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Enhancing elite autonomy: the role of cultural policy in post-authoritarian Chile (1990-2005)

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ABSTRACT
This article explores the relationship between cultural policy and democratization by taking post-authoritarian Chile as a case study. It argues that culture was one of the more marginal and alternative policy areas that could favor democratization in the country by increasing what the author calls 'elite autonomy'. This new concept theorizes that in a democracy obstructed by the heritage of the dictatorship, culture could help democratic elites of the center-left validate their coalition as an independent political force, differentiate themselves from the right-wing party elites that supported the military regime and ultimately break with the negative image of the Pinochet regime.

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Introduction

Following a *coup d'état* that deposed Socialist President Salvador Allende on 11 September 1973, a right-wing military regime led by General Augusto Pinochet was established in Chile. For almost 17 years, the dictatorship exercised violence on many left-wing militants, banned political parties and trade unions and imposed a broad censorship (Rigby 2001). In October 1988, a referendum was held to decide if Pinochet would maintain himself as President for eight more years. Chileans voted NO at around 56%, prompting the end of Pinochet's rule. Later, in December 1989, Patricio Aylwin, the Christian Democrat candidate of the center-left *Concertación* party coalition won the presidential election.[1] Chile's return to democracy was made through a 'pacted transition', that is to say, 'an agreement between the soft-liners and the moderates whereby they try to work out some of the details of transition' Gill (2000, 53). Following this process of negotiations, Chile became a democracy, but one characterized by a series of legal dispositions that allowed actors and supporters of the former military regime to keep some or their prerogatives. These are known as 'authoritarian enclaves', a concept coined by Chilean sociologist Manuel Garretón (2003, 47–48) and which refers to legal 'elements of the previous regime that persist in the democratic regime'.

Authoritarian enclaves were imposed by the Armed Forces as well as by their business and right-wing allies (mainly the Catholic-conservative party *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI) and the Liberal-conservative party *Renovación Nacional* (RN) and were the condition to validate the passage from dictatorship to democracy. Among those enclaves were nine appointed senators close to the ex-regime, the continuation of Pinochet as Commander-in-Chief and Senator and a binomial electoral system that favored centrist coalitions and reduced the electoral weight of more radical left parties (Londregan 2000, 83; Birdsall 2009, 59; Arceneaux 2017). Chilean democracy also kept the 1980 Constitution drafted under the former regime which granted power to the military until constitutional reforms were passed in 2005, and guaranteed the preservation of the neoliberal

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economic model designed by Pinochet's ministers. Other important enclaves were the 1978 amnesty laws that prevented perpetrators of human rights violations from being prosecuted.

While authors discuss authoritarian enclaves to highlight the obstacles to democratization after the end of a military regime (Galleguillos 1998; Garretón 2003; González 2008), this article focuses on what was little impacted by them and could thus help democracy. Democratic breaches always exist, whether they are created by the regime or exist despite the regime. Gilley (2010, 391) considers those spaces 'democratic enclaves' which he defines as 'institutions of the state or (…) regulatory spaces in society where the authoritarian regime's writ is substantively limited and is replaced by an adherence to recognizably democratic norms and procedures.' Sharp (2011, 108–110) also suggests that some institutions or groups never fully obey the dictatorship's rules despite the risk of violence and punishment. Authoritarian actors are not completely able or willing to repress dissidents and opposition groups can thus rely on organizations, networks, institutions or intellectual circles to have more latitude. Similarly, pro-democracy agents can use legal loopholes or areas neglected by the authoritarian power at their advantage. The scholarly literature on democratization has little addressed the fact that some policies are little pressured by enclaves and can thus help democracy. This is the gap that this article intends to fill by showing that cultural policy did play such a role in Chile's restricted democracy.

Methodology

The article is at the intersection of democratization and cultural policy studies. It is built on two concepts. The first one, authoritarian enclaves (Garretón 2003) theorizes the persistence in democracy of laws or institutions of the past dictatorial regime. As explained in the introduction, some enclaves are incarnated by the previous regime's actors. However, they can also be caused by democratic elites' if their ideology has evolved or if they perpetuate the politics of transition that has damaged political pluralism and weakened civil society (Siavelis 2009). Dabène (2008, 91) argues that enclaves are reduced to their legal essence in the literature, suggesting that more symbolic or psychological obstacles could be also framed as enclaves. Indeed, despite the return to democracy, some citizens still feel insecurity and have the impression that the country has not reached normalization or broken with its dictatorial past (Martín-Cabrera 2011, 11). Also, after transition, countries drag a bad reputation inherited from years of violence, injustice or censorship.

All these enclaves imply that new democratic elites have difficulty in differentiating themselves from the actors or supporters of the authoritarian regime. Therefore, the second concept used in this article is an original one called 'elite autonomy'. Elite autonomy is the capacity of incumbent elites to implement policies that favor democracy and that are based on their own decisions rather than those of their political rivals or other powerful actors (the military, lobbies, multinationals etc).[2] It can mean implementing new policies or creating institutions that expand citizens' rights.

Besides, elite autonomy has a more figurative side. When actors of the old regime remain within state institutions and hold positions of influence in society, democratic elites must prove to their fellow-citizens and international actors that the country is back on the right track, and that the era of dictatorship is closed. They, therefore, try to write over the dark past and build a 'democratic identity' through positive discourses or initiatives that 'design' the new regime. After the end of dictatorship, elites seek to build an environment that is as less reminiscent as possible of the authoritarian period and to present their political identity as distinct from the actors or supporters of the former regime. This is especially the case if these elites now share some common characteristics with their former political enemies.

The argument of this article is that cultural policy – understood as the policy area dedicated to the management and funding of culture, arts and heritage – helped the Concertación elites increase their autonomy. After Pinochet's defeat, the Concertación did not structurally modify economic and labour policy and was timid in transitional justice,[3] either because the right-wing actors obstructed legislation or because it now adhered in large part to economic and political conservatism. Instead,

in order to improve democracy, the center-left coalition relied on other policy areas such as culture that could enhance freedom of speech in a country where pluralism was limited. Also, at a more symbolic level, the Concertación faced the 'burden of the past' that tainted Chile's reputation. The article shows that culture, as a relatively 'enclave-free' policy area helped the Concertación have more political leeway and compensate for the loss of its left-wing identity caused by the military government's repression and its own validation of some aspects of Pinochet's heritage. As both right-wing forces and the Concertación agreed that market economy was key in securing the country's democratic stability and growth, and that consensus should prevail over transitional justice that was considered too contentious, ideological polarization was significantly reduced. Therefore, cultural policy was an opportunity for the Concertación to reaffirm its values as distinct from those of the right-wing actors who supported the dictatorship and allowed to re-create difference between the two camps.

Cultural policy was implemented along with other agencies and institutions that gave more visibility to issues such as gender equality, indigenous peoples and environment, ignored under the military regime. Those were more marginal than policies of economy or transitional justice. Yet, while they were less contentious than economy, labour policy or human rights, they sometimes clashed with economic interests and political conservatism. The environmental agenda was seldom compatible with big projects of infrastructure construction, women policy was seen by conservatives as an entry for Feminist ideology (Squella Padilla 2000; Dandavati 2005) and multiculturalism was against the principle of the Chilean unitary state (Haughney 2012, 213–214) defended by the right. Although it is associated with the left, the word 'culture' was more consensual than 'women', 'indigenous' and 'environment' as it was also compatible with some of the right's values. Also, as this will be shown, cultural policy provoked little confrontation between the Concertación and the right-wing sectors and did not jeopardize the accords passed during transition. Most importantly, the right had historically little interest in cultural policy. This allowed the center-left to 'seize' culture without facing much opposition or resistance.

In order to support this argument, the article focuses on the *Fondo de Desarrollo para la Cultura y las Artes* (FONDART) (Fund for Cultural Development and the Arts), a competition-based fund created in 1992, which is also the main source of cultural and artistic funding in Chile. The analysis is derived from a set of 40 interviews carried with actors from the Chilean cultural field: Concertación elites who implemented the FONDART, juries, cultural managers and recipients of the fund. Other sources such as policy, legislative documents and party manifestos were also used. The article is divided into two parts. The first one sets the relationship between right-wing elites and cultural policy under and after the Pinochet regime. The second one shows that the FONDART helped the Chilean center-left coalition increase its autonomy by improving freedom of speech and enhancing both the progressive image of the Concertación and that of the new democracy.

From the Pinochet regime to democracy: right-wing elites and cultural policy

Cultural policy: between traditionalism and disinterest

One of the most remarkable features of the Chilean military government was its full adoption of the neoliberal 'orthodoxy', which saw 'tariffs reduced, financial sector deregulated, foreign trade liberalized' and key sectors such as health and education privatized (Alexander 2009, 4). The steady implementation of neoliberalism under Pinochet showed strong political and ethical contradictions. As explained by Pitton (2007, 251), advocates of neoliberalism have long underestimated its nocuous effects as well as the 'the tension between neoliberal theory and practice', for although it is 'based on political ideas of human dignity and individual freedom' the actual concretization of the free-market ideology was only possible through coercive means. The model was promoted by the 'Chicago Boys', the ministers of Pinochet who studied economics at the University of Chicago as part of an exchange programme called the 'Chile Project' between the 1950s and 1960s (Valdés 1995). Back then, the

Chicago Boys learnt a new conception of economic science based on technical rationality and mathematical formalization. Upon their return to Chile, they defended a vision of economics that was very dogmatic and those who criticized it were systematically accused of being biased or partisan (Gárate 2010).

Also, the Chicago Boys promoted merit, personal effort and Anglo-Saxon postgraduate degrees especially in 'apolitical' subjects such as economics and management, which all satisfied the upper classes and the military junta. Prior to this, social recognition in Chile was principally achieved through family ties. As argued by Cubitt (1995, 106), 'large families and the recognition of a wide network of kinship ties is a feature of Latin American life' where 'names demonstrate aristocratic status' and 'family networks are manipulated in the course of politics and business.' However, between the 1970s and 1980s, the Chilean elite was not only relying on heritage and family descent to legitimize its social position but also on technical knowledge and professional success. Also, this new managerial ethos was combined with some traits that had long characterized the traditional elite: strong conservative values, a Catholic background and an attachment to patriotic symbols. The only difference was that, as the upper classes did not recognize themselves in the new pro-poor rhetoric of the Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council, they turned to other religious organizations such as Opus Dei and the Legion of Christ that were more elitist, more anti-Communist and more complacent towards market economy (Blofield 2006, 29; Han 2012, 195; Cox and Imbarack 2017, 237)

After the *coup d'état*, part of the upper classes started to build their social legitimacy through business, 'foreign capital', academic degrees obtained abroad and through the full adhesion to market economy (Bartell 1995, 60–61). The argument made in this article is that while this elite still held tight to its religious and traditional values, its new neoliberal stance further decreased its interest in having public policies dedicated to culture and the arts. Under Pinochet, there was the promotion of some cultural values such as 'hierarchy, authority, (…) duty and sobriety' (Errázuriz 2006, 76). The military government relied upon imageries and allegories as it honoured historical figures and developed an aesthetics of hygiene and color cleansing (Errázuriz and Leiva 2012).[4]

Moreover, under the military government, importance was given to cultural heritage and traditional arts. The National Folkloric Ballet and the *cueca* were still given visibility[5] while the Viña del Mar International Song Festival which had been launched prior to the dictatorship continued to take place every year. There were also institutions and official bodies dedicated to culture, mainly, the Department of Cultural Extension attached to the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the regime 'created the Cultural Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure the dissemination of its activities abroad', (…) 'cultural houses and cultural corporations in the country's main municipalities and ProChile, a technical body aimed at promoting exports and the "country's image"' (Antoine 2015, 163).

Yet, cultural policy was not a well-planned policy and well-structured domain but rather a set of initiatives in the cultural area. The military regime and its right-wing allies were predominantly interested in economic growth, the creation of enterprises and the preservation of traditional values and were little willing to design a more elaborated cultural policy. During the dictatorship, all areas of society became subordinated to neoliberal rationality as public services, state-owned resources, education, health, pensions, social security and the banking system were all privatized (Oppenheim 2007; Kikeri and Nellis 2002). Culture, however, was not considered a potentially lucrative domain by the new neoliberal and pro-market right-wing elite. It was neither a strategic nor a productive sector. Also, it appears that the right had few ideas in terms of culture, little creativity or talent to develop a full or creative proposition in this area. As put by an ex-FONDART jury and cultural manager:

> The Chicago Boys resolved everything through privatization … pensions, education. But for culture, they did not have a solution. They were just not interested; it was not something important for them. They left this task to us [the left-wing]. Economists and entrepreneurs know much about economy, but they are not very enlightened. Our economic elite is just not cultivated.[6]

Besides, for the military and the business actors close to the regime, culture was a *foco marxista* (Marxist source) that they looked at with a mixture of contempt and disinterest. Another important point is that, although they seemed to have a cultural and ideological proximity with North America because of their Anglo-Saxon degrees and their strong capitalist bias, they did not develop a tradition or a trend of philanthropy like in the United States where industrialists and entrepreneurs donate part of their personal wealth to fund culture and the arts.[7] Therefore, whether it was through a private or public system of financing, these elites did not conceive culture and the arts as good for the community or as serving the public good. After the return to democracy in 1990, most of the politicians of the center-right, as well as the business elites who supported them continued to simultaneously embrace unrestricted capitalist accumulation and societal traditionalism. In parallel, they still had little interest in cultural policy which was neither part of their social history nor part of their immediate political agenda. They logically remained unsympathetic to the theme of culture and kept a distant relationship with the artistic community. Consequently, during the first decade of democratic rule, cultural policy was little present on the right-wing agenda.

During the presidential campaigns of 1989 and 1993, the right-wing candidate propositions for cultural policy were minimal and focused on the same areas: cultural heritage, family and sports. In 1989, the part on cultural policy in Hernan Büchi's[8] program, was almost identical to that of the military regime. He proposed an increase in private donations to finance the arts and insisted on 'moral and aesthetical values' as well as on the 'strengthening of national identity' (Büchi 1989, 26). Besides, it emphasized the role of sports in fostering family, intelligence and morality. As for the programme of candidate Arturo Alessandri Besa in 1993, it combined a nineteenth-century vision of culture: one focused of cultural heritage, museums, archives and the conservation of historical buildings with an entrepreneurial vision advocating the economic participation of enterprises in sports (Alessandri Besa 1993, 14). Between 1999 and 2005, right-wing candidates Joaquín Lavín and Sebastián Piñera's program followed the same lines, with the only difference being that it very briefly included the issue of indigenous peoples. Overall, their propositions remained short as they sought to improve the existing cultural institutions through a plan of modernization.[9]

The Chilean political right and the FONDART

The left-wing actors who oversaw cultural policy during the relevant period suggested that the right did not oppose the implementation of the FONDART in the early 1990s.[10] This relative approval of the UDI and RN was linked to the fact that the FONDART did not jeopardize the neoliberal discipline. Indeed, cultural policy represented a very small part of the national budget. Therefore, it did not clash with powerful right-wing actors and barely raised their attention.[11] The consent of the right also came from a sentiment oscillating between antipathy and indifference vis-à-vis culture as a policy domain. Some of the arts subsidized by FONDART, especially in the early 1990s were quite anti-conformist and the right-wing sectors were not very permeated by the culture of dissidence and *avant-garde* that had a more left-wing connotation. However, rather than fighting against what they considered a Marxist manifestation, their reaction was one of disregard. Overall, the low financial cost of the FONDART and the unconventional artistic expressions it financed explained the initial indifference of the right towards it. As summarized by a former FONDART recipient and jury: 'Right-wing parties at first did not notice the FONDART, for them it was just something that financed clowns and that received 5000 pesos, it was something eccentric.'[12]

Therefore, cultural policy was little obstructed by the enclaves embodied by the right-wing opposition. Politicians from UDI and RN as well as the military were more concerned about blocking any measure that could have reformed the most radical aspects of the neoliberal model or facilitated the prosecution of those responsible for human rights violations (Álvarez 2011, 126–127). Culture was not part of their agenda. They looked at it from afar and raised their voice only when they judged that some of their cultural references were being ridiculed or their honour tarnished. When the right-

wing deputies had something to say about the FONDART, it was related to the integrity and history of the Chilean nation or to moral issues such as sexual decency. The fund did provoke a few scandals that have so far remained well-known in Chile.

A particularly famous one is the 2002 theatre play *Prat* financed by FONDART. Arturo Prat, a 19th century Chilean Navy officer killed during the War of the Pacific that saw Chile, Peru and Bolivia battling each other, is a sacred historical figure for former *pinochetistas* and part of the military. The piece written by playwright Manuela Infante portrayed him as a weak man, an alcoholic and according to conservative critics, as a homosexual. The right-wing politicians strongly condemned the work that according to them damaged the national hero's image.[13] Also, they lamented the existence of such a 'distasteful' play and the fact that it was financed with taxpayers' money. At the same time, the Chilean admirals stood up in defence of the honour of Arturo Prat, pressuring authorities to prevent the play from being premiered.

However, *Prat* and most of the polemical FONDART projects that stirred controversies in Chile were all financed and executed and its legitimacy as the sole mechanism of cultural funding was never denied. In fact, the right-wing politicians never explicitly opposed the FONDART as an institution but only saved their complaints for some art works that they judged offensive. The debates that took place between the right and the government in the early 2000s were like those found in any established democracy. Indeed, even in democratic regimes, some artists' works provoke scandals and stir discussions on the legitimacy of funding art with taxpayers' money (Sabrin 1993). Publicly debating the role of art and creative freedom is, therefore, also part of the democratic exercise. In Chile, the FONDART had a similar function. The other reason why the fund was not combated by the right is that it had a very broad definition of culture and the arts. Even though public money was invested in contemporary, popular or indigenous arts that were not part of the right's spheres of interest or political priorities, the FONDART also financed many projects for the protection and reconstruction of national heritage (*patrimonio*), which was very appreciated by conservative sectors.[14] In that sense, the FONDART valorized Chilean history and identity, in good accordance with the principles defended by the right.[15] As argued by a civil servant from the Museum Benjamín Vicuña MacKenna in Santiago:

> Part of the [Chilean] right, let's say the most ideological, thinks that having a FONDART or even a Ministry of Culture is not necessary, that whoever wants to develop culture should do it through their talent only (…) the right was never very enthusiastic about it, but they accepted it. They did not oppose it. When they took charge of the Council [of Culture and the Arts] they developed new lines of work that had to do with material heritage, buildings, architecture, religious art, and after the 2010 earthquake money was spent to rebuild churches through the FONDART and other things, that is their vision.[16]

Indeed, what is classified as cultural heritage (ancient buildings, monuments, national libraries or museums) is one of the most constitutive and visible aspects of a nation and as this was said earlier, was validated by conservative actors. As shown by the previous quote, the right could thus use the FONDART at its own advantage. What can be argued as well is that the fund allowed Chile to be seen under a positive light abroad. Films financed by the FONDART such as *Chacabuco: memoria del silencio* (2001), *Machuca* (2004), *En la cama* (2005), *Mi mejor enemigo* (2005) gained international visibility by being shown or awarded prizes in European film festivals. The export of local artistic commodities or creative industries is one of the key tools through which countries sell their (positive) image or enhance their credibility. Therefore, it made little less sense for the right to oppose the FONDART.[17] In the meantime, the FONDART allowed the Concertación to display a more left-wing political identity after the return to democracy. This is what will be discussed in the last part of this article.

Culture: an 'enclave-free' policy area

The impact of the Pinochet dictatorship on the Chilean left

The Concertación was a center-left coalition whose cohesiveness lay in its opposition to the dictatorship. In 1986, as the Pinochet regime continued to repress social movements, the *Alianza Democrática* (AD)

(Democratic Alliance) (which further became the Concertación) reunited Socialists, Greens, Christian Democrats, Christians from the left, Humanists and Liberals opposed to the military government and concluded that street protest was not the right path to follow and therefore chose a strategy of electoral politics and accommodation with the regime (Carey 2009, 88; Uggla 2009, 162). The Concertación elites' role was to propose a moderate agenda in order to carry negotiations and the process of constitutional reforms that secured the return to democracy. The history of the coalition is also one that led the political left to adopt some of the traits of the right-wing business and technocratic elites.

Indeed, from the 1980s, the Chilean left underwent a political mutation as the consequences of the Pinochet dictatorship: exile, repression and censorship had an impact on left-wing parties and the plans adopted by its leaders. Firstly, the Socialist Party ceased to exist in its radical form. As its leaders and militants were killed, put in prison or expelled from the country, the organization was greatly weakened. Also, its strong internal disagreements on how to oust Pinochet provoked in 1979 the split of the party into two branches: a democratic and reformist one, led by Carlos Altamirano, the General Secretary of the Party, and a more radical left led by Clodomiro Almeyda, Salvador Allende's ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs (Roberts 1998, 107; Paley 2001).

By the end of the 1980s, the PS transformed into a resolutely more centrist party (Angell 2007, 39). In 1987, as the military government lifted the ban on non-Marxist political parties, Ricardo Lagos, a leader from the PS, founded the PPD, a party that emerged from the renovated faction of the PS and that reunited people who had taken their distance with the right, individuals from both secular and Christian circles as well as former Communists and Socialists (Picazo Vallejo 2001, 293). The PPD erased most of its leftist stance to bring together all those whose priority was to defeat Pinochet in the 1988 referendum. Its creation was based on the strategy that consisted in ignoring ideological dissensions and focusing on bringing back democracy.

Secondly, another consequence of the Pinochet dictatorship was the transformation of left-wing politicians into technocrats. Because many Chilean intellectuals and politicians were excluded from public universities and political organizations, they increasingly relied on private foundations and research centers financed by foreign governments (Petras 1990, 102–103). As they integrated these networks, they embraced a resolutely more technocratic approach to social sciences and politics that was accepted by the authoritarian regime for it was 'carefully formulated in academic terms and presented in an abstract manner' (Silva 1991, 401–402). In addition, many exiled political leaders had an experience in foreign academia, especially in North American universities where the teaching of the new orthodox economy was concomitant with an exaltation of democratic and human rights ideals (Dezalay and Garth 2002). Even among the Chilean left, traditional politics became discredited as the experience of its leaders convinced them that 'over-politicizing' the debate was dangerous. Overt confrontation and social movements were considered obsolete and unhelpful. Therefore, the politics of technocracy and expertise was not exclusively the monopole of the political right anymore.

The transfer of power from the military to civilians in 1990 consolidated the influence of foreign-trained economists and engineers within state administration (Silva 2008). Part of the decision of President Aylwin to surround himself with technocrats was due to the politics of agreements and consensus-building that shaped the transition. Besides, many Christian Democrats after the end of dictatorship agreed with several aspects of the Chicago doctrine. As argued by Hojman (1990, 25), during the Aylwin presidency (1994) (1990–1994), 'many of the free-market policies were recommended by the Christian Democratic economists and other social scientists'. Consequently, like their counterparts of UDI and RN, numerous Concertación politicians eventually adhered to the principles of economic growth and neoliberal governance. Like the right as well, in the early phase of democracy and even later, one of the coalition's priorities was to reassure Chilean business actors about the continuity of the market-led economy (Haagh 2002).

Culture and the reconnection with left-wing ideology

As explained previously, the FONDART was irrelevant for the Chilean right as its priority was making sure the economic system was not structurally modified. Moreover, cultural policy was more debated between the members of the Concertación than between the center-left and the center-right parties. This lack of interest in cultural policy opened a space for the Concertación to increase its autonomy and decision-making capacity. Because it was remote from the preoccupations of the military and the Chicago Boys under the Pinochet regime, culture was left 'blank' and constituted a breach in which progressive forces could enter after the return to democracy. Although some institutions for culture existed under the dictatorship, cultural policy was not formalized enough and consequently, right-wing actors and the military did not impose any policy continuity in this area. This relative programmatic void allowed the Concertación and its cultural advisors to have more leeway in the area of culture.

Parliamentary discussions between the Concertación and the opposition happened during the legislative process that led to the creation the *Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes* (CNCA) (Arts Council) in the early 2000s. At that time, the FONDART was already a legitimate institution and Chile's main cultural policy. The foundation of the Arts Council only confirmed the status quo. The right publicly expressed its concern over the *gobierno de turno* (incumbent government) politicizing the Council and controlling creative content. Nevertheless, this fear already existed among the Concertación, and for this reason the FONDART was conceived as an institution that had a participatory structure.[18] Most of the right-wing deputies voted in favor of the law that created the CNCA in 2003. Over the years, cultural policy gave way to a 'silent consensus' across the political spectrum and its legitimacy was not called into question.

As for the Concertación, cultural policy gave it the opportunity to create a difference with their political rivals. Because of the enclaves, polarization between the right and the left was considerably reduced. Because of the politics of transition and the transformation of elites that occurred during the Pinochet years, the Concertación kept the foundations of the Chicago model. Cultural policy allowed to pursue a more left-wing agenda in a right-wing political and economic framework inherited from the dictatorship. The FONDART helped foster freedom of speech and open new societal debates in the country. Censorship laws (applicable until 2001) and a lack of pluralism in the press limited freedom of speech (Bresnahan, 2003, 39–49; Mason, 2012, 374–375). Many projects funded by the FONDART allowed artists and citizens to question Chilean society and politics by stirring public debates about sexuality, indigenous peoples and Chile's authoritarian past, which challenged the dominant conservative ideology.[19] It is acknowledged that throughout history, arts have been used to defy the incumbent power holders and transmit messages that were more acceptable because they were presented as artistic and folkloric rather than political (Chirambo, 2001; Bilbija et al., 2005). As explained by a former FONDART coordinator:

> [FONDART] put in tension many topics such as authoritarianism and the ideological control of part of the media. The artists in the good sense of the term untied themselves. In all fields, in theatre, in visual arts, in cinema and literature, very controversial works were created. Very controversial ones. The records of that time are very interesting from the artistic point of view but also in terms of the debate that it has provoked with the Chilean society. It put in discussion many dimensions that today are obvious, but that were not so obvious at that time.[20]

The FONDART allowed to enhance the Concertación's elite autonomy since it was strongly associated with left-wing ideology. Indeed, many artists in Chile have historically supported the Left. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, the New Chilean Song Movement was 'one of the most compelling examples of a cultural component helping to accompany a political revolution to power' and had a strong militant posture as it openly supported the Communist party and the Socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970–1973) (San Román 2014, 2–3). Also, the Ramona Parra and Elmo Catalán Brigades were known for the murals they did to campaign for the Popular Unity coalition led by Allende (Palmer 2008, 8; Mularski 2014).

In the 1980s, many artists related their creative work to the struggle for democracy. Artists were the face, the symbol and the content of the resistance against Pinochet in the last phase of the military regime.[21] They supported the Concertación and actively participated in the NO campaign for the 1988 referendum (El Mercurio 2018). In the campaign spot appeared professional artists, music performers as well as elements of lyre playing, circus arts, and theatre. Also, the spot was supported by a song *La alegría ya viene* (Joy is coming) composed by musician and TV producer Jaime de Aguirre. The involvement of artists within the campaign for democracy was also crystallized by the event *Chile crea* (Chile creates), a meeting of artists and intellectuals proposing performances and debates that took place in 1988 (Lazzara and Délano 2002, 37). It is important to underline as well that some famous artistic figures were victims of the dictatorship. Musician Victor Jara and music band Quilapayún who represent Chilean culture at home and abroad were either killed or exiled. As such, cultural policy was a way to symbolically reconnect with this imagery of the old left and compensate for the right-wing orientation of the Concertación in the economy. As argued by a former jury of the FONDART:

> The Concertación never was left-wing at the economic level, they were never able to twist the arm of those who held influence in Chile, because they are too powerful. FONDART and the cultural institution [CNCA] were their little hobbyhorse to balance out the economic groups. The only way that the Concertación had to display its left-wing was through culture.[22]

What the above quote shows is that between 1990 and 2005, because of the designated senators, the Concertación did not have the majority in the Senate. This was essential to pass laws that could have changed the political and economic system shaped under Pinochet (Hartlyn and Valenzuela 1998, 49; Garretón 2000, 74–75). Yet, as it was previously explained, the Concertación underwent a political and intellectual mutation that led many of its members to partly embrace the previous regime's ideology. Some enclaves were consequently related to the center-left's lack of political willingness and not only to the pressures exercised by right-wing sectors. For example, between 2000 and May 2002, the Concertación had a majority both in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and did not present any project that could have substantially modified Pinochet's heritage in key policy areas (Portales 2005, 18).

The renunciation of the left-wing ideology by the Concertación created a loss of their identity and this was problematic for the image of the coalition and that of democracy. Yet, because cultural policy was 'left-wing connoted', it helped give an impression of breaking with the repressive and conventional right-wing order. The FONDART at the time it was created had 'anti-establishment' image and a libertarian character for it provoked noise and dissonance in a society that was conservative. Also, the FONDART brought joy and satisfaction for many artists who had supported the Concertación during the campaign and had waited for an instrument of cultural funding. Two FONDART recipients' claims support this argument:

> FONDART was new content, new media, (…) it had political prestige and political capital. It was irreverent in terms of freedom of speech because it contributed to it after having a very repressed country. With the FONDART started to appear theatre plays that were completely punk, companies that were completely crazy. It had a rebel spirit.

> At the beginning, it was impressive. There was a government that for the first time after years of complete obscurantism allowed funding for avant-garde artists, above all. For them, the FONDART was very important and very much loved.[23]

Finally, it should be highlighted that although democracy was back, the amnesty laws that guaranteed criminal impunity to perpetrators still tied Chile to its dictatorial past and damaged the country's reputation. Culture and the arts were some of the means used to enhance Chile's democratic and left-wing identity. In 1992, the Universal Exposition was held in the Spanish city of Seville, where the Chilean government presented 'a twenty-eight-foot-tall installation composed of several smaller pieces of iceberg from Chile's Antarctic territory' (Korowin 2010, 48). The purity of the iceberg's whiteness was a metaphor for a new beginning. Besides, according to Gómez-Barris

(2009, 2), it was an 'effort to rehabilitate the country's international image'. In that sense, art symbolized the regeneration of Chile which was ready to embrace democracy and depart from the Pinochet era. The FONDART as the main tool of cultural policy also played this function, especially in the early phase of democracy.

Conclusion

This article developed the argument that after the return to democracy in Chile, culture emerged as a relatively low-risk policy area that could increase the 'elite autonomy' of the center-left coalition. In a context of authoritarian enclaves, the Concertación needed more room for manoeuvre and had to enhance the left-wing identity it had partly lost as a result of the dictatorship and the hegemony of neoliberal ideology. Cultural was a strategic area for it was relatively protected from the pressures of the military and entrepreneurial sectors who remained powerful after the end of dictatorship. Indeed, the right's priorities were business, growth and the promotion of conservative values: family, religion and the commemoration of Chile's historical heroes. However, designing a cultural policy was not on their agenda and was associated with leftist propaganda. While it was sometimes critical of left-wing culture during democracy, branding it as a *nido de marxistas* (Marxist nest) or a waste of public money, the political right never considered that it was worth fighting against, as it did not threaten neither its position nor its interests.

Cultural policy, and more specifically the FONDART, was not devoid of tensions and scandals. However, the heated debates it provoked were not the mark of an authoritarian regression but rather the sign of Chile's reconnection with democracy. As such, the FONDART contributed to open spaces of free expression. Consequently, the polemics stirred by the FONDART did stimulate democracy rather than restrict its exercise. Finally, cultural policy appeared as a relevant domain for Concertación's elites who could use it to temper the coalition's socio-economic resemblance to the right-wing parties of RN and UDI. Indeed, arts and culture were very connected to the left as during the Socialist era of Allende and during the struggle for democracy, artists were present and active. Also, the more libertarian and colorful aspect of FONDART made it an instrument that sometimes disrupted or questioned the conservatism and austerity inherited from the Pinochet era.

Notes

1. The main parties within this wide coalition were the Socialist Party (PS), the Party for Democracy (PPD) and the Christian Democratic party (PDC). The Concertación governed Chile between 1990 and 2010. The article covers the Concertación era until 2005, year of the constitutional reforms that removed some of the most important enclaves.
2. The concept of elite autonomy here applies to governing elites rather than elites from the opposition. It is not theoretically restricted to the center-left but focuses on those who govern and have a more limited decision-making power due to the political balance inherited from the authoritarian era. In Chile, the right was dominant after transition. Yet, the concept of elite autonomy could also analyze the limits and possibilities of incumbent right-wing elites in cases where the left is stronger or hegemonic.
3. The 1991 National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation had an informative rather than judicial value while the 1999 Round Table Dialogue and the 2004 Valech Commission's information on human rights violations was classified for decades, strongly limiting prosecution.
4. In parallel, the decree archives of the period show a repeated interest in religion and sports. The valorization of heritage was correlated to the nationalist stance adopted by the military regime while the support for religion mostly consisted in giving a legal status to Evangelical churches. Indeed, in order to counter Catholic authorities that were hostile to the military regime, Pinochet backed and co-opted the Protestant community (Stoll 1990, 316). As for sports, they were supported by the right because they were recreational forms of culture that bore little ideology.
5. The *cueca* was declared a national dance by government decree on 18 September 1979. [15] Interview, independent researcher, 26 April 2018.
6. Interview, 22 March 2018.
7. Ibidem.

8. Büchi was the Minister of Finance of Pinochet between 1985 and 1989.
9. Joaquín Lavín (Programa de gobierno 1999); Sebastián Piñera (Programa de gobierno 2005). Available on www.archivochile.com.
10. Interview, 22 March 2018; Interview, 23 March 2018.
11. Benavente and Larraín (2016) explain that 'with respect to Chile's cultural public expenditure, there are no precise estimates' due to the 'institutional dispersion in the sources of information on public expenditure'. By taking into account the 'budgets of services of the central level of the State, such as are the CNCA, the Directorate of Libraries, Archives and Museums (Dibam) and the Directorate of Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dirac) and the 2016 Budget Law, they find out that the budget for that year represents 0.55% of public spending. By extricating data from the 2009 national budget, the author calculates that the money allocated to the CNCA at the end of the Bachelet administration amounts to 0.23% of the national expenditures, and this, knowing that the FONDART budget has grown every year since 1992.
12. Interview, 5 April 2018.
13. Senado, sesión ordinaria N° 2, 2 October 2002.
14. The FONDART was divided into many areas/lines of application, guaranteeing a very large and inclusive conception of culture and the arts.
15. The FONDART was positive for the image of Chile in general. Films build the picture of a talented and open nation, one that also has intellectual credentials as they make citizens think about their own society and even about their dark past. The fund gave a polished and successful image of Chile abroad. It has received positive feedback in other countries of Latin America where a similar mechanism of cultural financing is still wanted by artists, especially in countries of the region that have fewer or no instrument for cultural funding. This success of the FONDART beyond Chilean borders, could help the country break its isolation, show its dynamism and economic success. Consequently, it could be validated by all political parties.
16. Interview, 20 April 2018.
17. Under the center-right government of Sebastián Piñera elected in 2010 new areas of application for the FONDART were created: design, new media, circus arts and architecture. Soon after taking office, the Minister of Culture Luciano Cruz-Coke spoke about opening FONDART lines of application in the areas of cultural infrastructure's reconstruction, conservation and dissemination of cultural heritage.
18. The FONDART was based on a system of peer-review as artists judged other artists' work. As such, the FONDART aimed at giving more decisional power to civil society. Also, the FONDART was open to all Chilean citizens, regardless of their background and their artistic trajectory.
19. The fund did receive some regular criticism. It was indeed very bureaucratic as applicants had to respect strict administrative requirements due to the scarcity of resources and budget rigour imposed by neoliberal rationality. Yet, this criticism applied to Chilean policies in general. The fund remained enclave-free for it was less pressured by the right and helped citizens reconnect with more plural opinions.
20. Interview, 20 March 2018.
21. Interview with employee of Museum of Memory and Human Rights, 13 April 2018.
22. Interview, 5 April 2018.
23. Interview, 10 April 2018.

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ARTICLE

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Role of universities in preserving cultural heritage in areas of conflict

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ABSTRACT
People living under occupation continue their struggle against loss of land by preserving their authentic cultural heritage, narrative, identity, and very existence in various ways. This paper sets out the efforts of Palestinian universities to protect their cultural heritage in the face of continuing Israeli occupation, which demonstrate resilience by building sustainable livelihoods. This includes raising awareness of their cultural heritage, and assisting the economy through the provision of work opportunities that portray a collective policy towards their culture. It sheds light on the case of Al-Quds University that is implementing several conservation projects in different cultural sites rich in the contextual values in the Old City of Jerusalem. The university adopts people-centered solutions, which give the built heritage significant meaning and value. A taxonomy of efforts among the projects is outlined to inform policy discussions related to the role of universities. Through utilizing empirical data that can stimulate discussions on developing a more shared set of efforts, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on the reconstruction of built heritage as a dynamic process and strategy to help people recover from the impacts of conflicts.

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Introduction

The destruction of cultural heritage during wars can be used intentionally to destroy people and their identity. Both Robert Bevan (2006), and Helen Walasek (2019) argue that the destruction of the enemy's cultural artifacts is politically motivated in order to reject and erase people's presence and collective memory of a place. As a result, in times of political conflict, people's perception towards their identity and cultural heritage can be changed through embracing new strategies (Bourdieu 1994; Malkki 1995). In other words, people become attached to their built and material heritage because it is inseparably associated with their identity and very existence.

Many charters and efforts have been developed since the early 20th century to offer professional and scientific practices in the conservation of built heritage and accelerate these activities in both theory and practice. As these practices develop, amendments are made based upon empirical evidence. Community practices in built heritage have inspired many scholars to develop critiques towards the universal 'thingnification' of heritage (Byrne 2009, 229), which can undervalue the important but intangible aspects of everyday life (De Cesari 2010). Much of the emerging literature points to the centrality of (re)use that give value and meaning to the setting (Smith 2006). This is particularly important in the case of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

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Since the inception of Israel in 1948, the continuing political conflict resulted in the destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage and landscape. Many cultural sites have been deliberately destroyed and their collective memory erased (see Abu Sitta 2017; Said 1992). This has been intensified during the First (1987) and Second (2000) Intifadas (*uprising*), leading to the damage of significant monuments like the Nativity Church in Bethlehem (2002), the burning of worship sites in the Al-Aqsa Mosque (1969) and the imposing of temporal limitations in places of worship in order to provide exclusive access to Jews, as in the case of the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron (since 1994). The destruction of the natural landscape was also affected, especially with the construction of the Separation Wall (2002) that fragments the natural terraces that are thousands of years old as well as destroying the olive groves that had been passed on through generations.

In the early 1990s, the Palestinians began conserving their built heritage through resilience as an expression of resistance against the occupation. Several groups of architects and professionals took the lead and established Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in almost every city in the West Bank (WB) and East Jerusalem (EJ). Drawing from their local context, several projects were preserved in different cities and towns (Bleibleh and Awad 2020). Subsequently, several Palestinian universities took similar approaches to preserve their built heritage by giving it new uses for educational and cultural purposes. Their aim was to revive and preserve abandoned sites from seizure by Israeli settlers, and to protect and sustain Palestinian cultural identity, thus raising awareness of their cultural heritage, and assisting the economy through the provision of work opportunities and portraying a collective policy towards their culture.

There are 18 universities in Palestine (MOHE n.d.), most of which were established as secondary schools before the 1970s in different cities and gradually flourished into smaller colleges and then into universities between 1992 and 1998 (Sullivan 1994). Yet, their remarkable development endorsed education to all and allowed 'social mobility for rural youths and refugees, as well as for middle and lower-middle-class residents of the cities' (Zelkovitz 2014, 389). Except for a few governmental and private institutions, universities are considered public and autonomous, run by a board of trustees from public figures and all dependent on student's (low) tuition fees and various funds.

Following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PA) in 1994, which continued the Palestine Liberation Organization's goal to strengthen the political, socio-cultural, and national identity and the right of return (Amara 2002), most Palestinian universities sought to enlarge their campuses to surrounding areas. As such they played a role in preserving a handful of historical sites, thus reinforcing both individual and collective Palestinian identity. Through adaptive (re)use, many projects were implemented, whether from the accumulated expertise of local NGOs, employing individual architectural firms or using their own architectural offices and involving academics.

As many international bodies became involved in heritage conservation in Palestine, the provision of funds and assistance have allowed universities to propose (re)using endangered and abandoned sites as legal guardians and protectors through long lease agreements directly from owners or municipalities. The works follow the laws and policies set by the PA Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and its councils with regard to cultural heritage protection. However, the hanging political situation over Jerusalem, considered under occupation according to international law (Geneva Convention (IV) 1949), the Al Quds University (AQU) in EJ has set further policies to manage and promote cultural and heritage protection not only for educational purposes but also to rehabilitate the livelihood of the affected community.

With a focus on AQU's efforts, this paper aims to inform policy discussions on the role of universities in the protection of cultural heritage in order to contribute to heritage studies which aim to build resilience in areas of conflicts. The second and third sections introduce a general overview on cultural heritage and conflicts, which helps to contextualize the literature of the study. The fourth section shows why and how universities in Palestine contribute in the protection of cultural heritage. The fifth section focuses on AQU's intervention projects in the Old City of Jerusalem. The sixth section explicitly outlines these efforts.

Built heritage in times of conflicts

Cultural heritage is a shared responsibility for all to protect and pass on to future generations in the full richness of their authenticity (ICOMOS 1964). This includes the natural and built environment, tangible and intangible assets such as historic sites, built heritage, and practices. Hence, heritage can be defined as a dynamic cultural process (Harvey 2001; Smith 2006) rather than something statically inherent in things. It is therefore a renewable resource, shaping people and being shaped by them. The Himeji Recommendations state that values associated with cultural heritage are socially centered rather than technically or scientifically based and should be assessed by taking into consideration changes over time, perceptions, and attitudes (ICOMOS 2014). The recommendations emphasize the issue of change and continuity as factors that affect the prioritization of values attributed to cultural heritage by people and societies. Thus, what is suggested is an emphasis on the process rather than products, as this affects decisions on what to change and continue for a sustainable development beyond existing and traditional management strategies. Recent references echoed recommendations to integrate local communities through the participation of all stakeholders including those affected by political conflicts, see Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2018) and World Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Role of Local Communities in the Management of UNESCO Designated Site (UNESCO 2012).

The importance of the social dimension in approaches to heritage management in conflict and post-conflict areas has been widely reported (Giblin 2015; Higueras 2013; Saifi and Yüceer 2013). The literature reflects that the conservation of cultural heritage should be seen as an opportunity to explore an alternative form of knowledge through creative adaptation (Holtorf 2006). Accordingly, approaches to cultural heritage in conflict areas should be seen as a dynamic way to maintain an authentic connection with emerging changes (Aljabri and Abdel Nour 2011) imposed by political forces (Legnér 2018; Hürol, Yüceer, and Başarır 2015). What is crucial to people during conflicts is their collective values, beliefs, and traditions where they see heritage as part of the cultural production of their local and national everyday life. Or efforts in conflicted areas should be less about preserving *still* objects and monuments and more about creating a better future centered around people (Aljawabra 2018). As the international community has been slow to act, local communities have to be more resourceful.

