

Raphaela Henze  
Gernot Wolfram *Editors*

# Exporting Culture

Which role for Europe  
in a Global World?



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Which role for Europe  
in a Global World?

### *Editors*

Prof. Dr. Raphaela Henze  
Hochschule Heilbronn  
Künzelsau, Germany

Prof. Dr. Gernot Wolfram  
Macromedia Hochschule für Medien und  
Kommunikation  
Berlin, Germany

ISBN 978-3-658-01920-4  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-01921-1

ISBN 978-3-658-01921-1 (eBook)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013956640

Springer VS

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*Lektorat:* Dr. Cori Antonia Mackrodt, Katharina Gonsior

Printed on acid-free paper

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## Introduction

Cultural transfers between Europe and the rest of the world belong to the history of this continent for over a thousand years. Streams of migration, artistic exchanges, political movements, social imbalances and a history of flights and escapes have determined and determine this ongoing development. However, the history of colonialism, from a historical perspective, has led to a negative image in relation to the term ‘European Culture’. Institutions such as the European Union, and many others, have made huge efforts in an attempt to change this image and to implement a new one based on an understanding of diversity, tolerance and cultural openness. But has this policy really led to an increase in the visibility of European Culture in our global world?

So-called “high culture” including classical music, theatre, literature, dance etc. is present all over Europe, but, for example, how many modern, European literary voices, how many film directors’ or dance choreographers’ works reach the levels of awareness amongst a global audience in the way many of the cultural products from the United States, India, or the Arab World do? Does a genuine European mass culture even exist? And what might that word *genuine* mean in this context?

Somewhat surprisingly, today, Europe as well as European Culture is often connected with the attribute of being ‘old’ or ‘old fashioned’. So it seems that European Culture needs some sort of protection and further explanation. Perhaps though, this is also a compliment and reflects some of the special features of this continent with its countless numbers of cultures, languages and traditions. Discourses of remembrance and legacy play an important role in almost every European country, naturally also questions of postcolonialism and eurocentrism, as well as reflections about edges and centers. When we use the term European Culture we use it as a symbol, as a space for certain traditions, doubts and hopes. Thus, these processes of reflection need time and space to create proper content.

In the development of globalization this approach can appear as something outdated that disturbs the rush of rapid changes, and for some it might even appear as a huge waste of time, money and effort. Therefore, this volume tries to look at the role of the export of culture or cultures as well as European cultur-

al transfers and their special approaches in order to reflect on both their failures and their opportunities.

Some of the many questions of interest to us include:

- What do we actually mean by ‘European identity’?
- Is the export of national cultures (in most European countries subsidized by the taxpayer) still relevant or simply a waste of money and effort in a global world? Will one culture dominate all others?
- Can and should European countries learn, for example from the USA, about how to export popular culture (and is it even possible given the global limitations of most European languages)?
- What are successful examples of cultural transfers and what can be learned from them?
- Do we need new cultural identities? How can we avoid the gaps of mono-cultural national approaches in the field of cultural activity?
- Which role does the European Union play within these processes?

We tried to find authors from different countries to help us with these questions and to get in- and outsiders’ perspectives on the European Cultural Agenda and the diverse efforts we undertake to foster both our national as well as our European cultures.

Although we have authors from eight different countries (USA, Italy, Spain, UK, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Germany) with diverse academic and practical backgrounds as well as experience in the field, we are convinced that, in this volume, we will raise more questions than we will be able to offer answers. We cannot see anything wrong with this and look forward to further discussion. Not forgetting, that art and culture are made and created – always and anywhere – by individuals, not by systems or institutions. The tensions between common perspectives and individual approaches have also provided a guiding question for this book.

*Mai’a Davis Cross* explains why the US-American approach towards public diplomacy and spreading its culture cannot serve as a role model for Europe despite some obvious similarities like a diverse population. She draws a clear line between economic success based on popular cultural products and culture as a means to raise mutual understanding and cooperation. Both are important, but should not necessarily be mingled. As the only US-American author in this pub-

lication, she explains how European cultural products and services, as well as the way in which they are exported, are seen from the perspective of the most important trading partner.

*Claire Burnill-Maier* writes about the narratives of cultural transfers and states that America's economic power has enabled it to influence and shape the values of a growing global audience. She believes that this argument has been used to express a helplessness of other cultures to compete against the American 'cultural juggernaut'. Burnill-Maier's contribution however, seeks to look beyond this and argues that cultural production and output in Central Europe are subject to a 'comprehensive conservatism' dating back many hundreds – indeed thousands of years, from which it cannot separate itself and which is holding back its ability to make its voice heard in the global cultural market. This conservatism is rooted in the cultural narrative of Europe, and is therefore difficult to challenge. In contrast to this, the USA, whose (modern) history spans only a short period, has, until now fewer of these historic ties with which to grapple.

