

Good practices in audiovisual diversity. Hype or hope?

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Abstract

Research conducted on the audiovisual industry within the context of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005) lends weight to the idea that exclusively applying market logic to the field of culture poses a threat to its diversity. It is therefore necessary to identify and foster practices to implement from the public sphere. The question, then, is how to define such practices. The Convention uses the term 'best practice' within a scenario in which this concept, like 'good practice', has been extensively but only vaguely defined. Taking this as a starting point, the aim of this article is to offer a report based on a critical, bibliographical and archival review of how these notions have evolved. To this end, we re-examine their origin and evolution, contrasting them with other related terms such as 'contextual practice' or 'meaningful experience'. We then analyse how the notions of good/best practice are used in the UNESCO Convention and in a series of studies focusing on communication and culture. In short, these terms are deconstructed to suggest a new critical definition that encompasses the characteristics of what might constitute a good practice in the promotion and/or protection of audiovisual diversity.

Keywords: best practices, communication, cultural diversity, audiovisual industry, public policy, UNESCO.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse the origins of the concepts of good and best practice and the implications they may have had –and any possible developments they may have provoked– in debates regarding cultural diversity in general, and more specifically audiovisual diversity.

To achieve this, we first explain how these terms have evolved. We then discuss related or alternative concepts, such as 'smart practice' or 'meaningful experience'. The aim here is to compare the conceptualization of the terms good and best practice with how they are used in the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereafter "the UNESCO Convention"; UNESCO, 2005). The rationale for this is that the Convention is a privileged instrument where these concepts interact with the debate on audiovisual diversity. In addition, we also analyse how these terms are used within the fields of communication and culture. Finally, a critical definition of good practice is offered.

The methodology takes as its point of departure a bibliographical and archival review of how the terms under consideration are conceptualized in different academic fields (especially education, business management, communication and culture) and social arenas (governments, civil society institutions, and national and international organizations).

In this regard, it is an approach that detaches itself from those definitions of good/best practices understood as final, timeless and universal actions. That is to say "the" answer or solution to a specific issue, valid forever after once identified and replicable regardless of context. Therefore, even though it is possible to state that a certain action is good, in the sense of it being positive and that it may inspire others, it is equally important to clarify why, for whom and under what circumstances.

To sum up, it is of vital importance to understand where these notions come from and what we might expect from this terminology, since good and best practices cannot simply be hodgepodge terms that encompass any kind of audiovisual initiative when discussing promotion and protection policies in regard to audiovisual diversity.

2. Good and best practices

We should begin by noting that the Cambridge English Dictionary, for example, defines best practice as a working methodology, or a group of methodologies, officially considered to be the best in a specific business sector or industry. According to María Teresa Cabré (2009), from a general and intuitive point of view the term good practice points to two interpretations. On the one hand, good practice means to be upright, in the moral and ethical sense, and, consequently, is opposed to bad, perverse, deceitful, malicious practices. On the other hand, good practices refer to ways of acting that follow a series of guidelines established, recognized and accepted by a professional or socially representative group.

Thus, to summarize, and following Anne Abdoulaye (2003), we might say that most definitions of a good practice imply a practice that simply works, whereas a best practice would be one that works and is simultaneously the best possible action.

2.1. Origins and evolution

The first known usage of the notion of best practice can be situated in the United States at the end of the 19th century, within two specific fields (González Ramírez, 2007; King, 2007; McKeon, 1998): studies on the organization of labour, derived from Taylor and the so-called scientific management theorists; and agricultural extension programmes, which included the dissemination of research projects on new agricultural methods and techniques.

In relation to the former, scholars such as King (2007) outline how Frederick Taylor, in his widely known monograph *The Principles of Scientific Management*, notes that among the various methods and tools used in each element of each trade there is always one method and one implement which is quicker and better than any of the others, for him therefore the best method and the best implement (Taylor, 1985: 25). As regards the latter, McKeon (1998: 494-495) explains in some detail that the concept of best practice is tied historically to the field of agriculture, especially in the United States. The first extension approach was pioneered in the state of New York in 1911: as agriculture was the local industry, the chamber of commerce decided to hire a recent agricultural graduate to spread the word about innovations throughout the country.