Built heritage under the occupation in Palestine

The struggle between the Palestinians and Israelis is 'a conflict created through the built environment' (Nitzan-Shiftan 2017, ix) and over existence. Israel claim over ownership and history, has been geared towards changing the physical reality, which resulted in the Palestinians' loss of land, livelihood, and heritage. In 1948, around 400 vernacular Palestinian villages were destroyed and its people expelled, thus creating the diaspora of refugees in different counties (Khalidi 1992). In 1967, Israel also occupied WB, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights from Syria and EJ including its Old City and holy sites. The Israeli goal of a 'unified Jerusalem' impacted both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. A few days after the war of 1967, the 770 year old neighborhood of the Moroccan Quarter southeast of the Old City, was razed in order to pave access for Jewish worshipers to reach the 'wailing wall,' thus expelling its residents to refugee camps and erasing an important historical site (Abowd 2002).

Other suggested plans included dismantling the old Ottoman city walls by the then Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, after capturing EJ in order not to obstruct the connection between the Jews and 'their holy sites' (Creighton 2007). Also, the excavations of tunnels underneath the Old City, the historic town of Silwan and the Haram-Al-Sharif area by the Israeli Antiquity Department, which in 1996 ignited the 'Tunnels Revolt,' undermined the visible built heritage laid above and caused damage to many historical buildings in the surroundings. The horizontal excavation method concerned experts as well as those living above (Natsheh 2019). According to an interview with shop

owners at Khan az-Zait, people said that they keep hearing drilling underneath them which causes new cracks every day and fear a total collapse of their buildings (personal communication, 13 July 2019).

On an ideological level, the targeting of Palestinian built heritage replaces an existing past with a new one. The existing Palestinian nationalism contrasts with the Zionist position (Jewish nationalism) in the form of the identity. Based on spatial reality, the encounter is between the Palestinian 'oriental' and vernacular built heritage and the modern project of Zionism – an adopted vision and symbol of a 'progressive state' of a secularized Judaism (Nitzan-Shiftan 2017). Nitzan-Shiftan (2017) argues that the encounter between the modern movement (which is aesthetically driven and occurs everywhere) and that of the Zionist vision of modernity (which is politically driven) is based on the same 'violent' view of the 'rupture of historical practices and modes of production' (22). This idea is central to the changes taking place in the center of Jerusalem and justifies many of the Israeli municipal projects that have taken place around the Old City. It is a replication of the existing vernacular in a performative manner (Saifi and Hürol 2018), attained through modernity's means and technologies to create a 'collective past, present and future' (Nitzan-Shiftan 2017, 24). However, it also undermines existing historical Palestinian sites and even burial sites (Başarir, Saifi, and Hoşkara 2016).

With the absence of a Palestinian representative state, the Old City of Jerusalem was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, following a contested Jordanian nomination in 1982. However, in 2000, through the oppressive raid on the WB during the Second Intifada, the deliberate destruction of cultural property has forced the intervention of the World Heritage Committee to 'disburse funds for the institutional build-up of the [PA] Department of Antiquities and the preparation of a tentative list' (De Cesari 2010, 315). Although such an act empowered the PA's heritage department and its reach to more areas excluding EJ (De Cesari 2010), Palestinian grassroot organizations have already established well-known conservation practices and approaches to urban, historic, cultural, and national identity (De Cesari 2010). Efforts were made to revitalize, conserve, build awareness and protect the built heritage from the occupation based upon creative solutions as a mean of cultural resistance (De Cesari 2010; Bleibleh and Awad 2020). Today, these practices have facilitated drafts of national law on the protection of cultural and natural heritage receiving international awards for best practices (Bleibleh and Awad 2020).

The focus of this research is to present further efforts taken by Palestinian universities in conserving cultural heritage in the face of continuing occupation, thus reflecting resilience to protect their identity by embracing the existing social, cultural, economic values, especially in EJ. This is done through observing five intervention projects of various cultural sites implemented by a Palestinian university. The significance of the research is that the case studies that can stimulate discussions and encourage further initiatives. The research methodology adopted includes:

- The collection of data over a period of 8 years, as a participant observer, which included site visits, workshops/seminars/lectures, steering committee meetings with architects, contractors, and experts as well as inauguration ceremonies.
- The analysis and compilation of archived data including inventory sheets, reports, documents, historical studies, intervention proposals, operation plans, and projects' aims, and outputs.
- Conducting interviews (10 people) including 3 administrative personals at the university, 2 involved architects, 3 university professors involved in the project, and 2 shop owners. Questions were open ended about their involvement, views, and challenges.

From the position of heritage is a cultural practice, the study builds a taxonomy that synthesizes the common efforts among the five understudy projects adopted by AQU to protect national identity. The taxonomy criteria employ a content analysis approach that classifies the efforts from empirical entities in order to make the knowledge embedded in the understudy projects more explicit. The results emphasize that the approach of adaptive (re)use and reconstruction, when based on local values, improves, and revitalizes outcomes.

Universities' role in conserving the cultural heritage

Universities are recognized as platforms for free speech and the flow of knowledge and ideas. They gain reputation and trust over a period of time as students, academics, and staff members are affiliated in different ways. Moreover, universities gain much international recognition through accreditation, collaboration with other international institutions and universities. They receive credentials and recognition from the intergovernmental body of UNESCO, and are therefore responsible under international law. They are places of diverse multi-cultures, politically neutral and inclusive, which grants them certain autonomy. They can be influential in the areas of culture and history, and impact upon young minds (Jokilehto 2006).

Unlike other grassroots organizations and NGOs, universities have the ability to sustain their economic continuity through tuition fees and do not depend solely on funds and donations. This means that when intervention in cultural heritage is to take place, they have more room for negotiations, follow-ups, and have more committed people. As universities are not profit-driven, constrains regarding time are more flexible. With a large and diverse degree of expertise, universities can operate on a multi and inter-disciplinary level leading to a more inclusive approach to problem solving.

In Palestine, universities are relentlessly targeted by the occupation and military regime, both before and after the establishment of the PA. Prior the establishment of the PA, Israel controlled everything related to education including curriculum, local and foreign professors' work permits, academic freedom, student admissions, and the banning of books based on national Palestinian identity and history. The establishment of universities were designated 'illegal' with punishments of up to 10 years imprisonments (Sullivan 1994). Even after the establishment of the PA as the legitimate authority for higher education in Palestine, campuses have been invaded and politically active students and professors imprisoned. Temporary checkpoints on-route to major campuses still continue. Al-Quds University for instance suffered more from being located in Jerusalem, after the erection of the Separation Wall in 2002, its main campus was demarcated outside and separated from its other campuses.

Although universities differ in the (re)uses they assign to acquired built heritage, they mostly aim to revitalize the wider context as well as individual buildings which were abandoned due to the migration from traditional areas of those seeking new modern living standards outside the historical cores. Some of these examples include An-Najah University's Qasr al-Qassem, which houses the Urban and Regional Planning Unit in the town of Beit-Wazan, west of Nablus, since 2003, Bethlehem University's Qasr Salem for Hotel Management Department (under implementation) (see Figure 1) and many more.

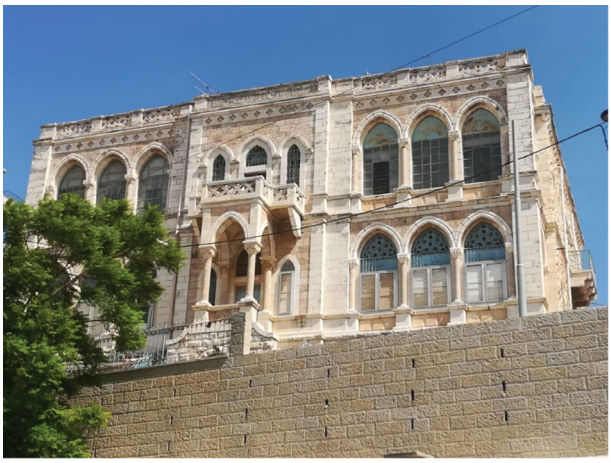

Figure 1. The 19th century urban Mansion (Qasr Salem) - Bethlehem University today (2020).

While many universities in Palestine are involved in the protection of cultural heritage, this paper builds on the case of AQU. As the only university in EJ, AQU has contributed to many conservation projects in the Old City, and has helped attract younger generations (students) and the suffering communities back into the city thereby promoting public awareness with regard to cultural heritage conservation. Not only did AQU offer a future to neglected but significant buildings, but also offered further support to local organizations, like the Islamic Waqf (foundation). With funds received from international donors and in collaboration/partnership with international bodies, AQU have accumulated a 'learning by doing' experience under extremely challenging, limiting, and complicated conditions. Of these challenges is the fact that Jerusalemites have not recognized Israeli rule over them, and have undermined its existence and institutions, and do not participate in political bodies. Yet, Israel on its side excludes community participation and prohibits any decision-making by Palestinians over their own sites as they possess a link with collective identity and the production of cultural meaning. Another challenge is the fact that unlike other Palestinian universities, located within the jurisdiction of PA's laws and regulations under the authority of the Department of Antiquities and Ministry of Tourism, the Israeli Antiquity Department in EJ is considered as a political body of the occupier. It enforces restrictions on Palestinian heritage in favor of an Israeli narrative (Abu El-Haj 2001). Yet, most interventions in Jerusalem are done by individuals and/or NGOs as the PA has no authority over EJ. This makes the intervention of AQU more distinctive as an actor responsible for setting policies and strategies.

The role of AQU in conserving the cultural heritage in EJ

The public university of Al-Quds has several remote campuses with the largest in the town of Abu Dis outside the Separation Wall. While the university has campuses in Ramallah, Hebron, and Gaza, the majority are in EJ and its Old City. Within the university, AQU has set a vision towards EJ: 'that only an educated and enlightened citizenry can safeguard the future of our nation. Indeed, education has been the key to our perseverance as a people struggling for freedom and self-determination. Such vision is set within its inner work policy and mission in different levels:

At an administrative level, the university assigns a vice president for Jerusalem whose aim is to follow up on bureaucratic works, negotiations, administrative and other issues related with the city and is devoted to this work solely. On an educational level, most projects including cultural heritage include student participation within their disciplines for training and practice in order to engage, learn and reflect from it.

At an academic level, professors are motivated to apply for grants and propose ideas related with non-circular activities through a system referred to as the 'ticketing system.' Any staff member can propose a project idea (a ticket) and is voted for by administrative bodies including the president, vice presidents, and deans and other related members. It establishes a network among the academic staff who are incentivized to offer support, further networking, and approval.

At an economic level, funded projects include allocated budgets for staff members outside their regular allowance, which guarantee another sort of extra income and motivates many accademics.

Several conservation projects were implemented by AQU, all adhering to professional practice in restoration, management, and adaptive (re)use. Such initiatives establish a role model for dealing with built heritage, five of which are presented here based on their significance, history, use, size, location, and implementation difficulties. The projects include: The Pool of the Patriarch's Bath, Khan Tankaz, Dar al-Consul Complex, Bab al-Malek Faisal and AQU Public Library.

The pool of the Patriarch's Bath[1]

The Patriarch Pool or Lacux Balneorum-reservoir of the bathhouse, is a large open vacant space in the Old City, with around 3,168 square meters of land. The rectangular pool is originally a reservoir forming part of the water system during the Roman period, which collected rain water from adjacent buildings' roofs and connected it through a water channel to the Ma'man-Allah' pool

outside the walls that functioned until late 19th century (Natsheh 2014). Originally, the pool provided the adjacent Coptic Inn and Hammam with water. The Coptic Convent, together with other surrounding buildings, obscure it from the outside. The entrance has been altered and its original location is unknown, and the one currently used is problematic and only accessible through a narrow indirect access from the convent. Through a lease agreement, AQU was able to obtain the right of use for the public. The abandoned but significant site had suffered from the neglect over time. Being inaccessible due to its location and the fear of having it captured by the Israeli municipality, AQU was able to provide prompt and temporary activities to proclaim its use, engaged Jerusalemite youth to voluntarily clean the built-up litter, and restore the space and the overlooking dilapidated buildings' façades until a more stable solution reached. Since 2011, the university raised funds and repurposed the space for various cultural events like the Music Festival conducted by the Music Department. The university had to find new solutions to solve the imposed restrictions to operate the use of the site. Inventively, it provided a new point of entry by leasing of one of the adjacent shops located on a main street and overlooking the pool to create a proper axis.

The Khan Tankaz complex

A similar approach was implemented in the Khan Tankaz Complex at the Qataneen Market adjacent to the south entrance of the Haram-Al-Sharif. The Mamluki Khan (Inn) originally featured two public bathhouses (hammams), Al-Ain and Al-Shifa, enclosed with a rectangular central courtyard, with upper lodges for pilgrims and visitors (Burgoyne 1989). Historically, both hammams were used by Jerusalemites for bathing and then closed for more than five decades. In 1998, AQU attained permission from the Islamic Waqf to (re)use it for educational purposes. Through the Welfare Association's Old City of Jerusalem Revitalization Program (OCJRP), the site was rehabilitated and the Center for Jerusalem Studies was established, which included a Master program in Jerusalem Studies. The center also organizes tours for locals (including school children) and, tourists around the Old City, guided by historians, archeologists, and experts.

In 2018, AQU restored these traditional hammams. Funded by the European Union, the project was implemented through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and designed by the local architectural firm – Jerusalem Design Center, following a public participation process. The preparations of the license had to be obtained from several Israeli bodies, following the laws, regulations, building codes, and approvals in order to operate. However, an ambiguous case arose due to lack of standards and codes in the Israeli law suitable for the establishment of a traditional hammam. The architects had to find ways to adapt to regulations in order to achieve implementation. According to project architect Ibrahim Hindi: 'at first the idea was like a riddle, we did not know if we could make a hammam work or not'. He explained that it was a confusing situation as no previous example existed among the Israeli municipality or the Department of Antiquity and Ministry of Health – each imposing its regulations on how to make the hammam work according to today's standards. The Department of Antiquity insisted that it is a historical site under their sole jurisdiction. However, it did not approve the design of hammam Al-Shifa, which according to its original layout, had direct access to the Haram-Al-Sharif which was used as an annex to mosques in accordance with Islamic tradition for ablution before the act of prayer. The Department of Antiquity, for political and security reasons, insisted that the hammam could be established only if it had an autonomous entry and exist. But this meant that it could not operate in a proper way i.e., from hot areas to cold areas (Frigidarium). This, in the end, necessitated the restoration of the Al-Ain hammam only (Figure 2), and the Al-Shifa was reconfigured as a cultural center. Other restrictions included the use of only electricity to ignite the hammam furnaces (Mustawqid) which increases running cost and energy consumption. Traditionally these were ignited by the burning of organic rubbish 'which acted for many centuries, as a neighborhood recycling center for organic waste' (Sibely and Sibely 2015, 526).

Figure 2. The hammam Al-Ain during a public lecture about the operation and restoration of the hammam (March 24th, 2015). Photo Credit: Al-Quds University.

The original design encourages many of the adjacent shops owners, to sell special soap, cloths, clogs, refreshments to create economic empowerment. A number of local and traditional crafts were incorporated into the project such as the making of the small glass clerestory windows to let half-light in through the domes.

The Dar al-Consul complex

Another large project was implemented in partnership with the Franciscan Custodia in the Holy Land, United Nations-Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT) and AQU and funded by the European Union. An underground area below street level of the Khan az-Zait Market (Olive-Oil Caravanserai) was excavated during the rehabilitation of the Dar al-Consul Complex inhabited by many Christian families on the first, second, and third floors. It translates as the *house of Consul*, named after the Prussian Consul who took residence in the building in the mid 19th century (Jubeh 2015). The aim of the project was to 'improve the living conditions of Palestinian families in the Old City of Jerusalem and enhance Palestinian cultural and civic identity' through rehabilitating houses, open spaces, and enhancing infrastructure and services. The ground floor containing shops facing the street will be rehabilitated for cultural, social, and commercial use. The work at ground level continued to be enlarged along the excavation, around 1214 square meters.[2] Historical studies implemented by Palestinian scholars indicate that one of the layers refers to the historical Roman Cardo Maximus constructed in the 2nd century AD, passing underneath the exiting Market and was buried and built above over time (Jubeh 2015). The partners decided that this massive area should serve as a civic and commercial hub for the residents, public, visitors and promote education and entrepreneurship among Palestinian youth. This enhances capacity building during and after the implementation, by involving the community and newly graduated university alumni to develop operation and management skills. Another contemporary re(use) will offer knowledge and career guidance (Figure 3). The graduate students of the Archaeology Unit implemented stratigraphy recording documentation of the interior elevations made for the first time in EJ, and students from the Department of Architecture created design solutions for the courtyards, and front façade. Another group made a model to help the conservation team and designers understand the complexity of the space (Figure 4). Other departments prepared promotional and documentation videos as well as business plans.

AQU public library

A lack of investment in public services by the Israeli municipality led AQU to lease a neglected three floor residential building from its original owners located at Aqabet-Rassas inside the Old City. The aim was to convert it into a public library administered by university staff. The library does not only

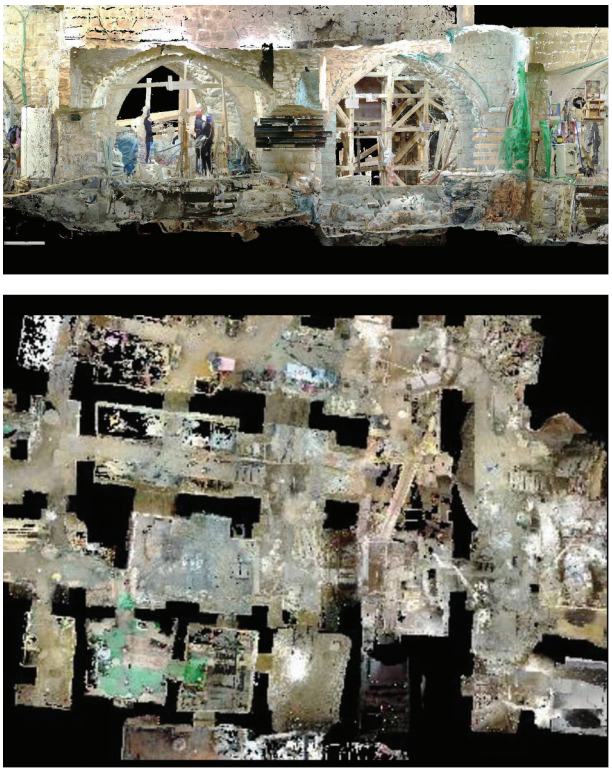

Figure 3. The Dar al-Consul civic and commercial Hub - stratigraphy images (above) interior elevations, (below) plan. Photo Credit: Hani Nur El-Din - AQU.

Figure 4. A model of the existing Dar al-Consul ground and basement floor, built by the students of Architectural Engineering Department at AQU (2019).

succeed in convincing the original owners to allow the university to restore and (re)use the building, but also bring various public cultural programs and events. Inaugurated in 2015 with the support of the Bahrain Royal Charity Organization and implemented by the UNDP, the building is the first public library to be opened since 1967 in the Old City. Several campaigns were employed around EJ, including advertisements on public buses and billboards as well as conducting many workshops in order to draw public awareness and contribute to the conservation of the cultural identity by inspiring knowledge through reading. According to an interview with the Administrative Director

for Jerusalem at AQU, Omar Zaro: 'Thousands of books were purchased, with many related to Jerusalem's history and archeology. Our aim is to reinforce the cultural and national Palestinian identity and to support the cultural sector through spreading knowledge and strengthening the resilience of the local community'. The Vice President for Jerusalem Affairs at Al-Quds University, Dr. Safa Nassereldin has said that the library incorporates 'values that make for engaged citizenship, openness to new ideas, cooperative endeavors, and respect for world cultures' (Zaro 2015).

Bab al-Malek Faisal - center for Jerusalem studies

The public library is not the only example of AQU's approach to persuade owners who left their historical houses to lease them in order to be (re)used and administered by the university. Bab al-Malek Faisal in the Bab-Houtta neighborhood inside the Old City is another example, as the building's location in neighborhoods affected by socio-economic and political problems is important. The neighborhood is also known to house the Dom Community, referred to as *Nawar* in Arabic meaning 'tramps,' who have existed in Jerusalem since the 16th century. The Dom - Indo-Aryans of the Middle East are a small and poor community under threat (Williams 2020). The efforts to locate a business incubator open to young people in the two-floor residential building recognizes the different and diverse communities. The building conservation was implemented and funded by the OCJRP.

Discussion

Andrew Herscher (2008) questions how to do justice to deliberately destroyed cultural heritage that involves violence against architecture and those who inhabited it. He argues that the act of construction produces new meaning and effects that can transform the dynamics of contexts and therefore its ontological status (Herscher 2008). Hence, the act of reconstruction of cultural heritage following political conflicts is not about documenting the destruction and reporting damage but about rebuilding what is important for people and their societies to achieve resilience and better futures through embracing change. Thus, those involved in the (re)shaping of the way cultural heritage should be considered are actors who produce values rather than create symbols (Pendlebury 2013).

The reconstruction of built heritage can open new ways to examine and understand it as a discourse of practice and knowledge production in times of conflicts. Reconstruction is an attempt to find continuity with the pre-conflict past, which invites us to rethink heritage as a dynamic act – a process – which is (re)produced in time, and not as merely a technical rebuilding of the past. Building resilience can happen when reconstruction is linked to the identification of heritage values, community involvement and needs, a long-term vision, and larger sustainable development goals (Jigyasu 2013). In other words, the reconstruction in vulnerable societies should not solely be a technical exercise of building the old with new materials (Khalaf 2020), but an integral act of all stakeholders, community needs, and livelihood.

Resilience should be seen as the ability of a community under occupation to adapt to the various changes but maintain its essential functions under challenging circumstances in order to ensure continuity for its future generations. Therefore, according to World Reconstruction Conference 3 – Promoting Resilience Through Post-Crisis Recovery, resilient recovery is that which strengthens community's ability to resist and recover from natural or human-made disasters (WRC3 2018). An opportunity to 'build back better' through development measures in order to reduce risks (UNISDR 2017). And that does not only signify the upgrading of infrastructures with new technologies but through creating 'stronger governance systems, improved basic services, diversified livelihoods for people, and better social protection mechanisms for poor and vulnerable families' (WRC3 2018, 174).

Looking at the different projects implemented by AQU, various efforts put through Palestinian cultural heritage towards building resilience can be outlined. These projects build up a taxonomy of practices adopted by AQU, based on thematic analyses to identify the common efforts in cultural heritage. They are interactive and dynamic and improve everyday life by embracing and

accommodating change created by contemporary life in a conflicted setting. These efforts emphasize that heritage management and protection cannot be studied in isolation from the values that matter to people's life and society. They show that the protection of cultural heritage is tied to a certain setting which incorporates many factors through space and time, like the social, economic, environmental, and many others. There follows a taxonomy of efforts and approaches initiated by AQU towards cultural heritage:

Incorporating neglected historical sites with everyday life through new uses

Universities are part of the communities they belong to and their approaches can be easily localized by identifying resources, needs, capacities, and developing a stakeholder-driven policy through a bottom-up approach. The policy of the re(use) of neglected sites through a set of diverse functions and programs allows them to be incorporated into everyday life. It enables abandoned cultural sites to interact with the existing economic and social life as places for work, recreational, education, and other uses as well as offering continuity under challenging conditions.

Partnership and fund raising to sustain future collaboration and more protection

As well-established politically neutral and non-profit institutions, universities present favorable conditions to collaborate in cultural heritage initiatives. Collaboration among different stakeholders and donors guarantee a more comprehensive and effective approach towards cultural heritage. The administration of significant historic sites by state bodies or foundations can sometimes be a burden, and cannot yield to profit-driven organizations and investors. Also, financial support can often be found but these seek the achievement of long-term sustainable goals. Universities are therefore well placed to carry out such projects as they can provide both expertise and best value.

Enhancing community participation and inclusion to create better living conditions

The hardship of life due to conflicts can affect and transform people making them both vulnerable and inactive (Holtzman, Elwan, and Scott 1998) especially when the social life with its capacities and assets are weakened. Resilience can be attained through creating better living conditions and livelihood for people in line with the new century roadmaps. Taking into consideration the need to build a better future, it is important to involve all local stakeholders in the decision-making processes from an early stage. AQU uses different ways to communicate with all stakeholders through billboards advertisements, surveys, workshops, seminars, and focused group meetings as well as social media and websites. As such stakeholders can take responsibility, know their roles and help in prioritizing the needs.

Building awareness through community and stakeholder involvement

Interaction can be attained through communicating values through guided tours and exhibitions at the cultural centers involving younger community members in voluntary work and targeting other channels such as schools. This creates a better sense of belonging among the community and build more social responsibility through emphasizing the importance of traditions and rituals between people and their environment.

Enhancing the economic sector and creating better services

The university's socio-economic policy clearly demonstrates that people and livelihoods are a key concern. The lack of investment and neglect by the occupier creates an unstable economic condition which affects peoples sense of belonging. The conservation of cultural heritage for daily use can

create new and sustainable jobs during the making and operating of these sites. It also supports others living outside the Old City when regenerating it as an incubator for other businesses, social enterprises, investments and can lead to economic transformation and development.

Considering the wider urban fabric to integrate and provide creative solutions

The complexity of historic urban fabric makes it hard to meet modern standards in order to function properly. Thus, seeking physical solutions that take into account other adjacent and potential sites in order to identify potential opportunities and endow better use as in the creation of a new entry and exit for the Patriarch Pool by including an adjacent shop in the solution.

Allowing cultural heritage to be used for public benefit

Heritage is a: 'resource to strengthen the ability of communities and their properties to resist, absorb, and recover from the effects of natural or human-made hazards' (WRC3 2018, 16). The appropriate conservation of historic settings, values, and practices safeguard the living culture of people and their cultural rights to hand on to future generations. This can be attained through the promotion of cultural heritage as a way of bringing communities together. Targeting the public through cultural events and programs, with explicit open access, helps to restore social and physical infrastructures.

Long-lease as a strategy to create better efficiency through time

The impact of conflicts can be severe on the lives and livelihoods of people leading to poverty, insecurity, poor public services, unemployment, and marginalization depriving them of basic human rights. Addressing such vulnerabilities is essential to achieve resilience. Reconstruction of cultural heritage that tends to run for short term does not allow for improvements to take place. The right of use through long-term leases allows time for spaces to embrace and influence change.

Capacity building for empowerment and resilience building

Activities centered around productive community engagement can help reduce the effect of the conflict trauma and retain skilled practitioners, institutes, and communities. AQU invests in activities that promote entrepreneurship, career guidance and provide a business incubator to develop operational skills among the youth through a strong interface between heritage and the environment. This enables individuals to see more effective actions and establish better organizational frameworks. It strengthens people's proficiencies, and helps them overcome exclusion. Other capacity-building strategies include more apprenticeships of local labor and opportunities for improving traditional skills and knowledge in the construction sector related to heritage conservation.

Documenting and supporting multidisciplinary approaches to conservation management

Universities through their wide-ranging research are able to record their work and to employ the latest technical innovation beneficial in accurate data collection. In addition, they involve a number of people like students whose learning benefits from this engagement that increases the number of actors. Working locally ensures more attentive and responsive consideration to communities' needs, easy access to stakeholders enabling them to offer best value conditions and allowing interaction between the community and cultural experts, which can also record and collect people's stories and use every channel of information.

Conclusion

This article discusses the role of universities in protecting the cultural heritage in areas of conflict as a way to build resilience and establish a better future through addressing values related with the built heritage. Through the case study of Al-Quds, the university's policy to protect the cultural heritage in the Old City of Jerusalem aims to protect Palestinian cultural heritage and therefore its narrative, history, and identity. The various efforts that the university make demonstrate that it is an effective actor in heritage preservation and the protection of cultural identity, rather than merely a place where debates and theories are produced. It seeks opportunities to build as a means to connect people with their life and reunite them with their city and history by embracing continuity and change, thus improving everyday life through maintaining a social and cultural cohesion as a remedy to the negative effects of the conflict.

The study also demonstrates the benefits of the adaption of buildings to meet contemporary needs whilst still maintaining Palestinian cultural identity through the advocacy of community participation. In safeguarding monuments and sites, the social fabric cannot be ignored. The role of AQU is not merely to sustain the physical and urban character but also to enhance the values, practices, beliefs, craftsmanship skills, tradition, collective memory associated with the Palestinian culture. These are the means to create a better connection between people and their built environment. The practices conducted by AQU, include a diverse set of programs and activities that utilize cultural values to bring aspirations to the affected community in EJ under long-term commitment.

AQU has shown that the conservation of cultural heritage during conflicts does not resist change by focusing on the past, but embraces change as a positive way to improve and manage people's lives. This is an integral part of place-making for Jerusalemites under occupation and helps them to adapt to new and emerging needs and values at a time when the conservation of cultural heritage is a response to ongoing conflict. The effectiveness of conservation is not based on the work of a single person, but is an interactive synergy of several disciplines that need to be aligned. Resilience can be built through creative and localized responses, and the support and collaboration of all stakeholders both national and international. Resilience can be attained through addressing the underlying problems created by the conflict and engaging with the existing situation in an active manner even before the determination of the conflict. Such strategies can help in creating a better vision for the future.

Notes

1. There are many names given to the pool, adopted to indicate link and ownership, yet, the most common is the Pool of the Patriarch's Bath (Natsheh 2014).
2. The exact area keeps changes with the new excavations. The latest measurement taken in April 2020 according to an interview with Hanin Nammari, a Senior Architect at UN-HABITAT (personal communication, 16 August 2020).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Designating heritage as European: between the European Union's heritage initiatives and the nation-state

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ABSTRACT
In an attempt to foster its citizens' identification with Europe, the European Union has made a great effort to identify what can be called 'common European heritage'. Many heritage initiatives, centred around the idea that heritage should be designated as European by the member states' heritage sectors, have proven counterproductive – instead of reaching their goal to construct a more stable European identity, they served as repositories of national pride and tools in the negotiation of nationalist claims of the member states. Through the empirical case of the EU's own Maastricht Treaty and the peculiar ways it became 'common European heritage' within the Dutch state heritage sector, in this paper we analyze the discursive tactics of national policy makers and the power dynamics between national and EU heritage regimes in the process of designating heritage as European. We demonstrate that even EU states with more constitutional traditions like the Netherlands maintain a powerful role in the construction of heritage as an unchangeable set of traditions and values strictly defined within the national boundaries, lacking the mechanisms to change their state-sanctioned and firmly established ways of defining heritage as 'national' and to legitimatize EU heritage narratives.

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Introduction

> It is significant that all candidate sites and EHL sites want to be European. Whether or not, they analyzed their European dimension in depth, they are driven by the wish to communicate the common values and principles that underpin the European project and identity. To put it in their own words, they are "meeting the past and walking to the future". (European Commission 2017, 26)

There is a certain poetic tone in the policy rhetoric of the European Union (EU) about common European heritage. The above quote from a panel report on the European Heritage Label (EHL), one of the leading and most recent EU initiatives on common European heritage, conveys the feeling that heritage is fundamental for Europe, it is its 'walk to the future', it represents the shared good intentions of the responsible stakeholders. In other EU statements, this rhetoric is even more explicit. According to a report assigned by the European Commission in 2015 titled *Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe*, heritage is 'at the heart of what it means to be European', making an enormous contribution to the European economy, the quality of life, and wellbeing of Europe's citizens (European Commission 2015, 5). This has been the tone and the wording of the EU's initiatives on common European heritage since the 1980s, when the European institutions started using prizes and labels as political means to legitimize their activities (Foret and Calligaro 2019).

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However, the reality about the ways in which heritage is designated as European in EU heritage initiatives is far less poetic and deserves thorough scholarly attention. Stemming from the belief in the role of culture as a political resource for integration (Vos 2017), the EU institutions are devoting much effort to identifying what can be called a common European identity, making common European heritage an important part of this process (Calligaro 2013; Delanty 2018). Multiple projects, funding schemes, labels and prizes have been initiated with the aim to facilitate engagement with wider notions of culture and identity. The European Heritage Days, the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage and the European Heritage Label have grown into the most important/influential EU initiatives in the field of heritage and have taken centre stage in many academic debates in the last decade (Lähdesmäki 2014a, 2014b, 2017; Niklasson 2017, 2019; Sassatelli 2002, 2009; Whitehead et al. 2019). In particular, scholars have warned that these seemingly symbolic heritage initiatives on common European Heritage have the potential to produce effects that are at odds with their intentions – rather than contributing to more inclusive ideas of European identity, culture and heritage, they may serve as tools in the negotiation of the member states' nationalist claims.

Therefore, it is crucial to address the ways in which these heritage initiatives at the interplay between EU regulations and the logic of nation-states enable the construction of 'European identity' as an EU category. The working of the EU is based on constant negotiations about which kind of power should be divided in what particular ways between the national and the EU level. In the field of culture and heritage, the EU's competence is subject to subsidiarity rules which restrict any EU action to a supporting or supplementary function (European Union 2012). The ways in which any EU culture or heritage initiative is implemented depend on the actions of the participating member states. Thus, understanding how some things come to count as 'heritage' requires much attention to the processes involved in the making of heritage (Macdonald 2009, 2013) and to the power dynamic between the EU and the nation-states' heritage sectors.

In this paper, we focus on the EU initiative 'the European Heritage Label (EHL)' and how it has been implemented in the national context of the Netherlands in order to disentangle the intricacies of European identity construction and heritage-making. Using the context of the Netherlands, we attempt to understand the kinds of meanings and practices that the EHL facilitates on a national level. Our particular focus is on the discursive tactics of national policy makers and on the ways in which the Dutch state heritage sector, acted when given the chance to build common European heritage and challenge the established ways of dealing with heritage. Our attention centres on one illustrative case: the Maastricht Treaty, formally known as the Treaty of the European Union, which was signed in 1992 and is one of the milestones in the EU's history. As the last of the three heritage sites awarded the EHL in the Netherlands, the Treaty had a very peculiar way of becoming European heritage within the EHL initiative and the Dutch national heritage sector in 2017.

We base our arguments on analyses of official EU and national policy documents, material commissioned during the preparation, launch or evaluation of the EHL initiative, and interviews with actors of interest to the EHL initiative. In this study, the relevant EU policy documents included official decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, official panel reports, application handbooks/guides, and application forms. At the national level, we consulted the official pre-selection reports of the Dutch Council for Culture, letters and speeches from the ministers and/or other politicians involved in the administration and organization of the Label, as well as the EHL application dossiers, where made available by site representatives. Concomitantly to the collection of data from official policy documents, interviews were conducted with the stakeholders involved in the administration and coordination of the EHL at local, national and European levels. These included EHL site managers, national and European administrators, coordinators and evaluators.

The rationale: heritage regimes

The idea of 'common European heritage' as developed and promoted by the EU heritage initiatives is deeply intertwined with the logics of the member states. Calligaro (2013) argues

that with its cultural policies, the EU actors wanted to challenge the monopoly of the nation-state over heritage and culture, while at the same time attempting to construct another imagined community, Europe, represented by a common heritage. Yet, this push entailed a paradox in the recurrent role of the state – the EU initiatives on common European heritage discursively produce and operationalize the idea that European identity derives from the national identities of its member states (Lähdesmäki 2014a, 2012). Thus, in the rhetoric of the 'common European heritage' initiatives, it is in the hands of the heritage sectors of the member states and the institutions that act in their name to make the preliminary choice on which heritage sites should be selected to become common European heritage' and to construct the narratives about the European significance of those sites. According to these heritage initiatives, common European heritage should therefore have 'layers' – a national layer and a European layer – which do not erase, but rather complement, each other and thus contribute to a more stable understanding of European identity and culture.

Even though the theoretical bases of this premise can be justified, its empirical foundation is hard to defend. The logic of social constructivism on which the general idea of identity is based allows for different layers within one single identity (Kohli 2000) – for example, part of the imagined Dutch national identity can be its Europeanness, i.e. these two layers can coexist within what can be called Dutch identity. However, adding the European supranational layer of heritage can still be very challenging for the state heritage sector for one main reason: the EU member states and their heritage sectors have a very powerful role in the construction of heritage as an unchangeable set of traditions and values strictly defined within the national boundaries. Heritage is inherently political: it is an instrument of power that states use to build a coherent national identity (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000; Smith 2006; Silva and Santos 2012). Thus, in the endeavour of making 'common European heritage', EU member states and their national heritage sectors are prompted to choose sites already recognized as national heritage sites. These circumstances reinforce the idea that the state's discourses on heritage as a national domain are dominant and superior to any other (international) heritage discourse (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000) and that, given that they are fundamentally ideological, state institutions produce and reproduce the state's authority (Meyer et al. 2009).

In view of this, the making of common European heritage can only be understood as a power dynamic between the EU and the nation-states that are its members. The concept of 'heritage regime' (Bendix et al. 2013) captures this dynamic best – it emphasizes the processes and the power relations involved in the making of heritage and puts the focus on the interplay between policy, practice and ideology in its national and international contexts. Heritage as a political realm connects with the wider notion of 'government', particularly with the Foucauldian understanding of 'governmentality' (Foucault 1991). Thus, thinking of heritage in terms of 'regime' makes the tension between the state heritage sectors and the international heritage initiatives more visible and tangible (Geismar 2015; see also2013). This understanding of heritage regimes enables us to critically reflect on both the key role of the nation-state in producing heritage, and the views and policies on the recognition and designation of heritage promoted by the European Union.

The central feature of any heritage regime is the role of heritage bureaucracy, policies and practices, such as listing schemes and the privileging of expert knowledge, in maintaining the logic of heritage as a hegemonic discourse about identity (Smith 2006; Bendix et al. 2013; Geismar 2015). As Smith argued, the discourse about heritage is 'reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts and institutionalized in state cultural agencies and amenity societies' (Smith 2006, 11). Thus, instead of claiming that state heritage sectors are not able to change their firmly established ways of defining heritage mainly as national, we need to acknowledge that it is the bureaucratic elements of heritage regimes that are reluctant to change the mechanism of sorting the past into national categories, both in the state and on the EU level.

The European Heritage Label: a state-centred approach

The European Heritage Label is the EU's most recent and most illustrative initiative on common European heritage. Its explicit aim is to foster the EU's citizens and notably its youth's identification with Europe by promoting the European dimension of heritage and a sense of common identity among Europeans. Designed as such, the Label is not simply a celebration of common European culture but subscribes to a series of political attempts to save the European Project by uniting people in their diversity (Lahdesmaki 2017).

Officially launched in 2013 and following the logic of the majority of the EU's culture and heritage initiatives, the EHL relies on the capacity and expertise of individual states and their heritage sectors in the making of common European heritage. Being awarded the EHL status depends, first and foremost, on the national selection process the participating member state may determine at its own discretion. The member state, through its chosen EHL officials, is responsible for the dissemination and communication of the information provided by the European Commission to the state heritage sector. Subsequently, the national heritage sector submits applications to the national EHL officials, who then decide which candidature dossiers to forward to the European level for selection. Only after completion of this national selection process, a 13-member European Panel of independent experts assesses the proposed sites and, if the evaluation is positive, awards the EHL on behalf of the European Commission. Once a site has received the Label, the protection of the EU-selected site is still primarily the responsibility of the member state. It is also the member state's task, in conjunction with the European Expert Panel, to monitor the appropriate application of the Label's criteria, (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2011).

To be successful in the candidature for the EHL, any site needs to meet a series of common selection criteria. It is these criteria that set the initiative apart from other labelling schemes, such as the UNESCO's World Heritage List and the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes. In difference to these schemes, the candidate sites are evaluated on the basis of their contribution to the EU's identity narrative or its symbolic European dimension, and on their ability to elaborate a project including actions and activities conveying this narrative to the European public (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2011, 3–4; European Commission 2017, 5). Thus, as Konopka (2015) argues, the EHL remains a chiefly symbolic action.

The European dimension of heritage is at the heart of the EHL (European Commission 2017, 5). According to the decisions adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, this dimension may derive from either European history and culture, or more specifically from European integration (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2011, 4). In the initiative's rhetoric, it is the state heritage sector and the institutions that act in its name that should articulate or highlight the European dimension of heritage in order to qualify for the EHL (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2011, 4). Yet, the European dimension needs to be articulated according to particular guidelines: it should be clear, straightforward and convincing. This view of the European dimension of heritage becomes the most explicit in the European Expert Panel's explanation of the reasons why certain sites failed to receive the Label. The European Expert Panel considers the lack of a 'clear narrative' a main reason for not recommending sites for the Label, in addition to oversimplification and reference to the European dimension in generic terms (European Commission 2017, 19; see also Kaiser 2014).

Since the Label functions primarily as an information and communication instrument for the EU (European Commission 2017, 23), the capacity of a site to develop a project that promotes the European dimension is of central importance in the selection process. This project must, thus, include a series of aspects that the European Commission deems as the most effective means to cultivate the European identity: information at the site, educational activities, multilingualism, participation in the EHL network events, the use of new technologies, and optionally the organization of artistic and cultural activities (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2011, 4). This highlights the instrumentality of each of the heritage sites selected to bear the EHL

title. What is more, it emphasizes the 'circular reasoning' and internal tensions by which the EHL functions: it is peculiar that sites are expected to prove their European dimension to their audience, but at the same time they need to provide that same audience with the opportunity to learn about European values in order for it to come to understand itself as European (Zito and Eckersley 2018).

In addition, in their candidature dossiers, sites must provide evidence that they possess 'a stable, professional and viable structure, ensuring the functionality of the site and [are] capable of managing the proposed project' (European Commission 2017, 24). However, this 'work plan' assumes a particular involvement of the state. For instance, sites must demonstrate that they benefit from appropriate preservation and protection regimes (European Commission 2018a, 7), yet these regimes are generally developed at national and, less often, regional or local, level. What is more, the 'work plan' also builds a relationship of pragmatic dependency between state institutions and the heritage sites. Given that the European Commission does not grant any financial aid other than supporting the design and management of capacity building activities of the Label (European Commission 2018b), each site needs to secure additional funds to organize the activities proposed in its project. This generally entails fund-raising activities, or engagement with institutions at the national level, which further confine EHL sites within their national environments.

In this setting, the Netherlands has managed to secure the EHL for three sites by the time we concluded this research: The Peace Palace in the Hague, Camp Westerbork in Hooghalen and the Maastricht Treaty situated in the buildings of the Province of Limburg. The European dimension of these three sites is produced by the state in relation to national interests and to dominant national discourses about what constitutes 'typical Dutch culture and heritage'. In this way, in practice, the EHL does not appear to favour the addition of a new, European, layer of meaning to heritage sites, as the initiative's rhetoric suggests. Instead, it seems to allow the display of dominant national heritage values and stories at a European level, becoming an EU-established, but state-centred heritage initiative.

The designation of heritage as European: the Dutch way

The participation of the Netherlands in the EHL happened in a complex social, cultural and political context. In the past, the Dutch government has demonstrated concern with the presumed deterioration of its national identity as a consequence of further EU integration (see e.g. Binzer Hobolt and Brouard 2011 on attitudes of the Dutch towards the 2005 referendum for a European Constitution). At the same time, the Dutch state sees itself as one of the forefathers of the European project and a crucial member of the EU. Therefore, the heritage sector decided that the Netherlands should take part in the making of common European heritage and that it should ensure the completeness of any European heritage repertoire through the addition of Dutch heritage sites (Council for Culture 2012a). However, they insisted that the participation of the Netherlands in any common European heritage initiative would be voluntary (Van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart 2010; Verhagen 2010) in order to allow the re-articulation of Dutch identity and the country's contribution to the European project.

