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Conference and Panel 'Futures and future-being for Cultural policy – cultural policy as political imaginary of human possibility' at the 12th International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, Antwerp, 19-22nd September, 2022. Panel Chair, Jonathan Vickery (Director, Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies), with Milena Dragičević Šešić (Prof. emeritus, University of the Arts Belgrade) and Serhan Ada (UNESCO Chair in Cultural Diplomacy and Cultural Policy, Istanbul Bilgi University).

A co-authored paper was published in advance of the conference. This text below was delivered as an individual paper (with Powerpoint slides, as represented by some of the images), and over-written after the conference for publication as a text.

Jonathan Vickery: **'Cultural Rights and Cultural Policy's possible future'**

I begin by clarifying some terms — as my anticipated audience is not wholly composed of cultural policy scholars or who have read the published co-authored paper for this panel. Our Panel is entitled 'Futures and future-being for Cultural policy', and we aimed to respond to three issues (defined as research questions): (i): What is the necessary and/or the ideological function of the term 'future' in cultural policy – why is it a recurring or modish term and do we need to discuss this? (ii): has 'creativity' and the discourses of 'industries' (skills-employability-economy) really a threat to our assumed ground in the Humanities (or has supplanted a Humanities-grounded 'cultural' research with a sociology or social science of cultural economy)? And (iii): As we sit in the ICCPR 2023 here in Antwerp – what 'disciplinary unity' does cultural policy research have today, articulated in the programme of this conference? Is it less a 'discipline' than an 'intellectual project', as it has been for various countries in various period (and UNESCO arguably up to the 1980s)? Who is responsible (collectively) for maintaining this disciplinary unity or identity, and is it [as we argue in our paper] contingent on the operations of government (the norms of authority and legitimacy as embedded in governing or political agencies), i.e. with no substantive sense of disciplinary (or knowledge-based) autonomy.

So far, this conference has featured spirited talks and discussions on culture 'from post-modern to post-Covid', the UNESCO Mondiacult event in September [2023], a generational frustration (among younger scholars) on the increasing colonisation of culture by economics (finance and employment agendas), an increasing pressure to prioritise 'impact' driven research, and the continual expectations on public 'engagement' (but not on theory-building). For our PhD students, there remains huge questions on their own professional prospects. Question of disciplinary identity are

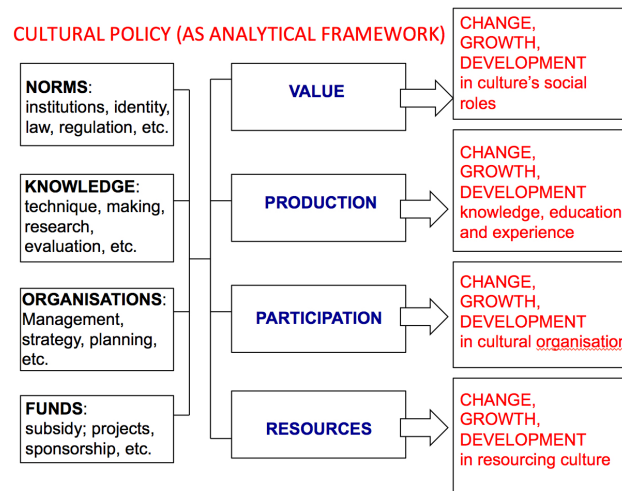
interconnected with the subject-profile, professional credibility and expertise, and vocational future for each student so educated.

In this individual paper, I will be putting forward a proposal for the reinvigoration of disciplinary 'autonomy' in cultural policy research through an engagement with the emerging discourse of Cultural Rights (principally, culture in, and as, Human Rights). Obviously, in such a short presentation, I can only offer a number of essential proposals by way of establishing the parameters of such an aspiration.

But first, Cultural Policy: this is a term identifying a variant of governing policy for culture, but today it also involves the porous, socially-embedded and diverse spectrum of activities and organisations that would be so categorised as culture. This means that when we use the term cultural policy in a research context, we imply both discourse and ideology along with 'practice' (with increasing legal regulation on social diversity, recognition and access, the distance between policy making and cultural production is becoming ever shorter). This is not theoretically contested if we consider a basic rubric that tutors in my Centre used when introducing students to cultural policy: See diagram below.

