2.3 Cultural policies

By Luis Ben Andrés

As evidenced by numerous historical precedents, states and governments have never refused to intervene in the cultural sector. In recent years, various models of public cultural policies have been developed that have attempted, with greater or lesser success, to encourage cultural life in contemporary societies.

1. Concept of cultural policies

There is a long path

that does not begin and has already ended

and a horizon that never comes any closer.

José Ángel Valente

As mentioned earlier, in chapter 2.1 Public Policies and Culture, state intervention in certain areas of people’s private lives is justified on the basis of the criteria of efficiency, equity or stability, or sometimes a combination of these (Samuelson, 1988). If this is true, or more or less accepted, in the case of the economy, infrastructures, health, industry and education, it is worth asking whether the same is also true for culture. Any response will always be conditioned by the ideological stance of the respondent. However, there is a consensus in that, at different levels, states always have some type of policy with regard to culture. A neoliberal state will reduce this to the minimum, leaving culture to the mercy of market forces in the belief that these will regulate cultural activity, endowing it with economic freedom and efficiency. A social democratic state, meanwhile, will be in favour of more direct and substantial intervention in culture in the belief that this will generate greater equity in terms of better and more equal public access to cultural goods and products, and will expect to redistribute cultural goods and services as it does other aspects of a country’s social and political life. Although it might initially appear that in principle, there are no essential differences between cultural policies and the rest of public policies, there are in fact elements that render them at least somewhat distinct. Their later emergence or consolidation and their at times somewhat diffuse or changeable content that affects essential processes and/or elements of people’s social and personal lives, among other reasons, to some extent differentiate cultural policies from the rest of governmental or state policies.

One of the first attempts in Spain to conceptualise cultural policy was carried out by Professor Vidal Beneyto and published in 1981 in the Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas [Spanish Journal of Sociological Research], in an article entitled Hacia una fundamentación teórica de la política cultural [Towards a theoretical foundation of cultural policy] (Vidal Beneyto, 1981). In this brief article consisting of no more than a dozen pages, Vidal Beneyto raised some of the key concepts in cultural policies. Despite the time that has since elapsed, his conceptual approach still surprises due to the continuing relevance of many of his arguments. Vidal Beneyto approached the concept of cultural policy from a political, social and community standpoint without...
identifying it exclusively with the state or government, affirming that cultural policy could be defined as the set of means employed and actions oriented towards the achievement of goals, the former determined and the latter implemented by members of the community —individuals, groups and institutions— whose dominant position endows them with the capacity to intervene in the cultural life of the community. This definition contains many of the factors that define policy: objectives, actions to achieve them, drivers of both and the capacity to propose and implement in the desired field (in this case, culture).

Equally interesting is his overview of the different types of cultural policy that had existed up to that point, providing a classification that can be termed as classic and has been widely cited by various authors. Essentially, he identified three types of cultural policy, depending on the goals pursued and in accordance with three distinct paradigms:

- Cultural policies based on the paradigm of patronage. These are characterised by supporting artistic and cultural creation in the sphere that is usually designated as high culture. Vidal Beneyto warned that despite its apparent disinterestedness, patronage seeks to align the orientation of artistic/cultural creation with the interests of the usually powerful patron (churches, monarchies, states, the bourgeoisie, etc.)

- Cultural policies based on the paradigm of democratisation of culture. These reflect the dimension of the democratic, with two aspects: first to democratise cultural decision-making, in the sense that it is the members of the demos who, through their representatives, basically decide what culture to make, for whom, with what means and in what sectors. The second aspect concerns the attempt to ensure that culture, previously understood as a minority privilege, becomes a common good of the community, to facilitate access for all to artistic and aesthetic creations, and to “popularise” culture in the traditional sense —the fine arts, the humanities, etc.— as far as possible. The ideological basis of this paradigm was that of the democracies that triumphed over totalitarian fascism in the Second World War.

- Cultural policies based on the paradigm of cultural democracy. According to Vidal Beneyto, these are in part the result of a certain weariness of well-being in Western societies, of the scant success of cultural democratisation policies and of the initiatives of agencies such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe. Cultural democracy focuses more on the activity than the works, more on participation in the process than on consumption of products (...) and defends the multiple cultures of all groups, all countries and all communities, etc. It is a paradigm associated with social and community development.

Vidal Beneyto warned that although these paradigms have a sequential historical origin, this does not mean that they are now mutually exclusive: on the contrary, in many present cases they overlap in governments and institutions.