Against this background, the Dutch government established particular practical arrangements to ensure that national identity is addressed and displayed together with the common European identity. A group of national stakeholders was therefore assembled to administrate the proper application and functioning of the EHL in the Netherlands. These stakeholders, each with different formal functions but all related to or under the influence of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, include DutchCulture, the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, the Council for Culture as well as the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. DutchCulture and the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency are responsible, respectively, for the dissemination of the information about the Label and the assistance of the potential applicants in the formal process of selection. The Council for Culture fulfils an evaluative and advisory role. However, it is the Minister, assisted by the Dutch House of Representatives, who holds the executive decision-making power as to which sites are endorsed as the final candidates to be presented to the European Commission.

Most importantly, a national thematic framework was strategically instituted in order to bring forward key elements of Dutch identity into the construction of heritage as European. In her request for advice to the Council for Culture, the 2012 Dutch State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science, Halbe Zijlstra argued that strategically chosen themes related to 'Dutch identity' would prevent the random selection of sites, reduce the number of candidates, ensure cohesion and cooperation between site holders, and, most importantly, articulate the significance of the Netherlands in Europe and the EU (Zijlstra 2012). Responding to the State Secretary's inquiry, the Council for Culture compiled a list of nine items which epitomize the Netherlands abroad: water, the Golden Age, tolerance, design, international law, agriculture, mobility, sport and youth culture. Yet, in the Council's view, understandability at the EU level necessitates a higher level of abstraction than these separate items provide. It was therefore decided to amass them into four overarching themes, each with two different sub-aspects, and with different levels of visibility and importance, namely Tolerance and Justice, Mobility and 'Makeability', Culture and Sport, and Money and Business Sense (Council for Culture 2012a), all meaning to represent different Dutch values that should be part of the European heritage in the Netherlands.

Each of the three Dutch heritage sites nominated and awarded the EHL is connected, either by the site in its application, or by the Council for Culture through inference, to one of the national themes. For example, the Peace Palace, a nationally recognized heritage site ('*rijksmonument*') prior to its candidacy for and award of the EHL, was actively encouraged by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to apply for the EHL title in view of its representative character for the Tolerance and Justice theme, and not because of its supposedly important role in the common European identity. No explicit reference to the national thematic framework or to the role of the Netherlands in fostering the European peace movement at the beginning of the 20th century and supporting the international justice system can be found either in the site's application (Municipality of the Hague and Carnegie Foundation 2012), or in the European Expert Panel's advice (European Commission 2013). Nonetheless, the Dutch Council for Culture proposed the candidature of the Peace Palace as it was seen to represent the values of openness, tolerance and neutrality, all viewed as characteristics of the Netherlands as a member state of the EU (Council for Culture 2012b, 9). The values of peace and justice that the Palace embodies are then not seen as 'European' as such, but rather as the exceptional contribution of the Netherlands to European principles. In other words, the Palace is the means through which the Dutch state can showcase itself as a country of law and peace to the wider European audience, as domestic heritage officials stated.

Camp Westerbork, one of the four commemoration centres in the Netherlands, similarly filed its candidacy for the EHL after the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education Culture and Science actively advised the centre to do so. The award was extended to the Camp because of its layered history, spanning across several episodes including the period prior to the Second World War, its course and immediate aftermath, and the period of decolonization (European Commission 2016). This history also links Camp Westerbork to more current events unfolding elsewhere in Europe, such as the refugee crisis. Despite these discursive techniques employed by both the site and the European Expert Panel to situate the Camp in a broader European narrative, the Dutch Council for Culture evaluated Camp Westerbork as the antithetical representation of the national Tolerance and Justice theme (Council for Culture 2012b, 5). In the Council's view, the Camp symbolizes the so-called '*raison d'être* of the European Union' through its Second World War narrative (Council for Culture 2012b, 6). At the same time the non-Second World War and non-Holocaust stories are considered 'Dutch aspects of the Camp's history' (Council for Culture 2012b, 6). This positioning of the site's history satisfies the wish for a distinctive national narrative, while reproducing symbolic narratives about Camp Westerbork as a carrier of Dutch identity and values. The candidacy of the Maastricht Treaty as an EHL site had a rather different path to the nominations of Camp Westerbork and the Peace Palace – it is an example of what we call European heritage in reverse.

The Maastricht Treaty: European heritage in reverse

The Maastricht Treaty, the third heritage site in the Netherlands to be assigned the EHL title, is a powerful example of how important it is to the Dutch heritage sector to underline national identity in the processes of designating heritage as European. Formally known as the Treaty on European Union, the Maastricht Treaty is a turning point in the process of European integration. It was signed in 1992 by the then twelve member states of the European Economic Community in the States Chamber of the administrative buildings of the Limburg Province, one of the twelve Dutch provinces. Although it resulted from the common efforts of all member states, and has no specific national or territorial ties, the Treaty did not earn the Label easily, but had to comply to the Dutch state's heritage narratives, and in some ways, become Dutch national heritage before being officially designated as European. Paradoxically, it was the Maastricht Treaty that emphasised the importance of common European heritage by promising that the EU should 'contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore' (European Union 2012, 121).

The string of actions and procedures preceding the site's EHL award provides an intriguing account of the reasons why the Dutch national stakeholders could not acknowledge the Maastricht Treaty as European heritage before it was included in the national heritage discourses. It is important to observe that prior to its EHL award, the Treaty was not an object of national heritage, although it was already displayed in Limburg's provincial buildings, themselves an object of municipal heritage. In this context, the Limburg Province – as owner of the building in which the Maastricht Treaty was signed – needed to submit two candidacy dossiers at the national level in order to ensure that the story it presented matched the Dutch national interests. The Council for Culture deemed the first candidacy dossier to be insufficiently qualified to be a Dutch submission to the EHL (Council for Culture 2016, 7). The narrative presented by the site was, in the Council's perspective, a 'safe story' which only pinpointed the relevance and successes of the Maastricht Treaty for the European Union, but did not reflect on the role of the Netherlands at all (Council for Culture 2016, 6). Furthermore, the Council argued that the application placed too much focus on the European standing of the Limburg Province instead of the Dutch state as a whole (Council for Culture 2016, 6) and that endorsing such a candidacy would mean playing into the Province's regional agenda.

Upon Limburg Province's insistence that the year 2017 coincided with the 25-year jubilee of the signing of the Treaty, the domestic EHL officials agreed to allow an updated application for the same selection round. The second and definitive candidacy dossier included repeated references to the Dutch position and role in the EU prior to signing the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Limburg Province 2017, 6). It also clearly expressed the ways in which the site-holders proposed to stimulate young people to discuss the meaning of the EU and to have similar debates with places of comparable significance elsewhere in Europe (Limburg Province 2017, 24). The Council for Culture then gave a positive assessment of the updated application. Thus, only when the Province framed its narrative within the national themes of Tolerance and Justice, and Money and Business Sense, and complied to the desired discourse about the EU at a national level, was iteventually allowed to put the Maastricht Treaty forward for the EHL title. However, while the Council insisted in its assessment of the first EHL application submitted by the Limburg Province that the Dutch role in the elaboration and negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty would be highlighted, this insistence is no longer visible in the evaluation of the final, updated application. Here, the Council for Culture simply remarks that the second application succeeds in observing the failure of the Netherlands – as 1991–1992 president of the European Council and leader of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations – to have a far-reaching social and political agenda included in order to provide legitimacy for an otherwise generally economic Treaty (Council for Culture 2017, 2). This remark, however, impacts the EU narrative conveyed by the site and implicitly rearticulates a set of Dutch social values in opposition to the EU's overall economic character.

Considering the very nature of the Treaty, the Dutch state heritage sector's insistence on highlighting the role of the Netherlands in the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty is peculiar. The site is a product of recent history, jointly drafted and signed by the European Union's member states. Therefore, it does not have the same connection to one location in ways similar to many other examples of EHL sites. This was not a reason for the Dutch national stakeholders to miss the chance to reassert its position as a member of importance in the Union, transforming the Treaty into a receptacle of supposedly typically Dutch values and identities, instead of a heritage that most EU citizens can relate to. It is in this context that the Maastricht Treaty received the EHL award in 2018. According to Province representatives, in light of the previous tensions the Limburg Province wanted to show that it was aware of the fact that it was the Dutch state, not the Province, who had the authority to provide relevant input at the European level. Consequently, the Province insisted that the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ingrid van Engelshoven, deliver a speech during the EHL plaque reveal ceremony on 9 May 2018, in addition to the one given by the representative of the Province. In other words, the Province, the Maastricht Treaty's coordinating and administrating body, self-regulated its behaviour in order to satisfy the nationally authorized heritage discourse, thus situating the nation-state once again as the legitimate source of power and promoting its values and interests in the European arena.

What is more, the actions following the EHL ceremony also show the same adherence to the national heritage discourses. In light of the EHL's focus on communication, the European Commission designed a travelling exhibition consisting of 38 information panels containing photographs of each EHL site, briefly explaining why these sites had been awarded the Label. Site holders had the opportunity to request hosting this exhibition, an opportunity which the Limburg Province did not miss in early 2019. Notably, the Limburg Province decided to place panels representing EHL sites from the same country side by side, with the three Dutch sites – The Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork and the Maastricht Treaty – displayed next to each other. However, in its evaluation of candidate sites, the European Expert Panel reports chronologically, with the intention to create a sense of historical continuity that goes beyond the national boundaries and to underline that national boundaries are in fact a recent creation. However, it appears that the coordinators of the Maastricht Treaty site in Limburg did not follow these intentions. The action of categorizing the panels per country, thus, serves here to symbolically reinforce national boundaries around the three Dutch EHL sites and provides yet another piece of evidence to the self-regulating behaviour of the Province in view of the tensions raised during the national pre-selection process.

Conclusion

With the EHL initiative on common European heritage and its poetic motto 'meeting the past and walking to the future', the EU aimed to repair the fragility and complexity of what is often named 'European identity'. Instead, it created something seemingly counterproductive – it handed the member states an opportunity to highlight their individual importance in the creation of the EU rather than to build inclusive and open European heritage and values. The context of the Netherlands effectively illustrates the failure of the EHL's state-centred approach to produce European heritage that transcends national boundaries, as well as the inability of the state's heritage regimes to validate other ways of defining heritage so as to legitimize European identity narratives. Aided by the Label's practical arrangements and by its reference to already extant heritage narratives at the national level (e.g. tolerance, human rights), Dutch state heritage institutions steered the EHL to represent a nationalist agenda and to promote and emphasize Dutch cultural values in the construction of European heritage. In these circumstances, only sites that present an image of the Netherlands and the EU that corresponds to the nationally authorized heritage discourse are nominated to become European through the EHL scheme. Even the Maastricht Treaty, one of the EU's milestones and a product of the joint efforts of several EU member states with no particular territorial ties, first had to comply to the Dutch state's heritage narratives and, in some ways, become

Dutch national heritage before being officially designated as European heritage through the EHL scheme. The Treaty, as the most illustrative example alongside the other two Dutch EHL sites of the Peace Palace in the Hague and Camp Westerbork in Hooghalen, ultimately became a political element that reproduces Dutch identity on an EU level instead of representing a unifying narrative, thus solidifying the national boundaries it is supposed to transcend.

Our research has demonstrated how, at least in the Netherlands, the making of a common European heritage is a complex political process that challenges the current way of decision-making within the EU. The state heritage sectors and the institutions that act in their name do not have mechanisms to escape the agency of the state heritage regime they are part of – a regime that creates and validates the powerful and dominant view that heritage is an unchangeable set of traditions and values strictly defined within national boundaries. It is doubtful if this outcome is different in any other EU member state. Risse claims that in the making of a common European identity, the states with constitutional traditions are more likely to change their collective understandings and include Europe in their national narratives than unitary and centralized states (Risse 2005). And yet, as our research has demonstrated, even in the Netherlands, with its constitutional tradition, the stable and structured ways of defining heritage only through the prism of the national identity sneak in through the back door.

The questions we raised in this paper are important not only because of the seeming ineffectiveness of EU heritage initiatives in creating more transnational notions of heritage, but also because the kind of heritage they produce lies at the heart of nationalist claims (Stolcke 1995). In the paper '(Why) do Eurosceptics believe in a common European heritage?' De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini (2020) claim that in today's Europe, embracing Europeanism goes hand in hand with embracing vicious nationalism and cultural racism. The paradox is that this kind of understanding of European heritage is produced directly by EU heritage initiatives (Calligaro 2013; Niklasson 2017). And that is why the discussion about how, where and by whom heritage is designated as European is crucial – because seemingly symbolic and poetic initiatives like the EHL are not only initiatives with ambiguous formulations and vague language, but also roads to lasting nationalism.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Translation as cultural diplomacy: a Chinese perspective

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ABSTRACT
The People's Republic of China, since its foundation in 1949, has been at the forefront of strategizing outward translation (translation of works for readers outside of China) as a means of cultural diplomacy. The concept '*guojia fanyi shijian*' (literally, national translation practice) is being developed by Chinese scholars to analyze state-sponsored translation. This article provides a historical overview of China's state-sponsored outward translation activities and aims to highlight the conundrum of deploying translation as a means of cultural diplomacy in the Chinese context. The close relationship between the concept of soft power and the Chinese propaganda system not only constrains the creativity and attractiveness of cultural resources, but also predisposes translation projects to prioritize the source culture over the target culture. Based on the possibility of extending cultural diplomacy beyond national interests, this article argues that the Chinese government's use of translation for cultural diplomacy should draw insights from intercultural communication practices to reinvent the principle of '*neiwai youbie*' (different approaches to domestic and foreign propaganda work). In particular, the growing international popularity of Chinese online literature, largely translated by fans, is a timely reminder for policymakers to reform their conventional translation policies with the aim of increasing soft power.

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1. Introduction

Although the nature and aim of translation and cultural diplomacy are inherently similar, there have been very limited attempts to bring these two concepts into dialogue with each other. Translation has long been understood as a medium to promote mutual understanding between cultures, while cultural diplomacy is known to be helpful in bridging differences and in opening new avenues of communication. Despite such proximity, the intersection between these two areas remains unexplored. Luise Von Flotow (2018) points out that cultural diplomacy, viewed by some as a 'nationalistic' topic, has been sidelined in young disciplines such as Translation Studies, in favor of other emerging research questions and directions. Patricia M. Goff (2018) proposes translation as a possible method of cultural diplomacy if foreigners are not interested in acquiring the source language. While recognizing the issues facing the translation movement in the Arab world, she also acknowledges that translation is not yet 'an automatic reflex in many countries' (Goff 2018, 432). Unlike the Arab world, the Chinese government upholds translation as an essential medium to disseminate its culture and is committed to experimenting with cultural diplomacy through translation. Though the Chinese experience shows that translation is not a panacea for cultural diplomacy,

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the constraints, challenges and controversies arising from deploying translation as a form of cultural diplomacy are too significant to be ignored.

Since its foundation in 1949, the young People's Republic of China has fully recognized the importance of translation and considers it to be a significant part of its cultural diplomacy. Early state-sponsored translation projects in China operated under the guidelines for external propaganda, with the selection of works for translation and the translation strategy strictly controlled by the ideology of the state. The main aim was to export Chinese revolution to the world, especially to non-socialist countries. In the 21st century, a significant discrepancy between how China sees itself and how it is seen by the world has been identified by both Chinese and Western scholars with respect to China's soft power approach. In view of the clear incongruence between China's current status as an economic power and China's deficit in soft power, the Chinese government has stepped up its cultural diplomacy efforts and renamed the strategy, formerly termed 'external propaganda', as 'external communication', to dilute the propagandist nature of its cultural diplomacy. Rather than being viewed as a simple shift in semantics, such a change has far-reaching implications for 'what techniques would be adopted, which department or ministry would be given more responsibility and power, and which development pathways would be considered most effective' (Sun 2015, 405). Accordingly, translation planning, a key component of the Chinese government's communication endeavor, has also been reformed to better align with the operation and objectives of cultural diplomacy.

As China's national power and its influence in the international arena has grown rapidly, the Chinese government has demonstrated an unprecedented desire to translate Chinese culture into other languages. In a December 2014 speech titled 'Enhance China's Cultural Soft Power', Chinese President Xi Jinping (2014, 179) proposed that:

> … to strengthen our cultural soft power, we should disseminate the values of modern China … More work should be done to refine and explain our ideas, and extend the platform for overseas publicity, so as to make our culture known through international communication and dissemination.

The government considers it very important to 'sponsor the translation of outstanding academic achievements and cultural products into foreign languages' in order to increase 'the country's cultural soft power' (as quoted in Bai 2020a, 2). To this end, China implemented its 'Chinese Culture Going Out' initiative in 2001, and entered an era of the so-called '*dawaixuan* 大外宣' (large-scale external communication), which claims to be multi-dimensional, multi-level and wide-ranging. The concept of cultural diplomacy as an effective tool is somewhat abstract, and a lack of reliable resources makes it difficult to measure the effects of translation in changing others' perceptions of the source culture. Nevertheless, since 1949, the Chinese government has been persistent in sponsoring the outward dissemination of translations.

Decades of outward translation practices in China have highlighted a conflict in the definition of cultural diplomacy: whether to focus on the government––the supposed key agent of cultural diplomacy––or on the desired outcome facilitated by unofficial activities. This conflict begs another question: how can outward translations be both *in* the national interest and go *beyond* the national interest? China's outward translations have benefited from a relaxation of the centralized control of the government. The early institutions of translation, which were supervised and manipulated under a hierarchical state-regulated system, have gradually been replaced by dispersed and diversified translation practitioners, sponsored directly or indirectly by the government. As 'culture' is open to diverse interpretations, and as an assemblage of multiple non-government participants and agendas are involved in intercultural exchanges, cultural diplomacy seems to be 'a messy landscape' (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015, 375) or 'a messy and mutable process of collaboration and adaptation' (Falk 2011, 8). Such a mutable process of collaboration and adaptation is already reflected in China's outward translation projects from the 1950s to the present, for example, in the increasing joint patronage between government-sponsored institutions and foreign cultural agents in recent years. In addition, increasing official attention paid to the

international popularity of Chinese online literature, shared through fan translation, has further complicated matters of cultural diplomacy. This raises another significant question of cultural diplomacy: how to mobilize popular culture to enhance soft power? Cultural diplomacy functions by attraction and thus rests on soft power. Cultural attractiveness, per se, does not count as soft power, so the challenge lies in how to deploy the attractiveness of popular culture to achieve policy objectives.

The focus of this article is to discuss translation as a concrete practice in cultural diplomacy from 1949 to the 21st century. According to Nicolai Volland (2007, 51):

> The founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 marked not only the start of a profound transformation of the Chinese state institutions, the society and the economy, but also the beginning of a monumental project to redefine the nature of the Chinese nation-state and its position in the world.

The ensuing political and social development of the Chinese nation has had a significant impact on the government's translation planning. Explicit transitions in the government's translation policy can be observed in different periods. From 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1978, translation projects were strictly controlled by the state to disseminate the achievements of China's socialist construction. From 1978, when the Reform and Opening Up policy was undertaken, to 2000, China joined the international community, followed the trend of globalization and reinvigorated its cultural development. With the gradual relaxation of state control of the cultural sector, translation projects were no longer as ideologically oriented as before. However, they were more or less still dictated by state-sponsored translation institutions. From 2001 to 2012, the thriving development of the 'Chinese Culture Going Global' initiative generated meaningful insights into the management of state-sponsored translation projects. The government's translation policy began to encourage more decentralized and depoliticized non-state agents to participate in China's outward translations, resulting in more heterogeneous cultural practices. Since 2012, after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has opened itself even more to the outside world and entered into broader and closer relationships with other countries. Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed 'the Belt and Road Initiative' in 2013 and aimed to construct 'a global community of shared future'. While acknowledging its growing global status, China recognized the need to consider wider global interests and actively promote international cooperation. This prompted the Chinese government to rely on more inclusive, flexible and efficient translation practices.

Following this historical framework, this article aims to provide a diachronic account of China's state-sponsored translation activities and to analyze both centralized and decentralized cultural practices in the Chinese context. It seeks to shed light on the nature and efficacy of cultural diplomacy and to investigate how translation can provide expanded opportunities for connection and to increase mutual understanding, while being instrumental in achieving the goal of cultural diplomacy.

2. Translation, cultural diplomacy and cultural soft power

Joseph S. Nye defines soft power as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' (Nye 2004, x). Culture is one of the three pillars upon which soft power rests, with the other two being political values and foreign policies. Cultural diplomacy refers principally to 'government strategies for the attainment of soft power through cultural means' (Iwabuchi 2015, 419). It is understood as 'the exchange of ideas, information, value systems, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding' (Cummings 2003, 1). The instrumental use of national culture is heavily dependent upon the vehicle of translation, as the US State Department (2005, 12) states:

> … translation lies at the heart of any cultural diplomacy initiative; some misunderstandings between peoples may be resolved through engagement with each other's literary and intellectual traditions; the poverty of insight

displayed by American policy makers and pundits in their view of other lands may in some cases be mediated by contact, in translation, with thinkers from abroad.

A case in point is the Franklin Book Program, launched by the US government, which is an American book-publishing and translation initiative that operated in the Middle East from 1953 to 1979. This program is an example of how America deployed culture to seek soft power within the context of the Cold War. Unlike the Franklin Book Program, which prioritized target audiences in its operation, China's outward translation project initially began as a top-down, state-sponsored enterprise that was principally source-culture oriented.

Translation has been a significant soft power resource in China. The Chinese government has considered the task of building soft power 'as part of its broader program of nation building through cultural construction' (Edney 2012, 913). Therefore, 'soft power has become almost a synonym for cultural attractiveness' (Edney 2012, 908) and the phrase 'cultural soft power' is often used by state-party officials in China. Translation, or the transfer, exchange and distribution of cultural products, can be conceived as a specific form of cultural soft power. Jie Wang and Josh Stenberg (2019) investigated the boom of translating Chinese modern and contemporary literature into Arabic. They found that the translation boom served China's self-representation as a benevolent and harmonious power, rather than facilitating any substantive cultural or literary interaction. Catherine Gilbert (2017) questioned the relevance of Chinese book donations to African audiences and argued that the cultural export activities from China to Africa were not genuine cultural exchanges, but rather another means for China to assert its power on the international stage. Rather than focusing on cultural exports from China to less powerful countries, this article turns its attention to the exporting of Chinese cultural products to the more hegemonic American culture through Chinese–English translations. As the 'Chinese conceptualization of soft power focuses on countering the effects of Western influence' (Edney 2012, 906), this article aims to reveal the efficacies and challenges of the Chinese government's efforts to deploy translation to counter the cultural trade deficit between China and America.

Translation was originally adopted by the Chinese government mainly as a cultural strategy to import other cultures. For example, during the Tang Dynasty (618–907), '*yichang* 译场' (an official institute for translation) was established to translate Buddhist scriptures from India. In the late Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), '*Tongwen Guan* 同文馆' (the School of Combined Learning, a government school) formulated translation policies to import Western culture. Presently, translation is mostly harnessed as a political strategy to export China's culture to the world and to increase China's soft power. Under the discourse of 'Chinese Culture Going Global', the concept of '*guojia fanyi shijian* 国家翻译实践' (literally, national translation practice) (Ren and Gao 2015) has been promulgated to study translation as a state act that serves the national interest. The state has absolute control over national translation programs, usually in the form of institutional translations. The translation quality is often assessed by the source culture rather than by the target culture.

The concept of *guojia fanyi shijian* (literally, national translation practice) ensures that translation is largely compatible with China's existing propaganda system. Although the government upholds the principle of '*neiwai youbie* 内外有别' (different approaches to domestic and foreign propaganda work), in implementation it sometimes changes into '*neiwai guankong* 内外管控' (state control over both domestic and foreign propaganda work). As Kingsley Edney argues, 'any desire to increase cultural soft power must be largely compatible with domestic propaganda imperatives' (2012, 911). Culture becomes not only an element of international power competition, but also an important source of national cohesion and therefore needs to be managed closely. In this light, national translation programs need to also follow the guideline that the Chinese government's foreign propaganda work should serve its domestic political objectives. However, Nye (2011, 84) emphasizes that 'with soft power, what the target thinks is particularly important, and the targets matter as much as the agents. Attraction and persuasion are socially constructed. Soft power is a dance that requires partners'. Moreover, he also asserts that 'soft power depends upon credibility, and when

governments are perceived as manipulative and information is seen as propaganda, credibility is destroyed' (Nye 2012, 152). Therefore, the Chinese government's deployment of cultural resources in seeking soft power seems to differ from Nye's original formulation.

Although culture has been marshalled to serve national interests, the effectiveness of this remains questionable. The Ditchley Foundation, when referring to cultural diplomacy, observes that 'the value of cultural activity comes precisely from its independence, its freedom and the fact that it represents and connects people, rather than necessarily governments or policy' (as quoted in Von Flotow 2018, 195). In China's early state-sponsored translation projects, priority was given to political works and the government decided what to translate and how to translate. As Yingjin Zhang (2018) notes, 'From the state's perspective, a cultural product is a message (e.g. positive images of China and the China dream) that matters in propaganda, while from culture's perspective, words and images always exceed their intended meanings and are open to competing interpretations in reception'. Therefore, more often than not, the political message contained in a translation was not received in the way the government intended. For example, in translating the revolutionary novel *Tracks in the Snowy Forest* (1965), the official endeavor to recast the revolutionary heroes into one-dimensional, ideal models that reflect the perfect self-image of China only proved to be counterproductive (Ni 2017). Consequently, the state-sponsored translations served only to enhance the auto-image of official Chinese culture (Chang 2015).

Based on these considerations, translation should aim to bridge the gap between what state institutions want and what individual agents and their target audiences want. Respect for and understanding of the 'other' is a prerequisite for seductive cultural means to be effective. As Von Flotow (2018) asks, 'A recurring question in the literature around cultural diplomacy turns around responsibility and controls: is the process best driven by government or should cultural activity operate as freely as possible?' In other words, will the participation of the nation state result in an uncritical reinforcement of a homogenized and exclusive understanding of the national culture? National translation programs should consider how to extend the pluralistic appeal of culture and pay more attention to the needs of their target audiences. The principle of *neiwai youbie* (different approaches to domestic and foreign propaganda work) should not be simply a slogan. Different focuses and approaches should be applied to domestic and foreign propaganda work. As Nye (2012) suggests, 'The best propaganda is not propaganda', so national translation programs can only translate into soft power when they are attractive to their target audiences. Voci and Luo (2018) assert that this newer concept of soft power is much more intricate and ambivalent than the older state-run, top-down, propagandist, monological model of soft power. The singularity of the state-dictated message is to be complemented by individuals because they possess a wealth of cultural creativity and entrepreneurship. These intensifying, multidirectional, intercultural flows embody an intrinsically diverse range of cultural-relations activities and therefore problematize any unifying national narratives authenticated through governmental efforts.

In other words, state-promoted cultural diplomacy is only one strand of the cultural flow in the web of intersecting cultural relations (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015). By expanding national interests beyond the pursuit of narrowly focused economic and political goals, cultural exchanges can be carried out in a more open, dialogic and cosmopolitan manner and develop toward multidirectional and multidimensional goals. In a similar vein, 'Chinese soft power' can also be shaped and harnessed by multiple, transnational cultural agents (Voci and Luo 2018). Therefore, soft power may be best articulated in non-state or sub-state, bottom-up, grassroots operations, since top-down state-generated programs may lack credibility and therefore fail to attract and convince international audiences (Zhang 2018).

Having said this, it is not easy to resolve the contradiction between the nation state's desire to mobilize the attractiveness of culture and the government-driven practices that may deprive culture of its pluralistic appeal. According to Batchelor (2020, 12), there are three stages in which translation can be said to become or to produce soft power:

(1) In the creation of a resource

(2) In the process of making a given resource into soft power, or in other words, turning the raw resource into a thing or idea which, in someone's estimation, will be attractive to specific others

(3) In the process of telling others about the soft power resource (i.e. through diplomacy).

More diverse translation resources are being created by the government as a source of cultural diplomacy. As well as China's attractive traditional culture, the government has also noticed the potential of popular culture, such as online literature and animation. Once these resources are created, the process of making them attractive and accessible to target readers depends on effective translation programs and multiple cultural agents. As Van Ham (2010, 67) notes, 'Although cultural products may appear to offer a resource for achieving foreign policy goals, and to have some observable effects on foreign populations, it remains unclear how any state might "wield" that resource'. This article aims to reveal some aspects of how China 'wields' translation products to achieve cultural soft power. According to the historical framework outlined above, an explicit transition occurred in the 21st century in the Chinese government's translation policy. The following discussion will elaborate on this transition and its implications for outward translation activities.

3. In the era of external propaganda: translating culture as a homogenous entity

Early outward translation subscribed to the dynamics of China's external propaganda, in which the government advocated establishing media platforms and publishing journals and books to spread revolutionary ideas. For this purpose, the International News Bureau was established in 1949, but three years later it was reorganized into the Foreign Languages Press (FLP) under the state's Publicity Department. In 1963, the FLP became an affiliate of another state-sponsored institution––China International Publishing Group (GIPG). The FLP was the institution in charge of the two major outward translation projects in these early years: the translation magazine *Chinese Literature* and the translated book series 'Panda Books'. The latter was clearly modelled after the famous publishing house Penguin Books in format and design. 'Panda Books' were published by the International Bookstore which was founded in 1949 for the international distribution of Chinese books. It avoided political distribution and developed a business distribution network in non-socialist countries in the 1950s. However, in 1959, when it was included in the newly established Foreign Affairs Committee of the China Cultural Council, its mission changed into 'cooperation with foreign affairs' (as quoted in Xu 2014, 83). In 1962, its distribution was required to 'coordinate international revolutionary movements' (Xu 2014, 83).

There were four main categories of literary translations published by FLP: classics; May Fourth authors; socialist realists; and Stalin Prize winners. From 1957, the press began to focus on the translation of contemporary Chinese writers. Besides literary works, it also translated and published policy documents from China's central government and the works of important Chinese politicians. The stated objective of the press's publications was 'to broadly introduce the achievements of the New China, the policies of the Communist Party and also the central government, as well as the experiences of Chinese revolution to the world' (as quoted in Xu 2014, 78). The main target audiences of Chinese propaganda, according to a report on internal discussions at the FLP in 1962, were those in three so-called 'in-between regions': socialist countries; developing countries that were fighting for independence; and capitalist countries (Xu 2014).

Despite the considerable number of translations published by the FLP, the Chinese government's endeavor to strategize translation as cultural diplomacy was not well-received in the West. Liping Bai (2020a) points out three major reasons that handicapped the operation of such translation initiatives. First, the homogenized translation practices under the umbrella of one Chinese organization may have given Western readers the impression that such translations were pure propaganda. During the latter part of the twentieth century, the magazines published by the CIPG were even printed with a warning from the American post office about their propagandistic nature (McDougall 2011). The failure of *Chinese Literature* and the Panda Books series proves that traditional propagandistic modes of translation can be a hindrance to the promotion of Chinese culture to the West. Secondly, the

Chinese publishers' lack of familiarity with the needs of their target readers and the norms of the target culture could have led to the use of inappropriate translation methods. Based on her own working experience in the FLP, Bonnie S. McDougall (2011) points out that the FLP was strictly manipulated by hierarchical management: translators were at the lowest rank of the publishing hierarchy and had little or even no say in decision-making; by contrast, the Chinese editors, though with very limited expertise in foreign languages and cultures, controlled the selection and translation process under the ideology of the state. She also complains about 'the bureau's ignorance of and the contempt for its readership' (2011, 44). Consequently, Knapp (1992, 775), when reviewing one of the Panda Books, notes, 'the translation should have been reviewed by a native speaker of English' to rectify its 'awkward phrases and heavy style'. Knapp (1995) also states that 'the translations, although adequate for the most part, are riddled with stilted and out-worn phrases'. Finally, Chinese publishers had little knowledge of the book market in the West and this may have impeded distribution. In the latter part of the 20th century, translations published by the CIPG were mainly distributed through 'a network of bookshops that was established and operated by Communist parties or other leftwing organizations' in Western countries and the only advertising for some of the bookshops was carried out 'in rather dull window displays' (McDougall 2011, 36–37). According to McDougall (2011, 37), 'prices were low, but so were sales; the customers were almost wholly party members or sympathizers, and few were casual buyers coming in from the street' and 'even specialist Sinological journals paid little attention to FLP books' (44). Obviously, such politicized translation projects failed to exercise the attractiveness of culture under the guise of cultural diplomacy.

Another translation product, '大中华文库' (Library of Chinese Classics), was launched in 1994. This large-scale translation project was headed by the National Press and Publication Administration and involved eighteen Chinese publishers and many well-known translators. It was an important attempt to systematically introduce the essence of Chinese culture to the world. However, its efficacy as a form of cultural diplomacy was questioned because most of the translations were distributed only in China and included in library collections.

The above-mentioned translation products are representative examples of imposition style translation. Cay Dollerup (1997) proposes two types of translation: translation as imposition and translation as requisition. The former is 'normally deliberate, always driven by the source culture, often with little regard for the receptor culture, and therefore pays much attention to the intention or intentionalities behind the original text manifestation' (Dollerup 1997, 46–47). The latter 'springs from the target culture and therefore implies a more relaxed attitude (perhaps out of ignorance) towards the sender's intentionality' (Dollerup 1997, 47). Proceeding from an 'imposition' manner, early government-sponsored translation projects in China tended to disregard consumers' needs. They either prioritized the translation of political books, such as works by Mao Zedong and policy documents before the reform and opening up in 1978, or they disregarded the target market. David Clarke (2016) eloquently articulated the significance of target audiences in the meaning-making process of marshalling cultural products as cultural diplomacy:

> … if they [policy-makers] have little control of what consumers in other countries make of the cultural products from their nation, whether promoted, distributed and sponsored by cultural diplomacy policy or not, then it would arguably be hard to find a logic for continuing to invest time and resources in formulating such a policy.

As a result of this insufficient consideration for its partner, the government's translation projects––*Chinese Literature* and Panda Books––were halted, in 2001 and 2007, respectively. In China's imposition-type translation projects, the creative dimensions of culture were under-represented and the desired effect of cultural diplomacy to convey messages and project images was a wish rather than a reality.

4. Toward more dispersed and diverse translation practices

Cultural diplomacy in China has developed toward a broader purview in the 21st century. The promulgation of关于广播影视'走出去工程'的实施细则 (Regulations for China's Radio, Film and TV to 'Go Out') in 2001 by China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) heralded the beginning of China's 'Going Out' initiative. Governmental institutions have funded different translation projects to promote Chinese literature and culture globally, such as the 2006 中国当代文学百部精品工程译介工程 (100 Excellent Contemporary Chinese Literary Works in Translation) and the 2009 中国文化著作翻译出版工程 (Works on Chinese Culture in Translation), among others. In 2013, the CIPG, together with the China Academy of Translation, established the platform of 'Key Words to Understand China', which translated key political terms and concepts. At the end of 2015, the English version of 'The Splendid Chinese Culture Website' was launched jointly by the CIPG and the Academy of Chinese Studies in Taiwan. The website covers 300 topics about Chinese culture. In 2017, the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies was established under the CIPG to translate and explain China to the world.

The official translation mechanism is shifting from a single model, dominated by the state organ, the FLP, in the 20th century, to a more diffused approach. The Chinese government, aware of the drawbacks of imposition-type translation, has adopted the strategy of '*jiechuan chuhai* 借船出海' (borrowing a boat to go to sea) to translate and promote Chinese culture. This involves incorporating Chinese Communist Party messaging and content into media outlets abroad, either overtly or covertly. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the CIPG has been actively establishing cooperation with overseas publishers. The networks for Chinese–English translation are becoming more complex. The '中国文化与文明丛书' (Culture and Civilization of China Series), launched by the CIPG from the 1990s to 2012, was jointly published by the CIPG and Yale University Press. They have published bilingual books on Chinese painting, sculpture, architecture and the formation of Chinese civilization. This project is said to have 'achieved world-wide success' (Donatich 2006). The '中国文学海外传播工程' (Chinese Literature Overseas Dissemination Project), initiated in 2010, was run by Beijing Normal University, the Confucius Institute at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma Press. The significance of launching this project was recognized by both the American and Chinese sides, who jointly applied for a grant from Hanban, the Confucius Institute Headquarters. Bai (2020a, 2020b) summarizes the factors that contributed to the successful operation of this joint translation project: joint need on both sides; the cultural, social, symbolic or economic capital enjoyed by the publishers, writers, translators and editors; local distribution channels; and the collaboration between the translation agents. These two representative joint translation projects further testify to the efficiency of the strategy of 'borrowing a boat to go to sea'.

Other joint patronages include the '中国现当代文化经典文库' (CPG China Library), launched in 2014 and undertaken by the China Publishing Group and leading Western publishers; cooperation between Penguin China and the General Administration of Press and Publication; and cooperation between Harper Collins and the People's Literature Publishing House. With recourse to local agencies, cultural diplomacy through translation is more likely to attract and persuade the target audience. The mutable process of translation as cultural diplomacy complicates the question of who decides what the desirable products are in cultural diplomacy, and whether there are any criteria to select such desirable products.

5. Online literature in translation: beyond the national interest?

It can be seen that many of the translation projects focus on traditional Chinese culture or serious literature. However, in view of the prominence of popular culture in the current era of globalization, the issue of how to exploit the possibilities of popular culture, while also ensuring communication of the state's preferred messages, is a new challenge for policy makers. Though popular culture can

probably reach a wider audience, it can also circulate images that are not consistent with state criteria. John Storey (2009) claims that popular culture is an 'empty' conceptual category and the term depends on how it is used. 'Popular culture' is used in this article to refer to online literature and content, as opposed to 'high culture' that is regarded by the state as China's cultural essence and therefore worthy to be made known internationally. Popular culture, though not enthusiastically embraced by elite cultural circles, appeals to larger audiences both domestically and internationally.

Under the 'Chinese Culture Going Global' initiative, the state's strategy to enhance its global communications capacity and increase cultural soft power provides a valuable opportunity for the launch of online literature. Under the auspices of this policy, many national conferences on online literature and online literature going global were held, for example, the 'Network Literature Overseas Communication Forum in the Context of Free Trade Port' and the 'Chinese Online Literature Going to Sea with AI Translation' in 2019. According to the '2020 Report on Chinese Online Literature Going to Sea' (iResearch 2020, August, 31), the number of overseas users of online literature had reached 31.935 million by 2019, representing an overseas market of 460 million yuan (approximately 70 million US dollars). By 2019, translated online fiction exceeded 10,000 items and 87.9% of overseas readers said that they would read Chinese online literature if it was available in their chosen category (iResearch 2020, August, 31).

The international popularity of Chinese online literature has prompted the Chinese government to take more interest in the potential of online literature to function as an instrument of Chinese soft power. China's top media watchdog, SAPPRFT (2014) issued a guidance that called on online publishers to go beyond the country's borders, and tell Chinese stories on the global stage and showcase the new face of China. According to this guidance, SAPPRFT would support online literature companies to expand into overseas markets through overseas mergers and acquisitions, joint operations and the establishment of subsidiaries. It would also increase funding for the international distribution and trading of online literature. Moreover, the CIPG would also deploy its overseas resources to promote online literature (The Xinhua News Agency, 17 November 2019). Though it is not immediately evident how the translation of online literature can be harnessed in the long term, the Chinese government is considering how to utilize online literature to its advantage.

The translation of Chinese online literature originated from grassroots fan translations and has developed into more systematic translation projects since 2016 when it successfully went global. Interestingly, translation has become a powerful agency that has transformed online literature from a transgressive practice that challenges China's official publishing system to a significant component of China's 'Going Out' initiative. Online literature has emerged as a non-commercial, grassroots alternative to the state-controlled publishing business in the context of the Chinese literary system. It has blossomed in China since the late 1990s and ranges from subjects such as time travel, fantasy and warrior legends, to teen romance, historical fiction and science fiction, encompassing a wide variety of genres and styles. Online literature has created a new literary space both in China and in the world. According to Elaine Jing Zhao (2017, 1237), 'in a country where literary production has long been regarded as a tool of propaganda and confined to elite professionals, online literature has flourished owing to the lower entry barrier and weaker censorship in the digital space'. Such a new cultural form encourages freedom, equality and creativity, providing unknown writers with a platform for creation and enabling writers to circulate their works without going through the process of editors as censors. The online websites offer interactive affordances that promulgate a 'fanfic' review culture, 'whereby the roles of authors and readers become virtually interchangeable' (Thomas 2011, 209). Reader-oriented writing is thus an important factor for online fiction's domestic and international popularity.

In December 2014, a Chinese-American, Lai Jingping, established Wuxiaworld, the first website to launch the English translation of Chinese online literature, which is now the foremost digital platform that brings online literature fans and translators together. Since then, several hundreds of translation websites have emerged, among which Gravity Tales and Volare Novels have received the most attention. In 2017, major fan translation websites began to cooperate with Chinese online fiction websites for intellectual property rights. In May 2017, China Reading Limited established Webnovel, the international version of

the famous Chinese online fiction website, Qidian, heralding the beginning of the 'official channel' to disseminate online fiction in translation (Shao, Ji, and Xiao 2018). The agencies of multiple cultural players in the translation of online literature remind us of what Hyungseok Kang (2015) observes in South Korean cultural diplomacy as 'a gradual convergence of both explicit and implicit approaches', the former being 'nominal cultural policies' and the latter being 'effective cultural policies' (434). In other words, this convergence implies that a diverse range of cultural players and the increasing dynamism of the cultural sector are decentralizing the governmental approach. While persisting as a top-down and unilateral approach by governmental agents to enhance soft power, cultural diplomacy also becomes an implicit function of international cultural exchanges, promoted by government-sponsored institutions and other cultural players, leading to depoliticized and decentralized approaches to facilitating intercultural exchanges.

Even though online literature is not considered by the government to be the best medium to serve national interests, it has indeed attracted many international readers. According to the '2019 Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature' (www.chinawriter.com.cn, 20 February 2020), online literature is in the vanguard of, and a calling-card for, the globalization of Chinese culture. It has facilitated the dissemination of Chinese culture and displayed China's cultural confidence. In addition, the report also states that the government has stepped up its efforts to regulate the development of online literature and is trying to foster a favorable environment for online literature writers. In particular, it advocates that online literature should reflect Chinese realities and sing the praises of the Party, the Chinese nation, the Chinese people and their heroes. This reminds us that Chinese culture is deployed not only to promote China's image internationally but also as a source of enhancing national cohesion. The difference between online literature translation and early centralized translation projects is that instead of focusing exclusively on the government's wish to promote how socialist realism works, it is now also aware of the need to target readers by using their preferred genres, such as fantasy novels.

Chinese online literature is said to have the potential to be an international cultural product comparable to ACGs (Animation, Comic, Game). While many of the translations published by FLP are lying in Chinese institutions abroad (Geng 2014), Chinese online literature has attracted a wide young international readership. According to the statistics of Wuxiaworld, 40% of the users were from North America (people.cn, 17 April 2017). Some of them even write spin-off stories from their favorite book series. The numbers of readers-turned-writers have increased to over 40,000 on Webnovel (iResearch 2020, August, 31). Fan translators have also learned language in multiple ways, such as from peer-to-peer feedback, autodidacticism and creative uses of Google Translate (Vazquez-Calvo et al. 2019). They have transferred knowledge from the digital wilds into formal language education similar to the official Confucius Institute. The cultural consumption of fan communities is a complex process of meaning-making in which writers, translators and readers coalesce into a creative cultural force. Freely flowing global information provides more opportunities for cultural connections.

