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Policy-making as an emotionally-charged arena: the emotional geographies of urban cultural policy-making

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ABSTRACT

Analysis of the role emotions play in a range of social processes has increased significantly, but is neglected in the context of cultural policy-making. Recent literatures in feminist and emotional geographies draw attention to how emotions are emergent in, and play a role in shaping, a broad range of social contexts and processes, while other literatures stress the need to 'personalise' the expert and consider the emotional aspects of planning. Inspired by these literatures we deploy the notion of 'affective urbanism' to study how emotions are interwoven with cultural policy spaces in the city and explore the 'emotional regimes' that incorporate emotions with the multi-scalar politics that is shaping urban cultural policy-making. This is undertaken through an analysis of emotions in the working lives and political contexts of cultural policy-makers in Stockholm (Sweden), Gdańsk (Poland) and Manchester (UK). Overall the paper seeks to develop a research agenda that places emotions centrally in studies of cultural policy formation and implementation.

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Introduction

Emotions have become increasingly important in multi-disciplinary understandings of a broad range of social processes, but almost no attention has been paid to their role in cultural policy-making and implementation. The purpose of this article is therefore to explore the role of emotions in cultural policy-making in three European contexts – Stockholm (Sweden), Gdańsk (Poland) and Manchester (UK). In each of these contexts, the arts, culture and creativity have become central in urban policy-making, often in an instrumental, neoliberalised economic fashion, but also addressing other aims, including 'art for art's sake', socio-cultural integration and education. However, at the same time urban cultural policy-making in these cities now takes place in a rapidly changing political context which has heightened the emotional context and experience of cultural policy-making. The analysis thus makes a contribution by exploring the ways in which cultural policy-makers are emotional beings and policy-making is an emotional process, but goes beyond this to explore how emotions are emergent in the policy-making process. The paper brings together consideration of the feelings and subjectivities of cultural policy workers with a discussion of the emergent nature of emotions within 'big politics', developing notions of an 'emotional geopolitics' in which political processes and everyday experience are brought together (cf. Pain 2009).

We do this through an analysis of 45 semi-structured qualitative interviews undertaken with key urban experts involved in cultural policy-making, planners who also cover culture, key cultural

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intermediaries, NGOs and individual cultural producers and representatives of grass-roots arts organisations in Stockholm, Manchester and Gdańsk. These actors in the three cities were engaged in planning and cultural strategy making, designing and delivering individual cultural projects and festivals, managing key cultural intermediaries such as large museums or theatres, and disbursing national and local state funding. They were identified through fieldwork, analysis of plans and strategy documents, and local knowledge, which allowed us to 'map' the cultural policy 'ecosystem'. From this framework, key representative actors were selected for interviewing as a way to 'study through' (McCann and Ward 2012) the politics of policy-making.

As Anderson and Holden (2008, 148) argue, affect and emotion emerge 'in between, within, and alongside the other distantiated flows and events that make up cities', and hence we explore them in the particular context of how they emerge as part of the relational nature of mobile policy around culture and creativity. The focus on emotions was not originally an aim of the research. However, given the current rapidly changing political context in which these mobilities are brought into being (particularly a move to the Right) the interviewees frequently became emotional, in a way that we had not anticipated when planning the interviews. This brought to the fore the issue that cultural policy-making is an emotionally charged pursuit and made it more surprising that this issue has not been covered in the literature to date. To analyse this, all instances of emotional parts of the interviews were extracted and analysed using qualitative coding methods across the three cases. Due to the politically sensitive nature of many of the issues discussed all respondents have been kept anonymous.

