

MEDIATING SOCIAL COHESION:
MEDIA AND CULTURAL POLICY
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CANADA¹

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Abstract

The paper explores the ways in which audiovisual media policies articulate a particular agenda for cultural and political diversity in the European Union. It explores the approaches of Canada and EU to the question of social cohesion and problematises their respective agenda priorities. Locating media policy within the globalised context of market integration and supra-and-international policymaking, the article identifies not only perceptions – and realities – of concerns shared across two distinctive political and social contexts, Canada and the EU, but also a remarkable similarity in their approach to these problems. The article argues that globalisation provides a broader context within which the quest for diversity and the processes leading to the articulation of solutions and future policy is directly linked to the interaction between the pressures deriving from the conflict of representation of private interests and the social justice claims from diverse corners of societies.

Introduction

This article explores the ways in which media and cultural policy in the European Union is conceived as a tool for diversity and social cohesion.

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Through juxtaposition to the Canadian experience, it aims to demonstrate the similarity of claims and concerns that make up the political deliberation fabric of media and culture policy and the differences in their materialisation. Canada is seen as a proponent for the protection of culture, recognition of multiculturalism and diversity, and an advocate for progressive redistributive social policy, including the media and cultural industries. Therefore it is often approached as a useful and familiar example on which EU policymakers can draw, in order to design policy that addresses a similar range of issues. This article further locates the EU, and for that reason also Canada, within the broader spectrum of globalisation and brings attention to policy which, despite its significance for generalisable interests and therefore a broader category of actors, it remains outside the 'endgame' of policy output.

The policy experiences of the EU and Canada offer an interesting canvas that narrates the discursive and political economic frames of culture and media, cultural diversity and social cohesion in the two polities. Next to the more (or less) obvious differences between Canada and the EU, such as their political organisation, cultural makeup as well as proximity to economies of scale, there are common experiences and references that point to shared concerns and conceptions about the role of media and cultural policy. The debates surrounding the changes in the field and in particular in broadcasting de- and re-regulation are based on distinctive ideological underpinnings. These exemplify conflicting positions among free-market and interventionist approaches and are certainly neither apolitical nor neutral, as policy is often claimed to be. Moreover, in both polities, the structural reorganisation of the state as a consequence of globalisation determined the structural organisation of their respective media landscapes. Finally, in both cases, international structural determinants, ideological positions and the tensions between various interests underwrote the (supra)national approach to management of challenges in policy and their proposed solutions.

Next to these phenomena, which I am discussing later on, important struggles on the 'symbolic' immaterial level of culture have increasingly defined the quality and direction of media policy arguments. Overall, despite the hegemonic prevalence of neoliberal measures, the design and implementation of media and cultural policy proposals, especially when initiated by the European Parliament (EP) and the Canadian House of Commons, are driven by two overarching, distinct but interlinked, de-

sires. On the one hand, proposed policies aim to counterbalance the cultural deficit by promoting 'domestic' cultural production vis a vis the Hollywood audiovisual (AV) industry and effects of cultural imperialism. On the other hand, both polities pursue a 'top down' approach to cultivate, through media and cultural policy, a common identity, whether in the sense of 'nationhood' as the Canadian case may articulate or in the broader sense of cultural belonging, as the European project may identify as a necessary condition for the legitimacy of the polity.

Within the framework of policymaking in these two constituencies, there comes to life a more global set of power dynamics, which is rooted in the tensions between the tendency of capital towards global expansion and the accompanying processes of social dispossession, economic polarisation and cultural fragmentation. The media and cultural industries are situated within the very core of these tensions and epitomize fundamental questions related to the role of culture for people's sense of place, identity and autonomy. In a world characterised by capital as well as human dis-and-relocation, the transformation of social institutions and institutional roles, and changing notions of citizenship, the question of social cohesion becomes a significant conceptual and strategic framework for public policy and social action.

Social cohesion, institutions and interests in the macro-level context

The relationship of social cohesion and cultural policy is an under-researched area in policy analysis. On the one hand, studies of EU media and cultural policy, but also the project of European integration in more general terms tend to concentrate on the particularities of the EU in its supranational institutional architecture, often neglecting the broader international environment within which the polity is called to operate. On the other hand, the question of social cohesion, which is addressed in a variety of ways by other disciplines, is not visibly linked to the European question in terms of media and cultural policy. Consequently, there is a lack in studies that address the impact of 'exogenous shocks' on the internal institutional organisation and the change in the ideological underpinnings of policy (Golob 2003) and the relationship of these dynamics to that of cultural policy and social cohesion. To better contextualise the changes in media and cultural policy, and in particular in appreciating the shift to a neo-liberal agenda, and their relation to the question of social cohesion, it is important to explore the ideas and basis of the

legitimation of policy, while taking into account a complex set of international exogenous factors, the internal institutional dynamics and the ways in which they provide a response to exogenous and domestic demands. These dynamics are expressed within the process and objects of policy, reflecting conflicts among positions, or 'stakeholders' as some of the recent international communications policy literature began to refer to, international and domestic periods of crisis and subsequent institutional changes.