And as you see, my version of this diagram [I am literally cutting and pasting from a Powerpoint slide I used in teaching] we do not just define cultural policy but define it in terms of an 'analytical framework' — i.e. any policy of culture is at once a statement on what culture is and how it functions from the vantage point of policy — as an object of that policy. In other words, where no concept of culture can be said to be self-evident, policy frameworks become ideological in their annunciation of culture as policy, and as ideology become a significant component of cultural discourse (the institutionalised meanings, theories and documented sphere of culture is a current and evolving means of cognition, at the level of production, organisation, reception and so forth). And yes, the more one looks at this the more one is frustrated in how 'culture' has been tabulated — how *any* tabulation of culture can be justly criticised as a crudification, reduction, simplification or bureaucratic instrumentalisation. But here is our first point: culture as policy is internally ideological insofar as culture itself is not something that can simply be 'captured' (as social or economic policy can articulate social welfare or economic production), by a series of objects, problems,

areas or activities. Culture in policy is a matrix of ideologically-embedded representations.



Even so, cultural policy does have a history that can be tabulated with arguably less frustration, even if it involves a question on what the object of policy is — whether it is identified with documents, directives, projects, organisations, the strategic work of application and implementation, outcomes and evaluation, and so on and on. I am here reproducing another old [and yes, out of date, with spelling issues] teaching slide, which has ordered the history of policy as a thematically arranged ‘discourse’ (which, in the terms of the tabulation, is simply a mesh of practical or philosophical rationales for policy along with the relevant institutions or agencies that mediated these). Again, even looking at past definitions of culture and policy together raise huge questions, but more instructively, urge us to completely revise our understanding of cultural policy (not least in an age of climate emergency, pandemic, security and surveillance, geopolitical conflict, digital media and not least, Artificial Intelligence).

cultural policy discourse – historical periodization		
		main actors
40s – 50s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National identity – national reconstruction – welfare. – historical patrimony and heritage. – Cultural protection, conservation, institution building. – access, public rights (supply side). – high arts (as against applied, and popular). – scholarship and cultural authority. 	Nat.Stat. Gov'ts Councils, nat. museums nat. scholars
50s – 70s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – high art contested (pop art; mass culture). – authority and institutional monopolies opposed. – canons, hierarchies and genres questioned. – interconnections made between art, science, anthropology and psychology. – fiscal pressure on state institutions. – state remains cultural funder and 'owner'. 	Nat.Stat. Gov'ts Councils UNESCO CoE
80s – 90s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – partnerships between institutions, organisations – influence of business and corporate management strategy and planning – cultural entrepreneurship and creative industries – sustainability, wellbeing and quality of life – international relations/development – multiculturalism and minority cultures – urban regeneration; art and architecture – core cities; city regions 	Nat.Stat. Gov'ts Councils Local Gov't EU CoE UNESCO UNCTAD
2000s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – all of the above... – rights, access, equality (ethnicity, gender, etc.) – civic life, public sphere, commons – the city – global cities – global civil society – Integrating creative and cultural sectors – 'New institutionalism' – new arts centres – networks; collaborations; 	Nat.Stat. Gov'ts EU CoE UN – multiple OECD WIPO WB/IMF

Reading this table's historical overview [the 2000's only refer to the first decade, and before digital media began to take hold, after 2010], one sees how the many subject-themes cross the spheres of government, governance (including institutions), consultancies and agency-based research and academic research. These four spheres remain quite distinct in the kind of knowledge they form and implement, but the 'themes' themselves tend to be pervasive. By way of assumption, the diagram illustrates the following:

1: Cultural policy is no longer concerned with 'nation building', even (in the UK) a post-Brexit iteration of nation statehood; and similarly, EU cultural policy (and Council of Europe) is less invested in the project of 'European citizenship' than it was. Nonetheless, place-based and the 'geo-social' does continue to play a central role in cultural policy thinking – either residential agglomerations (towns, cities, etc.), traditional districts or counties, or regional alliances ('the North'; industrial alliances; professional or institutional networks; etc.), and this has become embedded in the rise and dominance of economics-based cultural policy aims, internal to creative industries and creative economy 'framing' of arts and culture.

