

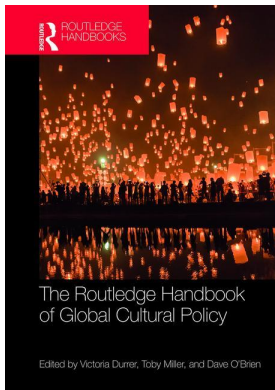
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Cultural governance and cultural policy

Hegemonic myth and political logics

Jeremy Valentine

To govern, one could say, is to be condemned to seek an authority for one's authority.

(Rose, 1999: 27)

Introduction: 'Welcome aboard the Black Pearl, Miss Turner'

The phrase 'cultural governance' does not enjoy a rigid designation. In semiotic terms, it is a syntagm that comprehends a variety of ways in and through which the paradigms of culture and governance can be combined. Culture is notoriously ambivalent. It can mean both sensation and meaning, experience or symbol, a way of life or its artefacts. Governance appears to be relatively straightforward. It means the conduct or process of governing, in the sense of ordering, commanding or directing. So cultural governance can mean the conduct or process of governing in or by culture, and it can also mean the cultural characteristics of governance or an aspect of governance particularly concerned with culture. Those and other possible combinations can overlap, and any strict denotation is always fixed within specific pragmatic contexts. Even then, it is not possible to completely eliminate all residual connotations through action alone. A context is never completely closed. So instead of attempting to list all possible uses of the phrase, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate that cultural governance has a relatively fixed and determined value as a component of hegemonic discourse in a specific historical conjuncture roughly co-extensive with the emergence of neoliberalism in the 1980s and its consolidation and dominance in post-industrial capitalist social formations since the 1990s. Despite its economic connotations, neoliberalism is not reducible to an economic base. It is primarily a political project seeking to extract value from economic processes by acting on political systems and structures to transform them to its advantage. Part of that hegemonic project is the extension of economic processes insofar as they are reducible to market institutions. In that way value becomes calculable, but neoliberalism is not simply a matter of establishing market mechanisms. It is also a matter of protecting itself from their negative effects. Neoliberalism is rule through rather than by markets. In economic terms, neoliberalism is most accurately categorised as a rentier regime as it is not value creating because it relies on extra-economic political power. One only has to reflect

on the growth of bureaucracy and administration to grasp that point. The argument of this chapter is that contemporary cultural policy emerges from that context. It does not resolve the ambivalence of culture but mobilises it.

The argument acknowledges the extensive theoretically and methodologically diverse field of research that demonstrates some of the relations between culture, both as way of life and artefact, and neoliberalism. These include things like attempts to shape subjectivity in order to comply with codes of strategic personal responsibility, the normalisation of precarity, the instrumentalisation of culture as a self-policing solution to problems of social cohesion and the promotion of intellectual property monopolies as a means to deflect chronic problems of accumulation in economic formations that remain tied to capitalism. This chapter is positioned in relation to that research by focussing on culture in the context of the relation between governance and neoliberalism. It does that in order to show that the neoliberal determination of governance is not exactly straightforward. It is ambiguous because it means both the process of governing and action on that process. In that respect, the ambiguity of governance acquires something like the Barthesian status of myth (Barthes, 1973). In semiotic terms, the general signifier 'governance' is transferred from its conventional signified to become at the same time a signified within a particular mode of power that is characterised by acting on governance in order to make that which is to be governed governable. The additional, particular sense, is parasitic on a prior general sense such that the latter appears as an alibi for the former and the power of governance is naturalised. Consequently, as Enroth points out in a similar Barthesian observation on governance, reality is emptied of history and filled with nature, the way things are independently of human action (2013: 69). The mythological sense has enabled governance to become a hegemonic sense-making project. According to Davies (2011), 'governance' has become hegemonic because of the persistence of the general meaning of the term through which power hierarchies persist in the structures represented as unmotivated processes to erase conflicts and contestations. Neoliberal cultural policy is mobilised by the ambiguity of governance.

The myth of governance does not just make sense of things. It changes the relations between things that are made sense of, not least with respect to structures of political power in capitalist post-industrial state formations. Thus, Jessop goes so far as to reformulate Gramsci's notion of the integral state defined as 'political society + civil society' in terms of 'government + governance in the shadow of hierarchy' (2015: 480) where 'shadow' refers to the concealment of power. However, concealment does not entail elimination. Governance creates particular political logics of command, obedience, contestation and subversion as a consequence that stems from its ambiguity. As Best points out, the ambiguity of governance is an 'interpretive lubricant in an uncertain world' (2012: 101). Ambiguity creates the slack in the system in which a balance between coercion and consent can be established. At the same time, it prevents the constitution of governance as an antagonistic frontier on the old power bloc versus the people model. The point of the myth of governance is the prevention of a War of Manoeuvre and the maintenance of conflicts as multiple Wars of Position. The argument of this chapter is that insofar as governance as myth is hegemonic, it conditions power relations and the cultural policy that is formed within them and its actions on culture in whatever sense. That is to say, cultural policy is agnostic with regard to the ambivalence of culture, which in many cases is a resource. In that respect, it's useful to recall Hall's observation of the emergence of 'governing by culture' (1997: 231) which became possible on the basis that as a descriptive category culture had expanded beyond a narrowly conceived cultural sphere to become a terrain on which to act. Its political significance could no longer be reduced to an opposition between domination and resistance, and its authority, or belief

in it, had evaporated (Valentine, 2002). However the significance of culture is measured its political conditions and its existence as an object of policy are determined by the political logics of governance. Cultural policy is action on the governance of culture.