The ideas of modelling and dissemination involved in both fields were widely adopted and developed in the 1970s, when studies on the organization of labour were taken up by industrial management and the

agricultural extension model influenced education studies. Best practice began to be used, on the one hand, as a label for the manufacturing of the best tools to improve competitiveness, and, on the other, for the dissemination of outstanding teaching techniques. As King (2007: 10) brilliantly points out, both versions of the history of best practice can be traced back to the United States, even though one “goes back to the private sector and to management-speak” and the other connects with research-based innovation “promoted at the county and state level”. More specifically, González Ramírez (2007) argues that the extrapolation of this terminology to the field of education occurs as a consequence of evolution in education systems from the 1980s onwards.

In any case, these were the two main versions of the use of the notion of best practice up until the 1990s, when the term first began to influence the defining of public policies as a tool to help remodel administrations, before expanding towards all areas of business management. In 1992, for instance, Spendolini would lead a series of detailed analyses of the concept of benchmarking, leading Davies and Kochhar to affirm, a decade later, that “the rise in the number of studies of best practices has been encouraged by the increased interests in benchmarking, with many companies eager to investigate the levels of performance that can be achieved and how this can be done” (2002: 289). The concept of best practice, which originated in the private sector as a tool to benchmark performance against competitors, has “more recently entered into use in the public sector, particularly as an aspect to the reforming agenda of public management” (Brannan & others, 2008: 3).

Use of the term best practice began to coexist increasingly with that of good practice, revealing that the nuances of the words were (and still are) plentiful and that their definition and distinction have been blurred from the beginning. As an example of this, McKeon (1998) explains how they were traditionally thought to have come from the professions of medicine and law, where they constitute everyday phrases used to describe solid, reputable, state-of-the-art work.

The launch of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) in 1994 clarified and legitimized the term best practice, offering a definition that in fact remains widely used by the organization nowadays. The MOST Programme, still in place, attempts to transfer relevant knowledge from Social Sciences research to those in charge of making decisions on and devising public policies, as well as other interested parties. It is the only UNESCO initiative that promotes research in Social Sciences and, given its importance and later influence, it is worth analysing the definition it offers.

The concept of best practice was originally linked to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, suggesting that: 1) it refers to a creative and sustainable practice that generates an effective response; 2) it can be potentially replicated as a “guideline”; 3) it contributes to the development of policies¹.

Thus, according to the MOST Programme, there are four common characteristics to a best practice:

- Innovative: it develops new and creative solutions to common problems.
- Effective (make a difference): it has a positive and tangible impact on the living conditions, quality of life or environment of those affected.
- Sustainable: it contributes for a lengthy period of time to the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

¹ See: www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm#1

- Potentially replicable: it works as a model for generating new policies and initiatives in other places.

Following these developments, from the mid-1990s onwards the use of the terms good/best practices reached a peak and with the new century they became fashionable labels which ended up permeating nearly every industry and professional discipline. For example, they began to be used in relation to the development of new technologies and computer science, the challenges of governance (good practices catalogues in areas such as law, security, immigration, health, and a long etcetera) and the improvement of industrial processes (quality standards, ISO standards, etc.). True to its diverse origins, "the language of good and best practice is still used very widely today, in diverse contexts, to commend particular innovations, whether in organizations, in technologies or in societies, to a wider audience" (King, 2008:10).

The *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, compiled by the Council of Europe (2008), can easily be pointed to as an example of both this expansion and a vagueness of definition.² Moreover, beyond the terms good/best practice, with the turn of the century there emerged a string of concepts presented as similar and/or alternatives. For this reason, following the above review and before looking into how the term best practice links with the UNESCO Convention, it is worth considering other notions which may allow us to forge a new critical definition of a practice that may promote and/or protect audiovisual diversity.

2.2. Related and alternative concepts

Our bibliographical review has highlighted the following terms as being closest to those of good/best practice: smart, recommended, leading, bad and contextual practices, and meaningful experiences.

2.2.1. Good, best or smart?

Within the business world (among companies, consultants, etc.), the systematic use of the term best practice is very common, although an explicit definition is never offered. Consultants such as Accenture, McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte & Touche or Arthur D. Little use this terminology in the presentation of their activities, taking its meaning for granted.

This is why it is common to hear accusations of the term best practice being used as a notion deployed by consultants to try and convince companies to activate a series of pre-packaged solutions. From this point of view, it is not possible to refer to these practices as best but rather, at most, good. Consequently, good practice would be a more appropriate term.

