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Cultural Diversity as a Political Concept: Chance and Failure

... and Still Some Hope if You De-Globalize a Bit

The concept of *cultural diversity* looks like a self-evident notion, however, it started its politically meaningful life only at the end of the nineteen nineties of the last century. The sudden appearance of this concept is the result of a huge global struggle about the question whether big commercial forces have the right to exploit cultural markets at their wish, or, alternatively, whether individual countries should have the right to limit the activities of - mostly transnational - corporations in order to protect the diversity of cultural expressions. These expressions may come from within the country or from many other parts of the world and should – according to this opinion - not be pushed to the margins of the market by overwhelmingly powerful cultural industries.

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Earlier attempts to save Cultural Diversity

The main protagonists of this struggle have been, and still are, on one side the United States, and on the other side countries such as France and Canada; both parties were supported by groups of other countries. The main battlefield was Geneva where the organisation of global trade has its headquarters. The struggle erupted in 1985 when a new global round of trade negotiations started. The topic of this round was a further opening of the markets of the different countries. This opening should include all products and, for the first time, services and copyrights as well. The name of this round of trade negotiations is *Uruguay Round*, because the whole process of global dealing and wheeling happened to start in Uruguay. However, the name is less important than what was – and still is - at stake.

In order to understand this – and why cultural diversity became such a loaded con-

cept – we have to go back to the years immediately after the Second World War, and even before that. One of the reasons of the long continuation of the Great Depression in the thirties of the twentieth century might have been that more and more countries started to close their borders for goods coming from other parts of the world in order to protect their own industries. Consequently, the economies of all those countries continued to stagnate because import restrictions were catastrophic for exporting enterprises, and thus for the entire economic system. After the war, the idea was: never again such a mistake. Would it be possible that many countries agreed, in common negotiations, to reduce their tariffs on imports and to have in successive stages more freedom of trade, and hopefully more prosperity? Indeed, in 1948, this idea became materialized in the so called *GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*.

However, viewed from a different angle, complete freedom in trade and investments in foreign markets would be harmful

as well. It may not be desirable that foreign companies overrule local producers and push them from the market - certain aspects of local economies are fragile and need at least some protection. In the cultural field, there is the wish that films or music are not coming only from one country, in this case from the United States. Artists and citizens should have the right to create, to watch and to hear artistic expressions made in their own surroundings, as well as those coming from far away. There is – or there should be - a right to protect what is valuable or too weak to survive the storms of stronger market forces and thus to counterbalance free trade. A trial and error procedure to combine freedom and protection is a delicate balance act, which should not be called protectionism. There was a desire to broaden the applicability of GATT to a global context and still guarantee this balance. This is the basic idea behind the *International Trade Organization*; in 1948, balanced principles were formulated in the so called *Charter of Havana*.

Only a couple of years later the United States withdrew from the idea of an International Trade Organization. In the meantime, the US had become by far the dominant economic force; it favoured open markets, and thus GATT, without any restrictions. The entire situation was dominated by the ongoing Cold War. Thus, it is not surprising that the project of ITO died before its birth.

The need to balance commercial exchanges more fairly came back on the global agenda at the end of the sixties of the 20th

century. Quite a lot of former colonies had just become independent, but were not yet fully aware that this was a reality for them, neither in the economic sense, nor in the fields of culture and information. A courageous attempt to challenge the power of the transnational corporations that were mostly based in the western hemisphere was undertaken, but – again - it failed. The General Assembly of the United Nations established in 1974 a Commission and a Centre on Transnational Corporations – with the idea to monitor and to regulate the behaviour of those companies in one way or another -, but already at the beginning of the nineties both Commission and Centre were abolished.

One of the few results of the campaign for a *New World Information and Communication Order* was UNESCO's decision to install a Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, chaired by the Irish law scholar Séan MacBride. In 1980, the commission published a report, entitled *Many Voices, One World. Towards a New, More Just, and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*. This title sounded promising while the report itself was disappointing. The most concrete part is Recommendation number 58 that speaks about effective legal instruments that should be designed to: '(a) limit the process of concentration and monopolisation; (b) circumscribe the action of trans-nationals by requiring them to comply with specific criteria and conditions defined by national legislation and development policies; (c) reverse trends to reduce the number of

decision-makers at a time when the media's public is growing larger and the impact of communication is increasing; (d) reduce the influence of advertising upon editorial policy and broadcast programming; (e) seek and improve models which would ensure greater independence and autonomy of the media concerning their management and editorial policy, whether these media are under private, public or government ownership.' (MacBride 1980: 266) Unfortunately, the report did not indicate what should be done strategically in order to realize those goals.