An example from a famous scene within a justifiably popular film might serve to illustrate how power operates within neoliberal governance. It occurs in Walt Disney Pictures' 2003 blockbuster comedy 'Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of The Black Pearl' when, without simplifying the complexities of the plot too much, Elizabeth Swann, daughter of Weatherby Swann, the governor of the Caribbean island of Port Royal, is captured by Pirate Captain Barbossa of the Black Pearl, which has besieged the island in search of a gold medallion that will lift a curse on the ship and its crew. To deceive Barbossa about her true identity in order to increase her chances of escape, Elizabeth gives her family name as Turner, which happens to be the surname of Will, a young blacksmith's apprentice whom she had encountered as a survivor floating amongst the wreckage of a shipwreck rescued by the HMS *Dauntless*, the ship on which she and her father had travelled to arrive at the island eight years earlier when she was 12 years old. In order to obtain her release, Elizabeth appeals to the Pirate's code, which she assumes governs Barbossa's conduct, in order to constrain his actions by the force of normative consistency. In this brief exchange, the presuppositions of Elizabeth's tactic are erased by Barbossa:

ELIZABETH: Wait! You have to take me to shore. According to the Code of the Order of the Brethren...

BARBOSSA: First, your return to shore was not part of our negotiations nor our agreement so I must do nothing. And secondly, you must be a pirate for the pirate's code to apply and you're not. And thirdly, the code is more what you'd call "guidelines" than actual rules. Welcome aboard the Black Pearl, Miss Turner.

(Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of The Black Pearl: 2003)

Pirates of the Caribbean probably does not have the direct ideological-critical power of the Bill and Ted and Wayne's World films' lampoons of the hegemonic Total Quality Management notion of 'excellence' in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Nevertheless, the brief dialogue neatly condenses a movement through three main types of rule and their corresponding forms of organisation: contract, solidarity and governance, which in this scene trumps and appears through the reference to 'guidelines'. The significance of the notion of 'guidelines' is explained by Brown's recent critique of governance as the dominant neoliberal political rationality in which: 'Centralized authority, law, policing, rules and quotas are replaced by networked, team-based, practice-oriented techniques emphasizing incentivization, guidelines, and benchmarks' (2015: 34). For Brown the emergence of governance is decisive for understanding the contemporary exercise of power as it has 'become neoliberalism's primary administrative form, the political modality through which it creates environments, structures constraints and incentives, and hence conducts subjects' (122). Although the substitution may not be as complete and uniform as Brown suggests, 'guidelines' are a ubiquitous component of governance and condense normative values and material practices of rule while appearing unmotivated and allowing for the flexibility of self-determined action.

For Barbossa, the advantage of 'guidelines' is that they are vague, indeterminate and elastic. Their binding and obligatory force is temporary and derives from an ability to interpret them within a strategic and pragmatic power relation, which, in this context, is asymmetrical to Barbossa's advantage. At the same time, 'guidelines' are flexible enough to persist through any possible reversal of power. Several comic moments in the film feature the

pirates trying to interpret the code that they presume governs their own actions. ‘Guidelines’ are not opposed as they are too indefinite to target. Instead, they are continually revised to take account of the situation in which they are applied. They thus constitute a ground of consensus that has become hegemonic within neoliberalism. The consensual basis of ‘guidelines’ allows social agents to avoid being governed by strict rules, even, and especially, when those social agents are in positions of governing. Hence, governance conditions a political logic of flexible or ‘pop-up’ sovereignty where advantage is obtained by the capacity to limit the range of possible contextual interpretations. In that sense the political logic of neoliberal governance operates in the undecidable gap between a rule and its application, which Wittgenstein opened in *Philosophical Investigations*: ‘This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule’. Consequently, a course of action is governed not by a rule but by the context of action, which is never completely closed. If necessary, it can be ‘made out to accord with the rule’ afterwards.

To establish the context of cultural policy, the chapter begins with an account of the emergence and consolidation of the discourse of governance. To avoid any misunderstanding, it is important to emphasise that discourse is not just a matter of organised communication or meaning. It is also the context wherein the communication makes sense and the actions are consistent with it, which is in no sense guaranteed. If it were, it wouldn’t be political. It would be a fantasy of rational technocratic administration. On that basis, the chapter will attempt to explain the discourse of governance as a hegemonic project (which does not entail that it is successful). From that the chapter discusses how cultural policy emerges from governance and its characteristic political logics have become codified, which is followed by a discussion of some examples drawn from recent research. The chapter concludes with some brief remarks about future problems that research on cultural governance may encounter.

Governance as hegemonic discourse

Brown’s critique of governance is based on the claim that it depoliticises through the erasure of agency and its replacement with processes as a consequence of what Lemke refers to as ‘the eclipse or erosion of state sovereignty’ (124: Lemke, 2007: no page reference given). However, it would be more accurate to say that through governance as myth the political is displaced. This is illustrated by Offe’s irritated critique of governance and in particular its ‘inherent vagueness’ (2009). For Offe governance is an ‘empty signifier’ that oscillates between an institutional sense of a structure of rules, the general sense, and a political sense of steering, the particular sense. The force of the general sense occludes the particular such that, as Offe observes, the subjectless character of governance as structure of rules makes steering look like price formation in markets. It is as if ‘something happens, but nobody has done it and would thus be responsible for the result’ (550). The notion of subjectless action is reinforced by the common political science technocratic fantasy definition of governance as ‘self-organizing, interorganizational networks’ (Rhodes, 1996: 660). But the subject does not disappear. Collective action is displaced through the weakening of binding decisions in order to encourage ‘enlightened self-binding’ (Offe: 559), and principal-agent relations become political outcomes rather than causes. To eliminate that sort of thing Offe proposes that ‘a boundary must be set around the core sphere of state institutions, for which one should retain the concept of *government*’ (552) by eliminating ‘the unresolved polysemy of the concept’ (557). Doing so would draw a clear distinction between state and civil society in order to reinscribe an old school functional structure of modern political authority within

which political actors would compete over the possession of power and the distribution of rights, responsibilities and resources, either democratically or by other means.

