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# BUILDING MEDIA'S INDUSTRY WHILE PROMOTING A COMMUNITY OF VALUES IN THE GLOBALISATION: FROM QUIXOTIC CHOICES TO PRAGMATIC BOON FOR EU CITIZENS

Violaine Hacker\*

## RESUME

The citizenship as a socio-legal issue will be addressed regarding the capacity of the international system to identify the values of the citizens within their community. The crucial issue becomes to localize global problems in order to make these more palatable to people, and to possibly reinforce any sentiment of belonging. At the same time, the construction of a "Europeanised level" in the realm of European Media Services industry in the globalisation is subject to regional changes and technological disrupting logistics relating to citizenship. The solution of globalising local problems as theories (glocal) becomes quite old-fashioned, and above all a social contract based on structures definitely remedies democratic deficit in pushy and quixotic ways. Its implementation has remained patchy in many respects, and needs to be adjusted and strengthened. In that respect, the notion of "cultural diversity" - widely promoted by the European Union as a common good - may be useful to formulate public policies relevant to developing creative industry as well as promoting EU people values. Citizenship should adhere to both the economic vision of global public goods and the ethical vision of the common good. Nonetheless, the wizard institutional machinery willing to promote a "knowledge economy" in a globalised information society may remain only wishful-thinking if media literacy is not utilised as a boon in a modern public sphere.

**Key words:** Common good, common public good, cultural diversity, European citizenship, industrial policy, institutional analysis, Media services, political choice, public-private sphere, values

## Introduction

Mirroring the ancient Greek philosopher **Diogenes of Sinope**, is it possible to say: "*I am a citizen of the world*"? Used in a broad sense, citizenship includes responsibilities in terms of a nation-state, but also criteria reaching into often-overlooked dimensions of civil, social, economic, and cultural sphere, and

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it also entails the emergence of a global civil society dealing with post-national ownership.

Consequently, if one looks at governance from a practical point of view in an attempt to surpass dominant Westphalian theories, international institutions have an urgent need to demonstrate their own leadership as well as to embody the political vision. A legitimate system of governance must therefore ensure the effectiveness of decisions, particularly in the field of Media industrial policies, which could also bring some positive results for citizens at reasonable cost at the same time. Such a system also underscores the way of interacting with the political agenda, that is to say not anymore purely “à la Montesquieu”, i.e. through constant and deterministic “social contract”. This process would be rather a product of converging actions of a variety of actors, interacting on an informal level. It would be, consequently, incrementally incorporated into constitutional policies.

Firstly, the question of citizenship and nationality will hence be analysed in terms of the capacity of the international system to identify among individuals and according to their values what the community desires. Europe’s unique offer is its enormously rich and distinctive cultural heritage and its traditions of democracy, intellectual freedom, religious tolerance and open debate. This institutional machinery, as radically new economic and political entity on the international scene, is capable to show leadership to implement policies and projects that have proved to be really successful. Secondly, with the wide array of ICTs used by citizens in all kinds of creative ways that respond to local needs in the globalisation, the question will be afterward perceived in considering that Medias have tremendous significance which shed light on the subtle and complex indicators of how power and culture change within a community, not through a basic social contract. As we have seen in Tunisia or Egypt, they are powerful tools when it comes to establishing a polity.

Consequently, citizenship will be considered as a status defined and enjoyed by a person who is a full member of a community, so that the prerequisite of democracy requires in turn the empowerment of individuals. A structure in a social contract does not exactly reflect what people actually want to address, especially at the time where the *affectio societatis* is stronger.

Instead the concept of “citizens’ media” articulates the metamorphic transformation of alternative media participants into active pluralist citizenship. Individuals gain access to and re-claim their own way of communication with the

ability to gather forces to shape one's symbolic and material world, not on the basis of the liberal tradition in political philosophy, but rather on the basis of their wished orientation or staging.

In that respect, the notion of “*cultural diversity*” – widely promoted by the European Union as a *common good* – may be useful to formulate public policies relevant to developing creative industry as well as promoting the EU people values. Citizenship should adhere to both the economic vision of global public goods and the ethical vision of the common good (first part). Nonetheless, the wizard institutional machinery willing to promote a “*knowledge economy*” in a globalised information society may prove to be only a wishful-thinking if *media literacy* is not utilised as a boon for citizens in a modern public sphere (second part).

## **The Cultural Diversity: between global public goods and common goods**

Institutions in the Global Economy can genuinely respect values which can be – according to the “*triangle of coherence*” – of three kinds (Lamy, 2011). Its first part is nowadays represented by the World Trade Organisation; second one is constituted by the United Nations - particularly the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) - providing a framework for global legitimacy through accountability. A third part consists of expertise of member-driven international organisations and civil society, depending on the incorporation of flexibilities in the rules so as to preserve the expression of identity in a globalised world. This multilevel governance of interdependent public goods enables some sustainable and politically-correct Media industries regulation. “*Cultural Diversity*” - regarded in Europe as a common good - is supposed to compound the diversity of European citizens, to respect local identities, and to implement its industry. More globally the role of democracy is to discern the polytheism of values, which was formerly circumvented in the notion of “*discursive democracy*” proposed by **Jürgen Habermas** in an era of industrialisation. The European democracy has to face international contradiction, as well as the polytheism of values in the heart of the fragmented Europe itself.

