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**“Europeanisation”, Cultural Policy and Identity:
Debates, Discourses, and Actions**

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1. Studies of Identity, Mentality and Culture
2. Intercultural Cooperation in International Markets and Organisations
3. Regions, Cultures and Institutional Change
4. International Politics and Culture

“EUROPEANISATION”, CULTURAL POLICY AND IDENTITY: DEBATES, DISCOURSES, AND ACTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Now that substantial economic and political integration has been achieved by the European Union (EU) in western Europe, questions relating to culture and identity are becoming more prominent. For example, the Socialist group's manifesto for the 1999 European Parliament (EP) elections promised to “develop a stronger European identity” but also to preserve “the distinct cultures of Europe” (Harding 1999). However, economic studies and understandings of regionalisation are “much more advanced than identity studies” (Higgott 1998, 42).

This paper looks at some of the debates and discourses surrounding these questions and issues, which are related to the notion and process of “Europeanisation”. A key question is the extent to which such policies and measures are motivated by ideas and norms, by the aim of supporting or

furthering integration, or by the rational self-interest of governments, sectoral groups, and political parties.

A particular issue here is the difference between the EU's "official" cultural policy, as adopted under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty, and the vigorous and wide ranging policies which it has applied, or attempted to apply, in the audiovisual, film and media sectors.

The official common cultural policy has to date been relatively non-controversial. The relatively innocuous and non-controversial nature of its aims, measures and outcomes leads Pantel (1999) to focus almost solely on it in considering EU policies and actions in the area of culture, and to come to a very favourable conclusion. Marcelino Oreja, the previous commissioner for culture, stressed that political institutions were not to "do" culture but to contribute to the development of the member states' cultures, consistent with the commission's specified legal competencies with respect to culture (Ricciardi 1999). Ricciardi (p. 3) quotes the former president of the EP, Jose Maria Gil-Robles, as making the following observations with respect to European cultural policy:

One cannot speak of a European cultural policy. The expression could suggest a concept of centralisation in conflict with national, regional and local cultural differences. European culture is all the different cultures together, the EU cannot intervene in culture as such, but must operate for the good of culture.

Former Commission vice-president Sir Leon Brittan also stressed that the EU did not have intentions of cultural integration, saying that (1994, 16): "Brussels has neither the intention nor the power to roll them (Europeans) into a single race, culture or nation". However, Cris Shore (1993, 787) argues that while expressions of national identity and culture will be welcomed in the EU context so long as they are "benign" and "purely cultural", "construction of a new Europe ultimately required the dismantling of the sovereign nation-state".

The area of audiovisual policy and trade in cultural products has not been identified at the official level as part of the EU's common cultural policy. However, it has clear cultural ramifications, and cultural protection has often been cited as a justification for measures, as indicated later in this paper. It is therefore considered for the purposes of this paper to be part of the EU's cultural

policies and measures, in spite of there being an apparent reluctance to acknowledge it as such in terms of official discourse. It is an area in which there has been substantial political interest and even conflict, with considerable differences in member states' positions and between those of the EU and the US. As a result, it has assumed in many ways a greater importance than that of the relatively limited and uncontroversial provisions of the EU's formal common cultural policy and the actions taken under this. The *Television Without Frontiers* directive (Commission of the European Communities 1984) continues to be a source of controversy, not least through its extension of television programming quotas and related requirements to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) which have applied for membership of the EU.

One motivation behind moves towards a common cultural policy and construction of a common identity appears to be the view that differences in culture and identity reduce the level of support for further European integration, and hence there is a need to try and further the level of "Europeanisation". This does not necessarily imply integration of culture and identity, but it does appear to imply attempts to reduce the impact of outside cultural influences, and in particular of the US and of Hollywood.

That the existence of such differences reduces support for further European integration is supported by cultural theorists such as Zetterholm (1994) and communitarian theorists such as Walzer (1970), who focus attention upon cultural difference as a source of objection and resistance to integrating pressures. Walzer's argument that "the citizen's point of reference is the political community, but as a man he has other memberships other references and these he sometimes sets against the state" (1970, 194) can be readily extended to the EU and the context of the different attachments of citizens here, to the EU as well as to member states, regions, family, and other sources of identity such as ethnic and linguistic group, and class. The greater the degree of cultural heterogeneity among the groups forming a political unit, the greater the risk that political decisions may be inconsistent with the central values of one or more groups (Zetterholm 1994, 67). The greater the degree of "Europeanisation" of identity and culture, the greater the readiness of member states' populations to give their allegiance to the EU's central institutions in Brussels, at least in principle.

However, the "question of cultural identity of its member states and individuals" remains "One of the most controversial issues in the debate about the future of the European Union" (Jarausch 1998, 1). The cultural industries issue and the question of whether free trade principles should be extended to film, publishing and broadcasting, have constituted some of the most controversial matters in regional integration in general (Galperin 1999, 627). Film, publishing and broadcasting are exempt from USA-Canada North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) agreement.