The concept of social cohesion is explored in a variety of disciplines both from the perspective of causing certain outcomes, such as prosperity and economic productivity, political stability etc, and as an outcome itself, the degree of which results from factors such as globalisation, technology or cultural diversity (Beauvais & Jenson 2002). Although the causal relationship between social cohesion and these factors has not been empirically 'proven', their interrelationship and unilateral association is evident. Social cohesion is understood as the 'coming together' of communities, the fostering of partnerships and intercultural understanding, as well as the material and cultural sustainability of societies in cultural policy (Maloutas & Pantelidou Malouta 2004; Jeannotte 2003; Beauvais & Jenson 2002). Kearns and Forrest (2000) break down 'social cohesion' into common values pattern, structured solidarity, social networks, group identification, and social capital, an approach that aims to make the concept more tangible for epistemological and policymaking purposes. Nevertheless, the problems associated with the use of the term social cohesion are not insignificant. Having become the antonym of 'social exclusion', itself a vague and problematic term that is used to redefine social inequality in terms of segregation from mainstream participation in the market, such as through consumption, social cohesion occupies a ubiquitous position among policy 'pragmatists', middle class groups, the New Labour as well as nationalists opposing multicultural agendas. The ambiguity of the concept is also related to the rise of conservative politics and its attempt to reconcile claims of social justice with neoliberal policies of the privatisation of solving social problems, something that until now and at least for the Left was considered irreconcilable (Maloutas & Pantelidou Malouta 2004).

In the EU context, the concept has been used to provide a counter-value to the overwhelmingly market-driven integrationism and to the projected US model of corporatist capitalism as one for the economic

development of Europe. 'The content of social cohesion is therefore not a situation that can be unambiguously predefined following meticulous analysis but an issue at stake, and this is why it remains unclear and elusive' (Maloutas & Pantelidou Malouta 2004, 452). It is perhaps this level of ambiguity that reflects at the same time both the forces at play in the European project, as expressed through clusters representing conflicting interests and visions of the EU, and the multifaceted functions of media and culture in this specific field of policy. For Canada, the claim for social cohesion follows along similar lines of multifaceted aspects of the role of culture and media as well as the approaches to what cohesion, in this case national, may constitute in a globalised world. In both cases, ultimately social cohesion and media and cultural policy are related to the changing notions of citizenship and the lived experience of the citizen-subject², and her/his relationship to institutions as shaped through policy.

The normative function of institutions, such as the EP or the Canadian House of Commons, as parliamentary and therefore minimally representational expressions of citizens' interests, rests to a great extent on their ability to perform an ideological form of justification 'which either asserts or counterfactually supposes a generalisability of interests, that is dominant' (Habermas 2004 [1976], 112). This 'generalisability of interests' constitutes also the 'test method' according to which the 'suppression of generalisable interests' can be compared discursively to the normative structures in a given society. Habermas argues that 'the specific achievement of such ideologies consists in the inconspicuous manner in which communication is systematically limited' (Habermas 2004, 113). The policy process as the site of political debate and deliberation between conflicting or interdependent sites operates to achieve both a normative justification of agendas and outcomes. That policy is itself embedded within the normative structures of the broader institutional

² A 'citizen' is a legally recognised entity entitled to rights before the state. The presumption of citizenship is – among others – based on the model of the male-subject, the sovereignty and legalised force of the state, and is territorial based (see the writings of Lister, Young, Benhabib). Citizenship rights coexist and depend upon Human Rights. However, an undocumented person in the EU is still entitled to Human Rights, simply by being human (Guild 2005). In this article, I do not distinguish between citizens with political rights and human beings without. I am fully aware of the analytical distinction. However, often this distinction is used to justify political or cultural, abusive treatment of 'non-citizens'. In this article the Human is also considered a citizen-at-large.

arrangement (of the European polity in this instance) *and* seeks to determine those of forthcoming value, presents an interesting dilemma: to what extent is change, that is a departure away from the status quo, possible and to what extent can such change be reflective of generalisable interests (in this case those deriving from social cohesion)?

As the historical development of media and cultural policies in the EU shows, the road to including these areas in supranational jurisdiction has paralleled the development of the EU's overall role in the international relations of its member states. The emergence of media and culture questions is due to the EP's concerns in the early 1980s, as a jurisdictional area they became embodied in the EU treaties only after the economic justification of such action had been presented. The rise of neoliberal politics in the USA and UK in the early 1980s advocated the rollback of the role of the state in addressing inequalities, providing employment and mediating between market extremes and social and economic polarisation. It also undermined the ideological and cultural underpinnings of media and culture institutions up to that time in Europe, and in particular the near monopoly of the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) system, as well as the public service remit of the few private broadcasters. It is important to note here that a series of exogenous factors, or 'exogenous shocks' (as identified by the International Political Economy literature) have contributed to the shift in policies and the re-examination of the role of the state. The oil crisis in the late 1970s and international economic recession in the 1980s have 'discredited the nationalist and statist economic policies of the 1970s and opened up a period of disillusionment and uncertainty over each country's health and international identity', writes Golob (2003, 374) referring to the experiences of Canada³, the USA and Mexico. This certainly holds truth for Europe, as governments sought to address the slipping trust in the ability of the nation state to maintain levels of wealth and social security through a set of policies, mainly focused around the privatisation of public owned services, and their accompanying discursive justification and ideological foundation, 'freedom from the nanny state' or 'consumer

³ Townson writes 'Politicians continue to repeat that the United Nations rates Canada as the best country in which to live [...] in fact, on the UN's Human Poverty Index (IHPI) Canada ranks 9th [...] Canada's rate of poverty in 1997 was 12%. The highest rate was 16.5% in the United States, closely followed by 15.3% in Ireland and 15.1% in the United Kingdom' (2000, 12).

choice' and neoliberalism. For Golob, critical junctures, generated by exogenous shocks and endogenous crisis (or 'crisis of state legitimacy') create the conditions for a paradigm shift in policy making. However, they do not determine the ways in which this may take place, as, here, the nation state has a protagonist role to play. Indeed, nation states on both sides of the Atlantic engaged in actively promoting a 'paradigm shift' in policy and most importantly the ideas that provide legitimacy to this shift, and by extension to their own role in dealing with crisis, before their citizenry⁴.