*Raphaela Henze* describes the particular structures of trading artistic goods, concepts and ideas from Europe to other countries. She discusses the phenomenon that all in all Europe is the second largest exporter of content (27 % of all international content in comparison to 50 % by the United States of America) but that the content stays mainly in Europe and mostly does not find its way out. She reflects upon the traditions of so-called "high culture" in different countries and asks for a new commitment to proper investment in culture with self-confidence. Although there are some lessons to learn, Europe is not obliged to copy structures from the USA or other "big players". Its traditions and contemporary culture are rich enough to formulate its own way of cultural transfers.

*Gernot Wolfram* refers to the fact that today 'Europe' is, from a cultural and political perspective, a difficult term. Economic pressures often lead to a form of European culture which is determined by some serious factors of imbalance. In reality, Europe is facing a huge divide between the northern and southern countries at the moment. Many art projects in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy have difficulties presenting their ideas to audiences due to a tremendous lack of money. Does a significant discussion about solidarity between artists and art projects already exist? *Wolfram* believes that European Culture is no-longer a term which represents the necessary spirit of a holistic approach, of common values and a unified strategy for how artists can work together in Europe even in a time of economic or political crisis. What exists instead is a broad approach towards the so-called Creative Industries on the continent. This problematic development is closely examined in his contribution.

Opening with data concerning the immigration to the EU from third countries, *Hilary Carty* argues for change in our cultural organizations that will otherwise no longer be able to uphold the status quo. They will have to develop into truly open, democratic cultural institutions. By doing so, they will not only fulfill their tasks of caring for an increasingly diverse audience, but they will be drivers in changing our societies and cities and thus inspire creativity and growth.

*Michael Schindhelm* writes as an international cultural expert and arts manager about the challenges for European Culture in becoming more visible within global discourses. Missing a strategy, especially in Germany, to present Best-Practice-Examples as sources of knowledge for international partners, he asks for a new process of reflection on how European countries can participate in a more relevant way within the fast global streams of cultural development.

*Ulrich Sacker*, who has worked for the German Goethe-Institut for many years, explains why especially in times of globalization it is important to invest in culture and why national cultural institutions are well advised not to give art and artists a political agenda. With this assumption, he shares some of the viewpoints of *Pius Knüsel*, who has been involved in cultural transfer as director of the cultural foundation Pro Helvetia for more than ten years. *Pius Knüsel* gives a critical analysis of the approaches of several national cultural institutions abroad. He strongly advocates for art and culture not to be reduced to a mere tool of cultural diplomacy and gives advice on how cultural transfer – understood as a joint endeavor and a dialogue between nations – can become fruitful for both the hosts as well as the guests in their respective countries.

*GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens* and *Cristina Ortega Nuere* from the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers (ENCATC) focus their discussion on topics of education within cultural fields and their challenges within a global world. They reflect questions including: How should education evolve in a changing society and environment? Which skills and expertise should education in the cultural management and policy field provide for allowing a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe and beyond? How can networks in the field of culture and education contribute to reforming and modernizing the educational system as well as to creating capabilities to stimulate the sector's ability to innovate through the exploration of fresh and unconventional connections between the creative, business and academic spheres?

German Journalist *Katrin Sandmann* contributes a highly important and unfortunately often neglected aspect in many discussions. That we have thriving cultural diversity, which admittedly we sometimes struggle with, is something that we have to be not only aware of but extremely grateful for. In other parts

of the world artists do not experience the amount of freedom their colleagues in the Western hemisphere do. Where we discuss audience development strategies, members of the Iraqi National Symphonic Orchestra do not know whether they will survive the next performance of European music written by Beethoven, Mozart or Brahms. Even the dominance of US-American popular culture meets its limits in many parts of the Arab world. *Katrin Sandman* writes about the essential power, but also about the vulnerability of arts and artists. She does not see things from a theoretical standpoint; she has gathered her experience in places where being involved with the arts is not only a difficult but sometimes an extremely dangerous occupation.

*Iris Rittenhofer*, who has lived and worked in Denmark for many years, elaborates that national cultural goods and services have already lost huge parts of their national relevance and already possess a transgressive quality. Many of the cultural products, and she refers specifically to Danish design, are, firstly, no longer produced in Denmark, and secondly, many of the companies producing them are no longer Danish but multinational. This is not seen as anything to lament, but as a challenge to manage this transgressive quality of cultural forms and genres. The European Capital of Culture – the title being awarded to the Danish city of Aarhus for the year 2017 – can be a tool to enhance the visibility of this transgressiveness if it really takes the European aspect seriously and makes not only the cities sharing the title during the respective year work together, but all those interested in this most controversial of all EU projects.

