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Identity and Diversity in European Media Policy: Crisis Changes Everything(?)

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Introduction

The question of identity in media policy in Europe has long been one that encompasses much more than 'just' the question of construction and reflection of ways of living, perceptions and understandings about oneself and others. Identity as a matter of European media policy has pointed – right from the 'start' – to the deeper issues about the existence and role of the EU, not only its past history but also to a vision for its future. Unavoidably, furthermore, identity as a matter of media policy in Europe revolves around questions of diversity in terms of cultural representation, but also in terms of production and pluralism of the media.

The aim of this chapter is to take stock of the development of a European media policy trajectory with the specific task of critically assessing the development and expansion of the concept of identity and the principle of diversity. Hence the aim here is not to provide an overview of what is meant by 'identity' and the role of the media but, instead, to examine the multifaceted character and trajectory of the concepts of identity and diversity in media policies. This chapter discusses continuity and change in media policies in Europe, as identity becomes the space of struggle and tensions found in the process of developing a European common polity and cultural and communicative arena in lieu of a revived claim for and practice of cosmopolitanism. The contextual parameters of such an analysis are structural, political-economic and legal – that is, regulatory conditions and ramifications that 'frame' the following discussion.

The chapter discusses, without revisiting old ground, the conditions of the European integration project as one currently under the pressure of crisis and in particular with reference to the role of the state and identity. The state is the main driver of policies in general, and in particular in media and cultural policies, as those belong still firmly within its jurisdiction. The reason for this

strong positioning of the European state as the main actor in regulating the media and culture lies precisely on the significance of constructing 'national' and cultural identities and the sense of self-determination accompanied by this normative stance. The chapter raises the issue of economic welfare and social conditions of identity formation and challenging in contemporary Europe. It connects this to the discussion of identity in media policy as a terrain of struggle and tension exacerbated in times of crisis, but also as a field of connection to the broader view of media as cultural and social institutions. As the chapter argues, the changes currently under way in Europe are testing the assumptions and fragile balances on which the EU has based its legitimacy and own identity. The latest policy program, Creative Europe, is making stronger statements about the scope of marketization and monetization of culture and media services perhaps than ever before, and in a significant move, disconnects citizenship from its discursive and policy dimensions.

The changing state and new realities of Europe

It is widely acknowledged that interrelated conditions under which decision-making takes place are important as a matter of institutional arrangement and, in particular, in the field of media and cultural policy in the EU (Risse, 2001; Humphreys, 2011). Internal economic and market integration have been inextricably coupled with a dominance of liberalization policies in the making of the EU that reflect, accelerate and lead global liberalization (Harvey, 2003). Certainly, this direction has not remained unchallenged or all-encompassing or even uniformly applied. Yet it is unquestionably clear that the driving motor of the European unification process has been tainted by market-centered priorities and normatively assigned to the leading role of privatization of public spaces and public assets, from transportation and essential services, such as railways and water, to the telecommunications spectrum and infrastructure, and cultural production in the media (Barnett, 2001; Sarikakis, 2007). The development of the European project has been accompanied by a degree of change in the role of the state. Indeed, it is argued that globalization processes and the survival of the nation state demanded that a certain amount of state sovereignty and jurisdiction over a range of policy areas must be 'surrendered.' For scholars (Risse, 2001; Sarikakis, 2004; Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006) this requirement from the state to withdraw from certain areas, or co-regulate, points to a change in the function and role of the state, but not its significance in global politics. The locality of policy implementation is the most important aspect in the drive for global, including European, processes of integration.

Policy principles and directions seem to be set and agreed upon in multi-spatial arrangements, involving only a few selected states and other actors outside the spectrum of national or even regional politics, often concretizing

and translating policy directions into national regulation. The state's withdrawing of resources from social welfare coupled with the withdrawal of regulatory control over the market gives rise to systems of self-regulatory arrangements for the media industry, which in fact consists of multiple industries, such as advertising, electronics, the press and broadcasting, Internet service providers and content providers. It also relies increasingly on the regulation, indeed disciplining, of individuals when it comes to media users' behaviours, especially in relation to new media.