In defence of the Commission – and of UNESCO as a whole – it must be said that adequate time was lacking to develop policies bringing trade and culture into a more just balance. From the beginning of the 1980s on, neoliberalism established itself as the dominant economic school of thought and practice. In 1985, the United States left UNESCO, considering it as too much inclined to the idea of regulating cultural markets, followed by Great Britain and Singapore. Already from the 60s onwards, whenever the demand was voiced to regulate markets in favour of cultural diversity, the US claimed that this would undermine the free flow of communication, and who could possibly be against an ideal like the free flow? However, free flow has a treacherous double meaning: it is a powerful democratic principle and at the same time an aggressive trade position on behalf of U.S. media interests. 'The core operational idea behind the principle was

that transnational media firms and advertisers should be permitted to operate globally, with minimum governmental intervention.' (Herman 1997: 17)

The 1980 report *Many Voices, One World* summarized the problem of the free flow concept thus: 'It is generally conceded that the concept of "free flow", has, in practice, increased the advantages of those who possess greater communication resources. On the international scene, more powerful countries and bigger organisations for the provision of information (data banks, computerised sources for specialised information, news agencies, film distributors, etc.) have in some instances a preponderant position, which can produce adverse economic, social and even political effects. Thus, it is claimed that the "free flow" doctrine has often been used as an economic and/or ideological tool by the communication rich to the detriment of those less well endowed.' (MacBride 1980: 141)

Cultural Diversity, Free Trade and Corporations

A couple of years after neoliberalism established itself as a dominant force, the above mentioned *Uruguay Round* of global trade negotiations started. Thanks to new communication and transport opportunities, several already big enterprises became *transnational corporations* in the broadest sense, operating easily in all corners of the world. The enjoyment in the board rooms of those huge companies about quantitative and qualitative extensions of their possibilities was great. The

change of operating conditions urged them, so they claimed, to formulate a shopping list of desires which was submitted to the Uruguay Round, and the corporations lobbied fiercely – and successfully – for its realization.

First of all – so their saying went – GATT was a nice idea. Still, all member countries should pledge to lower their import tariffs and other trade barriers on an equal base. However, not all countries complied. Consequently, it was proposed to introduce into this round of free trade negotiations a sanction mechanism. It would allow to punish states that discriminate against foreign companies with import restrictions on every imaginable kind of product. This suggestion was subsequently adopted. In order to administer the process of sanctioning, amongst several other reasons, a World Trade Organization, WTO, was established.

Now we will arrive, more specifically, at the topic of cultural diversity. It became increasingly clear that international business is not only about goods, but also about what has been called services: banking, education, water, accountancy, transport, insurances, telecommunications, health, tourism, information, culture, and so on. The transnational corporations that operated in those fields proposed as a second wish from their shopping list a new agreement on opening progressively the markets for those kinds of services. This became the *GATS, the General Agreement on Trade and Services*.

The third demand was that the corporations' copyrights, patents and so on – more and more called intellectual property rights – would be better protected. To satisfy this desire, *TRIPS, Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights*, entered into function.

Late in 1992, a movement started in France and Canada that was critical about a specific aspect of the services agreement that was under negotiation in the Uruguay Round. The people joining in this movement, soon followed by many politicians, claimed that cultural expressions are no trade products like many others. Of course, artistic expressions have commercial aspects, but they are much more than that. The arts and cultural phenomena embody important aspects of human communication. To hand them over to the forces of the market may threaten the existence of plurality of cultural expressions and, in the end, of all things and ideas, which people have created in their own living space.

In this context, the Articles 19 and 27.1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights were reminded. In Article 19 the wording is as follows: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' Article 27.1 stresses: 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in the scientific advancement and

its benefits.' Time and time again the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Covenants that were follow-ups of this Declaration, speak about "everyone". This gives no room for the idea that, for instance, market dominating corporations should sit at the steering wheel of the cultural life of our societies; quite the opposite should be true.

