenses, as the potential and capacity to move in between different categories, spanning territories – countries, regions, cities, neighbourhoods – languages, disciplines, sectors, audiences, mentalities or cultures. This wide-ranging perspective allows a space to re-invent ourselves and our transnational projects and networks towards hopefully more sustainable, engaged and fairer commitments, relationships and processes.

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THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S RELATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

Mercedes Giovinazzo

Abstract

The European Union fosters constructive and positive relations with its southern neighbours, and culture has indeed been one of the Union's main assets in building bridges with its neighbouring countries to the South. With support from the EU, Interarts carries out projects in the Southern Mediterranean that are based on the postulate that culture has an intrinsic 'public value' that complements the economic and social contributions to public space. These projects also aim at developing sustainable 'communities of practice', groups of people who share a common interest and learn from each other and thus develop personally and professionally. The issue is tackled from a practical and hands-on perspective, with a set of projects presented to illustrate the reality of cultural cooperation in the region. From this experience a series of conclusions is extracted as food for thought.[1]

[1] The paper was written in June 2020 and includes information used for the contribution made within the framework of the Rijeka conference in 2019; updates have been made where necessary and thus mentioned.

The European Union has continuously fostered constructive and positive relations with its southern neighbours. Indeed, culture has been one of the Union's main assets in building bridges with its neighbouring countries to the South and has been considered as such in many strategic and policy documents. For instance, the strategic document *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*[2] states:

"Cultural diversity is an integral part of the values of the European Union. The EU is strongly committed to promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding, and respect for fundamental rights. Accordingly, promoting diversity through international cultural relations is an important part of the EU's role as a global actor." This action is carried out also with the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation, headquartered in Barcelona and Cairo respectively.

Within the European Union,[3] the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) of the European Commission has the mandate to take forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies, in close cooperation with the European External Action Service and supported by the European Union Delegations in the partner countries. Cooperation with the region is set in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and includes ten partner countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia. The ENP is implemented through a series of modalities: bilateral agreements that are tailor-made for each country and cooperation programmes with regional and cross-border remits. The bulk of funding available comes from the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which had an indicative allocation of 17 million EUR for media and culture in the 2014-2020 budgetary period.

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[2] European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Commission: *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, JOIN(2016) 29 final. See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:-52016JC0029&from=EN.

[3] Further information is available at http://www.medculture.eu/about/eu-cooperation.html.

With the objective of promoting access to information of available resources online and the dissemination of information about best practices, the European Union has also set up the EU Neighbours East and South online platform.[4]

The Media and Culture for Development in the Southern Mediterranean Region Programme rolled out two initiatives: *The Med Culture* and *Med Film programmes*.

Under *Med Culture*, a technical assistance unit[5] was rolled out from 2014 to 2019. Its aim was the promotion of culture as a vector of human, social and economic development in South Mediterranean countries and, in particular, accompanying partner countries in the development and improvement of their public cultural policies. The approach, consultative and participative, took place in partnership with civil society actors, ministries, private and public institutions involved in culture as well as other related sectors. The target countries were Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine, and Libya. The overall aim of Med Culture was to pave the way towards the development of institutional and social environments that confirm culture as a vector for freedom of expression and sustainable development. More specifically, to improve governance through inter-ministerial cooperation, the design of national action plans for culture, and the improvement of the organisational structures in cooperation with peers across the region.

The EU Med Culture programme also funded two main projects, with a grant of approximately 2.5 million EUR each:

The *Drama, Diversity and Development* project was implemented from 2014 to 2017 to support the efforts of the Southern Mediterranean countries in building deep-rooted democracy and to contribute to their sustainable economic, social and human development through regional cooperation in the fields of media and culture. It supported activities fostering cultural policy reform and reinforcing the capacity of cultural policy makers, as well as promoting investment and the development

[4] See https://euneighbours.eu/en.

[5] See http://www.medculture.eu/.

of cultural operators' business capabilities.[6] This rights-based project used theatre to promote diversity and challenge discrimination against minorities as an instrument that, through a non-exclusive approach, engages all levels of society. The project was implemented by a consortium of several organisations: Minority Rights Group International in the United Kingdom, the Civic Forum Institute (CFI) in Palestine, and Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies in Egypt. Through two open calls for proposals, they funded street theatre projects in the Southern Mediterranean and offered trainings to strengthen the capacity of the sub-grantees in delivering projects. The project also carried out, amongst others, advocacy initiatives on litigation/remedies for cultural rights' abuses.