Furthermore and in parallel, the role of the state is being remodelled to gain more influence and a stronger presence in other domains, such as those of the regulation of community and individual adherence to an ever-expanding, ever-fluidized regulatory space. These phenomena can be better observed in situations when direct communicative needs are present, such as in terms of bottom-up culture-making – which is confronted, for example, by copyright restrictions and emergent punitive measures in digital environments, as well as in physical public spaces (Lessig, 2004, 2005; Christensen, 2010). As Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout argue (2008) when referring to the marketization of public services and the changes in the role of the state and its relation to citizens, 'a state with strong sense of public interest is a state that asserts the multiple needs of society against the dictates of the market' (2008, p. 103). Within the process of allocating resources to resolve social inequalities and promote wealth, in particular, when placing a wealth and unification strategy on the expectations from the communication and media sector, the role of citizens changes discursively and practically. Globally, and in Europe, the change of state in providing for social needs has meant that 'citizens' are replaced by 'consumers,' in a system where the state withdraws from its pivotal social role (Webster et al., 2008). The European project is based on a multidimensional change of the state, whereby privatization is combined with supranational decision-making processes, and where institutional conditions over intergovernmental negotiations are added to the weight of international imbalances in negotiating power. Despite the fact that certain mechanisms are put in place to ensure minimum constitutional and political equity and legitimacy, which recognizes national sovereignty (including veto or absolute majority voting systems), international politics is about power. This is important to consider when analyzing the trajectory of media policies in Europe and in particular in a climate of financial and social insecurity, as Europe has been dealing with, in the past five years of the financial crisis.

The pressures on states, societies and economies are reflected as pressures on the media systems and the communication environments in Europe. These are not only, or necessarily, remodelled through law and formal policy, but by the very conditions that determine availability of resources for media structures, support for media workers and journalism, and generally media and pluralistic

media and cultural work (Schlesinger, 1999). Furthermore, the crisis is reflected in complex ways that numbers in the checks and balances of national budgets do not reveal. The implications of stripped public accounts for citizens are that social and essential services provided by the state are diminished, which by consequence means that the most vulnerable social groups, which rely on state provisions for minimal protection, are the first to bear the brunt, disproportionately. By extension, public services, including communication and public service media, are stripped of resources. A vicious circle of falling standards in the quality of services, life and most aspects of social life thus begins.

Within this context, a particular social group is also at the receiving end of both material shortages and discursive hostility: migrants. Europe's common territory, history and experiences are put to the test when confronted with the demands for cultural openness and the consequences of choice-based or forced human mobility. In turn, the ways in which understandings of European identity contest and compliment interlocation with the 'other' shapes the context within which forms of identity are extended to third country nationals. This terrain of migration, diversity and identity is characterized by complexity and, like all areas in European politics, tensions and conflicts. When it comes to the question of identity, migration and the nation often occupy opposing and uncomfortable positions on the European 'Charta' of social and civil rights, exacerbated by the financial crisis. As the so-called middle classes disappear, there is a rise in populist politics, characterized by cultural scapegoating and banal nationalisms. The impoverishment of social groups, as European history has shown, the tolerance of the extreme right by states, and periods of deprivation and recession provide the ground for extreme ideologies that gain visibility and ground. These come to be added to the unresolved 'issues' that Europe has with itself, the nature of its identity, the definition of its 'others,' which depend on viewpoints and interests internal or external, and the purpose of its being. The extent to which Europe can maintain a framework of powerful statement in the face of these challenges will depend upon the symbolic actions and structural provisions that it engages in. It is interesting to note, however, that the crisis and the creation of extreme living disparities in previously largely middle-class societies does not automatically equal despising and fearing the 'stranger.' Alexander (2013) argues that the core element of this non-teleological relation is the relative autonomy of culture. As the author says, 'it is not structural position per se, but rather its active interpretation and reconstruction in terms of polluted representations, that leads the occupants of this status to assume a strangeness in the core group's eyes' (p. 85). Certainly, it becomes harder to identify a 'core' group in the Europe of 50 countries and the EU of 27, when thinking in terms of institutional arrangements strictly, legal formulae and processes, and the concerted effort of European institutions in general to pursue the development of a common European identity. Yet this effort seems to have

reached its limits of efficacy in the current climate of crisis, as political economic dimensions in the constellation of cooperation and coregulation in the monetary positioning of the EU seem to affect the realm of symbolic action, as exemplified through the representation of the crisis in the media in Europe. In this case it is interesting to investigate a little further the possible interconnections of policy and content outcome, and the impact on the identity of Europeans as a matter of urgency.

Identities and citizenship of Europe: A question of media and cultural policy?

