

**PRESENTATION by  
Ritva Mitchell  
Program Advisor, Council of Europe  
International Cultural Comparisons  
The State of the Art from a Policy  
Perspective**

**Introduction**

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to participate in this Symposium, and also for making my first longer visit to Canada possible. The theme and the title of the Symposium, **Crossing Frontiers: Issues of Heritage, Culture and Identity in a Comparative Context**, is certainly most suitable for your country. This country has received great numbers of immigrants from all over the world, including Finland, my own native country. These immigrants crossed the frontiers in a very concrete sense, and they had to solve, like immigrants always must, very personal problems of cultural heritage and identity.

Canada is also intellectually a very good place to review and assess the role and value of international comparisons in cultural research and policy making. For instance, the International Comparative Research

Group (ICP), one of the organizers of this Symposium, is a unique unit, which has dedicated its work to international comparisons of cultural policies and trends in cultural development. I do not exaggerate, if I say that some of the best comparative international studies on cultural policies have come from Canada, either from the ICP Group or from other Canadian research bodies and institutes. For more than a decade, Canadian comparative studies on participation in cultural life, development of cultural industries and the status of the artist have also given to European researchers and policy makers invaluable insights into these areas of research.

This very year, 1994, is also a very interesting year to discuss international cultural comparisons and related policy issues in the rapidly changing, integrating and -- unfortunately also -- increasingly more turbulent, violent and intolerant world. We will soon be celebrating the fifth anniversary of the radical turn in Eastern and Central Europe. As we all know, the initial optimism, the belief in the victory of liberalism and the feeling of the reunited European continent have subsided, and doubts -- and even Fear, with a capital F --

have undermined this optimism in the minds of the new would-be citizens of the United Europe.

The recent fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Normandy was also a celebration of the unity of the North Atlantic community. This unity is based on the images of the common battle against the cruellest of all enemies of mankind, fascism and totalitarianism. These images still suffice to unite the countries of the North Atlantic community, that is the countries of Western Europe and North America. What has been happening during the last five years in Central and Eastern Europe definitely indicates that some other images from deeper historical cultural sources are being needed for the forging of a new greater Europe without frontiers. Unfortunately, such images have not emerged, and chauvinist and military images have gained a stronghold in the minds of the leaders and the people in several post-Communist countries.

This year, 1994, we are again at the threshold of a new revolution of world communication systems. The new digital technology is soon bound to change radically the relationship between the production and consumption of cultural goods.

Audio-visual products are becoming increasingly divisible and their producers increasingly receptive to the demands of individual consumers. This new consumer orientation will probably be only illusionary. The contents and structure of audio-visual catalogues of major film and television program wholesale corporations, that is, their stocks of feature films, television programs, video-films, music videos, etc. will determine consumers' choices, and, in the long run, also their tastes and preferences. New audio-visual products will also be increasingly produced to fill the gaps in these audio-visual catalogues and to provide them with new generations of successful genres and products.

In the recent GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] negotiations, cultural products came, for the first time, to the forefront of international trade diplomacy. The European countries fought for the right to subsidize their national audio-visual production. The victories gained in this battle may, however, be undermined by the ongoing technological changes and related new orientations in die production and international trade of cultural goods.

I do thank the organizers for giving my presentation such a prominent position in the program of this Symposium, and asking me to speak about so important a topic as the present state of the arts in policy-oriented comparative cultural research. Against the background of the world events and trends I briefly outlined, I feel that the organizers could have made a better choice in choosing their speaker. National cultural policy decision-makers; leaders of international cultural organizations; and executives of major transnational corporations in culture industries do certainly know better than I, the real value of international comparative research and its results.

I, however, know that the honour to speak here does not pertain to me alone but is also due to the organization where I am presently working, die Council of Europe. I have obviously been asked to bring forth to this Symposium die wider collective experiences of the Council. At this point, I take the liberty to note with satisfaction that the ties between our host country, Canada, and the Council of Europe, the pan-European organization representing 32 European countries, -- or 38 countries if all die members of European Cultural

Convention are counted in -- have recently taken another positive turn. Canada no longer has the role of an observer in the activities and programs of the Council of Europe. Canada can now participate and take active part in all the major programs of the CDCC [Council for Cultural Cooperation]. We at the Council of Europe Secretariat can now benefit even more effectively from the Canadian expertise and experiences in the fields of cultural development and cultural policy, and I feel that my presence here is one of the marks of this new era of cooperation.