The concept underlying these paradigms differs substantially between the first two and the third. Whereas patronage and the democratisation of culture refer to culture essentially understood as art and aesthetics, cultural democracy refers to a socio-anthropological view of culture as a way of life.

To conclude this summary of Vidal Beneyto’s article, I will highlight four important ideas from his text. First, he noted that it was not only the state, at whatever level, that was the driving force behind cultural policies. Rather, he indicated other agencies that were at least as important in this respect, such as the private sector (including what today is generically termed the cultural industries, which encompass anything from large multinationals to artisanal businesses), foundations and, very importantly in his view, a semi-public sector that is often presented as having a “public service” vocation and which today includes NGOS and the amateur and
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grassroots association movement. The second idea refers to the instrumental shortcomings of cultural policies at that time and the efforts made to redress these by resorting to categories mainly from economics, sociology and social psychology. Specifically, he cited concepts such as cultural demand, cultural planning, cultural innovation, cultural action and the right to culture, among others. Without doubt, this deficit in cultural policy and management has continued to linger, and many consider that it has still not been fully corrected. His third idea concerned something that today might seem obvious but at that time was necessary to state clearly, in black and white; namely the coexistence of three different cultural fields or contexts. Vidal Beneyto indicated that these consisted of:

1. **Popular culture**, whether local, community-based or grassroots.
2. **Media culture** produced and distributed by the cultural industries, mainly by the large multinationals that monopolise content and distribution channels for mass-produced cultural products.
3. **High culture**, the domain of the elite. Vidal Beneyto identified this as artistic, intellectual, aesthetic, urban, Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Oriental.

Another important aspect of the article was his identification of the need for a theoretical framework with well-defined categories in order to formulate informed cultural policies. He indicated identity and heritage as the most fruitful ones at the time, provided that they were based on the dynamics of communication/participation and creativity.


Observatorio Cultural del Proyecto Atalaya
This first exploration clarified very important aspects of what we term cultural policy, and focused the discussion on essential points such as models, processes, agents and purposes. In a more recent study published in 2008, Alfons Martinell and Taina López constructed a map of the key concepts in cultural policies and cultural management (Martinell, 2008).

The originality of this method resides in its depiction of the concept of cultural policies based on the professional practice of cultural management, as the authors acknowledge, while also providing a map of all of the associated elements and relationships. First, Martinell and López constructed a database of concepts, definitions and professional terminology in the sector in order to generate alphabetical and thematic thesauruses. Next, all these concepts were grouped and classified in semantic fields. Of all the semantic fields examined in this interesting study (policies, agents, management, information, training, research and culture), the ones that concern us here are those referring to cultural policies. The concept map is grouped into general domains (GD), various general themes (GT) and specific themes (ST) broken down into three levels (1, 2 and 3) depending on the extent to which they have direct relationship with the general theme in question. The concept map of cultural policies is as follows:

Below, we shall see how this is applied to cultural policy.

The general domain of cultural policies includes nine general themes defined as follows:

1. International cultural policies
2. National cultural policies
3. Regional cultural policies
4. Local cultural policies
5. Sectoral cultural policies
6. Cultural policy management
7. Cultural policy strategies
8. Bases of cultural policies
9. Institutional frameworks

Obviously, each general theme includes a list of specific themes. The interesting thing about this map is that it depicts the concept of cultural policy using thesauruses and lists, defining it by itemising its relationships. Hence, and this is a personal interpretation, cultural policy is defined by:

- The existence of different levels of application or regional authority: international, national, regional and local levels.
- The existence of sectors in the field of culture which promote the need for sectoral policies. These include, as specific themes, heritage policies, publication policies, communication policies, performing arts and entertainment policies, public reading policies, visual arts policies, popular culture policies, etc.
- The need for specific strategies for implementation and goal achievement. Some of these include training, production, development, development plans, dissemination and communication.
- The need for bases. The main bases identified in the map include the models of state and constitutional bases, diagnoses and studies, states of opinion, cultural rights and values and international declarations and conventions.
- It should also be noted that policy management is also specified and defined. In this sphere, Martinell and López indicate strategic plans, organisational structures, management models, the function of cultural agents and policy cycles, among others.
In sum, their concept map has proved a very interesting instrument that sheds light on cultural policies because it shows a considerable number of aspects, domains, tools and concepts which it is necessary to examine in order to understand the concept and complexity of cultural policy. In this respect, their map paves the way for further work.