Whether or not Offe's proposals for disambiguation are realistic, practical or even desirable, this chapter takes a different approach. The discourse of 'governance' may be 'gibberish', in Brown's judgement, (140) but nevertheless its ambiguity works as a hegemonic sense-making activity and produces specific political logics. The focus is on the conditions in which the discourse is formed and the characteristics that enable its hegemonic project. Governance emerges in the context of the crisis of capitalist social democracies in which the structure of governing had, for various reasons, become problematic. In the early 1970s political scientists explained this phenomenon through notions such as 'the crisis of governability', the 'fiscal crisis of the state' and 'legitimation crisis'. Phenomena like general irreverence, the popular rejection of deference, the decline of assumptions about the authority and value of a unified culture and punk in general were represented as symptoms of decline in media and elite discourses. In fact these developments are more accurately understood as consequences of the success of the post WWII consensus, and in particular the rise of the citizen as consumer who placed demands on the state that created problems of overload that could not be solved without unpopular and expensive state expansion. Phenomena like that became understood in terms of the 'contradictions of the welfare state' (Offe, 1984). As well as such endogenous shocks, Western European and North American polities were increasingly confronted with exogenous unpredictability and contingency beyond their control, not least with respect to world commodity prices and the development of industrial productive capacity in the non-West, which served to 'disorganise capitalism' (Lash and Urry, 1987).

In response to those circumstances states have in general 'hollowed out' and 'reinvented' themselves as a consequence of their reduced capacity to act within environments over which they have decreasing control as the increased cost of doing so is prohibitive, both financially, as no one wants to pay for it, and politically, as the presence of state intervention serves to create a target at which opponents can aim. In other words, hierarchical structures of modern political authority, where linear command corresponds to serial cause, can no longer cope with the stress of governing contingency. At best, governments remain legitimate only insofar as they offer citizen-subjects the possibility of acting on other citizen-subjects to their comparative advantage. Authority and decision making are pushed up to para and international organisations, some formal and accountable, others not so much, which can take the flak for unpopular decisions precisely because of their distance, and pushed down to the local and molecular organisations of pressure groups, special interest groups and communities in general, which become contained by the conflicting pressures of maintaining authentic popular support and conforming to rules in order to gain resource. Hence, states reconfigure the vertical and horizontal distribution of power as both a resource and an object of action. Governance is a reflexive process that seeks to maintain the conduct of governing under conditions in which the governability of that which is to be governed is no longer taken for granted. So governance is about acting on governing so that government can continue.

These developments have significant practical consequences. Firstly, the creation of quasi-markets by states in order to distance themselves from welfare provision by making users responsible for it, reconfigured as consumers within the neoliberal project of capital. Here states govern through regulation, strategically limiting or expanding the effects of markets, which in turn becomes the object of political gaming. Secondly, the networkification of political society in order to establish lines of inclusion and exclusion, which build consensus through the figure of the 'stakeholder' and other weasel word terms developed

within neoliberal governance. These activities are supported by actions such as the agentification of state administration, for example through the UK government's New Public Management programmes introduced in the 1980s to incentivise innovation through 'policy entrepreneurs' who would introduce market efficiencies (Clarke and Newman, 1997; Hood and Dixon, 2015; O'Brien, 2014). More generally, political action becomes an epistemological tactic of 'problematization', in Foucault's sense, through which something enters into 'the play of true and false' and becomes an object for thought and action (Foucault, 1997). The main mechanism for doing that is the rather banal practice of counting things or, more specifically, making things countable and thus the invention of procedures and processes to do that, or 'audit' (Power, 1997; Valentine 2004). By making things and actions auditable they become organisable and controllable. Subjects are included on the condition that they act as if they are assets or resources, 'human capital', and thus prepared to bear risk and responsibility for their actions. Such a strategy incentivises subjects to conform to courses of action that are likely to create least risk and cost to themselves.

However, this is not a straightforward matter of calculation because cost and risk are not necessarily known and change in relation to the objectification of the subject. Consequently, in a cruel irony, subjection is not simply a matter of obedience or discipline. Rather, subjection entails what Deleuze called 'modulation' with respect to changing regulatory codes (1995). Deleuze's observation is part of a broader argument about the decline of what Foucault had called 'disciplinary societies'. For Deleuze, these no longer work in the context of 'a general breakdown of all sites of confinement – prisons, hospitals, factories, schools, the family' (1995: 178). State agency has become characterised by continual 'reform' such that nothing is ever finished. Control is exercised through administration and their allies in management and marketing, 'the arrogant breed who are our masters' (181). Agamben, in a lecture at the Nicos Poulantzas Institute in Athens in 2013, developed the political consequences of Deleuze's observations through improvising on his own Schmittian notion of the 'state of exception'. For Agamben 'destituent power' explains the character of contemporary state agency as it follows the embryonic political logic of Quesnay's proposition that: 'Since governing the causes is difficult and expensive, it is more safe and useful to try and govern the effects'. In this way, the distinction between the rule and the exception is weakened through flexible casuistry, which in turn becomes the vehicle of internal and external power struggles and a means for expanding or contracting the scope of policies.