I have been given the task to speak about the present state, role and potential of policy-oriented comparative cultural research. Although I was given the right to confine my address to the field of my personal experiences gained as a program advisor at the Council of Europe, I certainly did first feel that the task assigned to me surpassed my analytical skills and my practical experiences. To my relief I noticed, while reading the program of the Symposium, that I can focus my address on some more general analyses and commentaries, and that the same issues that I am supposed to address will also be discussed in detail in die plenary sessions:

in Plenary Number One in particular, where national policy frameworks are being compared but also in Plenary Number Two, which focuses on the participation in cultural life. I also noticed that the Researchers' Forum will discuss methodologies and research designs, so I do not need to dwell in these areas to any great extent. The list of participants made me also convinced that the best possible competence is present in this Symposium to deal with these issues. While examining the list, I recognized the names of persons who have now for years carried out comparative international research either as academic researchers or as advisors of cultural policy-makers -- many in both roles.

The program of the Symposium gives some general outlines for the discussions and debates of this session. It suggests first that comparative research on cultural policies and cultural development is increasingly important for national governments and, second, that this research, on one hand, provides a vital source of innovations and information for policy makers and, on the other hand, promotes international cooperation and cross-cultural understanding.

Those who are involved in international comparative cultural research, certainly know that these statements are not true without qualifications; that they are more or less hypothetical and programmatic. We certainly wish that these statements were true, and we also know that, whatever the degree of their validity at present, we must work to make them more true and valid. We also know that the truth and validity of these statements do not solely depend on what we do as researchers, but also on the decision makers and those responsible for international cultural cooperation. They must understand the information that researchers are providing and transmitting to them, but they, in turn, must also be able to provide for decision makers relevant information in such a manner and form that it will interest them. I wish to underline the word "relevant." With this I mean that researchers fail, if they do not rely on the cumulative and innovative nature of the comparative information, and work for that, but instead satisfy themselves to serve the same standardized information irrespective of the changing conditions and the related need to make change in policies and modes of cultural cooperation.

My following contribution does not directly address these two issues of comparative cultural research, that is, the degree of interest of the decision makers in international comparative information and the role of this information as a source of innovations and increased understanding in international cultural cooperation. I try to approach these topics indirectly and to explore the kind of information that there is in the information markets which prevail between comparative cultural research and its users, and also, the changes that are happening in these markets: what new products, that is, new types of information are being offered by policy-oriented research?

What I say here is by and large based on my experiences as a program advisor at the Council of Europe, and I also use these experiences to document and illustrate my arguments. I will mainly utilize the experiences I have gathered in the European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews. I will also refer to some recent experiences in a more limited project, which has opened to me some broader global perspectives on issues of cultural policy and cultural development. The Council of Europe has promised to

participate in the preparation of the World Report on Culture and Development by producing a European subreport. The planning of this subreport has certainly made me reconsider my opinion about the international aspects of national cultural policies and cultural development. At the same time, I have naturally altered my views about the role of international comparative research and the type of research we need in our attempts to solve the most urgent problems in the cultural field.

### **Perspectives and Interests in Policy-oriented Comparisons: A Basic Typology**

I will use two simple typologies to structure my presentation. The elements for the first typology can be found from the program of this Symposium.

While giving the guidelines for today's discussions and debates, the synopsis suggests that governments, that is, cultural policy decision-makers, can adopt two different perspectives to international comparisons. The first compares domestic development with "similar development in other countries," in particular, the relative success of national policy. The second

perspective looks for "new orientations towards the global environment," by using information that enables governments to identify major trends of international global development in order to react to them.

