

# Arts, Market and the State: Cultural Policies in Introspect

FARUK YASLIÇİMEN\*

---

## Cultural Policy: Management, Value and Modernity in the Creative Industries

By Dave O'Brien

London, New York: Routledge, 2014, 166 pages, ISBN: 9780415817608

---

## Arts Management and Cultural Policy Research

By Jonathan Paquette and Eleonora Redaelli

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 162 pages, ISBN: 9781137460912

---

## Cultural Policies in East Asia: Dynamics between the State, Arts and Creative Industries

Edited by Hye-Kyung Lee and Lorraine Lim

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 229 pages, ISBN: 9781137327765

---

**T**he field of cultural policies is novel and burgeoning; it harbors diverse and even contradictory approaches, with no universally recognizable principles; it has no common language of its own nor any unified theoretical perspective. The field is fragmented and heterogeneous in nature and bound to the interaction of multiple actors in different institutional settings. Although it began initially as a western academic and institutional endeavor, and developed mostly in the U.S. and Western Europe, cultural policies has turned out to be a common good for the entire world both as an academic

discipline and as a bureaucratic and institutional enterprise.

The relationship between arts, culture, market, and state gets more problematic when the diversity and the desired homogeneity of culture are considered with anthropological sensitivity. The use of culture for nation building and nation branding has been criticized by circles who approach art from an “art for arts’ sake” perspective and bestow a sui-generis privilege to the artistic realm independent of any government or public engagement or intervention. States, however, are keen on making cultural

\* Ibn Haldun  
University

**Insight Turkey**  
Vol. 20 / No. 2 /  
2018, pp. 273-283

policy as a part of both their hegemonic and economic development agenda.

Economic and political developments have always influenced cultural policies that governments pursue, and this is more apparent in countries which follow the trend of cultural industries and associate artistic and cultural production with economic growth. Yet certain legitimacy problems emerge. When cultural policy makers become actively involved in the process of nation building and nation branding and profile the limits and breadth of the cultural identity of a nation, concepts such as governmentality and governance become meaningless. The role of bureaucrats, state officers, and public managers becomes questionable, but as the authors argue below, cultural policy, in essence, is public policy and, in a democracy, the field is governed by representatives elected by people themselves. In this regard, what kind of arts are funded by governments and consequently the volume of arts are two outstanding issues that will continue to shape the political debate over cultural policies.

The three books under review here cover cultural policies in diverse geographies: O'Brien's book draws on British examples, while Paquette and Redaelli's tome is confined to a North American context. Lee and Lim's edited book, on the other hand, covers an extensive, multifaceted and complex geography, namely East Asia.

\* \* \*

Paquette and Redaelli's *Arts Management and Cultural Policy Research* aims to draw a map of the loosely connected fields of arts management and cultural policy. Confining their work to the North American context, the authors suggest that scholars in the field have to consider the 'totality of knowledge production' since there are varieties of disciplines concurrently at play and various kinds of knowledge production occurring in and out of academia. The book aims to provide scholars with an ethics of research in this broad, complex, loosely connected, and fragmented landscape, arguing that despite their differences, the disciplines, in essence, are fluid and permeable entities. Neither arts management nor cultural policy can be defined as independent bodies even though the former was produced in the discipline of management and the latter in the field of public policy. Therefore, the authors call to merge the two sides of the literature.

A novelty of the book is that it offers a transdisciplinary approach. Paquette and Redaelli argue that transdisciplinarity is better than interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, or cross-disciplinarity, as it brings different institutional knowledge together by considering academics, practitioners, policymakers, researchers and communities as essential stakeholders, going beyond the conventional lines of academia.