Another way to explore cultural policy, or cultural policies as many authors and professionals prefer to call them, is through lexicography, understood as the compilation of dictionaries. Interestingly, there are three different works in this field, two relatively recent and one somewhat older, enabling a comparison in order to further define the concept of cultural policy.

The first of these is a book by Teixeira Coelho (2009), a Brazilian editor, novelist and professor at the University of Sao Paulo, founder and coordinator of the Observatory of Cultural Policies and director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sao Paulo, among other professional and academic achievements. The second is a critical glossary of cultural management by Pedro A. Vives (2007), a historian, freelance consultant, university teacher, director of cultural institutions and programmes in Latin America and the author of numerous books. The third and oldest book is by Héctor Santcovsky, and was published in 1995 by the Cultural Information and Documentation Centre (Cádiz provincial council). This is a translation from Catalan of an earlier version of the book published by the Institut Municipal d’animació i Esplai (IMAE, Barcelona city council) and is a dictionary of cultural action. The definitions given by the authors vary in length and complexity, somewhat hindering further clarification of the concept. Consequently, a table was drawn up summarising the four main elements that can shed light on the concept of cultural policy. These elements are:

- The objectives that a cultural policy aims to achieve
- The means employed to implement it
- The fields which a cultural policy may encompass or include
- The agents driving a cultural policy.

The resulting table is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Santcovsky</th>
<th>Vives</th>
<th>Coelho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet the public’s cultural needs. Knowledge in public space.</td>
<td>To ensure each individual’s freedom to access knowledge or not.</td>
<td>To meet the public’s cultural needs and promote the development of symbolic representations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material and human resources. Strategic planning.</td>
<td>Laws or standardised procedures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct cultural action interventions in the cultural process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields</th>
<th>Extensive, including heritage, creation, rights, development cooperation, leisure and entertainment.</th>
<th>The cultural market.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage, creation, dissemination, animation, art education, international cooperation. Culture external to the cultural market. Relating to the uses of culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>National and international public institutions and agents.</th>
<th>State, civil institutions, private entities, community groups.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State, regional and local government.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled from the sources cited above.

Before continuing, it should be noted that the aim of this comparison is not to highlight the contribution of one book over that of the others. Rather, the goal is to identify those elements that bring us closer to the concept of cultural policy based on the contributions of all three authors, who, as two of them indicate in the titles of their books, have conducted a critical analysis of the concept. A reading of their contributions, summarised in the table above, serves to draw the following conclusions:

- Public and governmental agents play an essential role. At all levels (national, regional and local) and in all institutional forms, the state is an essential agent. Due to historical tradition, personal beliefs or strategies, the authors view the public sector as the main driver of cultural policies. Nonetheless, they also recognise the role of the non-public sector, a concept that encompasses the corporate private sector as well as communities, associations or non-profit organisations involved in the field of culture.
- The fields in which cultural policies operate are ambiguous and difficult to define. From the earliest to the two more recent definitions, the authors indicate increasingly wider fields encompassed by cultural policy. This is an unresolved problem in the sector, and one that the more recent authors, Vives and Coelho, discuss in depth, considering it one of the sector’s challenges.
- With regard to the means that cultural policies require or possess for their implementation, these do not appear to differ from those employed in other areas of public policy or in non-public sectors: resources (material and human), regulatory capacity, direct intervention and strategic planning. This is undoubtedly a symptom of normality with regard to other policy areas.
- As regards the objectives of cultural policies, Santcovsky and Coelho agree that these should be aimed at meeting the public’s cultural needs, a goal that could be equated to that of other public policies, such as health or education, which underpin the welfare state. Underlying this stance is the desire to be considered a new cornerstone of this form of political society. In this case, Vives introduces a novel element by equating culture with knowledge and associating it with the right to freedom of choice. He also broadens it in the sense of considering that cultural policies should strive to place knowledge at the centre of public space.

From the various approaches to the concept of cultural policies summarised above, a series of elements can be extracted that help define the concept. Thus, cultural policies consist of:
1. **Agents** who drive, design, promote and disseminate them. These agents, accredited for such functions, may be public (state, regional or local), private (corporate) or third sector (non-profit, community or grassroots organisations).

2. Cultural policies exhibit specific **content** that characterises them as such. This is one of the most problematic areas of the concept, since such content has expanded beyond the arts in their traditional, historical sense, to encompass other areas of a fundamentally anthropological or recreational nature. In addition, there is a tension between popular culture, media culture and high culture which directly affects the content of cultural policies.