Firstly, the discussion of values is now central to the on-going WTO negotiations on specific global agreements that allow for the expression of identities. Among members, differing visions on culture contradict each other.

Hence, for instance, a movie in Europe is perceived as an artistic creation and consequently benefits from special treatment, while in the U.S. it is perceived to be a mere entertainment regardless of its artistic value. In international law, films are traditionally seen as property, and the content of television programs is defined as a service. Consequently, cultural interventionist policies are opposed to Anglo-Saxon liberal position, causing failures in international negotiations. In fact, the underlying objective of challenging these policies is not so much to promote the expression of local cultures and identities, but rather more substantially regulate development subsidies propitious for powerful impact on media services. The EU fears the abandonment of the advanced revenue system supposed to guarantee cultural diversity, seen in Hollywood as a subsidy mechanism. The WTO agreements provide a whole range of flexibilities with considerable leeway to Members, who are free to exclude whatever sectors according to their commitment from an open trade. Then a number of WTO Members actively support their cultural industry in the interests of preserving their identity, through minimum national content quotas for Medias, and exemptions or subsidies. Even within the EU, interventionist policies based on the notion of “*cultural exception*” get opposed to the policy of the “*cultural specificity*” on the liberal Anglo-Saxon side. For instance EU Nordic countries, very active in cultural affairs at domestic level, opposed the introduction of quotas in the European audio-visual industry. Other countries stress the primacy of the interests of consumers, and the fact that competition in the Media sector would rather have beneficial effects.

Secondly, in such a conflicting context, the notion of “*cultural diversity*” has been echoed by more neutral organisations, particularly within the UNESCO - a second part of the “*triangle of coherence*”. Its Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2005, is a clear recognition of the specificity of cultural goods and services, as well as state sovereignty and public services in this area. With the exception of the United States, Australia and Israel, all WTO Members ratified it. Designed for the international trade, it clearly became a crucial reference to the definition of the European *policy choice*: in 2009, the European Court of Justice favoured a broad view of culture - beyond cultural values through the protection of film or the objective of promoting linguistic diversity previously recognised.

Third part of the “*triangle of coherence*” consists of member-driven international and civil society organisations promoting values in a new globalised industrial and services world, which means dealing with new logics of identity, land and technology that have altered the traditional public space. In the vortex of industrial development, the Media not only satisfy internal political interests by strengthening social ties and identities, but are also linked to external political interests as a guarantee of visibility. Transcultural phenomenon is on the one hand being compared to a “steamroller”, but on the other hand it is also being increasingly questioned, because globalisation also stimulates the affirmation of local identities. One could think that with power strategies like wide-release tactics helped with mega communication budgets led by Majors will promote universal values and dominate the imagination of the entire world...if only globalisation did not bring its share of complexity.

A film certainly reflects both an aesthetics that bear the imprint of a socio-geographical context, but maybe also contains multicultural essence. Only India seems to resist in such a hurricane, thanks to discreet protectionism. Local films (*masala*) preferred by the Indian public become possible with the operation of a dense cultural heritage including diverse arts, music, dances and stories. Indeed, film practices cultural hybridisation. For instance, the Brazilian film *Blindness* was directed by the Brazilian director **Fernando Meirelles**, from a book of a Portuguese author **Jose Saramago**, adapted by a Canadian writer, but shot in English with American, Brazilian, and Japanese actors. In such a warlike international competition, regional patterns have to alter conservative economic models. Since its accession to the WTO, Beijing pledged to increase the quota of imported films - despite its long tradition of exclusion of foreign cultural and artistic products giving preferential treatment to local cultural expression. The Chinese authorities integrate know-how, as well as foreign funding through co-productions. A co-production agreement was signed on April 29, 2010 with France. Another contract signed in November 10, 2010 should encourage production of Indian films in the U.S. Moreover, the economic model of Hollywood is restructuring, and it reinvents itself continuously. Dashing Majors - formerly devoted to Mainstream Entertainment - are nowadays used to finance internal services loaded to focus on creativity so as to offer similar so-called European independent film. The future of Europe depends on its ability to both incorporate multidisciplinary disciplines undergoing fragmentation into national markets, and to transcend local identities representing EU citizens on

the international scene. Far from U.S. or Japan political image war, the EU is used to an inside ethnographic focus and its audience is not glued to its home theatre. Still facing the inside audience, the EU is keen on glamorising her cultural influence, rather than fostering commercial conquest with market shares. Its industry is not designed adequately to penetrate the world market, and is confined to a cultural readiness supposed to proclaim nationalism, and possibly also the European identity and then citizenship! Therefore, one may regret the far too long expected *MEDIA International*, *MEDIA Mundus* and *Euromed Audiovisual II*, promoting international focus in strengthening cooperation with audio-visual industries of third countries.