The organization of chapters, definitions, tables, and other features give the book the function of a textbook;

this brings an advantage as well as a disadvantage, as the narrative turns didactic at times, directly addressing students of the field. In accordance with the book's textbook function, the authors provide a brief history of arts management training programs in the second chapter and describe in the seventh chapter how the main epistemological traditions in the humanities and social sciences influence current cultural policy research, and how the influence of post-structuralism affects arts management and cultural policy. In the eighth chapter, Paquette and Redaelli exclusively focus on the U.S. institutions that produce knowledge in the field.

Paquette and Redaelli underline an important tension between institutionalization and originality: despite the pressure of institutionalization over the field, as it moves towards standardization through its either coercive, normative or mimetic features, the very nature of arts manifests the contrary as it tries to find more and more peculiar, unique means of expression. Therefore, there are serious discrepancies between institutionalization and artistic expression, as the former imposes structures while the latter tries to divorce itself from and dismantle them once formed. It is a reflection of the same tension that occurs between bureaucracy's engagement in the cultural field, and which all of the books under review critically examine.

Paquette and Redaelli do not discuss the ethical or aesthetic aspects of the issue of marketing arts. Similarly, the

authors don't go into detail about power relations and ideological baggage in the study of cultural policies, although these forces may entirely influence scholarly outcomes. Such pitfalls are also valid for 'foreign' scholars who study the cultural policies of a 'different' country, if they embrace existing ideological positions and biases. Paquette and Redaelli explain that "cultural policy ideas and guiding principles are often decided through the meetings and gatherings of a tight-knit global community of policymakers and elite policy experts who share ideas, views, and solutions that feed national cultural policies" (p. 82), and thus draw attention to the diffusion feature of cultural policies. Although they give the example of creative cities trend that dominated the visions of local governments and the trend was imitated and transferred from one place to another with or without minimal changes, the authors don't discuss the hegemonic aspect of cultural policies in local or global power relations.

While Paquette and Redaelli understand cultural policy and arts management research as an academic endeavor and outline major trends and threads in the field of knowledge production, offering an all-inclusive transdisciplinary perspective, Dave O'Brien approaches the issue of knowledge production from a very different angle. According to O'Brien, governmentality and the questions of how to govern and with which instruments have become almost prerequisite for the justifiability of cultural policies. The practice of

modern governmentality rests on exerting authority in the cultural sector within social sciences techniques that value success through impact measurements, particularly economic ones. O'Brien claims from a critical viewpoint that social scientific methods produce and reproduce our understanding of culture, cultural organization and more importantly the value attributed to arts.

\* \* \*

Dave O'Brien's *Cultural Policy: Management, Value and Modernity in the Creative Industries* argues that cultural policy has long been a neglected area of study, falling in between political science, cultural studies, and the sociology of culture. O'Brien, like Paquette and Redaelli, describes the chief purpose of his book as bringing these diverse fields together in synthesis. *Cultural Policy* argues that cultural policy is public policy, and that assessing the value of culture should go beyond the limitations of bureaucracy or bureaucratic imagination to claim more legitimacy. Therefore, a new theory within the framework of public policy is needed. Here the authors agree, since Paquette and Redaelli also regard cultural policy as conventional public policy that is associated with a state or an official organization, whose conduct and the totality of whose actions and inactions exercise influence over the cultural field.

The value of culture is a fundamental debate with regard to public management and funding. Policy makers,

at best, use management techniques to quantify and measure the value of culture rather than depending on more abstract evaluations. Even though the economic and aesthetic value of the arts sometimes overlap, the market value of art works does not always correspond to its artistic worth. So, funding decisions become controversial and a matter of contest as the nature of aesthetic merit is relative, socially constructed and politically charged. In the context of public management, it is justifiable to adopt numeric techniques for creating common standards to measure the value of artistic and cultural production. However, cost-benefit analyses bear the risk of reducing arts and culture to a mere benefit-oriented approach, thus hindering economically less profitable but socially and aesthetically more significant gains.