² For example, to the question of what a best practice would be in relation to intercultural dialogue, the Council states that it will apply a number of loosely defined criteria to those projects or programmes that wish to qualify as an example of best practice. Among these, the following are mentioned: 1) able to show that they promote intercultural dialogue, 2) achieve their aims, 3) managed within a given budget and framework, 4) continue beyond the experimental period, and 5) allow for repetition and adaptation by other organizers in other countries and cultures.

The underlying logic here is that the context and history surrounding the production of any practice are intrinsically linked to it. As a result, the fairest thing to do is to affirm that there are and have been a series of practices that have been good for someone, and that, perhaps because of this, they might also be good for others. Critics of the term best practice point out that declaring some practices to be better than others completely neglects historical and cultural differences, while at the same time claiming universalism (Mason, 2007). In addition, it is also an attempt to hide the imposition of endogenous solutions (Mtahabwa, 2007).

Authors such as Bardach (1994) even propose the concept of "smart practices". Within this variation, the idea is that efforts should not be geared towards obtaining and applying the best possible practice but the most convenient, intelligent and appropriate for each situation to solve a specific problem.

Thus, in short, the first and very simple observation worth making is that if a practice is defined as good, best or even smart, it needs to be explained why.

2.2.2. Recommended and leading practices

The terms good/best practice are often accompanied by the idea that since they are exemplary, they should be reproduced, imitated and replicated. In the case of social programmes, some years ago Nico van Oudenhoven and Rekha Wazir explained very clearly that since practitioners, policymakers, researchers and funding agencies seemed to agree on the fact that there was sufficient knowledge to address most problems, the dominant rationale should be that replicating a good practice was a cost-effective means of utilizing scarce resources. Consequently, organizations should focus on bringing existing programmes up to scale rather than supporting yet more experimental, pilot, innovative, or trial projects (Van Oudenhoven & Wazir, 1997: 3).

From this point of view, good/best practices are characterized by their reproducibility, which is why they are also supposed to be recommendable. Following this reasoning, the terms "recommended practice" and "leading practice" came into wider use in the 2000s to suggest knowledge transfer and replication. This terminology, which implies a notion of being ahead, at the avant-garde, is "softer" than the notion of best practice but takes it for granted that practices can and should be transferred across and implemented in different contexts (Mason, 2007).

Therefore, our second observation is that if a good practice is characterized as exemplary, it should also be clarified for whom (as well as explaining who is recommending what for whom).

2.2.3. Contextual practices

Within the field of computer science, some authors argue that the term best practice should be replaced with that of "contextual practice" (Kaner, Bach & Pettichord, 2002; Ambler and Lines, 2012), while acknowledging that the former has more marketing value, which justifies its wider use. They sustain that there are no best practices, that the value of any practice depends on its context, and that people working together are the most important part of any project's context.

This position is related to those that criticize the use of the term best practice precisely because they do not agree with the fact that a specific action should be recommended as the best approach for all cases.

The idea here is that what may be defined as best changes according to the context and consequently it is not possible to state that a certain practice is the best one but rather that, if anything, it might be the best in a specific context.

Our third observation is therefore that if it is possible to state that something is good, and that it may be exemplary, it will also be necessary to clarify for what purpose, for whom and in what circumstances.

2.2.4. Meaningful experiences and sensible practices

Some Humanities scholars defend positions that share similarities with the ones proposing the notion of contextual practices. However, contrary to the views explained above, they oppose the use of the term best practice. Within education studies in particular there is widespread use of the notions of “meaningful experience” or “sensible practice” as alternatives to good/best practice.

Messina and Pieck (2007), for example, point out that problematizing the concept of best practice and reflecting upon innovation theory prompts them to postulate that the concept of meaningful experience is more open and promising. The noun “experience” alludes to the possibility of reflecting upon the practice itself, whereas the adjective “meaningful” brings the satisfaction of diverse needs to the fore by becoming involved in complex contexts and realities. From this position, what is discussed is not simply why a particular action is good or best, for whom and in what circumstances; the aim is also to establish a clear differentiation by deploying the term experience in place of practice. This viewpoint refutes the possibility of a practice being labelled as best in all different cases and by all agents involved to postulate that, at most, an experience may be defined as a significant, interesting or inspiring example.

Similar to this position, there are studies on inclusive education that prefer to use the notion of sensible practice, understanding it to have a prescriptive character. Operti (2009: 45), among others, defends this position: “There are no international success models to copy or replicate mechanically. However there are trends, references and results to share inter-regionally that look like visions, strategies and sensible practices”. More specifically, Mel Ainscow is one of several scholars to have worked on the concept of inclusive practices in the education field. He has designed, together with Tony Booth (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), an index which takes inclusive education as the organizing criterion.