2: The history of art and canonical art museum collections have become less a structural feature of policies (and values) for arts or cultural institutions. The postmodernism critical attack on the values of canonical history – the ranking of the

products of artistic genius, 'great men', the Renaissance, classical aesthetics, high art connoisseurship (and that end of the art market) – has been decisive, and thus we have seen a shift towards (or valuing of) socially-based cultural production, the lesser known or appreciated women and the experiences and perceptions of audiences (and their changing social demographics). Globalisation has become less a theoretical topic in cultural policy research than a consensus-based commitment to the parallel development of numerous 'other' cultures in the world, many of which are represented within the general population (in the UK, 'multiculturalism' was a hugely influential ideology without much of a public policy). The area of national Heritage remains as State and national patrimony, but where the white monocultural complexion of the 'patrimony' is effectively depoliticised by the tourism industry and the third sector governance (charity interest-groups) that are more responsive to social change in specific heritage-based locations; either way, Heritage research does not have a major impact on cultural policymaking or research in general (though culture in the UK remains fragmented at the level of national policy making).

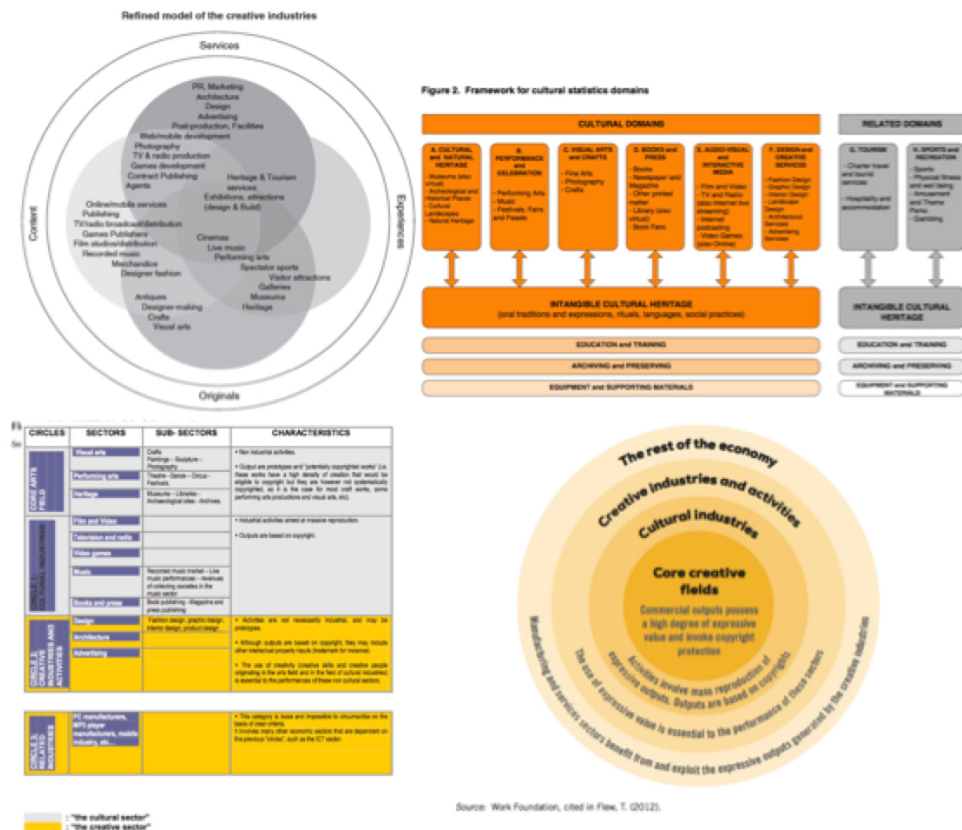
3: Organisational, bureaucratic /procedural, regulatory and 'compliance', validation, evaluation, reviewing and strategy-building, have all increased as a central dimension of policy-thinking if not policy making (in the past, in the UK at least, all 'implementation-application'-based planning – what we now see as part of strategy and management – was kept 'arm's length' as a matter for professionals and semi-autonomous institutions or organisations in receipt of public funds).

4: As a dimension of the above (3), a huge emphasis on the 'law' (particularly rights and equalities, but also Security, and Health and Safety) has made, in the UK at least, national compliance to centralised standards and measures more bureaucratic in a way not seen since the post-War period of 'nation building'.