Today, media products are both economic commodities and cultural goods. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, European policies have moved in the pendulum between 'box-office' performance and production of European narratives, especially in the field of audiovisual production (see, for example, Pauwels et al., 2007). At the same time, there is a parallel dichotomy – one organized around the role of public service media and private or commercial media in providing 'customers' with what they want. These two fundamental discursive and normative competing positions characterize media and cultural policy with serious implications for national European media landscapes. The impact of this competition is that, until today, for example, it has proved impossible for the EU to produce a strongly positioned policy in support of media pluralism. Another implication is that, Europe-wide, public service media (PSM) are under high levels of, costly, scrutiny. A particular angle of market logic has exempted private media from the same scrutiny, even though their financing, the main justification for PSM control, is partly also public, through individual subscriptions, tax exemptions and other forms of subsidy. The issue of diversity and identity has been more successfully applied in concerted efforts in the case of specific countries in the film sector than in the PSM ironically, perhaps, because the film sector has been prioritized for its commercial value. The EU has been active in protecting European cinema production through programs such as MEDIA and EURIMAGES (see Chapter 18). The latest MEDIA program declares the current strategy:

As well as increasing the global competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors and their scale, the Culture and MEDIA Strands will improve the offer of content available for consumers, with positive impacts on cultural diversity and European cultural identity.

(European Commission, 2011b)

Internationally, in alliance with other countries, the EU achieved the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) exemption rule for cultural goods.

In December 2000 the European Council adopted the Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Article 2 stipulates that 'Cultural and audiovisual policies, which promote and respect cultural diversity, are a necessary complement to trade policies.' In October 2005 the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was passed and solidified the EU position in the WTO/GATT negotiations (De Vinck, 2007, p. 24). The 'cultural exemption' became one of the cornerstones of EU communications policy and still enables Europe to maintain its support for PSM and for the system of subsidies and quotas (see Chapters 26 and 27).

In the past three decades of such policy development, identity has occupied an interesting place. There are largely three interconnected dimensions in the debate of identity and its role in media policies in European media policies. These are (i) the construction or preservation of existing cultural identities, understood to derive from existing national bases of member states; (ii) the construction of an additional layer or dimension of identity, the European identity, which is seen as a vehicle for legitimation of the EU integration project; and (iii) the level of identity as a personal choice and experience and a state of being that might be considered of relevance to media policies regulating the terms and conditions of media production and distribution, but also occasionally content regulation in terms of representation.

These dimensions, one may argue, reflect the social-national, supranational and micro/individual contexts of identity formation and representation. They have preoccupied the EU policy-makers in various legal and other official documentation by way of aspiration (how to become European), 'soul searching' (what it means to be 'European') and cultural policy (representation of cultures and identities) throughout the historical development of media policies. They demonstrate at the same time the struggle for clarity and direction within the cultural, symbolic domain of a public sphere in construction, the EU sphere. Hence, on the one hand, identity in media policy has been seen as a question of preserving European narratives of cultures amid a cultural services and goods market that has proved challenging for European works. Where content is concerned, the angst of lagging behind the USA has determined the policies and understandings of European identity and sense of purpose too. It could be said that the 'nemesis' of European media industries has probably been the US film and general audiovisual industry, which benefits from large-scale markets, a systematic and organized alliance of relevant industries and a track record of successful maintenance of a dominant market position in the world. This is not a trivial point, although it is claimed again and again in writing about the economics of the media industry and in particular of audiovisual content. It is instead a telling output of years of sustained organized and multifrontal promotion of the interests of the US audiovisual industry that has shaped not simply the numbers of admissions in movie theatres of cinemas but also entire

conceptual and legal frameworks at the very international level. The EU has therefore proceeded to produce policies of support for 'domestic' audiovisual production through production and distribution strategies aimed internally towards the single market. The MEDIA Program has become an institutional pillar for the promotion of EU audiovisual works with a strong normative position in the need for the preservation, making and generation of existing and new stories deriving from the societies of Europe and the European experience. As a qualitative mechanism bound to and supported juridically by the European treaties it attains a focus that is increasingly 'instrumental', cross-national and market-centered. At the same time, it has fostered international alliances in the sector, as with Canada, and proceeded to the influencing of cultural policies in other regions (i.e. policy transfer), such as Africa and Latin America (Sarikakis & Ganter, forthcoming).