The United States have considered the movement to keep culture out of the proposed trade agreement GATS as a form of protectionism. Their advice was: let cultural products freely flow and the market - the "invisible hand" - will organize itself in such a way that everybody gets as a consumer what he or she likes. The counter argument was that the "invisible hand" would give no chance at all to smaller cultural units that do not have the marketing power and the horizontal and vertical integration of the superpowers in the fields of communication and culture. The mobilising term used in an attempt to keep culture out of the rough trade context was: cultural exemption. Take care that countries still will have the right to regulate themselves and prevent monopolistic forces, which diminish the variety of cultural expressions from taking over cultural life.

Unfortunately, this exemption idea did not work. A kind of compromise – we arrive in 1993 - between the US on one side and France and Canada on the other side was finally reached: accordingly, culture would indeed be mentioned as a service in GATS – thus, no cultural exemption at all -, but

France, Canada and many other countries would not make commitments to open their markets completely for cultural products from other countries. In daily practice this meant: read a lot of stuff coming from the US and a little bit less from Great Britain – and in any case read more Anglo-Saxon stuff than you have been reading so far. Thus, in this process France, Canada, and allied countries lost the battle to keep culture out of the hard reality of trade liberalisation.

Soon after the Uruguay Round was finished, the concept of *cultural diversity* replaced the idea of conquering the new trade agreement with cultural exemptions. Why was a need felt to start the discussion again about more protection for cultural expressions? Simply, there was a lack of confidence and a fear with respect to WTO: Since its purpose was to liberalise trade progressively, the threat was felt that one day or another France and other countries would not be able anymore to resist to a complete opening up their cultural markets and lose the right of protection – with all the dire consequences.

From where – out of the blue? - came this concept of cultural diversity? How did it , for a while, get such a prominent place in global political debates? It must be realized that cultural diversity was not a completely new concept. UNESCO struggled, during its whole history, in order to find in the footsteps of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the right words for expres-

sing that manifold opinions and expressions are important. Apart from manifold, we find, terms like variety, multitude, distinct, pluralism, plurality, competition of ideas, specificity, diversified, creative diversity and also cultural diversity. But this last concept was a term amidst many others. Now, in the specific context of a huge global political failure, the concept of cultural diversity was, all of the sudden, introduced as a strategic tool. Former ambassador of France at UNESCO, Jean Musitelli, describes the unexpected introduction of this concept: 'The term cultural diversity originated around 1995 by intuition. It was a synthesis between cultural exception and creative diversity. We were not completely sure what the content of cultural diversity could or would be, neither about the precise definition of this term.' (Vlassis 2010: 251, note 4) Obviously, it helped that the concepts of cultural diversity and of biodiversity had a strong connotation and consonance.

The mobilising force pushing the concept of cultural diversity came from the fact that, as time went by, fewer and fewer cultural conglomerates were dominating cultural markets worldwide. Thus, it was recognized that cultural diversity needed protection. This – and the acknowledged right to give protection - was an important political goal worth fighting for. A particularly marked monopolistic situation was noted - for some people maybe unexpectedly – in the field of distribution where Amazon, Apple, Google and a few others were dominating the field. Is one allowed

to speak of a monopoly when several players cover the field? John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney explain: 'When we use the term "monopoly," we do not use it in the very restrictive sense to refer to a market with a single seller. Monopoly in this sense is practically non-existent. Instead, we employ it as it has often been used in economics to refer to firms with sufficient market power to influence the price, output, and investment of an industry – thus exercising "monopoly power" - and to limit new competitors entering the industry, even if there are huge profits. These firms generally operate in "oligopolistic" markets, where a handful of firms dominate production and can determine the price for the product.'

According to Foster and McChesney, the typical production unit in modern developed capitalism is a giant corporation, which, in addition to dominating particular industries, is a conglomerate, i.e. operating in many industries, and multi-national, i.e. operating in many countries. (Foster 2012: 66) In all branches of industry the existence of such a kind of market dominating enterprises is hugely problematic. In the fields that relate intensively to democracy – information, communication, and cultural expressions - it is unacceptable to have our informational and cultural communication controlled by only a few huge corporations.