A particular problem with actions in the field of culture and identity in support of European integration is that they can in certain cases involve "identity-creating arguments" that there can be "better" or "worse" Europeans (Diez 1997, 29) and by implication good and bad citizens within the EU context. One aspect of this is indicated by the situation that UK respondents to the Eurobarometer 51 survey (European Commission 1999b, 46) cited fear that unification will lead to a loss of identity and culture as their major concern, with 68 per cent of respondents identifying it as such. The transfer of jobs to countries with lower production costs, and drug trafficking and organised crime were in contrast to this the first or second most widespread fears for respondents in most other member states. The only other EU country for which loss of identity was one of the three primary concerns of respondents was Ireland, and here it came third after fears of drugs and crime and transfer of jobs. The area of cultural policy comes relatively low on the list of those which survey respondents felt should be EU rather than national policy responsibilities. Out of eighteen policy areas it was ranked sixteenth in the list of those which it was felt EU-level policy making would be appropriate for, with 32 per cent in favour of this being an EU responsibility and 59 per cent wanting it to be a national one (European Commission 1999b, 54).

Issues of identity, integration and media restrictions associated with these have become a source of conflict not only for the existing member states and for the US, but also for the prospective EU member states in CEE. Even what has been said about culture is disputed, as Senelle (1996, 58) states that Jean Monnet, perhaps the most important architect of post-war integration in Europe, said towards the end of his life that if he were to start out again on the task of constructing Europe, he would begin with culture (Senelle 1996, 58). However, former European Commission president Jacques Delors describes this statement as having been "erroneously ascribed" to Monnet (Delors 1997, 1).

The context in which the EU is developing policies which impact on culture and identity is one of globalisation, with much of the "globalisation" influence being that of popular culture from the US and Hollywood. It is also a context in which the "consumer model" has almost "entirely replaced the citizenship model" in the relationship between the public and media and cultural institutions in countries with mixed public and private media arrangements and cultural funding, for example in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK (Beale 1999, 441). In these situations government emphasis has become more oriented towards finding international markets and recognition for national cultural industries rather than shielding cultural institutions from market forces. EU media but not cultural policies could be seen as an attempt to counter and even reverse such a trend. There is nevertheless an expectation, at least on the part of Ricciardi (p. 1), that EU common policies in the area can both defend and promote a specifically European culture, playing "a major, essential even, role for the defence and spread of European culture in the world".

The EU and its predecessors have long made reference to the cultural connections between European countries as if these alone constitute an implicit justification for the integration process. For example, in *A Portrait of Our Europe* (Commission of the European Communities 1994) a section is devoted to "Shared Values" and draws attention to the situation that "The peoples of Europe have always been linked together by a shared culture" (p. 55), giving examples of historical, religious, scientific and intellectual links, and with a picture of part of the Parthenon to illustrate "history and traditions" (p. 56).

DEBATES AND DISCOURSES

The adoption at the supranational level of cultural policies and policies affecting media and trade has been associated with a number of different debates and discourses. Those relating to the *Television Without Frontiers* directive and later attempts to make the 51 per cent European content television programming quotas specified in it mandatory, have at times been of a heated and belligerent nature. Strictly speaking, the quota arrangements are outside formal common cultural policy arrangements, yet reference is often made to cultural aims in support of them. These aims are sometimes expressed in what might be described as "Euronationalist" terms, focusing upon the need to reduce the cultural influence of the US, which is implicitly identified

as the “other” against which European identity is to be created. They are also expressed in terms of trade protection, and a need to “support” a European industry or specific national parts of it.

For example, when a majority of MEPs voted in favour of making European content television programming quotas mandatory, the president of the EP’s culture committee, Luciana Castellina, said (Buonadonna 1996): “This is not a victory over the US but a victory for our own culture. Something must be done in a situation when 82 per cent of programmes aired in Europe are produced in the US”. The majority of the committee’s members were from the film, media and entertainment industries, suggesting that their position could not be divorced from the interests of those industries. Similarly, Ricciardi (1999, 4) uses the following terminology to refer to arrangements on trade in cultural products, in the context of a discussion on European action in the cultural field: “Only Europe as such can impose the cultural exception in trade negotiations and take on the Americans in vital sectors like the cinema and the audio-visual sector in general”.

Meyer-Heine (1997) exemplifies the danger that cultural policy measures such as the *Television without Frontiers* directive can result in the designation of some member states as “better Europeans” than others. She takes a somewhat extreme position and one which implies that some member states are indeed more “European” than others according to their attitude towards television programming quotas, speaking of the “invasion” of European screens by US cultural products, of the need for a coherent defensive attitude towards European culture, and of the desirability of using quotas to promote “our” way of thinking.

The problem with such views is that they tend to reflect the opinions and interests of particular member states rather than an EU consensus or a position which will optimise the welfare or sense of well-being of the EU population. De la Grazia (1998, 29) describes how the French cultural establishment and cinema industry have become leading voices in demands for protection of the cinema and audiovisual industries, which are in turn the “bellwether” of calls for the protection (or creation) of European identities. She considers that the reasons for this include not only the relative strength of French cinema, but also the situation that France does not have control of any of the major communications enterprises such as Bertelsmann, Disney or Time Warner.

Jeancolas (1998) demonstrates the tendency for national interests, and in particular French national and sectoral interests, to become identified or synonymous with European or EU interests. He discusses the 1992-93 GATT negotiations which led to the Uruguay Round conclusion and agreement on multilateral trade liberalisation, and the US' desire to avoid making culture an area of exception. He refers to "the French protagonists" (p. 55) when describing the struggle of French industry and political interests to prevent this. He concludes (p. 60) with a quotation, admittedly from a Spanish director (Juan Antonio Bardem), which refers to "the Europeans" collectively, and uses the terms "reprieve" and "rearguard action", the latter risking being "glorious but ineffective", to refer to success in refusing to allow the Americans to remove the exemption for cultural products from the negotiations and final agreement.