In practice, and while deploying a 'liberalizing' discourse, many states – while seemingly retreating – play a key role in the process of transferring the oligopolistic power of the big groups into the new networks, in a close alliance between economic and political power which has expanded into the digital world and which seems to ignore the social and political dimensions of culture and communication while at the same time making use of these (Bustamante 2004, 804-5).

The institutional vacuum in this period, namely the lack of institutional, EU based jurisdiction to move towards a comprehensive policy framework for the development of the European media landscape, allowed for the dominance of a specific ideological framework that, spanning from public services, to the role of the nation and social relations underpinned not only national policies in Europe and across the Atlantic but also the EU approach in the years to come. Moreover, it was the lack of an alternative ideological basis upon which the emergence of new media would be shaped, one that could rid negative associations with

⁴ At this point, it is important to note two things: legislative powers and legitimacy of force rest with nation states even in the era of globalisation, although for many scholars globalisation epitomises the contestation of state sovereignty; perhaps even more so, today, the nation state's legitimacy is more dependent on international integration, albeit of a neo-liberal, market-led nature. Indeed, as Moravcsik argues (1992) reclaiming legitimacy and maintaining nation state sovereignty was one of the major reasons why European nation states participated in the construction of the EU. One can extend this to the numerous applications for accession to the EU by the former East European countries. Nevertheless, the power of nation states to design policy, although solid domestically, is unequal in the international terrain. As Hardt and Negri argue 'with the end of the Cold War, the United States was called to serve the role of guaranteeing and adding juridical efficacy to this complex process of the formation of a new supranational right' (2000, 181). Alongside the rise of the 'empire' a group of powerful states, working closely with some of the most powerful corporations headquartered in their territorial jurisdictions have significant negotiating power at the international 'round table'.

either state control (and therefore restriction of freedoms), ‘communist’ values (monodimensional cultural approach) and socialdemocratic or Keynesian derived models (public service sovereignty) that have ‘proved’ to be a failure⁵. It is within this context that the development of media and cultural policies in the EU and Canada has come to define the new era, characterised by the liberalisation of services and privatisation of functions of the public sector, the ideological construction of consumer sovereignty, the still in part ‘fordist’ way of (mass) production and distribution of media content, cross-ownership and concentration of media ownership to a media oligopoly, as well as the transnational networks of production and distribution of media products through a variety of platforms. To these new organisational and trade trends, we must add the parallel polarisation of the culture industries of small countries and linguistic or other ‘minorities’ towards production and consumption cycles of a shorter radius. The construction of new communications markets in the EU required the specific targeting of the PSB system with the aim to dismantle its financial stability on the basis of EU and national competition policy. Throughout this process, the interests of market-focused private interests superseded those of the public whose very role as a ‘citizen-public’ was reframed into the ‘consumer-public’. Within this climate, the most significant EU piece of media legislation, the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF), was drafted first and foremost as the European Single Market directive, as the *single* piece of EU legislation that actually set the ESM in motion in 1989. Technological issues were framed along the lines of individual consumption, state ‘incapability’ to keep up with change, and superiority of the competition of individual interests in the market as the regulator for media.

The contexts of policy claims

Political debate is the means through which ‘personal aspirations that stem from experiences that individuals undergo’ (Aglietta 2000, 403) within a system of economic organisation can be translated into goals for

⁵ Numerous careful studies have shown the link between state withdrawal and decline of welfare state and increase in poverty, social polarisation, inequality and crime. Most importantly, for this paper, the decline of welfare support for women, the main wageless workers of the culture industries (through volunteer work among others) has detrimental effects for the continuation of community culture projects and the maintenance of a vibrant grassroots cultural creativity. See also Beale and van der Bosch 1998.

the wider population. In other words, political deliberation and state mediation transforms the individual quest for a better life into a social goal and thereby a matter of public policy. Through this process private interests reflect or are presented as reflecting generalisable interests. The mediation between private (capital) interests and those of the individuals, as situated within the larger social stratification and therefore become members of a stratum – or class or ‘interest group’ as women, minorities and disable people are often regarded – ‘manages the tension between the expansive force of capital and the democratic principle’ (402). Thereby, mutually exclusive or dependent interests are managed in the form of legislation or other agreement through the institutionalisation of these processes. However, even so, as Hardt and Negri (2000) point out:

Today a notion of politics as an independent sphere of the determination of consensus and a sphere of mediation of mediation among conflicting social forces has very little room to exist. Consensus is determined more significantly by economic factors (307) .

Media are located within a broader cultural policy field, which is not limited to a static and archaic understanding of ‘regulating museums’ or a question of ‘high arts’ vs popular culture, but which is integral to the institutional organisation of the expression of ‘national’ culture and the legitimised version of the regulating polity (whether state as in the Canadian case or state-like as in the EU case). Against a background whereby increasing and intensified processes of communication and technologically enabled round-the-clock financial transactions are taking place, media policy is called to address the media as an economic factor. The institutional arrangements of the EU seek to accommodate, and further facilitate, changes in international relations that are increasingly shaped (beyond the nation-state) by the influence of transnational capital, expressed through the militancy of transnational corporations as these are represented by global corporate alliances, such as the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT), the Business Roundtable (BRT), Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) or the Global Business Dialogue on electronic commerce (GBDe) or on the European level the European Publishers Council, the Association of Commercial Television in Europe and the Association Européenne des Radios⁶. Moreover, the

⁶ See here for a discussion on the role of such alliances on global media policy Chakravartty and Sarikakis 2006 and for the role of private interests in the current

complex system of international integration of markets and the conspicuous convergence of politics and business through the rise of the private sector as an equal partner in public policy blurs the boundaries between the jurisdiction and sovereignty of nation-states on the one hand, and national and transnational, globally operating capital on the other. Indeed, one of the most significant actors in EU-USA bilateral relations is the TransAtlantic Business Dialogue (TABD), which has the mandate 'to boost transatlantic trade and investment through the removal of barriers caused by regulatory differences' (European Commission 2004).