Tania Voon opens her book about *Cultural Products and the World Trade Organization* with a truth one easily forgets: 'At the heart of many trade disputes lies a "trade

and” problem: that is, a clash between the goal of trade liberalisation and some other goal.’ (Voon 2007: 3) In the philosophy of neoliberalism it is unthinkable that such an “other goal” exists, and, accordingly, trade conflicts are regarded simply as trade-only conflicts between superpowers, whether those are corporations or states. This is, we feel, a simplistic view and it makes sense to observe that there are many real “other goals” that may be in conflict with trade-only policies. Let’s focus, in the framework of our discussion about cultural diversity, on what relates to communication, information and cultural expressions.

First of all it should be recognized, as Edward Herman and Robert W. McChesney observe, that the media 'provide emotional outlets, evoking anger and feelings of sympathy, stress, and release. The media provide amusement, entertainment and distraction. And they provide information (or myths and disinformation) about the past and present that helps to create a common culture and system of values, traditions and ways of looking at the world. The media also sometimes service minorities and subcultures within larger communities, providing them with local news and entertainment and allowing them to see themselves and the world through their own lenses.' (Herman 1997: 2,3) It appears to be clear, taking into account sensitive fields such as human emotions, communications and conflicting ideologies, that there should be as many enterprises as possible

that produce and distribute cultural contents.

Viewed from a different perspective, media concentrations and the existence of huge cultural conglomerates are not really a problem, because such enterprises provide us with many different cultural goods and services. Even if this claim were true – and one may doubt so - one wonders whether media contents are the core issue. Cees Hamelink explains: 'It is however more important to question whether consolidation of media ownership guarantees sufficient independent locations for media workers, enough channels for audience reception and/or access, adequate protection against price controls on oligopolistic markets, and opportunities for newcomers on media markets. Even if the oligopolist could demonstrate quality, fairness, diversity, critical debate, objectivity, investigative reporting, and resistance to external pressure in his offerings to the marketplace, there would still be reason to provide regulatory correction as the marketplace would effectively be closed for newcomers and thus not constitute a free market.' (Hamelink 1994: 174,5) Such a regulatory correction of the marketplace, as Cees Hamelink proposes, is at the core of the discussions about cultural diversity, or, at least, it should be.

Next, we should look at the dominance of cultural enterprises. Are they too big – and what is too big? – and how influential are they? Do they possess and exercise exorbi-

tant marketing power? Several other questions come to mind. Isn't it true that their intellectual property rights are tools for the protection of their investments in hoped for blockbusters, best sellers and stars rather than generating money for most of the artists? Isn't it true that those blockbuster films, best seller books, and music stars push artistic diversity and expressions to the margins of the markets? Isn't it true that this limits the choice citizens have concerning their cultural preferences? Isn't it strange that under such market conditions the citizenship of people becomes replaced by an inferior role as consumers? Isn't it regrettable that local experiences of citizens become less relevant in what they see, hear, read, and experience in the form of cultural expressions? If nearly all channels of cultural and informational communication are commercial, isn't it unavoidable that the free democratic debate of informed and independent citizens disappears behind the horizon?

As a consequence of this type of questions – and of all the uncomfortable answers – France, with the promotion of the new comprehensive concept of cultural diversity, went into overdrive. For the French president Jacques Chirac cultural diversity became a personal priority. During his speech in 2002 for the French ambassadors he positioned cultural diversity in a privileged position of foreign policy and declared that cultural diversity is another dimension of sustainable development. It should serve the purpose of humanising the globa-

lisation and bring the world of global finance under control. Cultural diversity should also contribute to the development and consolidation of a multipolar and harmonious world, based on the global dialogue of cultures. With the concept of cultural diversity, Jacques Chirac positioned France against the financial and commercial globalisation of Anglo-Saxon origin, an attitude that was, it must be said, not quite realistic. (Vlassis 2010: 342,3)

How was it then possible that this lofty concept of cultural diversity with its far-reaching implications raised so much enthusiasm in such a short time – both in cultural circles and amongst many politicians worldwide? A possible explanation is that people started to become aware that the neoliberal economic world was, like in many other fields, unwilling to make any compromises in the field of cultural expressions. Thus, it was necessary to fight and to save at least the bare minimum which under no condition must be lost : cultural diversity as an integral part of human rights.