Online literature has received wide attention in China as a result of its international popularity. The originally free literary and translation practices are now tasked with implementing cultural diplomacy policies under the macro context of 'Chinese Culture Going Out'. The government's interest in the potential of online literature as a cultural ambassador further complicates the tensions between governmental and non-governmental endeavors in cultural diplomacy, between the creativity of culture and the instrumental application of culture and, last but not least, between the export of high culture and popular culture. Unlike high culture, which requires funding by some kind of governmental institution in order to develop and survive, popular culture is generally driven by private or business interests, beyond governmental influence. Therefore, the translation of online literature seems to be *in* the national interest while going *beyond* the national interest. According to Taro Aso, former Foreign Minister of Japan, 'Any kind of cultural diplomacy that fails to take advantage of pop culture is not really worthy of being called cultural diplomacy' (as quoted in Iwabuchi 2015, 424). Japan's pop-culture and South Korea's Korean Wave have been marshalled in those countries'

cultural diplomacy and have proved to be attractive to international audiences. The translation of Chinese online literature again speaks of the power of popular culture to reach the general public. However, Iwabuchi (2015) questions whether pop-culture diplomacy could 'achieve a crucial object of cultural diplomacy, that is, the promotion of genuine international cultural exchange'. As the current objective of China's cultural diplomacy is to encourage expansion and creativity, and to increase the international visibility of Chinese culture and the counter-cultural deficit between China and America, the translation of online literature has, to some extent, served this purpose.

6. Conclusion

Though the Chinese government has long upheld the principle of *neiwai youbie* (different approaches to domestic and foreign propaganda work), the close relationship between the concept of soft power and the Chinese propaganda system has constrained the potential effect of translation as a form of cultural diplomacy and undermined its credibility as a cultural resource. Early institutionalized translation projects showed that controlling what to translate, how to translate and who to translate under a unifying national narrative would produce counteractive influences. The concept of *guojia fanyi shijian* (literally, national translation practice) emphasizes the dominant role of the state in national translation programs, but the question is whether or how they can achieve their purported purpose of serving national interests. For example, translations of China's 'Red Classics' – 'historical tales of the exploits of the Communist heroes of the revolutionary war, and tales of the struggle to transform Chinese society through the socialist reform of agriculture and industry'(Roberts and Li 2017, vii)––are hibernating in libraries and fail to translate into cultural soft power.

The different ideologies and needs of target audiences inevitably disrupt supposedly linear, direct and untroubled communication between cultural diplomacy providers and their audiences. The source culture's national interests are not reconciled with the interests of other agents, including but not limited to the audience. Cultural diplomacy provides a source of funding through which cultural practitioners can continue their work, but its propagandist nature is likely to cause suspicion among target audiences. Reliance on local agents is therefore indispensable to the attainment of soft power through cultural means. The changes from external propaganda to external communication – from top-down homogenizing practices to more heterogeneous practices, from sole patronage to joint patronage in sponsoring translation, and from source-culture oriented to 'borrowing a boat to go to sea' – herald new and promising directions in China's cultural diplomacy and translation.

Batchelor's (2020) three stages for translation to become or produce soft power need to rely on more diverse cultural resources and transnational agents. The newly discovered resource––online literature––has attracted the attention of the Chinese government, academia, publishers, media companies and AI industries. AI translation is applied to keep up with the updating of the source text. Online literature translation has received increasing 'national concern', but the Chinese government's efforts to formulate cultural policy in supporting the international development of online literature is still nascent. Pop-culture diplomacy needs to broaden its aspirations if its full potential is to be exploited (Iwabuchi 2015). For example, how can online literature reach beyond the individualized pleasure of media consumption? For translation to be a more effective form of cultural diplomacy, the so-called foreign propaganda work needs to extend beyond serving domestic political objectives and reinvent the principle of *neiwai youbie* (different approaches to domestic and foreign propaganda work). The instrumental and monolithic cultural means motivated by the state should be complemented and enriched by free, creative and pluralistic cultural resources adopted by multiple agents during international cultural exchanges.

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Scholarship diplomacy and India's Neighbourhood First strategy

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ABSTRACT
'Scholarship diplomacy' refers to a country's diplomatic strategy of offering scholarships to and sponsoring the studies of overseas students to improve bilateral relations, promote academic exchange, or support the educational and academic development of the target country. Compared with traditional diplomacy, scholarship diplomacy is more effective in engaging foreign publics and is less confrontational. It is part of the trend of global education and is receiving increasing attention from academics and policymakers. Scholarship diplomacy aimed at neighbouring countries (Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, etc.) is an important component of contemporary India's cultural diplomacy. The region-focused feature of Indian scholarship diplomacy is notable and deserves in-depth analysis. This paper regards India's scholarship diplomacy as a strategy to counter China's growing influence in South Asia and points out that this practice serves India's 'Neighbourhood First' strategy by 1) exporting its cultural values; 2) attracting foreign citizens and promoting people-to-people cultural exchange; 3) and strengthening geographical ties with South Asian countries. Ultimately, all of these activities serve India's interests. This paper also discusses the practical and theoretical underpinnings of Indian scholarship diplomacy and lays a foundation for future research on the country's cultural diplomacy.

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1. Introduction

Scholarship diplomacy is a critical form of cultural diplomacy. With the development of its national power and demand for international status, India has placed a growing emphasis on educational aid as a diplomatic strategy, including scholarship programmes (Goyal 2018). The earliest practice of Indian cultural diplomacy dates back to the 1950s, and India's scholarship diplomacy appeared in the 1990s. Since the beginning of the 21st century, India's scholarship aid programmes have greatly expanded in terms of both scope and expenditure. In 2019, 3,930 students received scholarships from the Indian government (Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) 2019). India pays attention not only to the quantity of educational aid but also to its effectiveness and quality. Higher education (undergraduate, graduate), professional education (engineering, pharmacy, management), and cultural exchange are the main channels of its scholarship diplomacy.

Notably, in terms of the number of scholarships provided by India, neighbouring countries receive the vast majority. As India, especially the Modi government, treats surrounding countries as its 'backyard' in terms of strategic significance (Tourangbam 2019), this phenomenon is worth exploring. This paper argues that India's scholarship diplomacy is a strategy to deal with China's growing regional influence and a soft power tool to engage overseas publics, allowing India to

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maintain its influence in South Asia and other recipient countries. Through scholarship diplomacy, India aims to build closer ties with citizens overseas and advance its 'Neighbourhood First' strategy.

In the following analysis, this paper first defines cultural diplomacy and scholarship diplomacy, then briefly reviews the history of Indian cultural diplomacy. Next, it discusses the background and basic characteristics of Indian scholarship diplomacy, with a focus on India's neighbourhood policy and China's threat. Finally, it expounds on three objectives of Indian scholarship diplomacy. First, scholarship programmes help India to export its values and cultural traditions and build an image of a responsible great power. Second, international students are important targets of India's scholarship programme, with the aim of breaking down stereotypes and reducing hostility towards India. Third, India's scholarships to its South Asian neighbours have helped to increase its geopolitical influence and promote regional integration.

2. Cultural diplomacy and scholarship diplomacy: definitions

2.1. Cultural diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is soft power diplomacy. Instead of relying on coercive power or economic sanctions, countries achieve cultural diplomatic goals through attraction and agenda-setting (Nye 2005). Cultural diplomacy is the process of establishing and promoting foreign relations through the deployment of culture, education and art. It is more flexible and subtle than the imposition of views, and it emphasises the importance of shaping others' perceptions of the attractiveness of one's own culture. The ultimate goal is to establish a positive national image, protect a country's perceived cultural sovereignty and help the country realise political, economic and diplomatic goals (Mark 2008). Cultural diplomacy targets overseas governments, elites and the public, and sometimes also domestic citizens (Huijgh 2011). These characteristics distinguish cultural diplomacy from public policy, international cultural relations and political propaganda (Rivera 2015).

Many examples of cultural diplomacy emerged during the Cold War in the United States and the Soviet Union. In the last decade, many Asian countries, such as China, India, and Japan, have realised the importance of cultural diplomacy (Hall 2012). Countries' competition to carry out cultural diplomacy shows that soft power has become a new field of competition: through cultural diplomacy projects, a country aims to use soft power to achieve diplomatic, political and economic goals and compete with other countries in terms of cultural influence.

2.2. Scholarship diplomacy

As part of cultural diplomacy and a form of cultural exchange, scholarship diplomacy is intended to support education in the recipient countries, seeking to promote local economic and human resource development. Scholarship diplomacy is also seen as a vital way to build soft power. The United States' Fulbright Program is a typical example. This international educational funding programme originated as part of the cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy strategies of the United States after WWII, helping to promote the American value system (Bettie 2015).

The adoption of scholarship diplomacy as a strategy is related to the development of international education and changing perceptions of education. First, education has gained increasing significance as its contribution to modernisation and economic progress is recognised all over the world (Leslie and Brinkman 1988; Wojciuk, Michałek, and Stormowska 2015). Education is known to stimulate creativity and personal potential and enhance a society's vitality. As a result, support for education has increased since the 1970s and 1980s (Cheng and Chan 2015). Second, with the internationalisation of education and the breakdown of language barriers, students today have a variety of ways to gain a better education and achieve personal improvement (Torres 2008). In addition to governments and schools, multilateral platforms and international organisations provide

opportunities for students to obtain an education abroad. These factors have increased the prevalence of international scholarships (Brown and Lauder 2006).

Scholarship diplomacy has unique advantages. Scholarship programmes reflect a country's sense of responsibility and help the country to maintain close ties with foreign citizens and elites. Scholarships also have the advantage of being non-confrontational and neutral. Unlike other forms of foreign aid, scholarship diplomacy does not involve direct investment in local construction; nor does it encourage other countries to worry about the donor's 'power projection'. These characteristics provide a sufficient rationale for the implementation of scholarship diplomacy.

3. India's cultural diplomacy: a soft power strategy since the 1950s

India's scholarship diplomacy indicates that the country is aware of the role of soft power as an important strategy for achieving diplomatic objectives and increase its regional influence. Indeed, reliance on soft power is a vital logic behind India's scholarship diplomacy, constituting the background of India's scholarship diplomacy. This is even more persuasive if we look at the diverse cultural diplomatic projects and culture-based ways of engaging the diaspora launched by the Indian government in recent years. The worldwide International Yoga Day initiated by Narendra Modi in 2015 allows India to promote its peace-based narrative and build a national image of a spiritual society with distinguished moral merits.

India has long recognised the role of soft power in its foreign policy, and there is a consistency to be found in India's cultural diplomacy over time. The first dimension of this consistency lies in India's continuous effort to create institutions and mechanisms for cultural diplomacy. In 1950, the ICCR was established to help India engage culturally with other countries. Early forms of cultural diplomacy included establishing libraries, promoting intellectual exchange, sending Indian artworks and exhibits abroad, and participating in multilateral cultural events such as the Afro-Asian Film Festival and the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference.

> I have always looked forward to furthering the cause of India's cultural association, not only with the neighbouring countries to the East and West but with the wide world outside . . . I sincerely hope that the formation of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations will lead to a better understanding between our people and the peoples of other countries. Jawaharlal Nehru, cited in Simon Mark, *A Comparative Study of the Cultural Diplomacy of Canada, New Zealand and India* (2008, 185).

Upon its establishment, the ICCR was a sub-unit under the Ministry of Education; it was later incorporated into the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), reflecting a strengthening of the relationship between cultural relations and foreign policy. In the 1970s, Indira Gandhi realised the need to export India's image and began to send cultural ambassadors and set up cultural centres overseas (Isar 2017). In the 1980s, the Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts was established to encourage cultural exchange, and a data bank of 'arts, humanities and cultural heritage' was constructed (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1987). It is due to these projects that Kugiel (2012, 354) argued that 'if the term had been used during the Cold War period, India could have been considered among the greatest soft powers in the world'.

After the 1990s, India's cultural diplomacy continued to evolve and many new mechanisms were introduced. Specifically, it emphasised the role of cultural diplomacy for economic purposes and engaging the diaspora, and the target of its cultural projects expanded from elites to foreign publics (Kugiel 2012). It is in this context that modern India actively launched its scholarship programme diplomacy, a continuation of its long-term efforts to build a cultural diplomacy mechanism.

Scholarship diplomacy is in line with the direction of India's overall foreign policy. This is evident from the creation of a Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children in 2006–2007, as the diaspora has been a central target for Indian foreign policy and domestic politics in the last decade or so (Hall 2016). As the following analysis shows, scholarship diplomacy is also part of India's regional policy,

the Neighbourhood First strategy. By exporting its culture and values, reaching out to overseas citizens, and promoting geographical connectivity, India has been able to increase its contact with neighbouring countries and counterbalance China's influence in South Asia.

4. India's scholarship diplomacy: Neighbourhood First

India has been providing scholarships since the 1990s. Neighbouring countries are the focal targets of its scholarship diplomacy, receiving the most assistance and the most diversified aid projects. Of the 24 ICCR scholarship programmes in 2018–2019 (see Table 1), 10 targeted specific South Asian countries and 6 were transnational or general scholarship schemes whose recipients included South Asian countries. These figures surpass those of Southeast Asia and Africa, which benefit from India's regular scholarship schemes on a smaller scale.

This focus on neighbouring countries deserves special attention. Unlike other global cultural diplomacy programmes in India, including cultural exhibitions, art performances, International Yoga Day, and the 'Incredible India' campaign, the target of India's scholarship diplomacy is consistent and area-focused. Given India's view of South Asia as its traditional sphere of influence, New Delhi's attention to its neighbours is unsurprising. Some scholars have linked India's aid to South Asian countries to its geopolitical purposes. India's assistance to Afghanistan, for example, has been interpreted by some as a counterweight to the influence of Pakistan (based on the principle that 'the enemy of one's enemy is one's friend'), and by others as part of India's strategy to achieve a balance in South Asia (Paliwal 2017).

As the most populated and powerful country in South Asia, India has long taken the role of a regional hegemon (Prys 2013). The India–Bhutan Friendship Treaty, signed on 8 August 1949, kick-started India's long-term control over its neighbour's foreign policy; 'Bhutan allows India to guide its external affairs' was set as a rule. This is only one example. As Basrur and de Estrada (2017) argued, during the Cold War, India feared interference by external powers in South Asia. India's regional hegemony peaked in the 1980s, exemplified by its military interventions in Sri Lanka and its role in the formation of Bangladesh. Since the end of the Cold War, however, India's regional role has changed in many ways. It was at this time that the Neighbourhood First policy and then the scholarship diplomacy policy emerged. Here it is necessary to look back on scholarship diplomacy in the context of the history of India's Neighbourhood First strategy.

Table 1. 2018–2019 ICCR scholarship schemes (part).

Country	Name of Scholarship Scheme	No. of Annual Seats
Afghanistan	1) Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghanistan	1) 1,000
	2) Scholarship Scheme for Children of Afghan Martyrs	2) 500
Bangladesh	1) Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme*	1) 200
	2)Border Guard Scholarship Scheme	2) 20
Bhutan	Aid to Bhutan Scholarship Scheme	20
Maldives	Aid to Maldives Scholarship Scheme	20
Nepal	Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme	200
Sri Lanka	1) Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme for Sri Lanka*	1) 120
	2) Maulana Azad Scholarship Scheme	2) 50
	3) Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship Scheme	3) 25
Transnational/general Scholarship Schemes that include South Asian countries	1) SAARC Scholarship Scheme	1) 20
	2) Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme*	2) 26
	3) AYUSH Scholarship Scheme for BIMSTEC Countries	3) 30
	4) General Scholarship Scheme	4) 499
	5) CEP/EEP Scholarship Scheme*	5) 150
	6) ICCR Scholarship Scheme for Indian Music and Dance*	6) not fixed

Data collected from ICCR annual report. * indicates schemes initiated by the ICCR; the others are administered by the ICCR on behalf of the MEA.

4.1. Neighbourhood first 1.0 and adjustments to India's Neighbourhood strategies

In the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, India had to make pragmatic adjustments to its foreign policy (Rizvi 1993). Due to considerations of economic development and national security, India enacted its 'Look East' and Neighbourhood First policies. It 'offered more concessions to its smaller neighbours in South Asia' (Kugiel 2012, 359), emphasising economic interconnection, negotiation and diversified forms of communication. This represented a huge adjustment to the 'Indira doctrine' of the 1980s (Hagerty 1991). During this period, India also launched several bilateral educational cooperation projects, although limited in number and scale, such as the B. P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation, which was set up in 1991.

From 2000, India's foreign policy gradually took on the feature of multi-alignment (Hall 2016). India actively reached out to South Asian, Southeast Asian, and even East Asian countries, coordinated Indo–US relations, established strategic partnerships with multiple countries, and joined multilateral cooperation organisations. In these ways, it began to defend its strategic independence and fulfil its strategic needs. In this context, India started to actively engage in scholarship diplomacy, providing an increasing number of scholarships.

From 2000 to 2012, India provided numerous scholarships to Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan and other countries (Press Trust of India 2013, 2014; Khan 2012). In 2001, India began offering scholarships to Afghan students to encourage bilateral ties and regional stability. The core programme at this time was the Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals, which by 2011–2012 was providing Afghan students with 500–600 seats each year. In 2012, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs announced that the project quota would be increased to 1,000 people, with a total expected expenditure of Rs 495 crore from 2013 to 2021 (Kumar 2015). Notably, India and Pakistan simultaneously offered educational aid and scholarships to the post-Taliban Afghanistan, indicating that scholarships had become a strategy for geopolitical competition.

At the same time, India launched an ICCR scholarship to Bhutan to support its 10th and 11th Five-Year Plans (2002–2007; 2008–2013). Nepal, which bears cultural similarities to India, is another significant recipient of Indian educational aid. For example, 12 Nepalese students won the first batch of Indian Technical Cooperation scholarships in 2000. In the next year, the Golden Jubilee Scholarship was established to mark the 50-year anniversary of India–Nepal Economic Cooperation. The scheme has since supported 50 Nepali students each year. As a *Press Trust of India* article reported in 2013, 'over 1,900 Nepalese students have been available from Indian scholarships'.

During this phase, scholarship diplomacy helped India to assert its regional influence against the rising influence of Pakistan (and China). This friendly, benevolent diplomatic practice also helped it to establish a new type of regional authority, distinct from that of traditional Western powers. Scholarship diplomacy differs in nature from economic, political or military aid; it is a neutral and benign form of public goods provision. The advent of scholarship diplomacy to some extent helped India to establish its credibility in the international community. For example, India performed well in the UN peacekeeping missions by sending substantial numbers of soldiers, which, as India expected, contributed to its efforts to join the UN Security Council as a permanent member. Similarly, India's scholarship assistance (and other forms of assistance) in the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan not only served geopolitical purposes but also enhanced India's international image and led the country to aspire to a higher global status.

4.2. 2014 to the present: Modi's Neighbourhood First 2.0

In 2014, Narendra Modi adjusted India's neighbourhood diplomacy strategy, putting forward Neighbourhood First 2.0 (Kumar and Sharma 2015). After taking office, Modi selected Bhutan as the first country for his official visit, and invited the leaders of SAARC member countries to attend his inauguration ceremony as prime minister. This indicates that at this time, India considered South Asia to be its primary diplomatic target. 'With the background of Gujarat's development model and

inspiration from the Gujral Doctrine, Narendra Modi has embarked on a pragmatic and proactive neighbourhood policy' (Sahoo 2016, 66). The prime minister advocated stronger bilateral relations and more active multilateral relations and sought to protect India's regional primacy (Sidhu and Godbole 2015). Based on its 'sub-regions' (Pant and Yhome 2020), India hoped to establish a peaceful, stable, economically interconnected and India-led regional order (Bajpaee 2016).

The Modi government's neighbourhood diplomacy and foreign policy have several objectives, according to Chandra (2017): to gain the status of 'supremacy' in South Asia, to make use of the strength of major powers to aid India's development, to counterbalance China's influence, and to defend India's national interest. In this context, India has increased the number of scholarships it provides to neighbouring countries. In 2014, India increased the number of Ambassador's Scholarship and Nehru Wangchuck Scholarship places available to Nepal, and the latter's annual funding increased from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore. In the same year, India increased the overall number of scholarships available for Nepalese students to around 3,000, seeking to support Nepal's development. In 2015, Modi announced the launch of the Scholarship Scheme for Children of Afghan Martyrs to 'lay the foundations of future, not light the flame of conflict; to rebuild lives and not to destroy a nation' (Ministry of External Affairs 2015). In addition, with the help of multilateral platforms such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement (BBIN-MVA), Modi successively implemented the South Asian University Scholarship programme. He also launched scholarships for countries participating in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). In 2019, students from India's neighbouring countries represented 49% of all international students in India (Hindustan Times, 2020).

Under Modi's Neighbourhood First 2.0 policy, the threat posed by China is one of the biggest considerations. Therefore, when analysing the motives for India's scholarship diplomacy, one cannot ignore the pressure that India feels from its powerful competitor, China. In 2013, China announced the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road projects, through which it has since provided material aid, infrastructure development, and direct investment for South Asia (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.). It has also launched a series of scholarship programmes for a large number of countries, covering Africa, South Asia, and other regions. These projects are part of China's vision of a new form of international governance, reflecting its status as a responsible leading power. According to this vision, China is responsible for promoting 'win-win' outcomes with other countries through foreign aid and encouraging cultural communication and engagement. However, these projects pose a great challenge to India's influence in South Asia, and are thus of great concern to India.

China began providing human resource training and educational assistance in the 1980s. In 2004, China began building Confucius Institutes around the world, contributing to 'Mandarin fever'. Now, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China's scholarship programmes are as attractive as its previous cultural diplomatic programmes were. This year, a 'worrying trend' was highlighted by the Indian newspaper *Hindustan Times*: China now attracts as many students from South Asia as India does, even when excluding Pakistan. In the last six years, the number of students studying in China from India's neighbouring countries has increased by 176%. With regret, *Hindustan Times* concluded that China has become the new hub for South Asian students.

The impact of China on India's scholarship programs is twofold. On the one hand, India's traditional influence in South Asia has been challenged. India possesses abundant soft power and human resources, along with a growing economy. Its geographical location and historical and cultural ties with its South Asian neighbours give it a natural advantage in conducting cultural diplomacy and enhancing its influence in South Asia. There is a sense of cultural and religious affinity between India and countries like Bhutan and Nepal, based on Hindu culture. However, this piety, which kept Bhutan subservient to India's foreign policy 'without complaint' for a long time, is now wearing thin (Stobdan 2017). In this context, China's cultural diplomacy and construction assistance

to India's surrounding countries are undoubtedly a great threat. India is no longer the only country that wields substantial influence over South Asian countries.

On the other hand, by alleviating concerns and building mutual understanding through scholarship programmes, China's activities may prompt India to invest more in scholarship diplomacy in South Asia. One of the goals of the BRI is to promote friendly exchange and people-to-people contact, according to the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This is partly based on the belief that people-to-people exchange can help dispel misunderstandings of and misgivings about China among overseas citizens and facilitate the smooth implementation of China's overseas projects. As such, China has promoted cooperation on research on the history of the ancient Silk Road, heritage research, tourism, and scholarships.

This is an important and inspiring message for India. India's dominant role in South Asia has been increasingly questioned. Pakistan's hostility, other neighbours' dissatisfaction with unequal diplomatic relations, and China's development of 'win-win' and 'equal' friendly relations with these countries have all made India increasingly nervous. In the context of Sino–Indian competition in South Asia, India's carrot-and-stick approach to its neighbours (Bhutan, Nepal) has weakened their once trusting relationships (Stobdan 2017). Even more worryingly for India, as Stobdan suggests, anti-India voices are rising among the people in neighbouring countries. Given this background, to win the public's support and solve its 'image problem in the "near abroad"' (Hall 2012, 1107), India has implemented scholarship diplomacy as a regional strategy.

For example, in response to the BRI, the Modi government launched India's version of the BRI, the Project Mausam. The project aimed to rebuild ties between India and countries in the Indian Ocean region through cultural events, heritage dialogue, and archaeological cooperation. The project does not seem to have made much progress, but it reflects India's alertness to and lessons learned from Chinese cultural diplomacy. The project is also part of India's efforts to leverage history and culture to enhance its regional influence.

India's scholarships are not only a form of development aid and a way to achieve geopolitical goals; they also play a role in reshaping bilateral diplomatic relations. In recent years, due to India's interference in Nepal's internal affairs and the 2015 blockade, India–Nepal relations have shown fluctuation, including deterioration (Baral 2017). Since 2018, Modi has made several visits to Nepal to expand the two countries' cooperation on culture and education and repair their relations. In 2019, he announced that the two countries would reach an agreement on boosting five areas of cooperation: cultural traditions, trade, tourism, technology and transportation. Scholarship diplomacy is expected to contribute to this revival of bilateral relations.

4.3. Brief summary

Evidently, scholarship diplomacy has become an essential part of modern India's neighbourhood diplomacy. In summary, the scholarships offered by India to its neighbours can be broadly classified into 1) multilateral scholarships offered to South Asian countries; 2) bilateral scholarships offered for memorial purposes or to promote bilateral relations; and 3) bilateral scholarships provided as part of an aid project or as an area of bilateral cooperation, which often appear along with other forms of aid or bilateral exchanges. In addition to these three categories, some international talent programmes do not fall under the administration of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Scholarship, which originated from the 1964 ITEC Scheme.

India's scholarship schemes cover a wide range of disciplines and are culturally and linguistically diverse, ranging from the arts to technology and traditional medicine. Although scholarships in different disciplines all strengthen India's national image as a country with a splendid culture and fast-developing IT industry, they have distinct arrangements, targets and impacts. For instance, scholarships related to Hindu culture, whether in art, language or medicine, help India recover its trust of and sense of brotherhood with Bhutan and Nepal. Scholarships relevant to modern

technology serve different aims: they disseminate a set of standards to India's neighbouring countries and may eventually facilitate regional collaboration, as discussed in the following section.

India's scholarship diplomacy has the following characteristics. 1) It emerged in the 1990s on a very small scale, and has expanded in the 21st century, especially under the Modi government. 2) It appears on critical occasions, such as at times of conflict or bilateral tension and during regional conferences. 3) It is consistent with the development of India's foreign policy and regional strategies and with the evolution of the Neighbourhood First strategy. 4) Its development is a way for India to maintain and consolidate its regional influence and counterbalance China's rising influence.

5. Three major effects of India's scholarship diplomacy

Having understood the aspirations that underlie India's scholarship diplomacy, it is now important to examine the major effects of this diplomacy. The following analysis points out that scholarship diplomacy works in three ways – value exportation (ideology), citizen diplomacy (participants) and geo-connectivity (geopolitics) – to assist India in achieving its Neighbourhood First strategic goals. The three dimensions explain the rationale for and necessity of Indian scholarship diplomacy.

The advantages provided by scholarship programmes in international relations have made such programmes a topic of increasing interest in the literature. Researchers investigating the mechanisms of scholarship diplomacy have taken various perspectives. First, from an ideological Nye (1990, 2005) and Bu (1999) studied the cultural diplomatic practice of the US during the Cold War and pointed out that education is a way to transmit values and ideologies, recognising the role of universities and other educational institutions in cultural diplomacy. Educationists (Zeidler 1992) and political scientists (Bowers 1980; Sundar 2004) exploring the national education system and political ideology transmission have revealed the mechanisms of the impact of scholarship diplomacy. Second, from the perspective of participants, scholars have focused on scholarship recipients as strategic resources that can be mobilised. For example, Bislev (2017) put forward the concept of 'student-to-student diplomacy' based on a case study of China. Bettie (2019) explored how the American Fulbright Program has transformed young people's lives and promoted a better understanding. Byrne and Hall (2013, 425) analysed how international education in Australia has become a public diplomacy strategy to mobilise students, describing educational diplomacy as 'a vehicle that enables and fosters authentic engagement, exchange and collaboration at the individual, institutional and community levels'.

Furthermore, geopolitics offers a vital perspective on the effects of scholarship diplomacy in regional strategies. Geopolitical theories relating to geographical location, neighbour–neighbour relations and regional cooperation (Flint and Zhu 2019; Peters 2020) explain how neighbourhood-centred scholarship diplomacy serves India's Neighbourhood First Policy and South Asian strategy.

5.1. Exporting culture and values: building national image and promoting value system

Scholarship diplomacy is a process by which a country builds its image and exports its values through academic pursuits and funding (Yang 2010). According to constructivist theory, only when a country adapts to the norms of international society will it be accepted by others and have the opportunity to enhance its international status (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001). In India's neighbourhood diplomacy, having the international image of a 'bully' would be an obstacle to the construction of a stable and cooperative regional environment. By allocating its budget to scholarships, India has built an image of itself as a responsible power with a strong economy and advanced education, hoping to win recognition from outside. In addition, through the social function of education, namely spreading values, India can reproduce its cultural values and norms, thus gaining a greater voice and influence in South Asia and globally.

More specifically, in its implementation of scholarship diplomacy, India has built two main images of itself through media coverage, student experience and project design. First, it has sought to define

itself as a responsible major power. This is predicated on the widespread assumption that foreign aid provided by major powers is the embodiment of humanitarian responsibility. It is not only a reciprocal relationship but also an ethical practice (Hattori 2003). By building a public image of itself as a responsible power by providing aid, India can ease the fears of neighbouring states. Second, India has sought to present itself as economically, educationally and technologically strong, and as an ideal destination for study, investment and tourism. By providing opportunities for international students to study and live in India, India hopes to showcase its national power such that both students and foreign citizens recognise its potential. Overseas investors can also learn about economic opportunities in India, which is particularly important because India regards attracting foreign investment as an important means of economic development (Bajpaee 2016).

In particular, India is concerned about logistical support for image building. It has implemented a convenient system for online application, medical reimbursement and housing assistance for ICCR scholarship recipients, which reflects its determination to showcase its IT affordances, economic development and medical capability. The efficiency and convenience of the application service are expected to increase students' satisfaction with and evaluation of India, and therefore enhance the attractiveness of the country (Wojciuk, Michałek, and Stormowska 2015).

Furthermore, education helps India to reproduce its culture and values. By providing education to international students, a country can export its hegemonic ideology and value systems to the world. The authorities (e.g. the government, NGOs, and intellectuals) transform the national ideology into globally accepted 'common sense'. This not only helps the country to maintain its status but also enhances its soft power and voice (Khoja-Moolji 2015). Joseph Nye (2005) pointed out that the educational and cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War played an important role in strengthening the former's soft power. While studying in the United States, some Soviet scholars became extremely impressed by its values and began to advocate liberalism. Likewise, India's scholarship programmes (such as the ICCR's annual winter camp) can export traditional Indian values, including peace, morality, and the superiority of Hindu culture. They can also advertise India's model of economic development and democratic achievement.

5.2. Citizen diplomacy: breaking down prejudice and transforming students into Ambassadors

Students are both influential participants in scholarship diplomacy and the objects of citizen diplomacy. Scholarships construct a bridge for civil exchange and play a role in citizen diplomacy by financially supporting international students. As a form of public diplomacy, 'citizen diplomacy' refers to a country's effort to attract foreign elites, citizens and civil society through listening, advocacy, culture and exchange (McConachie 2019). As a practice of cultural diplomacy aimed at foreign citizens, India's provision of scholarships for neighbouring countries can promote bilateral relations and break down prejudice. By turning international students into strategic resources, India's scholarship programme aims to train 'future ambassadors', laying the groundwork for positive diplomatic relations in the future.

India considers cooperation with like-minded and emotionally connected neighbours to be a key factor in foreign relations. However, a lack of interpersonal exchange and mutual distrust pose obstacles to its diplomatic strategy (Pant and Yhome 2020). Scholarships are an effective approach to removing barriers, generating goodwill and encouraging progress in bilateral affairs. India believes that 'education and cultures are the medium through which people to people contact would be established', and that they are beneficial for the 'revival of brotherhood roots' (ICCR 2019).

So-called 'people-to-people' exchange in India occurs not only between elites but also between the state and citizens and between citizens and citizens. This is reflected in the activities of India's Public Diplomacy Division, which was established in 2006 to build bridges between Indians and

people overseas. Currently, the Public Diplomacy Division is one of the departments responsible for coordinating scholarship programmes, along with the ICCR and the Ministry of Education.

To attract citizens from surrounding countries, India places emphasis on cultural similarities and offers special scholarship programmes. These include the AYUSH Scholarship Scheme and scholarships in Indian performing arts, music, dance and Sanskrit literature for South Asian countries. It is worth noting that the AYUSH/Indian culture scholarships have special meaning for the pro-Hindu Modi government. For example, Prime Minister Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party have tried to mobilise Nepalese Hindus to reshape this bilateral relationship, but their efforts have been impeded by the secularist policies of Nepalese leaders (Ojha 2015). In this case, AYUSH and Indian culture scholarships export Indian/Hindu traditions, emphasise the common cultural identity of the two countries and mobilise overseas citizens. Therefore, through its emotionally evocative cultural heritage, India aims to revitalise its cultural ties with other South Asian countries, re-awaken shared historical memories and promote bilateral friendships as well as economic ties (Khan 2019).

As beneficiaries of scholarships, students are a substantial soft power asset. Joseph Nye Jr (2004) pointed out that if talented international students choose other destinations for education, countries will miss out on the opportunity to gain soft power. Outstanding students who receive financial aid in India may take government positions when they return to their home countries, thus playing a pivotal role in domestic politics and diplomacy. Their experience of studying abroad and familiarity with India will have an impact on their home countries' decision-making (Amirbek and Ydyrys 2014). The critical factor behind this mechanism is the academic or social elitism of international students. Selecting students through exams and qualifications is also a process of choosing 'strategic assets' for the country. As 'ambassadors', students are familiar with the culture and society of both India and their home countries. Their objective introduction to the host country helps to break down stereotypes and prejudices held by the origin country.

5.3. Geo-connectivity: geopolitical influence and regional integration

In addition to analysing cultural diplomacy from a constructivist perspective, with reference to values, image, and norms, geopolitics must be considered when exploring scholarship diplomacy. Indeed, as the following arguments suggest, scholarship diplomacy helps to strengthen India's geopolitical power by enhancing regional connectivity. At the same time, bilateral and multilateral scholarship diplomacy helps to promote regional integration.

First, scholarship increases India's geopolitical influence by promoting transnational person-to-person communication and transportation 'connectivity'. Geopolitical theorists (Carter 2005; Khanna 2018) have argued that a country's geographical influence is correlated with its connectivity, i.e. whether the country's citizens, resources and governments can connect and interact with those of other countries. The criteria for judging connectivity include transportation convenience, person-to-person connectivity and economic interaction (Flint and Zhu 2019). India has long emphasised the importance of enhancing its transportation, interpersonal and cultural connectivity with neighbours (Roy-Chaudhury 2018). Early attempts to improve connectivity between India and its neighbours included the Asian Highway Network, which was built in the 1950s and revived in the 1990s. Other recent examples include the 'BBIN road connectivity pact', an agreement on the BBIN cross-border movement of passenger buses and private vehicles and the 'India, Myanmar, Thailand trilateral highway project'. Today, scholarship diplomacy provides opportunities for person-to-person communication, opens up routes for travel, and promotes convenience. Thus, it can help India to enhance its connectivity and geopolitical influence and maintain its regional dominance (Pant and Yhome 2020). As a cultural exchange programme, scholarships are a relatively neutral form of development aid (Wojciuk, Michałek, and Stormowska 2015). Compared with economic, infrastructure and military aid, scholarships are less likely to raise concerns about India's growing regional influence.

Second, given that interpersonal communication is a key indicator of regional integration (Smith 2014), scholarship diplomacy facilitates South Asian collaboration and coordinated development. The degree of regional integration in South Asia is still low, and its economic and trade connectivity lags behind that of other regional cooperation organisations. The implementation of sub-regional cooperation projects such as BBIN-MVA has also encountered considerable resistance. The reasons for this resistance include 'asymmetrical power relations', unbalanced trade, tariff barriers and mistrust of India's dominant status (Chaturvedi, Hussain, and Nag 2015). More specifically, in 2012–13, while India's exports to Nepal were valued at 4.17 billion dollars, Nepal's exports to India were valued at 579.8 million dollars. In 1996, the South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ) was put forward to promote regional social and economic development. 'However, the SAGQ proposal did not go down well with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Pakistan saw this move as an Indian proxy to alienate it within SAARC' (Kumar 2017, 2). In this context, scholarship programmes help India to promote interpersonal mobility and academic exchange and build mutual trust to counter the obstacles of regional integration. Regional co-development relies on the efforts and resources of every member and requires consistent technical standards and policies (Kumar 2017). India's education aid serves as a joint training program that allows South Asian countries to master standardised technology and achieve policy unification.

6. Discussion

6.1. Evaluation of Indian scholarship diplomacy

Similar to that of other forms of cultural diplomacy, the effectiveness of scholarship diplomacy is hard to evaluate. The difficulty comes from the vagueness of the outcomes of cultural activities and the lack of criteria for assessing their effectiveness. Nevertheless, some evidence of success in India's scholarship diplomacy has been obtained. In an ABC News survey, 74% of Afghan respondents had a favourable view of India, which is at least partly attributable to India's aid and scholarships to Afghanistan (Hall 2012). ANI News, a UK-based Indian international media outlet, has reported positive views of India held by many international students from neighbouring countries in recent five years.

However, India's scholarship diplomacy has many limitations that have thus far prevented it from achieving its objectives. First, while the number of colleges and universities in India is large, very few are ranked among the top in the world. As Wu and Yang (2020) pointed out, China currently has 22 colleges and universities ranked among the top 500 in the world, while India has only nine, and China's investment in educational research and development is three times higher than India's. Insufficient investment in education research and poor management also reduce students' evaluation of studying in India. Hence, more overseas students wish to study in China than in India. It also appears that Indian students are far more willing to study in China than Chinese students are to study in India. Between 2012 and 2016, the number of Chinese students studying in India decreased from 682 to 191, while the number of Indian students studying in China remained above 10,000 (Wu and Yang 2020).

Second, the number of scholarships offered by India is still limited, and scholarship diplomacy alone is insufficient to achieve mutual understanding between people in India and overseas or promote regional integration. In addition to scholarships, India should find ways to provide direct communication channels for a large audience to engage in cultural diplomacy. Last but not least, the neutrality of India's scholarship diplomacy has been questioned. When ICCR officials advocate their scholarship programmes, they describe India as a 'cultural exchange centre' that is inclusive of all cultures, and represent the scholarship programme as ideologically neutral. However, as the example of China shows, scholarship diplomacy is increasingly perceived as a new form of cultural expansion that is questioned by other countries. Another barrier to the neutrality of India's scholarship diplomacy is the connection of its scholarships to the increase in Hindu nationalist schemes in

India. There is empirical evidence of this connection. One of the ICCR's responsibilities is to organise a trip by international students to Haridwar and Rishikesh, which are famous Hindu sacred sites. Furthermore, students visit Patanjali Ayurved Company as a key part of this visit, and Swami Ramdev, the co-founder of Patanjali and a renowned yoga guru, is a close ally of Prime Minister Modi and a contributor to Hindu nationalism. Together, these factors limit the effectiveness of India's scholarship diplomacy.

6.2. Guidance for policymakers

India's scholarship diplomacy, despite its limitations, offers several recommendations for policymakers. The first is to tailor cultural diplomacy to local conditions. The various examples of Indian citizen diplomacy prove that identifying the characteristics of the target is the key to successful cultural diplomacy. It is necessary to learn about the cultures of other countries, find the similarities between them, and design programmes that appeal to them. For instance, modern India has undertaken different projects of cultural diplomacy with different countries. For example, it is committed to exporting scholarship diplomacy and educational assistance to South Asian neighbours, while for Europe and America, it prefers to export various high-quality cultural products (e.g. yoga, song and dance, films). As previously discussed, the former showcase India's achievements in education and sense of regional responsibility. The latter approach targets Western markets, which have higher consumption levels, and whose citizens are full of curiosity about Indian culture. Therefore, Bollywood movies and International Yoga Day have become India's first choice when designing cultural diplomatic programmes overseas.

Nevertheless, the infrastructure of India's scholarship diplomacy should be improved, and its financial budget should be properly allocated. India has been criticised for its poor management capacity, government efficiency and education infrastructure construction, as Isar (2017) illustrated. These criticisms reflect the relative weakness of India's economic 'hard power' and management 'soft power'. This informs future policymakers that while scholarship diplomacy is often considered soft power diplomacy, hard power development cannot be ignored. The latter is the foundation of and driving force for scholarship diplomacy, and determines its quality and effectiveness.

Furthermore, the role of scholarship diplomacy should be fully understood. Although this paper focuses on India's neighbours, it is critical to adopt a multifaceted perspective to understand the country's diplomatic strategy. The key insight afforded by this paper is that role assessment and policy formulation can be performed at three levels: domestic, regional and global. At the domestic level, scholarship diplomacy provides a channel for direct dialogue between a country's own citizens and overseas students. Informing the domestic public that the country is taking international responsibility is one of the goals of India's scholarship diplomacy. At the regional level, scholarship diplomacy serves India's Neighbourhood First strategy. At the global level, the mechanism of national image promotion is at work. Scholarship diplomacy helps India to gain international recognition and a global status by projecting the image of a responsible, fast-developing country.

7. Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy has been India's strongest diplomatic tradition since the 1950s. Particularly in the last two decades, Indian cultural diplomacy has taken diverse forms, including scholarship diplomacy. Scholarship diplomacy is a neutral diplomatic strategy that promotes people-to-people contact, mutual understanding, and cultural influence, and has therefore been widely adopted by India, the US and China to serve their geopolitical and diplomatic interests.

Indian foreign policy has long focused on the periphery. With the introduction of the Neighbourhood First Policy in the 1990s and a new emphasis on cultural diplomacy, India embarked on scholarship diplomacy towards its neighbours. When the Modi government proposed Neighbourhood First 2.0, scholarship diplomacy was further expanded and became an important

cultural diplomatic strategy for India. This paper points out that India's 'neighbourhood scholarship diplomacy' is not only a counterbalance to China's rising influence in South Asia but also helps India to achieve the objectives of exporting its values, conducting citizen diplomacy and enhancing regional connectivity. Scholarship diplomacy ultimately reshapes India's geopolitical influence, which is at the core of India's Neighbourhood First strategy.

This paper thus bridges the gap between cultural diplomacy and regional politics. It provides an analytical framework that will contribute to the analysis of other cultural diplomacy categories and projects. Nevertheless, two dimensions are worth further exploring. First, the process of implementation of Indian scholarship diplomacy in different countries should be explained; second, the effects of Indian scholarship diplomacy should be presented through systematic data collection or interviews.

On the basis of this research, future studies could take the following approaches to better understand Indian scholarship diplomacy. 1) Locating India's scholarship diplomacy within the context of global educational aid architecture and transnational collaboration projects; for example, exploring how India's scholarships interact with UNESCO and South-South cooperation. 2) Comparing Indian scholarship diplomacy in South Asia and Africa to reveal the motivations for Indian cultural diplomacy and the characteristics of India's global strategy. 3) Discussing India's role as both a recipient of substantial aid and a giver of educational assistance, such as scholarships. Exploring these issues may yield important new insights.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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ABSTRACT

The Balassi Institute is the main cultural institution responsible for facilitating Hungary's cultural diplomacy goals in promoting Hungarian national culture and relationship-building with its diaspora communities abroad. This paper argues that the Balassi Institute's Hungarian Culture & Language Studies program operates as a resource of soft power in collaboration with Hungarian communities abroad to strategically shape second, third and fourth generation Hungarian-Australians as 'good-will ambassadors' who are expected to continue Hungary's cultural diplomacy efforts through promoting Hungarian culture abroad. This process of good-will ambassador construction occurs well before the program's commencement through selection processes and in drawing on the efforts of the Hungarian diaspora communities. This paper draws on focus group data with Hungarian community leaders in Australia and analysis of public documents and program applicant forms to the Balassi Institute. It also draws on motivation letters provided by previous program participants, communications with staff from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as information provided by the Hungarian Scout Association Abroad, to highlight that both the State of Hungary and the Hungarian community in Australia become agents of soft-power collaboratively working to construct Hungarian good-will ambassadors and fulfil shared aims in safeguarding Hungarian national identity.