While boundaries between producers and consumers of culture have blurred, it is ever more difficult to make value judgments on culture. O'Brien gives the example of Britain, where overwhelming attention is paid to the capacity of creative industries as a cultural policy. From such a perspective, value is determined through production and consumption practices that are directly linked with a sense of identity. O'Brien discusses the issue of who is creative and who isn't in terms of creative industries. Collapsing social hierarchies, blurring boundaries between high and popular culture, the presence of dissimilar cultural consumption and participation patterns within different age groups and genders, all re-

volve around the status versus class debate in the midst of radical democracy discussions and thus show how difficult it is for public managers and policy makers to determine 'whose culture' or 'which culture' is 'more' valuable.

The Victorian concept of 'civilizing' through arts and culture and a top-down democratization of culture approach are criticized as they focus on supply rather than demand. For some time now, cultural policies are oriented creative industries, which reinterpret cultural policy in association with economic development and promote investments in constructing iconic buildings, cultural tourism, erecting creative quarters, organizing major events, etc. The term has currently gained worldwide acceptance and symbolizes the marriage of the economy with the cultural sector. It aims to capitalize on creativity for the market consumption of culture, becoming a wheel of economic growth as well as a supposed cultural development. However, similar to the tension discussed by Paquette and Redaelli between institutionalization (the quest for standardization) and originality (the pursuit of independence), there is a tension between creative industries and bureaucracy.

Cultural policies are fundamentally interrelated with modernity, government and the social life of methods. The domination of secular institutions, the contemplation of social science, the transformation of social relations through extensive penetration of market economy and the birth of

an individualist culture all denote the prevailing milieu in which culture is being produced and consumed today. To O'Brien, modernity, with its ambiguities and ambivalences, harvests rationalism and catastrophe, emancipation and genocide as well as universalism and Euro-centrism, all of which have contributed to bringing about the shift from government to governmentality. The key factor here is the individual.

Developing a knowledge economy has proven traditional public economy to be ineffective, and has required a new management that takes efficiency, effectiveness and other similar concerns into consideration, an evolution towards a more assessable public managing. This has meant an increase in governments' agency in public management, despite the strong trend in individualist culture and the proliferation of non-governmental organizations. To O'Brien, the issue has become 'governing better, rather than governing less,' a development that has augmented the state's role in cultural affairs.

Drawing on the British model of creative industries, O'Brien underlines the central role of local authorities for creative works that are unsurprisingly driven by political projects aiming to revitalize their voter base. He also draws attention to the problem of defining the exact boundaries of terms and concepts pertaining to culture and cultural policies. Discussing both productive and problematic aspects of culture's extensive association with economy, the author

does not really differentiate between the culture of arts and the culture of any other commercialized practice in society. Both on a theoretical and practical level, creative labor and workers are problematic to define, for instance causing art school graduates not to think of themselves as creative workers or, on the other hand, the leisure of the past becoming the labor of the present and causing an uneasy fusion between the two.

There are successful examples showing the fruitful relationship between culture and urban development, such as the use of galleries or iconic buildings as beacons of cultural reinvigoration, making cities attractive for cultural tourism, organizing major events, competing for a status of, say, European City of Culture (ECoC), and using culture to revive economically declining places, the famous example being the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. O'Brien cites Glasgow and Liverpool as successful examples. Statistical data shows how the 'successful' results of the activities in Liverpool, when the city held the title of ECoC in 2008, were achieved by the governance of the cultural sector, namely by bringing together varieties of actors who have unique knowledge, skill and expertise and by organizing the map of cultural planning for a specific time period or event. In short, a cross-sector of institutions get together to plan, produce and administer culture.

O'Brien, however, deconstructs the Liverpool success narrative further, and criticizes the social scientific

research-based evidence about measuring the contribution of using cultural policy in urban development while dealing with the ambivalences of modernity. There is also the question of the neo-liberal language of the private sector. If public value matters here, then the question is: who really represents the public? O'Brien admits that there are lots of publics. But this question has to be further examined given the fact that well-organized groups may seek their own parochial interests when presenting themselves in the name of all public.