Emotional geographies of urban cultural policy-making

A number of academic disciplines have highlighted the central role of emotions in social processes, emphasizing emotions as emergent, that is dynamic and embodied in individuals and/or circulating between them. Rather than simply residing in subjects, emotions are situated in, and relational across, space – 'emotional geographies are inherently woven through all human experiences and interactions, with other people, places and things' (Askins and Swanson 2019, 2–3, online) – and emotions do diverse kinds of work in different contexts and spaces (Smith et al. 2009; Davidson, Bondi, and Smith 2005). While it is well established that urban space is one arena which is shaped by a range of emotional and affectual responses, the role of emotion in urban cultural policy-making spaces has yet to receive attention. More recently, Mangset (2020) has provocatively – in his own words, apocalyptically – suggested a legitimisation crisis in (even the 'end of') cultural policy, though Gross (2019) argues that it is potentially a field in which the links between care, hope and cultural democracy can be developed (and cf. Bennett 2015). This paper, therefore, analyses how emotions of various kinds are 'woven' into, and impact upon, the 'lifeworlds' (cf. Khan 2019) of the diversity of actors involved in cultural policy formation.

The relationship between emotions and urban space is usefully encapsulated in Anderson and Holden (2008, 142–4) concept of 'affective urbanism', that is:

An urbanism animated by a conceptual vocabulary specific to the logics of affect and emotion ... [which is] attentive to how various modalities of the more than/less than rational, including affects, emotions, and feelings, compose urban life.

Analyses, therefore, need to 'foster an everyday urbanism attentive to the taking place of affects, feelings, and emotions' (145). While Frosh (2011, 2) notes that it possibly does not help to try and unpick the 'definitional knot of affect, emotion and feeling that is hard to penetrate', affect has been defined as 'a substrate of potential bodily responses, often autonomic responses, in excess of consciousness' (Clough and Halley 2007, 2) in relation to which emotions are a conscious (though subjectively experienced) mental and embodied reaction to something or context (e.g. see Davidson and Milligan 2004). Since emotions are 'interscaled and interconnected, refracted and fractured across cultural spheres' (Askins and Swanson 2019, 3) they are entangled in other urban geographies.

This renders them unevenly distributed across cities and time, particularly as they ‘fold into ... spatially nuanced, topologies of power ...’ within which ‘emotions function differently in relation to the varied kinds and mixtures of powers, including ... domination, authority, manipulation, coercion, and seduction ...’ (Anderson and Holden 2008, 147–8; and cf. Anderson et al.’s (2020) analysis of the diverse ‘modes of uncertainty’ emergent in response to Brexit; Jones et al.’s (2017) analysis of the ‘emotional, existential and political textures’ of contemporary immigration control in the UK).

While cultural policy-makers have yet to be considered in this context, research on a closely related professional group – urban planners – helps to develop why emotions could be important in cultural policy-making. Urban planning has been characterised as dominated by a rational–emotional dichotomy which has marginalised the role of emotions in planning practice (Baum 2015; Ferreira 2013; Das 2008). However, in the context of work which argues more broadly for the need to consider the emotional dimensions of bureaucracies (Graham 2002), planning literature has begun to explore the ways in which planning practice is emotionally loaded and combines cognitive and emotional elements (Ferreira 2013; Hoch 2006). This has a longer academic history, from the mental mapping of urban space (e.g. Lynch 1960), the analysis of a ‘sense of place’ or topophilia (the affective bond between people and place – Tuan 1974) by humanistic geographers, and extensive work on fear (particularly of crime) in relation to the built environment by socio-cultural geographers (for just one example see England and Simon 2010). Other work in human geography and urban studies has explored the angry reactions of artists protesting against the neoliberalisation of cities and cultural policy (Novy and Colomb 2013; d’Ovidio and Rodríguez Morató 2017; McLean 2017). A different set of emotions are emergent among those pursuing an ‘architectural enthusiasm’, which has implications for heritage policy (Craggs, Geoghegan, and Neate 2013, 2016).