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Cultural diplomacy through Hungarian diaspora engagement

Cultural diplomacy (CD), as part of the broader field of public diplomacy, is defined as 'an actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad' (Cull 2009, 19). The purpose of CD is on fostering relationships of mutual understanding among nations through the exchange of ideas, traditions, and aspects of culture. This becomes important for the foreign policy objectives of State governments, as it can facilitate international relationships and open up pathways for socio-cultural, political, and economic development (Hartig 2014; Nye 2004). Diaspora engagement can also work to fulfil similar cultural continuity efforts abroad. CD in this context is then less orientated toward intercultural relations and mutual understanding and aligned more specifically within the context of serving specific interests of the State. This includes aims to accrue power and maintain national identity, which become achievable through engagement with diaspora communities (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015). This paper focuses on the ways in which CD is constructed and understood in Hungary in light of its prioritisation, over the last decade,[1] toward engaging the

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diaspora and extending Hungarian culture 'beyond borders', with the government claiming 'every Hungarian living anywhere in the world a member of the Hungarian nation' (Hungary Today 2018). Since the election of the 2nd Orbán Government in 2010, Hungary has made significant efforts toward engaging the diaspora by introducing a set of policies to bolster participation in Hungarian affairs, with priorities to continue the State's economic investment into cultural revitalisation projects (Pogonyi 2015). The Balassi Institute (*Balassi Intézet*) is of significant importance when it comes to reaching out to the Hungarian diaspora communities abroad. The Institute claims to

> 'act in the service of delivering the reputation of Hungarians to the community of nations, the presenting of shared values at home and abroad, the construction of a conscious, value-oriented image of the country, foreign policy interests, and the cultivation and development of the cultural values and relationships of Hungarians living within and beyond the borders' (Inkei and Váspár 2014, 9).

This paper suggests that the Hungarian Culture & Language Studies (HC&LS) program (*Magyar nyelvi és Magyarságismereti képzés program*) of the Balassi Institute operates as a resource of soft power in collaboration with the Hungarian communities abroad to strategically shape second, third and fourth generation Hungarian-Australians as 'good-will ambassadors' of Hungary. This process of moulding good-will ambassadors occurs well before the program's commencement through internal selection processes by the Hungarian diaspora communities abroad who assist in selecting candidates. This paper will highlight that both the State of Hungary and the Hungarian community in Australia become agents of soft-power who work collaboratively in creating Hungarian good-will ambassadors to fulfil shared aims in safeguarding the performance of Hungarian national identity both in Hungary and in Australia.

The Hungarian diaspora community in Australia

Currently, it is estimated that the total number of Hungarians in the neighbouring countries of Hungary is 2.1 million with an additional 2 million representing the number of Hungarians living in the West (diaspora communities abroad) (Kovács 2019). The Hungarian-Australian diaspora consists of Hungarian-born people who have migrated to Australia and successive generations. While successive generations are likely to have qualitatively different attachments to Hungary compared to their parents and grandparents, these generations are likely to be socialised within strong social networks and ethnocultural community groups which influence the relationships they develop with the 'Homeland' (Cressey 2006; King, Christou, and Ahrens 2011; Levitt 2009). Currently, in Australia, New South Wales has the largest Hungarian-born population (6,420) followed by Victoria (4,984), Queensland (3,432) and South Australia (1,274) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018).

The development of the Hungarian-Australian diaspora community grew out of several waves of forced migration throughout the decades of Hungary's communist dictatorship (Kantek, Veljanova, and Onnudottir 2019). Australia's geographical distance paired with structural constraints meant that up until 1989, engagements with Hungary were infrequent and difficult. In attempts to overcome the systemic exclusion from Hungary, a series of Hungarian community organisations were established concentrating on building social networks and maintaining Hungarian language and culture (Kantek, Veljanova, and Onnudottir 2019, 83). Hungarian social clubs, church groups, scouts, community language schools and folkdance groups were introduced from the mid-1950s onwards, some with international origins including the Hungarian scouts in Australia as part of the wider Hungarian Scout Association Abroad[2] (*Külföldi Magyar Cserkészszövetség*). However, the Hungarian-Australian diaspora community has been facing sustainability challenges due to factors including an ageing migrant population and the structural assimilation of later generations into Australian society. Such assimilation has resulted in declining rates of intergenerational Hungarian language transmission as well as participation in various Hungarian community organisations (Hatoss 2008, 2018; Osvát and Osvát 2011). For example, Hatoss (2018, 6), referencing Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2016, reveals that in New South Wales, there was a '13 percent decrease in the number of people

who spoke Hungarian between 2006 and 2016, with over 66% of those speaking Hungarian aged over 45 years'.

Therefore, loss of language and culture is of concern to community leaders as while the Hungarian-Australian community embodies a physical site of cultural performativity, it is also symbolic of the survival of Hungarian culture and resilient efforts of preceding generations (Kantek, Veljanova, and Onnudottir 2019). As a result, the future of the Hungarian community in Australia is now being directed toward the current second, third and later generations who are tasked with upholding the Hungarian cultural and linguistic tradition through maintaining these at-risk Hungarian community organisations.

Methodology

This paper draws on a focus group conducted in March 2019 with (N = 5) leaders from three Hungarian community organisations in NSW. The focus groups were recruited through purposive and snowballing sampling methods. The organisations from which these leaders were recruited included; two Hungarian language schools[3] and the Hungarian scouting association. These are not the only Hungarian community organisations which operate within New South Wales, nor do they represent the Hungarian diaspora community within Australia as a whole, but they are home to most of the Australian participants who participate in the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program. The Hungarian scouts and community language schools in Australia work collaboratively with the Balassi Institute in Hungary and assist the Institute in engaging with the second, third and fourth generations abroad. For example, the Hungarian scouting association has worked in collaboration with the Balassi Institute in the sourcing of program candidates from their scouting (*Cserkész*) communities. The Hungarian community language schools (*Magyar iskola*) also engage with the Balassi Institute in sourcing of Hungarian language teaching materials, while also assisting in advertising its HC&LS program. Furthermore, this paper draws on thematic document analysis of the Institute's HC&LS program application documents online, the training program provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and (N = 5) motivation letters submitted by previously successful Hungarian-Australian program participants. Together, these documents provided insight into the eligibility requirements for the program, its intended purpose and structure, and into the strategically assembled motivations written by applicants for program acceptance. Lastly, the paper draws on personal communication with staff from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Hungarian Scout Association Abroad who have been in positions responsible for program recruitment.[4]

Soft powering cultural diplomacy among the Hungarian-Australian community

Cultural diplomacy can be viewed as a series of practices which build cultural relations through opening opportunities for socio-political and educational ties. Scholars such as Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015), Kang (2015) and Zamorano (2016) have acknowledged the role of the State in shaping the monopolising intentions of cultural diplomacy and foremost, in enhancing national prestige both domestically and internationally. In particular, a two-sided approach toward understanding CD is evident through its purpose to foster open, international relationships and mutual understandings, whilst also becoming a narrow governmental practice used by the State to consolidate power, thus 'entering a complex space where nationalism and internationalism merge' (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015, 367). While many Hungarians are citizens through assimilation including the Jewish community, the dominant Hungarian conceptualisation of national identity can be considered to mirror a similar two-sided formation, combining ethnonationalism with elements of transnationalism. Hungarian national identity is based on a belonging to a Hungarian ancestral lineage, the maintenance of the Hungarian language while also recognising the diaspora communities abroad. The extension of citizenship rights to the diaspora is indicative of this, as eligibility is based on proven Hungarian

ancestry and level of Hungarian language competency whilst being non or former residents of Hungary (Fowler 2004; Gödri, Soltész, and Bodacz-nagy 2014).

Since the election of the conservative, right-wing Fidész party in 2010 (2nd Orbán government), State-diaspora relations have transformed, with the government providing an array of nation-building policies and opportunities aimed at Hungarian diaspora communities abroad (Pogonyi 2015). As a result of this, a de-territorialised understanding of Hungarian national identity has emerged, one which embraces a global community perspective, as highlighted in their Fundamental Law where 'Hungary shall bear responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living beyond its borders, and shall facilitate the survival and development of their communities; it shall support their efforts to preserve their Hungarian identity' (in Gazsó n.d., 5) . Prior to the 2010 elections, political interest focused on reforming and reconciling socio-political ties with Hungarians living as minorities in neighbouring countries as part of its goal for national reunification in light of Hungary's turbulent history, specifically the impacts of the 1920 Treanon treaty (Pogonyi 2015; Waterbury 2010, 2018). However, since the election of the second Orbán Government in 2010, diaspora engagement has extended outward to its diaspora communities internationally, with Ludányi (2011, 84) arguing that this shift concerned 'the abandonment of emigré politics and its replacement with the diaspora perspective', having impacts on 'transforming the relations between the Hungarian government and Hungarians living beyond the country's borders'. For example, the development of the Strategic Framework for Hungarian Communities Abroad (2011) was developed as a joint task between both the Hungarian State and Hungarians living abroad to facilitate relationships of support between the Hungarian government and diaspora communities. Integral to this, the Bethlen Gábor Fund[5] has enabled Hungarian diaspora communities abroad to apply for community development grants to assist in supporting the operation of Hungarian community organisations abroad. Further, the Association of Hungarian Educators in Australia *(Ausztráliai Magyar Pedagógusok Egyesülete)* was founded in 2013 and in 2015 it represented Hungarian educators in Australia in the Hungarian Diaspora Council, liaising with the Hungarian State and strengthening its relationship with the Balassi Institute (Palotai, Wetzl, and Jarjabka 2019).

Combined, these opportunities have opened social, economic and resource exchange pathways between Hungary and its diaspora abroad and have influenced the ways Hungarian-Australian community organisations plan for future survival. The maintenance of the Hungarian-Australian diaspora community is planned through a trans-local objective: to engage with the various resources and exchanges offered by the Hungarian State, while ensuring that these are reinvested into the preservation of the Hungarian community organisations in Australia. Therefore, in considering Hungary's prioritisation of 'Hungarians living beyond borders' and 'preservation of Hungarian identity' abroad, how does Hungary's leading cultural diplomacy institution achieve this and what role do these diaspora communities abroad play in contributing toward these shared aims? These contextual insights have been largely unexplored within the literature and is what this paper seeks to contribute.

Hungarian cultural diplomacy through The Balassi Institute

The Balassi Institute (*Balassi Intézet*) is a cultural organisation run by the Hungarian government for the purposes of spreading Hungarian culture, language and education to Hungarians living outside of Hungary, thus understood as an agent delivering the CD agenda of the Hungarian government. Originally founded in 1927 as the Hungarian cultural Institute with a priority in enhancing Hungary's prestige in the international scientific research community, by 2002 it was renamed as the *Balassi Intézet*,[6] undergoing radical changes in purpose and methodology by embracing a number of institutional bodies of national and foreign cultural policy and orientating its efforts towards preserving Hungary's national image outside of Hungary's borders through education and cultural experiences (Horváth 2013).

The Institute's partnership with the Hungarian scholarship board (*Magyar Ösztöndíj Bizottság*) in 2005 also provided international scholarships to participants living outside of Hungary for the purposes of enhancing their participation in Hungarian education. Ludányi (2011, 83) for example, argues that the Balassi Institute and foremost it's scholarships and opportunities for young overseas Hungarians to study for a year in Hungary were the Orbán government's first 'real commitment' to its own priorities to strengthen Diaspora-State relations. Coming under the operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade[7] in 2016, the Institute currently consists of a network of 23 Hungarian institutions in 21 countries, becoming a conduit delivering the transmission of Hungarian culture through providing a large variety of courses, lectures, cultural events and programs. As stipulated online (Balassi Intézet n.d.-a), the main aim of the Institute is to preserve and promote national culture and heritage and maintain relationships with the diaspora. Programs offered by the Institute focus on providing Hungarian language and cultural education, especially important given that the Hungarian language is understood as a core cultural icon and an 'important means to express and keep Hungarian identity' (Hatoss 2008, 6).

The Institute belongs to the growing group of cultural institutes emerging from the 1900s, sharing aims to promote and strengthen national culture abroad.[8] Examples of such institutes include that of Germany's 'Goethe Institute', the United Kingdom's 'British Council', Spain's 'Instituto Cervantes' and China's 'Confucius Institute'. According to Paschadilis (2009: 279) while cultural institutes aim to contribute to the delivery of CD 'the major ideological force behind them is a pervading cultural nationalism, with its characteristic emphasis on language and education.' The use of diaspora tourism and cultural exchange programs by such institutes can therefore be understood to operate as 'explicit cultural diplomacy practices' (Kang 2015). These practices serve an obvious purpose to enhance national prestige through the strategic representation of national culture and identity abroad and do so through strengthening the State's ties with its diaspora communities who can further promote and support this work. As argued by Hartig (2014), cultural institutes like the Confucius Institute, despite being State-centric in terms of their direct affiliation and control by the State, have recently embraced the assistance of non-state actors including foreign non-governmental organisations to broaden the scope of their relationships and exchanges. The Balassi Institute also functions in this way. The promotion of Hungarian culture and national identity abroad is achieved through the Institute's HC&LS program which follows a similar logic to diaspora tourism programs and homeland tours offered in Israel (Cohen, 2004; Kelner 2010) and Morocco (Mahieu 2019) by embracing and inviting the participation of its diaspora communities. The 10-month total duration of the program offered by the Institute, paired with its unique structure combining educational components with leisure opportunities, functions to inform the experiences participants assign to both their role in the diaspora and to their responsibility to Hungary (Kovács 2019; Taylor, Levi, and Dinovitzer 2012).

Therefore, CD delivered through the Balassi Institute can be viewed as linked to constructing and reproducing an elite *Magyar* (Hungarian national) identity to be performed specifically outside of *Magyarország* (Hungary). The purpose of this form of CD is therefore concerned with relationship building with Hungarian communities abroad and the promotion of a particularised, shared image of Hungarian national identity performativity. Here, CD serves a purpose in establishing 'cooperation and partnership through mutual benefit' (Jora 2013, 50). The Institute's collaboration with Hungarian communities abroad therefore facilitates the delivery of the abovementioned goals, as these communities also aim for Hungarian cultural continuity and thereby benefit from engaging its members in the HC&LS program. CD then is not only controlled by one government or a single organisation, but is in the 'possession' of various non-state actors who also benefit from its impacts (Hartig 2014). This paper thus argues that CD is the outcome of performances by both State and non-state actors through various interest-based cultural exchanges and collaborations. This is important as non-state actors abroad are increasingly becoming political players who also engage in diplomacy work and contribute to shaping and reproducing national identity discourses and performativity (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015; Jora 2013).

Operationalising soft power: The Balassi Institute's HC&LS program and Hungarian-Australian diaspora community abroad

The use of soft-power and a variety of soft-power resources is important to achieve cultural diplomacy and foreign policy objectives (Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015). Nye (2004, 5) defines soft power as a co-optive form of power which is based on the ability to 'shape the preferences of others' through attraction. Soft power resources are therefore conceived as activities, programs, organisations, and policies which are designed to use attractions to persuade others to subscribe to beliefs, values or wants either on their own accord, or without the actor even knowing. As argued by Nye (2004, 13) 'government policies at home and abroad are a potential source of soft power' as they work with the aim to shape the views of the public through persuading them to adopt the State's national culture and view its values as legitimate and thus, worthy of continuing. The State, through State-led diaspora tourism,[9] becomes instrumental in the delivery of soft power to the second, third and fourth generation through cultural education and experience to influence the politics of belonging to the 'homeland' (Nye 2004; Fan 2008).

The Institute's HC&LS program which is of specific interest to this paper, is offered only at the Institute's headquarters in Budapest, Hungary, targeting second, third and fourth generations from diaspora communities in both northern and southern hemispheres including; North and South America, Canada and Australia. The 10-month program and associated scholarship invites young people of Hungarian origin aged between 18 and 35 years born outside of Hungary to improve their Hungarian language skills and cultural knowledge and experience contemporary Hungarian culture (Balassi Intézet n.d.-a). While there are no official records of how many Australian Hungarians have attended the HC&LS program, personal communication with a representative of the Institute confirmed that since its conception, over 750 young people have participated in the program from areas including; North and South America, Canada, Australia, and parts of Western Europe. According to the 'Training Programme' (Balassi Intézet n.d.-b) provided by an official from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the purpose of the HC&LS program is to 'strengthen the Hungarian identity of the students and to prepare them for their future work in disseminating the Hungarian culture. This goal is to be reached by increasing their language competence on the one hand and by transferring up-to-date knowledge of Hungary and the Hungarian culture on the other'. Therefore, the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program is used as a resource of soft-power by the State in attempting to maintain and strengthen Hungarian national identity through a combination of socio-cultural immersion and education experiences.

The Hungarian community organisations in Australia can similarly become agents of soft power through their ability to shape Hungarian national identity discourses and performances locally, while also encouraging homeland sentiment and engagement in homeland initiatives like State-led diaspora tourism (Sasson et al. 2014). Földes (2013) argues that soft power can be transmitted through broadcasting work which can be achieved through outlets such as the media. Here, the Hungarian community leaders are actors of soft power who also engage in this broadcasting work by reaching out to young people in their communities and encouraging their attendance at the Balassi Institute. For example, previous program students who have returned and continued leadership as scout leaders have shared their positive experiences to junior scouts, thereby contributing toward favourable images of Hungary and the Institute. In doing so, they are engaging in role-modelling, encouraging the future attendance of their junior members and interest in further Hungarian language and cultural education. The impacts of this messaging have been proven successful, as interview data (outside the scope of this paper) with program participants has suggested that interests in attending the HC&LS program were influenced by the positive feedback communicated by former participants.

The benefits of Hungarian language and cultural education offered by the HC&LS program can be transferred locally to revive interest and leadership in Hungarian organisations in Australia. For example, the Hungarian scouts draw on traditional Hungarian literature and poetry, historical re-

enactments, and Hungarian folk music to formulate activities to engage young scouts through cultural performance and frame narratives (*kerettörténet)*. As Magyarody (2015, 138) explains, such cultural folk activities comprise an 'essential factor in the creation of a culture' and are 'integral to perceptions of what culture is and how an individual identifies as part of a national/ethnic/cultural group'. Therefore, the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program provides a unique opportunity for the Hungarian community in Australia in helping overcome challenges to communal sustainability and leadership by working with the Institute to ensure the moulding of its participants into Hungarian good-will ambassadors. This positions the Balassi Institute and Hungarian-Australian diaspora community as agents of soft-power, while also positioning the second, third and fourth generation as essential in facilitating their goals.

Hungarian good-will ambassadors: the second, third and fourth generation as a shared resource for Hungary and Hungarian communities abroad

The position of the second, third and fourth generation within the diaspora community as 'middlemen' between the homelands of their parents/grandparents and the countries in which they themselves were born must be considered when determining the consolidation of power held by different actors and the strengthening of transnational relationships. State governments are increasingly recognising the second, third and fourth generation as a resource, hence investing in diaspora tourism and cultural revitalisation programs (Pogonyi 2017; Sasson et al. 2014). For some time, a long-distance nationalist approach was used to theorise the socio-political resource potential of diasporas who become involved in a wide range of nationalist activities whilst residing in locations outside of the homeland (Anderson 1992). This perspective recognises a form of nationalism that is 'structurally embedded in a transnational network' between migrants with their places of origin (Skrbis 2001, 136). However, the emphasis of long-distance nationalists as migrants from the diaspora whose nationalism tends to favour ethnonationalist ideologies neglects the engagements of subsequent generations who may not share similar attachments to the 'homeland' nor experience belonging in similar ways (Sasson et al. 2014). Performances of nationalism and remittance motivation by the second, third and fourth generation is diverse and not necessarily the result of seeking a sense of belonging to supplement a previous lack of belonging, nor the result of directly intending to support homeland governments and their initiatives. Instead, these generations from the diaspora provide different contributions such as their membership(s) within ethnocultural community organisations abroad, engagements in virtual transnational social fields and participation(s) within various forms of diaspora tourism, thus being more likely to contribute to the 'symbolic inclusion efforts' of State governments and 'symbolic nation-ness' on a transnational level (Delano and Gamlen 2014; Pogonyi 2015).

In light of such acts and performances, this paper extends on Nagy's (2017) 'good-will ambassador' to understand the efforts made by the Hungarian State and the Hungarian communities abroad who together share interests and expectations in shaping the second, third and fourth generation as responsible for the transnational transmission of Hungarian culture to diaspora communities abroad. Nagy (2017, 169) originally referred to 'good-will ambassadors' briefly within the context of analysing the cultural diplomacy efforts of Hungary throughout the inter-war period, describing tourists who, through cultural tourism, contributed to the 'desirable foreign image of Hungary' once returning home. As a result, cultural tourists became key in re-constructing national narratives of Hungarian national culture through their satisfactory experiences in-country. However, as this paper argues, the second, third and fourth generation from Hungarian diaspora communities abroad and more specifically, the participants from the HC&LS program, can equally be engaged in the positive image-building of Hungary. This is because, as reflected in Némethy-Kesserű's (2011, 14) research on the Balassi Institute and its relationship with the international Hungarian scouting organisation, the HC&LS program has the aim of 'connecting them [young people] to their roots and becoming ambassadors of their ancestors' homeland in their countries of birth'.

The term good-will ambassador is therefore used in this paper to describe the socio-cultural role program participants at the Balassi Institute are expected to adopt. The actions of these individuals are viewed as making 'charitable' contributions toward Hungary's cultural diplomacy effort, while also working within the 'best interest' of the Hungarian community organisations at home. Understanding Hungarian good-will ambassadors in this way is important as it emphasises that soft-power operates on a non-discernible level to influence the behaviour and values of its targeted audience. Secondly, it points attention to the indirect and symbolic forms of politicised work expected of and performed by the second, third and fourth generation who unknowingly engage in the cultural politics of Hungary through their participation in this State-led form of diaspora tourism and through their performances of leadership and voluntarism in their own communities.

'Intending to serve the community': sourcing potential Hungarian good-will ambassadors for the HC&LS program through strategic selection

The HC&LS program's application process becomes important when understanding the recruitment processes and standards of the 'ideal candidates' the Institute intends to reach. Document analysis of the application form for the program reveals that the process of leadership development begins before participants attend the Balassi Institute in Budapest. Prospective applicants are required to 'justify' their eligibility for the program through providing a handwritten resume, a motivation letter, as well as provide references to speak to their commitments to Hungarian culture in their places of residence to support their application. Early in the process, applicants outline their Hungarian familial ancestry and nominate their level of Hungarian language proficiency, hence an ethnonationalist response to Hungarian culture. Interestingly however, proven ancestry is not on its own enough in order to be a strong, competitive applicant for the program. The Institute also requires that applicants provide a letter from a key community organisation or leader/figure to justify their Hungarian cultural commitments, with engagement in Hungarian community organisations encouraged. Personal communication with a partner of the Institute responsible for the assessment of the applications of the program stated;

'we must reward those who have maintained their Hungarianness (*magyarságukat*) abroad for years, regularly, and on the other hand, try to recognize the enthusiasm and work of the newcomers, hoping to be used not only for their own development but also for strengthening the Hungarian community . . . my main consideration in determining the places is to assess the extent to which the applicant serves or intends to serve the Hungarian community and is not merely seeking his or her linguistic and personal development for scholarship. So, I was the first to pick scouts and young people who are dedicated to their community' (Program recruitment supervisor, personal communication, April 2019 – translated from Hungarian to English).

The above sentiment indicates that a commitment or 'dedication' to Hungarian culture is essential for potentially successful participants. In this sense, the diaspora is only a resource to the State when they are in positions of sharing knowledge and cultural performances with others within a communal context. For example, the Hungarian language education and knowledge of Hungarian history and geography gained in the program are important for younger community members as they are qualities which are examinable in scouting leadership exams. Similar conceptualisations are highlighted in the work of Baldassar and Pyke (2014) who refer to the benefits that recent Italian migrants in Australia bring to the existing Italian community through their 'knowledge transfer' capacities, given their contemporary, current knowledge of Italy and Italian culture which can be used to both renew and challenge existing Italian communal identity in Australia. Such knowledge sharing explains the prioritisation of selecting Hungarian scouts whose roles are to provide specific Hungarian cultural activities to groups of children in preparation for their own future roles in scout leadership and community-building. Further to this, the indication of 'service' highlighted above stresses the responsibilities attached to 'good-will ambassadors' who are expected to invest their cultural education back into their communities. This is reflected in the literature on diaspora tourism

which highlights the growing sense of responsibilities frequently accompanying the homeland journey including an obligation to help others (Cohen 2004; Garrido 2011; Kelner 2010; Louie 2003; Taylor, Levi, and Dinovitzer 2012). This can include providing financial support from afar (Taylor, Levi, and Dinovitzer 2012) and strengthening moral commitments to the homeland through political activism and social work (Garrido 2011).

Interestingly, in the Hungarian-Australian case, most participants in the program are from the Hungarian scouts or Hungarian dancing organisations and/or are the descendants of prominent community leaders such as Scout leaders, Hungarian language school or dance teachers and/or key members/donors of the Hungarian social clubs. This indicates that prior socialisation within ethnocultural community organisations is essential, with the Balassi Institute intending to create a specific international milieu who share similar experiences of ethnocultural communal membership and/or have parents who are in high esteem within them. It is these characteristics which constitutes commitment and 'dedication' to the goals of the Institute and positions these young people as being most likely to 'serve' the community organisations at home through voluntarism and leadership.

Additionally, most program applicants[10] (as is the case for Australia) are proficient in Hungarian and are encouraged to fill out their applications in Hungarian. This not only operates as a classificatory mechanism but as a source of social closure, becoming a further factor informing cultural performativity and foremost, commitment. The emphasis on Hungarian language competency contributes toward the definitions of Hungarian national culture and its core values, as Hungary has been well known for being a language-centred culture (Cutcher 2015; Hatoss 2008). Therefore, using language proficiency as a mechanism of social closure,[11] which is often also mediated by participation in Hungarian organisations, enables the 'building of internal opportunities while restricting opportunities for outside involvement' (Karlis 2015, 244). The implied boundaries that these forms of social closure create contribute to solidifying social differentiation and in doing so, work toward enhancing the ethnocultural ties of the in-group. This closure provides opportunities for the Institute to foster strategic in-group socialisation among its target audience who consist of young, highly engaged individuals who are considered to have pre-existing membership in Hungarian community organisations and who have parents who are active members and leaders within them and thus likely to support their children's own, ongoing engagement in the community.

'I want to do it for my community': motivations for Hungarian good-will ambassadorship

Motivation letters also operate to revisit, prove, and support the affirmations shared in reference letters related to the ongoing theme of 'applied Hungarian-ness'. Applicants are instructed to provide 300 words regarding their purpose to study in Hungary and how the knowledge gained from the program will be actioned upon return home. Based on a sample of motivation letters submitted to the Institute, Hungarian-Australian applicants wrote about their desire to connect with their culture in more concrete ways including strengthening their language proficiency and Hungarian cultural knowledge. Applicants referred strategically[12] to previous engagements and roles in community organisations at home from as early as childhood to demonstrate their long-standing and ongoing commitment to Hungarian communal culture. This is achieved through stressing the applied nature of their Hungarian identity performances alongside identifying the tangible outcomes they hope to achieve. For example, one participant from Sydney wrote;

'I am hoping to use the knowledge and language education toward enhancing my existing role as a Hungarian scout leader' (motivation letter 2018 – Translated from Hungarian to English)

This was similarly expressed by another participant from Perth;

'I will use the Hungarian cultural knowledge and language education to become a Hungarian language schoolteacher so I can contribute toward strengthening the Hungarian identity of young children in my community' (motivation letter 2015 – Translated from Hungarian to English)

These letters are used by the Balassi Institute to assess the personal motivations of applicants and to help determine the likelihood of the candidate pursuing the CD goals of Hungary and thus, the likelihood of them embodying the 'Hungarian good-will ambassador'. The motivation letters therefore become key in the construction of an 'elite' form of Hungarian cultural performativity based on the extent to which expressions of Hungarian culture are connected to communal activities and linked to organisational membership. Additionally, the community figure/organisation reference letters become critical in this process of selectivity by the Institute, as it provides an additional layer of assessment to determine the likelihood of applied engagement by the applicant. It also reveals that there are a series of benefits that these local Hungarian-Australian community organisations receive through the engagements of their second, third and fourth generation members in the program as a soft-power resource. An email exchange with a program recruitment supervisor confirmed the prioritisation of 'particular' applicants based on 'particular' intentions, stating:

> 'There is a prioritisation of applicants who are part of the Hungarian scouting association and also those who appear to be working within the best interests of their Hungarian communities abroad' (Balassi representative, personal communication, April 2019 – translated from Hungarian to English).

Therefore, in considering the development of good-will ambassadors, the Institute is intending to select applicants who are most likely to continue to 'work within the best interests of their communities'. These 'ideal candidates' become positioned in-between both the goals of the Balassi Institute and the goals of the local Hungarian diaspora communities they belong to as a result of their participation in the program which equips them with the language and cultural education to contribute to their community organisations at home. Hungarian cultural belonging therefore becomes mediated by both the Hungarian State and non-state actors, determined by the extent of Hungarian cultural performances and community engagement. One community leader from a Hungarian community language school in NSW commented on the reflective component of the motivation letter and 'ease' of reinvesting knowledge gained at the Institute:

'[the motivation letter] gets young people to sit down and think "what can I give back to the community if I learn at the Balassi Institute?" . . . for most it's an easy choice because most of them are in the community already and they go and build their knowledge and at some point, you have to give it back' (Community leader, March 2019 focus group communication).

The reference to 'ease' signifies that there is a natural, unspoken assumption pertaining to the reinvestment of cultural knowledge and time from applicants to their communities upon return, especially those who have previously held membership within the organisations. The motivation letters also reveal the strategising by applicants who see the letter as an opportunity to not only prove their eligibility, but to also similarly position themselves as 'ideal candidates' who may have future plans to action their learning outcomes in their own communities at home in exchange for a travel abroad experience.

'Come back and give back': planning and pursuing re-investment for the Hungarian community in Australia

The local Hungarian community organisations in Australia play a significant role as informal gatekeepers to the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program given the application requirement which relies on letters from key community organisations or leaders/figures to speak to the commitments of Balassi program applicants. Similar to the CD goals of the Balassi Institute and Hungarian State at large, leaders from the Hungarian community organisations in NSW have expressed the role of the program in assisting their own agendas to secure critical mass in their communities and bolster the leadership representation in their organisations. Therefore, these local organisations, as non-state actors who are independent from the Hungarian government, similarly view program participants as a transnational resource who can help revive their organisations, whilst also recognising the

Institute's program as a resource which can be used to incentivise, reward and fuel community engagements at home.

The mutual recognition of the value of the HC&LS program by both the State and diaspora communities abroad is important, as the maintenance and reach of soft power is relational and thus influenced by the extent to which those in the relationship (i.e. those who administer soft power and those who consume it) recognise it as significant. For the Hungarian-Australian community leaders interviewed, critical mass and as such, the investment of human resources (i.e. volunteering, membership and leadership) constitute a commitment to Hungarian culture and therefore shape the responsibility of the good-will ambassador role. This is because the Hungarian community organisations and voluntary associations in Australia have provided migrants and subsequent migrant generations with opportunities to gather important social networks, participate in Hungarian cultural activities, and maintain a sense of belonging (Kantek, Veljanova, and Onnudottir 2019). These insights have also been reflected in Andits' (2017) work on strategies for Hungarian cultural survival which highlighted that young people's disengagement with Hungarian organisations is especially a challenge facing the community today. The inability to maintain community organisations such as the Hungarian scouts, dance group and the Hungarian language school are perceived as a failure to preserve Hungarian culture. Therefore, cultural continuity and the success of Hungarian cultural preservation is equated with the extent to which the community organisations themselves are well-resourced and functioning. According to this mindset, low-level rates of voluntarism, an absence of leaders and a general decline in attendance reflects a perceived decline in Hungarian cultural performativity and interest.

'There is a return on investment for us': incentivising community engagement

For the leaders of the Hungarian-Australian community, the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program represents two main opportunities; Firstly, a reward to already engaged, young members in the community, and secondly, an incentive to capture the interests of young, less active members people in the community. Together, these opportunities are understood by leaders as assisting them with addressing the challenges of obtaining a sustainable level of critical mass within their organisations. Therefore, their support of applicants is strategic, as the community organisations work in an informal partnership with the Institute to ensure that those who attend the program are supported by their community leaders and are therefore, in well-resourced positions and most likely to engage in the community-building efforts of these organisations once they return. One community leader from the NSW scouting association commented on the selection agendas and expectation of reinvestment, stating;

'the community is picking those who have pretty good Hungarian background … if someone has trouble paying the airfare, we help them because there is a return on investment for us. Balassi is actually improving our "better ones" and for our future, those people are going to be critical … so they can teach our future community' (Community leader, March 2019 focus group).

By providing social and economic support to prospective applicants, the Hungarian community organisations involved are able to promote their own 'image of care' (Kovács 2019) and financially invest in community members, with the hopes that it will lead to the reinvestment of physical resources (i.e. voluntarism and leadership) through good-will ambassadorship. The referral to 'better ones' applies to the young people from the Hungarian community organisations in Australia who are regular, active members, who know the community leaders and who speak Hungarian. In labelling applicants by this criterion, an internal hierarchy is constructed based on the extent to which the participant intends to use their time in the program and abroad in Hungary with the best interests of the community at home. Another leader also commented on the 'rewarding' aspect of the Balassi Institute and scholarship opportunity, emphasising the importance of 'giving back';

'It was quite clear to the leaders here who they wanted to send … it's a reward, it's a scholarship and it's also effort from the leaders here to prepare students … we wanted those who were mature

enough to come back and give back. Give back in the community, give back to the kids here' (Community leader, March 2019 focus group).

Therefore, the dissemination of Hungarian culture locally is as significant to the Hungarian community organisations in Australia as it is to the State of Hungary and its foreign policy interests. The conceptualisation of the support these community organisations provide to prospective applicants as a 'reward' for their continued engagement efforts can be argued to reflect the strategic aims of these organisations, to promote not only an 'image of care' (Kovács 2019), but to help facilitate their goals for critical mass and increased voluntarism upon return. This is because ethnocultural communities as voluntary, non-profit organisations rely on people volunteering their time to enable the facilitation of specific activities which in themselves, aim to (re)produce interest and maintain the community's main objective. Karlis (2015) labels this 'citizen action', whereby a community's sustainability is dependent on the collective efforts of its members, given that close-knit relationships are integral to enable the organisation, operation and overall maintenance of voluntary organisations. Without sufficient citizen action, social cohesion in the community depletes and organisations are unable to sustain themselves due to the absence of interest and therefore lack of motivation to invest resources (Karlis 2015). Therefore, ensuring that a 'minimum threshold of interest' is experienced by all members in the community is essential in maintaining critical mass, to ensure that there are both attendees and leaders, roles both critical to the purpose and maintenance of a community. The expectation of 'giving back' to the community also indicates the implicit responsibilities attached to the opportunity; to reinvest the knowledge gained through the program into the younger members of the community as a gesture of good-will and of gratitude for the support provided by the organisations in preparing and assisting them during the application. As such, participation in the Balassi Institute's HC&LS program is used as a strategy to engage and incentivise the participation of the second, third and fourth generation members in the community to ensure that the 'minimum threshold of interest' will help to resolve retention rates and promote future, long-term leaders in the community (Lueck and Steffen 2011).

'Be careful who you send': community evaluation as a risk management strategy

The evaluation by community organisations also works to minimise and assess the extent to which participants attending the program will provide the tangible outcomes the Institute and the local communities hope. One community leader who has worked closely with the Institute since the program's conception stated;

'There is an expectation of picking. Has this person participated in the community? have they given to the community? have they been members or are they going for a holiday for a year?' (Community leader, 2019 focus group).

However, the risk and disappointment of sending candidates who do not contribute upon return was also expressed by leaders, particularly one who shared;

'Be careful when you send the student. One of the things we have learnt is that if the child is too young and immature, then it just becomes an excuse to party' (Community leader, 2019 focus group).

Such expressions of risk from community leaders highlight the uncertainty involved in the efficacy of CD strategies and soft-power, beginning to hint toward the agency of participants who may pursue the program for personal interests outside those intended by the State and community organisations at home. As Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015, 375) suggest, 'the effects and impacts of cultural diplomacy "messaging" or "image projection" can never be determined in advance'. This is because the meaning-making of agents who consume soft-power resources are difficult to monitor, given its diffuse nature, with its impacts often only traceable overtime (Clarke 2014; Nye 2004).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hungary's conceptualisation of cultural diplomacy can be understood as interested in safeguarding and reproducing an elite Hungarian national identity abroad, while simultaneously strengthening Hungary's relationships with its international diaspora communities. The Balassi Institute achieves this in numerous ways, using its 10-month HC&LS program as a form of State-led diaspora tourism to engage second, third and fourth generations through Hungarian cultural and language education to promote their engagements with Hungarian culture at home. As this paper has argued, there is a clear strategic framework which underpins program eligibility focusing less on privatised, symbolic attachments and performances of Hungarian national culture and more orientated toward concrete outcomes pertaining to leadership and community engagement, from which both the Hungarian State and communities abroad benefit. The paper highlights the growing recognition of this group of program participants as a resource for the State's cultural diplomacy efforts as well as the Hungarian community organisations at home, who hold shared values pertaining to Hungarian national identity continuity and performativity. This reveals that the Balassi Institute is recruiting 'ideal' candidates who are well-qualified and most likely to reinvest the skills and knowledge they gain from experience in the program back into their Hungarian communities at home, thus occupying roles as Hungarian good-will ambassadors. Their moulding into this role occurs before participants even apply for the Institute's program through their previous engagements and memberships within Hungarian community organisations and/or their parent's involvement in the community. Therefore, this paper has highlighted the collaborative soft-power partnership which exists between the State of Hungary and the Hungarian community in Australia who together, facilitate the creation of Hungarian good-will ambassadors to maintain the performance of Hungarian national identity and culture.

Notes

1. See (Gödri, Soltész, and Bodacz-nagy 2014; Kovács 2019; Pogonyi 2013; Pogonyi 2015 & Waterbury 2018) for a comprehensive outline of Hungary's history of diaspora politics.
2. The alternative translation of the Külföldi Magyar Cserkészszövetség (KMCCSZ) is the International Hungarian Scouting in Exertis
3. The primary school is a member of the Australian Federation of Community Language schools catering to educating school-aged children on Hungarian culture and language from years K-6 every Saturday. The Hungarian community language high school is run by the NSW Department of Education as part of their Saturday School of Community languages which continues this language education to students from years 7–12, with the aim to prepare students to take their Hungarian HSC continuers language exam. The 2020 Annual General Meeting data reveals that throughout Australia, over 10 community language schools are in operation with a total of 212 students participating in the primary school, 62 students attending years 7–11 and only 15 students completing the year 12 level in Australia. This indicates a decline of students continuing language education to this level.
4. This research forms draws from existing PhD research on the diaspora engagements of Hungary through the Balassi Institute with the Hungarian diaspora community in Australia, with full ethics clearance approved by Western Sydney University in 2018 [H12981].
5. The Gábor Bethlen Fund is a dedicated public fund aimed at promoting the objectives of the Hungarian Government's national policy strategy.
6. In commemoration of Balassi Bálint, an infamous Hungarian renaissance poet who wrote on themes related to Hungarian nationalism.
7. The Institute operates as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade under the supervision of the State Secretariat for Cultural and Scientific Diplomacy.
8. For a detailed analysis of the histories of Cultural Institutes abroad, see Paschadilis (2009)
9. State-led diaspora tourism is used in this paper to describe institutionalised forms of diaspora tourism which receive government or partial-government sponsorship such as birth-right programs.
10. Based on 17 interviews with previous participants of the program from Australia who attended the HC&LS program at the Balassi Institute between 2001 and 2018. Additionally, over 70% of these participants were members of Hungarian scouts at the time of their participation. All participants were a part of at least one or

often many Hungarian organisations and groups at the time of preparing their applications to attend the program.

11. Karlis (2015, 244) defines social closure as a 'sense of distinction or closure based on difference' which can be used as a method to restrict involvements of particular individuals and groups in specific opportunities. Within the context of this paper, social closure refers to the classificatory schemes inherent within the application process which works to assess eligibility of prospective program participants. Thus, the level of language proficiency can be considered to play a role in eligibility, shaping the competitivity of the applicant and the extent to which they can be successful in attending the program
12. The motivation letter is argued to be strategic as interview data from outside the scope of this paper with 17 previous Hungarian-Australian program participants reveals that the motivations for participation in the program differ greatly from those disclosed in the letters.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Contingent availability: a case-based approach to understanding availability in streaming services and cultural policy implications

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Contingent availability: a case-based approach to understanding availability in streaming services and cultural policy implications

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ABSTRACT
Streaming services have emerged as increasingly important access points for cultural content, often promising, as Netflix does, 'unlimited entertainment'. However, the actual conditions of availability remain under-examined. While streaming services typically contain a vast selection of objects, they certainly do not hold the total amount of all possible items. Streaming services thus pose new challenges for policymakers who wish to ensure access to, and availability of culture. In this paper, we build on previous research to develop the term 'contingent availability' and discuss how cultural items are made available in streaming contexts. Departing from a pyramid model of availability, we investigate these levels empirically through a case-based approach. Nine Norwegian award-winning or critically acclaimed books, movies and TV series were strategically selected to highlight how availability in streaming services is contingent upon multiple conditions. For each case, we assess the ways in which Norwegian cultural policy influences production, distribution and availability of culture. We discuss how cultural policy measures do secure availability for most of the cases, but is unable to effectively combat fragmentation of availability.

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Introduction

Over the past decade, streaming services have become important and even dominant access points for films, TV-shows and books in digital format. In Norway and the other Nordic countries, this tendency is especially pronounced: More than half of the Norwegian population subscribe to Netflix. Almost nine out of ten use a music streaming service. At least 150 000 subscribe to a streaming service for ebooks and audio books (Tallerås, Colbjørnsen and Øfsti 2019).

Streaming services like Netflix, Spotify and Storytel (each dominant in one of the cultural sectors in Norway) provide access to enormous amounts of media content. However, it is not always straightforward for users to navigate these services. For content producers and streaming providers, coming to terms on distribution licenses in an international marketplace is hard. Hence, not only can a single item be lost in the abundance of a vast database, but it can also be difficult to track down which service has rights to distribute which item, if anyone at all. Adding nuance to the myth of streaming ubiquity and abundance, is part of our motivation in this paper.

In a previous article (in Norwegian only), we explored conditions for availability in streaming services both conceptually and empirically, departing from a notion of 'contingent availability' (Norw. *relativ tilgjengelighet*) (Tallerås et al. 2019). We argued that distribution, dissemination and presentation is in effect a structured set-up of multiple layers that filters the content stream before it

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can reach a user. This filtering process is affected by cultural economics, technology, laws and regulations. The article mostly explored availability from a user's standpoint and with specific attention to the role of algorithms.