The program of the Symposium, quoting the 1993 United Nations Human Development Report, also rates cultural participation as "the central issue of our time." This reflects the democratic/participatory interest -- or ethos -- of the World Organization. I am sure that most of us here have also internalized this ethos as the major premise of modern cultural policy. Yet, we also know that participation has its reverse side, too, and that is money. Encouraging cultural participation through the provision of public cultural services costs money, and people's participation in culture, as customers of private cultural services and users of the products of culture industries, brings money into the national economy and to profit-oriented institutions and firms. Thus, the democratic/participatory interest or ethos has its counterpart, the economic/technocratic interest in efficiency of national cultural policy in terms of optimal cultural expenditures of public sector and/or profitability or at least self-sufficient cultural institutions and firms of culture industries.

We can combine these two types of perspectives and interests into the following typology of four different policy orientations. The examples in the cells suggest the kind of role that international comparative research and information can have within these orientations.

What is the status of this typology? Does it describe international comparative policy-relevant information that research has to offer for cultural policy purposes, or does it pertain to policy makers' ideas of the types of information they would like to have? My answer is both and neither. The typology depicts a potential information-market situation between cultural policy decision-makers and research. I will later use the experiences gained in the European Program for National Cultural Policy Reviews to test whether this market situation is really relevant, or whether more comprehensive markets for international comparative policy-oriented information is needed.

This typology needs three further specifications. First, it pertains to orientations of national cultural policy only.

## TYPOLOGY A

### **National Cultural Policy Orientations and Examples of the Related Types of International Comparative Information**

#### **Policy Perspective:**

Cultural policy perspective is mainly domestic, comparing policy achievements with those of other countries.

Cultural policy perspective is mainly international, relating national policy measures to the major global trends of development.

#### **Policy Interest:**

*Interest in Cultural Policy Decision-making is Mainly Democratic / Participatory*

##### I. Example:

Comparison of national indicators on people's cultural participation and access to cultural life with the same indicators in other countries. This is done to assess the relative successes and failures of already implemented policy measures aiming at wider participation.

##### II. Example:

Identification of global trends in the international development of the media, cultural industries and communication technologies. This is done to assess their effects on people's cultural interests, and on the level and type of their participation.

*Interest in Cultural Policy Decision making is Mainly Economic/ Technocratic*

##### III. Example:

Comparisons of national indicators on public cultural expenditures and subsidies to cultural industries with the same indicators in other countries. This is done to assess the relative efficiency of policy measures in the provision of cultural services and products.

##### IV. Example:

Identification of international trends in the production of different types and genres of cultural products. This is done to assess the aptness of the established production strategies of national cultural institutions and cultural industries, and to find them new strategy options.

Another type of information market would have been needed for the analysis of policies and information needs of such transnational actors as international organizations and multinational corporations. Second, the orientations are not mutually exclusive, but usually exist side by side in any given national cultural policy -- although different authorities may maintain different orientations and may need different types of international comparative information. Third, the examples are drawn from the areas that are major foci of national cultural policy in all modern industrialized societies. Public cultural services, cultural institutions, cultural industries, and communication technologies and the media are certainly such areas -- and there are also such areas, where international comparative information can have a major role in the formulation of policy objectives and strategies.

### **Experiences from the European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews**

If we consider the diversity and abundance of information provided by comparative cultural studies, my typology may appear rather elementary. As I already indicated, it is also rather unrealistic as a description of

the types of international comparative information used by national cultural policy decision makers. There is, however, a very specific reason as to why I have used it as the analytical instrument of my presentation. The typology approximates rather well the starting point of the European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews, in that it was initiated as an experiment with the reviews of the cultural policies of France and Sweden. I can use the progress of the Program to illustrate how this rather narrow starting point was unavoidably expanded, when further country reviews were carried out.

The Program, as many of you already may know, was modelled after the evaluation programs established by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the areas of educational, science and technology policies. The stages and procedures of the review are the same as in the OECD evaluations: the preparation of the national report; the appointment of an international group of experts to carry out the actual assessment and evaluations; and the final discussion and debate between experts and national cultural policy decision-makers on

the basis of the report prepared by the experts.