These literatures point to cities being emotionally charged places, a characteristic increasingly recognised in accounts of how planning has surveyed and taken into account the emotional relations of residents to urban spaces and how planners design urban space with emotional responses in mind, especially around fear and safety (Zeile et al. 2016). Furthermore, recent literature demonstrates that affect and emotion are deeply intertwined with urban planning and policy-making in general (Graham 2002; Anderson and Holden 2008; Sandberg and Rönnblom 2016), and in specific policy areas including climate change (Smith and Leiserowitz 2014); housing, gender and employment (Meth 2009); neighbourhood policy interventions (Jupp 2013); ageing in place (Hardill and Mills 2013); and children’s wellbeing in deprived neighbourhoods (Horton and Kraftl 2009).

At the same time, more recent literatures have sought to deconstruct conceptualisations of planners and other key urban actors as existing in a rational everyday professional environment. As has been demonstrated, cultural and creativity policies are increasingly mobile entities, formed by policy-makers and other bureaucrats in place through an engagement with globally-circulating ideas. These mobilities are enabled by ‘experts’ such as consultants (Prince 2015) and others making up formal ‘informational infrastructures’ (Andersson and Cook 2019; McCann 2008, 2011).

However, recent literature has begun the task of ‘humanising the expert’, decentering ‘the expert’ and ‘expert knowledge’ and personalizing these professional roles (Feldman 2013; Campbell and Marshall 2000, 2005). Here we develop Khan’s (2019) emphasis on studying the diverse ‘lifeworlds’ of cultural policy-makers. As Temenos and McCann (2013, 346) argue, even formal, professional spaces are ‘sites of encounter, persuasion, and motivation’, and important interactions between policy-makers happen as much in the conference bar or at dinner as in formal meetings. Indeed, recent literature has highlighted the importance of informal contacts and *ad hoc* network practices (Cohen 2015; Söderström and Geertman 2013) in the formation of creativity policy, emphasizing the need to follow Craggs and Neate’s (2017, 47) focus on ‘the everyday embodied and social nature of policymaking’.

Surprisingly, given that the arts, culture and creativity are often about representing, engaging and mobilising emotions, analyses of cultural policy-making have neglected the role of emotions. Feminist and emotional geographies literatures emphasize that emotions and thought/rationality are interwoven (rather than binary) and are mutually co-constitutive of space and place, which allow

us to interrogate how emotions of various kinds are ‘woven’ into the working lives of cultural policy-makers in the context of new ‘affective urbanisms’ (Anderson and Holden 2008). What role does emotion play in the relatively mundane, everyday world (cf. Khan 2019) of cultural policy-making, and how does it shape the actions of policy-makers? Analyses should consider how a range of different emotions are emergent in the everyday policy-making context. Before turning to this analysis, we sketch out the multi-scalar political context of cultural policy-making in each city.

The politics of urban policy-making and the heightening of emotion in Stockholm, Gdańsk and Manchester

The emotions that are emergent in spaces of urban policy-making are likely to be diverse. Analyses have yet to explore the experience of boredom, frustration or apathy in the professional, office-based world of policy-making, but these could be accompanied by joy, satisfaction, pride and excitement about people, places, achievements, events and policies. However, while we consider a range of emotions in this paper, we focus on the emergence of emotions in the context of contemporary changes in the multi-scalar politics of cultural policy-making. Recent trends such as the changing relationship of the urban and national with the EU, a shift to varying degrees to right-wing politics, and the reshaping of neoliberal policies under various forms of ‘authoritarian neoliberalism’ (Bruff 2014; Tansel 2017; Bruff and Tansel 2019) have created very different political contexts in which the emotional aspects of policy-making have been heightened. The current political climate provides a particularly topical and urgent context in which to explore these phenomena.