In this article, we go into detail on specific cultural items from Norwegian film, television and book publishing, thus shifting the perspective. We investigate availability in streaming services empirically through a case-based approach, selecting nine Norwegian award-winning and/or critically acclaimed books, movies and TV series to highlight how availability is contingent upon multiple conditions. For each case, we assess the ways cultural policy measures influence production, distribution and availability.

The research question: *What factors enable and restrict the availability of specific cultural items, and how does cultural policy address contingent and limited availability in digital contexts?*

The remainder of this paper contains a theory and background section followed by nine case presentations, a discussion and a short conclusion.

Theory and background

The internet and digitization of media have enabled new forms of distribution and access to content, making an impact on all the major culture industries (Herbert, Lotz, and Marshall 2018). The music industry has in a short time moved from physical formats through downloadable file formats to streaming services. Streaming services, with Spotify and Apple Music as the global leaders, are now the dominant access point for music. The audiovisual market has experienced a similar development, although with a more fragmented outcome. Along with national broadcasters and cable providers, streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and HBO make for new distribution channels and production frameworks for film and television programming. While still comparatively marginal, streaming services also provide access to ebooks and digital audiobooks. Amazon's Kindle Unlimited and Swedish Storytel are pushing this development. All in all, this shift can be characterized as a move away from markets based on single transactions to markets based on the purchase and sale of rights and access (Colbjørnsen 2020; Lotz 2017; Smith and Telang 2016).

Commercial streaming services are typically financed through either a monthly subscription fee or through advertising. In exchange for payment or ad-exposure, the user gets access to the entire database, usually without restrictions on use. Non-commercial entities such as public service broadcasters and library organisations also operate streaming services, with similar characteristics apart from the funding. Unlike digital formats based on downloading files (like iTunes), the user of streaming services has access to media files that are continuously flowing from a database, but cannot extract the files themselves, share them with others outside the service or remix the content (without violating the terms of service) (Küng 2017; Perzanowski and Schultz 2016).

The business model of streaming services also has another side, based on the fact that users contribute data to the service when they interact with it (Maasø and Hagen 2019; Bolin and Velkova 2020). Large amounts of data about the user's habits and preferences informs the streaming provider's decisions on how to display and recommend content. This presentation of content to users takes place on a screen, a user interface, or more colloquially, a 'shop window', where only a small minority of items from the database are visible at a time. The selection of this content can be done automatically, by algorithms, or by human editors and other curators.

Already in the databases, content has been filtered. Even in content bases containing tens of thousands (or even millions of) items, there will be missing bits. The Norwegian streaming services for audio books and e-books contain thousands of items, but are still limited, especially compared with the offers available in libraries and bookstores. And while some items are singled out for recommendation by the service's algorithms, others rarely or ever reach a single user. In the case of Netflix, the content structure at the database level may best be illustrated with the large variations on the catalogue size according to where the subscriber resides (Lobato and Lotz 2020; Stewart

2016). Algorithms that operate based on databases are thus inherently restricted by what these databases contain and how the data in them are structured (Bucher 2018; boyd and Crawford 2012).

The discourse on streaming services is characterized by hyperbolic claims: 'Unlimited entertainment' is a marketing catchphrase from Netflix. However, there are many obstacles or barriers that limit availability of media content, even in a world of supposed abundance and availability. According to the Oxford online dictionary, 'availability' is the quality of being able to be used or obtained. In this context, where we primarily discuss books, films and television programs, we understand availability in a broad sense as the opportunity to read or see them. For the consumer, availability may seem a dichotomous dimension: Either you find what you were looking for, or you do not. You may, however, end up reading another book, see another movie or just browse the internet, without your initial desired object being strictly unavailable. You could subscribe to the wrong service, misspell a title when you search for it or have a deprecated version of mandatory software on your smart TV. Availability, then, is influenced by how much effort, money, expertise or technical infrastructure you bring to the table.

The pyramid of availability

With the concept of *contingent availability*, we seek to capture the factors that enable and restrict availability, looking at different stages in the process of making a cultural item available. In Tallerås et al. (2019), we suggested that availability consists of five levels. In order for a cultural product to be selected by an end user, it must be made available at all these levels. The *making available* is crucial, as it highlights how items do not simply *become* available: Availability is managed, both supported and hindered by social actors. Below we provide a visualization of how availability in streaming services is structured and subsequently summarize the five levels.

Overall, the concept of contingent availability can be presented as a pyramid with different levels where content is included or excluded as one moves towards the top of the pyramid (see figure 1). In this paper, we have made the small alteration from Tallerås et al. (2019) that «algorithmic availability» is substituted with 'presented availability', indicating that the final presentation to the user in an interface can be performed by both machine algorithms and human editors.

Ontological availability: The fact that an item is ontologically available means that it exists in the world, and is thus an absolute prerequisite for it to be available at all.

Technological availability: The fact that an item is technologically available means that it exists in a format and in a state that can be played and read by the available media technology in question.

Legal availability: The fact that an item is legally available means that there are contractual agreements and licenses and/or laws and regulations that contribute to, or do not prevent, the work being able to reach the end user.

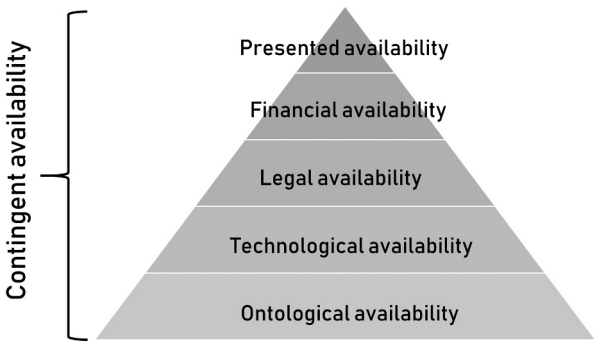

Figure 1. The pyramid of availability.

Financial availability: The fact that an item is financially available means that it exists at a price that both the licensee and the end user can accept.

Presented availability: The fact that an item is presented as available means that end users are exposed to the work, either through a form of algorithmic filtering, by a human editor/editorial team, or a combination of the two.

We wish to note that, while we focus here on availability in streaming services, the pyramid model is likely to be applicable in other contexts as well, both digital and analogue, cultural or non-cultural. Our conceptions of levels of availability have much in common with general theories of how information systems work (Flodén 2018). Nonetheless, there are specifics to culture markets that need to be taken into account.

Culture markets and their mechanisms

In this article, we approach items belonging to three separate industries: television, film and book publishing. While these are disparate in many ways, they also share some characteristics. Both similarities and differences need to be explicated because they have a bearing on how availability has traditionally been managed in the cultural industries.

The television, film and book industries comprise production, distribution and sales/consumption. The end products are for sale in open consumer markets and subject to copyright protection. The products of the cultural industries are symbolic goods whose value is multidimensional and difficult to pin (Bolin 2016).

Production is quite different between the three industries, where film and television production has typically been very expensive endeavours, and thus managed in studio systems, while book production is comparatively cheap, and thus organized in individualized author contexts. While there are huge differences between the cost structure of a major film production and a novel, the shared assumption is that culture industries products are characterized by high initial costs and low reproduction costs (marginal cost). Mechanical reproduction and later digitization has further contributed to lowering marginal cost (Towse 2019).

Distribution is also different between the industries, but there is a shared tendency for indirect sales, thus the common prevalence of middlemen and intermediary organizations enabling the diffusion of symbolic goods from producer to consumer. Intermediaries such as studios, agencies and publishers take on risks and initial costs and typically advertise and market the culture items.

Cultural products are categorized in different sectors, and sales and distribution channels are traditionally separate for each industry: Television programmes have been available through television sets and via cable or satellite; films can be seen in cinemas and purchased on DVD/Blu-Ray; books are sold through book stores and lent through libraries. Internet distribution and streaming services have made for new channels across all industries.

Each item can also be packaged in different ways and sold at different prices. Content producers typically use this repackaging strategy to create various 'windows' where availability is managed to create maximum profit from all potential customers (price discrimination) (Shapiro and Varian 1998; Smith and Telang 2016): TV series are aired on cable TV before released to streaming services; films are first shown in cinemas before made available for screening on TV, in rental services and for streaming; books are first available in hardback, before the paperback and ebook versions arrive (Smith and Telang 2016). For TV programming, the notion of scheduling has been an important way of managing how programs reach the public. Streaming marks a break with scheduling, as content is typically, but not exclusively, made available in bulk (Lotz 2017; Spilker and Colbjørnsen 2020).

Typically, for each window, the price to consumer decreases. The decrease in price per window can be seen to heighten availability, as a larger portion of the audience is able to access content. However, most cultural items have a short life span and disappear from commercial circulation after some years. Libraries, archives and public service repositories may prolong the life span, but even here, availability is limited by resources and opportunities for dissemination and display (Burkart and Leijonhufvud 2019).

Overall, digitization of cultural items can be expected to increase availability, for various reasons. The scarcity of material objects is not technically an issue with digitized items. A digital media file can be disseminated across the globe, and the costs of copying and spreading are miniscule. Moreover, digital items are not subject to material decay, so can enjoy a long life and do not even require shelf space (if not on physical carriers).

Streaming services are perhaps the best example of the promise of availability in the digital age. As mentioned, streaming also tends to break with established cultural sector practices such as windowing, price discrimination and scheduling: In streaming services, content is often made available all at the same time, on-demand and at a flat price. And as international services, they cater to audiences across the globe.

Cultural policy

Access to and availability of cultural content is not just the domain of commercial corporations, but the concern of cultural policy-making, laws and regulation. Indeed, the idea that 'culture is a pure public good, one that should be equally available to all', is one of the core tenets of most cultural policies (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005, 7). The Declaration of human rights, Article 27, states that 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits' (United Nations 1948).

The Nordic countries are typically associated with the so-called 'architect model' in which a ministry of culture is tasked with organizing the general cultural policy framework (Duelund 2003). Additionally, Norway has, in line with the British model, established an arm's length organ, the Arts Council. Overall, according to Duelund (2008), cultural policy in the Nordic countries since 1945 has been rooted in the basic idea 'to promote art and culture with a view to ensuring artistic freedom and cultural democracy' (Duelund 2008, 7). This view of cultural policy also extends to the media sector (Syvertsen et al. 2014).

While cultural policy measures can be located at both national and international levels (Mitchell 2003), here, we focus on national cultural policy. We take a fairly 'narrow' perspective on cultural policy as part of deliberate measures taken by cultural government agencies (Duelund 2003), but also incorporate issues of availability that have often been sorted under the term 'media policy'. Ultimately, our approach is influenced by the fact that digitalization changes and challenges cultural policy (Valtysson 2020), taking into account such aspects as global platforms, digital licensing schemes and algorithmic filtering.

Although some private foundations do provide financial support, the state plays the crucial part in supporting the arts and culture in Norway. Availability and access are considered some of the most prominent aims of cultural policy, as expressed in the 2018 Norwegian white paper *The Power of Culture*:

> An active cultural policy is a prerequisite in order for art and culture to benefit as many people as possible, by ensuring that all people have actual access to culture, regardless of their background (Ministry of Culture 2018, 16).

Norwegian cultural institutions such as public libraries, a public broadcaster and the otherwise heavily subsidized media and cultural sectors receive funding and privileges in exchange for obligations on content diversity, quality and access for all. Access and availability is supported by legislation that sets requirements for how important information and cultural content should be made available and used by the population, across all the cultural sectors that we analyze here.

The commercial side of the Norwegian literary institution also enjoys subsidies and support mechanisms, striving to ensure access and availability for readers. This is achieved through several different schemes, three of which are particularly central: The Norwegian Book Agreement is a legally binding agreement which, among other things, ensures that the bookstores are obligated to obtain all available titles from any publisher upon request and sets terms for price fixation (Løyland and Ringstad 2012; Poort and van Eijk. 2017). The fixed price agreement means that streaming services

for ebooks and audio books are effectively backlist services. Further, print books (and, from 2019, digital books) are exempt from value-added tax (Standard rate 25%) (Colbjørnsen 2014). Finally, the Government subsidizes the purchasing of a number of literary books, non-fiction books and children's literature for libraries. Aside from an expansive public library system, the Norwegian Government also funds the vast digitization efforts of the National Library (Gran, Røssaak, and Kristensen 2019) and The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (NLB), which produces and lends out audio books and braille books, free to use for patrons with disabilities. In order for literature to reach non-Norwegian audiences, a cultural export programme exists, Norla – Norwegian literature abroad.

While cultural policy on literature is applied at several stages in the production and dissemination of books, Norwegian cultural policy for film and television largely targets production (Moseng 2017; Bjerkeland 2015). The Norwegian Film Institute (NFI) awards funding to select productions based on either the perceived artistic or commercial merits of project applications. NFI also grants production funding for some television-drama projects, but while the NFI funding is usually the base funding for film projects, it is usually the top financing for TV projects. In addition to funding awarded prior to production, finished films might receive marketing support from the NFI as well as post-hoc support (Norw. 'etterhåndsstøtte'): If a film sells more than a set minimum of cinema tickets in Norway, currently 10.000 or 35.000 depending on the kind of film, the NFI will match the earnings from any market.

Further, the government directly supports two public service broadcasters (PSBs). NRK, the traditional non-commercial national broadcaster, was until 2020 supported by a license fee and is now financed over the national budget. TV2, a commercial public service broadcaster founded in 1992, began receiving limited direct support in 2018 after arguing that the commercial broadcasting privileges were no longer sufficient to maintain the station as a PSB. Both broadcasters also operate under regulations that require them to have a certain amount of original Norwegian television drama, and to use external production companies.

In addition to the PSBs there have been other policy-driven attempts to support dissemination of Norwegian films and to a lesser extent TV series. The company Norgesfilm has operated several VOD services aimed at schools and libraries as well as the open service Filmarkivet. NFI runs the streaming service Filmbib for documentaries and short films. In 2016, Nettkino.no received funding for a service that could bridge the gap between cinemas and the home entertainment market. Despite also receiving EU support, the service was deemed unwanted by cinemas and distributors and unpopular among users (Ryssedal 2018). It has since been relaunched as a conventional VOD service with a focus on Norwegian and 'quality films'. All of these services remain marginal compared to the commercial VOD services.

To sum up, Norwegian cultural policy works at different levels: Overall cultural policy *frameworks* (legal, political, ideological, infrastructural) can support the arts and culture by other means than financial, whereas *subsidies* (direct and indirect) provide a financial support mechanism. More concretely, availability of cultural items like books, films and television programming can be supported by the state providing basic artist support (grants, housing), by project/production support (direct subsidies or by application), or by supporting or creating channels for distribution, dissemination and consumption.

Finally, it should be noted that the cultural field is strongly hierarchized: Divides between high culture (theatre, literature, art) and popular culture (e.g. comic books, video games, pop music) still exist and influence cultural policy. The tendency has been for high culture to be subject to support mechanisms whereas art forms associated with popular culture are more rarely supported, but this has changed with increased attention to the commercial potential of the so-called creative industries (Garnham 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005).

Materials and methods: case selection

In the following section, we will present nine cases of books, films and TV programs, all selected with the purpose of highlighting aspects pertaining to the notion of contingent availability. Thus, the cases are not representative of books, films and TV programs in general, but are purposefully

sampled to gain rich information for in-depth study (Flyvbjerg 2006; Yin 2009). Seeking cases that lend themselves well to discussing contingent availability in streaming services, the purpose of the case sampling strategy was to 'clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences', to quote Flyvbjerg (2006, 229).

The status of our cases is somewhere between 'extreme cases' and 'critical cases' (Flyvbjerg 2006). In our selection process, we used the following broad criteria: We sampled evenly across the three industries, three from each. The cases needed to be recent, from 2013 to 2017, but not so recent that their newness could hamper availability in itself. All cases would have received awards, critical and/or popular acclaim. They can thus be expected not to disappear from the cultural memory because of lack of quality or appeal. However, we are not explicitly interested in popularity or audience numbers as such. As will be shown in the following analysis, the cases are all in some way supported by cultural policy. We also sought to ensure breadth in genres and formats, both to ensure case variation and to explore the ways that availability is influenced by these factors. Finally, we wanted to avoid obscure cases that would be entirely unfamiliar to both Norwegian and international readers.

Through the analysis of these nine cases, we aim to shed a light on the extent to which items of cultural importance are available to the public and how laws, regulations and subsidies enable access. Specifically, we wish to analyse availability in streaming services, but the case presentations also touch on availability in other distribution channels. In the following, we first give an introduction to each work and its author/originator and context, and then indicate its availability for Norwegian audiences.

Results: case presentation and analysis

Dag solstad*, the insoluble epic element in telemark in the years 1592–1896,* Oktober forlag, 2013

Dag Solstad is arguably Norway's most acclaimed living author. Since his debut in 1965, he is the author of 19 novels and a number of essay collections, dramatic plays and non-fiction books. Solstad received the honorary Brage award, Norway's most prestigious literary award, in 1999 and the Brage Prize for fiction in 2006. He is also the recipient of the 1989 Nordic Council's Prize for Literature and was awarded the Norwegian Critics' Prize in 1969, 1992 and 1999. Solstad was granted Honorary salary of the Norwegian State ['Statens æreslønn'] (200 000 NOK annually for life) in 2011. Solstad is widely translated and acclaimed internationally, having been short- or longlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize three times (2007, 2009 and 2012).

The Insoluble Epic Element in Telemark in the Years 1592–1896 [Norw. *Det uoppløselige episke element i Telemark i perioden 1591–1896*, aka the Telemark novel] was published in Norwegian in 2013 by publisher Oktober forlag. The novel follows Solstad's family on his mother's side, and the farms that the family was connected to for close to 300 years. The Telemark novel takes the form of a highly detailed chronicle, resembling a non-fiction genealogy. It is one of several publications from Solstad's hand that transgress or play around with genre boundaries. Besides speculations to the contrary (Korsvold 2013), it was included in the library purchasing programme for literary fiction. (A previous genre-breaking effort from Solstad, *Medaljens forside. En roman om Aker* (1990), was not included in the library purchasing programme.) *The Insoluble Epic Element in Telemark* was nominated for Brage and the Norwegian Critics' Award in 2013.

Availability

The Telemark novel was published as hardback and ebook first in October 2013. A paperback version came in 2014, before a softcover version was published in 2016 as part of the Collected works of Dag Solstad series. It is not released as audio book, unlike several of his previous novels. In terms of how readers can access it, the Telemark novel is still widely available in several print formats and as an

ebook. It can be purchased through a number of channels and, because it was included in the purchasing programme, is available in public libraries, though not in digitized format from the National Library. The book is not available in the Norwegian streaming services Storytel, Fabel and Ebok.no Pluss, neither as ebook nor audio book. However, a digital audio book version is available through The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille.

Steffen Kverneland*, Munch,* no comprendo press, 2013

Steffen Kverneland is a Norwegian author, artist and illustrator. Kverneland has published numerous comic strips and albums. Since 1993, he has specialized in adapting classical literary texts into comics strips or albums. His work includes two large-scale 'graphic biographies' of artists Olaf Gulbransson (*Olaf G.*, 2004, with Lars Fiske) and Edvard Munch (*Munch*, 2013).

Munch, the graphic biography of Norwegian modernist painter Edvard Munch was published by No comprendo press in 2013. The Munch book is essentially a reworked and expanded version of previously published stubs in the *Kanon* comic book series published 2006–2012. *Munch* comprises Kverneland's drawings detailing the life and work of the famous painter, with careful renditions of Munch's art combined with drawings in his own style. All quotes, most of them from Munch's contemporaries, are referenced judiciously, as in an academic publication.

The book was very well received and widely construed as a genre-crossing masterpiece. It won the Brage prize for non-fiction in 2013, as the first graphic work. Nonetheless, it was submitted to the Arts Council's library purchasing programme for comic books, not for non-fiction. The Norwegian Ministry of Culture awarded *Munch* with a prize for comic books and children's literature for 2013, but the book is primarily directed at adult audiences. The first chapter of the *Munch* book was exhibited at the Munch museum in Oslo, and later acquired in its entirety by the National Gallery of Norway. The book was supported by the Norwegian Arts Council and the private Fritt Ord foundation. *Munch* has been translated into numerous languages, supported by Norla.

Availability

The print version of *Munch*, published in one edition (soft cover, four colour illustrations) in April 2013, is widely available in bookstores and libraries. No ebook version is available in Norwegian, but the English ebook can be obtained through Amazon's Kindle store and the dedicated comics store comixology.com (a subsidiary of Amazon), only in the US. The book is not available in Norwegian streaming services at all. The graphic format helps to explain the unavailability of an audio version. Norwegian streaming services do not provide comic books or graphic novels at all.

Heidi Sævareid*, slipp hold,* mangschou, 2015

Heidi Sævareid is a Norwegian author, primarily of books for children and young adults. Sævareid has practised as a teacher and a literary editor, as well as a book critic and translator. She has been nominated for a Brage award thrice. Her first novel was awarded the debutant price from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture. Sævareid has published with several publishers: Her first young adult book *Spranget* (2013) with Omnipax, her second YA book *Slipp Hold* (2015) with Mangschou, and then her next two YA books *Slagside* (2016) and *Bruddlinjer* (2018) with Gyldendal. The non-fiction book *Life in the UK* was published by Flamme in 2018, before her debut adult novel *Longyearbyen* was published by Gyldendal in 2020. Internationally, she is represented by Oslo Literary Agency and published in Croatian, Danish and German.

Sævareid's second book, *Slipp Hold* (2015) is the story of the couple Mari and Torger and follows Mari's explorations of self and body. It has been described as a bold and unusual novel for the target group 15+, detailing so-called body suspension techniques. It was overall very well received by book critics. The Norwegian language society Riksmålsforbundet awarded Sævareid in 2016, and *Slipp Hold* was nominated for a Brage.

Availability

Slipp Hold was published as a hardback in February 2015. This version is still widely available in bookstores. It has not been published in other formats for sale, neither physical nor digital. The novel was included in the library purchasing programme for 2015, meaning that approx. 1700 exemplars are available in public libraries across Norway. *Slipp Hold* is not available in any of the streaming services, nor as downloadable ebook/audio book. This is unlike Sævareid's later titles published with Gyldendal which are available in ebook format in Norwegian book stores. Similar to the Solstad case, a digital audio book version of *Slipp Hold* is available through The Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille.

Bjørn Olaf Johannessen, Erlend Loe and Per Schreiner, *struggle for life,* NRK, 2014-2015

Struggle for life (Kampen for tilværelsen) was an award-winning Norwegian TV-drama produced by and initially broadcast on state broadcaster NRK. Touted as the first 'writer-led' NRK drama series it was met with relatively high expectations already at the pre-production stage, not the least because all three writers were award-winners already and in the case of Erlend Loe a writer of numerous best selling and award winning books as well.

It received uniform critical praise and was nominated for best TV drama at the 2014 Prix Europa as well as several awards at the Norwegian 'Gullruten', where it won best TV screenplay in 2014 and best TV direction and best TV cinematography in 2015. It aired at main channel NRK1 at 21:35 on Wednesdays and re-broadcast the following Sunday at 01:05.

Availability

All episodes were available on NRK's streaming platform after the initial broadcast of each episode and until 6 months after the final broadcast of the final episode of season two. The first episode was broadcast 10 September 2014, and the final broadcast of the final episode was 4 May 2015.

As 3 September 2015 and the removal of the series from the streaming service drew close, reactions to the removal appeared in the press. Critics, scholars and notably writer Erlend Loe, lamented the 'total disappearance' of the series. At this point, other NRK drama productions, like *SKAM* (see below), were available to stream 'in all perpetuity'.

Unlike these recent productions *Struggle for life* had been made under older contracts with, among others, the actors guild. These contracts limited streaming to a 'catch-up' service after transmission. According to NRK, putting the series on the streaming services would require 'millions' in payments to the actors guild. *Struggle for life* was also not released on DVD, unlike earlier NRK drama series. NRK had decided to end this practice as DVD sales had floundered and was not prepared to make an exception.

The series briefly resurfaced twice after its disappearance from the NRK streaming service. First, from July to October 2016, it featured as an inflight movie on Norwegian flights to the US and Thailand. Later in 2016, it was announced that HBO Nordic had bought the rights, and would start streaming the series in December 2016. By May 2019, however, *Struggle for life* was once again unavailable except for, according to a tweet from Erlend Loe, as a personal copy on a USB stick carried by each of the three writers.

Jon Iver Helgaker and Jonas Torgersen, *Norsemen,* Viafilm/NRK, 2016-

Norsemen (Vikingane) is a TV comedy series set in 790 AD in a fictional viking village. The show is produced by Viafilm and was initially broadcast by NRK. *Norsemen* was shot in both Norwegian and English language versions, although when the first season was in production no international sales had been made.

The entire first season was released on NRK's streaming platform on Friday 14 October 2016. The first episode was then broadcast on NRK1 at 22.30 on Friday October 21, and the rest of the first season was broadcast on the following Fridays. The first episode was seen by 646 000 on linear TV, and had another 246 000 views online. NRK quickly commissioned season two, which premiered in November 2017, and season three followed in February 2020. *Norsemen* season 3 received production and development support (2.4 mill NOK in total) from NFI.

Norsemen won Gullruten for best comedy show in 2017 and 2020, and was the only Norwegian show listed among in *The New York Times*' list of 30 best international shows of the decade.

Availability

Currently, all seasons of *Norsemen* are available on the NRK streaming service, until September 2023, January 2024 and February 2027, respectively. In June 2017 it was announced that Netflix had bought the global rights, including Norway, for the English version. Originally this was only for the first season, but season two followed in September 2018 and season three in July 2020. After the sale of the first season to Netflix, Viafilm launched a targeted Facebook campaign in order to drive interest for the show on Netflix. Viafilm spent 30 000 dollars on the campaign, and sent all the traffic directly to Netflix. While they could not directly measure the effects of the campaign themselves, as Netflix does not divulge viewership numbers, there were a number of clear indications of success. Firstly, interest in the show and actors soared on IMDB, secondly, Nielsen ratings measured the show as the 4th most popular Netflix show at a moment in time. According to Viafilm, this led to Netflix picking up the second season as well as branding it a 'Netflix Original' and increasing its internal promotion.

Julie Andem, *SKAM*, NRK, 2015-2017

SKAM is a TV series which gained significant worldwide popularity during its running time from 2015 to 2017. The teen drama, created by Julie Andem and launched by NRK, follows a group of teenagers at a secondary school in Oslo. Each of the four seasons have a lead character thematizing topics such as sexual assault, homosexuality and religion. *SKAM* was published daily as a multimedia product comprising postings in social media and shorter clips on a website (skam.p3.no). The clips were synthesized into episodes published weekly, at NRK's streaming service and shown on one of NRK's linear TV channels (NRK3). In 2016 Sweden, Denmark and Iceland bought the rights to show the series.

With more than 1 million people streaming the weekly episodes, *SKAM* is one of the most streamed shows at NRK. It has received a number of awards, including 13 prizes at 'Gullruten', in the years 2016–17. It was also well received among critics and has been a hot topic in studies of media and popular culture. The academic interest is often related to its social media-driven publishing model, the strong engagement among its fans and the international success. Until January 2017, the series was available globally from NRK's website and streaming services, and nationally in the mentioned Nordic countries. The series was not dubbed into non-Nordic languages, but subtitles were translated by fans and spread through social media. The success has also led to remakes in the US (with the title 'SKAM Austin') and in several European countries.

Availability

SKAM was made available on an open website, through NRKs streaming service, and shown on national linear TV in several Nordic countries. Clips and episodes are still available through the NRK website. As mentioned, the series was only globally available from NRK until January 2017, before the launch of its fourth season. Then, music organizations claimed that license agreements, meant for a Norwegian audience, were violated by the large international following, and NRK chose to 'geo-block' (Lobato and Meese 2016) international access.

Bent Hamer, *1001 grams,* BulBul Film/Norsk filmdistribusjon, 2015

Bent Hamer is one of Norway's most recognized movie directors. His movies, from the debut *Eggs* in 1995 to his latest *1001 grams* in 2013, have won a number of Norwegian and international awards. At the 2014 Toronto film festival, *1001 grams* was presented in the *Masters* program, illustrating Hamers position as an internationally acclaimed director. *1001 grams* was his second movie to represent Norway for the Oscars. His movies tend to attract more cinema visitors abroad than in Norway. Hamer has been associated with the tradition of 'art cinema narrators' (Torkelsen 2011), and is arguably representing a genre often well received by critics and cinephiles, but also often overseen by the larger audience.

1001 grams follows a researcher calibrating measurement tools at the Norwegian Institute of Weights and Measures. The title *1001 grams* refers to a prototype of a kilo located at the institute. The movie received substantial support for production and distribution from NFI.

Availability

1001 grams has been broadcast twice at NRK, the last time in December 2019. Following this broadcast, the film was available through NRK's streaming platform for a year. It is released and still available on DVD. It is also available through iTunes and some other providers in the transactional video on-demand (TVOD) market, such as Amazon's Prime Video. According to a survey conducted by NFI in 2018, it was at that time part of the rental catalogue offered by some of the Norwegian TV distributors. It is not available in any of the well-known Norwegian or international streaming services.

Frode Fimland, *Siblings are forever,* Filmfilm/Tour de Force, 2013

Frode Fimland has contributed to a number of productions for NRK and other Norwegian TV channels. After the success of the documentary *Siblings are forever* (Norw. *Søsken til evig tid*), he has mainly worked as a documentary filmmaker.

Siblings are forever portrays the siblings Magnar and Oddny and their struggle to run a family farm in the western parts of Norway. It became a success at the cinema and is the documentary movie with most viewers (linear) at TV2, the second largest Norwegian TV channel. It won a best-movie award at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in the United States, and it was nominated for the 'People's Amanda Prize' at the International Film Festival in Haugesund. The popularity in the cinema, and the moderate feedback at the Amanda awards indicate that this film is more of an audience favourite than a critics' pick. This is somewhat an opposite situation to *1001 grams. Siblings are forever* received development production and distribution support from NFI.

Availability

According to NFI's investigations of availability of Norwegian movies that have premiered on cinema, documentaries prove particularly difficult to obtain. This applies both to TVOD and streaming services. *Siblings are forever* illustrates this by being inaccessible in both markets. The movie was bought by and aired on TV2 (linear). Afterwards, it was available through TV2's own streaming service, Sumo, but is no longer available there. It has not been broadcast on NRK. The only possibilities to watch the movie today are by purchasing a DVD, or using the public library streaming service «filmbib.no».

Thea Hvistendahl, *The Monkey and the Mouth,* Einarfilm/Euforia, 2017

The Monkey and the Mouth (Adjø Montebello) is Thea Hvistendal's debut feature and is an experimental concert film where footage from the popular Norwegian rap duo Karpe's three sell-out concerts at major Norwegian concert venue Oslo Spektrum is intersped with short fiction films

forming a narrative. *The Monkey and the Mouth* was nominated in four categories for Amanda awards and won for best production design.[2] The film was produced by Einar film and distributed by Euforia. *The Monkey and the Mouth* did not receive production or development support from NFI, but did receive marketing support.

Availability

The initial release of *The Monkey and the Mouth* was characterised by a strategically limited availability. It was first released in cinemas for four days in December 2017. During the summer of 2018 it was screened again at some festivals, and in December 2018, a full year after the cinema premiere, it was released digitally. Another year later, in December 2019, it was screened by NRK and remains available on their streaming service until December 2022. It has not been made available on any other streaming services, unlike most of Euforia's catalogue which is available on *Norsk Film*, a streaming service available for free to customers of broadband and cable TV provider Teliaplay.

Discussion

In this article, we have taken a case-based approach, gathering information on specific titles to see to what extent they are available to the public, specifically in streaming services, and how cultural policy plays in. In doing so, we have attempted to test assumptions that digitalization enhances availability, and that cultural policy further supports availability and promotes access. By choosing critically acclaimed, popular and widely recognized items, we wanted to highlight the ways in which even culturally significant titles may be unavailable or rather lacking in availability when measured against the hyperbole of digital marketing and the lofty goals of cultural policy.

Our findings may seem paradoxical: On the one hand, the nine items are, or have been, publicly displayed and widely available. They are circulated in bookstores and libraries, screened on the most watched Norwegian channels and produced in numerous editions and versions, including digital versions with seemingly endless 'spreadability' (Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013). However, upon closer inspection, we see that availability is contingent upon a number of conditions and aspects. The book cases indicate how recent publications that are widely available in print format can be unavailable in streaming. Indeed, traditional distribution and dissemination channels such as physical libraries and brick and mortar book stores remain the access points for users who require the fullest possible selection. However, if their requirements also involve a technological preference, these channels fall short, as digital and streaming offers are typically provided elsewhere. None of the three literary works are available in commercial streaming services, although, interestingly, audio book versions for streaming of the Telemark novel and *Slipp Hold* are indeed in place in the NLB library for the visually impaired and people with reading difficulties. Kverneland's *Munch* is available in ebook format only in the English translation and through comixology.com. The widely touted digitization initiative of the National Library of Norway (Gran, Røssaak, and Kristensen 2019), is limited to works published before year 2000.

For films and television programming, there is a parallel pattern, in which traditional channels maintain availability and visibility. At the time of their release, *Struggle for life, SKAM* and *Norsemen* and had the highest degree of availability any TV show in Norway could expect, as all were broadcast on the biggest channel, NRK1, and in good, if not optimal, scheduling slots. All three shows were also available on the open NRK streaming service. Currently, the situation is very different for the three shows. *Struggle for life* was caught in the transition between technologies, or more correctly in the judicial and economic fallout of the transition from DVD to streaming. While NRK remains the sole rights-owner, they still consider it too expensive to release it on either the streaming service or as a physical medium. *SKAM* is available on NRK for streaming, for the foreseeable time. *SKAM* is nevertheless an example of how availability at the legal level can be complicated by international success.

Norsemen remains available on NRK's streaming service and will remain available there for far longer than what was the case with *Struggle for life* made only a year earlier. Due to the Netflix sale, *Norsemen* can be considered the 'most available' Norwegian television series in the world. However, it is important to note that this is in large part due to the Viafilm campaign. While this did not change ontological, technological, legal or economic availability of the series, it raised the presented availability. By skillfully using Facebook's marketing algorithms, Viafilm increased the Netflix viewership of the show in ways that the Netflix algorithm had not. This likely helped the show overcome the cold-start problem associated with recommendation algorithms (Sancho, Jesus et al. 2012) and probably started a positive chain-reaction for the show. As more people watched the show, the Netflix recommendation algorithm could more easily recommend the show to more viewers and so on. This led to Netflix branding it as a 'Netflix Original' which also seems to be associated with added visibility on the platform (Tallerås et al. 2019).

Neither *1001 grams, The Monkey and the Mouth* nor *Siblings are forever* are available on commercial streaming services. *1001 grams* and *Siblings are forever* went through periods of wide circulation, involving cinema screenings and broadcasting, but are now harder to come by for users of streaming services. DVD copies and download options ensure that *1001 grams* is still available, though. The availability of *Siblings are forever* is somewhat secured by library distribution through the filmbib portal. *The Monkey and the Mouth* followed an opposite path, where the availability was kept low by the distributor with a limited cinematic distribution and delayed digital availability until it became broadly available on NRK.

In the previous article (Tallerås et al. 2019), we found that Norwegian films, ebooks and audio books were generally poorly represented in the major streaming services, and that available content is scattered across various services and typically offered only in certain windows of time. In practice, a member of the public who wishes to have access to a wide array of Norwegian titles (films, TV, books) in streaming format must subscribe to a number of services and would still be missing many titles, both old and new. Thus, while streaming promises abundance, fragmentation must be considered a severe hindrance on availability of concrete items.[1] The present case studies confirm the tendencies toward a fragmentation of distribution channels.

A fundamental aspect of streaming services is that they are global phenomena, which interrupt the national media structure of providers and services (Gran, Røssaak, and Kristensen 2019). This implies both that global media companies gain considerable market shares in national markets, such as Netflix in the Norwegian TV and film markets, but also that services imitate and resemble each other, with interface, presentation algorithms and the functional streaming models based on similar technical infrastructures.

The massive global impact is challenging for a cultural policy that has traditionally been oriented towards local challenges. The streaming market are nevertheless approached with policies and regulations. With its Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the EU demands a certain quota of the content offered through streaming services to be produced in member countries, aiming at 'preserving cultural diversity' and 'safeguarding media pluralism' (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2010). As a national example, book streaming services are required to provide all available titles in the Norwegian book market upon request, as per a 2017 addendum to the Norwegian Book Agreement. The practical realization of this addendum is nevertheless still to come.

Provided new developments and adaptation, cultural policy measures can still be used to counter availability challenges, especially at the financial and legal levels in the pyramid. There are however severe challenges at the presentation level at the top of the pyramid, that need to be mentioned. Most streaming services provide a larger database of content than is manageable for any single user to browse. These services, therefore, resort to automated forms of exposure via algorithms. We have not investigated the extent to which our chosen cases are actually exposed to users of streaming services, but this would probably constitute a significant part of their potential availability. Today, there are regulations that prohibit Google and other web search providers from conducting hidden advertising through their search results, but no cultural policy measures that say anything about

what is to be recommended through the interface of streaming services. This is an area of increasing research and discussion, especially with regard to the consequences of public service broadcasters starting to use similar algorithms in their services (Tallerås et al. 2020).

Conclusion

We will conclude here by noting that digitalization in general, and more specifically streaming, cannot be seen to have increased availability across all the items we have analysed. The nine items we have looked at will struggle to reach the widest possible digital audience, primarily because cultural economics and media technological restraints result in fragmentation and unavailable items. In the cultural economy, time is managed to create a profitable business. This has consequences for our cases. Films and TV shows such as *Struggle for life, Norsemen, 1001 grams* and *Siblings for life* are made broadly available only in short periods, through screening on the public service broadcasting channels or in cinemas. For the Telemark novel, *Munch* and *Slipp Hold*, screening windows are not a matter of concern, but publishers nonetheless tend to publish books in versions that are made available sequentially over the first few years of the book's lifespan. Thus, ebooks and digital audio books are not necessarily available from day one – and frequently not even at a later stage.

Streaming is typically the latest version to appear. The time constraints are due to licensing terms which again are a matter of economics. While we have not examined the issue specifically in this article, both the case of *Slipp Hold* and the three film cases suggest that distributors and publishers play a key role. Heidi Sævareid's book with a small publisher, Mangschou, is less available than her later books with major publisher Gyldendal; and all three film cases were distributed by companies that do not have output deals with streaming services, unlike the leading Norwegian distributor Nordisk Film Distribusjon.

Technology and formats also amount to hindrances, as genre-crossing and innovative titles may not fit with established channels and platforms. As new technologies appear and older technologies vanish or lose their central position, certain titles may lose out, as *Struggle for life* exemplifies. All together, the various mechanisms and practices that characterise the culture industry contexts which we have investigated means that items are far from unavailable, but rather that their availability is fragmented.

Two cases stand out as exceptions: *The Monkey and the Mouth* comes forth as an exception as its availability is strongly linked to streaming distribution rather than traditional (linear) channels for audio-visual content. Similarly, *SKAM* emerges as a highly available PSB hybrid success. This show is also an example of how illegitimate distribution channels ('piracy') solves a problem of unattainability, all because of geographical restrictions on distribution.

Despite our reservations about broad proclamations that cultural policy ensures availability, a pattern emerges across the nine cases: National cultural policy institutions actually do promote access: Without distribution channels such as NRK and public libraries, availability would be hampered even more. All the three TV cases indicate how direct funding of NRK has been important. Support from the Norwegian Film Institute was crucial for *Norsemen* season 3, as well as all the film cases. The Norwegian Arts Council is critical in providing production and distribution support for literature. National cultural policy nonetheless seems unable to create frameworks that support availability on a more ambitious scale where fragmentation is less of a concern. As new services from public service institutions are added to the media mix, they do in effect make for a more fragmented media sector.

Notes

1. We have opted here for the term 'cultural industries' rather than alternatives such as *media* industries, culture *industry, culture* industries, *creative* industries or *copyright* industries (cf. Hesmondhalgh 2019 for a conceptual discussion).
2. https://730.no/karpe-filmen-adjo-montebello-vant-amandaprisen-i-natt/.

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Integrating cultural and social policy through family home visits in suburban areas of exclusion: examining the rationalities of Bookstart Göteborg

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Integrating cultural and social policy through family home visits in suburban areas of exclusion: examining the rationalities of Bookstart Göteborg

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ABSTRACT
This article explores the rationality of the Bookstart home-visiting programme in Gothenburg, Sweden, concerning its general ambition to provide social inclusion through mixing cultural- and welfare policy. Through the Bookstart programme, librarians visit families in their homes to inform and instruct parents about reading books for their children to enhance language learning. The areas of the city chosen for intervention were described as socially vulnerable, typically with a majority of citizens born outside Sweden. The analysis outlines the rationality and technologies formed in a philanthropist tradition, targeting the moral potential of parenting and creating the subjectivities of the reading parent and child. Different welfare professionals employ slightly different discourses but all base their legitimacy on the benign power of knowledge about what is best for children in the city. Through this analysis, we contribute to the knowledge of how cultural policy is integrated into social policy in the contemporary advanced liberal welfare state.

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Introduction

This article explores the Bookstart Göteborg project, a book-gifting scheme carried out through home visits in socio-economically vulnerable areas in the city, and how it has been implemented and promoted by different public actors. Bookstart Gothenburg is part of a wider national policy concern since 2015 over declining reading habits among Swedish children and young people, evidenced by the PISA reports (Dir. 2016:78, p. 3; Swedish Arts Council 2018; Sjödin Sundström 2019). Notably, in the government budget proposition for 2021, Bookstart is strengthened by additional funds to address the issue of diminishing reading capabilities among children (Prop. 2020/21:1), stressing the policy importance attributed to the Bookstart intervention.

From a perspective of cultural and social policy as keys of particular governmental rationality of contemporary welfare states (Rose 1999), with an empirical focus on Bookstart Göteborg, we particularly examine the technology of the home visit – a cornerstone of the local policy ambition to reach out to families in these areas. In this sense, we see the formation of children's literacy as an example of how cultural policy, social policy, and educational policy intersect in the practice of municipal welfare services. Additionally, we see this technology in the tradition of social work with families and individuals in the marginalised communities of modern urban settings.

Concerns of (sub)urban social, economic and geographic exclusion have been on the agenda in Swedish public debate (Sernhede, Thörn, and Thörn 2016) and social policy transformations in the

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last decade (Franzén, Hertting, and Thörn 2016). Accordingly, social policy objectives, in terms of social inclusion or integration, have been top priorities (Dahlstedt and Eliassi 2018). These discussions must be viewed in the light of increasing immigration and increasing socio-economic segregation coinciding with ethnic segregation (Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2016) and resulting in increased stigmatisation of so-called suburban areas of exclusion (Backvall 2019). In Sweden, such a discourse of social exclusion has been heavily directed towards certain populations and areas of cities being in a state of otherness, which is referred to as 'outsidership' (Davidsson and Petersson 2017). In the 2000s, cultural policy was formulated with concern to social exclusion in many European welfare states (Bishop 2012; Kawashima 2006), consequently promoting culture as an instrument to achieve social inclusion (Belfiore and Bennett 2007), for instance in Sweden (Ekholm and Lindström Sol 2019).