Especially in the field of media and communications and with the advent of the commercialisation of culture, the pressures for a market-led development (and use) of technologies is the strongest⁷. As communications technologies are enabling the management of financial capital but also trade and the organisation of labour in other industries, they also play a vital role in ensuring that consumption continues even when the physical conditions – closure of shops, factories, banks – may dictate the (temporary) cease of transactions. In the recent case of the review of the TWVF Directive, the representation, and impact, of industrial interests in the policy process through the close identification of national governments and national (and transnational) industries proves a hard opponent for consumer organisations, NGOs and the EP (Williams 2006). For the EU, the recent accession of nation states wherein PSB traditions are very weak, or non existent, coupled with a knee-jerk affiliation to the US model, weakens the foundations for a social market model⁸. With new

review of the Television Without Frontiers Directive Granville Williams 2004 Free Press No 142

⁷ See the work by Shore (2001) and Sarikakis (2004) for detailed accounts on the trajectory of the development of media and cultural policy in the EU, and the distinctive 'phases' of integrating media and culture into the EU agenda, accompanied by a mixture of market-oriented beliefs, populist sentiment, but also deep interest in the role of culture in the democratisation of integration.

⁸ For a detailed account of the role of lobbies in the ongoing TWVF directive see also Williams 2006. In late (techno)capitalism the development of new markets also maintains the manufacturing industry and therefore the still in-part fordist organisation thereof, albeit organised in geographies of labour outsourcing to countries with lower labour wages, weaker economies and higher vulnerability to corporations (Hardt and Negri 2000). The role of communication technologies for international trade and electronic commerce for the creation of new markets cannot be overstated. However, beyond the buying and selling – and consuming – of products and services, it is mostly in the domain of cultural goods, or the creative industries as have come to be known, where the media and their technologies penetrate every waking moment in western

communications technology, new space opens up for the re-use of existing cultural goods and in particular of AV material, or material whose audio-or-visual properties can be digitalised and repackaged, and therefore the opportunity for new sources of revenue rises. The efforts to amend the TVWF directive, so that the use of new technologies also succumbs to a public interest ethos, are opposed by the projection of a set of private interests presented as generalisable. They are exemplified in the conflict about the protection of media as a cultural (not market) territory for free expression, creativity and political deliberation⁹. Moreover, the well explored ‘clash’ between the EU and the USA on the protection of AV industries in the GATT (GATS) and WTO rounds¹⁰ is a struggle for the control over these spaces. As Venturelli argues:

the cultural conflict over media and audiovisual content is not a superficial, high-diplomacy power play between the U.S. and France. It is, instead, about the fate of a set of enterprises that form the core, the so-called ‘gold’ of the Information Economy (13).

Transnational corporations are at the heart of this struggle: not only those upfront AV content producing industries such as the media giants AOL Time Warner or Bertelsmann are involved in the markets, and therefore directly interested in the policies that shape them, but also the electronics industries, some of which, such as General Electronics, own AV content producing industries and distributing networks. With the convergence of media platforms and digitisation of content, the issue of ‘barrier free’ trade becomes a major priority for transnational corporations. The policy agendas of global transindustrial alliances, focused around further liberalisation of markets, can be traced throughout the policy agendas and outcomes in supranational and international policy, such as the recent World Summit on Information Society (Chakravartty

societies. It is there, in the repeated use of cultural products, such as films and videos, music and electronic text and their relation to digital technologies, where the wealth of the new information society lies.

⁹ That the neo-liberal agenda clearly favours private capital over public investment has been explored in macro-economic analyses and studies of the withdrawal of the public sector from areas crucial in the maintenance of basic service standards, such as postal services and telecommunications. It is within this spectrum of macro-level economic reregulation on the basis of ‘pro-competitive’ policy that ‘transnational corporations gain access to publicly-financed infrastructures and service markets’ (Grieshaber-Otto and Sinclair 2004; p. 8).

¹⁰ See also Pauwels et al in this issue.

and Sarikakis 2006). Canada has shifted its long-held priorities, to respond to global pressures for the liberalisation of communications and the withdrawal of state aid from public services, including the public service broadcasting system, while leaving the building of the Information Society (IS) to the priorities set by private corporations. The institutional change following the Brussels GIS declaration in 1995 show the direct influence of the international policy regime and the particular set of agendas related to new communications (Abramson and Raboy 1999). Structural changes in ownership and operation of telecommunications, an industry central to the information age, have led to increased concentration and widespread privatisation. The industry has come under the jurisdiction of powerful or 'core' institutions such as the Industry Canada or the Telecommunications Commission DG or the current Information Society and Media DG, under which come now 'cultural' aspects that have digitised (ecommerce) potential, such as the production of digital films and digital content. To that, almost in a contrast, comes the separation of the 'soft' areas of cultural policy under Heritage Canada, responsible for broadcasting policy, or Education and Culture DG in the EU. Areas such as PSB, AV production training, film and the preservation of cinema and audiovisual 'heritage' and initiatives for the promotion of cultural diversity are, artificially, separated from the core activities of competition, (e)commerce and technology. Given that these three policy objects lead EU and Canadian approaches to domestic and international policy, it is significant that the very organisation of policy jurisdiction frames the question of diversity and expression along the 'soft' and disassociated lines of 'culture' vis a vis 'economy'.