Cultural Diversity and the failure of the UNESCO Convention

Here the chronology of events. As we have seen, the change from cultural exemption to the concept of cultural diversity originates from the late 1990s. In October 2003, UNESCO decided to prepare a Convention on Cultural Diversity. From then on, things went very fast. In November 2005, the Convention was adopted by the General Assembly of UNESCO. With the exception of the United States and Israel all

countries were in favour of the Convention. In March 2007 enough countries had ratified the Convention to make it a fact. However, this instrument was blunt; it did not deliver anything remarkable. The impressive words of the French president had not become reality - the Convention was nothing more than a paperclip that bundled existing cultural policies from different member states of UNESCO.

In the report for the 6th ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity at UNESCO in Paris, December 2012, this feeling was clearly expressed: 'Some Parties that had the necessary structures and policies already in place prior to the entry into force of the Convention stressed that its implementation has supplemented the existing policies and measures rather than introduced a "major policy shift". This is the case of a number of Parties Member States of the European Union that indicate a certain difficulty in distinguishing the achievements specifically linked to the implementation of the Convention from those related to their existing cultural policies.' This raises the question: How could an international legal instrument and a concept that were so promising become irrelevant in no time? Nina Obuljen expressed the feeling of many people soon after the acceptance of the Convention in UNESCO: 'There was unanimous agreement that the diversity of cultural expressions is something worth protecting, . . .' (Obuljen and Smiers 2006: 21). What

happened that this agreement was not followed-up by practical acts and policies?

The first problem is of course that the Convention on Cultural Diversity did not become what several proponents had in mind: their idea had been to correct – or even resurrect - what WTO had failed to put into place. Garry Neil summarizes the objectives which the *International Network for Cultural Diversity* tried to push forward in the years before the introduction of the Convention: 'The status of the convention must be equivalent to the trade and investment agreements and must prevail where the Parties are considering cultural policies and cultural diversity. And, the convention must confirm the right of States to implement the policies to promote culture and cultural diversity that they deem appropriate.' (in Obuljen and Smiers 2006: 51) Hélène Ruiz Fabri adds to this demand that 'from the legal standpoint, the issue became one of the relationship between rules of international law, it being understood that for such a solution to be credible, the international instrument in question would have to have the same legal force as WTO law, that is to say, binding.' (in Obuljen and Smiers 2006 73)

However, this was not the outcome of the fast process that gave birth to the Convention. Its Article 20.2 is crystal clear about what the Convention is not: 'Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as modifying rights and obligations of the Parties under any treaties to which they are parties.' One must recognize that another outcome

would not have been possible. The member states that have voted in UNESCO in favour of the Convention on Cultural Diversity are also members of WTO, and, thus, are obliged to obey to the rules of WTO. In a new Convention they could not pretend that the WTO reality did not exist for them. This reality obliged them to follow the rules and principles of WTO, and these rules and principles are solely focused on the achievement of progressively higher levels of liberalization of trade. No wonder, then, that Tania Voon came to the following view: 'Against this background, it seems clear that the WTO agreements aim to dismantle trade barriers over time for the mutual benefit of all Members. Therefore, in principle, any changes to or clarifications of the agreement to accommodate cultural policy measures should not weaken the existing disciplines.' (Voon 2007: 218,9)

We must conclude that we have witnessed a rather schizophrenic process. Countries have signed up, enthusiastically, for a UNESCO Convention but this Convention does not have any binding force. It does not give the countries the power to withstand the idea of progressive liberalization of markets, and this lack of power includes, of course, cultural and communication markets. During the negotiating process it had already become clear that the Convention would not have any effect, besides that it may raise the awareness of a political goal: it makes sense to implement cultural policies that are not forbidden by WTO. While it is certainly useful to improve one's awareness and to better define one's

goals, this was not the major reason for the huge mobilising and theorizing efforts of the proponents of a Convention of Cultural Diversity.

Cultural Diversity and the revolving door

This could have been the end of the story. However, the struggle about complete freedom for market forces versus the right to protect specific values – amongst them in the fields of culture, information and communication – has entered some kind of a revolving door. The topic seems to exit – but then it comes back, again and again.

In 2013 the United States and the European Union decided to fast forward negotiations on a regional free trade agreement, called TTIP, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Simultaneously, the US was doing the same with countries around the Pacific Ocean, which should become a so-called Trans-Pacific Partnership. And as if this is not enough: also the EU and Canada are working on a free trade agreement, called CETA, the Comprehensive and Economic and Trade Agreement.