5: With some irony – given the lack of all the specific social and political conditions of 'nation building', which is where public policies for culture in most countries actually began (either Post-World War Two, or post-colonial independence) – cultural policy has nonetheless revived a sense of public culture, commons, the civic life of cities, and other forms of collective belonging. But, the lack of specific substantive reality to a public realm – a subject of my argument, below, noting the obvious global decline in the prestige and agency of nation statehood — has been masked by the rise of what we may call 'social universalism' or a political rhetoric of rights and equalities

that has replaced a public realm in defending collective welfare, but doing it through pan-cultural identities (gender, race, age, and so forth) and minority group interests.

But I need also to mention another recent and decisive influence on cultural policy, and that is the most notable, the turn to ‘creativity’ – creative industries or creative economy and its many euphemisms, where creativity (once the preserve of artist or bohemian types) is now a global public policy term. Below I post a screenshot of what have been (I assume) the most widely circulated tables/diagrams of ‘culture’ as a field of policy, at least since the UK New Labour government’s 1998 now famous Creative Industries Mapping exercise — for the generation of our students, they contain what is now normative in thinking about culture as applied ‘creativity’.



The international impact of the UK government’s Creative Industries Mapping (1998, then again in 2001) was no doubt facilitated by the appearance of New York Times bestselling books on creativity, notably David Brooks’ *Bobos in Paradise*, Ray and Anderson’s *The Cultural Creatives* (both of 2000), then Richard Florida’s *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002.

The central feature of a ‘creativity’ approach to culture, as numerous scholars and policy commentators have highlighted, was that it was inclusive of a range of industries not previously associated with ‘culture’ (computer software and commercial agency-based design communications) and this had implications for how government defined the arts and culture as policy objects. The ‘diagrammization’ of culture after the year 2000 (and the huge influence of Richard Florida’s economics-based theory of the ‘creative class’ in EU policy circles) rationalised the interconnections of a spectrum of disparate policy areas, minimising the problematic role of the arts and separately, the crafts sector. The four ‘models’ I need briefly to reference are those of the UK’s NESTA (2006), UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2009), EU [2006; by the consultancy KEA, but widely deployed in EU policy making] and the UK’s Work Foundation (2007) — here below [in screenshot] randomly ordered and without any theoretical connection in their ordering. Indeed, their difference supports my ruling assumption that ‘culture’ as a policy theory is and always was hybrid, discourse-based (different in different places), motivated (always animated by a policy agenda) and altogether philosophically vacuous (empty of substantive meaning – the traditional art historical, humanist or anthropological definitions of culture are now redundant).

NESTA’s 2006 model is an innovative framing of culture as a series of four overlapping spheres of production – spheres that can be defined in terms of the production of ‘Originals’ (such as ‘visual arts’), ‘Content’ (most media and publishing), ‘Services’ (most design-based work, like architecture or advertising) and ‘Experiences’ (like cultural institutions, music and sport). The innovative aspect of this model is that it is neither product- nor economic value-based as such but *purpose*-based, yet, whose concept of production is an uneven mix of professions, organisations and activities. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2009) model reinforces traditional genre-based categories as value-neutral lists, separating culture from tourism and sport. The model is helpful in recognising the fundamental role in what is called ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (a euphemism for any historical, social or ethnic culture that happens to characterise the environment of production or any society or place), but also recognises the fundamental socio-institutional conditions of education, archiving and general technical capability or availability of

equipment. The EU's 2006 model (by KEA), was careful to separate out creativity from culture — or creative industries from the cultural industries — but where a self-evident dimension of the creative resides in 'culture' (particularly design-based production); moreover, creativity can reside in non-cultural activities (designing of buildings, for example) and culture can reside in non-cultural activities (the retailing of cultural products, such as DVDs or film streaming). Importantly, the arts are distinct from the rest of culture and fundamental to our understanding of culture itself. Finally, the UK's Work Foundation (2007) model, which is a now-classic 'concentric circle' model (of various origins, notably with David Throsby's theory of cultural economy), does not differentiate between genres or sub-fields of cultural production. Its value is representing how 'expressive outputs' are central to an economy defined by industrialised reproduction and copyright (by implication, artistic creativity is the fount of, or at least central to, the creative industries, and the latter play a major role in the general performance and productivity of manufacturing and services in general).