The ideological and material underpinnings of media and cultural policy

In this broader paradigm shift of regulatory organisation of the media and cultural industries, the EU and Canada have according to Collins, 'embraced two determinisms' (Collins 1995, 4). *Technological* determinism supports that social and political change is shaped by technological development. *Cultural* determinism proposes that cultural and political identities are interdependent thereby axiomatically resulting in the creation of new political identities emerging from new cultural ones. Technological determinist discourses in media and cultural policy in Canada and the EU allowed space for only a limited range of regulatory decisions and a particular direction that redefined the relationship between

the state and corporate agency. Young (2003), exploring the discourses across dominant policy trajectories in these two polities identified the hegemonic discourse of the role of technology across claims for democratisation. These are associated for example with questions of access and 'choice' (technological democracy) and the creation of nationhood (technological nationalism) broadly related to the diverse ethnic and cultural fabric of Canadian and EU societies, in addition to the role of technology itself in providing the incentive for (specific) policy. Although not always or necessarily in the same timeframe, both Canadian and EU media policy frameworks have used 'technology' as a policy compass and cause in their approach to reregulation, blending in their rhetoric social policy questions, from broadcasting and the media as public goods to issues of cultural protection and promotion, to the prosperity of the nation(s). In Canada, these discourses can be traced back to the 1960s where the vision of nation-building together with issues of public access and community broadcasting became entangled with the spread of cable television (Raboy 1990; Young 2003). More recently, the same conversions of social values and deterministic framing are accompanying the emphasis on the IS policies for a policy that seeks to create the most 'wired' country in the world. On the EU front, as in the Canadian, these attestations can be found throughout the IS policy development, irrespectively of whether the 'visions' relate to the field of information technology or whether they address convergence of media platforms or digitalisation (Chakravarty and Sarikakis 2006; Mosco 2004; Murdock 2000; Winseck 1998). Within this context, questions of cultural diversity and social cohesion obtain a particular significance: As the digital divide debate gains momentum in the IS – technology bound discourse, which has come to enclose conventional as well as 'new' media, the illustration of lack of social cohesion through additional processes of division becomes even more profound.

This digital divide, often caricatured as a simple division between the connected and the non-connected (or more recently between those connected to broadband and those linked to obsolete networks), has acquired all its complexity and its impact in the world of communication and culture. This in turn affects the democratic society of the future. There is division by purchasing power, reinforced by cultural knowledge and codes; division between those who possess diverse types of information that have strategic and competitive value as opposed to the merely

escapist and superficial. There is also a division between the producers and the consumers of knowledge, between nations that can exploit their cultures (and even the cultures of others) and nations destined to give up their cultures as raw material for free. And there is also a divide between countries, regions and within each society (including the richest and most industrialized). In both polities, these are not simply questions of a conceptual or symbolic nature, but are directly related to the materiality of the experience of citizenship – and therefore citizens' experience of the polity itself. They point to the legitimacy of the polity.

Social cohesion is closely linked to cultural diversity facilitated through the cultural production of the AV (traditional or new) media¹¹. According to the UNESCO Convention 'Cultural diversity' refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used.

Feigenbaum (2005) places a different 'kind' of significance upon diversity: he refers to the role of ideas and intellectual innovation being part of an environment rich in cultural stimuli, from language to symbols, perceptions and world views. These stimuli are further reflected upon the imagination and innovation of political and governing relations of a society. Ultimately the future is shaped by the richness or homogenisation of creativity¹². Ironically, the homogenisation of cultural expression limits consumption and creativity, both seen as the global market driver, namely 'choice' (Feigenbaum 2005, 5). Venturelli, too, connects the necessity for diverse intellectual creativity to the market-led subversion of this same prerequisite:

¹¹ Recent global movements for the recognition of communication and cultural rights such as the CRIS campaign, and the democratisation of the media, such as the Union for Democratic Communications point to the centrality of the role of media and economic policies for determining the limits and possibilities of cultural expression and diversity, and its role in maintaining social cohesion.

¹² The detrimental role of economic restrictions to the role of intellectual labour, vital for the functioning of participatory populism is identified by Lee (2005) and Park (2006) in their analyses of the labour conditions and market limitations exercised upon critical – non 'homogenised' – work

Every nation will need to have [...] a vibrant and diverse audiovisual industry, publishing industry, intellectual industry, and a dynamic arts community if it is to 'grow' its other multimedia content and cultural sectors. In this respect, nations which attempt effectively to prevent the total erosion of content industries will have an advantage over those that simply give up the struggle to diffuse and diversify knowledge and creative enterprises to the growing consolidation of international content producers and distributors (13).

It is in this terrain of debate that representational politics (EP, House of Commons) have produced ideas that attempt to address the 'culture drain' on the one hand, and the question of social cohesion, on the other, through shared notions of and equitable access to cultural expression. Social cohesion as an aim is emphasised by both polities in their cultural and media policies. However public(s) claims for redistributive policies and policies sensitive to claims for recognition and equitable representation, have not reached the policy implementation, as they largely clash with the limited market-focused agenda¹³. Not only have both polities struggled to define the question of cultural diversity pending between the broad conception of culture as a 'way of life' and 'the Arts' loaded with reminiscences of elitism and classism, but they have also had to face their distinctive disarray. Cultural diversity as a requirement for social cohesion presents a complex set of questions about the coexistence of culturally heterogeneous groups, the apprehension of dislocation and dispossession of migrant populations, the struggle of dealing with material polarisations across class, gender, age, and ethnicity¹⁴ as well as the particular framing of collective memory and experiences.