2.2.5. Bad practice or anti-pattern

Given the terminological evolution discussed above, an alternative to understanding what constitutes a good/best practice would be to refer to the antonyms bad/worst practice, a path which has yet to be theorized. In the software engineering world, the term anti-pattern is a common one. Its origins may be situated in the 1990s, in the work of programmer Andrew Koenig (1995), before later becoming popular in the context of social interaction analysis. Anti-pattern refers to a scheme, pattern, or modality, which is frequently used but is in fact inefficient and/or counter-productive.

Rejecting the terms good/best practice and choosing alternative options such as meaningful experience or sensible practice may help to create distance from some of the more negative connotations associated with these notions. However, this does not mean that the same underlying questions, posed here as observations, should not be clarified; in other words, why, for whom, and in what context an action is

meaningful or sensible. At the same time, the disadvantages of leaving behind a terminology that is already very common need also to be borne in mind.

3. Diversity, communication and culture

Having reviewed the evolution of the expressions good/best practices and a series of related and alternative concepts, we will now address the use of these expressions in the UNESCO Convention and some studies on communication and culture that focus on the audiovisual from an international perspective.

3.1. The UNESCO Convention

The UNESCO Convention, approved at the organization's 33rd General Conference in October 2005, attempts to re-assert the links between culture, development and dialogue and create an innovative platform for international cultural cooperation.

In this sense, it is interesting to note how some of the Convention's articles refer to the term best practices to account for the need to share measures that have been "taken to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within their territories and at the international level" in order to "share and exchange information relating to the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions" (Article 9 –Sharing and transparency).

More specifically, this is expressed in Articles 12 (Promotion of international cooperation) and 19 (Exchange, analysis and dissemination of information), where the term appears explicitly. Article 12 points out that: "Parties shall endeavour to strengthen their bilateral, regional and international cooperation for the creation of conditions conducive to (...) enhance public sector strategic and management capacities in cultural public sector institutions, through professional and international cultural exchanges and sharing of best practices".

The first point of Article 19 details that the "Parties agree to exchange information and share expertise concerning data collection and statistics on the diversity of cultural expressions as well as on best practices for its protection and promotion". UNESCO is directly involved in the promotion of such best practices, establishing in the second point of this article that the organization will facilitate the collection, analysis and dissemination of all relevant information, statistics and best practices.

Nevertheless, the Convention does not offer a definition or conceptualization of the expression best practice beyond its aforementioned use. Neither do the operational guidelines – a series of instructions for signatory Parties regarding correct implementation of the Convention – clarify the concept. The guidelines on Article 9 explain how Parties shall submit a Quadrennial Periodic Report providing relevant information on measures taken to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within their territory and at the international level, as well as on the impact and results of these measures. The guidelines on Article 19 specify the role and responsibilities of Parties and the UNESCO Secretariat and the potential contribution of civil society.

The fact is that Articles 9 and 19, which should be read in conjunction with one another, are essential in understanding to what extent the text can be implemented, given that they can demonstrate its degree of

efficacy in a specific manner. They specify obligations for both UNESCO and the Parties to the Convention (Merkel and Obuljen, 2010; von Schorlemer and Stoll, 2012). Whereas Article 9 provides a monitoring mechanism for joining Parties to apply the Convention and facilitates the exchange of information, Article 19 deals with managing the knowledge to be exchanged and shared, specifying how the joining Parties and UNESCO would contribute in this respect. Therefore, the explanation of what a best practice is, or is not, is key to the implementation of many of the provisions in the agreement.

The first provision of Article 19 complements Article 9 and gives more specific orientation through a focus on expertise in data collection and best practice; nonetheless, as Merkel clearly explains (2012: 496-497), the nature of information remains as equally general as in Article 9:

Is information limited to publicly available data? Or would it also involve private sector information on cultural content, trade and services, e.g. on trading in licenses? Would information on (policy) research be included? Would this include information on challenges, unresolved issues or even differing opinions regarding the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions? Who decides?

These questions affect what we are to understand as best practice for the protection and promotion of diversity in cultural expressions. The lack of thoroughness is still more surprising if we bear in mind that the same UNESCO could have turned to the definition of best practice forged within the MOST Programme. Instead, a "common sense" approach was chosen.