This article aims to explore the governmental rationality of Bookstart Göteborg, concerning its general ambition to provide social inclusion. How are problems constructed in discourse, which is purportedly targeted in the policy of the intervention? How is the technology of home visits conducted and rationalised? How are the discourse and rationality of the objectives of the intervention formed? These questions are examined on the empirical basis of interviews with practitioners, professionals and policymakers working with Bookstart in Göteborg, Sweden, analysed through a governmentality perspective (cf. Rose 1999; Villadsen 2004). Through this analysis, we contribute to the knowledge of how cultural policy is integrated into welfare policy, and vice versa. In societies marked by growing inequality, migration flows, and welfare cuts, it is important to examine new conditions of cultural policy that arise to understand and address social problems.

Empirical context

Bookstart Göteborg is a book-giving programme organised in collaboration among the municipality administration, childcare centres, and libraries to promote early language development in children aged 0–3 years (Swedish Arts Council 2018). Bookstart originated in Great Britain in 1992 with the charity Booktrust and grew internationally throughout the 1990s (Moore and Wade 2003; O'Hare and Connolly 2014). Through a decree by the former centre-right government, The Swedish Arts Council introduced Bookstart as three-year pilot studies in five municipalities in Sweden in 2015 (among them Göteborg, Swedish Arts Council 2018), inspired by the Danish Bogstart (Espersen 2016).

Göteborg (Gothenburg) is Sweden's second-largest municipality, with approximately 500 k inhabitants, providing an interesting example of contemporary cultural policy and welfare changes. The city is geographically segregated concerning socio-economic status and origin; a problem acknowledged through the city-wide scheme *Jämlik Stad* (Equal City) and the Swedish police authorities (2017). Bookstart Göteborg is part of a larger mobilisation called *Staden där vi läser för våra barn* (The City Where We Read For Our Children, CRC). Seven areas deemed at-risk or especially vulnerable with a comparatively high proportion of residents born outside Sweden were selected for the intervention (Equal Gothenburg 2014, 2017).

The purpose of Bookstart Göteborg is to encourage parents to read to and with their children from an early age to enhance language development and strengthen the children's chances to finish school, and by extension, create an equal city (Widerberg 2018). Through information about families given by the childcare centres, librarians make home visits to families when the first child is six months old, and a subsequent visit when the child is 11 months old. During these visits, age-appropriate books are handed out to the families. When the child is 18 months old, the families are invited to visit the nearest library for another book gift. Although book-gifting has a history in the city that predates Bookstart, the method of home visits by librarians is typical of the Bookstart project.

Cultural policy context

Cultural policy researchers are typically critical towards the policy tendency since the late 1970's 'to use cultural ventures and investments as a means or instrument to attain goals in other areas' (Vestheim 1994: 65, quoted in Nisbett 201: 558). Among others, Gray (2007) conceives of the instrumental utilisation of cultural practices as part of general commodification processes, and Belfiore (2002) have expressed criticism towards the attitude of using culture as a means of responding to social problems broadly. In contrast, others question the use of the concept 'instrumentality' in cultural policy discourse as it encompasses such a broad range of issues (Røyseng 2016) and point to the fact that all cultural policy initiatives serve a purpose and must therefore be understood as instrumental (Skot-Hansen 2006; Gibson 2008). For instance, Nisbett (2013), argues that cultural professionals are not opposed to instrumentalism but view it as a natural feature of cultural practices. Still, it is important to note that cultural policy in the Nordic countries was formulated to respect the autonomy of the arts and the principle of arts for art's sake (Bakke 2001; Duelund 2008). Debates about undue political influence over the arts and culture sometimes erupt in Sweden (e.g. Power 2009).

Although we understand Bookstart as an instrumental policy project, it is not the instrumentalism per se that we wish to examine critically but the (implicit) assumptions about contemporary social problems to which culture is seen as a solution. We seek to study Bookstart as a social and cultural policy intervention that results from such assumptions that positions segments of the population in need of certain interventions, such as the home visit. These interventions are in turn, we argue, part of re-emerging philanthropic rationality in Swedish welfare, in contrast to or emerging alongside, the encompassing welfare rationality.

Research context

Much research on Bookstart and similar book-gifting schemes where librarians or health care actors cooperate in provision have been conducted internationally (Espersen 2016; Ghelani 1999; Hall 2001; Hashimoto 2012; Moore and Wade 2003; O'Hare and Connolly 2014; Tung-Wen Sun, Shih, and Walker 2014; Wray and Medwell 2015). Positive outcomes from book-gifting schemes concerning children's attitudes to books and parent-child reading have been noticed (Moore and Wade 2003). In a more critical perspective, Vanobbergen, Daems, and Van Tilburg (2009, 286) discusses the 'pedagogicalisation of the family' as a discourse of making parents responsible for their children's educational success and making the home a place for training and learning.

Much research focuses in general on literacy and parent-child relationship outcomes of Bookstart. Notably, in the Danish case, the outcomes are specifically directed towards what is called 'ghetto areas' (Espersen 2016, 10) through the method of home visits by librarians, with the hope of preventing future social problems. The purpose of the home visit is to encourage trust in official agents through a 'psychology of persuasion' to entice parents in socio-economic vulnerable areas with a majority of the immigrant population, encouraging residents to take greater responsibility for the language development of their children (Espersen 2016, 21). Librarians are seen as neutral agents in comparison to other municipal agents and thus well suited for creating non-stigmatising meetings in the homes of hard-to-reach target groups. The core mission of librarians is to promote culture and literacy to citizens, where the concept of culture is not specified and could signify both the Danish culture and aesthetic culture (Espersen 2016). The Danish model using home visits by librarians in 'vulnerable areas' was adopted by the Swedish Arts Council in 2015 in the form of pilot projects in selected municipalities (Swedish Arts Council 2018).

Research on Bookstart in the Swedish context is limited to research-based reports, such as the evaluation by the Swedish Arts Council in 2018, and evaluations of municipal book gift schemes and collaborations between health care and libraries (Hampson Lundh and Michnik 2014; Rydsjö 2012). Sjödin Sundström (2019) have focused on how the national concern about children's dwindling

reading habits and poor school results is constructed as a private concern for parents, which is why the public concern must be to govern parents through educating them on reading habits for children.

The cultural participation of children and young people is given prominence in the Swedish national cultural policy goals, as well as in the national library legislation (Hultgren and Johansson 2013; Hedemark and Lindberg 2017). Public libraries often set up 'child spaces' to promote active engagement with children's literature (Hedemark and Lindberg 2018). In research on Swedish librarians' professional role, it is found that collaboration with other professionals, such as childcare centres, is common to stimulate literacy in children. Librarians are known to educate parents about their roles in supporting their children's early reading habits (Hedemark and Lindberg 2017, 2018). However, Hultgren and Johansson (2013) found that parents from other countries were largely absent from activities in their study of a children's library.

While international studies have mainly focused on evaluative approaches for understanding the potential of Bookstart and similar programmes, few studies situate this form of intervention in a policy context, scrutinising the policy significance and effects of the intervention promotion. Our article aligns with a critical policy approach, by exploring the governmental rationality underpinning the intervention, examining both how the intervention is made intelligible and the policy effects made possible by the intervention. This article thus fills a critical knowledge gap in the context of Bookstart in Sweden and book-gifting employing the home visit by librarians. Additionally, the article provides a general contribution to the field of research by spotlighting and interrogating how culture policy and social policy are intertwined in the practical utilisation of interventions on the municipal level of government.

Theoretical framework

The governmentality perspective concerns how power can be understood in modern and liberal societies; as a productive force rather than a means of oppression (Foucault 1991). Accordingly, for power to operate in an advanced liberal society, it needs to be exercised through subtle forms of shaping the conduct (actions, behaviours, wills, subjectivities) of subjects – not through coercion, but voluntary participation (Foucault 1991; Rose 1999). The ways of conceiving how to govern the conduct of individuals and populations are from this perspective called governmental rationality (Gordon 1991; Rose 1999) because governing is based on discursive knowledge about problems as well as technologies of intervention and knowledge about people and their needs. From this approach, we seek to problematise the rationality of the intervention to understand the potential effects, in the form of cultural and social policy schemes, of public professionals entering the homes of families.

Villadsen has mapped out the governmental rationality of neo-philanthropy (2004, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011), and directed attention towards the technology of the home visit. He particularly explores how technologies of providing aid and support to – governing – the poor, vulnerable and excluded were developed through philanthropy in the late 1800s and gradually integrated into professional social work of the welfare states in the 1900s.

An essential facet of philanthropist work was to provide educational efforts that addressed the moral reflection, competencies and will of the targeted subjects, especially directed at vulnerable parts of the urban geography (Villadsen 2007). Philanthropic organisations devised a variety of social work routines, such as home visits to the poor and vulnerable – an approach through which the moral character and willpower of the poor and excluded could be assessed and determined, while at the same time facilitating aid and support within the realm of the family (Donzelot 1979; Villadsen 2007). Such technologies were integrated into the post-war welfare states, which came to dominate social work (Donzelot 1988), assessing how poverty and vulnerability were seen as consequences of or interwoven with structural conditions that the individual could hardly change on his/her own (Villadsen 2007).

The key to the contemporary neo-philanthropic turn in social work was how the power of the will re-appeared as the central object of government. Notably, the discourse of philanthropic social work

and neo-philanthropy centres around at least four recurring objectives and ideals: first, the objective of a governing intervention is the morality, responsibility, and willpower of individuals. Second, aid and support should be directed to (and limited to) those deemed in need and those deemed to have the ability to develop and improve. Third, individuals must be made part of, and integrated into a moral community (Villadsen 2004). Fourth, help and support should be provided as help-to-self-help and must create the conditions for recipients to help themselves, so they no longer require outside assistance (Villadsen 2007).

In Villadsen's (2011) analysis the variety of discourses and means of philanthropy and neo-philanthropy intersect through technologies like the *home visit*. Through home-visiting, the moral character of subjects in need could be ranked and categorised. In this way, the philanthropic predecessors of the modern social worker could simultaneously emerge as mediators, judges and practitioners of aid and support (Villadsen 2007). As a mediator, the philanthropist assumed the role of distributing help and support to the vulnerable. He/she acted as a link between the included community and the excluded poor and vulnerable.

Furthermore, he/she also took on the role of assessing and articulating the needs of the poor and the vulnerable (Villadsen 2007, 2011). As a judge, the philanthropist was able to investigate and assess the moral qualities of the poor and excluded (and their families). As a practitioner, the philanthropist was able to offer education and support. Giving was primarily directed towards advice and guidance, thus not towards alms or material necessities (Villadsen 2007, 2011). Establishing a common social subjectivity and morality of the individual citizen and the families was made possible by the professional performing social work, and thereby becoming a bridge between the included normality of society and the individual, family or group of deviants (Philp 1979; Villadsen 2004).

With this historical and theoretical framework, we wish to discuss Bookstart as a provider of services for the vulnerable, and above all, as a rationality of government. We examine how the ways of thinking about, talking about and organising different activities, contribute to changing our ways of thinking about social problems and cultural solutions, as well as our way of looking at the people who are considered in need of help and support.

Methods

The empirical data consists of interviews with respondents from Göteborg, selected due to being knowledgeable about and central to Bookstart Göteborg, representing levels of policymakers, administrators, and professionals.

Two representatives from the Political Committees, one part of the Cultural Committee and one of the Social Resource Committee were interviewed. Both are involved in supporting and initiating mobilisation towards equality work and projects such as CRC, of which Bookstart Göteborg is part.

Bookstart primarily concerns the Cultural Affairs Administration with responsibility for the libraries, and the Social Resource Management, with the responsibility for childcare centres and central management for Equal City and CRC. Persons interviewed for this study were the project coordinator and the communications officer for CRC as well as the manager for the City library. They were actors with the responsibility, and ability, to influence the policy.

The study considers interviews with three librarians who are making home visits (including the Bookstart project leader). These were actors that also had power over the specific content of the local implementation of Bookstart and with experience of meeting families in socio-economically vulnerable areas.

The study also considers a group interview with four nurses at a family care centre in one city district, who were cooperating with the librarians in the Bookstart project. Their responsibility was to provide the librarians with information on children born in the district, as well as to promote reading for children among parents.

The interviews followed a thematic guide focused on issues of (1) desired outcomes, (2) procedures in home-visits, and (3) risks, problems and possibilities arising in Bookstart. Respondents' names are made confidential. All respondents were offered the opportunity to read the transcripts of the interviews and to approve their quotes in the draft of the article.

To the empirical material outlined, social policy and technologies of governing cannot only be understood through formal policy discourse and documentation. Instead, social policy discourse needs to be assessed and examined in the variety of strategies, articulations and discursive practices promoted to facilitate processes of social change (Bacchi and Bonham 2014). In the analysis, we approach policy as well as technologies of governing in the form of productive power, methodologically as discourse analysis. Any discourse is the result of conflict and struggles, enabling how things and objects are talked about and acted upon (Foucault 1980). Governmental rationality, in this sense, refers to the ways relations between the problems constructed, technologies of intervention, and objectives of interventions are constructed in discourse (Gordon 1991). The analysis is guided by the general understanding of how governing rationalities are formed in the nexus of problematisation, technologies of intervention, and objectives of the rule.

Based on the guiding framework, spotlighting governmental rationality (in terms of the problematisations, technologies and objectives of government), we have explored the discourse and rationality of the Bookstart project. We constructed four themes through the analytical process of a close reading of our material: *compensating for inequalities in life trajectories, the benign power of home-visiting, mobilisation of organisational cooperation*, and *facilitating the subject of inclusion*. Altogether, the four themes and discursive elements intertwined form the governmental rationality explored and analysed.

Results and analysis

The following analysis is structured in the four subsections mentioned above, presenting the technologies of governing of the Bookstart intervention analysed, aligning with the rationalities of neo-philanthropy sketched out above.

Compensating for inequalities in life trajectories

Inequalities in life trajectories are discursively associated with access to and attitudes towards reading books. Reading books is seen as an indication of good life trajectories, for education, health, security, and welfare in life. Accordingly, providing aid and support in book reading is a way of compensating for social inequalities and of ameliorating risk among the marginalised and excluded population of the segregated city. Accordingly, risk assessment, and targeting those deemed in need, is a key for the rationality of governing promoted.

A discourse of inequality underpins the motives and legitimacy of the Bookstart project. *The CRC project coordinator*, for instance, says that 'we need to identify: where, in the areas we work, are there groups of people that we may not reach? And how to best reach them.' Here, against such backdrop, a particular population of the vulnerable parts of the urban geography is deemed to require aid and support.

When asked a question about the causes of socio-economic inequality and segregation and the policies outlined to target such problems, *a civil servant of the administration for allocation of social welfare*, working in the communications office for CRC, explains:

> The reason why a city is segregated is very complicated. [. . .] One way to go about (segregation) is to look at what city districts in Gothenburg have the least resources, and to consider how we can reach families that today, we are not in contact with. It can mean that their children are not attending preschool, it can mean that you are not visiting the childcare centre. [. . .] If there is one thing you can do to increase equality or to invest in children, it is: read to your children!

Here, the civil servant frames the discourse of inequality through understanding inequality as the absence of families or target groups from social services such as public childcare. She also asserts that addressing inequality through caring about children and their reading habits has been a successful strategy to gain full political support, as well as for engaging the private and civil sector to support the programme.

Bookstart Göteborg started as pilot projects limited to selected areas in the city. In the words of *the librarian from Bergsjön city district*, 'Bookstart was always located in east Bergsjön, where there are the greatest … We are going to these vulnerable areas, but east Bergsjön is the most socio-economically vulnerable of them all'. Locating the needs assessed to the areas of socio-economic exposure and social exclusion is often associated with reaching out and of accessing the people living there. *The coordinator for CRC* elaborates on the selective outreach to a more general intervention. She says, 'from the point of view of equality this could be a typical general intervention provided to all … but then, we could also work with the book more directly.' She specifies that the selective intervention rationality needs to target 'these areas where we can expect, in the socio-economic weaker areas, they do not have many books at home', adding that 'not much reading is done there, they do not have these reading habits'. Again, assessing the needs is the underpinning of the selective outreach, and the intervention can compensate for the socio-economic inequalities noted as well as the lack of reading and parental support from the home. Considering the Scandinavian and Swedish model of governing welfare, with a high emphasis on universal right and general outreach (Larsson, Letell, and Eds 2012), such selective provision and targeting is noteworthy and, not least, symptomatic of philanthropic notions of aid and support to those in need (Villadsen 2007, 2011).

The Bookstart intervention is motivated and underpinned by a risk assessment and prevention rationality (cf. Rose 1999). For instance, *the politician in the cultural committee* explains, 'interventions for children and youth need to come at an early age, […] because what we do for children and youths will have an impact in the long run'. In this way, she specifies the importance of interventions today based on effects in the future. This rationality aligns particularly with potential risks that need to be avoided or combatted. Notably, the intervention aims to provide powers of resilience to those deemed in need and deemed at-risk. Risk becomes meaningful through a discourse of social exclusion. Accordingly, when *the communications officer at the administration for allocation of social welfare* pinpoints the risks that need to be averted, she means, 'they risk ending up in a state of exclusion'. Accordingly, she continues, 'this is all about power and resources, the educational level of parents' and how this facilitates 'the language development of the child [and] it becomes a chain of happenings … going to school, succeeding in school, being admitted to high school and having the power over your own life, being able to make decisions'. Moreover, the risk highlighted is associated with limited democratic and citizen participation. According to *the Bookstart project leader*, these children 'risk growing up … without having their democratic right to make their voice heard'.

The discourse of risk articulated can be understood in two, intertwined ways. In one instance, the risk is a condition caused by socio-economic segregation. According to *the Bergsjön librarian*, the areas targeted are characterised by 'very low-income levels … the lowest in Göteborg'. In the other instance, the associated risk is the effect of how parents residing in the area lack the knowledge and competences required to provide for their children. One of the nurses at the child care centre reflects on the situation by saying that 'parents themselves do what they believe is best, but sometimes they do not realise that there are problems that can have serious effects' in terms of future social problems and social exclusion. Increasing vocabulary and language skills is promoted to enter society with the means to compensate for parent's lack of economic capital and to avoid poverty and social exclusion.

In the following excerpt, *the Bergsjön librarian* explains why it is important to reach out to the children living in families in the areas excluded and marginalised.

> Because literacy, I mean the preschools and schools cannot compensate for the gap that arises. [. . .] If you read at home, you have a larger vocabulary when you start school, and that is what these children are lacking, it is not about them being multilingual in the first place, it is about them not having been exposed to reading, and that is what we want to change. [. . .] This is something we need to make clear to the parents, for them to be aware.

According to this way of presenting the situation, socio-economic divisions and segregation are manifested in unequal reading habits and language skills, which in turn affect how school success can be estimated. This way, the *Bergsjön librarian* describes the compensation and risk protection rationality of the intervention, but moreover animate the parents as a target for intervention. Accordingly, parents need to be informed about the importance of reading. It is through this way of conceiving the problem that the technology of home-visiting emerges as a way to reach out to those deemed in need, to compensate for the inequality observed, to prevent risk and to promote social inclusion. Here, reading, culture and books, become facilitators of reaching out to the families – and *in*, to the homes – of those at risk and in need.

The benign power of home visiting

Seeing that families and parents are problematised as a source of exclusion and risk as well as a potential location of the solution, the strategies outlined by welfare professionals are about entering the homes to access the families. Importantly, the home visit governing technology needs to be enacted as a non-hierarchical encounter based on trust and mutual relations while simultaneously involving assessment and observation of the home and the parenting carried out, as well as pursuing interventions by the book.

Home-visiting, as described by professionals, enables the formation of relations with parents and families that are non-hierarchical and based on mutual interests. *The project leader of Bookstart Göteborg*, says 'the home visit is one of the biggest successes, the actual meeting', that is created between professionals, parents, and families. Face-to-face communication, in this meaning, is facilitated by the power of the book. One of the nurses at the childcare centre, for instance, stresses that visiting parents in the home should lead to the parents 'knowing what a book is'. In this way, the technology of home visits is composed of three constitutive forces of governing: establishing relations and entering the families, observation, and diagnosis, as well as intervention by the book.

First, in interviews, home visits can be portrayed as a means of creating non-hierarchical social relations between professionals and parents. *A nurse at the childcare centre*, for instance, says that 'you are on the family's turf and not here (in the care centre), the meeting is more on their terms.' Home-visiting, in this regard, is not only a means of finding common ground but is also described as essential for reaching out (and into the families) respectfully, as stated by *the Bookstart Göteborg project leader*, 'home visits . . . they are . . . for me one of the cornerstones of a respectful treatment'. In contrast, the library is more generally known to be spaces that require specific behaviour, such as to 'be quiet and treat books gently, not cause any commotion' (Hedemark and Lindberg 2018, 431). Similarly, the librarian at the Angered library muses about the differences between meeting a family at the local library compared to the home visit: 'when we come home to a family, the power balance is levelled, it is more of an equal meeting, we are in their home, we are their guests, and we have to adjust to their situation'. Accordingly, 'this makes most parents relax, makes them more comfortable'. Here, the home visit is understood as a means to level the aspect of unequal power positions between professionals/citizens. Principally, visiting parents and families in the home is a way to form trust and is also a way to show that the governing authorities of welfare have a benign interest in families. *The librarian from Angered library* notes that 'people are delighted and grateful when we come and we are showing an interest in their child, who of course is the most important thing in the world for them.' The benign care and provision of support, as well as the selective outreach, is characterised by a relation between provider and receiver, a relation based on moral obligations and responsibility recognised in philanthropic support to the poor and marginalised (Villadsen 2007,

2011). This relationship also benefits the welfare professionals as it is based on acts of mutual interest and perceived equality.

Second, the professionals observe the household and families concerning the presence of books in the home, and the attitude towards books and reading in the home. They also assess the need for governing intervention. The benign care and intervention rationality are expressed through observation of the household. In the following description by *the librarian from Angered library*, observation is described as a key element of the home visit technology.

> Most of the time, the families open (the door), sometimes they have not received the letter, you can only speculate, but most of the time, someone opens. [. . .] Each visit is very different depending on how many are at home, is the child sleeping or is it awake? Is there only one parent home, perhaps they have forgotten that we were coming, are there others there visiting? Are there animals in the home? Is the TV on or not, have they just woken up or not? It is very different.

Here, the librarian explains how the professionals making home visits try to assess the situation and the people in the home; what type of information and interaction with the child and parents is possible, how long the visit is going to take. Through the visit and the observation, the visitor takes the form of a judge, diagnosing the needs and deciding the potential of the parents and children, and offering aid and support in the form of education – which, again, is something that can be recognised from the traditional aid and support of the philanthropists (Villadsen 2007, 2011).

Third, based on the assessment of the home, aid and support can be provided in the form of book gifts. For this support to operate in the home and through the families, the book needs to be presented as something for everyone, and the habit of reading as something fun, enjoyable, and easy-going. *The librarian from Angered library* pinpoints the duality between presenting the book as something enjoyable, while at the same time using the symbolic force of the book to provide aid and support. She says, 'people can have too much respect for the book . . . it is okay if the child chews on it'.

The pedagogical task is to make the book a natural part of the lives of their children, no matter if they use the book in what would be considered 'wrong' ways, such as putting the book in their mouths. A nurse at the childcare centre elaborates on this further, while also mentioning that there may be a certain resistance from parents. She says that parents may be 'a little sceptical when you tell them to read for their child; they do not understand, and they do not listen.' Accordingly 'the parents think that when we say read, that we are going to . . . that they are supposed to *read* . . . that is not what it is about'; instead you should 'talk about the pictures in the book, attempt this conversation', and that is 'actually a common misunderstanding among our parents'.

Accordingly, the governing rationality of the intervention means to help parents to provide for their children themselves, and to emancipate them from dependence on aid and support, to empower the families – to help them help themselves (cf. Villadsen 2007, 2011). Providing this necessary information and visualisation about reading (or at least how to become familiar with the book), represents the parent as a recipient of education and provision. Following this discourse, parents are made a particular target of the governing intervention.

Mobilisation and organisational cooperation

The home visit is described not only as a technology to enter the house-holds and families of the excluded population but also as a way to mobilise a variety of social actors from different social sectors, engaged in various measures of forming the conduct of subjects, in this governing endeavour. Childcare centre professionals visit families and provide names and addresses for librarians and their visits. This mobilisation is used to introduce the families to the institutions of the inclusive society, perceived as being in contact with and visiting certain important social/cultural institutions, notably the childcare centres and the libraries.

The project coordinator for the mobilisation CRC elaborates on how the home visit 'lowers the thresholds to visit not only the library but also other arenas that provide support for children and

families … open playgroups, family centres, and other meeting places'. Through mobilisation of a variety of service providers, the libraries can be integrated into the complex of welfare provision, and in the government of the conduct of parents, families and eventually children. *The manager of the City library* says 'of course, I see the library as a crucial part of the welfare structure'. She continues, 'I believe that libraries equalise life conditions in a way … the library cannot function if it is isolated.' Accordingly, 'we cannot fulfil our mission [if isolated] but need to cooperate with, for example, schools, preschools, and childcare centres, as well as other bodies such as associations'. Through such discourse and rationality of collaboration and mobilisation through home visits, the provision of welfare is represented as a joint responsibility for all kinds of actors engaged in compensating for inequalities. The various actors are joined through a collaborative technology of accessing and overseeing the families.

The governing actors and agencies involved can collaboratively enter the homes and families to provide books and reading support but can also provide general information about Swedish society. Introducing welfare institutions to the families is thus a two-fold technology: first, it concerns the penetration of professionals into the house-hold, second, it concerns opening up the house-hold and families so that the families can enter society and the institutions beyond. Accordingly, the home visits are an opportunity to increase the chances of parents and families visiting the library as well as interconnected social institutions such as family centres offering child-centred activities. In the following excerpt, *the Bergsjön librarian* expounds on this matter.

> We usually tell them about the library […] that you are welcome here to ask questions. Sometimes there are questions about children, siblings with late language development which worries them. We can say: visit us in the library and bring the child; we can see if there is anything for you. […] You meet mothers who have been mostly at home during their time in Sweden. […] There are many books for you in your language, and they step out of their roles as mothers for a moment and say 'I am also going to read!'

In this rationality of governing, professionals become mediators between the excluded population and the institutions of the inclusive society. Thus, visiting the library provides an opportunity for families to leave home and to engage in society beyond. For the two-fold strategy to be realised, the relations facilitated through the home-visits are vital.

Facilitating the subjects of inclusion

The goals of the home-visit technology can be understood to a variety of objectives anticipated, in addition to the mobilisation of the variety of social actors and agencies outlined above, altogether concerning the formation of self-including subjects. This regards both forming conditions for education of the parents and the children. Accordingly, the home visit aims to construct an idealised communicative and competent parent as well as a learning subject child that can potentially grow up to be an included subject citizen. Thus, the governing rationality is centred around the conduct of families, parents and, ultimately, the children at risk and in need.

The construction of ideal parental competences arises in two ways in discourse. The *communicative parent* is a parent who reads to their children, a parent who understands that children need to engage with their parents verbally to develop language skills. Therefore, as *the Angered librarian* puts it, her role is to encourage the parents 'to show, inspire, and to put words to things they are already doing, or can easily do. To cheer them on and affirm that it is important to talk to and read to their child and that their child, above all, loves to hear their voice'. Developing communicative skills is a path to becoming a *competent parent* – the ideal parent knows that it is important to read and talk to the child. According to a nurse at the child care centre, 'Some (parents) do not understand the importance of talking to their children … […] they do not have that knowledge that a child needs someone to listen to, to be able to answer. To meet the child'. Following this rationality, being competent means knowing that reading and talking to the child is instrumental, even if the child does not respond, and understanding the importance of forming relations to and through the book.

In this sense, and according to this rationality, it is the conduct of the parent that needs to be fostered in order to affect the children.

The project coordinator of Bookstart Göteborg continues by saying that 'the home visit programme that we're talking about . . . the aim is to support parents in their role in supporting their children and giving them good living conditions.' By way of providing such powers, the rationality of provision can be described as a form of assistance to self-help (cf. Villadsen 2007, 2011), in the way that parents are aided to provide support to their children and families, emancipating themselves from the need for future support and provision. In this way, the image of the parent's importance for the child's linguistic development is conveyed. As a guiding agent, the parent – through the home visit – is constructed both as a target (i.e. to be integrated into society and developed as competent parents) and as a means of control (i.e. as an agent to guide the child to future prosperity and protect the child from risk). From the intervention, the parent is targeted and strategically formed as a mediator and agent of governing. Simultaneously, the parent is mobilised and activated as a means of providing for the child and for preventing risk as well as for facilitating the development of language skills. Parents are formed as means and mediators of rule, ultimately shaped to shape their children in a manner following the competencies outlined by professionals. In both meanings and positions, parents are governed through a form of education that tries to shape an includable citizen subject.

When it comes to the ideal subject child, the goal is outlined above in terms of providing for good conditions for the child and of developing resilience against the risks they may face in the future. Here, the *learning child* is a repeated discursive figure. The children need to be educable and learning to be prepared for school, so that, in turn, they do not fail in school, which protects them from risks associated with social exclusion. Seemingly, learning and being educable enable social inclusion and citizen participation. When asked what the long-term effect of the Bookstart project and the home visit interventions would be, *the project coordinator for the mobilisation CRC* outlines the following:

> It is about us wanting children to finish school. We know that a good language ability, an early reading ability, to have an early developed vocabulary, contributes to and affects your school performance, your ability to finish school and to pass your grades, to further studies, to have a good life, future possibilities on the labour market and so on. But it is not only that; it is also strongly related to democratic values, that we get citizens that can partake in society.

Here, development of language skills is associated with education progress, employment, and labour market opportunities. Moreover, this process of progress, of risk prevention, is noted as a way of social inclusion and democratic participation. According to the governing rationality promoted, the future conduct and competencies of children can be steered this way, and risks can be prevented. Here, a benign and unthreatening form of power, operating through the librarian is promoted, providing aid and support for the vulnerable and those at risk.

Discussion

In this article, we have outlined the governmental rationality of Bookstart Göteborg. Looking at the rationality and technology promoted through home visits, they are fundamentally informed and underpinned by rationalities of philanthropy sketched out previously (Villadsen 2004, 2007). The educational elements of interventions target the willpower and competencies of individuals, i.e. the parents. The measures targeting individuals and families as units are promoted as responses to problems explicitly understood to be caused by structural inequalities. Accordingly, such measures are explicitly reflected upon in terms of compensation, but still providing support to risk resilience. Also, the intervention is explicitly targeting those deemed to be in need or at-risk of future and advanced social exclusion. The measures taken are underpinned by notions about how the targeted parents, families and children are seen as having the potential to develop and refine their competencies and capabilities (c.f. Vanobbergen, Daems, and Van Tilburg 2009). Also, the intervention strives to promote inclusion and integration in the community. The community is promoted both in

the form of relations with mediating professionals representing the welfare machinery of society and the public sector and in the form of adaptation to the norms, culture and conduct associated with the majority culture and society. That is, principally language skills. Moreover, considering the families as a unit of government, and parents as the means and ends of governing technologies, provision comes in the form of assistance with self-help, aiming to support the families to provide for themselves, to form reading habits and to conduct themselves independently.

The culture, health, and social professionals, i.e. the conductors of home visits, are positioned in the discourse as mediators, judges and practitioners of social inclusion (cf. Villadsen 2007, 2011). As representatives of the welfare machinery penetrating the families and households of those in need, introducing them to the institutions of society, they have a mediating function between society and families, inclusion, and exclusion. Although the librarians emphasise the pleasure in reading and the book as a way to form parent-child relationships, they are, in the observation opportunity provided through the home visit, positioned as judges assessing the moral and educational potential of the parents and children, diagnosing their educational needs and assessing their potential prosperity and risk resilience. Positioned as practitioners, the professionals enter the families and instruct the parents on how to read to their children, both visualising the practice and forming the parents as agents, means and ends of the intervention. As shown by previous research on the librarian profession, targeting parents to support children's early literacy development is not new (Hedemark and Lindberg 2017, 2018). However, this article highlights the home visit as a novel aspect of cultural policy conduct. Provision, here, comes in the form of educational guidance of the parents, not through material assistance or support directed to the children. The professionals conduct their practices *within* the realm of the families.

By analysing the educational ambitions of social/cultural policy, and will to govern the home, families and parents through facilitating reading habits and familiarity with books, we show precisely *how* the philanthropic rationality of provision permeates the professional welfare interventions on the level of the municipality (cf. Villadsen 2004, 2008a, 2008b, 2009). When utilising a cultural practice as a means of educational goals and with the objectives of preventing risk and exclusion, the rationalities and technologies interrogated can be analysed in terms of the ongoing interweaving of cultural policy, educational policy and social policy (cf. Sjödin Sundström 2019) at the local level. Distinctions between these policy areas are contingent upon and produced in discourse; however, they are disturbed in practical interventions by professionals operating on all fields simultaneously.

In conclusion, we must interrogate the conditions under which such governmental rationality can emerge and manifest itself as a reasonable approach to promoting social inclusion and to combating risk and social problems. Selective governmental rationality can only be realised in a landscape of increasing social inequalities and advanced social segregation (Equality report 2014; 2017). Such conditions are a prerequisite for directing governing interventions towards populations deemed to be in need or at risk. The segregation spotlighted cannot be politically combatted by broader social reforms of the structures causing inequalities and segregation. It is in this respect that the rationality promoted aligns with a post-political discourse (cf. Sjödin Sundström 2019). Both rationalities of selectivity and non-reformist agendas are illustrative of the gradual transformations of the Swedish and Scandinavian model and state of welfare, moving from welfarist and social-democratic ideals towards advanced liberal governmentality (Larsson, Letell, and Eds 2012). In this line of argument, cultural policy, and the neo-philanthropic rationality of government at the local level makes a productive force in this ongoing transformation. With regards to the home-visit, reaching out to those deemed at risk of exclusion, it also marks a shift in Swedish cultural policy which traditionally has relied on inviting people to institutions of cultural practices to offer democratic fostering.

Additionally, the educative elements of social change directed towards cultural adaptation and learning of language skills through the home visit are premised by an understanding of cultural homogeneity and community. When such conditions mapped out are enforced by cuts in social investment and austerity policies and reluctance for broad social reforms as well as policies

promoting cultural and educative elements, philanthropic rationalities of government emerge in new institutional forms.

When based on selective assessment and provision of those deemed in need, the promotion of literacy skills through the willpower and conduct of subjects as a condition for inclusion makes out an institutional form to (re-)"philanthropise" the state of welfare. Neither the instrumentalisation of cultural policy (Skot-Hansen 2006; Gibson 2008), the home-visit as a technology of government and provision (Donzelot 1979), or the philanthropic rationalities of welfare (Villadsen 2004) are new per se. Also, instructing the parents and involving the families to influence their children is a common strategy of librarians for the promotion of reading (Hedemark and Lindberg 2017, 2018). Furthermore, home-visits are a common measure of social work (Villadsen 2011). What is made visible from our analysis of the Bookstart discourse and rationality is how these traditions and technologies intersect and intertwine, enabling a new and transformed form of the home-visit, and how this technology illustrates important aspects of a transforming state of welfare in Sweden, in particular. Cultural policy, then, formed as an instrument of social policy objectives provides a discursive arena where such rationalities of neo-philanthropy are introduced into the welfare machinery of contemporary welfare states, in particular Sweden.

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Failure seems to be the hardest word to say

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ABSTRACT
Policy interventions, to increase participation, have long been informed by data demonstrating inequity in the subsidised cultural sector. However, it is less clear how evidence is employed to judge success or failure of initiatives to create greater equity. Indeed, quantitative surveys suggest a failure to change patterns of cultural participation. Despite this a large body of evaluation reports celebrate the 'success' of participatory projects. This article presents findings from UK research that explores how cultural participation policies might be improved by better acknowledgment of failures. The research involved interviews, questionnaires, workshops, observations and documentary analysis involving over 200 policymakers, cultural practitioners, and participants. It identified a cultural policy landscape that is not conducive to honesty or critical reflection and argues that without this it will persistently fail to learn or to deliver the scale of change required to create the equity it professes to desire.

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Introduction

A culture of evaluation, to supposedly inform 'evidence-based policy', has been a significant feature of the relationship between cultural policy and practice, in the UK at least, since the 1980's when Myerscough developed his economic case for culture (1988). In the case of cultural participation, which is the focus of this research, much of the policy focus on increasing participation is cited as a response to the data generated in surveys such as Taking Part (DCMS 2018) or the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) (Scottish Government 2018), which show differing and unequal patterns of engagement across a specific list of cultural activities. Both of these examples demonstrate how data and the evidence that data supports can be used to shape and influence high-level policy aspirations and goals. However, advocates of evidence-based policy argue, 'if policy is goal-driven, evaluation should be goal-oriented. Such evaluation completes the cycle and provides feedback to improve the policy' (Sanderson 2002). In other words, if policy is truly 'evidence-based' there should be as much concern with gathering data and evidence of the extent to which policy interventions are, or are not, delivering policy goals as there was in establishing the original need.

In the case of cultural participation, data and evidence has informed the way in which the 'problem' of non-participation has been constructed (Stevenson 2013) as a 'participation deficit' (Miles and Gibson 2017). This in turn has influenced the types of policy interventions that are seen as 'appropriate' to 'fix' the problem (Jancovich 2011). However, it is far less clear how data and evidence have been employed to judge the success or failure of such policy interventions in achieving the goal of 'increasing' cultural participation. Indeed, although repeated iterations of Taking Part and the SHS show a failure to substantially or sustainably change patterns of cultural participation (Warwick Commission 2015) there is a tendency for the discourse around such projects to be one of success (Rimmer 2020) with evaluation

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reports and impact case studies primarily focused on celebrating successes rather than learning from failure (for example: Fun Palaces 2019). Yet these successes are often evidenced with reference to a diverse range of criteria that have little to do with the goal of sustainably increasing diversity and equity within the cultural sector, which many of these projects were ostensibly funded to deliver. Indeed, as we will argue below, through stories of unqualified success the participation agenda has taken a performative turn, in which evaluation practices generate and sustain a narrative that does more to legitimise rather than challenge existing inequities.

This article presents some of the findings from UK research that has considered how cultural participation policies, projects, and practices might be improved by better acknowledgment and discussion of failures. In this wider research, we examine how different stakeholders (including artists, participants, and funders) may define success and failure in different ways, based on different logics and values, but for the purpose of this paper the focuses is on policy.

We therefore begin with an examination of how the notion of 'evidence-based policy' has been critiqued in the wider public policy literature. We highlight the growing interest in moving beyond current practices in which evaluation is primarily understood as a tool for monitoring against targets or performance management. We then move on to consider the literature on policy failures and specifically the extent to which policies ever result in outright success or failure. From this, we argue that if evaluation is to be credible and engender the type of learning that leads to meaningful policy change it must fully recognise and reflect on both.

The findings from our research draw on a large body of empirical data, collected via interviews, workshops, and surveys with policymakers, cultural practitioners and participants. In our discussion, we consider the barriers to talking openly about failures; and examine how capturing and sharing narratives of failure might usefully inform the development of cultural policy. Our aim throughout this research has been to develop new insights into the processes of cultural policy making and we conclude with a call for more honest and open critical reflection in the cultural sector, recognising that narratives underpin policy decisions as much as data and evidence.

Evidence-based policy

Beyond the field of cultural policy studies, the notion of evidence-based policy has long dominated the wider field of policy studies (Colebatch 1998). It is founded on the principle of decision-making that 'seek[s] to manage economic and social affairs "rationally" in an apolitical, scientized manner such that social policy is more or less an exercise in social technology' (Schwandt 1997). In other words, it assumes policies will deliver better results if those instigating and implementing them make rational decisions on 'what works' based on a technocratic understanding of 'best practice' rather than through understanding the political values, meanings, and ideologies that underpin decision-making (Clarke, Pawson, and Tilley 1998; Pawson 2012). Yet the evidence base for making claims about the benefits of evidence-based policy has itself come under question. In particular, the concept of rational choice has been challenged for its assumption that data and evidence are neutral objects, not open to interpretation (Sanderson 2002). Furthermore, as Howlett contends, 'an emphasis only upon technical learning may not lessen, but in fact contribute to a continued lack of policy success; that is, repeating over and over again the errors of the past' (Howlett 2012a).

In contrast, the constructivist (Guba and Lincoln 1989) interpretative (Yanow 2000) and argumentative (Fischer and Forester 1993) theoretical traditions all argue for an understanding of the politics of policymaking, and the complexity of the social world in which any knowledge (or evidence) is both constructed and contingent. The rational approach, conducted through the application of objective rules by disinterested observers is therefore rejected (Stone 2012) and instead policymaking, and the analysis that is conducted to inform it, should be seen as political choices (Weiss 1977). From this standpoint, while surveys such as Taking Part and the SHS may inform the construction of a policy problem more attention must be paid to the values and logics that inform policymakers choices in how they address such problems and in doing so categorise

certain people and behaviours as being more socially valuable than others (Stevenson 2019). As such, the act of evaluation should also be understood as political because it contributes to the construction of normative positions via the questions that are asked and the measures that are employed.

But as Cairney suggests neither the evidence-based nor the political choice perspectives are of themselves an accurate description of what actually happens in the policy process, which he describes as a complex process functioning under conditions of 'bounded rationality' (Cairney 2012, 2016). In reality, the policy process 'weighs beliefs, principles and actions under conditions of multiple frames for the interpretation and evaluation of the world' (Van Der Knaap 1995). From this perspective, evaluation research plays a conceptual rather than instrumental role, 'reaching decision makers in unsystematic and diffuse forms, "percolating" into the policy arena' (Sanderson 2002) through a process of 'disproportionate information processing' (Cairney 2012) rather than rational thought or ideology alone.

Despite these critiques, assumptions about both the prevalence and desirability of evidence-based policymaking has remained widespread (Colebatch 1998; Cairney 2016). In the UK identifying 'robust' evidence is still seen as the cornerstone for policymaking in two distinct ways (Sanderson 2002). The first is accountability that government and its agents are delivering the outcomes they have committed to. Here evidence relates to performance management and is most commonly associated with monitoring and measurement of 'impact'. In the cultural sector, this is what has commonly been criticised as the tendency for research to 'make the case' for culture. The second use of evidence is to inform 'improvement' based on evidence of *how* policy interventions achieve change. The growth in What Works Centres provides an example of this in the UK (Gold 2018). But as Sayers (2020) argues the degree of certainty, of cause and effect, that can be delivered through evidence-based approaches to policymaking such as 'what works' is overstated. Rather than evidencing 'truths', at best they might help to avoid error.

Instead of more 'evidence' others argue that what is needed, but less common in practice, is policy analysis that seeks to pragmatically understand the 'implementation gap' in order to explain not only what works but also for whom and in which circumstances. Such an approach is also as interested in what doesn't work as what does, so as to ensure that similar failures might be avoided in future (Hogwood and Gunn 1984) and the benefits of future interventions can be dispersed more equitably. This is not an argument against the use of evidence, but rather that greater attention needs to be given to the extent that different groups of stakeholders with different lived experiences and drawing on distinct value systems may interpret and experience policy success and failure in very different ways.

For rather than truly objective evidence, it is the construction and replication of a dominant policy narrative that has greatest influence over policy decisions. As such, those who can exert the greatest social power seek to retain control over the articulation of the dominant narrative (Taylor and Balloch 2005). A key element of this control is the ability to frame certain activity as a success, in spite of any evidence to the contrary. Such failures to learn and/or respond to such learning are further policy failures. It is therefore argued that the guiding principle for critical policy analysis should be to address the fundamental questions of: Who learns? Learns what? To what effect? (Howlett 2012a).