France's support for a restrictive cultural policy with respect to media imports reflects the situation that for it, the "battle" at the EU level allows the continuation of its national quotas on television and radio broadcasting and extends them to other countries. The quotas are seen as filling a number of purposes. These include the protection of domestic cultural industries, preservation of the use of French, and placing limitations on Anglo-Saxon and "Hollywood" cultural influences. France pushed for the retention of the present exclusion of cultural goods from world trade liberalisation negotiations in the current world trade liberalisation talks under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but received little support on this from the other EU member states (European Voice 1999b).

The interests of France especially in "protecting" the European media space were evident in the outcome of the 2000 Nice European Council summit and concluding intergovernmental conference meeting. The changes agreed upon there will form part of a new "Nice Treaty". It was agreed to extend qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council to trade in services and the commercial aspects of intellectual property, but not where a trade agreement would exceed internal EU competencies, notably those requiring harmonisation of EU law, which includes cultural, audio-visual and educational services, and health and social security (Duff 2001). The outcome was hence described by *New Europe* (2001) as one in which France had managed to retain the use of the veto in the Council where issues affecting its cinema industry were concerned.

In contrast to French attempts to further national interests through a more restrictive EU media and audiovisual policy, the interests of the UK lie more in preventing the EU from adopting protectionist measures which might jeopardise its substantial cultural exports in such areas as television programming, film, music and publishing. Prime Minister Tony Blair has “embraced the notion of the creative economy and that it is not taken seriously enough”, pointing out that “... more people now work in film and TV than in the car industry, let alone shipbuilding. The overseas earnings of British rock music exceed those generated by the steel industry” (Greenhalgh 1998, 84). The Blair government has nevertheless sought to assist the commercial competitiveness of the culture industries, for example with a subsidy of pounds 92.25 million to be distributed to three British film consortia (McGuignan 1998, 72).

The issues of quotas, subsidies and trade in cultural products have become a matter of international concern as well as a divisive issue for the EU’s member states. Puttnam and Watson (1997) portray the conflict between the US and the then EC over cultural products such as television programming in the context of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations as a “war” between the US and Europe, with even the CIA’s agents being brought in to obtain information. Mamoun Hassan, in *The Undeclared War*, goes further in linking media dominance to geopolitical aims, saying that Hollywood and the (US) State Department “talk about movies as business” but “they want the world” (Hassan 1997).

Discourse of this nature was supported by statements from the president of the then Commission of the European Communities, Jacques Delors, when in office. He sought to justify the restrictive aspects of EU media policy in terms of a struggle for Europe’s identity:

The current debate on the electronic media is well-known; the identity of Europe is at stake. It is unacceptable that this form of culture should be belittled under the domination of the great multinational groups. It needs incentives and patronage (Delors 1997, 1).

Delors himself, in what Hedetoft (1997, 18) describes as the ““Delors” position of the 80s”, was strongly opposed to the view that culture is equivalent to national identity, seeing it instead as “having an unrealised “European” and unifying potential that just needs to be cultivated and encapsulated by suitable political beliefs and institutions”.

While US discourse has emphasised the trade nature of the culture debate, that of the EU has focused on the “special” nature of cultural products. In the Uruguay Round the US denounced television programming restrictions as a “flagrant and discriminatory impediment to US television exports” (Devuyst 1995, 457). European Commission vice-president Martin Bangemann responded that the programming quotas directive emphasised the Community’s political will to preserve the European identity in a medium of television’s importance, saying that: “Television is not just a product, it is also part of our culture, we are not prepared to completely abandon our culture to the market forces ... The question of which languages will be spoken tomorrow and which values will hold, cannot just be a matter of economics”, to which US Trade Representative Mickey Kantor replied that the US could “best advance the interests of ... artists, performers and producers and the free flow of information around the world – by reserving all legal rights” (Devuyst 1995, 457-458). Bangemann’s comment makes it explicit that the opposition to greater access for US’ cultural products is partly motivated by the desire to prevent a wider use of English in the EU which might impact on the use of other major national languages. This is indicative of one of the underlying problems with the *Television Without Frontiers* directive (Council of the European Communities 1989) and similar measures. This is that they reflect the interests of those member states concerned over wider use of English, rather than those that use it as a national language or that see its wider use as part of the process of modernisation, internationalisation and even “Europeanisation”. Policies and measures with respect to US’ cultural products and trade represent an outcome of conflicts between EU member states, as much or more than between the EU and the US.

There is a “cultural quality” argument sometimes put in support of media restrictions, for example by Mlinar and Trcek (1998, 83). They say that when consideration is given to the “European tradition of national television stations as co-creators/disseminators of the national cultural identity”, in comparison to the “consumerist” and “entertainment-oriented” basis of US television, it becomes much easier to understand the heated nature of the debate over the “Americanisation” and associated “vulgarisation” of European television programmes and how it is seen as a threat to national identity in some European nations. However, the use of cultural protection arguments in support of EU measures which reduce the penetration and influence of US media products suggests that underlying such measures is the motivation to create a European identity more clearly separate from that of the US.

There are also class perspectives to these arguments. For example, Stevenson (1997, 52) describes how in the UK the BBC was used as a vehicle "for not just national but regional Home Counties culture, and certain notions of democracy, Englishness and nationhood", until the 1990s saw a change in policy to draw on a wider regional base for content. He sees the growing importance of transnational media as *liberating* audiences from "certain socially imposed notions of the national community". However, he views the introduction of more pluralistic broadcasting arrangements as helping to provide a common cultural framework in Europe and to preserve it from the "further cultural hegemony" (p. 59) of the US' entertainment industry.