Governance discourse is a way of making sense of these conditions in order to act on them. Although there is probably no single point of origin, the emergence of its mythic sense can be traced in its development by institutions and organisations that responded to the situation that had emerged in the 1970s. One source is private sector corporate reform in the USA. The notion of 'corporate governance', which emerged in conjunction with similar phrases such as 'corporate social responsibility', tried to do two things: solve corporate legitimacy problems and maintain autonomy through self-monitoring against juridical and media attacks from the non-corporate sector. These projects were given an intellectual framework by such remarkably influential theoretical models as Williamson's Transaction Cost Analysis (TCA), which following institutional economics and the Coaseian theory of the firm, defines governance in the general sense of 'the institutional framework within which the integrity of a transaction is decided' (Williamson, 1979: 238) and 'the institutional matrix within which transactions are negotiated and executed' (239), but which, at the same time, identifies governance in the particular sense as an object of action with the observation

that: 'Governance structures which attenuate opportunism and otherwise infuse confidence are evidently needed' (242). Williamson's theory is grounded in a rational functionalist approach that aims to minimise transaction costs through standardisation and the elimination of idiosyncrasy. However, the context in which it was taken up was very different, as the weakness of authority structures encouraged idiosyncrasy and difference. Mediated by management consultants and lobbyists through 'regulatory capture' TCA and similar ideas were adopted by business facing states through 're-inventing government' projects in the 1980s that allowed their formation as solutions to problems of rule in post-disciplinary societies (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Governance obtained a wider dominium than nation-states when, possibly as early as 1989, it was adopted by the World Bank through the development of Worldwide Governance Indicators in order to manage its relations with national economies in the non-West and subsequently the West (Best, 2012; Buduru and Pal, 2010; Offe, 2009). Thus, governance exercises leadership by hegemonising institutions in order to transform them. The institutions remain to all outward appearances the same. As even the anarcho-situationist graffitiism of *The Invisible Committee* recognises, the targets of change are the infrastructures where power is now located (2015: 83).

Not only does governance make sense, governance also acts on sense-making itself. A peculiarity of governance discourse is that it develops a particular vocabulary, grammar and syntax in which subjectless action becomes imaginable. In addition to guidelines, as Eagleton–Pierce points out, governance is part of a particular vocabulary and conceptual organising grid that makes sense in relation to other terms such as 'partnership', 'empowerment' and 'network' (2014: 10). Best (2012) draws attention to the circulation of notions such as 'best practice', which require judgements to verify conformity that can only be established in opposition to worst practice. At the same time, governance discourse develops an enunciative logic that Moretti and Pestre demonstrate through a statistical analysis of a corpus of World Bank documents (2015). Words are modulated syntactically and grammatically in order to erase the World Bank's representation of itself and its world as a linear and causal sequence of knowledge, agents, actions, procedures, objects, facts and effects linked by a temporal structure of verbs. The main linguistic mechanism that achieves this is nominalisation, the derivation of abstract nouns from verbs. Thus, for example, co-operating, which implies the existence of agents who co-operate, is replaced by cooperation, in which agents are subject to an abstract process in which temporality is abolished and no one is responsible. Because nominalisations appear to lack agency in order to appear as a process that conditions action they are difficult to oppose, and they are equally difficult to define as they are trapped in the circle of gerundification, which functions to leave an action's completion undefined and suspended in a continuous progression without actual movement. Sequence is replaced by listing, a succession of 'ands' or even, one might add, bullet points and other para-discursive marks. In this way governance discourse transcends all determinants of place and time, and to prove it Moretti and Pestre provide a graph that shows a 50% reduction in temporal adverbs between 1948 and 2008 in World Bank documents. Even though Bankspeak is a 'tortuous form of expression' (Moretti and Pestre, 2015: 96) it is always good, phrased as euphoric, progressive, compassionate and empathetic and achieved through dialogue and partnership. Importantly, as Mulderrig points out in a detailed analysis of a corpus of UK education policy documents circulated during the period of the New Labour government, the grammar of governance discourse presupposes the conformity of actors rather than seeking to secure their volition (2011). Obedience is simply unmarked. In this way actions are 'enabled', autonomy is 'regulated', compliance is 'ensured' and obligation and responsibility are distributed.

The cultural governance imaginary

In general, the initial motivations that established relations between culture and governance understood culture in an anthropological ‘way of life’ sense and aimed to unify it as a solution to a situation that Habermas recognised with the proposition that: ‘Modern societies no longer have at their disposal an authoritative center for self-reflection and steering’ (1987: 553). Even though Habermas’s rational-functionalist notion of an absent centre begs the question of its former presence, in conditions in which ‘binding decisions’ don’t really bind the anthropological properties of culture become thinkable as a solution to governing. In part, this is because given modern individual freedom ‘regulatory norms cannot motivate behaviour that depends on personal initiative, innovation and positive engagement’ (Mayntz, 1994: 14). It is on that basis that action on subjectivity through culture as a form of governing appears as a solution. This approach is explicit in some of the more ham-fisted instrumental proposals for scaling up corporate ‘cultural change’ projects to the level of state and nation, for example, 6’s suggestion that the state should act to provide a coherent framework of meanings in which social relations can be based making it possible for a society to organise itself through the shared understandings of a common culture. A reinvented government ‘must be about nothing less than changing the whole culture’ (1997, 283). Of course, such a suggestion presupposes the existence of what it is designed to remedy, namely, the absence of a centred cultural authority and the presence of a shared culture, let alone a whole one. Nevertheless, instrumental approaches to the alleged problems of ‘social cohesion’ do trickle down into projects for managing the problems of so-called multiculturalism.