In comparison with the OECD programs, the European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews is more research-oriented. This is reflected in three respects. First, the national report, although it is to be approved by the national ministry responsible for cultural affairs, is supposed to be prepared by a group of independent researchers. Second, the whole procedure is supposed to be more of a review and analysis of the policy as whole, than a detailed evaluation. Third, one of the main objectives of the Program is to produce comparative information of the cultural policies and cultural development of the countries reviewed.

In the last-mentioned respect, the aim is very ambitious: to develop a set of indicators, which would allow the comparison of different countries at least in the following areas: public financing of culture (public cultural expenditures); household consumption of culture; and the level of participation in cultural activities. These indicators actually make up a simple input/ output model. Public financing is the input, which-provides subsidized cultural services, and these services, in turn, expand

cultural participation and alter the patterns of cultural consumption. Without the provision of public services, cultural consumption would increasingly be concentrated on the "passive" use of the products of the media and cultural industries.

In all fairness, it should be added that the whole program of cultural policy reviews has a much more complex design -- with the descriptions and analyses of policy measures pertaining to enhanced decentralization and cultural democracy; promotion of the arts and creativity; preserving and presenting cultural heritage; and more intensive national participation in international cultural cooperation. What interests us here is, however, what has happened in practice to the ideas of the international comparability of the results of reviews and of the development of a set of standard indicators for cultural policy purposes.

Everyone who has participated in developing frameworks for cultural statistics or has tried to maintain international comparability of his or her cultural indicators can guess what happened in reality to the ideas of comparability and standard indicators of the Program. Yet the

attempt within the Program is an interesting case, because the indicators used were supposed to be policy-relevant -- that is, the policy makers were ready to accept the indicators as a valid means to internationally compare the successes and failures of the implemented policies.

To make a long story short, after the preliminary interest, the ideas of international comparability and the set of standard indicators have remained in a secondary role in most of the cultural policy reviews. Of course, the number of cases is still rather few: four reviews, Sweden, France, Austria and the Netherlands are already finished; and two reviews, those of Finland and Italy, are proceeding towards their final stages. In all these reviews, the data for suggested indicators on public financing, cultural household consumption and people's cultural participation have certainly been gathered and processed. In the first two cases, Sweden and France, these data were also in the main focus of both the national reports and the report of international experts. In later reviews, more unique features such as cultural traditions, problems of national identity and the form of government (e.g. federalism) have taken a more dominant role.

There are certainly some technical and organizational factors, which have played down the role of comparability and the suggested standardized indicators. It seems that national groups of researchers, who, especially in later reviews, have had the major role in the preparation of national reports, have been less interested in technical analyses and comparisons of public financing, household consumption, participation, etc., and more interested in factors that would make the evaluative aspects of the national reports more prominent. Also, the very fact that national reviews have not been progressing in parallel, but in a partially overlapping time sequence, has also undermined interest in coordination and comparisons. Radical changes in the economic conditions and related variations (e.g. in public financing of culture) have also made comparisons difficult. In general, radical international changes, which reach different countries at different times, make comparisons difficult -- and sometimes even impossible.

The last remark takes us to the problem that incorporates the main message of my presentation. At the beginning of my presentation, I listed a number of recent or ongoing drastic changes in Europe and in the world as a whole. I certainly do feel that

these changes, in addition to having made comparisons more difficult, have also altered our perceptions and interpretations of both national and international development. In respect to international cultural comparisons, they have enhanced our interest in historical and more unique factors that shape national cultures and international cultural development

The experiences within the framework of the European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews seem to confirm these arguments. The most recent reports, the Austrian and Dutch national reports and the Finnish draft national report, specifically point out major changes, which not only have shaped the orientation of national cultural policies, but have also altered old perceptions and interpretations of cultural policies -- and even historical development of national culture. Of course, the impact of the drastic changes in Europe on the emphases of these reports must not be unduly exaggerated. Austria, the Netherlands and Finland are certainly countries with unique historical and cultural features. These features would have played the major role in the reports under any circumstances. What I yet argue is that changes in Europe have made these features

more prominent -- in the minds of both the writers and readers of the national reports.