In the UK the onslaught of American films and media has been opposed on the basis that this would lead to Americanisation of popular manners (Jarvie 1998, 43). Schlesinger (1994, 33) comments that ever since World War I British cultural elites and official circles have seen American popular culture as a threat to national culture. Jarvie, like Stevenson above, notes that there have been class and regional factors in this debate, given the earlier domination of the BBC and many early films by "home counties" and "plum in the mouth" accents, manners and lifestyles. However, given the greater size and superior economic position of the US, and the relative ease with which the non-elite British audiences of American wrestling events studied by Stevenson readily adopted such features of American popular culture as hot dogs and baseball caps to go with the sport they were watching, fears of Americanisation of popular culture had a basis in reality. That these fears were not realised owes more to the resurgence of British popular culture through popular music and such British but non-elite influences as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Sex Pistols, Boy George and Queen than to official influences and restrictions. The situation that US popular culture has become more multicultural and less exclusively Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic in the post-war era has also reduced its closeness to British culture. Even though the latter has also become more multicultural, this has to a significant extent been in different ways, for example through the introduction of West Indian, Indian and European influences rather than Hispanic or Latin American ones as in the US.

This "cultural quality" argument, and fear of "Americanisation" of popular culture, have been associated with the antagonism found even in mainly English-speaking member states to wider access for American popular culture, at least among elites. Former prime minister of Ireland Garrett Fitzgerald argued that the EC or EU has had too little cultural influence in that "it has

failed to halt or even slow the pervasive Americanization of all our societies" (Fitzgerald 1994, 184). Expatriate Irish writer Fintan O'Toole is critical of EC cultural policy on the grounds that instead of developing a regional cultural policy incorporating community participation, it was proposing a "European Dallas" to replace the American one (O'Toole 1991, 271). Such concerns are not restricted to European states. Writing in the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Wolpe (2000, 13-14) describes how American cultural dominance "from Wintel to Disney, from AOL-Time Warner to McDonalds" has led to America becoming "both an object of a respect and a target of disaffection".

Dardanelli (1999) expresses support for policies and measures to build a supranational identity. He refers (p. 7) to the relatively low level of support expressed for the EU by its citizens in terms of Eurobarometer survey results which indicated that only 36 per cent support the existence of the EU; of the 49 per cent voter turnout in the 1999 EP elections; and of the situation that EU citizens trust fellow member state nationals considerable more than those of other EU countries, whom they trust no more than US citizens. As he indicates, such outcomes suggest that the EU suffers from a lack of political legitimacy due to the low level of political and personal identification with it. He also notes (p. 7) that Eurobarometer survey data indicated that only 38 per cent of EU citizens thought Europeans share a cultural identity. The data also indicate that 50 per cent did not think Europeans shared one, and a further 13 per cent were undecided (European Commission 1998b, B.41).

Dardanelli's proposed solution is for member states to "use their exclusive control over the education systems that socialise European citizens" to raise the level of political identification with the EU (p. 12). It follows his interpretation of a Eurobarometer survey approval rating 1995-1999 of 85 per cent for "teaching in schools how the EU works" as being equivalent to support for "an EU dimension of the education curricula" (1999, 12). Eurobarometer survey response data (European Commission 1999a, 54) nevertheless indicate that of eighteen policy areas, education is the one which has the lowest level of support for joint national and EU decision making. Only 29 per cent support the idea of it becoming a joint area of decision making, and 66 per cent want it to remain national.

A somewhat different approach or discourse is that government attempts to support or direct culture may achieve little, or be counterproductive, since cultural goods tend to succeed or fail irrespective of the level of state support provided. Panos Theodorides, artistic director of the "Thessaloniki Cultural Capital of Europe 1997" festival, argued that "culture comes from the people, never from the state" (Mitchell 1997), although the festival itself would presumably not have taken place without EU financial support. Wayne Hemingway of the successful Red or Dead fashion firm observed in a speech to the Social Market Foundation that whatever qualities contribute to the "coolness" of the British fashion industry cannot be retained when "enshrined as official government policy" (McGuignan 1998, 75).

Popular music provides an example of the achievement of success on a global basis without state support. Out of a total of two hundred and ten big hits in the two decades to 1998, ninety (43 per cent) were British and eighty-three (40 per cent) were American songs, with thirty-seven hits or 17 per cent coming from elsewhere (Mlinar and Treck 1998, 87). The most recent trend has been for national products to take an increasing share of EU national popular music markets, partly due to the increased specialisation and segmentation and consequent reduced international marketability of the US product. For example, in Greece traditional bouzoukia groups and singers have stood high in the hit parade in recent years (Field 1997). In Portugal there has been a revival of interest in traditional *fado* music and songs, which earlier fell out of favour after the revolution in 1974, rock music being regarded as "the music of democracy" at that time (The Economist 1999). The international success of Scandinavian rock groups such as Swedish *Abba*, *Roxette*, *Ace of Base*, and more recently the *Cardigans*, the *Wannadies*, *Grass Show*, and Danish/Norwegian *Aqua*, demonstrates that it is possible for groups from even the smaller European countries to become global icons, albeit that this may involve singing in English and about such international popular culture items as "Barbie" and her accessories. Lars Olof of *The Cardigans* refers to a "Swedish skill at copying combined with a typically Scandinavian melancholia", but the group agrees that pop is an Anglo-Saxon invention and that success only comes to those who instinctively know this (Bousfield 1998).