Of course, few argue that 'creativity' and the creative or cultural economy framing of the arts and culture was not significant, but did allow cultural policy research to gain a certain credibility and national and global policy levels. But, creativity was allowed to frame the arts and culture in a way that stripped cultural policy of the previous resources it did have to offer a strong response to a new global horizon of rapid change — featuring climate and sustainability, geopolitics and the rise of 'civilisational' cultures (religion, ancient, ethnic or indigenous identities and so forth), gender and social identity. Our previous theoretical, literary and philosophical routes were made redundant by social science approaches more capable in the face of a policy world increasingly dominated by economics. The policy fact that culture is important because we have evidence that it plays a role in the 'global economy' is no longer a compelling fact as it was a few years ago. The global is now much more than an economy.

But moving back to our subject — the disciplinary function of cultural policy research — what does the programme and content of this conference tell us on current priorities? Of course, a conference is entirely voluntary and subject to a range of contingencies as it is an economic weight against a representative Global South

participation. But, as a large-scale biennial congress attracting scholars from Australia, New Zealand, South America, the ASEAN region and Africa, the conference programme does present a live snapshot of the disciplinary field and its range of sub-fields, however we can identify them.

<p>Subject-areas represented in this conference</p> <p>'Local-Global', public/private, urban/rural?, value/ contestation, digital transformation. Cultural economy, sectoral challenges, labour and precarity, creativity, industries, professional development, money Democracy, Cultural politics, policy models, governance, networks, museums, contemporary art, books, film, video, Social justice, participation, access and spaces/places, online communities. Arts, projects, entrepreneurship, mobility International diplomacy, policy transfer, branding; development UNESCO 2005 convention; heritage; Policy research, methodology</p>
<p>Subject-areas <i>not</i> represented in this conference</p> <p>Global networks, geo-politics, Asia, Africa, Sub-cultures, autonomous culture zones, avant-garde, resistance and radicalism. indigeneity, colonialism, religion, culture and territory (post-Empire; race and antiracism) and crisis (Lebanon; Israel/Palestinian) Multiculturalism; global political economy, mass migration; diasporas; exile; refugee (sanctuaries and culture etc. Historic institutions and public administration, management, strategy and organisational innovation Russia-Ukraine The rise of 'civilisational states' (Iran, Turkey, China, etc.) Mega-events, festivals.</p>

What can be deduced from the conference programme? Given the contingencies and variables, we can only make provisional observations, suggesting that we are tending towards subjects involving artistic practice, local, organisational and the agents of such, and leaving aside broader socio-political, global and conflict-based subjects (as well as the linguistic or philosophical dimension of policy thought). This leaves open the question on the relation between local/organisational culture and its issues (many of which involve transnational issues like sustainability) and the global geo-politics of culture. I suggest that the question of culture as 'agency' can be a way of imagining a continuum between these two.

Returning to the opening of this paper [and our published panel paper] my working hypothesis is an old fashioned sociological one, that disciplinary identity matters for 'institutional agency' (i.e. for recognition, funded development, student viability;

interdisciplinary empowerment) and an imagined ‘future’ has to take this into account. If this is the case, do we need (i) an intellectual agenda(s) – common projects, scholarly credibility, solidarity and participatory projects? (ii) to define (case archive) more vividly how ‘culture’ still has the facility to provoke social change, intellectual provocation, discourse intervention etc. (was coopted by economic policy for creative industries)? The assumptions underpinning this hypothesis are that cultural policy research has always been ‘governed’ by meta-theoretical imperatives (democracy, citizenship, added to which became enterprise and innovation, economic resilience, and economic innovation, and now sustainability and human rights).

That we pay attention to the global need for sustainability but not for human rights, is not just an observation on this conference programme but from across the publishing spectrum [cf. the conference plenary talks by Gijs de Vries and Louise Haxthausen; and the last five years of the regular issues the *IJCP*]. That Human Rights-based dilemmas are now prevalent at local arts level is obvious — at least, in terms of group identity (recognition), critical thinking (e.g. for or against religion); Black Lives Matter and postcolonial critique; place-based identity and in some places (Eastern Europe) the rival of nationalism. In the published panel paper, we proposed three ways in which we needed a more concerted attention to Human Rights, in part, as the relation between rights and post-Enlightenment social thought is internal to the post-War emergence of a pan-European public policy for culture, and through UNESCO this is becoming more visible. We suggest this by way of how we arguably need to attend to...