### **Expanding the Scope of International Comparative Information**

What, then, are the changes of emphases that we can -- with die above-mentioned reservations -- identify within die European Program of National Cultural Policy Reviews? Or, more specifically, what new types of international comparative information have appeared in the information markets that prevail between cultural policy decision-makers and researchers?

In order to keep my presentation more systematic, I, at this point, may revert back to my starting typology, and suggest how the observed changes in the "real world" might have changed the information markets by expanding policy perspectives and by diversifying policy interests.

I have already suggested that the unique historical features of national cultures, cultural policies and cultural development have probably gained a more prominent position, at least in the minds of researchers. This does, not, however, mean that interest in international comparisons is waning.

Another more general way to express the change of the perspective is that individual countries, their cultures, policies and cultural development, are now seen and analyzed more often from a combined historical/cultural and geopolitical perspective. Nations are still being compared, but, at the same time, the results are related to the geopolitical conditions which have shaped, and are still shaping the history and culture of the countries compared.

The drastic changes in Europe and in the world seem to have a similar "relativising" effect on policy interests. There is an increasing awareness that "cultural participation" is by no means an unambiguous concept. It is now generally recognized that different groups and individuals assign different significance (different "meanings") to their seemingly similar cultural interest patterns of cultural participation.

I will again make the long story short and present a new expanded version of my original typology.

## TYOLOGY B

### National Cultural Policy Orientations and Examples of the Related Types of International Comparative Information: Expanded Version

<b>Policy Perspective:</b>	Cultural policy perspective is mainly domestic, comparing policy achievements with those of other countries.	Cultural policy perspective is mainly international, relating national policy measures to the major global trends of development.	Cultural policy perspective is mainly historical / cultural relating policy measures and options to past and present geopolitical conditions.
<b>Policy Interest:</b> <i>Interest in Cultural Policy Decision-making is Mainly Democratic / Participatory.</i>	<b>I. Example:</b> Comparison of national indicators on people's cultural participation and access to cultural life with the same indicators in other countries. This is done to assess the relative successes and failures of already implemented policy measures aiming at wider participation.	<b>II. Example:</b> Identification of global trends in the international development of the media, cultural industries and communication technologies. This is done to assess their effects on people's cultural interests, and on the level and type of their participation.	<b>III. Example:</b> Identification of historical and geopolitical determinants of national culture and national cultural policy, and comparison of these determinants with those effective in other countries. This is done to find historical sources and / or structural restraints on participation, and to find a means to enhance or remove them.

***Interest in Cultural Policy  
Decision-making is Mainly  
Economic/ Technocratic.***

IV. Example:

Comparisons of national indicators on public cultural expenditures and subsidies to cultural industries with the same indicators in other countries. This is done to assess the relative efficiency of policy measures in the provision of cultural services and products.

V. Example:

Identification of international trends in the production of different types and genres of cultural products. This is done to assess the aptness of the established production strategies of national cultural institutions and cultural industries, and to find them new strategy options.

VI. Example:

Identification of different historically established patterns of financing culture and promoting cultural industries. This is done to understand one's own national pattern, and to see other wider options and their effects on cultural life as a whole.

***Interest in Cultural Policy Decision-  
making is Socio-cultural and  
Oriented to Maintaining or Altering  
Cultural Identities and Meanings.***

VII. Example:

Identification of "meanings" that people assign to the arts and culture, and comparison of these meanings with those prevailing in other countries. This is done to understand better the strengths and weaknesses of the national arts and to reorient cultural policy.

VIII. Example:

Identification of "meanings" that people assign to international, popular and widely diffused products of the media and cultural industries. This is done to find an appropriate balance between national culture and "foreign" imported culture.

IX. Example:

Identification of "meanings" that people assign to their own nation; its history and geopolitical position; their national culture; and their own national identity. This is done to understand and compare such phenomena as nationalism, internationalism, racism and multiculturalism.