In October 1996 *dEUS* became the first Belgian group to reach the UK popular music recording charts with *Little arithmetics*, sung in English. Other successful Belgian groups have included *Vaya Con Dios*, *Flowers for Breakfast*, *K's Choice*, and *The Evil Superstars*, all of which sing

wholly or partly in English (Delvaux 1996). The choice of names and language to sing in does not create negative comment among Flemish-speaking Belgians, to whom the successful Belgian singer Jacques Brel was regarded as a traitor to his Flemish origins because he sang in French and achieved success in France.

Further arguments arise with respect to the context in which moves are being made, which is one of globalisation, and within which the trade in cultural products, and investment in their production, is at least partly of a reciprocal nature. While EU cultural policy in the audiovisual sector is at least partly aimed at cutting back the influence of Hollywood and the Americanisation of the European cultural sphere, UK cultural exports to the US remain significant, and Germany's Bertelsmann is the largest English-language publisher in the world.

With regard to the prospects for success of moves in the area of culture and identity, Wayne David (1996) considers the attempts made to further a common culture in Europe futile, on the basis that there is no likelihood of an EU identity superseding or replacing existing identities. Nick Stevenson (1997, 50) argues in similar vein, that while there has been some displacement of stable, nationally articulated forms of identity by more changing and fragmented constructions, "There remain good sociological reasons for presupposing that specifically national forms of identification will continue to play a large role in shaping the future of Europe." However, as these commentators from the UK, their views may be influenced by the relatively high level of questioning there as to whether there is a common European cultural identity which Europeans share. Eurobarometer survey data indicate that over half of UK respondents, 58 per cent, did not agree that there was, compared with 44 per cent in Germany, and an EU 15 average of 50 per cent (European Commission 1998b, B41). Over a third of UK respondents, 36 per cent, disagreed completely with the notion of a common European cultural identity, as did 40 per cent of Swedes, compared to an EU average of 22 per cent.

The use of newly created symbols and programmes to promote a common culture in Europe is considered by Johan Galtung to be unnecessary, to run the risk of creating a "new distortion", and to have already involved works which deal with the EC/EU in "a totally uncritical manner" (1994, 224).

POLICIES AND MEASURES

A distinction can be made between the two major categories of EU policies and measures in the area of culture and identity. The first category could be described as "culture expanding", since they involve subsidisation of cultural activities and products. This category includes, or is complemented by, actions in such areas as education and sport. The second category includes more restrictive measures such as television programming quotas and duties and restrictions on imports of cultural products. While these may result in an increased output of specifically European or EU member state cultural products, they have an impact of restricting the total availability of such products to consumers and of raising their price.

The Maastricht Treaty on the European Union, which was signed in 1992, but only ratified and in force in 1993, gave the EU's institutions competence in the area of culture and cultural policy. Article 128 under Title IX sets this out as follows (European Parliament 1996, 277):

1. The Community shall contribute to the flowering of cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.
2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States, and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:
 - improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
 - conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
 - non-commercial cultural exchanges;
 - artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty.

Actions taken under the cultural policy powers include the provision of financial assistance for the maintenance and preservation of ancient monuments, for museums and opera houses, for the running of the European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO) of young musicians, and for the repair

and refurbishment of the Venaria royal hunting lodge of the House of Savoy. They hence come into the first group of actions, those that are "culture expanding" as opposed to protectionist. The provisions of the common cultural policy, and the discourse relating to it, can be described as being of a reassuring nature. As indicated above, the provisions for cultural policy in the Treaty stress that it is to be aimed at encouraging cooperation between member states, and supporting and supplementing their actions. The EU's culture ministers held only two annual meetings in 1997, the same number as in 1990; back in 1980 none had been held. This can be compared with the eleven, sixteen and fourteen meetings held by the agriculture ministers in those respective years, and the fourteen and two sets of thirteen meetings held by the General Affairs Council of foreign ministers (Hayes-Renshaw 1996). The relative infrequency of meetings reflects the low-key nature of the official cultural policy, and also that trade and many other related issues have not so far come within its ambit.

The EU's cultural policy programme to date has included a focus on the establishment of "cultural networks" such as libraries and professional education, and has assisted the translation of books and the development of cultural relations with CEE and other areas. The principle of subsidiarity should at least in theory operate to discourage the EU's institutions from taking over cultural functions which can be performed more efficiently at the member state level (Schelter 1996, 209).

However, there are now more clearly defined moves towards using cultural policy as a means of integration, rather than just as a support for member state actions. The various programmes which have been developed and funded by the European Commission in support of the arts and culture, including Kaleidoscope for the performing arts, Ariane for literature, Raphael for the performing arts, and the European Capital of Culture scheme for cities, have been absorbed into a *Culture 2000* European Framework Programme which has a budget of €167 million for the period 2000-2004. The new arrangements appear to be aimed more specifically at integration than earlier ones, with major projects being intended to "increase the sense of one community and make Europeans more aware of the cultural diversity in Europe", and priority being given to those which will have a world-wide impact and increase the circulation of arts (Eur-op News 1999). However, mention is still made of support for actions by organisations in member states, and the need to ensure access for the young and the underprivileged.