Culture as a vital element in international relations [...] In this context, it is also important to promote the richness of cultural diversity of our partners, to serve local identities, to promote access to culture of local populations and develop an economic resource which can have a direct impact on socio-economic development.

(European Commission, 2007, p. 20)

This strategy has been followed as one for strengthening the EU's own position of bargaining at international negotiations in areas of cultural production (see Chapter 28). The policy of sustainable development of cultural diversity on which the EU embarked encompasses the protection and revitalization of its heritage and support for the contemporary cultural industries and development of the intercultural dialogue. These elements reveal the global action for culture and the media in the instruments adopted by UNESCO, the EU and the Council of Europe. Within this set of activities, the debate around identity as a core element of understanding the project of European integration on the one hand, as well as of citizens participating in its making, has also been one that has undergone various stages. It is linked to the fundamental questions of the kinds and scope of jurisdictions of the EU over time, its reason for existence and its legitimacy. However, alone, the aim to replace Hollywood films with national ones does not serve diversity, and neither does it provide necessarily multiple narratives of Europeanness, not least because of inner-European, often underplayed, dominations in the cultural sector. This is also a point of critique for European cosmopolitanism developed in Stevenson's work (2005), who calls for attention to the domain of culture, and also the process of exclusion, othering and marginalization. European is not simply a matter of a top-down process of integration between nation states but should be an aspiration and strategy at the level of culture and with resistance to processes of 'othering.'

Shades of identity and diversity in European policy considerations

Indeed, Europeans share a common cultural heritage, which is the result of centuries of creativity, migratory flows and exchanges. They also enjoy and value a rich cultural and linguistic diversity, which is inspiring and has inspired many countries across the world. [...] Through this unity in diversity, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and promotion of a common cultural heritage lies at the very heart of the European project.

(European Commission, 2007, p. 1)

The EU message of 'united in diversity' fulfilled three important functions of a symbolic and normative character in policy-making and in the broader European integration process. First, based on a minimum set of common historical memory, without claiming similarity of experience across history, it did not undermine or challenge the idea of nationhood and nation-based membership as part of the broader European family. Second, it managed to provide a second level of attachment and the first makings of an imaginary community of Europeans. Though its institutional character and top-down approach may not have resonated widely, however, at the level of legitimacy for the often fast-paced European project, it provided a plausible, cosmopolitan almost, narrative. Third, it has served to provide cultural legitimacy to the project of Europe and effectively open, discursively and normatively, but also in some practical ways, the field of envisioning Europe as more than its own 'self', which has been a predominantly economic, market-centered one.

These dimensions are invariably connected to the multilevel dimensions and exercise of citizenship, which is bound with specific sets of rights and responsibilities on the basis of access to culture and cultural works (European Commission, 2007). The issue of a set of rights that relate to the exercise of cultural expression and civic participation are part and parcel of the larger normative claims about media pluralism and democracy. The construction of an 'extra' layer of identity as a matter of European policy and the design of media policies have for a long time been core discursive elements in cultural policies and the cultural agenda of Europe. Both of these conceptual angles are rooted in their 'life' as legal entities on the one hand, albeit in a complex context and in rather limited forms; and on the other hand they derive value as political claims aiming to expand their common and jurisdictional understandings and applications. First, citizenship is limited to the recognition of an individual by a state; European citizenship despite its arguably supranational, cosmopolitan characteristics is still very much dependent on national recognition. Citizenship is also conventionally understood in the light of a limited set of rights, and is bound with responsibilities towards the community and state. However,

broadly, citizenship is understood in its public character and, although a 'neutral' right afforded to all recognized members of an imaginary community (nation), it is effectively subject to the degree of visibility in social, political and cultural terms. Visibility – and legality – are forms for the expression of recognition and, therefore, legitimacy. The subjects whose 'presence' is visible and 'legal' enjoy the legitimacy of their voice: in other words, those who speak from a default position of being recognized as 'citizens' are legitimate voices in public debate. However, legitimacy is not only legally provided or guaranteed but is organized in a complex hierarchy, which depends on various intersectional factors and their combination at any given point in time: gender and racialized identities are some of the most stable factors in relative hierarchies. To those it is important to add the role of cultural capital, socioeconomic position and, of course, historicity.