The *Communities of practice for the public value of culture in the Southern Mediterranean*[7] (SouthMed CV) was implemented from 2015 to 2018 by a consortium of several organisations: Bac Art Centre in Tunisia; Gudran Association for Art and Development in Egypt; the Association for Arts and Education – Khayal in Lebanon; the German Commission for UNESCO in Germany; the National Centre for Culture and Arts of the King Hussein Foundation in Jordan; and Interarts in Spain as the lead partner. The project had a geographical focus on seven Southern Mediterranean countries, from West to East: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

Given that the project was led by Interarts, this contribution gives it more ample space.

The project was designed based on two main concepts. The first concept was that of the 'communities of practice'. Initially developed by anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, communities of practice are understood as those groups of people who share a common interest that provides the basis for information- and experience-sharing, thus enabling them to learn from each other and develop personally and professionally. Indeed, communities of practice are based on balanced

[6] See https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/projects/drama-diversity-and-development-programme-ddd and https://minorityrights.org/programmes-evaluations/middle-east-north-africa-drama-diversity-development/.

[7] For further information on the project, see www.smedcv.net.

communication between its members, as both learners and providers of knowledge. To be successful, the communities of practice rely mainly on motivation and collaboration amongst their members. The second concept is that of the 'public value of culture'. Pascal Gielen, one of the main theorists of this idea, considers that culture is the substructure of society:[8] it is the basis on which we give meaning to our lives in society, but it is also the basis for the economic and political features of that same society. It also sustains the design and implementation of public policies and independent initiatives.

SouthMed CV funded 38 projects with 1.5 million EUR, selecting the final projects from over 160 high quality applications. This testifies to the fact that there is an extremely thriving sector in the region and that pioneering and pilot initiatives such as SouthMed CV respond to a concrete need. Successful applicants implemented their projects, each involving a partnership of diverse organizations from the target countries. All projects were inspired by the idea that, from the perspective of sustainable human development, culture has social and economic effects that include broader public ones, which are to be understood and valued as laboratories that will inspire other processes, policies and projects in the Southern Mediterranean region.[9] SouthMed CV provided continuing support and advice to these projects through awareness-raising, capacity-building, and networking activities aimed at strengthening the professional capacities of cultural actors in the Southern Mediterranean, including civil society organizations and local authorities.

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8 Pascal Gielen, Sophie Elkhuizen, Quirijn van den Hoogen, Thijs Lijster, Hanka Otte, *Culture: The Substructure for a European Common. A Research Report*, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2014.

9 *Mahattat*, the final publication, accounts for the cultural dynamics and projects that SouthMed CV supported in the Southern Mediterranean region, with interviews, articles, cartographies, quotes, photos, and a graphic chart with indicators. It also includes a comic booklet, a communication tool widely used in the region: *Azem & Ajaj* portrays, in Arabic with English subtitles, three different approaches to the term culture and its contexts in the region. The book is downloadable at http://www.interarts.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Book_MAHATTAT.pdf.

Ultimately, all the projects funded by SouthMed CV contributed to the wider strategic objectives by:

- supporting cooperation processes, understood as joint and shared endeavours towards common objectives;
- increasing the centrality of culture in the design and implementation of local, national and regional development strategies;
- enhancing evidence and comprehensible, adapted arguments regarding the potential of culture to contribute to social and economic development at a local level;
- and, finally, by facilitating and strengthening South-South cooperation.

The EU Med Film programme also funded a series of projects, one of which was the *Towards Greater Gender Equality: Promoting the Role and Image of Women in the Southern Mediterranean Audiovisual Sector* (SouthMed WiA) project.[10] Implemented from 2017 to 2019 by Interarts, in Spain, with the Screen Institute Beirut, in Lebanon; the École Supérieure de l'Audiovisuel et du Cinéma de Gammarth, in Tunisia; Culture and Media Agency, in Belgium; the Permanent Conference of the Audiovisual in the Mediterranean, headquartered in Italy and, as an associate, the European Women in Audiovisual Network, headquartered in France.