Indeed, one reason underlying the lack of engagement with the emotional aspects of cultural policy is that until relatively recently studies have neglected the *politics* of cultural policy-making (Shin and Stevens 2013; Lee 2016; Grodach and Silver 2012). However, linking the emergent nature of emotions with uneven relational topologies of power in the city provides us with a starting point from which to analyse the role of emotions in cultural policy-making. This follows recent calls to analyse cultural policy-making as a highly charged political field (Belfiore 2020; Grodach and Silver 2012; Dinardi 2015; Shin and Stevens 2013; Žilič-Fišer and Erjavec 2017; Lee 2016; Marx 2018; Vos 2017; Warren and Jones 2015; Gross 2019). Belfiore (2020: 385) argues that cultural policy ‘is an arena for power struggles and a site of inequality [characterised by] unequal distributions of value, voice, and symbolic power’, a perspective echoed by Shin and Stevens (2013, 13) who argue for more ‘consideration of the dynamics of local urban politics [because t]he integration of the cultural economy shapes, and is shaped by, power relations among different stakeholders over time’.

Urban policy-making is currently being reshaped in a complex multi-scalar political context. As Varró and Bunders (2020: 221) argue ‘attention should be given to how different scales co-constitute the embedding of policy concepts’. In this paper, we extend this to include consideration of how this multi-scalar political context shapes the emergence of the emotional contexts of urban cultural policy-making. Urban politics is an obvious starting point for consideration, but urban politics often aligns with, or opposes, and thus is shaped by, national-scale politics. The shift to the right in many European countries, particularly the rise of authoritarian neoliberalist regimes (i.e. those using a governmental logic that combines authoritarian political leadership with the further neoliberalisation of markets), is often accompanied by an increased tendency of coercion (Tansel 2017) that directly challenges and seeks to control culture and cultural policy in support of particular political discourses. The politics shaping urban policy-making is becoming more heated and intense, creating an emotionally charged environment for cultural policy-making.

In this context, urban and national relationships with the supra-national in the form of the EU further complicate the picture, as they could align with the values of the EU and EU cultural policy or be shaped by a form of nationalistic Euro-scepticism. The resulting uneven relational topologies of power that are produced both within cities and between the urban and other scales create diverse political contexts with implications for the emotional context of cultural policy-making. Thus, in each case study city, a diverse multi-scalar political context is producing a heightened

'affective urbanism' that shapes the emergence and role of emotions in the lives and practices of cultural policy-makers.

Stockholm (municipal population 972,000 in a larger city-region of 2.4 m) is the capital of Sweden and the cultural centre of the country, featuring a number of higher education establishments for arts and culture and many high-profile national and municipal cultural institutions. Relationships with the EU are stable, but though the role of the EU is highlighted in the new national cultural policy (2009) it plays a relatively minor role for culture. The country and the city have experienced intensified neoliberalisation, and from 2006 the centre-right ruling coalition promoted a style of cultural policy which emphasized its economic, instrumental value in the context of a high-cost, innovation-driven economy. The city's brand 'Stockholm – Capital of Scandinavia' is built upon three value words – one of them being 'culture'. In 2014 a leftist majority came to power and has aligned cultural policy more with an imperative to engage the outer city districts and marginalised communities there in order to better integrate them and tackle social and geographical marginalisation. Despite this, cultural policy-making takes place in a context where socio-economic and cultural marginalisation and tensions are growing.

Gdańsk is an important northern Polish regional capital (population 468,000) and combined with Gdynia and Sopot it forms the 'Tricity' (*Trójmiasto* – population 1.4 m). Culture assumed a greater significance in urban policy-making after 1989 as the city struggled with de-industrialisation, particularly associated with the major shipyards. Since then Gdańsk has developed a significant independent arts scene and a number of high-profile cultural institutions and festivals. Culture and creativity have been strongly promoted by the municipal authorities supported by NGOs and cultural producers. This particularly ties in with attempts to generate an image for the city as open, liberal, tolerant and 'European'. However, this identity and the local politics associated with it is forged in opposition to national politics. From 2005 – and particularly after election successes in 2015 and 2019 – Poland's right-wing Law and Justice Party has promoted increasingly nationalistic, centralistic and Euro-sceptic discourses. Polish cultural discourses, particularly those promoted by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, favour cultural policies with a more traditional, nationalistic, conservative and religious element. Gdańsk has placed itself in opposition to this rise of authoritarian (nationalist) neoliberalism and its influence on cultural policy formation. At the same time, as a means of circumventing the central government and its policies, Gdańsk has strong links with the EU. The resulting context is one in which urban-national political relations are strained.