*Verena Teissl* compares different ways of dealing with cultural transfers in Europe and the USA. On the one hand she states that the USA did not depend on institutions like the Goethe-Institut or the Institut Français to place itself in the centre of the world and in our minds. On the other hand she is convinced that distribution of goods is clearly a different activity from cultural transfer, which is the main task of foreign cultural policy institutions. Cultural transfer can be understood as a trans-cultural tool: Adapting the ideas, systems and formats of expression of foreign cultures results in new, hybrid cultural and artistic practices. She chooses the example of film and film distribution to illustrate her positions with a concrete genre.

We hope to initiate a debate about the opportunities and risks of so-called typical European approaches with this publication. We would be very pleased if we could open up new perspectives on national cultures and their importance in a global world as well as contributing to the improvement of the quality of global artistic exchanges, not only in Europe.

We would like to thank Claire Burnill-Maier and Brigitte Brath for their hard work in helping to produce this volume. Their scientific sensitivity and their guidance through the final version of the book were of tremendous help. We would also like to thank our colleagues, friends, students, and audiences at a variety of conferences who gave us inspiration for our discussions about this fascinating topic.

Raphaela Henze & Gernot Wolfram

Künzelsau/Berlin, November 2013

# Transatlantic Cultural Diplomacy

Mai'a K. Davis Cross

## Abstract

This chapter grapples with the question of whether the EU can project a coherent image to the outside world through public diplomacy given its significant cultural diversity. Has this been an impossible task or has the EU over time managed to create successful and legitimate ways of augmenting its soft power through the export of its cultural products? To shed light on this issue, I first consider the United States as the target audience for European cultural products, and evaluate successes and failures on a practical level. To what extent and why are Americans aware of European cultures? Second, I compare American public diplomacy approaches to European ones. Given that both the EU and US have high-levels of cultural diversity, I conclude by drawing out the lessons and drawbacks of adopting an American approach to public diplomacy, especially in light of the changing geo-political landscape.

## Introduction

Public diplomacy is typically defined as how a nation's government or society projects itself to external audiences in ways that aim to improve these foreign publics' perception of that nation.<sup>1</sup> Europeans can boast a long list of public diplomacy initiatives centered on cultural engagement at the European, national, and local levels. These cultural initiatives include music festivals, film weeks, food tastings, education fairs, and so on.<sup>2</sup> Through various media venues, there are also radio and TV talk shows, websites, policy papers and other publications that showcase debates, discussions, and even quizzes about what it means to be Euro-

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1 Mai'a K. Davis Cross and Jan Melissen (eds), *European Public Diplomacy: Soft Power at Work*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

2 European Commission, "A Glance at EU Public Diplomacy at Work," Brussels: European Communities, 2007.

pean in terms of both culture and identity. At the elite level, expert visits, training programs, information days, media trips, educational exchanges, and other events are common. This clear commitment to the cultural dimension of public diplomacy is certainly a result of the high level of awareness that EU institutions and member states have of the importance of foreign publics' perceptions of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, foreign public opinion is absolutely central to achieving Europe's foreign policy goals from trade to energy to security.<sup>4</sup>

The European Parliament advocates defining European culture as broadly as possible, but with specific and coherent strategies of promoting it to external audiences.<sup>5</sup> In particular, the Parliament recognizes the connection between culture and foreign policy, emphasizing the importance of culture's relationship to human rights. It stresses the important role of the fledgling European External Action Service (EEAS) in being able to convey cultural messages to foreign publics. And it calls for the EEAS to focus on sharing literature, film, music, and heritage to build bridges with foreign publics, as well as to foster best practices, democratization, and mutual understanding. Indeed, members of the European Parliament see trust building with foreign publics as intimately linked to cultural diplomacy.

Similarly, the European Commission sees culture as the cornerstone of human development.<sup>6</sup> Its research into the role of culture in diplomacy shows increasing demand for cultural products. The Commission finds that given the growth in 21<sup>st</sup> century communication tools, "creative entrepreneurs" have the potential to truly augment Europe's soft power, defined as attractive or co-optive power.<sup>7</sup> According to the Commission, the EU's influence, both internally and externally, is closely tied to its diverse culture. Internally, mutual exchange of culture within Europe promotes increased creativity, which enhances economic growth, jobs, innovation, enrichment, and lifelong learning. Externally, it promotes peace, intercultural dialogue, and conflict prevention – all major goals of EU foreign policy.

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3 Emma Basker, "EU Public Diplomacy," in Javier Noya (ed.), *The Present and Future of Public Diplomacy: A European Perspective. The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy* (Madrid: Elcano, 2006).

4 Committee on Culture and Education, European Parliament, "Draft Report on the cultural dimensions of the EU's External Relations," November 29, 2010.

5 Committee on Culture and Education, European Parliament, "Draft Report on the cultural dimensions of the EU's External Relations," November 29, 2010.