We would suggest here, following Grant (2011), that the absence of a clear explanation for the term in the Convention was due to the fact that the complex negotiations that took place to agree on an international instrument such as this led to a broad wording that would bring as many countries on board as possible. The involvement of the United States in attempting to first stop the Convention and then influence its drafting so as to undermine and dilute its content (Barreiro, 2011) should also be considered part of the explanation for this.

3.2. The field of communication and culture

3.2.1. Good/best practices as buzzwords

Since the beginning of the 2000s, extensive and vague use of the concepts of good/best practice has been common in a number of different fields, as already documented, including research on communication and culture. This is especially true when discussing compilations, catalogues and databases that compile cultural initiatives.

In this regard, there are well-known examples of the cataloguing of practices for cultural diversity that display the aforementioned vagueness within the international arena:

The first notable UNESCO-sponsored document on this issue is *Public service broadcasting: a best practices sourcebook* (Banerjee & Seneviratne, 2005). This text, which attempts to give information regarding the concept of public service broadcasting, constantly uses the term best practice without ever defining it.

The manual *Community media: a good practice handbook* compiles a set of case studies on good practices in community media. It attempts to inspire and support those involved in the promotion of community media and contribute to their understanding while raising awareness about their specific characteristics among those who develop public policies. Even though it states that a good practice includes ideas of adaptability, relevance, sustainability and innovation, among others (Buckley, 2011: 8), it does not include further clarifications about what these issues actually mean.

In 2009, the European Commission supported the publication of the document *Media4Diversity. Taking the pulse of diversity in the media*. This study attempts to select and evaluate the most significant and innovative media diversity initiatives over the previous five years, offering thirty examples. Even though the selection criteria are clearly specified, the rhetoric of those initiatives, initially labelled as significant and innovative, ends up as a discourse on good practices (Internews Europe, IFJ and MDI, 2009: 22-23). Although not explicit, the reader is led to understand that a good practice is one that fits the specified criteria.

Finally, in 2010, the Asia-Europe Foundation and the German Commission at UNESCO, with the assistance of researchers from the network U40-Programme Cultural Diversity 2030, put together the document *Mapping Cultural Diversity. Good practices from around the globe*, which offers a compilation of good practices in the protection and promotion of diversity in cultural expressions (Sekhar & Steinkamp, 2010). Here, a good practice is defined in reference to the already mentioned MOST Programme. However, no further clarifications are included.

3.2.2. From best practices to inspiring initiatives?

In contrast to the above, however, it is interesting to note that later documents show a greater amount of terminological accuracy. Worth highlighting in this respect is the study *Presenting artists from the South. Inspiring initiatives*. Published by the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity (2012), it is a compilation of inspiring initiatives — neither good nor best — collected by Canadian civil society groups to promote cultural expressions from developing countries used in Canada.

UNESCO, for its part, is currently compiling an inventory that will catalogue all of the documents and events that promote the Convention at the international level. Without specifically mentioning the terms good/best practice, the Conference of the Parties has decided to support the creation of a database of experiences and practices related to promotion of the Convention³.

In Spain, for example, this tendency is found in the *Bank of good practices of cultural and development projects*, produced by the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo / Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID, 2009), which does, in fact, define what a good practice is. Both the record card and its help manual specify a series of practical reference points and models as ideal working methods. The consideration of a good practice as an “act or strategy within a particular cultural and development project that has given a satisfactory solution to a specific problem, so that it may work as an example for future promoters and agents” (AECID, 2009: 5), is qualified by explaining the following criteria: innovation, transferability, viability, pertinence, efficacy and positive

³ See: www.unesco.org/culture/cultural-diversity/2005convention/en/programme/articlexxi/

impact, planning, co-responsibility and participation, and the existence of application and evaluation indicators.

4. Elements for a definition of good practices

Summarizing the observations presented here, we understand that the terms good/best practice should never refer to definitive, timeless and universal actions. If an action may be defined as positive and exemplifying, there is a need to clarify why, for whom and in what circumstances.

Given that UNESCO does not define best practice in relation to cultural diversity, despite the Convention using the term, the open debate regarding its meaning and the multiple fields in which it is used vaguely — studies on culture and communication included — we propose leaving the term behind in favour of the use of good practice. There are two main arguments to defend this position: the need within UNESCO for a pioneering, adaptable and non-simplifying definition for the Social Sciences (MOST Programme), and the familiarity of the term good practice, which may contribute to the transfer of knowledge to society in a productive way.