3. Cultural policies pursue specific **objectives** or goals. This is inherent to any policy, whatever its scope. Something that does not have specific, measurable objectives may be called many things, but not a policy.

4. To achieve their objectives, policies deploy specific **strategies**. Cultural policies share strategies in common with other public or non-public policies, while also possessing some that can be considered unique.

5. Cultural policies require means or **resources** to achieve objectives, using defined strategies in specific fields that are based on decisions taken by accredited agents. As with any other policy, culture has schemas and guidelines on the theme of resources, which encompass human, financial, economic and infrastructure resources, among others.

6. Cultural policies represent **options** and differences. Not all policies are the same or pursue the same ends, and on numerous occasions, the main agents must take decisions that imply very different paths. Even a non-policy, i.e. doing nothing in the field of culture, is a cultural policy option. In this latter respect, Vives (1992) has argued that **cultural policy implies a flow of philosophy, principles and specific policy ideas in society: an implicit policy culture. In consequence, it would be inaccurate to state that the absence of a cultural strategy denotes the lack of a culture policy; however, the desire to have one is a symptom of maturity of the latter.**

These six elements help elucidate what cultural policies are, but it is still necessary to identify other elements and aspects to obtain a better understanding.

### 2. Foundations and legitimisation of cultural policies

As noted by Rodríguez Morató (2012), the social sciences and sociology in particular draw a distinction between organisations that work with defined technologies and are subject to control of their outputs, known as efficiency-driven organisations, and organisations whose goals and procedures are more diffuse and lack control, known as legitimacy-based organisations. According to Rodríguez Morató, **the administrations and cultural institutions that guide cultural policy clearly belong to the latter... cultural policy relies more on adaptation to institutional rules, legitimised myths and ceremonial demands than on any kind of measurable output.**

Cultural policies are located in this second framework of legitimacy. It could even be argued that regardless of their economic objectives, the cultural industries themselves are strongly legitimised by symbolic demands and **legitimised myths** based on cultural values. In the case of the contemporary state, the legitimacy of its cultural policy stems from its role as guarantor of **an entity that looks after everyone and that speaks on behalf of all**, as indicated by Coelho (2009). This legitimisation characteristic of the welfare state presents two lines of argument. The first is the idea of cultural dissemination, based on the notion of a core of cultural or heritage goods that it is necessary not only to preserve, but also to render accessible to as many people as possible. The other line of argument represents an attempt to respond to social demands, whereby the state does not take
the initiative, unlike the case above, but responds to the needs and demands of the public. Again according to Coelho, this state response, which legitimises it to develop and implement cultural policies, may be based on four possible paradigms. These are:

- Policies derived from a social welfare logic. As with other policies, the state corrects the deficiencies generated by social and market dynamics, in the sense of correcting inequalities and imbalances and facilitating access, in this case to culture, for as many people as possible.
- Interventionist policies justified by the quest for meaning behind social dynamics. Such dynamics may be the pursuit of a national, ethnic or religious identity, for example.
- Policies based on the need to obtain an ideological framework. This model is similar to the previous one and usually seeks objectives related to national construction or reconstruction under a new ideological framework.
- Policies based on the need for a communicative practice between the state and its citizens.

These paradigms that legitimise cultural policies are not mutually exclusive and may sometimes appear in combination. For example, a communicative practice is an indispensable condition for policies that seek a given ideological framework.

López de Aguilera (2000) provides another perspective on the legitimacy of public cultural policies, saying that although the drivers of culture are creators and the general public, subsidiary state action is also legitimised, being justified by two arguments:

- First, that culture has always been a concern of the state. Although public cultural policies as we know them today are a recent phenomenon, first the European states and later everywhere else in the world have intervened in the field of what has been considered culture at any given time.
- Subsidiarity is a principle of state intervention that is generally accepted by all in order to correct or complement the markets and the action of civil society. The main question is usually to determine the scope, intensity and objectives of such intervention.

From these arguments, López de Aguilera deduces the necessity for state intervention in culture, supported by three reasons:

- Culture must be given the same consideration as any other area of human activity. According to López de Aguilera, cultural policy is a priori as legitimate as social, economic or educational policy, for example.
- Cultural administration is necessary to meet the public’s cultural needs. Meeting these needs is associated with an improved standard of living, education and free time. This argument is in line with the welfare state and/or the consumer society.
- Whereas a liberal conception of the state associates culture with individual freedom, a welfare state orientation focuses on the right of the individual to participate in cultural life.