- Redefining our intellectual traditions of European ‘critical’ enlightenment as racially/ethnically inclusive (i.e. not a dimension of Western dominance or ‘epistemic colonialism’).
- Asserting parameters between Human Rights-based discourse [domesticated yet ever evolving international legal regime] and local self-determination, cultural democracy (place-based cultural diplomacy through pluralist alternatives to multicultural sclerosis)

- Develop critical influence on policy approaches to 'Cultural Rights' (as a cultural policy discourse and not just a co-opted sub-section of 'Rights-based' Sustainable Development policy fields).

In the panel paper, we observed how cultural policies all over the world are increasingly drawing on international rights-based legal regimes, giving law itself a more prominent role in cultural management and production; the UNHRC appointment of a Special Rapporteur in Cultural Rights in 2009 was a significant moment in the recognition of a 'rights-based' approach to culture; there is, of course, a rise of rights-based approaches to both international and global development policy and agencies like UN Habitat have pioneered policymaking on how this works out in concrete situations (urbanisation; cities and governance). There have featured across the UK and Europe high profile right-based art projects, such as Ai Wei Wei and the Fly the Flag project. And on a less than hopeful note, agencies like the European rights advocates Freemuse report on a global decline in artistic freedoms.

On a concrete note, we must begin by acknowledging the rise of the 'legal' or laws as conditions of cultural production broadly. Since the year 2000, most artists or other cultural producers would now take for granted that (though some of these are place or country-specific) they need to observe the law in ways hitherto they did not. A short list of these legal conditions would reveal some old (e.g. obscenity) and some new (terrorism-related), but also that the increasing diagnostic dimension of law itself (e.g. 'Hate' crimes) inevitably invest a greater authority in the means of implementation (it might all depend on how a judge interprets a given situation and its implications).

- Libel, Defamation and Slander (all countries)
- Obscenity (e.g. pornography) (all countries, less EU)
- Copyright/IP – national and international regimes (all countries)
- Confidential information (e.g. state security; military: all countries)
- Terrorism offenses (e.g. glorifying terror) (most countries)
- Offending the State (e.g. Turkey; in law even France and the Netherlands)
- Blasphemy (many Islamic countries; traditional Christian)
- Offending the Church (e.g. Greece; Russia)

- Hate speech (UK; EU; USA)
- Theft or appropriation (e.g. Holocaust Era Art Recovery Act)

As a counter-balance to an increasingly legal and litigious environment for culture (and indeed any form of communication in the public sphere, whether dissent within government or state, politics and protest, journalism or religion), Human Rights have become significant. Currently, the human rights pertaining to the arts and culture are the following (followed by the relevant article in the original Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), which are re-phrased within the 1966 ‘covenants’ [legally binding] of International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – altogether now referred to as the ‘International Bill of Human Rights’ [added to which are various protocols and amendments].

Categories of Rights as directly pertaining to cultural policy (and can be phrased as Cultural Rights)	UDHR article
Right to education	Article 26
Right to participate in cultural life, community and the benefits of scientific advancement	Article 27
Right to information, including freedom of opinion and expression	Article 19
Freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Article 18
Right to freedom of association	Article 20

Cf. <https://en.unesco.org/udhr>

My task here is to propose a basic Human Rights framework for cultural policy research, giving cultural policy a ‘disciplinary’ project (albeit with ‘trans-disciplinary’ knowledge). The intellectual weight would remain on the ‘culture’ and not the ‘rights’ — which is a usual pitfall; we should not simply apply human rights law to culture, which has always been problematic for modern and contemporary art, religious and indigenous peoples. Human Rights has, unfortunately, been politicised and subject to all kinds of ‘protest rhetoric’ and this can make for confusion on the relation between law, society and culture, and where Human Rights is everywhere subject to false representation or agenda driven interpretation. What I do here is simply identify

the challenge and parameters of designing a disciplinary identity for cultural policy research – and do so on the basis of Cultural Rights.