A similar but more sophisticated rational-functionalist approach understands cultural governance as the outcome of the functional differentiation of the reflexive complexity of modern liberal democratic political systems. For Bang, cultural governance is the solution to the problem of the absence of command and control for commanders and controllers to adopt (2004). On this basis, leaders and managers seek to incorporate as many different types of actor into the ‘systematic articulation, organizing, programming and implementing of collective decisions and actions’. Expert systems ‘must invent new modes of indirect steering for empowering their members and environments and in such a way that they freely, willingly and self-reflexively can help them solve their problems and deliver desired outcomes in an effective manner’. This is because systems cannot afford to seal themselves off from the ‘conventional practices of its ordinary members or environments’ (165). In this way citizens are responsibilised and compelled to recognise ‘that in an authority relationship, if citizens fall into confusion and disorder, then not only the political system but also the whole of society will do so as well’ (186). Obviously, such a technocratic approach relies on the existence of strong communitarian bonds through which the threat of shaming can be implemented, and Bang admits that this instrumental and programmed approach compromises citizen capacity for autonomous reason. Bang developed this approach out of ethnographic work on Danish local government initiatives to include citizens in the process of governing as, effectively, self-governing. As it turned out, the sorts of re-structuring cultural governance required were rejected by Danish citizens. Nevertheless, Bang makes explicit some of the assumptions of commanders and controllers in search of a disinterested rational function to legitimate their position.

A more amusing interpretation of governance rejects rational-functionalism in favour of the wisdom of the organic unity of tradition inscribed in the specific culture of the UK state. Jointly and separately, the work of Bevir and Rhodes has established this approach (e.g. Bevir and Rhodes, 2005). The state is a cultural entity that ‘consists of all kinds of practices

from everyday polite exchanges over cups of tea, through symbolic displays of authority and status, to decisions about policy and its implementation. Yet, each of these practices is anything but monolithic. Polite exchanges over tea do not have a fixed form' (Bevir, 2011: 463) or, one may suppose, impolite exchanges. Governance works through ad hoc networks and muddled interactions with all sorts of individuals and organisations inside and outside the state as formally understood, and in a pragmatic higgledy-piggledy way without underlying laws and overarching steering institutions. Political actors are primarily interpreters, and governance is the process of working out shared meanings, often through conflict, which then become sedimented as common sense narratives. Everything is network, even markets and hierarchies, which evolves out of inherited historical traditions, which in turn explain actions and the formations of interests. Bevir and Rhodes are notoriously coy about the exercise of power. Instead, politics is about dealing with difficulties and dilemmas, in order to preserve business as usual. However, the nodding and winking system of rule is not impervious to exogenous shocks. For reasons that are never entirely clear, Bevir admits that 'a managerial narrative has clearly made headway in recent years' (438), which emerged from neoliberal reforms of the 1980s such as New Public Management. This development is explained through a disavowal in which the strategic emphasis on networks as a means of acting on governance is reconciled with governance as tradition such that 'community groups, private firms and new governmental agencies all had to be integrated into a coherent policy process. The result was the rise of all kinds of networks and partnerships based on common agendas' (467). In fact, Bevir's disavowal occludes a transition from one myth of governance, depicted in the famous warm and fuzzy BBC TV satirical situation comedies 'Yes, Minister' and 'Yes, Prime Minister' of the 1980s, to another depicted by the equally famous cold and prickly 2005–2012 BBC TV satirical situation comedy omnishambles 'The Thick of It' and spin-off film 'In The Loop'. Through that shift the relation between cultural governance and cultural policy emerges and becomes more clearly defined through an agnostic approach to the ambivalence of culture, or culture in whatever sense.

A good account of this process is Barnett's analysis of the development of cultural policy in The European Union (2001). One thing that the EU has never managed to achieve is cultural unity and identity despite the efforts of its elites to create a common reference point in Europe's cultural heritage as a basis for affective legitimacy and despite the notoriously fragmented or 'multi-level' character of EU governance across which cultural policy is distributed and within which policy actors compete.¹ In addition to the democratic deficit, one of the major obstacles to such a task remains the persistent popularity of American entertainment and its market logic. Such was the anxiety provoked by popular culture that dirigiste elite responses developed as an official form of Cultural Action, which was consolidated in the formal recognition of culture in the 1992 Treaty of the European Union. Barnett shows that despite an elite obsession with elite culture, the development of culture as an object that could be formed transformed its ontological status from symbol to practice of governing via its passage through EU governance processes. Culture is transformed from an anthropological symbolic object of ritual and ceremony to a governable object of policy. According to Barnett, the vehicle for that process is the development of an 'ethic of participation', designed to encourage active citizenship contributions to cultural development. However, the presupposition of a common unified culture is minimised in favour of the cultivation of affective participation or 'engagement' that legitimates governance pragmatically. Culture is no longer used as a means to establish a common European identity. Rather, it becomes a means by which to legitimise EU policies. In that respect Barnett confirms the relevance, if perhaps not the intent, of Bennett's Foucauldian approach that displaced questions of the

essence of culture in favour of questions of its effects (Barnett, 2001: 27; Bennett, 1992). EU policy governmentalizes culture in order to shape 'discrete repertoires of conduct' in both cultural and non-cultural policy domains.