6 European Commission, "A Glance at EU Public Diplomacy at Work," Brussels: European Communities, 2007.

7 For more on European soft power, see Mai'a K. Davis Cross (2011) "Europe, A Smart Power," *International Politics* 48(6), pp. 691-706.

Member states have long engaged in robust approaches to their own national and sub-national public diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> But both the European Parliament and Commission understand that Europe's culture may be most influential when disseminated in a collaborative fashion, (i. e. at the European level), even though it is internally highly diverse. Collaboration in European cultural outreach can be achieved in such a way that cultural practitioners are able to come together in a forum for dialogue, and identify key stakeholders. In other words, there is a strategic dimension to culture as part of an overall European public diplomacy approach.

At the same time, it is undeniable that intra-European cultural diversity makes it challenging to project a coherent image of Europe to external audiences. This is where a comparison to the US might be valuable. It is worth noting that few *individual* countries have a singular culture or identity, even within Europe. The US, for example, is at least as internally diverse culturally as Europe with its multiple ethnicities, vastly different geographic landscapes, and spectrum of indigenous cultures. Yet, the US still manages to project a coherent and quite tangible image that is recognizable around the world. This chapter will first elaborate upon how American audiences perceive European culture, as an example of a key target audience for European cultural diplomacy, and then compare the US to Europe in terms of how well the two actors project their cultural identities abroad. Finally, I will conclude with some lessons for the future of European public diplomacy.

### **The US: An Important Target Audience for Europe**

The transatlantic relationship is often described as the most important and enduring alliance in the international system. This is no more obviously true than when we consider the historical context of the post-World War II period in which there was widespread recognition of the United States' role in supporting Europe through Marshall Aid, enabling the reconstruction and eventual establishment of a united Europe. The US was the first country to recognize the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and the first to establish diplomatic representation towards this fledgling union. In turn, the European delegation to the US was

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8 For a full account of member states' individual public diplomacy strategies, see: Philip Fiske de Gouveia, with Hester Plumidge, "European Infopolitik: Developing EU Public Diplomacy Strategy," *The Foreign Policy Centre*, November 2005.

established in 1954 when the ECSC was barely off the ground.<sup>9</sup> Now, the EU and US are each other's biggest trading partners, together making up around 40 % of global trade in goods, and almost half in global trade in services. They are also each other's biggest foreign direct investors. They work together in almost every area of security policy, both internal (terrorism, organized crime, trafficking) and external (peace, stability, development, and defense).<sup>10</sup>

The EU and US should have a natural affinity when it comes to cultural exchange because of the wide body of shared values that are at the core of their close strategic alliance: democracy, the rule of law, international cooperation, free market, fundamental freedoms, and so on. Even though these values often result in disagreements when it comes to the nitty gritty of politics and policies (i. e. the death penalty, approaches to counter-terrorism, use of force, visa reciprocity, some aspects of international humanitarian law, climate change, access to health care, and so on),<sup>11</sup> core shared values are arguably what really matter in providing a basis for effective cultural engagement.

European culture has a high status in the eyes of most Americans. At its core, European culture is also a central part of American culture as many Americans have European heritage, albeit from generations ago. As Wim Wenders, the famous German film director, said in a speech to the European Commission:

[The American Dream] was the dream dreamed by all the immigrants from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, who had to leave their native countries for a wider variety of social and religious reasons to travel to that "Promised Land" called America. They dreamed the dream of the "Land of Opportunities", and it offered them precisely what they lacked at home: **a future**. It

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- 9 Beginning in 1974, the EU also launched the EU Visitors Program to bring future American leaders to Europe for tours of several weeks with the goal of enhancing mutual understanding. This was primarily for political, rather than cultural, aims. See: Scott-Smith, Giles. "Mending the 'Unhinged Alliance' in the 1970s: Transatlantic Relations, Public Diplomacy, and the Origins of the European Union Visitors Program," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 16(4), pp. 749-778.
  - 10 For examples of how the EU explains itself to Americans more generally, see: EU Delegation to the US, "The European Union: A Guide for Americans," 2008; "EU Focus: The European Union and the United States: A Long-Standing Partnership," *Delegation of the European Union*, December 2010; and Anthony Gooch, the Spokesman for the European Commission Delegation to the US, "Taking it to the U.S.: the EU's Greatest Public Diplomacy Challenge," April 19, 2006, University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy. [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/events/events\\_detail/1934/](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/events/events_detail/1934/).
  - 11 "The European Union and the United States: Global Partners, Global Responsibilities," *European Commission External Relations*. June 2006. Also, a November 2011 Pew Survey of the differences between American and European values provides evidence of the main differences: "American Exceptionalism Subsides: The American-Western European Values Gap," *Pew Research Global Attitudes Project*, November 17, 2011. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/> (accessed April 15, 2013).