SouthMed WiA emerged from the observation of persistent gender inequality and under-representation of women in the film sector, both on screen and behind the camera, and the perpetuation of stereotypes related to the image of women in Arab societies. Its ultimate goal was to positively influence widespread cultural attitudes and public opinion, to strengthen the capacities of female professionals and operators of the audio-visual sector in seven countries of the Southern Mediterranean – Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia – and to contribute to sustainable development and cultural diversity by enhancing the image of women in the film sector.

SouthMed WiA has the following objectives:

[10] For further information on the project, see www.smedwia.eu.

1. To enhance the role of women in the SouthMed Audiovisual sector by funding 8 projects from the seven target countries aimed at promoting gender equality in the audio-visual sector. The total amount of funding made available was approximately 800 thousand EUR. Implemented by various consortia, the projects received systematic coaching and their staff participated in training and networking events.
2. To strengthen women's skills and their capacities to advocate for and participate, with prominent roles, in the local and regional audio-visual industry through capacity-building and coaching of local operators, especially women, awareness-raising of and outreach activities for relevant stakeholders.
3. To enhance evidence, provide comprehensible, relevant arguments and raise awareness regarding the potential of female involvement in the audio-visual sector and in society globally.

The project produced:[11]

- An informative handbook which gathers, for the first time, relevant information about gender equality opportunities in the audio-visual sector in the South Mediterranean, in areas such as production, funding, exchange and networking.
- A documentary presenting real stories of young and emerging female professionals to make visible the challenges they have faced to access the film industry.
- Based on the assumption that education is the key for changing stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours deeply entrenched in culture, a set of guidelines for the inclusion of gender issues in audio-visual, responding to the need to train a new generation of female filmmakers and promote education that avoids negative stereotypes about women.
- A collection of evidence, with data, information and arguments regarding the potential of the role of women in relevant positions in the film industry, and the importance of positive and fair image of women on the screen.

[11] All these outputs are available for download at http://www.smedwia.eu/fr/activities-2/publication/.

The project has also set the basis for the launch of the SouthMed WiA Network, the first Southern Mediterranean network of women professionals in the audio-visual sector and the film industry.

Based on the 25 years of experience of Interarts, four key ideas emerge as regards culture in the framework of development cooperation, in particular in the Southern Mediterranean:

1. Culture has an intrinsic 'public value' with an unquestionable potential to foster not only active and participative citizenship, but also employment, social cohesion and gender equality. Culture is also a powerful, essential tool to sustain regional integration and stability. It is also a tool to increase young people's resilience and empowerment: the Arab countries are amongst the youngest global regions and young people are, undoubtedly, one of its major assets.
2. The projects referred to in this paper all stem from a rights-based approach, as regards cultural, civic, social, political and economic rights. Culture has been the vector that supports, for instance, gender equality and young women's empowerment as crucial to sustain the region's development; professional capacity-building of cultural and creative operators as a means of ensuring decent employment opportunities; dialogue on policymaking as pre-emptive for good governance.
3. As regards cooperation mechanisms, projects such as the ones mentioned have all envisaged mixed and transversal approaches with local authorities, public bodies, NGOs/CSOs, the media. They have fostered North-South cooperation and South-South cooperation, albeit focusing on the difficulties that exist in the region as regards mobility. There is indeed an issue as regards mobility and cooperation opportunities for operators from the Mashriq and Maghreb regions: not only is travelling difficult due to visa constraints, but relationships with and amongst certain countries are extremely tense and would benefit from diplomatic easement measures.
4. The sub-granting mechanism has recently been used by the European Commission only in its funding programmes targeting