The first challenge is to recognise the expansive spectrum of what can be called ‘culture’ – and do so from, on the one side, traditional notions of land/territory, ethnicity/indigeneity, heritage/patrimony, and all the anthropological concepts of ‘ways of life’ culture (from food, community, dress, sub-cultural identities, and so forth), to, on the other side, the realm of contemporary arts and cultural institutions, to the creative industries (including the digital and media as they extend away from culture into design innovation-based manufacturing). Defining ‘culture’ based on specific genres of art, practices of creativity or invention, and certain products or objects, tends to become vague as it is complicated, and so mapping out of the ‘realms’ of culture as place-specific activity can obviate this. A place-based approach may suggest cultural ‘ecology’ and ecosystem approaches, and so forth, but these naturalist frameworks are less able to comprehend the actual contradictions, exploitations and absences in ‘culture’ as they play a role in configuring the cultural life of any given place. i.e. ecosystem approaches assume that culture is a coherent self-sustaining whole and not the fragmentary and contested landscape of struggle that it often is in some places. A ‘mapping’ of what culture means and appears as in a given place will be important in (a) recognising forms of unofficial, non-institutional, unfashionable or politically difficult, forms of culture from recognised culture; (b) demarcating the culture that is critical to the human dignity, fulfillment and expression, demanded by Human Rights, from the culture that is not central to that.

As to (a) the mapping process is not ‘morally’-underpinned, in the sense that a cultural policy project should not assume an ‘equality’ between the cultural forms or practices or communities it identifies, or is obligated to support such equally (i.e. a chronic problem with public policies the world over is that it tends only to recognise the culture it intends to support, and only supports culture to the extent that it approves of it — an approval often heavily weighed in favour of historical forms of culture). My proposal for a ‘mapping’ as a basis of cultural policy thinking is therefore value-neutral, and should be conducted as an improvised form of cultural geography.

My second proposal is to deconstruct the dominant ‘creative economy’ models that

have played a role in cultural policy making — using the mapping exercise to gauge how far the ‘economic’ has pervaded social and cultural policy, and define (a) how the economic does aid our understanding of productivity and labour, and the relation between artistic forms of creativity, place-building, clusters and synergies, youth culture, design, fashion pop music, industry and employment; but, (b) how the ‘economic’ has generated a blindness to the social and cultural dynamics that so often form the material conditions of creativity and cultural productivity per se; and have ‘colonised’ realms of society and culture – from an economics-driven bureaucratic management of social resources in local public authorities, to strategic and financial management that is dominant in the arts, to an education sector that is often driven by training models and career imperatives.

Cultural policy has routinely ignored many areas of culture, largely as a public policy endeavour it only recognises what will become a candidate for public funding. This traditional public administration, institutional bureaucracy, and funding system-based framework of cultural policy, still remains dominant in many parts of the world. This should be dissolved as far as is possible – not because policy is not inherently political or institutions are intrinsically bureaucratic, but that culture is not a sphere of human life that simply replicates behaviours, values or activities from political, social and economic realms — culture is indeed pervasive, and has social and economic dimensions for sure, but is also capable of evolving its own forms of social and economic life (management, production, project, values, behaviours and activities, institutions and organisations) and historically culture has had its own ‘politics’ (the politics of culture and the cultural-political in the face of other forms of politics).

The two proposals above are aimed at critical or active *knowledge* – addressing the paucity of research knowledge and ‘epistemic communities’ of cultural policy in specific places, but also addressing the question of self-knowledge, the critical reflexivity of culture itself, how ‘culture’, while a vague, expansive, term, can nonetheless generate specific forms of agency, productivity and organisation. This latter form of knowledge, then, culture’s self-knowledge, is a means to empowerment and the creation of a strong sense of culture’s ‘public’ validity as a matter of agency.

Culture's *political agency* – in a world in which social and economic forces are growing stronger and claiming hegemony over values (how to live) – will become significant to the survival of local or even national public spheres. I hold to the traditional axiom that an autonomous public sphere is a central component of any functioning democracy, but would venture to say that what constitutes 'public' is contingent upon culture (upon an imagined or generalised comprehension of collective coexistence as participants in a democratic polity governed by knowledge through deliberation). This is my assumption, at least, as an assertion it would need arguing through, of course; but it's not a complicated proposal, whereby a democratic public realm is regarded as dependent upon a democratic culture (of behaviour, values, tolerance of ideas, and so forth), and a democratic culture is not itself constructed by political institutions but emerges from a public culture (and a 'culture' that involves non-cultural institutions of civil society as much as institutions of the arts, heritage or other activities we see as internal to our concept of culture).