\* \* \*

Hye-Kyung Lee and Lorraine Lim, editors of *Cultural Policies in East Asia*, aim to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on the state policies that shape cultural production and consumption in East Asia. Rather than taking each country individually, the book concentrates on certain leitmotifs determining the overall structure and organization of cultural policies in the region. What makes working on this huge and crowded geography justifiable to the editors is that they claim to have seen noticeable economic (state-led industrial advancement), socio-cultural (Confucian cultural heritage), and historical proximities (intermix of colonization, ideological conflicts and the Cold War) between Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, China and South Korea. The three parts of the book focus on (1) cultural identity formation and nation building, (2) the negotiation between culture and state, and (3) the rise of creative industries policy.

Lee and Lim differentiate Japan, however, from other states with a distinct, non-statist cultural policy practice. Japan is open to the West and a former colonizer, while South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and China are former colonies that have used culture for nation building. The latter countries have been in rivalry in claiming ownership over their common cultural heritage and have experienced the top-down creation of national identity; they also went through ambivalent processes in adapting to a globalized western culture. The book shows how adaptive the East Asian governments were in implementing cultural policies for economic and political purposes. Lee and Lim estimate that investment in cultural policies by these governments will increase in the near future. These countries have a substantial young population exposed to global culture and the role of the state's top-down, pre-fixed cultural policies might be difficult to sustain. Lee and Lim underline the ways in which cultural globalization and convergence culture give rise to different cultural policies in the region.

In Singapore, where arts and culture have been a national good providing a strong sense of identity with cosmopolitan and local colors, the bureaucratic imagination with ideological ingredients and romantic interpretations is predominant. Terence Chong in his article "Bureaucratic Imagination in the Global City" draws our attention to a binary dichotomy for managing cultural policies in Singapore, where bureau-

crats have contradictorily been both the nation's chief arts visionaries and the major art critics at the same time. However, positioning bureaucrats as the leading figures of art and culture is problematic due to the very nature of bureaucracy, having inherent limitations when it comes to measuring, evaluating and judging arts and culture properly.

Chong claims that the government in Singapore follows culturally protectionist and conservative policies while insisting on certain social norms and allocating funds accordingly. Even though both conservative and liberal cultural policies pose a certain set of values and ethics to society, there is no real elaboration by Chong as to why a government should follow a liberal policy instead of a conservative one. Similarly, while criticizing the ascendancy of bureaucracy in governing cultural policies in Singapore, Chong states clearly that "for the bureaucrat, it is elitist art and the self-indulgent artist that need to change, not the community" (p. 29), although justifying the other way around is more difficult. For the author, the bureaucratic imagination is limited and in favor of art orthodoxies, leaving no room for heterodoxies, and believes that there is an inherent political function of art. As an author who has penned a highly political text like the arts manifesto, Chung hopes to see a culmination of sentiment in resistance to the bureaucratic imagination by "younger and more heterodox artists" who will use arts "as a vehicle for dissent, defiance or irreverence" (p. 33).



Lorraine Lim argues in her article, similarly to Chong, that the relationship between the Singaporean arts sector and the government is uneasy. There, economic growth-centered and pragmatic criteria define the major outline of cultural policies, and the state is acting like civil society itself. To Lim, the government supports the arts according to two rationale: first, showcasing Singapore to the world, and second, the expectation that artists will edify political structures. There are those artists who follow the government-drawn path and those who reject it and follow their own agenda. However, Lim does not engage a vital question as to why artists who work with 'independent' agendas prefer to engage in issues such as memory, ethnicity or identity. No doubt, the vagueness of the National Art Council's principles allows state official's arbitrary interpretations to reign over cultural and artistic production. But the examples Lim gives are about controversial moral values that a conservative government is expected to pursue, such as objection to homosexuality.