¹³ In the EU TVWF review, attempts to subject new technologies to the same universal ethics of cultural protection, limitation to advertising and product placement methods, accountability of private media etc as represented by the EP and citizens and cultural workers' organisations is in a colliding route with the demands of the media and electronics industry.

¹⁴ The decrease of real wages of the average worker across the NAFTA country members, even in the USA, for example and the widening gap between the richest 20% of Canadians, the net loss of jobs, decline of stable full-time jobs, casualisation of employment that hits women the hardest, as does poverty, through a policy of protection for investors and financiers undermines the very basic standards necessary for minimum social cohesion across these societies. For detailed studies of the impact of NAFTA and WTO on workers, poverty and employment see the following studies from the Economic Policy Institute: Scott, Robert 2001 *NAFTA's hidden Costs. Trade agreement results in job losses, growing inequality and wage suppression for the United States*; Salas, Carlos 2001 *The Impact of NAFTA on wages and income in Mexico*; Campbell, Bruce 2001 *False Promise. Canada in the Free trade Era* all at <http://epinet.org>. For an overall study on Women and Poverty in Canada see Townson, Monica 2000

The approaches of EU and Canadian policy are distinctive but are also based on similar experiences. Canadian cultural policy appears consolidatory and defensive, the European project (increasingly) aspirational and tendentious¹⁵. Europe's newly-found enthusiasm for culture is based on the intention of 'softening' the edges of – or tensions around – heterogeneity in the EU, not only with reference to the difference among nations but also those of migrant populations and diverse social and cultural groups. The expectation is to mediate a degree of social cohesion through culture in ways which will foster the growth of 'unity' among citizen subjects of the EU. However, there are three problems with the implementation of such a programme. First, the degree of structural imbalance across societies and media landscapes disallows processes of cohesion, as these may be based upon equitability in accessing and processing information among citizens. To that one needs to add the inequitable status of whole nations and regions in their media producing capability. Additionally, one has to deal with the ever-present perceived (or real) domination of US AV products. Second, often 'the eurocentrism and class bias inherent in conceptions of culture also promote exclusion and intolerance, particularly towards those who fall outside the boundaries of official European culture' (Shore 2001, 108). Third, internal processes of cultural fragmentation are the outcome of recent migration. As Schlesinger and Foret note 'The EU's expansion eastwards leaves us wondering how the additional ethnic, national, religious and culturo-linguistic diversity will be integrated and how this will change the EU's dynamics' (2006, 64). National and global media targeting specifically new constellations of ethnic, national or religious cultures are themselves becoming 'invasive others' from within, in the complex quest for the cultivation of a common identity. Finally, one must always keep in mind, that there is an alternative set of national drivers in Europe, such as diverse policy bodies and procedures, recognised values, socioeconomic contexts and other traditions that are active in policy making. In that respect, the great difference between Canada and the EU is one of the status of the nation state. The EU is clearly not one, but depends on a complex system of nation-states and supranational and

¹⁵ I owe this idea to Neil Blain.

regional institutions. Nation states additionally are faced with internal cohesion questions¹⁶. Canada on the other hand *is* a national driver.

Indeed, the geographical boundaries of 'Europe' are themselves contested and inasmuch as the EU claims more and more to 'represent' Europe, its continual growth continually unsettles possible comprehensive identity-claims. Nor do cultural background or religious affiliation or ethnicity either individually or in combination settle the question of who is a European (Schlesinger & Foret 2006, 65).

The dependence of the Canadian broadcasting system on US originated AV material has been instrumental in the shaping of national broadcasting¹⁷. In a way, the US has 'forced' the development of a Canadian broadcasting approach to pursue the construction of nationhood. Canadian policymakers have sought to develop a definition of the country's cultural identity, understood as 'other than' American.¹⁸ Broadcasting programming has been identified as the carrier of nationhood, which different from the US, would bring the nation together in much the same way or of the same significance as the great railways connected the diverse population of this vast territory. Europe's way to a supranational distinctly European identity is approached through the construction of citizenship *rights* introduced by the legal entity of European Citizenship.

¹⁶ Not only the nation-states relation to the EU is included in this phenomenon, such as the vote for/against an EU constitution has shown, but also the 'need' felt within the boundaries of nation states to re-assert nationhood towards internal considered 'outsiders'.

¹⁷ The global audiovisual sector, in particular, is controlled by seven Hollywood based transnational companies which dominate European and Canadian content distribution. Germann (2005, 95) argues that it is not the content that is responsible for the market success of cinema 'Blockbusters' but rather intensive marketing coupled by powerful distributing mechanisms that not only promote only certain audiovisual material to reach consumers but also disallow content originated 'elsewhere' from same levels of (widespread) distribution.

¹⁸ Of course, it is important to acknowledge that not all media are colonised, as books, theatre and the arts, or even domestic television production demonstrate vibrant domestic modes of use. As far as mostly and broadly available AV content, as well as other digital internet material is concerned, the global AV industry is led by the Hollywood based cluster. Despite internal markets and productions that prefer or favour non-American content, the overall picture remains one whereby national or other domestic content is limited to consumption within national boundaries, is directly influenced by fluctuations in national or other (federal, supranational) subsidiaries and of limited multiplatform commercial use when compared to the elaborate merchandising industries associated with major film studios, television networks and internet portals.