Policy failure

Dye (2005) suggests that, in general, governments have little clarity as to whether or not their policies have been successful. However, this does not stop them from framing such interventions as successes (Fischer 2003). Despite an emerging interest in theorising failure within policy studies, there also remains a scarcity of literature that explicitly considers policy failure in practice and even less that specifically considers failure in regard to cultural policy. It has been argued that this is the

result of 'blame avoidance' in policy making, which is perhaps the largest barrier to learning and change given that,

> … this can amplify policy failures rather than correct them as energy and resources are spent on avoiding blame, denying the existence of failure … rather than on improving policy (Howlett, Ramesh, and Wu 2015)

Interestingly, it is argued that this is most in evidence within the bodies that appear to be the most accountable. Paradoxically many evaluations that try to demonstrate accountability may in fact reinforce overstated celebratory narratives while failing to examine the 'root causes' of problems or the persistent failures that are limiting more significant progress being made (Howlett, Ramesh, and Wu 2015). This, McConnell (2010) argues, can lead to good politics but bad policy.

However, this is not to say that the term 'failure' is not used in policy analysis at all, rather that it is used inconsistently, without clear definition. This means that,

> … arguments relating to policy failure are not only ambiguous, but they also tend to conflate forms of failure that are actually discrete. This imprecision has led to confusion in theoretical debates as well as uncertainty in policy evaluation, as opposing voices tend to talk past each other rather than contest well-defined positions (Newman and Head 2015)

In response to these difficulties, public policy academics have proposed taxonomies and frameworks to assist in the analysis of policy failure. For example, Bovens *et al* have argued that any evaluation of policies needs to differentiate between programme success/failure and political success/failure (Bovens and 'T Hart 1996;). While the former is more concerned with effectiveness the latter is more concerned with perception. To this initial classification, McConnell (2010) added a third category, process failures, in order to categorise specific failures related to policy implementation.

Building on this work a review of the existing literature identified that when authors do comment on policy failure(s) they are usually referring to one of four 'modes' of failure:

- Objective attainment failure: when policy objectives are not met
- Distributional failure: when some stakeholders groups are negatively affected by the policy
- Political or electoral failure: when politicians are negatively affected
- Implementation failure: when organisational or other obstacles prevent implementation (Newman and Head 2015)

But confusion and conflation between each of these often obscures understanding not least because different modes of failure have different causes. It is argued therefore that any conclusions, recommendations or remedies should be considered in regard to each mode independently. Our own research is informed by these taxonomies but seeks to test their efficacy within the field of cultural policy and in so doing develop a bespoke taxonomy that recognises the different logics, values and meanings that underpin policy making in the cultural sector.

Notwithstanding the existence of what Gray and Hart have dubbed 'policy disasters' (2005), it is further noted that policy outcomes are rarely, if ever, outright successes or failures but contain elements of each (McConnell 2010). For example, if the aims, values, and logics of policymakers and practitioners are different their measures of success and failure may also differ. Similarly, policies that don't meet the initially stated objectives can, nevertheless, be political successes and vice versa. This is particularly the case in regard to those wicked problems (Rittel and Webber 1973) in which governments tend to seek to address symptoms rather than causes (Stringer and Richardson 1980) or to adopt 'placebo' policies that are primarily enacted in order to manage a difficult issue down or off of the political agenda (Gustafsson 1983). In such cases policies take on a significant symbolic function, demonstrating a government's commitment to addressing the perceived problem rather than 'solving' it. This has been demonstrated to be the case with cultural participation, where policy interventions are celebrated for widening 'access' to culture despite failing to evidence significant and long-term change in the baseline data around which the 'problem' of cultural non-

participation was constructed (Stevenson, Balling, and Kann-Rasmussen 2015; Jancovich 2017b). Our research therefore asks what might be learned by understanding the failures that are ignored in current discourse.

Methodology

The wider research project, from which this article draws its analysis, took place over a period of two years, and involved three stages. This paper draws on the first two stages only.

In stage one 8 workshops, with space for 20 people in each, were held with different interest groups. These comprised 2 workshops for policymakers, 2 for arts organisations, 2 for individual artists and 2 for cultural participants. The workshops were creatively facilitated and sought to identify the extent to which these different interest groups had shared or disparate definitions of success and failure in regard to cultural participation policies and projects. Participants in the workshops also discussed whether they saw value in talking about failure and the levers or barriers to doing so. In addition, workshop participants were asked to identify specific examples of success and failure in cultural participation policies and projects they were aware of but had not necessarily been involved in.

Due to the high level of interest in participating in these workshops an anonymous survey was also conducted to allow others to share their stories of failure, which received a further 100 responses.

From the examples of success most cited by workshop participants three case studies were identified for closer analysis in stage 2. These were Creative People and Places (www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk) an Arts Council action research programme that seeks to examine how place based funding might impact cultural participation; Fun Palaces (https://funpalaces.co.uk), an initiative started by two arts activists to shine a light on the skills and everyday creativity that already exist in communities by promoting local DIY cultural events; and Slung Low (www.slunglow.org) a professional theatre company currently co-managing an old working men's club as performance venue and community space.[1] In conducting these case studies, we considered what learning might be gained by examining areas of failure within the work of organisations whose narratives more commonly focused on success.

Stage 2 also involved 83 in-depth qualitative interviews with a larger sample of policymakers, funders, evaluation consultants, cultural professionals, and participants. Through these we further investigated the different meanings of participation given by different agents and their attitudes to failure. All of the interviews were transcribed and the data analysed alongside that generated through the survey and workshops.

Working inductively, a thematic approach to analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was taken, and coding was conducted using the NVivo software. For the purposes of this paper the main themes identified related to the attitudes to and the value given to the notion of failure from professionals in the cultural sector, the way success and failure are evidenced and to what end, and the resultant failures that these attitudes and practices may themselves generate. From this, we have identified a new taxonomy of failures that were used in phase 3[2] of the research and will be explored in more detail in future outputs from this project.

Given the sensitivity of the topic, the names of all of those who took part in workshops and interviews were anonymised, but the representatives of the case studies agreed to the naming of their organisations, for which we are grateful and hope their example demonstrates the value of sharing stories of failure openly.

Fear of failure

Many of the cultural professionals[3] who we spoke to supported the view that 'art and culture can never fail' (policymaker). All were far happier to talk about 'how things could have been better' (cultural professional). Failure was often felt to be too negative a term to employ. Time and again,

words such as 'discomfort', 'unease' and 'unhelpful' were used to describe the way many professionals felt about the word. Some opposed what they saw as the 'binaries' or 'finality' implied by the term although interestingly they did not resist the word success in the same way. Furthermore, most felt you could always find something of value that had been the result of any given cultural activity. However, this value might have nothing to do with the specific intention of 'increasing' and 'widening' access to culture. When asked if a project would have failed if it was intended to diversify the audience for a particular organisation but did not attract anyone who had not been to that organisation before, most interviewees agreed that this would, indeed, have been a failure. But they were doubtful if this were a narrative they would share. This supports the claim from the literature that policies and projects are rarely an outright failure, but need to be assessed against a range of domains that challenge these binary definitions if people are to feel comfortable talking openly about them.

To help challenge the narrative that failure is impossible, or should not be shared, all of those taking part in the workshops, surveys, and interviews were asked to share a story of failure and consider whether they had learnt from it. Significantly, many cultural professionals defaulted to a personal failing, which ranged from being a perfectionist and so having too high expectations of others to experiencing imposter syndrome in their role. While some said they had learned from reflecting on these failings many said it was something they couldn't change or that thinking about it made them feel bad about their abilities.

When subsequently prompted to think of an example related specifically to cultural participation projects the majority of stories told by the cultural professionals were of micro operational failures (such as a van breaking down on the way to a show so it didn't go ahead) or macro systemic failures (such as social inequalities in society at large) that were 'acts of god' which neither they nor the cultural sector could be held accountable for, or do anything about. Few offered any detail about how they had learnt from such failures and many found it an uncomfortable process to share such stories. Although not universal,[4] it was clear that for many, talking about failure, especially failures related to activity they had been involved in, was highly challenging. For all that several of the cultural professionals interviewed said they had the Samuel Beckett quote 'fail, fail again, fail better' pinned on their office wall, most saw this as an aspiration rather than something they found easy to do.

Our analysis suggests that fear plays a large part in the discomfort exhibited by many of those we spoke with, in regard to publicly describing or acknowledging anything they have been involved in as having failed. Some felt that a fear of failure is common in the UK, rooted in a taboo of educational failure experienced as a child. Despite what some described as a growing business rhetoric around learning from failure it was also often felt that it is becoming harder to talk publicly about failure because of a 'soundbite culture' (evaluation consultant) where 'everyone thinks a mistake is something that should be punished rather than something you can learn from' (participant) and people are 'scared of how their words will be used or abused' (cultural professional). This is indicative of the extent to which it was not the fear of something failing that caused the most discomfort. Rather, it was the fear of being blamed for failures, or being perceived by peers as a failure professionally. It was felt this might affect future contracts, funding and partnerships. This demonstrates the importance that profile and reputation have as a measure of success or failure within the cultural sector, often over and above the purpose of the project or the impact on participation. As we will discuss later in the article, this fear reduces risk taking and encourages the production of uncritical stories of unconditional success from which the sector fails to learn.

Despite this evident discomfort with the label of failure when attached to their own work, many of the interviewees appeared far more at ease talking about failures 'in general', or times they felt they had been failed, or failures they perceived others to have caused. The remainder of the article will discuss some of these failures in more depth while also considering some of the reasons why learning from failures seems so hard to do.

The numbers game

Most of the cultural professionals we spoke to acknowledged that the participation agenda was driven by the evidence that 'publicly funded arts, culture and heritage, supported by tax and lottery revenues, are predominantly accessed by an unnecessarily narrow social, economic, ethnic and educated demographic that is not fully representative of the UK's population' (Warwick Commission 2015), which they saw as a failure of participation. As such, most agreed that the aim of participation initiatives was to address this inequality by reaching out beyond those who are already engaged with subsidised cultural activities.

Yet only a few of those we spoke to considered the extent to which the work they had created or funded had, or had not contributed towards attainment of this high-level policy objective. Instead, interviewees more often spoke about the extent to which cultural participation projects resulted in 'individuals whose life has been transformed' (evaluation consultant). There were multiple references to improving health and wellbeing, increasing citizenship, and contributing to social cohesion. All of these narratives frame the participant as the problem who needs to be 'fixed' rather than the policies, projects and practices that create and sustain structural inequities in regard to how different people's cultural lives are valued and supported.

This is not to suggest that those receiving funding are not concerned with capturing evidence about who they work with. Each of our case studies record demographic data about their audiences and celebrate the fact that their participants are more diverse than other organisations they know of. Who and how people participate is therefore also a clear criterion for measuring success or failure. But as our case study, Slung Low demonstrated, numeric data does not provide neutral evidence but can be used to create whatever narrative is needed. For example, they cited the fact that only eight people from their local community had engaged in their recent programme of work, with most participants coming from further afield. As their total numbers had increased and the previous season only engaged four local people, they argued that this could be presented as a success (100% increase in local participation and increased profile further afield) or a failure (numbers of participants from the local community continued to be low). But in reality, they believed it is only a deeper, and more nuanced understanding of the processes involved and the challenges faced in developing new audiences that has any value for shared learning. However, despite seeing the value in understanding the successes and failures in their process they felt compelled to focus their attentions on controlling a narrative that would maintain their profile.

For others collecting 'evidence' often became more about overall numbers than about the diversity of who participates. For all that one of the founders of Fun Palaces said 'hashtag – it's not about the numbers' several of the Fun Palace local volunteers felt that the evaluation form they were sent by the head office was 'all about numbers'. For staff working on Creative People and Places a commonly held view was that 'it's absolutely not about numbers [but there's] a massive pressure to always have numbers'. Similarly, policymakers told us that it's not 'about numbers [but] without the numbers you can't start the conversation'.

But this acceptance of the need to play the 'the numbers game' (cultural professional) as inevitable, was also seen to detract from the high-level aspiration of supporting a more diverse range of people to participate in culture, by focusing on quantity, as an easily measurable target, over a more nuanced discussion about the purpose of the activity or the process of delivery.

Many found it difficult to determine who had set the quantitative objectives they were required to report on. But they felt that this encouraged certain types of work, such as spectacle, which might achieve short-term numbers but not long-term change. Furthermore, there was lack of confidence in the value of this data beyond merely monitoring activity. There was no evidence of funders aggregating the monitoring data they received back to meaningfully assess the effectiveness of funded projects in delivering the purpose or objectives of the policy aim to create a permanent change to the diversity of people whose cultural lives are being valued and supported. Indeed, a number of our interviewees cited examples of policies or projects they knew had not delivered

significant or enduring change yet saw the same organisations receiving more funding to repeat the same type of projects.

Short-term successes but long-term failures?

For the project participants interviewed one of the ways in which they told us cultural policy and projects consistently fail is by failing to recognise their lived experience as cultural participants, in particular in regard to the cultural activities they already engage with:

> I often go to places that are considered to be low income, low participation in the arts, and people do all sorts of creative things (participant)

> Real cultural participation happens every single day (participant)

This particular failure was recognised by many of the cultural professionals who often showed awareness of the growing body of evidence around the prevalence of 'everyday participation' (Miles and Gibson 2016). This led a number to acknowledge that:

> … there's a real arrogance within a lot of arts organisations that they know what would be good for that community (cultural professional)

> … it's not working, because it doesn't recognise, it doesn't nourish the cultures that are there (cultural professional)

> One of the key reasons why the statistics are so disappointing is because we are proposing a definition of culture which does not match the way in which culture is defined by a lot of people today (evaluation consultant)

Yet despite such acknowledgements it was recognised that there was 'a failure to follow through in terms of funding' to support the range of cultural activities that people take part in (policymaker) and an almost unanimous assumption that this would not change.

In part, this despondency stemmed from the recognition of another recurring failure, namely the preference for funding short-term projects that everyone knew could not be sustainable once the funding ended (irrespective of what they promised in the funding application). Many artists and arts managers spoke about the extent to which this encouraged 'safe' output-based work that could be easily reported on rather than developing work that could embed permanent structural changes within the cultural sector. Time and again we heard people say the same things:

> … the biggest failure is that it hasn't continued (participant)

> … it's worse, isn't it, if you're given something and you have a really good time and then it's taken away (cultural professional)

> … while the money was in place, they made interesting moves, but the minute there was no more money in place … one of the real problems for us was about trying to embed real cultural change and change in practice (policymaker)

> … the biggest issue with organisations getting funding to work in areas of deprivation is that they come in, they do the project and they get the money, then they report and leave again … I think that would be a failure on their part, but nobody would notice, because they would have completed the project and reported [on it] (cultural professional)

This failure was evident in one of our case studies, Creative People and Places, which despite having the aspiration for long-term sustainability stated in the programme objectives, had the project mentality built in to its programme design. Places chosen to be part of the programme were given large amounts of funding at the start that decreased every three years, whatever their research and evaluation found.

> I think if we are trying to achieve a more equitable cultural sector … to not sustain the investment in it, or to, you know, massively cut it each time, just to me feels … I don't understand that (cultural professional)

All the staff from Creative People and Places who were spoken to reinforced this point and the chief funder – Arts Council England – further endorsed this. Yet despite being described as an action research project and having gone through four phases of funding this fundamental aspect of the programme design remains unchanged. This is a clear example of failing to implement policy alterations, even in the face of evidence indicating the necessity to do so.

Interestingly, the place-based approach to funding which is at the heart of Creative People and Places has been adopted in other countries (Jancovich 2017a), including Wales and Scotland where we also interviewed policymakers as part of this research. While some of those interviewed in these other nations said they had learnt from the problems in Arts Council England's programme design, they said this was not based on the sharing of evidence or policy learning between the different agencies. Instead, they said learning was limited by the fact that Creative People and Places had only been promoted as a success story. Any differences in the place-based approaches between the three countries were therefore based on hearsay or rumour (in other words narratives not evidence), personal gut feeling of the policymakers involved, or a desire to put their own mark on their approach. This further questions the extent to which policy-making is an evidence-based process and adds weight to the argument that framing the narrative may be as, if not more influential than building the evidence base.

'Making the case'

There was consensus amongst artists and arts managers that the biggest barrier to talking more openly about failure, in a manner that would engender learning and encourage change, was the perceived prevalence of evaluation, performance management, and accountability frameworks. This supports the argument made earlier that a focus on accountability may reduce honesty rather than encourage it (Howlett, Ramesh, and Wu 2015). Significantly, the language of meeting objectives was often used interchangeably with meeting expectations, which suggests a desire to please someone else's agenda, and acknowledges the subjectivity of the data from the outset. These expectations were commonly based on second-guessing what different stakeholders wanted rather than 'grown up conversations between all parties' (policymaker).

Many of those we spoke to who had delivered or managed participation programmes exhibited a lack of confidence in defining success and failure on their own terms. They also expressed a pressure from funders to 'over promise' when setting out their objectives in applications. This is at odds with the nature of participatory work where by definition 'you can't always know [your objectives] until you've got the end result with the people' (cultural professional). But while many of those receiving funding often felt they were measuring success against objectives they did not set or necessarily support, some funders described a 'self-elevating rhetoric' in reporting dubious achievements that came from the arts organisations themselves. For some, obscuring project failures was endemic in the arts due to its 'self-congratulatory insularity' (funder) and across the board there was frustration that objectives were neither fully owned nor understood by any party.

Furthermore, a key principle of participation theory is that participants should be involved in a cyclical process from setting the objectives to evaluating the outcomes and informing how to take the work forward (Jancovich 2017b). Yet such inclusive and reflective involvement of participants, in defining success and failure, appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. Despite the cultural project participants we spoke with telling us that one form of failure would be 'failing to meet participants needs' rarely did any of the cultural professionals in our sample talk about the extent to which their priorities had been formed or altered by participants. Nor was meeting the participants' expectations and accountability to the participants themselves, rather than the funders, commonly cited as a factor in considering the relative success/failure of a project.

Where participants were spoken to as part of an evaluation it was mostly commonly structured around questions to measure the objectives that had been on the initial funding application, rather than to assess whether those objectives were relevant in the first place. There was also no evidence

of evaluations including the opinions of those who opted not to take part, despite the recognition that 'you have to look at it through the lenses outside the room as well' (evaluation consultant). While most of the cultural professionals recognised the importance of capturing different voices they tended to use these different voices to tell a single narrative, often around the transformational impact of the work on individuals. But when evaluations fail to explicitly recognise conflicting perspectives and narratives it raises questions about whose lived experience matters most and the extent to which the invitation to 'participate' extends to challenging the 'official' narrative about the efficacy or even desirability of cultural participation projects and policies.

While many funders agreed that evaluations should offer something more than monitoring data in order to transparently account for expenditure, the distinction between monitoring and evaluation appears to be commonly misunderstood, forgotten or ignored. This results in reports, increasingly written by professional evaluators, which are 'too often only looking back when [they] should be looking back with a future-oriented agenda' (evaluation consultant). Indeed, most interviewees who had been the recipients of funding spoke about the need for evaluations, not in relation to learning, but rather as necessary tools with which to 'make the case'[5] for continued funding based on what McConnell (2010) defines as 'political success' or what we have defined above as profile. The extent to which narratives that support the profiles of individual artists and organisations are prioritised over honesty about how the initiative has succeeded or failed in its purpose or processes, is indicative of a collective failure in the cultural sector to consider the extent to which current approaches to supporting cultural participation are failing to make a difference to the entrenched inequity that presently exists.

Failing to learn

Many of those who took part in our research said afterwards that they found the opportunity to talk explicitly about failures as cathartic, liberating or a learning experience. Yet almost everyone said that they had experienced little to no opportunities to do this in such a candid manner before. Even the professionals, who said they had already acknowledged the value in learning from failure, felt their reflections were most likely to take place on a personal and private basis. It was much less common for such discussions to be shared across teams and almost never with participants or funders. Where they did take place it was always in the context of 'safe spaces' (cultural professional) with trusted peers.

In the case of Fun Palaces, there was recognised to be great value in sharing learning between different places. But the volunteer nature of the programme meant many of those we interviewed felt that in practice the only people who had the capacity to share their experiences were the paid regional ambassadors. The local volunteer organisers did not feel engaged in this process, let alone the participants who attended events, whose voices were collected through very standard satisfaction surveys. Furthermore, the regional ambassadors we spoke to said that even among themselves there was a tendency, encouraged by the design of the evaluation, to share good news stories rather than discuss failures.

Within Creative People and Places there is funding to support a national peer-learning network. Staff from the programme all said that this did provide a safe space and that the longer the network had existed the more honest people felt they could be about failure within this. But most described the sharing of failure as a space for professionals to vent rather than learn. No one could think of any examples that led to programme or process change. Furthermore, while most Creative People and Place areas involve participants in decision-making on the artistic programme there is less evidence of them being involved at other points in the planning cycle such as agenda setting and evaluation. Despite the peer network also organising an annual conference which invites in the wider cultural sector many of those interviewed said what was presented in these forums was celebratory and promotional and did not encourage critical dialogue about the failures that had occurred or the changes that were necessary.

For Slung Low, without being part of a network like the other two cases, while they were committed to the principle of sharing their learning across the sector, they said the reality of day-to-day life meant they rarely even had time to reflect among themselves as a team, let alone with participants. The participants of Slung Low we spoke to described them as a very open organisation, which was willing to listen but the nature of producing work always meant that they were on to the next project and so it became difficult to embed the learning.

In our wider sample, there was also a sense that, for all a number of cultural professionals talked about 'the right to fail' as a vital part of the creative process, there was also some doubt about how much the majority of those receiving funding wanted or were able to reflect critically on their own failures:

> … the failure I see more regularly is that organisations don't want to adjust and change (cultural professional)

> [The problem is with] the ones who don't see themselves as failing, so they would never come and say, "we've failed" because they wouldn't acknowledge that that's the issue (policymaker)

Or as one funder retorted:

> … they [organisations and individuals receiving funding] say we need to be allowed to fail … everybody's allowed to fail, the point is to learn … if you want carte blanche to not get it right again then that's pointless

Within the UK cultural sector, a culture of truly critically reflective learning (Hanson 2013) appears either absent or at best simulated through the production of tactically constructed project reports and evaluations.

There was also scant evidence of funders critically evaluating their own funding strategies and the logics on which they are based. As noted above, there is scarce evidence of funders aggregating the data and information they receive back through evaluation reports in order to draw conclusions about the extent to which their own processes are working or whether the funding being distributed was cumulatively delivering their high-level aims and purpose. In turn, this has led to deep frustration and scepticism amongst the practitioners we spoke to about whether such evaluation reports are ever read:

> … literally thousands of post-lottery grant reports sitting in a kind of data graveyard (evaluation consultant)

> I have noticed very little interest in learning really … what is the point of spending months doing this, bothering people, doing dozens of interviews and then the report is not even read by the people who then make decisions (evaluation consultant).

Those interviewees we spoke to who worked for trusts and foundations readily recognised this failing and were able to point to specific actions they were taking to evaluate themselves more robustly. Although those who worked for arts councils and local authorities shared many of the same concerns, it was also evident they shared a similar pressure to those they funded around 'making the case' for continued subsidy and support from government. As one public sector funder said during a workshop 'civil servants and ministers are looking for good news stories, they don't want to hear about what's gone wrong'.

Overall, when talking about the nature of evaluation and where the learning from failure should take place there was a tendency from all of our interviewees to relocate the responsibility elsewhere. The policymakers were less willing to explore the failures in their own programme designs but tended to expect that the organisations they fund should be more honest about what they had or had not achieved. The organisations receiving funding either passed the blame back to the funder for being too instrumental in what they wanted measuring, or down to the artist for not being able to deliver what was expected. Similarly, some artists passed blame both up the chain to the organisation or funder for setting unrealistic goals and down to the participant for not appreciating the opportunity on offer. It would appear that this perpetual process of passing the buck encourages a culture of evaluation that is more concerned with blame avoidance, 'box-ticking' and professional

protectionism than collective social learning predicated on a shared responsibility to make cultural participation in the UK more equitable.

Conclusion

Our research has found a cultural policy landscape in the UK that is not conducive to honesty, critical reflection or learning from failures. Through our research on cultural participation policies and projects we have shown there to be a lack of trust and open dialogue between participants, artists, cultural organisations and funders, which we posit may have wider implications across all areas under the jurisdiction of cultural policy.

A fear of losing funding and future work or damaging professional reputations is resulting in a tendency, for those working in the cultural sector, to reproduce narratives of success and to prioritise blame avoidance over meaningful learning. We argue that, as a result, the chance of success in achieving the intended purpose of a policy, even within the narrow terms of an individual programme, is itself reduced. The desire to demonstrate success discourages risk taking and encourages repetition of past mistakes. It further prevents learning from which the cultural sector might implement the structural changes needed to engender greater equity. For all that our interviewees told us the purpose of cultural participation policies was to create a more equitable cultural sector, it appears that achieving success in this regard is far less important than the profile success of self-preservation.

As such, cultural participation policies and projects have taken on a significant symbolic function, demonstrating an institutional or individual commitment to addressing the perceived problems of engaging specific publics, rather than attempting to understand, let alone 'solve' the problem in a more objective sense. Consequently, ambiguity becomes an essential part of policy formation and evaluation (Zahariadis 2003) and 'feel-good' narratives about success (Stone 2012) are employed to help to build and sustain advocacy coalitions (Sabatier 1988) concerned with maintaining the status quo.

However, the value that these 'feel-good' narratives have delivered for the profile of the UK cultural sector is by no means an outright success either as the legitimacy of public subsidy for arts and culture continues to be questioned in a way that, for example, education and health are not. As one policymaker said, 'there is no shortage of evidence [about the value of cultural subsidy] the gap is the ability to convince' (policymaker). So while demands to 'better' evidence the 'value' of art and culture continue to take up a significant amount of time and resource, the focus on success arguably contributes to this continued failure to convince.

We contend that the only learning being prioritised is that which May (1992) describes as 'political' but which we have defined as profile, whereby those seeking to advocate for their own position within the field of cultural policy aim to better advance their arguments and ideas. In short, those who can exert most influence within the UK cultural sector primarily want to learn how to make *their* case better. Yet unless and until the UK cultural sector also acknowledges and learns from failures of process, practice and participation they will never deliver the scale of change required to create the sort of equity and inclusion they claim is the purpose of such work. As such, we tentatively offer a new taxonomy of success and failure, building on the findings above to include not only profile, but also purpose, process, participation and artistic practice as the 5 facets of cultural participation projects and polices that must all be examined if policy learning (May 1992) is to truly occur. Furthermore, ever more eloquent evaluations employing the same narratives of empowerment and transformation must give way to critical reflection (Hanson 2013) that draws on different perspectives and narratives, recognising success and failure as being opposite ends of a spectrum rather than existing in binary opposition. Such work must be honest in recognising that a policy or project that succeeds for one group, community, or organisation might fail for another and that any successes may not be understood as such by all of the stakeholders. To adapt Howlett's (2012b) position on policy analysis, if we accept that success

and failure are contingent on whose perspective we are looking from then policy evaluation must seek to answer: Success and failure for whom? To what degree? To what effect? It is these questions we are encouraging those working in the cultural sector to explore as part of the final stage of our research project.

Notes

1. We had initially planned to have a case study from at least one of the other nations of the UK but failed to find a suitable organisation willing to waive anonymity. However, additional interviews were conducted with representatives from a number of these organisations.
2. Stage 3 of the project involved the creation of an interactive website (https://failspaceproject.co.uk/) to trial a new taxonomy of success/failure for cultural participation policies and projects.
3. Throughout this article, we use the term 'cultural professionals' to refer to arts managers, participation workers, and artists. Evaluation consultants, funders, and policymakers are labelled separately.
4. Some professionals and many participants were more willing to embrace the term. It appeared from our sample that those who had followed less traditional education and career paths were least fearful of talking about failure, but there was insufficient data to confirm this hypothesis.
5. Funders from local authorities and the arts councils were more sensitive to the need for 'making the case' than funders from independent trust and foundations.

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The justice of visual art. Creative state-building in times of political transition (Series: law in context)

by Elisa Garnsey, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 246 pp., £18.99 (paperback), £85.00 (hardback), $23.00 (Adobe eBook), ISBN 978-1-108-49439-7 (hardback)

Viktorija L. A. Čeginskas

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BOOK REVIEWS

The justice of visual art. Creative state-building in times of political transition (Series: law in context), by Elisa Garnsey, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 246 pp., £18.99 (paperback), £85.00 (hardback), $23.00 (Adobe eBook), ISBN 978-1-108-49439-7 (hardback)

In political theory and international relations, art has often been considered as a representation of political discourse or as an instrument to transcend the political in the pursuit of justice. Elisa Garnsey's monograph *The Justice of Visual Art. Creative State-Building in Times of Political Transition* shifts the focus of this discussion from the instrumentalising art to acknowledging it as a site and mode of politics. In this view, works of visual art (e.g. painting, photographs, drawing, video art, sculpture, installation, or art performance) reflect on societal divisions, experienced violence, and traumatic memories of the past that continue to affect the socio-political relationships within a state and its relations with the international community in the present.

Garnsey gives an accomplished account of the transformative power of art and culture for engaging and shaping ideas of justice in post-Apartheid South Africa. Her transdisciplinary approach brings in new perspectives on the mutual effects of transitional justice and visual art for better understanding the complex ways in which the experienced injustices and trauma of the past continue to affect contemporary feelings of justice and judicial practices within a society. The book will be of interest to scholars, undergraduates, and graduate students of law, international relations, social science, conflict studies, (critical) heritage studies, memory studies, and post-colonial studies as well as to law professionals and policy-makers.

By addressing the important role of art and culture in the pursuit of transitional justice in South Africa, Garnsey challenges the widespread view that post-conflict justice and feelings of justice can only be brought about through specific legal mechanisms. She investigates how values and principles of transitional justice are expressed through artworks but also how art can help to evoke, represent, and reconcile different visions of the past, so that a new collective political future can be imagined, in which feelings of justice are acknowledged. Her analysis draws on extensive empirical research at the Constitutional Court in South Africa and the South African Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale in 2013, visual and archival research, and 130 semi-structured interviews with people involved in both institutions (e.g. judges, artists, staff, visitors, and governmental representatives).

The book is structured in eleven chapters and focuses on three areas: (i) the theoretical framing of the relationship between art and justice; (ii) the development of a new concept of visual jurisprudence in relation to art; and (iii) the cultural diplomacy practices of states emerging from conflict. Garnsey posits that art has become 'a radical form of political participation in times of transition' (29) because of its capacity to empower political recognition and representation of individuals and communities that support transitional justice in more effective, affective, and creative ways than other conventional legal and political means. This central argument runs like a red thread through the main body of the book, which is divided into two parts addressing the national and international dimensions of transitional justice in relation to art. In Part I (*Recognising Transitional Justice in the Nation State*, Chapters 3–6), Garnsey explores how the symbolic site of the Constitutional Court, built on a former penal site during Apartheid, and its art collection are central to shaping political and social transformation and reflecting the new values that underlie judicial practices and decisions in post-apartheid South Africa. Part II (*Representing Transitional Justice on the Global Stage, Chapters* 7–10) addresses the potential of art in cultural diplomacy to shape South Africa's process of nation-

building and its external representation through engaging with the unresolved legacies of Apartheid at the 2013 Venice Art Biennale. The book concludes with a summary of its key implications and contributions.

Garnsey is interested in exploring the relationship between art and justice in times of transition and their mutual effects on each other, which contribute to a better understanding of 'how the past shapes the present, how the present shapes the past, and how the present envisages the future through art' (1–2). Although she limits her analysis to visual art, she contributes to the debate about culture at large (including various forms of art, heritage, cultural practices, and values), highlighting its transformative and affective power. Garnsey shows how engagement with the past through art plays simultaneously on multiple temporal, spatial, and affective dimensions, and helps to reflect and intervene in complex socio-political processes that shape internal relations in a society. In her introduction, Garnsey highlights the relevance of art in 'animating and activating the narratives of individuals so that they take on collective importance' (2). She refers to the complex interrelation between politics of memory, oblivion, and culture as well as the particular interests and ideological backgrounds against which art functions.

Sharing a common vision of the past is a vital element in nation-building but a particularly difficult process in societies emerging from conflict and seeking reconciliation. Garnsey's detailed case study reveals how the dark legacy of violence, oppression, discrimination, and trauma continues to impact on policies, practices, and everyday interactions in post-Apartheid South Africa. She argues how engaging with the past through art can support the state's transitional justice narrative and help to attain specific political interests and goals in the present, and at the same time, offer new opportunities to critically engage with the past. Garnsey shows how art helps with the recognition, representation, and integration of multiple, partly contradictory experiences and feelings, also of marginalized groups, through its capacity to generate memory and emotion by drawing attention to the actors and subjects of justice, and the purpose of justice to promote change. Thus, art not only has the capacity to connect people but also to increase inclusion, tolerance, and empathy towards others through engaging with experiences of the past. In this context, Garnsey introduces her novel concept of visual jurisprudence, in which she theorises how art can offer a critical perspective on the perception and provision of justice and the communication of what is considered as just.

The analysis in the second part of the book fits seamlessly with the first, as the shared nature of art and its capacity to produce ideas of communality and shape visions of the future makes art an attractive tool in cultural diplomacy. Garnsey's analysis of the art exhibition at the South African Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale underlines the relevance and dual function of art internally and externally for identity constructions and cultural diplomacy through creating, representing, and commenting on specific images and narratives of the past. The art exhibition at the pavilion helps to express the ongoing struggles with the complexities of the past in South African society and to conceptualise transitional justice as a new, collective narrative on the global stage. It presents South Africa as a state that, after going through a difficult period, has returned to the international community. Garnsey addresses two possible criticisms in her conclusion: (i) whether what she discusses counts as transitional justice, and (ii) whether art really matters in post-conflict settings in the face of urgent human need. The answer to both questions is yes. Contemporary practices and interpretations of the past result from constant processes of meaning-making, creative cultural production, and engagement at different societal levels. While nation-building and diplomatic processes that aim at establishing national unity, self-confidence, and societal cohesiveness make these processes visible, cultural resilience strengthens individual and collective hopes for the future, especially in times of humanitarian crisis.

The recognition that art is inherently political and can be a site and form of political participation may come as a surprise to scholars of political science and international relations, but not to those familiar with critical heritage studies. This is the sole noteworthy shortcoming of this otherwise excellent book. While Garnsey draws extensively on works from the fields of transitional justice, human rights, memory studies, public diplomacy, and art, she does not refer to the rich body of

scholarly literature in the field of critical heritage studies. Critical heritage scholars have examined how cultural heritage is a site of conflicting interpretations and practices in struggles over political power, recognition, representation, inclusion, and participation in contemporary societies. As they have pointed out, heritage is essentially about the meaning given to the past and how it is expected to be recalled in the present through specific interpretations and images of the past. While culture can be instrumentalised for political purposes to underpin certain ideologies, normative discourses, and power relations within a society, it also enables diverse perspectives, including individual or collective experiences of pain, trauma, and violence. This view suggests that art is inherently political, complex, relational, and presentist and can help to critically engage with topical debates and crises in society.

Garnsey's book gives considerable food for thought and contributes to transdisciplinary research by producing new insights. Her work on the relationship between art and transitional justice helps to expand the scope of and methodological approach in a number of fields through which the transformative potential of culture, heritage, and art can be explored. I recommend her book to scholars and a wider readership interested in how legacies of the past affect socio-political and cultural relations, politics, and practices in societies today.

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Red creative: culture and modernity in China, by Justin O'Connor and Xin Gu, Bristol, UK/ Chicago, USA, Intellect, 2020, 316 pp., £20.00 (ePDF), £20.00 (ePUB), £26.00 (paperback), £80.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781789383218 (hardback)

A communist country cannot be creative. This is the mainstream supposition, that is contested by Justin O'Connor and Xin Gu in their book titled *Red Creative: Culture and Modernity in China*. The catchy title presents a (seemingly) impossible conjunction. Indeed, the imitation culture associated with the 'Made in China' slogan is often contrasted with the idea of the 'genius' formulated by sixteenth century writer Giorgio Vasari and the notion of creativity rooted in the anthropocentric approach of the Renaissance. While artistic autonomy and individualism are at the forefront of western modernity's identity, these notions do not present the core foundation of creativity in the case of China. Still, creativity plays an important role here and this is exactly what the authors attempt to reframe. Furthermore, there have been several surprising turns in the region in recent years, as we have seen in the case of the museum boom, or with Chinese artists ranking at the top of the global art market's selling lists or for example with the proliferation of creative clusters. Similarly, the term 'red creative', something that seemed to be previously unthinkable, has become a plausible idea recently.

The structure of the book is as follows: in the 'Introduction', we learn about the context in which this book was conceived, the major discourses around culture, creativity, and modernity, as well as gaining insight concerning the authors (and their approaches to the topic). After establishing the framework for their investigation, the authors explore the various aspects of the foundational question in the following chapters.

Chapter 1 'The Creative Industries and the China Challenge' provides an in-depth introduction to the notion of 'cultural industries' and the phenomena of 'creative industries'. This segment includes the genealogy and critique of these terms, as well as the (overlap and) contrast between the two distinct agendas. The authors also explain the reasons why China seemed to be incompatible with

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the creativity programme (at least from a Western perspective): namely the belief that creativity cannot be promoted by an authoritarian, 'despotic' political system. Western commentators saw creativity (that is the 'ability to create ideas and innovate rather than simply manufacture things', 29) as the comparative advantage of the West.

Chapter 2 'Culture, Modernity and the Nation State' gives the reader a historical account of Chinese modernity. As the authors explain, after the turn of the century the word 'new' (xin) became crucial and meant not only reform but also the rejection of the old. For radical reformers disavowing the 'Confucian' past seemed to be the prerequisite for reform, and this 'new' had to be derived from the West. Applying Tony Benett's 'culture complex' (public institutions 'such as museums, libraries and art galleries, and the kinds of knowledge that go with them', 69) as a framework, the authors argue that China might have arrived at a very different kind of modernity and a very different kind of 'culture complex' could have emerged. However, its distinctive trajectory should not be regarded in terms of the Western 'original'. The authors have a closer look at the concepts associated with Western modernity such as the notion of public sphere outlined by Habermas, artistic autonomy and the bourgeois subject investigated by Bourdieu, and the idea of liberal governmentality introduced by Foucault. These various notions are then applied by the authors to the specific realities of China.

Chapter 3 'Shanghai Modern: Cultural Industries and Modernity' is a detailed case study looking into Shanghai's exemplary modernity and the city's historical role in China's path towards modernism. The authors look at 'the period from the 1911 Republican to the 1949 Communist Revolutions' (12).

Chapter 4 'Post-Reform China and Neo-liberalism' discusses Deng Xiaoping's 'reform and opening' (1978) from the perspective of neo-liberalism. The authors outline the basic dynamics of this globally dominant political agenda and explain how it affected the Chinese reform programme. The authors suggest that there were certain limits to neo-liberalism, connected to China's distinct civilizational past. One of the key consequences of the reforms is that the logic of markets and capital accumulation tended to hollow out socialist and collectivist values.

In Chapter 5 'China as a Civilizational State', the authors outline some countervailing currents to neo-liberalism, rooted in China's 'Confucian' heritage, and demonstrate how this heritage still structures everyday economic and social life. They also explain how Chinese leadership uses the above mentioned 'civilizational and socialist' resources to 'deal with the disruptions of market-driven modernization, and the newly individuated subjects' (153). Since, (besides markets,) the reforms also required subjects: 'productive and governable' consumers.

Chapter 6 'Shanghai: Creative City' takes us back to the long case study concerning Shanghai. The authors explore how Shanghai was rediscovered as a 'creative city' with its cultural memory of Chinese urban modernity once forgotten. They give a complete account of how its Pudong district became the 'new Manhattan of the East' and a source of global image capital with its iconic skyscrapers, luxury shopping malls, art venues and new forms of urban consumption.

In Chapter 7 'Reforming the Culture System' the authors look at China's post-1978 cultural policy reforms. These reforms attempted to establish a market-based socialist culture, addressing the needs of its consumer-citizens at the same time retaining the core socialist values. Interestingly, the party-state aimed to ensure these values, not via external content control ('censorship') but by its position as the primary market organizer of the cultural production sector. Of course, this is opposed to the creative industries' emphasis on free markets and the sovereign consumer. A significant and disturbing development – they propose – is the recent shift to various forms of digital control.

Chapter 8 'Creative Subjects' returns once again to Shanghai and the notion of the 'creative imaginary'. The authors aim to trace the community – artists and cultural workers – behind 'creative clusters', and demonstrate how these became an integral part of the city's real-estate apparatus.

Finally, in the 'Epilogue' the authors place the whole story in a framework similar to the dominant narratives concerning the Cold War, noting that China's position (the largest population and the second-largest economy) has rearranged the global geopolitical power relations, challenging the hegemonic role of the United States.

One of the biggest virtues of the book is the complex vision delineated by the arguments showcasing different perspectives and a wide array of standpoints. This might be due to the collaboration and the fortunate pairing of the authors. One is 'non-Chinese' and arrived in the country in the early 2000s (at the time when creative industries were initiated), while the other is 'Chinese': born in Shanghai but had left the country in 2003. Both of them are active in the field 'which spans the political economy of culture (and communications) and cultural studies' (9). They had witnessed the unfolding of the creative industries agenda, in a context very different to neo-liberal capitalism. Writing this book must have been a major challenge considering the speed of these developments: one has little opportunity to take one step back and reflect on these very recent issues. This book demonstrates the authors' deep knowledge in both the history of economic thought and that of China, as well as the contemporary academic debates on related topics.

The authors revisited many issues in the light of postcolonial thought. Interestingly, in Chapter 2 the authors contest the popular narrative that Shanghai Modern's (1911–1949) 'cultural industries' were the platform for Chinese artists-intellectuals to forge a 'national-popular revolutionary subject' – which narrative would relate them to the Weimar and the USSR avant-gardes. According to their argument, however, contrasting a commercial and cosmopolitan city with Mao Zedong's brutal politics of nation-building and cultural propaganda misrepresents the role of Shanghai – as the city's cultural industries constituted an alternative model of an 'engaged radical intelligentsia' (13). Another major trope reframed is 'censorship' – they argue that 'it is not primarily the issue that matters (though it does matter) but the squeezing of the space of development and experimentation between the state and the market' (15).

It is also worthwhile highlighting that the book applies a historical approach: it studies the past in order to understand the current situations. Notably, the authors' narrative doesn't start with discussing the 1978 reform – which would be a common choice –, but instead with the nineteenth century when China was first confronted with Western modernity.

The commercialization of culture, (digital) surveillance and most recently the coronavirus pandemic (which is mentioned in the 'Epilogue') are global issues, also present in the West. After accusing China of merely copying the West, it may be beneficial to finally raise the question: what can the world learn from this country?

In summary, the book takes a critical look at the Chinese creative economy, with a strong focus on Shanghai, as the exemplary formula of Chinese modernism. Contesting many of the mainstream narratives and truisms dominating the cultural and creative industries discourses the book encourages us to understand China on its own terms. Of course, the reasoning could not only apply to China but many other countries outside the Euro-Atlantic world. *Red Creative: Culture and Modernity in China* is an extremely insightful and informative venture, which will be a valuable resource for cultural policy decision-makers, academics, as well as educators.

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