Barnett observes that 'the Commission has found a means by which to reconcile the discursive tensions between culture and economy in the field of cultural action in a way that respects the intrinsic qualities of 'the cultural' while enabling their instrumental deployment in the service of economic and political imperatives of integration' (28). Culture becomes whatever, for example through the weakening of the distinction between cultural action as a contribution to a European cultural identity and the legal and economic regulation of audio-visual policy, or as a means to encourage the acquisition of personal skills such as flexibility and self-confidence, as well as skills of participation (putting aside the question of how such attributes became categorised as skills). The limits of the uses of culture are set by the capacity to invent extensions of its ambivalence. At the same time, political logics emerge from the ambiguity of governance. Networks of interest-group collective actors develop and become attached to cultural policy at vertical and horizontal levels of governance and as different degrees of subsidiarity develop. The ambivalence of culture is deployed instrumentally to mark out territory within administrator-stakeholder networks from which to obtain and deploy position within the policy process. This development in turn stimulates a politics of interpretation with respect to definitions of culture and limits to legitimate action and with respect to competing policy agendas such as economics, law and welfare. Needless to say, all that stimulates free-riding 'gravy train' phenomena through the invention of bureaucratic devices such as committees, working groups and initiatives organised around the essentially conflicting demands of harmonisation and diversity that monitor, measure and evaluate culture to tie subjective will to objective effects in order to calibrate 'the transformation of the disposition of citizens in line with multiple objectives' (31). Insofar as these objectives change, this process and the strategies of objectification that support it are in principle unlimited. The tension between the transformative and the expressive cultural imaginaries is exploited in order to establish 'legitimate claims over cultural policy functions' where 'success depends upon finessing a complex set of questions regarding authority and accountability; questions of who represents diversity, when this has been primarily defined in terms of bounded communities bought together in forms of dialogue and exchange, and questions of who defines the core values around which diversity should be encouraged to flourish' (32).

In many respects the developments Barnett analyses are part of a wider, global development of the political logics of cultural policy within the hegemonic myth of governance characterised by the emergence of a material and subjective infrastructure that Yudice describes as 'an enormous network of arts administrators who mediate between funding sources and artists and/or communities. Like their counterparts in the university and business world, they must produce and distribute the producers of art and culture, who in turn deliver communities or consumers' (2003: 13). Yudice's critique is aimed at the 'NGO-fication' of cultural policy and the emergence of a 'UNESCO-racy'. In turn, these groups support, sponsor and fund numerous projects and firms, both subsidised and for profit, to support their activities, creating a vast consultocracy. On the one hand, outsourcing this work to external contractors allows their conclusions, often in the form of evaluations, to appear objective and disinterested. On the other, many of the subjects overlap in their group memberships, which are further complicated by the circulation and exchange of knowledge and people through close and often exclusive networks. As Prince has shown, through a study of UK DCMS and its regional networks, the consultocracy does not simply record but actively intervenes (2013, 2015). One of Prince's key points is that such interventions are mobilised

through social relations and in doing so participate in the power games that in turn structure cultural policy. Hence, experts subject themselves to governance requirements in order to obtain recognition and accreditation, yet at the same time ironise those requirements in order to maintain subjective agency. The political logics of this process can be seen in the following examples, which illuminate attempts at cross-national and regional policy transfer.

Political logics of cultural policy

It would be inaccurate to conclude that cultural governance is a monolithic discourse that is simply 'rolled out', to use a teeth-grinding phrase loved by UK manager administrators in order to occult their own subjectivity, into an eternal future 'going forward', to use another. If the sense-making discourse of cultural governance is understood as a way of hegemonically coding phenomena, it does not follow that it is guaranteed simply by following and repeating its rules of enunciation. Instead, the codes through which cultural governance makes sense become the objects of political action, usually through interpretation in order to gain resource and occasionally through opposition in order to maintain or gain power. One code, common in governance discourse as Best (2012) pointed out, is the notion of 'best practice', which motivates shortening implementation chains through imitation, repetition and reproduction. If something is badged as 'best' then it stands a chance of being copied because it requires less effort and less risk because responsibility can be deflected to pre-constructed criteria, especially if these are not explicitly stated. In that way idiosyncrasy is marginalised, costs are reduced and action can appear subjectless. The policy is *transferred*. Yet the implications of this process are not always fully understood. Improvising on Peck's notion of 'fast policy' (Peck, 2005), Pratt discusses the diffusion and 'trickle down' of cultural policy 'best practice' across national borders in the institutional context of the EU and UNESCO through the critical notion of 'xerox policy', and in particular its effects on urban planning as an effect of the attractions of the 'magic dust' of culture and creativity to solve problems of regeneration and development (2009). Pratt objects to this approach because its 'rationalist and normative approach to policy' is blind to questions of variation of place and context. However, the reason for Pratt's criticism is that the fragmented and contradictory character of EU cultural policy is a hindrance to centrally directed implementation and the reason for that is the persistence of national and regional cultural policy development. According to Pratt: 'At best, the 'model' that emerges from Europe is idiosyncratic, subjective and contradictory' (19). Pratt's criticism erases the values of sensitivity to place and context it had relied on for moral justification, and the necessarily fragmented multi-level governance character of EU policy, its formalisation in elastic frameworks and subordination to principles of subsidiarity, and the turf wars and institutional rivalries that arise from that, are disavowed (Bach et al., 2016). So Pratt's replacement for xerox policy is, paradoxically, the expansion of an original that would homogenise difference through a top-down command and control structure based on 'a policy department which has the CCI [Culture and Creative Industries] as a core and high priority, and an agency which has real resources and power to implement policy' (20). In other words, Pratt proposes that the autonomy of place and context is eliminated through establishing a single model of authoritative governance.

Pratt claims that the UK DCMS is a model of best practice in that regard. It might be an aspiration but hardly describes the reality. Based on his own experience, as academic expert and policy advisor for a project that sought to transfer UK DCMS policy to St Petersburg, as part of the EU's Tacis programme of 'technical assistance' to Russia and the former Soviet Union in order to provide the city with a 'cultural industries' strategy, O'Connor (2005)

reports a series of obstacles that undermined rather than directly opposed it. Firstly, 'culture industry' in the positive sense did not fit with the Russian Tolstoy style 'spiritual' cultural paradigm, which coded both official and Bohemian hipster independent cultural imaginaries. To weaken that solidarity the project attempted to divide the independents from the state by deciding to establish 'an independent intermediary agency that would give voice to the sector in the city' (53) and represent its interests to government in coherent policy language. However, independents rejected that as it would sever access to state subsidy and encourage the attention of state regulatory agencies and their informal tax extracting mechanisms. In general, the project could not provide alternative protection against 'theft of ideas, abuse of goodwill, arbitrary breaking of lease agreements and unpaid debts', which characterised the cash economy of the local business environment. Another strategy aimed to appeal to the values that united the state and the independents in opposition to the importation of the 'crassest popular culture' but unfortunately would have required direct government intervention, which would in turn require 'a fundamental shift in attitude to culture' as well as 'root and branch reform of the legal and regulatory frameworks' (57), in other words, action on governance from an external source.