Li-jung Wang's article "Cultural Difference, National Identity and Cultural Policy in Taiwan" provides a brief account of cultural policies in Taiwan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and explains the tidal waves of rivaling ideological projects. The imposition of Japanese culture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was followed by cultural de-Japanization by Taiwan's Kuomintang government which imagined and constructed a Chinese nationalism between the 1940s and 1970s. Arts

and cultural associations were established under the control of the government. The 1970s-1990s witnessed the rise of local, Taiwanese culture as opposed to the government-imposed cultural policies that had influenced varieties of cultural forms, and gave birth to new Taiwanese films, Taiwanese native painting, Taiwanese Literature, Taiwanese folk music, etc. The 1990s marked a different time period in which multiculturalism and maintaining cultural diversity exercised considerable influence over national identity formation. The main challenge of the multicultural approach, as argued by Wang, was the deepening tension in Taiwanese society between diversity and unity, between separation and integration, and between hybridity and homogeneity. Globalization makes the construction of national identity difficult for two reasons: imagining a homogenous identity is difficult and the relations between cultural policies and national identity are unstable. Wang's solution is to find basic cultural rights for all and specific rights for some groups.

China has hundreds of millions of online gamers and more than half of the online gaming market is domestically produced and based on Chinese historical stories and folklore. The country's revenues from online and mobile games in 2011 corresponded to one third of the total revenues of the global online games industry. Anthony Fung in his article "Online Games and Chinese National Identities" mentions that these games sometimes offer evidently wrong in-



terpretations of history, such as characterizing Genghis Khan in a game as a representative of an ancient Chinese emperor. In Fung's terms, such repositioning of historical figures is a clear example of Sino-centrism. The popularity of such games enables the Chinese government to instill citizens with a strong sense of belonging to Chinese culture and national identity, as gamers feel themselves part of a constructed national history. Chinese online games exemplify a happy marriage of culture, national discourse, state hegemony, and capitalist logic.

Kiwon Hong and Hye-Kyung Lee discuss in two separate chapters the relationship between culture and state in South Korea. Hong focuses on the Han Style and the commercially driven Korean Wave, characterizing the hybrid identity of Korean culture with the aim to create the image of a respectable country noted for technological advancement rather than cultural significance that eventually produced a kind of 'non-threatening' nationalism. Hye-Kyung Lee, on the other hand, focuses on the vulnerability of the cultural sector to party politics in Korea. The preponderance of the state's role over the cultural sector and its legitimation are two chief subjects. Deep rooted ideological divisions and bilateral politicization are grave problems for the maintenance of the cultural and artistic sectors that avoid sectoral consensus.

At the expense of some anachronism, Jerry C.Y. Liu in his article "Re-Orienting Cultural Policy," makes analogies between past and contempo-

rary contexts by arguing that the main features and conducts of Chinese culture and governance have customarily been self-reflexivity, self-constraint, and self-regulation, which resemble the contemporary post-modern conception of cultural governance. Although Liu emphasizes cultural difference in generating cultural policy by looking for an alternative to the West, he considers the calls of Taiwanese artists and activists for a self-autonomous cultural space as a reinterpretation of "Confucian logic in contemporary cultural governance" (p. 134).

Mari Kobayashi and Nobuko Kawashima examine cultural policies in Japan in two separate articles. Kobayashi focuses on two major reforms initiated by a group in the early 2000s that ensured the unanimity of all parties and affected local cultural policies in Japan. Locals were given the opportunity to formulate and execute cultural policies in and for their localities. With these reforms, Kobayashi claims, Japan adopted a cultural democracy perspective that favors the participation of citizens, reconsidering the management of culture on a local level and promoting the diversification of players within local cultural policy. The article by Nobuko Kawashima, titled "The Film Industry in Japan," revolves around the question of how the Japanese film industry expended and experienced growth without public subsidies or protective barriers given the fact that Japanese domestic films occupy more than half of the box office in contrast to Europe. Kawashima argues that

this success is due to the investment of television stations. Unlike previous Japanese movies, the content is light, so they appeal to a general public. Japanese younger generations don't consider Hollywood or European movies cool anymore, but they are enthusiastic about Japanese anime, manga and video games. Scenarios with local idols are more attractive and relevant to this audience. But Kawashima is critical of the current condition of the film industry, which seems unsustainable and he expects the Japanese government to adopt a film policy and bring administrative and fiscal incentives together. More seriously, there is the problem of a drop in quality (light entertaining films) contradictorily being the main driver of the upsurge in the film industry.