This version contains the old typology (cells I-IV) but also incorporates the new policy perspective and interest that I just pointed out. We can have a closer look at cells V-IX in order to understand what new kinds of comparative information they bring into the information market of our original typology.

Cell V can be perceived as the counterpart of cell II of the original typology. The latter assumes that there are universal international trends, especially those relating to new communication technologies, which shape, in the same manner, people's cultural interests and their patterns of participation irrespective of their national (country) context. The new cell V in turn suggests that any policy measures, which aim at altering people's cultural interests and their patterns of participation, must take historical/cultural factors into account -- and even specify them further in respect to past and present geopolitical conditions.

Cell VI relativises the ideas of abstract efficiency in the financing of the arts and culture. It suggests that we must, in order to really understand the effects of financing, not just look at and compare the amount of money and its allocation to different purposes.

We must instead, or at least in addition, look at, compare and analyze different patterns of financing. These patterns may, for example, combine private, non-profit and public financing in different manners. We are, of course, comparing these patterns at least implicitly, when we speak about the "patron state," "cultural policy of the welfare state," or "neo-liberal solutions to the financing of the arts and culture." We certainly do know that these different patterns (or "models") of financing have very definite structural effects on the cultural life as a whole: on creativity, amateur activities and participation in cultural life, etc.

The last row of the typology, cells from VII to IX suggests that the analysis and understanding of cultural meanings and related identities is an important aspect of cultural policy decision making, and that there is a related need for international comparative information. This information can pertain either to more varying and transient meanings assigned to the arts and culture (cells VII and VIII) or to more profound meanings that people assign to their nation and themselves (cell IX). Emphasizing, in the present world situation, the need of the latter type of information,

that is, comparative information pertaining to such phenomena as nationalism, internationalism, racism and multiculturalism, may practically sound like a cliché.

We can now have a concluding overall look at the expanded Typology B. It looks very much like a research program, outlining a whole host of research tasks ranging from practical and technical comparative research on participation and public cultural expenditures suggested in cells I and II, to historical and geopolitical analyses of the roots and determinants of nationalism, national identity and transcultural relations in cells V, VI and especially in cell IX. In between these two extremes, we have areas where research should be focused on communication technologies; international cultural industries and the media; economics of culture; and the varying meanings assigned to the arts, culture and cultural participation.

At this point somebody may ask me to be true to the topic of my address, and continue from here by assessing the state of the art, that is, presenting an evaluation of the state of research in all these areas. I can rather easily sidestep this request by pointing out

that my typology does not pertain to all comparative cultural research, but only policy-relevant research, defined in the terms of the perspectives and interests of my typology. I can therefore simply state that there is a lot of important research in most of the mentioned areas, but rather a small amount of this research can really respond to policy issues raised in the cells of the typology.

### **From a National to a Transnational Perspective**

I will continue my address for a while and bring to the agenda of this Symposium another major issue of methodology and research strategy of comparative cultural research. This is the issue of finding a perspective and information basis for transnational comparative policy-oriented cultural research. The perspective in the above analyses and classifications of policy-oriented research has been national: research findings should serve, or at least be linked to national cultural policy perspectives. We can ask whether we really can have a systematic transnational policy perspective and, if so, to what extent research with a national policy orientation can actually serve as a basis of policy-oriented international research.

The issue may sound unnecessarily complicated, but it is precipitated by a very concrete case. As many of you may know, the World Report on Culture and Development is presently being prepared. The Council of Europe has promised to prepare the European subreport, which will contribute to the preparation of the World Report.

Finding an appropriate perspective for the European subreport has turned out to be a difficult task. The task is made even more difficult by the fact that the subreport should be policy-oriented; in other words, it should identify major European cultural policy issues and suggest general policy lines for dealing with them. All this should, furthermore, be done in such a manner that suggested policy lines and policy measures would be congruent with the global cultural policy perspective(s).