It would be a mistake to read such obstacles as straightforward resistance, as they are elements of the negotiation process through which cultural policy is exchanged. Two factors in particular are important for shaping outcomes. Firstly, the extent to which neoliberal imaginaries are already normalised within governance discourse. Secondly, the extent to which conflicts over position and position-taking already structure the field of cultural policy. In the case of South Korea, for example, cultural policy adoption appears to have been relatively straightforward (Lee, 2016). The ambiguities of cultural policy enabled the attachment of a spectrum of different interests without creating conflict, even if these subsequently sought to out manoeuvre each other. The state had adopted the notion of a 'creative economy' as its economic master narrative and tied that to the organisation of the production of wealth through the development of human capital in flexible networks in order to establish continuities with the 'knowledge economy' that had otherwise been economically disappointing. Hence, the cultural sector enjoyed economic legitimacy as a way of avoiding the fate of cheap labour commodity production competition that had befallen so many of South Korea's regional rivals. Moreover, South Korea has been able to enjoy a degree of regional cultural hegemony and benefitted from revenues from intellectual property rents through the export of its own commercially successful culture industry products. By coding these products in terms of traditional culture any opposition between that and popular culture was avoided. However, by developing cultural policy in the direction of 'creative' economy the opportunity was created for science and technology interest groups and their manufacturing base to compete with 'content industries' for subsidy by appealing to the certainties of conventional economic thought based on familiar and easily calculable assumptions about the scalability of production and objective certainties of the market. Consequently cultural governance developed in South Korea as a War of Position, rather than, as in the case of St Petersburg, an external position around which conflicts are organised as a War of Manoeuvre. In South Korea, as Lee argues, cultural policy is, in Cunningham's terms, both 'Trojan Horse' and 'Rorschach blot', and hence ambivalent.

In their account of the development of cultural policy in Norway, Pinheiro and Hauge analyse the negotiation process to script editing (2014). The script is comprised of the mundane and commonplace statistical and diagrammatic images through which it is presented. The feedback on the presentation process at conferences, seminars, 'away days' and other rituals of governance provides the opportunity for editing. In the case of Norway,

the process was assisted by the existence of mature multi-level governance structures that expanded the field of play while preventing direct competition for limited resource. Thus 'the policy process is a dynamic system or cycle rather than a unilateral one way route from origin (design) to target (implementation). Hence, in this context, it makes more sense to talk about 'nested scripts' – global, national and sub-national levels – that interact with, and influence one another, over time' (92). Such structures serve to prevent an experience of the imposition of policy as 'top-down' command and thus increase the chances of relatively frictionless adoption within the policy interest tier, if not necessarily within broader social, economic and cultural sections, because the governance policy process game is already being played. However, the fortune of scripts is by no means guaranteed, particularly if they are overcoded, repetitive and familiar. In their account of the development of cultural policy in Frankfurt, Dzudezek and Lindner (2013) note how presentation audiences would sometimes ironise and subvert the performance of scripts by, for example, responding to governance buzzwords such as 'flagship project' with exaggerated applause in order to call attention to their meaninglessness. The opposition partly arose from the fact that computer software and video game firms had been able to 'own' cultural policy at an early point in the process, thus restricting the ambiguity necessary to recruit as wide a spectrum of interest groups as possible. Culture was reduced to conventional economic notions giving the local Economic Development Agency the upper hand and isolating the Department for Arts and Culture. Consequently, similarly to South Korea, the script was instrumentalised in favour of narrow socio-economic interests that restricted its hegemonic reach.

Such cases point to the political logic of political actors taking advantage of different positions advocated by the global cultural policy consultocracy in order to compete with local rivals. Rindzeviciute, Svenson and Tomson found something like that in the case of Lithuania (2015). The adoption process was 'used by local actors as resource for forging new actorial identities and practices' (3) enabling organisational and institutional entrepreneurs to rearrange the cultural policy field rather than seek consensus. Local actors used both the British Council and the Open Society Fund as resources to obtain revenue from the EU, establishing their own organisations in the process, such as the European Cultural Program Centre at the Lithuanian Cultural Contact Point. The authority of 'foreign actors' armed with 'graphs and lists' was used to weaken establishment resistance so that cultural policy terms became an accepted framework with which to propose solutions to local economic problems. Despite the British Council's promotion of the UK DCMS approach, the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture adopted what they believed to be a Swedish model of cultural economy, but which in fact was Throsby's 'concentric circles' or 'solar' model promoted by Tobias Nielsen, a Swedish consultant and entrepreneur. In response, rival organisations sought to verify the DCMS model by overlaying its maps on Lithuania in order to mobilise its optimistic growth predictions, despite accusations that this was just a means to advance narrow organisational interests to obtain funding. The DCMS emphasis on economic growth provoked some defensive responses from established cultural interests who recognised that an expectation of profitability would negate the justification for subsidy. In fact, some organisations were able to play both ends against the middle, using funds to stimulate economic growth to subsidise heritage, conservation and publishing. In this way, Lithuanian actors were able to subvert the linearity of implementation by complicating the translation process and by exploiting differences between competing scripts.