culture. As for other sectors, the mechanism provides a high return on investment: indeed, it not only ensures support to on-the-ground projects, with a regional and national scope. It also provides for capacity-building on two fronts: the organisations participating in the selected consortia and the organisations which are beneficiaries of the sub-granting. The 'cascade' structure (consortium/sub-grantees/sub-granted projects' target groups/final beneficiaries) generates a strong multiplier effect reaching out more effectively to remote zones and marginalized segments of the population. It also ensures the development of actions set up by local players to respond to actual needs and adapted to the local contexts and situations, with a 'bottom-up' approach. Finally, the coaching of cultural operators (public and private) allows for a 'learn-by-doing' practice with an empowering effect for future sustainability. The projects contributed to the organisational and programmatic development of the sub-granted organisations. The capacity-building activities improved the administrative, financial and managerial capacities of newly established organisations. All organisations reported having increased their understanding of the transversal approaches to and through culture. They also increased their collaboration opportunities in the region through joint projects, resulting in a better understanding of the region, the sector and the sector's needs, but also because of better exposure to new and innovative work modalities. Ultimately, they also built stronger networks with other partners and stakeholders in the cultural sector in the Southern Mediterranean. Notwithstanding this, there is a drawback. As with any funding, the European Union contributes to cultural operators being able to carry out their work and, also, to open up their often-limited horizons due to the constraints they face, but also the political and social contexts in which they evolve. This *ballon d'oxygène*, albeit extremely positive, can create a sense of frustration once the programme and its funding are over: indeed, operators tend to feel that the opportunities for them to continue working are taken away. The issue here

is to also accompany them, as far as possible, in building their social and political awareness as to the role that they have to play as advocates for the design of targeted cultural policies in their countries and, also, in identifying the paths to be pursued for further development of their organisations.

Recent developments as regards civil liberties and political instability in the Southern Mediterranean region sustain the need to advocate, through concrete actions, for the powerful, essential role of culture in social cohesion, integration and stability, but also as a tool for young people's resilience and empowerment. The European Union, as the voice of European countries and their citizens, should continue to foster cooperation processes in the region, also through culture, as a means of diplomatic relations, but also a means of fostering cooperation, dialogue and development.

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This contribution has been written a year after the International Conference in Rijeka took place. It has been a long and complicated year and the world is undergoing a major crisis. Indeed, the disruption triggered by the pandemic will have long-lasting consequences that are hard to clearly envisage in detail and the challenges that lie ahead are all crucial for the future of humankind.

Our public health systems have been immediately and directly threatened and we have had to respond, collectively, to the incredible danger posed to the health of many and to a tragic loss of too many lives. But there are other potential threats that might not be immediately appreciated to their full extent. The first is to our economies and to what, in Western societies, we refer to as welfare: jobs have been lost, businesses have capsized, and social disruption might follow because of widespread anger, despair and lack of means of survival. The second threat is posed by the enhanced and reinforced control that citizens might be subjected to in the name of health and security: this could in fact be the very unfortunate justification that paves the way towards curtailing our basic civil and political rights. Indeed, the

pandemic has been the perfect pretext for the perfect storm, but we have not come this far in history and in the preservation of human rights to have them jeopardized.[12]

In this context, the cultural sector in Europe, as well as in the rest of the world, has been hit very hard. The initial wave of positive sentiments generated by the pandemic entailed the proliferation of spontaneous initiatives from the sector. However, this wave has dwindled when confronted with reality: culture has demonstrated that it is essential for human beings, but the public initiatives launched to support the cultural sector, in both Europe and the rest of the world, lack a structured and systemic approach. It is undeniable that there is an urgent need for policies and mechanisms based on the concept of solidarity to preserve the diversity and capacity of the sector, fundamental assets for democratic societies and competitive economies.[13] The truth is that the situation is more than complicated. A single example will suffice: the European Commission has proposed that the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) includes a budgetary allocation to the *Creative Europe* programme which is even lower than the one in the previous budgetary cycle.

The challenges are, as has been mentioned, enormous, but culture cannot be foregone. It is hard to understand why, even though it is a buzzword in most political circles, the role and importance of culture are continuously curtailed. It is not only about the future of culture and of the cultural sector in Europe; it is about the role that culture plays in fostering solid and constructive relations throughout the world and about the public value of culture as an essential element of human development that fosters a greater common good.

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[12] Mercedes Giovinazzo, "Resistance, resilience. Culture in the aftermath", in *Respond, react, evolve. Food for thought on new directions*, Biennale des Jeunes Créateurs d'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Barcelona, April, 2020.

[13] Mercedes Giovinazzo, "Politiche e strumenti nel mondo: uno sguardo internazionale su pandemia e filiera delle industrie culturali e creative", in *IoSonoCultura*, Fondazione Symbola.