Cultural diversity as a right, cosmopolitan claim and political action

European societies and Europe – both as an ideal and as a lived experience – are in the transitional stages of an extended period. They have entered a new era of 'uncertainty' of fluidity and of change. The political and administrative changes in the EU are determined to a great extent by national sentiments, but they also have the power to shape these. A European approach to cosmopolitanism through attention to and pursuit of supranational and cross-national allegiances and belongings in the production of culture and media content is embodied in the EU's attempts to institutionalize and legitimate diversity with legal instruments at an international level. So not only, as discussed before, is the matter of alliances with third countries and regions important for the economic dimension of cultural and media production; it is also a matter of a systemic counterpolicy to the dominance of liberalization of culture and mediated symbolic realms through attention to pluralism and diversity, as part of 'heritage.' Within this concept, migration and human diversity, and their reflection in culture, are the object of the Unesco Cultural Diversity Declaration and Convention (for an elaboration, see Chapter 27) – an important, yet for others also not entirely satisfactory text to which the EU is a signatory. Cultural diversity is defined as 'the common heritage of humanity' according to which culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature (Unesco, 2002, p. 4). The declaration has been developed and heralded as a strong statement of cultural rights. It has been criticized for watering down the political aims of counterbalancing the marketization of culture. It has also been questioned

regarding its strength in protecting human rights as 'UNESCO approaches human rights and cultural rights in particular with considerable political caution...[and] has mostly focused on inter-state relations regarding culture, rather than on the cultural human rights of people' (Stamatopoulou, 2007, p. 79). With regard to the content of cultural rights, Stamatopoulou claims that protecting cultural rights means that the state must prevent their violation by third parties – be they individuals or corporations. Fulfilling these rights means that the state must take appropriate legislative, administrative and judicial measures towards the full realization of such rights. Because of their cross-cutting nature, cultural rights also depend on the implementation of other human rights and it is argued that 'the concept of *minimum core obligations* is particularly useful in the case of cultural rights, which are often viewed as a luxury that governments should pay attention to only after fulfilling other more basic needs of the population' (Stamatopoulou, 2007, p. 153; emphasis added).

Europe is experiencing profound changes rooted in the processes of globalization, within which, indeed, cultural questions and the role of the media are fundamental in human-rights debates. Europe's mobility of services and goods has depended on the mobility of subjects, too, although in rather unequal and tiered ways. New, established and undocumented migrants; ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; and other non-recognized minorities are situated at different levels on the hierarchical scale of legitimacy. To consider this position in seeking to understand the place of identity and diversity in media in Europe is important for two reasons: (i) because it demonstrates their place in society and perceptions of them, which reveals ultimately the character and moral standing of a society; and (ii) because the voices of such social groups are dampened down under the noise of moral panics between polarized positions of crime/unemployment, invasion/overflow, cultural absolutism and cultural relativism.

The forms of diversity and cultural pluralism, identity, democracy and citizenship tested in the intersectionality of marginalization in the case of undocumented citizens, for example, is an area largely of neglect on behalf of European leadership in media and culture. The mapping of experiences of migrant people and especially those without formal documentation has shown that next to the material deprivation, cultural, symbolic and communicative silencing constitutes the systematic mechanism upon which these groups are dehumanized from the majority of society (Sarikakis, 2011). Various organizations have documented the violation of social, cultural and economic rights of migrant people, including the right to information, to express opinions and to access counsel and schooling, to name just a few. This means that the narrative of these 'situated knowledges' (Haraway, 1988), political claims for recognition and redistributive social justice are twice as hard to be heard and taken into account as for groups possibly occupying 'lighter' positions in the

scale of prejudice in society's margins. The process of recognition and representation of marginalized groups in political and social terms is intertwined with the process of communication, where media policy of content pluralism and media employment sets the foundations for public spheres fulfilling these political claims. Incoming citizens are treated with both suspicion and excitement as they come to reshape the constitution of what 'Europe' is perceived to be – their presence alters the familiar dynamics of nation-state fictions, such as homogeneity, linearity of ethnic lines and everyday cultures.