We can first use my Typology B to test to what extent policy perspectives, interests and comparative information bases -- which it suggests for national-level research -- are also applicable on the European level. If we look at the typology closer from this perspective, it is first evident that we simply cannot switch from a national to a transnational level by simply replacing the

word "national" by the word "European," and the word "country" by the word "continent," and "people" by "the Europeans." It is even rather nonsensical to speak about "European indicators," or "meanings the Europeans assign for the arts and culture," or "relative efficiency of European cultural policy measures." This is, of course, partly due to the narrow limits within which we can use "Europe" as a collective actor, and partly also due to the fact that it is difficult to define with what "Europe" and its culture should be compared.

The sense or lack of sense of this replacing process, however, seems to vary from one broader policy area to another. We can speak about the "strategies of European culture industries and the media" --probably because such strategies do exist, at least in the European audio-visual sector. Similarly, we can speak about the "European models of financing the arts and culture," because the differences between these and the non-European models, especially the US one, are well studied. On the other hand, speaking in general terms about the "European identity" and related policy measures is less easy. Identification of meanings that the Europeans assign to

their continent" is still, in many ways, an abstraction.

However, we can also forget the meanings and look at Typology B from a more concrete perspective of comparative research. We can ask whether researchers can actually obtain concrete European indicators for comparative purposes in the different areas that the typology specifies. We know that such indicators do exist, for example, in the areas of economic and demographic development, and it is also possible to obtain similar aggregate or average indicators with respect to cultural development and cultural policy. We definitely can obtain aggregate indicators of the Europeans' cultural participation (e.g. visits to the cinema and European interests in the arts and culture). Also, European cultural expenditures, and subsidies to the media and cultural industries can be assessed, at least as national averages. And, of course, we have nowadays a steady stream of surveys and polls, which try to establish the commitment of the Europeans to "being European," and there, of course, is no dearth of general philosophical, "politological" and sociological analyses of the Europeanness.

Thus, our test of the possibilities to speak about transnational European cultural policy perspectives, and related comparative research and information gives somewhat mixed results. This, of course, is no surprise. We know too well that Europe as a transnational collective actor is yet unfinished in many respects. In the fields of cultural policy, it will probably still remain as an unfinished collective actor for sometime to come. The discussions and debates of the special role of culture in the formulation of the Maastricht Treaty indicated that national culture is one of the ideas to which the European nations strongly adhere, and national cultural policy is the policy area, where any authority is reluctantly transferred to such transnational actors as the European Union.

I conclude my presentation by returning back to the agenda of this session and the guidelines that the organizers have written for it. These guidelines suggest, as I already pointed out at the beginning of my presentation, that, first, comparative research on cultural policies and cultural development is increasingly important for national governments; and, second, that this research, on the one hand, provides a vital source of innovations' and information for policy

makers, and, on the other hand, promotes international cooperation and cross-cultural understanding. My presentation has given a somewhat gloomier picture of the situation. This is probably due to the fact that I have tried to map systematically an extensive field of policy-oriented comparative research. It is understandable that existing research may look rather fragmented and scarce from this perspective. On the other hand, I have not discussed the state of the art of comparative research such as is carried out in academic circles and at such independent research institutes and groups as ICP. I will not contradict my own presentation, when I say that this type of comparative research can really be a vital source of innovation and information for policy makers, and that the information they provide for governments is becoming increasingly more important.

The second, more implicit, theme of my address has been that we need both more profound and more geographically comprehensive, international comparative research and information on cultural policies and cultural developmental trends. By "more profound," I mean comparative research on and information about such issues as nationalism, national identity, and

transcultural communication and cooperation. I know that much research has been carried out in these areas, but, if we look at the present situation in Europe and in other parts of the world as well, more information -- and of course more action -- is certainly needed.

My plea for geographically more comprehensive information pertains to comparative research and information on transnational cultural development policies, which I discussed in the latter part of my address. Although I spoke on this topic from a very definite European perspective, my plea pertains to all comparisons between more comprehensive transnational regions and cultures -- be they called continents, religions or civilizations. Whatever our opinions may be of Samuel Huntington's thesis of the danger of the impending wars of civilizations, he did, in any case, a great service when he reminded us of the fact that we certainly do need more comparative information about other civilizations -- and we need this information to make Huntington's thesis defunct.