Michael Keane and Elaine Jing Zhao give a brief periodization of cultural policies in China in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They talk about two major turns: from publicly subsidized to commercial culture and from commercial to amateur and user-generated content. Nation building and modernization concepts were replaced with the introduction of cultural policies as a pillar of industry. Keane and Zhao argue that China didn't experience the same boom in cultural and media sector as it did in the economic field. As of the 2010s, China's cultural productivity was tied to international cultural competition. China's soft power instrument is characterized by information industry and emerging technologies; while trying to be competitive in the

international field by means of its soft power capacity, China's inherent weakness, according to the authors, is due to the copy culture (*shanzhai*) that emerged in the 1980s and continues today.

In contrast to the negative outlook of Keane and Zhao, Xin Gu assumes a possibility in China's move from 'made in China' to 'designed in China,' as the country promotes the market potential of culture which led to an almost eight-fold increase of officially created cultural clusters in Shanghai between 2006 and 2010. What made Shanghai distinctive is that rather than focusing on traditional culture and heritage-centered cultural policy, Shanghai followed a more western/contemporary path through focusing on design, architecture, R&D, fashion, and cultural communication, etc. This is not to deny the triangle that politics, economics, and culture have to coinhabit. Along with Gu, Hsiao-Ling Chung discusses a positive relationship between the state and the cultural sector. Examining five municipalities in Taiwan, Chung claims that prescribing policy frameworks for every city in order to create cultural and creative industry is difficult, as these cities have distinctive characteristics. A creative city can be designed through a collective effort by bureaucrats, creative talents, commercial businesses and communities and sustainable coordination. It needs bottom-up and culture-centered practices along with efficient branding strategies.

\* \* \*

All in all, the books under review are valuable contributions to the field of cultural policies. The value of culture, creative industries, aesthetics, public management, funding and promotion preferences are all debatable issues and will remain so. Considering transformations since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in both the notions of culture and cultural policy and the diversification of cultural consumers, the questions of which culture and whose culture are thoroughly controversial.

There are two contradictory trends in cultural policies today: on the one hand, there is an increasing break between the state and the artistic and cultural sector on a discursive level, but, on the other, the roles of central and local governments continue to rise in practice, parallel to the rise of creative industries, nation branding policies, and spatial regeneration processes. A halfway point would be the utilization of concepts such as governance, participation, and cooperation in generating cultural policies.

Civil and bottom-up initiatives gain importance vis-à-vis the supremacy of bureaucrats; however, the question is to what extent civil initiatives are civil. As long as debate over the re-

lationship between global hegemony and culture is overlooked while examining the national/local/conservative perspectives for cultural policies, proper answers cannot be given.

None of the books under review touch upon the issue of global hegemony and its relationship to culture, even though it is fundamentally important. What is almost common, for example in Lee and Lim's edited book, is the categorical otherization of the state. Many of the articles problematize the relationship between the arts sector and governments, and prioritize individual artistic enterprise over state enterprise. The articles in this very informative, analytical and useful book, apparently tell only one side of the story in that they highlight the problematic aspects of state-art relations, without necessarily problematizing the ways in which artists and arts organizations can sometimes act like governments in judging, promoting or indoctrinating certain forms and norms of culture. What is more problematic here is that criticizing censorship in the name of freedom can turn into secular manifestos telling governments which liberal cultural policies they ought to follow, a practice whose legitimacy is debatable. ■