The development of EU involvement in cultural policy has in general been a slow process. Pantel (1999, 50) refers to the 1957 Treaty of Rome's inclusion of the aim of "an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe", but even if this is interpreted as a justification for actions impacting on culture and identity, these have taken time to develop. In 1977 the Commission released a communication to the Council which proposed that the then European Community (EC) should be involved in the economic and social aspects of culture (Bekemans and Lombaert 1996, 194). The 1980s saw a greater involvement of the EU's common political and administrative institutions in cultural matters. In 1984 the Addonino Committee on "A People's Europe" was established by the Council to look at a number of measures towards strengthening and promoting the EC's identity and image among its citizens and the rest of the world. It supported the adoption of initiatives which included an EC passport, an EC driving licence, an EC emergency health card, EC border signs and an EC flag, and the financing of a common or supranational EC television channel to promote "the European message" (Commission of the European Communities 1985). A number of its proposed initiatives have been adopted, most notably the common passport, but not the more controversial common television channel.

European City of Culture programmes have been held each year since 1985, with one specific city being designated one city to hold cultural events showcasing art, music, drama, literature, cinema, and conferences (Pantel 1999, 55; Council of Ministers of Culture 1992). The EU provides partial funding for these events. A report on it noted that the programme existed to promote European cultural appreciation, understanding and integration within the political context of Europe (EP 1990, 6), but also criticised it (p. 9) for tending to result in the goal of cultural integration being sacrificed in favour of that of the promotion of the chosen city.

A number of common symbols have been developed and promoted, including the EU's blue flag with its gold stars representing member states, and the *Ode to Joy* anthem without words. These have not been controversial as they have complemented rather than competed with member state symbols such as flags and anthems. The EU lacks a personification symbol other than that provided by the occasional, and often satirical, use of a traditional or modernised Europe. Polish journalist Jan Pieklo has used the term "Mother Europe" in an attempt to evoke a pan-European symbol (Pieklo 1998), but such a conception has been absent from European culture in the west and appears to be a derivation of the better-known "Mother Russia". There is no common

personification such as the German "Fatherland", France's young and revolutionary Marianne, or the more sedate Britannia. There has been a move to present Joan of Arc as a champion of Europe and European symbol (The Economist 2000), but it is difficult for national symbols, and particularly those identified with conflicts with other EU countries, to be accepted on a wider basis. The controversial nature of symbols at the regional and national level is reflected in Schlesinger's (1998, 70) description of events when the UK's "New Labour" banned bagpipes, thistles and tartan from being used at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference in Edinburgh in 1997 on the basis that they were "outmoded", and presumably because of their "tourist kitsch" associations. The ban was condemned by Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Alex Salmond on the basis that it was an attempt to obliterate Scottish symbolism.

Programmes operated under the common cultural policy include educational exchange schemes such as the ERASMUS programme for tertiary students and the more widely-based SOCRATES scheme, as well as the vocationally-oriented COMETT scheme and the LEONARDO programme through which young people obtain experience of voluntary work through placements in each other's countries. A sports programme is also being developed as part of the Commission's cultural and educational arrangements. Commissioner for culture and education Viviane Reding has established a special commission department for sports in line with the pledge which president Romani Prodi gave to focus more attention on sports issues (European Voice 1999a). Pantel (1999) draws attention to the lack of opposition shown to the EU's cultural policy actions in the 1996-97 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). She sees this as being indicative of "a minimum, passive acceptance" (p. 59) for the explicit policy with its proviso of support for national actions. She does not mention the much more controversial area of media and audiovisual quotas and subsidies. The effective separation of the two areas in the EU's policy categorisation, in spite of the situation that they both come within the area of "culture", makes such a skewed focus possible, but such a focus is nevertheless misleading.¹ However, there are some indications of the adoption or movement towards cultural policies with closer evident links with integrative aims. For example, a resolution by the Council of Ministers (1997) said that culture contributed to the realisation of the Community's objectives. A Commission communication calling for a "Fresh Boost for Culture in the European Community" (Commission of the European Communities 1987, 5) put a case for cultural policy as a political necessity to secure popular support for the Single European Act (SEA). It said that plans detailed in the

document for action of in the area of culture should use European actions in the areas of culture and education as a means of promoting regional identities as well as regional development. The use of cultural policy to foster further the already strong regional identities in the EU could be said to be assisting them to resist further nationalisation of identities, and hence reduce the legitimacy and influence of the nation states in EU arrangements.

The initiatives undertaken under EU common cultural policy arrangements to date have been relatively modest and non-controversial, and can be contrasted with the saga of the *Television Without Frontiers* directive, which does not come under the common cultural policy as such but audiovisual, media and trade policies. Attempts to restrict non-EU programming in the EU began with a 1984 Green Paper which dealt with the importance of broadcasting for European integration, arguing that "A European identity will only develop if Europeans are adequately informed" (Davis and Levy 1992, 476), leading to the directive and the imposition "where practicable" of a ceiling of 49 per cent on non-EC programmes. Later proposals included the removal of the terms "where practicable" from the earlier directive, and the exclusion of national news programmes, game shows, sports events and variety shows from the definition of European content. In practice a compromise was reached, whereby the 51 per cent European content requirement continued to be on a "where practicable" basis, and in return Germany and the U.K. dropped their insistence on abolition of the quotas in ten years' time. It was also agreed to double subsidies to the EU's film industry to close to US\$500 million. The EP, advised by its Culture Committee, wished to have the quotas made mandatory, but its decision was not accepted by the Council. The directive has been "one of the most bitterly fought pieces of Union legislation" (Clarke 1996). However, by 1994 91 of 148 channels were reported to have broadcast a majority proportion of European works, and 119 of these channels were reported to have met the requirement that at least 10 per cent of broadcasting consist of independent productions (European Commission 1996).