The viability of the EU does not depend so much on its political structure as on its being anchored in a culture-based sphere and on the establishment of a cultural European citizenship. Media industry as a way to acquire knowledge must work to explore the limits of citizenship.

### **Knowledge as a common good in a globalised economy**

In the public sphere characterised by consensus and cooperation, only *public goods* can be sought and acquired. It may also be seen as a unique world characterised by rivalry and competition in which everyone could pursue their *private interests*, but only if there is a consensus regarding an objective procedure. Furthermore, pluralism is a condition *sine qua non* the respect of a fair procedure, which allows the expression of axiological judgments. The development of critical thinking and citizen participation from private to public sphere through the media literacy is an essential contribution to the cultural development and progress of a democratic society. Nonetheless, restricting the public sphere to the playground of collective rights may lead to very rigid normative perspective. The central feature of the media globalisation is larger cross-border flows of media outputs, growth of media trans-national conglomerates, centralisation of media control, spread and intensification of commercialisation.

The EU needs a *progressive citizenship*, advancing from civil citizenship to cultural citizenship, depending on the acquired skills, behaviour and virtues related to the European heritage. Lacking the inner meaning of those values, the EU would disintegrate as many other creations of social engineering only described in a constant (liberal) social contract. However, media literacy is defined and the regulation must be dynamic, multidimensional, adaptive, fluid

and ever-expanding to account for future technological advances, and new purposes for and ways of interacting.

The involvement of the civil society ties in with the movement to extend education with the focus on *“learning for the length and breadth of life”*, acclaimed by both the UNESCO and the EU. Firstly, *media literacy* has been defined and attached to the idea of **“Education for Sustainable Development”** included in the United Nations’ Principles, and contextualised within the advocacies on the human rights-based approach to programming, and the creation of knowledge societies. Secondly, the Lisbon Agenda in 2000 asserted that Europe needs to remain competitive economically in the *“knowledge economy and an increasingly globalised information society”*. Due to the gap in media literacy development among the different States, the EC has to endorse the creation of synergies among the lack of shared vision, cultural barriers to innovation, European visibility of national, regional and local initiatives, of European networks of stakeholders, and of involvement of national broadcasting independent regulatory authority. Once a common framework is set up, investigative and political work can be developed more efficiently.

Eventually, the private sector can also play an active role, for instance in developing European quality standards to meet the needs of consumers and users, involving media industries, professionals, citizens, and authorities. For instance, the Internet Quality Certificate and the Federation of German Consumer Organisations in cooperation aim to establish minimum standards for the protection of minors with the KINDERCAMPAGNE project. The Quality Internet Agency in Spain provides internet quality standards especially related to the protection of the minors.

Meanwhile, the Media often neglect citizenship, appealing to the freedom of the viewer or user and the industrial and commercial character of the media. Promoting the expansion of knowledge society will have beneficial consequences for the economy and industrial development. This consensus among political elites is lacking in the educational sector, which makes a difference between technical focus on digital literacy and a humanist and cultural focus on media. Ideological protectionism stems from a political commitment and is detrimental to the clarity of the message. Some programs are developed; however, their impact on the education is limited. Some media providers consider that it is part of their mission as public media, or in their

interests as private media, to encourage a pedagogical rapprochement to the media. This situation is starting to emerge throughout Europe, but with unequal development, and tends to increase the scope and impact of activities in the educational community.

## Conclusion

While the theories asserting the necessity of globalisation of local problems (*glocal*) become quite old-fashioned, the crucial issue becomes to focus on localising global problems in order to make these more palatable to citizens, and to possibly reinforce any sentiment of belonging. A social contract based on structures definitely remedies democratic deficit in pushy and quixotic ways. Its implementation has remained patchy in many respects, and needs to be adjusted and strengthened. A contract seen both as incremental and pragmatic could rather transcribe the evolution of the polity. If neither is the Law neutral, nor creator of values, the role of public policies is nowadays to transcribe the current international conflict between the economic vision of *global public goods* - oriented on economic efficiency of the creative industry - and the ethical vision of *common good*, which introduces the notion of fairness and the possibility of asserting the citizens' identity in a multipolar world. Chancellor **Angela Merkel** proposed the creation of the *Charter for Sustainable Economic Activity*, adopted by the G20 in Pittsburgh, as a commendable effort to provide a "*new global economic contract*", to anchor economic globalisation on bedrock of ethical principles which would possibly renew the trust that citizens need to feel that globalisation can indeed work for them. It sets out a number of values common to the G20 providing economic globalisation with a solid foundation for the humanity, thereby helping to reassure citizens that it can promote progress. The adjunct concept of "*global civic education*" tends to prove that in a multipolar and interconnected civilisation, everyone has a responsibility for the well-being of other people. If identities are given a chance to express themselves at local level in a global framework, then globalisation could present an opportunity promoting values and cultures of citizens as well as the numerous histories making up the fabric of our world.

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