Discussing the bases of the legitimacy of cultural policies, López de Aguilera refers to the Declaration of Human Rights, and in the case of Spain, to the 1978 Constitution. This approach could also include the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights, a proposal by an expert working group that represents a serious attempt to provide structure to the cultural rights dispersed throughout international texts and frame them within human rights in general. In particular, the Declaration states:
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Article 11. (responsibility of actors in the public sector)

States and other actors in the public sector must, within the framework of their specific mandates and responsibilities:

1. Integrate the rights recognised in the present Declaration into their national legislation and practice;
2. Respect, protect and fulfil the rights enunciated in the present Declaration in conditions of equality and dedicate the maximum amount of their available resources to ensure their full exercise;

The right as formulated here implies an obligation or duty on the part of states. Similar schemas exist in other public policies such as education, for example. From international declarations to the constitutional texts of many countries, education is considered a right of citizens, and consequently, the state must guarantee equal access to the same. It is for this reason that it is so important endow culture with the status of a right of citizens, since this would also help to legitimise public cultural policies.

Other authors base the legitimacy of the state to develop and implement cultural policies on the consideration of culture as a productive activity that generates tangible goods and services, always within a framework of sustainability. In this respect, Pedro A. Vives (1992) has indicated that culture is a specific public space in which the state must inevitably intervene. Such intervention does not represent a mere expansion of the state’s powers, but is based on culture’s productive contribution to economic growth, and more broadly, to the design and achievement of balanced development in a modern society; in addition, culture is also related to operational paradigms such as human development and sustainable development. As with earlier postures, this stance informed by the welfare state legitimises public action in culture, since this forms part of a nation’s productive system and requires state regulation with the criterion of sustainable human development.

This line of argument for legitimising public cultural policies has been in constant development in recent years. One description is given in the Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales [Guidelines for evaluating local cultural policies], published by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (Spanish initials: FEMP) (Various authors, 2009), when discussing the supposed centrality that cultural policies have been acquiring in local policies. Since the mid-1980s, a triangular model of sustainable development has emerged whereby the three cornerstones of sustainable development are identified as the economy, social inclusion and the environment.

Sustainable development triangle
Source: Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales [Guidelines for evaluating local cultural policies]. Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP).

As the authors of the guide indicate, this is a consolidated and widely accepted theory to explain the bases of public sustainability and welfare policies. However, equally in the opinion of these authors, in recent years culture has assumed an increasing centrality in contemporary societies. Citing the work of Jon Hawkes (2001), they state that culture has emerged as a fourth cornerstone of the welfare state and has thus acquired greater importance within the body of public policies. They have produced a table to illustrate this theory of sustainable development:

**Sustainable development table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURE</th>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
<th>GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>SOCIAL INCLUSION</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Guía para la evaluación de las políticas culturales locales [Guidelines for evaluating local cultural policies]. Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP). Table adapted from Jordi Pascual.

To complete the conceptual framework for evaluating public cultural policies, the authors have taken five areas of the same (which are measured in their proposal for indicators). These thematic areas constitute a useful approach to important elements that legitimise public action in culture. These are:

- Culture as a factor for development (economic, social and regional)
- The cross-sectoral nature of culture
- The right of access to culture
- Culture as a form of citizen participation
- Memory and innovation in the construction of local identity (local in the case of the proposed Guidelines).

To summarise the foregoing, in the framework of democratic states, the legitimacy of public cultural policies is based on four key principles: value, right, responsibility and opportunity. This framework of legitimacy is formulated in the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, Our Creative Diversity (Various authors, 1997), better known as the Pérez de Cuéllar Report, after the former Secretary General of the United Nations and coordinator of the report. The authors state the following:

- Culture is a value. It is a heritage and symbolic value bequeathed to us by past generations, which is enriched by the continuous contributions of creators and the inhabitants of cities and towns. It is a
value that we must look after, manage and disseminate, and one for which everyone should feel a sense of ownership.

- Culture is a right. Everyone should have access to culture. However, if we believe in the democartisation of culture, it is also necessary to move towards shared decision-making among all stakeholders: the public authorities, creators, citizen associations and everyone involved in culture.
- Culture is a responsibility. We are all responsible for ensuring that our shared, dynamic heritage is maintained and passed on to future generations in all its richness and diversity. The public authorities have a clear obligation in this respect.
- Lastly, the report states that culture presents an opportunity for society. Heritage and creative capacity have the potential to spur development. As noted earlier, there is a growing belief that social and economic development rely upon, or at least have strong ties with, cultural development.