One of the reasons why the European content quotas create difficulties is that there are considerable variations between the tastes of different member states with regard to cultural products, including film and television programmes. For example, a series of films which received popular and critical acclaim in Denmark, the *Olsen Gang Movies*, were not popular in Norway, and when re-shot to increase the Norwegian content, received a favourable popular

reception but a very critical one from Norwegian critics (Hedetoft 2000, 6). The "principles and guidelines" paper (European Commission 1999c, 7) recognises this, but in a roundabout way which avoids explicit recognition of the situation that European audiences prefer their own national product and could even be taken to imply the existence of a common "European language": "... European television audiences show a clear preference for audiovisual content in their own language and which reflects their own cultures and concerns".

Since the rejection of mandatory quotas for the EU itself, the focus has been more on direct assistance to the audiovisual industry through the funding of training, development and distribution schemes under the Media II and now MEDIA Plus programmes of assistance. Other possible initiatives have also been discussed, such as the establishment of a European Film and Television School, the encouragement of events like Oscar awards, and the institution of a mechanism to inject more private capital into audiovisual production (European Commission 1998a). A budget of Euros 400 million has been agreed upon for the film aid part of the MEDIA Plus scheme alone for the period 2001-2005 (European Voice 2001).

The rationale given for the MEDIA Plus programme of direct support for training and pre-production to be applied to the audiovisual industry 2001-2005 includes a reference to over a million jobs in the industry in the EU in 1997 (European Commission 1999b, 1), as does that for the *Culture 2000* programme which attempts to integrate cultural policy goals into other policies and programmes (Brickwood 1999). Job protection is not accepted by economists as a valid reason for subsidies or protection, since it can always be argued that the money or protection cost involved could have been yet more employment-creating elsewhere. Reference is also made to the trend towards fragmentation of the audiovisual market, so that there is a longer exploitation cycle for works and more broadcasts over a longer period of time are now needed to amortise the costs of a film or programme (European Commission 1999b, 2).

Protectionist measures such as quotas will nevertheless continue, in spite of the relative lack of controversy of direct subsidisation arrangements under the Media and MEDIA Plus schemes. A communication on general principles and guidelines for EU audiovisual policy "in the digital age" (European Commission 1999c) sets out several issues and arguments which have already been taken up in policy decisions. For example, it states that "In external relations, and with regard to

future trade negotiations in the framework of the WTO, it is vital for the Community and its Member States to maintain their freedom of action in the audiovisual sector ..." (p. 2). This principle has been put into effect with the exclusion of the area from being subject to qualified majority voting in the EU's Council, unlike more general trade issues, in the decisions made by the 2000 Nice summit meeting of the EU's heads of government. In other words, each member state continues to have a veto over trade liberalisation or agreement decisions where these affect cultural products of this nature.

The communication also states that "... it is important that the accession countries implement rapidly and in full the Community acquis in the audiovisual sector" (p. 2), and pressure has been maintained on the existing and prospective applicants for membership to do so. The 51 per cent European content quotas of the *Television Without Frontiers* directive are required to be applied by countries which are applicants for EU membership, even though less mandatory requirements apply to the current membership (Field 2000). This has important consequences from the point of view of global markets as well as cultural influences and cultural integration. Films and television programming produced under the communist era have had little continued attraction for viewers in the applicant countries, and given paucity of domestic production and of alternatives, a considerable reliance on US films and programming had developed in most of them. The need to switch to a majority of European - and mostly necessarily EU - content makes a substantial change from a market opportunity and cultural influence point of view. It has created some problems in terms of trade relations, and resulted in a holding up of the approval of Albania's application for membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Albania is not yet a formal applicant for EU membership, but applies rules with regard to imports of television programming and films such as will be required as a condition of membership. Its membership of the WTO was blocked for months by protests from the US and counter-disputes from the EU over the application of such rules, but it succeeded in becoming the 138th member of the WTO on 11 September 2000 (TOL 2000). The concern of the US is that these rules, and their application by prospective members of the EU, reduce the market for US television programming and films in Europe.

THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL POLICY

The EU is not alone in attempting to restrict the access of foreign cultural products. Popular acceptance of foreign cultural products is problematic even in the US, and in spite of the commitment to free trade in the sector. Foreign cultural products which have become popular in the US, such as the BBC's *Teletubbies* children's serial, Japanese Pokémon pocket monsters and their associated card game and a children's book series about a teenage wizard character, Harry Potter, have been criticised there on religious and other grounds (Lexington 1999).

Stokes has drawn attention to the situation that in the context of "identity politics", a "central point of the struggle" is "over who has the authority to define any particular identity" (1997, 7). By adopting an official EU common cultural policy which is based on support for member state actions, the EU's institutions have avoided the situation of being clearly in a position to influence identities. However, such an influence is exerted through sectoral policies in the audiovisual sector.

The EU's cultural policies, inclusive of quotas and subsidies, are essentially political, designed to reduce cultural links with the US and to promote those between member states, and over the longer term foster the creation of a common European identity. In a discussion of how cultural studies relates to cultural policies, Jostein Gripsrud (1998) refers to Stuart Hall's (1973, 32) description of the uneven distribution of cultural power shadowing political and economic power. Cultural power was considered by Hall to consist of command over certain crucial processes. These processes included the choice of which issues would be covered by public communications, the terms on which they would be debated, who would debate them, and how the debate would be managed. When these principles and considerations are applied to the current debate over the EU and integration, a number of points become apparent. The cultural power of individual member states has become more circumscribed. National populations have become increasingly influenced by information originating (directly and indirectly) from the European Commission, and non-national media. The internet has widened access to information and reduced the ability of governments and organisations to influence or control this.