Europe's own identity, historically based on the 'otherness' of defined outsiders (Hardt & Negri 2000; Shore 2001), and in this respect also of the 'invasive other' (the USA) relies on the complex system of media production and cultural creativity, folklore and tourism that seek to convey the feeling of common heritage and future. The emphasis on the 'invasive other' has led to a one-sided appreciation of the threats associated with concentration of media industries and internal signs of cultural domination, that ignore the significance of linguistic marginalisation, the impact of media content control by European media moguls, the uncomfortable fusion of politics and media business, and the restrictions of the single market imposing on small media, small national markets and their capacity for cultural expression (Sarikakis 2005). Furthermore, more careful attention upon the 'unknown' territories of recent EU members, as well as upon the consuming habits of recent migrants is missing. Moreover, for both polities, vis-à-vis the USA broadcasting industry, even the strongest fears and anxieties expressed in EU policy have only resulted in relatively small support for AV and film production.¹⁹ At the same time, the homogenisation of culture exacerbated by the increasing media ownership concentration (in Europe and Canada) and the struggle over the role of PSBs are symptoms of the undermining of public interest policy towards cultural diversity. The well-rehearsed recipes for cultural products that guarantee profitability, and the expectation that they should, become an additional restriction to creativity but also on the 'acceptability' of forms of ways-of-life that may be ostracised in the process:

Th[e] path to an authentic 'clone culture' which replicates past successes can only increasingly standardize the production for and consumption by majorities, punishing innovative or minority creativity, that of small and medium enterprises, and linguistic and cultural minorities, thereby jeopardizing the overall ecology of each sector' (Bustamante 2004, 804-5).

For Canada, the linguistic proximity with the USA exemplifies some of these problems, while admittedly the broadcasting of French language programming 'made in France' does also very little to enhance the cultural production of the country. On the other hand, of course, the de-

¹⁹ For a discussion on the decline or stagnation of domestic production and success thereof see 'What's wrong with Canadian Broadcasting?' in www.publicairwaves.ca; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2002 *Canadian Context in the 21st Century* (response to Heritage Canada).

bated 'two solitudes' only refer to the rather privileged majorities of English and French speakers, while problematically leaving out indigenous cultures and languages, as a rather folklorised 'other' in the debates over media and cultural policy. Canada is torn by cultural survival struggles, perhaps unhappily embodied in the 'linguistic' question or the 'two solitudes' that ignore the marginalisation of first nations. The folklorisation of their cultural heritage not only objectifies cultural expression as the distinctive internal 'other' in Canadian media and cultural policy but also, disallows the development of 'culture' as part of the country's policy and the populations' active involvement in culture-making. To that, questions surrounding the position of other minorities and especially those consisting of immigrant people began to resurface and point to the inadequacy of understanding Canada as the 'playground' of colonial residues, which is reflected in the minimalist attention given to indigenous and migrant media (Baeker 2002; Roth 1998).

In Europe, cultural policy has also been approached as part of the European structural funds, a major funding programme that began with the Delors administration, in an attempt to promote social cohesion in the EU. The structural funds continue to support ultra- and semi-peripheral regions and are now directed to the new member states. In an attempt to invigorate the regions, cultural activities and programmes are envisioned primarily on the grounds of their economic benefits for regional development. Cultural policy in this context gains its credibility through its role in creating jobs and supporting local economies, but this 'adulteration' of purpose does not take place free of conflict. Delgado-Moreira (2000) argues that there is a conflicting view of the use of culture and cultural policy between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, two institutional bodies with non-identical views about social cohesion. These are epitomised in the 'supranational vs intergovernmental' approach to EU governance and consequently to the nature of the EU. Commission approaches culture – and within that the AV sector – as the means to better economic cohesion, which is expected to lead to better governability and therefore to a stronger EU (Commission 1996). The strengthening of the position of the polity is believed would consequently lead to better control of immigration flows and would strengthen the sense of citizenship and belonging to EU. The Committee of the Regions sees culture not as an 'asset' but as the watchdog of diversity; cultural policy for the COR is related to the integration of groups into

local societies and not into the EU directly, as the Commission aims. Delgado-Moreira argues that this tension demonstrates a distinctive, not openly conflicting, view of the role of culture in the EU between Commission and COR based on the ideological dispositions of transnationalism and multiculturalism. Commission is interested in cultural heritage, high arts, cultural exchanges and audiovisual policies as part of cultural policy²⁰. The fusion of cultural and tourism activities showcasing perceptions of current European cultures through symbolic festive events such as the European City of Culture demonstrates both confusion about the EU and an overtly economic understanding of its role and of integration. The COR approaches cultural policy in its grassroots elements, through the experience of immigration and 'incoming' human flows. This multiculturalist approach focuses on the human rights approach and access to culture-making. Cultural policy despite intentions and despite the small accompanying funds becomes more than a strategic 'small' policy field through the impact it makes in the regional programmes (Delgado-Moreira 2000, 458).

Words will be words: concluding remarks

The diverse populations of Europe and Canada pose the question of social cohesion as a matter of identity and human survival, alongside the pressures exercised by increasing polarisation of materiality. In Europe, 'unity in diversity' is largely addressed by policies in terms of the diverse national cultures, themselves having undergone processes of homogenisation and 'cohesion' to enable (or construct) the emergence of national identities. Only secondarily, do internal transnational diasporas or third country ones are considered of a recognised diversity. In its struggle to move beyond its economic remit, EU citizenship relies upon the conditions set out by attachment to a nation for recognition. In Canada, diversity has also been used to mask inequalities and 'culturalise' them, especially those, regarding populations that do not 'neatly' fit in the narrative of territorial based (space) claims or historical based (time) demands (Baeker 2002). Claims to the reality of the Canadian society are not without conflict when ethnic and visible minorities and aboriginals are considered. Europe is facing its own conflict in its process of turning

²⁰ Through the promotion of policy packages such as RAPHAEL, KALEIDOSCOPE, MEDIA and later CULTURE 2000 and its continuation etc.

diversity into a process of culturally based social cohesion. Having been based largely on either national or regional perceived often stereotyped or folklorised characteristics, concentrated along the cultural 'lines' between for example the Mediterranean or Nordic countries, the internal divisions or fragmentations of national and religious cultures, coupled with increased migration, create a new, complex set of drivers not adequately or consciously enough addressed by existing media policy.