Apparently, huge transnational corporations feel that WTO gives the countries still too much flexibility to make their own regulations – for instance in the areas of food safety, tax evasion, health, environment, as well as cultural diversity – and the transnational corporations consider these flexibilities as trade barriers. In order to make stricter rules, WTO did not appear to be a

useful platform to the corporations; their basic idea was to abolish “trade barriers” between the super economic blocs. Countries which are outside these blocs and like to do business with those within the blocs must, accordingly, subscribe to the outcomes of the negotiations between the US and the EU or the US and Pacific countries, or the EU and Canada. This means that the powerful economic entities would decide for the poorer and economically weaker countries, and without them.

Immediately after the announcement of the start of those free trade negotiations between the US and the EU, artists and many other people in France, followed by the French government, started to claim that culture should not be implicated in such an eventual trade agreement. In the French journal *le Monde* (14 June 2013), the minister of culture of France, Aurélie Filippetti, formulated that her country was prepared to give the European Commission a trade mandate, on one strict condition that is not open for debate: ‘the respect for the cultural exemption. France asks that the cultural and audio-visual sectors will be excluded from any agreement.’

Aurélie Filippetti continued: ‘For France this point of view represents a conviction that has a political and philosophical character. Our country feels very much attached to this conviction: culture is not a trade product like any other. The mechanism of the market is not capable to take into consideration the specific value of cultural expressions We should not leave

culture to the blind forces of the market! This implies, economically spoken, that we should establish strong regulations to assure the greatest diversity of expressions as possible. . . . Cultural diversity is a value in itself. As the opulence of the ecosystem can be measured by the diversity of species that can be found, the opulence of a culture can be measured by the diversity of its expressions.’

Thus, it is interesting to observe that, in 2013, two mobilising forces of the past come back into the political discourse: cultural exemption as well as cultural diversity. It has to be seen whether these concepts will survive the free trade storm that blows over the world. Its power is, to say the least, surprising considering the failure of neoliberalism: nobody can deny that it was the free trade credo that plunged the world into a huge economic crisis. Interesting as well is that the French minister puts the diversity of the ecosystem on the same line as cultural diversity. Thus, if she, and the French government, would be consequent, environmental questions should be exempted as well from the more liberalising tendencies of the trade negotiations between the EU and the US.

And, if we start to speak about exemptions, there are many others to consider. An example: on 24 August 2013, the then still mayor of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, contributed an opinion article to the *International Herald Tribune*. He reproached the Obama administration that it was ‘bowing to pressure from a powerful special-

interest group, the tobacco industry in a move that would be a colossal public health mistake and potentially contribute to the deaths of tens of millions of people.' Actually, the tobacco industry claims that all measures of governments that would keep people from smoking should be considered as "trade barriers", and, thus, need to be abolished. Michael Bloomberg considers 'a deal that sells out our national commitment to public health, and forfeits our sovereign authority over our tobacco laws, does not merit the support of Obama; of the Senate, which would have to ratify it; or of the American people.'

If we count well, at least three sectors deserve to be kept out of free trade agreements: culture and information, environment, and tobacco. It is not difficult, and it would make sense, to add to those three several other sectors. To name a few: for example agriculture, pharmaceuticals, water, energy, transport, financial exchanges, and tenders. Of course, trade is important, but it is even more important to protect inherent values in all those segments of human existence. These protecting exemptions would have as a consequence that we should start a process of relative de-globalization. Such an attitude would bring us back to the spirit of the above mentioned 1948 Charter of Havana, and to the proposed but killed International Trade Organization. One of its strong suggestions was that one of the United Nations organizations would deal with trade.

Consequently, trade would be directly connected to questions of labour conditions, food, health, and so on. It would be linked with the ILO, the international Labour Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO, the World Health Organization, WHO, and, in the final consequence, trade would reflect the basic principles of the UN, formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The present WTO does not even mention human rights. This mistake, we feel, must be corrected. No doubt, trade is a useful human activity, however, it takes place in the context of many other indispensable human activities. Social, ecological, economic and human rights interests interact with trade. They must be taken into consideration, and must not suffer, when trade decisions are taken. If this will finally be realized, then there is also hope for cultural diversity.

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