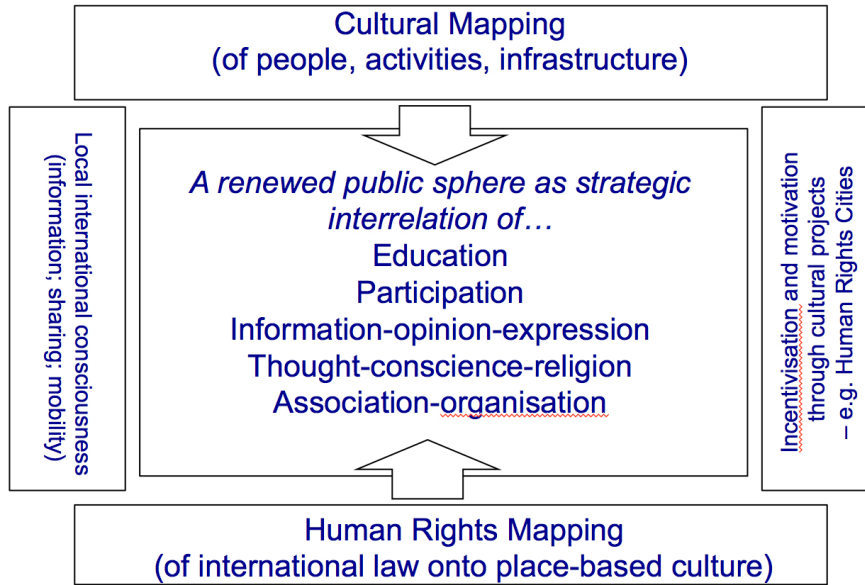
Culture's political agency — as being a formative force in a public realm is not something we can imagine through the responsibilities of cultural management, curating, or creative industries enterprise — even though ideas, intellectual leadership and social impact has been identified in these areas. What is required is a policy-level strategy framework that, grounded on the critical active 'mapping' knowledge above, can define culture as a form of agency. The 'definition' is reflexive and does not attempt to erase or mask the inherent complexities or even contradictions of the relation between culture (often specific, local, historical, ethnic or belief-based, even disruptive and dissenting) and human rights ('universal, indivisible and interdependent' – and defined and disseminated by authorities at UN or international level over subjects to which they are not accountable).

If we take the above categories [there are a few others; these are the central 'original' areas of the UDHR pertaining to culture], putting them together with my basic proposals for further knowledge, we have a basic framework. What that framework needs to articulate by way of detail is the direct relevance of the categories to the work of forming a public culture – a culture that is central to a public sphere. And here, I am a (post-)Habermasian in the sense that 'public' is situated as the dynamic intellectual and critical centre of democracy (whatever institutional form

it takes); but, beyond Habermas (who didn't have much to say on culture), 'public' must be construed as an 'imaginary' and not a substantive category (past the age of modern citizenry and nation state monoculture). The 'imaginary' of public is a discursive construct, and must be actively constructed and discursively sustained through a politics of recognition, devolution of power, participation and engaged knowledge-forming activities.

But to conclude, this below is simply the basic framework, which now needs to be worked out in terms of its theoretical problems, application and articulation as actual cultural policies. I do maintain, however, that this could serve as a disciplinary framework for the development of cultural policy research – disciplinary in the sense of a transdisciplinary cultural political economy of a renewed public sphere, and not just nationally but locally, regionally and internationally.

The centre of the diagram is, of course, the five principles of Human Rights law as pertaining to culture – something that we have possessed for a long time but have never been fully worked out in a local and regional context (i.e. how domestic adoption of international law is 'interpreted' into the actual resource provision and infrastructural development of places). And second, either side represents enhancing and dynamic measures taken to ensure the *political will* is sufficient – on the left, an international consciousness in a populace (not just common knowledge but active sharing between countries, and mobility of people between countries – the systemic cultural exchange); then on the right, a framework that defines the imagination, like a Human Rights City project, which will be instrumental in any incentivisation or motivation).



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(i.e. not *references*; this is a recommended group of texts that covers the field-based subject, issues and aspirations represented by this paper).

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