In Poder y Cultura. El origen de las políticas culturales [Power and culture. The origin of cultural policies], Pau Rausell explores the economics of culture and supports the findings of the report with regard to viewing culture as a value inasmuch as it provides the basis for cultural policies. According to Pau Rausell, cultural value is too broad a concept and there is a need for a more precise analysis. In particular, he claims that it encompasses several values with distinct characteristics, namely:

- The value of creation. The creation/innovation that all artistic production incorporates is a public good that has beneficial effects on society; as such, it should be supported by society. Creators must be recompensed for their efforts. The market alone cannot guarantee this recompense for two reasons: it does not recognise that creation affects other sectors and society as a whole, and all creative processes imply an effort with a high probability of failure. Creators implicitly accept the need for public policies to palliate market deficits.
- The value of message. The symbolic forms transmitted by a creative work coincide with values and knowledge that are felt by the community or are useful to achieve greater degrees of social cohesion and progress. Dissemination of given messages is necessary to construct the social ideal that it is intended to convey jointly. Public cultural policies are responsible for promoting a message of plurality, tolerance, freedom and identity in order to move towards a more democratic and egalitarian society.
- The value of plurality. Pau Rausell understands the political concept of plurality in terms of diversity, a cultural concept. In this respect, he claims that plurality is a collective value of democratic societies. It is only respect for diversity that renders the tyranny of the majority tolerable. Ensuring cultural plurality through public production or provision is one objective of any public authority intervention. This value is very closely related to the previous one, because one way in which plurality is reflected is through the diversity of messages.
- The value of training. Pau Rausell views cultural goods as a fundamental basis for training and education in the enlightened humanist tradition. The legitimacy of public intervention is based on the fact that the demand for training from a market perspective would be below its optimal level because the “untrained” would be unaware of the benefits endowed by training and would therefore demand less than efficient levels. Another powerful argument in this respect is the state’s obligation in Western societies to promote equality of opportunity in order to fulfil its redistributive role.

As evidenced throughout this chapter, there are numerous bases and grounds for legitimising public cultural policies. Various authors in disciplines from economics to anthropology have justified the role of the state as the instigator and driver of policy actions in the cultural sector. To sum up, these bases include:
• The existence of **cultural rights**. Access, diversity and identity are some of the cultural rights that are already widely accepted in academic, public and political forums. Such rights are now a defining feature of democratic society.

• Contribution to **social welfare**. Culture is one of the cornerstones of a welfare society, even in the present context of crisis. A society with more culture offers its citizens greater well-being.

• Contribution to **development**. Culture contributes to development in all its material, social, sustainable and human variables, from major economic indicators (GDP, employment, satellite accounts, etc.), to symbolic and communication contributions that promote diversity, freedom and positive identities.

• The need to correct market imbalances and **failures**. Public cultural policies are necessary to correct the errors and imbalances generated by an efficient market.

• **Equality with other public policies**. According to this additional argument, given its economic, social and political characteristics, culture merits public intervention.

### 3. Models and forms of cultural policies

Teixeira Coelho (2009) has classified cultural policies according to their ideological perspective, identifying three forms that public cultural policies can take:

1. Policies reflecting **cultural dirigisme**. Policies are defined by institutions and the authorities, who determine and define the cultural action to be undertaken by the state. This form can be further divided into two subtypes. The first, termed **heritage traditionalism**, is a model in which the institutions promote the preservation of folklore as the core of national identity, prioritising its dissemination and protection. According to Coelho, this heritage is used as a space without conflict with which all social classes can identify. The second subtype, termed **populist statism**, is a model in which the state and parties are used to affirm the central role of popular culture.

2. Policies reflecting **cultural liberalism**. In their most radical versions, these policies are based on the belief that the state does not have any duty to promote culture. The most common form is liberal patronage, in which support for culture is considered more effective when provided on private initiative or from similarly non-public foundations. Coelho states that there is only one goal: to frame culture within market laws. It is thought that as far as possible, culture should be a lucrative activity, or at least sustain itself. In general, this patronage tends to support high culture and those forms promoted by the media.

3. Policies reflecting the **democratisation of culture**. According to Coelho, these are based on the consideration of culture as a field of social or group interest that should not be left to the mercy of market movements. They should enjoy wide consensus and seek to create equal access to culture for all. Full development of these policies would be called **participatory democracy**. It is this ideological approach which is best aligned with the bases of legitimisation of cultural policies described in the previous section.