In the context of democratic arrangements, market-oriented and relatively uncontrolled news media, and access to the internet, the ability of cultural policies to influence understandings of news and events and to create new identities might be considered to be limited. Although there have been exceptions to this, for example in the strenuous “media battle” between NATO on the one hand and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the other, as described in Hammond and Hernan (2000), this was a situation of war and the exception which proves the rule.

The links between cultural and political ties, at least at the elite level, were demonstrated by an incident at the G8 (G7 plus Russia) summit in 1997 and later developments. Wild west “cowboy” type boots and dress had been provided by US President Bill Clinton for the European and other leaders to dress up in for a more informal part of the meeting. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl flatly refused to wear cowboy boots and western dress. French president Jacques Chirac also refused to put on the cowboy outfit provided, which where France was concerned led to him going “up in the estimation of the whole country the day after the failed fancy dress party” (Theobald 1997). In contrast to this UK Prime Minister Tony Blair donned full cowboy dress without complaint, but rather enthusiasm.

The following year a cartoon in *The Independent*, repeated in *The European* of 16 February 1998, 29, depicted Tony Blair following closely behind Bill Clinton in an “OK corral” setting, both dressed as cowboys, with Blair twirling his gun on his finger and thinking “Gosh” and smiling with glee. It was intended as a commentary on the UK’s support for the US in a prospective war with Iraq. As if following Blair’s lead or feeling themselves subject to the same links he did, 56 per cent of British respondents were found by a *Guardian* poll to support the US’ action, whereas a poll by *Le Journal de Dimanche* indicated that only 16 per cent of French respondents did (Higgins 1998). Cultural links were hence associated with political support, and vice versa, at not only the elite level of political leaders but also that of the people.

Neumann (1998, 226) has drawn attention to the dangers of an exclusion/integration nexus being played by the EU with respect to Russia, one of its historical “Others”, with the inclusion of the CEE applicant countries being eased by a stressing of the exclusion of Russia. Behnke (1998, 28) looks more widely at the “celebration of Western identity as the exemplary model against which

the East is re-created, and whether current theories of Social Constructivism adequately acknowledge the “intrinsic relationship between Western identity and (Eastern) difference”.

However, the main “other” against which EU audiovisual policies are posited is the US, at present the main controller of the world’s cinema and television screens. The creation of a common European identity could be argued to require a winding down of earlier relationships such as that between the UK and the US. It may also be argued that what is in reality being aimed for is a “Europeanisation” of elites rather than the people, and in this case the elites tend to be being “globalised” at the same time that they become more Europeanised and international.

CONCLUSIONS

A major conclusion of this paper is that the EU’s common cultural policy, as specified in the Maastricht Treaty and applied since then, has been a non-controversial policy which has adhered closely to its specified aims and avoided criticism. However, this is not the only EU policy with implications for culture. Policies in the audiovisual sector come into this category, and they have been of a far more controversial nature with far-reaching implications.

As the evidence and analysis presented above indicate, there is a considerable difference between what the EU expressly identifies as its common cultural policy, and the nature and impact of EU policies dealing with cultural products. The difference appears to reflect the desire to present an attractive and non-controversial “shop window” when it comes to policies in the sensitive area of culture, and to avoid ready public identification of programming quotas and even media production subsidies as being key parts of the common cultural policy effort.

There are clear trade and economic implications of EU policies, given that audiovisual products including film and television programming are the subject of trade disputes especially between the EU and the US, most recently with respect to the application of EU import quotas by even European countries such as Albania for which EU membership is at present only a distant prospect. From a UK point of view there is the danger that EU restrictions result in impediments

being placed on its own exports of cultural products in areas such as television programming, popular music, and popular fiction.

Cultural policies have an identity-creating impact which is achieved by an attempt to increase exposure to cultural products from one region of the world as opposed to another. They also have the ability to redefine a region or country as "the other" for the population of their own region. In practice, given the dominant position of the US as a supplier of audiovisual products to the EU and its applicant countries, and that it has links with the UK in particular, a major impact of EU cultural policies will be to weaken cultural links with the US or to at least attempt to do so.

While industry assistance goals and even those of common identity creation may be acknowledged or stressed, an underlying goal of such policies is geopolitical. They are intended to create a greater sense of unity but also of standing a little apart from the rest of the world, dissolving existing external links in order to create stronger new internal ones. However, such goals and processes also operate in a context of globalisation and a diminishing impact of distance due to the impact of the internet, reduced travel costs, higher levels of general education and so forth. It remains to be seen how strongly they are able to achieve their cultural and geopolitical aims in this context.

NOTES

(1) Pantel (1999, 58) also shows some confusion over the controversial nature of ID card arrangements in the UK, stressing the debate over which symbols should appear on the new combined British ID card and EU driving licence arrangements introduced in 1996, which was resolved by allowing a choice of alternative combinations of national, royal and supranational symbols. It was not so much the symbols to be used which were a source of controversy, but the situation that the UK had not had ID cards since the early post-war years, and as in the US and Australia there is substantial opposition to the notion of mandatory ID cards.

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