The EP emphasises a multicultural euro-politanism in political culture, cohesion among citizens and view to the world, as a 'European' way of life which is associated with public service, human rights and democracy. The concerns of parliamentary debates arising from the impact of the neoliberalist agenda for the media and cultural industry concentrate around the ways in which conditions of the production of expression, whether factual and journalistic or fictional, restrict the range of opinions, depth of aesthetic and analytic exploration and the range of narratives about the human condition. Editorial independence, long term support for PSB and investment in regional programming are areas of policy identified and advocated for by both the EP and the Canadian House of Commons, to which no satisfactory answers have been given. Underlying these aims is the attention given to the detrimental consequences of media ownership concentration, both for the richness of cultural creativity but also for democratic participation in the public sphere of Europe and Canada. Both institutions have repeatedly called for the establishment of an independent monitoring council that would monitor and intervene in the cases of power abuse, in terms of content, production and access to cultural sources. And both have shared the urgency for long-term support for cultural production, inclusive of, but also beyond, PSB, as in terms of training and education or in terms of subsidisation for distinctive works (the MEDIA programme in the EU or the Canadian Television Fund). However, despite the EP's numerous initiatives and calls for an overhaul of the TVWF and the design of anti-concentration policy and similarly despite the clear mandate the Lincoln Report gave the Canadian government (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2003), these recommendations have not been taken up in regulatory provision. The issue of foreign ownership added to that of cross-ownership has become for the Canadian case one of cultural survival or oblivion, as 'once foreign companies are allowed to take control,

the chances of Canadians ever reclaiming this vital space will be small indeed' (Raboy and Taras 2004, 64).

Not only that, but it seems that the US industry, as the archetype of the global media empire, is quickly finding ways to not only bypass the debate and actual policy obstacles on cultural diversity, but also to secure a strategic superiority vis-a-vis its problematic trade partners. Through bilateral agreements on digital content with third countries, it constructs a de facto environment that solves the problem of quotas and restrictions by moving digital content outside the jurisdiction of cultural exemption. Any digitalised form of content becomes automatically subject to market – not state – 'regul(ar)isation', through free trade agreements with countries as diverse as Australia and Morocco. This means that the liberalisation of ecommerce and digitalised content will bypass any culture protective measures. Moreover, it seems that the current policy status quo has reached its optimum impact, and new further proactive and comprehensive policies are required to address the range of unresolved issues within the two creative landscapes. This is evident by the fact that production of home grown works, in whatever form of Canadian or EU definition, has reached a plateau. In Canada broadcasting domestic content seems to be on a slightly downward cycle. Moreover, due to a chronic lack of funding for PBS²¹ long term planning is unachievable. This means that PSB is less able to take risks and be innovative, which further condemns it to lower ratings and quality of output. On the other hand, both EU and Canada have effectively subsidised private broadcasters and the US industry through either direct subsidies for works commissioned but not funded by private broadcasters, tax credits and favourable investment conditions. Moreover, the EU's focus on the market-ability of culture reinforces the very material and symbolic conditions that are detrimental to social cohesion especially one based in part on the construction of a common European identity. '[B]y allowing the market to determine the nature of this identity, we become European consumers' This is 'doubly ironic' given that the EU project is moving beyond its narrow economic remit (Harrison & Woods 2000, 490). Individualistic solutions to public policy problems such as those of access to media and culture, in terms not simply of consuming but also of

²¹ Financial support for PBS in Canada is among the five lowest ones among OECD countries. For the decline in funding public services see also Grieshaber-Otto, Jim and Sinclair Scott 2004. Also for international cultural flows see UNESCO 2005

'handling' and processing, creating and actively 'making' culture, exacerbates social and economic polarisation.

As this article has tried to show, it is within the context of broader processes of market integration, human mobility and the development of global governance regimes that policy aiming at the re/construction of social cohesion can be best analysed. This contextualisation allows us to understand the reasons and ways in which different cultures and societies may face questions of the same magnitude. Although not developed in this article, the underlying assumption is that the location of *acting* upon solutions is the nation-state, the region or province, and ultimately the community. Indeed, the challenges facing today's enlarged Europe are twofold: they concern inasmuch its own constitutional sustenance as the constitution of its identity and that appropriated by its peoples on one level. On another level, questions of cultural pluralism within nation-states, and of contested national identity make the relationship between the citizen, the nation 'unit' and the polity significantly more complex than any policy has acknowledged. Moreover, the tensions between individualistic approaches, through an overall policy agenda that bears the symptoms of market-culture, and the aims for social cohesion through diversity, multi/cosmopolitanism, recognition of hitherto 'non-belonging' social groups and minimum material wealth defeat the proclaimed aim. Structured solidarity is poorly served by small funding pockets for cultural creativity across the two polities. The creation of a 'common values pattern' through symbolic expressions of identity such as flags, anthems and exhibitions can reinforce a feeling of belonging, but alone, not create it. The experience of citizenship through the construction of social networks, group identification, and social capital points to a changing notion of the role of citizens on the one hand, but also to the relationship of undocumented citizens with the state, through the mediation of culture. This is the intersection where the macro-level structural regimes meet the micro-level conditions of social and cultural existence.

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