'Immigration into the EU is a reality [...] There are no reasons to believe that immigration flows will decrease' (European Commission, 2008). This statement is accompanied by increased securitization, which further challenges the prospects of cosmopolitanism. This 'state of mind' is reflected in the media and their representation of migration, and is further reinforced in EU policy trajectories, whereby functions that are supposed to provide security to citizens are privatized ('reception' centers for undocumented citizens, erection of border walls; see also *Médecins Sans Frontières*) with automated systems to (dis)prove human identity (biometrics). The two elements of the privatization of public spaces, whether home and mobile media, billboards, airports or streets, and their securitization point to the increased control of public spaces within which experiences and social interactions are made. The claim of cosmopolitanism is not only participation in the public domain but also meaningful participation, and under genuine conditions of the possibility of shaping the public agenda. But it also means to recognize the exercise of citizenship as an act that takes place in the private sphere, within the family, and also in spaces that are neither private nor strictly public but are confined, such as prisons and detention centers. Such guarantees for citizenship can be applied in those temporal spaces that are also characterized by a sense of forced immobility and inactivity. Historically, the normative understanding of the place of the concept of citizenship in EU politics has evolved as a major area for policy and provision, political action and institutional reform, and for over two decades has been referred to as the twin element of the debate on culture and media in Europe.

The EU expansion has challenged the cultural dimension of the polity and the Continent to remodel its understanding as a territory with common cultural features on the one hand, while it has also forced member states to redefine their self-perception in relation to a larger identity of being 'European.' Media and cultural policies, adhering to the overall proposal of 'Europeanizing' national political and administrative cultures, also pursue a form of Europeanization. Within this process, policy adoption and change produce significant changes to the contexts of identity formation and the cultural production of an area. The recent history of conflict in the Balkan peninsula and the entering of former Soviet bloc countries into the EU have been met with an application of stereotypical accounts in Western media cultures. The

narrative of the exceptionality of war, for example, as an un-European trait, to be found among non-Europeans (Goldsworthy, 2003, p. 4), has shaped most of the cultural narrative about the stance of media towards conflict and colored their role in constructing and reinforcing selective 'cosmopolitanisms' and Europeaness. Audiovisual production is better suited again to encompassing broader definitional spectra about identity, as through the element of financing and structural support, content production can be steered towards more demanding and 'enlarged' thought-provoking formats. Various mechanisms aim to incorporate the 'other' cinemas' into a broader European area. For example, the Media Mundus program (2012b) places particular emphasis on the region's film productions through Operation Kino through the Transylvania, Sofia, Sarajevo and Istanbul film festivals and by making titles available worldwide on digital platforms. The production of news, however, does not benefit from the same policy provisions, partly because journalism has been an area that Europe only approaches with a soft touch of recommendations. At the same time, it is also due to the combination of market interests that the EU cannot (or, for others, will not) intervene. The result is a lingering and, at crucial historical moments, damaging role of the press in cementing stereotypes and reproducing tiered societies of Europe. Research by non-governmental organizations, such as Article 19, points to major newsrooms and media production deficiencies in awareness, sensitization and inclusiveness. It points to lack of education and of sensibilization, awareness towards EU standards and policies of media professionals, and lack of financial means for that purpose; bad working conditions that inhibit the dealing with topics representing 'diversity'; and a lack of diversity of media staff. Under the magnifying glass of monitoring and stereotyping, neither anonymity nor mutual integration are safe. Cosmopolitanism – in this sense, the 'feeling' of being part of a bigger entity – shrinks.

European crisis: Situating policies within the context of symbolic action

As in Orientalism, the otherness of the Balkan countries has been constructed through stereotypical interpretations in Western popular fiction and film. A similar process of othering and representing Southeastern Europe as a 'wilderness' of mystery is the ongoing response of mainstream media to the financial crisis that, having its roots in the financial institutions of the USA, became acute in Greece and, due to the interconnected global financial system, is currently emerging in other countries. Although the media and public discourse treat the crisis as an ephemeral event, it is more reasonable to assume that it will accompany European societies for a considerable time. This is not only because the economic crisis has triggered a series of global chain reactions to