Coelho’s ideologically-based approach is necessary and interesting, but insufficient for the purposes of describing the full range of possible cultural policies. Vidal Beneyto’s analysis already defined three models, and we will now return to this classification because it remains valid and has been extended in recent years. For example, Iñaki López de Aguileta (2000) expanded his classification to categorise models into four different types:
1. **State patronage.** This policy is based on Europe’s centuries-old tradition whereby the nobility and the church supported the arts. According to López de Aguilera, the contemporary state has replaced the church and nobility in their role as protector of the arts. State patronage has been achieved through the foundation of major cultural institutions (e.g. art galleries, museums and national libraries) and the increasing provision of public education throughout the 19th century. As a result of these precedents, the first cultural administrations emerged, initially in Europe and then everywhere else in the world. This policy model continues to operate today in combination with private patronage and corporate sponsorship. As a policy, it focuses on high culture, which corresponds to the traditional concept of the fine arts. In this model, public policies primarily target creators and their works. A contemporary version of this model is represented by large institutions and Councils of Culture or of the Arts, which are responsible for distributing or assigning resources to creative projects or artists. Negative aspects of this model are that it prioritises elitist culture and neglects peripheral regions in favour of large population centres. For example, 68% of the funding awarded by arts councils in the United Kingdom (Gutiérrez, 2014) is destined for London, and 72% is awarded to the principal cultural organisations, which have incomes in excess of five million pounds sterling. In contrast, only 2% of funding is awarded to small cultural organisations (income less than 100,000 pounds sterling) and 11% to medium sized organisations (income between 100,000 and one million pounds sterling). Hence, this model supports artistic creation and the institutionalisation of cultural expression, but does not guarantee equality of access to either funding or cultural goods.

2. **Democratisation of culture.** This policy model was developed in the years following World War II, above all in Western Europe. France, in the emblematic figure of André Malraux, represents the paradigm of this policy. Although based on a very similar definition of culture to the previous policy, almost entirely restricted to the fine arts, the democratisation of culture aims to make culture available to the largest possible number of citizens by facilitating access to cultural goods and services. The main strategy applied in this model is dissemination. This has led to an increased number of cultural facilities, above all those of a specialised nature such as libraries, museums and theatres, in an attempt to bring culture to as many people and regions as possible. It is no surprise that this type of policy also coincides with trends towards decentralisation with the same objective of expanding the audience of culture and facilitating access to cultural goods and services to the greatest number of people possible. According to López de Aguilera, **these policies represent a breakthrough compared to the previous situation of patronage, and their achievements include the creation of an extensive cultural distribution and infrastructure network.** However, this remains a restricted definition of culture, almost identical to the policies of patronage, and thus retains the whiff of dirigisme, which seeks to impose high culture on the masses. López de Aguilera also notes that very little progress has been made towards achieving the objective of cultural dissemination. On the other hand, it was when this type of policy began to be applied that the profession of cultural manager first emerged and developed.

3. **Cultural democracy.** At the end of the 1960s, the world underwent a series of social convulsions that destabilised social and political organisation in Europe and the West. The most significant embodiment of these movements was May ’68 in France. A rebellious and questioning spirit became widespread; doubt was cast on some values while others, linked to the pursuit of greater freedom and participation and a more egalitarian consciousness, gained increasing popularity. In this context, in the words of López de Aguilera, **the right to culture was no longer understood as a mere right to consume art as a simple spectator, but rather to participate from within in socio-cultural processes, and play a leading role.** The emphasis shifted from having the right to consume cultural goods produced by others, to having the possibility of generating one’s own culture based on the individual creative contexts of citizens and communities. This heralded the arrival of community development, and the profession of community worker emerged at this time. According to López de Aguilera, the extension of the concept of culture (beyond that of high culture), acceptance of diversity (the culture of...
minorities of all kinds, of non-European societies or traditionally marginalised social groups, even of previously unrecognised forms of artistic expression) and trends towards decentralisation were the greatest achievements of this type of cultural policy. However, cultural democracy failed in other aspects, for example, cultural consumption by the masses veered more towards the mass media, and away from community development proposals. In addition, the mistake was often made of overestimating the general public’s creativity and denying the importance of professional creators: an expanded concept of culture does not necessarily mean that all practices have the same value.