The Lithuanian case is an example of cultural policy stimulating tactical positioning around resource games. In such contexts, there is minimal capacity to govern the passion/reason balance through which strategic interests are formed at the subjective level. Matthews's

detailed ethnographic account of the promotion of cultural policy in the Shetlands, a group of Norwegian islands annexed by Scotland in 1470 as part of a claim on a dowry debt for James III's daughter Margaret, describes a more openly hostile response to cultural policy (2015). In Scotland any threat to the elites that govern the cultural status quo creates a bit of a 'stooshie' (Stevenson, 2014). Indeed, a long-held position in the Scottish nationalist imaginary is the idea that its cultural elites are entitled to enjoy the role of a sort of bardic legislator (Moffat and Riach, 2014). However, the Shetlands enjoyed a long history of antagonism towards Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, with crofters liberated from the tyranny of the Scottish landowning class by British Prime Minister Gladstone's Crofter's Act in 1886. Thus, its relations to Edinburgh-driven nationalist discourse has always been complex and the reception of cultural policy is consistent with that pattern. It was implemented through the creation of *Mareel*, an arts centre based in Lerwick, the main town, which at the same time changed the status of Shetland Arts, the local cultural support organisation, to a commercial 'social enterprise' required to generate profits from the sale of popcorn and cinema tickets. For Matthews, these developments verified the observation that the main local political players were 'relatively indifferent or even defiant towards the 'creative economy' discourse' (154), a position that was widely shared, not least because it would undermine a comfortable dependence on revenues from fishing, oil and gas rents and subsidies to a recently invented tourist magnet 'traditional culture', which, Matthews notes, is 'defended and passed on in a much more authoritarian manner than one might imagine at first glance, often against whole segments of the population, and by the means of an unusual (and often vaguely threatening) institutional and political complex' (157). In fact, the reality of the Shetlands is a large service economy with a minority of inhabitants engaged in directly productive labour, with alcoholism, crack and heroin consumption and violence significantly higher than the traditionally high Scottish average. In that context self-destruction and self-conservation merge and cultural governance is neutralised by its absorption in the management of *Mareel*. Clearly, for some the costs of cultural inclusion do not outweigh the risks that cultural policy creates.

Anticipating problems of cultural governance

In conclusion, here are some critical issues that might benefit from further research, although the myth of governance may lose its hegemonic reach through the development of antagonisms from a spectrum of populisms and a general 'revolt against intermediary bodies' (Urbinati, 2015). By the same token, the conjuncture of cultural governance may have passed. So, for example, O'Connor refers to a 'cultural industries' moment in the past tense (2013: 379), suggesting that this may be because, in a cruel irony, cultural policy has been so successful in demonstrating the ubiquity of culture that its economic specificity has been lost in a broader 'creative economy' master narrative, although perhaps this claim underestimates the extent to which culture has always been subordinate to creative economy in order to obtain policy traction. In any event, as the GDP component of culture appears to be pretty uniform and stable globally, questions of how that is measured notwithstanding, has the economic boosterism of culture run out of steam? To what sort of problematisations in 'the play of true and false' will it be subject? Will it be able to maintain links with social policy questions of inclusion, diversity and equality in order to incentivise subsidy and regulation?

Secondly, given the reflexivity of 'policy learning' such that its codes are themselves modes of political gaming within cultural policy, has its discourse run out of sense-making capacity? Will the consultocracy develop strategies of institutional lock-in to gain security and mutual dependency? For example, a recent issue of *Arts Professional* reported the case

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of Arts Council England funding a consultancy on a non-competitive basis to the tune of £300k to develop an evaluation system for quality metrics that organisations in receipt of funding will be obliged to use at £2000 a pop (Hill 2015)² Or will new discursive strategies and enunciative positions emerge to overcome overcoding and stimulate ‘policy learning’?

Thirdly, will cultural policy adapt to local conditions through greater sensitivity to local regimes? For example, in April 2016 Vince Cable, Liberal Party MP and former Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills in the UK coalition government of 2010–2015, gave a talk at Polovcova House in St Petersburg with all the usual PowerPoint slides to explain ‘how creative industries work in UK’. The title of the presentation was ‘Creative Authority’, presumably chosen in order to enhance compatibility with Russian style authoritarian democracy.³ Or will the consultocracy adopt a universal moral prism with which to frame cultural advocacy, as, for example, in De Beukelaer’s application of Sen and Nussbaum’s ‘capabilities approach’ to culture industry development in Ghana and Burkina Faso (2012).

Fourthly, what challenges are emerging to the governability of culture? A critical aspect of that question is the processes understood as effects of globalisation. States and governments have invested considerable resources in protections against the flow of global culture industry but with very little success without the support of authoritarian violence, often under the sign of ‘diversity’. But these processes are not restricted to the infrastructures of texts and symbols. They include people, often as a consequence of authoritarian violence. As Robins pointed out (2007), in these circumstances investment in a common shared culture is restricting and reactive. Culture increasingly frees itself from roots and attachment and defies ‘the containing powers of nation states and national societies’ (157). Consequently, Robins proposes extending the rights recognised through multiculturalism to transcultural diversity, but with less emphasis on integration and stability, more on mobility, porosity, fluidity, as a sort of right to impurity and hybridity, to nomadism. Such an approach privileges a poetics of becoming over a rhetoric of being. So a question for the politics of culture is what side of that opposition is it on?

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Notes

- 1 For an account of EU cultural policy that outlines the institutional structures that support these characteristics, see Chapter 26.
- 2 For criticisms of the tendering process, see Selwood (2015) and subsequent correspondence in cultural trends.
- 3 I am grateful to Tatiana Romashko of Herzen University, St Petersburg, for this information.

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