In this sense, we feel it would be appropriate to depart from the MOST Programme's definition due to its widespread use, impact and relevance, in order to rethink and adapt it to the cultural and communication fields.

A critical review of the definition's four elements leads to the following considerations:

First, it is worth noting that an action's efficiency or efficacy alludes to its capacity to achieve the desired or expected effect. An action is effective when it achieves its goal and such a goal must produce a positive and tangible impact on the conditions or environment of the agents involved. This entails the practice being relevant and making a verifiable contribution. The practice must therefore have a transforming effect.

Second, the sustainability of an action alludes to its capacity to achieve the desired effect for an extended period of time. The outcome must survive the initial launching phase and resist any difficulties arising from its implementation. In addition, such sustainability is ideally a product of the involvement of a good proportion of the affected agents and emerges as a result of group effort and consensus. Moreover, this happens if there is a contextual and historical understanding of the issue being addressed. Consequently, the good practice has long-lasting effects. Ideally, the actors involved should be able to review its positive effects over time. It must generate reflectivity (learning and reflection on the experience itself) and therefore feedback (improvement of the good practice itself).

Third, a practice may be duplicated in a time and space other than the one in which its exemplarity was demonstrated. In other words, it may act as a model for actions in other places and function as a lesson to be transferred to other contexts for its imitation. Nevertheless, a practice may be good for certain agents in a specific time and space but not for others. At most, it may simply inspire them. There are no solutions or translatable models *per se*, but rather experiences that may contribute to elaborating a specific action, inspiring other practices on the basis of that. It is important to remember that the inspiring or exemplifying practice should be transparent. If all of the information relating to the processes of its generation and implementation is not available, a practice cannot be deemed to be exemplifying.

Finally, the innovative character of a practice — the development of new and creative solutions to common problems — implies the idea of change as a result of the introduction of novel ideas. In contrast with authors such as Brannan & others (2008), it is here argued that a practice qualified as good given the specified criteria does not necessarily have to be creative and innovative. This is why it is advisable to reject this aspect as a defining criterion of how good an action is.

5. Conclusion: good practices for audiovisual diversity

To summarize, a good practice within the audiovisual field is any action activated by one or several social agents and that is aimed at protecting and/or promoting diversity in any of the phases of the audiovisual industry. Consequently, such an action must be:

- Effective: it must accomplish its goal by making a tangible impact.
- Long-lasting: its positive effects must prevail in similar circumstances over time.
- Transforming: it must contribute to a change in the existing conditions in a positive way.
- Transparent: information regarding its formulation, implementation and impact must be public.

In addition, an action might be exemplary, in the sense of functioning as a source of inspiration for others, and also reflective; that is to say, it might trigger re-thinking through feedback.

Our proposal is founded on the ideas that the exclusive application of market logic to the audiovisual industry is a threat to cultural diversity and that its effective protection and promotion is an essential condition in counterbalancing the functioning of the market. This viewpoint is in tune with the UNESCO Convention and the importance it awards to both the transfer and impact of those actions deemed to be noteworthy practices and the need to share them as such.

Nevertheless, policy measures that can be legitimately introduced to protect and promote cultural diversity within the audiovisual industry must not be influenced or hijacked by any type of initiative presented as good or best without being accompanied by explicit and proper testimony of their excellence. We can mention at least two negative implications of a vague definition of what constitutes a good practice for the promotion and protection of audiovisual diversity. Firstly, in the absence of political commitment, a lack of clarity can lead to the promotion of any initiative whatsoever as a relevant practice in the audiovisual field. If any measure can be applied, policy becomes a façade and immobilism wins. Secondly, in a context of economic and financial crises, with many voices claiming to replicate what has already — supposedly — worked well somewhere else as opposed to “reinventing the wheel”, knowledge transfer may lead to naive assumptions and even contradictory results. If someone else’s measure is simply copied in the belief that its previous success secures its future outcome, policy can be disempowered, colonized, and path dependency can be deepened.

In contrast, adopting a clear, agreed, self-developed and justified definition of good practice, which may or may not follow the one we propose, can ensure more diversity in the audiovisual industry, as only those initiatives meeting minimum requirements would be supported, publicized and shared. In other words, bearing in mind that a practice is always tailored to a specific policy problem, only measures meeting pre-determined criteria should be included in the formulation and implementation of audiovisual policies and compiled in documents such as catalogues, inventories, manuals and guides.

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