4. Extracultural model. This is also known as the economism model, and as the name suggests, it prioritises the economic values of culture. According to López de Agüileta, this model emerged during the crisis in the welfare state that first made itself felt in the late 1980s. One national strategy to address the industrial crisis has been to seek new sectors of economic activity or promote others that national economic policies had previously overlooked. Such has been the case of culture. Throughout Europe, the cultural sector is being scrutinised as one which could help delineate the future of European Union member states. This became apparent as early as 1993, in the Delors White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, which pointed directly at culture as a possible source of employment, and continues in the Europe 2020 strategy which locates creativity and training at the heart of development. This model places particular emphasis on the economic dimension of culture, considering that the sector not only generates a significant amount of resources for national or regional economies but makes an essential contribution in other aspects, such as creativity, external image or attracting resources. In the words of López de Agüileta, culture possesses a halo and symbolic capacity that together benefit the image of whoever promotes it. Political and corporate organisations alike have discovered the growing importance of corporate image and the value of cultural activities — especially the most spectacular ones— in creating or reinforcing this. In this public policy model, cultural projects are primarily conceived as communication projects, hence the rise of cultural marketing. In consequence, under certain circumstances, cultural objectives become secondary to the goal of institutional or regional (e.g. city, region or country) branding. Political and economic concerns outweigh cultural objectives, with the dangers that this entails for the autonomy of culture and its creators. Another danger posed by such policies is that culture is reduced to the status of a spectacle, since activities may be promoted in which the overriding goal is to obtain a large media impact and a mass audience rather than focusing on long-term cultural goals. A review of the cultural policies implemented in Spain from the 1990s until just before the current crisis yields myriad examples.

**What cultural policy model or models are implemented at present?**

The crisis has undoubtedly exerted a traumatic impact on public policies in general and cultural policies in particular. Besides budget reductions that affect essential services such as museums or libraries, tax increases that discourage the public and cuts in funding for the cultural industries, there has been a profound change — some even claim a paradigm shift— in public policies. At present, it remains unclear which paradigm will triumph, and more seriously still, which would be necessary for the cultural sector. The essential facts that will define these policies are:

- The growing influence of the communication technologies. This is not novel, since these have been assuming an increasingly important role for more than 15 years.
- Previous models persist and endure, but none of them is hegemonic and they will need to find a niche and appropriate dimensions in the immediate future.
- The forced or voluntary reduction in public budgets is generating expectations — in my view unrealistic — about possible regulations on patronage.
2. POLITICS AND CULTURE

2.3. Cultural policies

- Civil society is beginning to try out micro funding formulas such as crowdfunding. The state’s withdrawal and the inaccessibility of corporate patronage has meant that many projects have needed to seek funding from society using channels that had previously been largely unexplored.
- The crisis in “traditional” cultural industries such as music, cinema and publishing. The impact of the information and communication technologies has caught these sectors unprepared, and they are now trying with greater or lesser success to adapt to the new paradigm.
- The current vagueness and uncertainty regarding when, how and in what condition we will emerge from the current crisis.

These factors render it difficult to know which policy model will predominate in the future, even in the most immediate future. At present, it could be argued that the dominant paradigm is entropy, the trend towards disorder, but if this functions as it does in physics, it will eventually lead to some kind of balance. Nonetheless, what is certain is that due to tradition and vocation, the state will continue to play an important role in the cultural sector and there will continue to be a public cultural policy.

For reflection

- The definition given by Teixeira Coelho in his Diccionario crítico de Política Cultural [Critical Dictionary of Cultural Policy] is as follows:

Cultural policy is the science of the organisation of cultural structures and is generally understood as a programme of interventions carried out by the state, civil institutions, private entities or community groups aimed at meeting the public’s cultural needs and promoting the development of symbolic representations.

- Is it complete? What is lacking? What is superfluous?
- Read the draft Andalusian law on patronage (www.juntadeandalucia.es). What roles do the public authorities assume? What kind of relationship is established between the public, industries and the authorities? Will this provide a solution to funding problems in the sector? Will it promote attendance at cultural events?
- Read the article by Professor Vidal Beneyto and reflect on its continuing relevance and validity. www.reis.cis.es
- There is a very interesting article in the journal Periférica, no. 14 (revistas.uca.es), by Eduard Miralles: ¿Hermanos, cuándo fue que se comenzó a joder aquello de entender la cultura como servicio público en España? [When did culture stop being seen as a public service in Spain?].

Documents

1. OEI. Cultural policies. www.oei.es
References