the economies and civil society but also because, in the case of the EU, it has resurfaced more strongly the old 'ghosts' of democratic deficiency, the sense of 'cultural' separation and the revival of brutal stereotyping, and puts in question the purpose of European integration. In the media and cultural sectors, the crisis has triggered both material and structural changes, and challenges to the governance of media. The same clichés come back to haunt us: the sensationalization of financial, political and social processes, and the persistence of reductionist journalistic values of national-centered and 'we'–'them' formats of storytelling create a conflictual set of public spheres. Moreover, internal migratory waves in Europe, exacerbated by economic need, are presented as problematic, despite the fact that all along, European identity has been as much about human mobility as about human stories. Analysis of European press coverage of the crisis reveals the impact of pressure on a system that succumbs to 'old world' dichotomies, nationalisms, xenophobia, scapegoating and unequal international relations (Sarikakis, 2012; Sarikakis et al., 2013). Research in six European national mainstream presses reveals that the press reports the crisis from a predominantly national angle, presenting the nation as a European leader, powerful negotiator or, in the case of the Greek press, under test to prove its Europeanness. It also shows that political dichotomies split Europe in more segments than unite it, between the 'lazy' south, the 'good children' of special peripheries (Ireland and Portugal) and the 'industrious,' truly 'European' Northern and Western European member states. At the same time, an often neglected dimension in understanding media coverage is media ownership. Its patterns and vested interests – exactly the areas that the EU has not managed to regulate in the past 30 years – have colored media coverage of the crisis and its causes, and have not given a pluralistic account of its impact and solutions. Reverting into comfort zones, diversity and pluralism in ideas, perspectives and stories quickly became the first victim. Mainstream national media have in their majority offered very little by way of reflection on European identity.

Abandon Europe?

The answer expresses my political utopian disposition: Europe must be overhauled in its current internal dominations, but not abandoned as a utopia of grounded, enlarged cosmopolitanism of multiple, diverse identities and universal principles of civil liberties and social justice. But 'Europe,' wherever it may lie, must demonstrate decisive political will to design strategies for the cultural industries and the media by directly connecting with these principles. This would mean direct collaboration with citizen organizations and media, and the regions, which, especially in times such as this, witness the dismantling of cultural rights and ultimately of citizenship. I have discussed elsewhere the impacts of crisis on the periphery's media and cultural sector and the

significant role of engaged citizenship to maintain social cohesion (Sarikakis, 2013). It would mean taking seriously and proactively implementing the protocol of Public Service Broadcasting to the Treaty of Amsterdam, and resolving to fund and protect culture and media pluralism, especially in times of risk such as this, by establishing an emergency fund that is accessible to journalists, media and culture workers and local authorities. It would also mean instilling strong and rich educational resources in schools on citizenship, common purpose and the significance of symbolic action.

Diversity is not only linked to people's origins or the spaces of multifaceted humanity in urban centers; it is also a matter of the exploration of a variety of ideas, intellectual innovation, symbols and perceptions. Policy exhibits a sense of temporality and fragility, as diversity and identity as foundations for social cohesion in Europe have not been systematically pursued across the media. The new Creative Europe (2014–2020) program claims that to 'preserve and enhance European cultural and linguistic diversity and its cinematographic and audiovisual heritage, guarantee its accessibility to the public and promote intercultural dialogue'¹ is one of the main objectives. Geographic and linguistic diversity of programming is strongly emphasized in the new program. However, this is not all: one thing that the crisis makes clear is that European societies demand enlightened leadership and courage in the media and cultural sector, urgently. It is almost unavoidable to think first nationally and geographically, and then, possibly, supra- and transnationally in terms of concretely creating the structures for better, more diverse and pluralistic, and more European(?) storytelling. European policies envision intercultural dialogue and market success – not an impossible combination. Yet media policies are ridden by the consequences of failing to act with political will to actively shape a media landscape based on a plurality of sources, contents and ownership. This has had consequences for both the ways in which Europe itself is being understood and represented in mediated public spheres, and for the ways in which European identity and national and cultural identities are (Lodge & Sarikakis, 2013). If we consider the media across Europe, it is only through PSM that attempts to sensitize workforces and audiences to the more pronounced realities of social diversity – such as through training, thought-provoking programming and some dedicated instruments – have borne fruit. Although there are many and important examples of increased awareness in public media in nation states, not all of them are attuned to the new demands for greater recognition of human experience and respect towards it. Market-driven media, on the other hand, are outside the scope of such expectations, often even normatively.

European societies need cultural and media policies that strengthen the idea that identity is not merely or entirely a private matter, and nor should it be treated as a matter of choice to be satisfied in the market of 'wants' and 'pleasures.' Instead, it has a strong public and political character in which cultural

experience requires the spaces to be expressed and challenged, modified and questioned, reinforced and reflected upon. Media policies in Europe reflect nothing less than the schism of purpose and vision about Europe itself, torn between the urgent realization for the need of legitimacy on the one hand but, on the other hand, also the fulfilment of the very 'basics' of Europeaness, in the form of meaningful and true interlocution among social groups and for the public interest(s).

Note

1. <http://www.efta.int/eea/eu-programmes/media.aspx>.

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