Manchester is a major city in the north of England (population 535,000) in the larger city-region of Greater Manchester (population 2.9 m). By the mid-1980s Manchester was in serious post-industrial decline, with mass unemployment, depopulation and significant socio-economic problems. Since then Manchester City Council has pursued an 'entrepreneurial' urban governance strategy in which culture and creativity have played a key role. Driven by the spontaneous 'Madchester' music and club scene of the 1980–90s, music and the arts played a key role in developing and promoting Manchester's global brand. The arts, culture and creativity (alongside sport) are now firmly embedded in the economy and policy-making ecology of the city. However, Manchester continues to suffer socio-economic disadvantage with some highly marginalised communities. A decade-long period of austerity politics pursued by Conservative governments, and the UK government's 'hostile environment' visa policy for immigration, has placed severe pressure on local government and the arts and culture. This has been further exacerbated by 'Brexit'. In the 2016 'Leave' referendum, the city of Manchester recorded the highest pro-EU 'Remain' vote in the north-west of England (60.4%). However, many of the boroughs in Greater Manchester (notably Wigan, Tameside and Oldham) recorded some of the highest 'Leave' votes (over 60%). The context is further complicated by the devolution of some powers and budgetary responsibility to the city and the appointment of a 'London-style' Mayor. The result is a reshaping of politics and policy-making in the city and city-region, with organisations such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority acquiring a greater co-ordinating and policy-making role, including for arts and culture.

The multi-scalar 'affective urbanisms' and emotional regimes of cultural policy-making

The analysis explores how different emotions are variously 'woven' into the working lives of cultural policy-makers in these different contexts. Here we suggest that locations are characterised by affective urbanisms in the form of 'emotional regimes' which interweave emotions in everyday work with emotions associated with the threats of 'big politics'. Different kinds of emotions co-exist and fluctuate in ways which are complexly inter-related with the uneven relational topologies of power present in the workplace and brought into play by the multi-scalar intersection of urban, national, European and international policies and politics.

Emotions and the mundane worlds of cultural policy-making

A range of emotions emerged in different ways in the day-to-day working lives of those involved in making and implementing cultural policy (and cf. Khan 2019). These included boredom and the mundane frustrations associated with any largely desk-based profession, from attending meetings to jammed printers. However, across the interviews emotions emerged in relation to the process of making cultural policy itself. Here the intersection of emotional and cognitive ideas about policy-making (cf. Hoch 2006) and the emotional dimension of working in bureaucracies (Graham 2002) emerged in ways which demonstrate the inter-weaving of emotions and topologies of power. As one cultural intermediary involved in shaping and implementing cultural policy in Manchester put it:

... It actually is about passions, and our emotions and our passions, and why we chose to work in the Arts. Because we try and connect our emotions and our passions with our work.

Thus, those involved in cultural policy-making bring their own personal enthusiasms for culture and creativity into their working lives which shapes their actions as professionals.

Of this range of emotions which play a role in their working lives many emerge from the struggle to get culture and creativity taken seriously in urban policy. One former policy-maker in Stockholm reported a diversity of emotional responses during his attempts to get culture adopted. He had great hopes about the potential impact of the 1995 UNESCO 'Creative Diversity' report, but was disappointed when it was not adopted:

I was so disappointed I wrote to the Board [of the Committee for Culture] about it. I was so enthusiastic about it [thinking] "Well, here we have something we should take to us and make it, process it in Stockholm." [But] nothing happened. They didn't react.

Frustration and disappointment are among the emotions experienced by cultural policy-makers at different times and unevenly distributed across the city in ways shaped by the differing power structures between urban and international policies and networks. One member of Gdańsk's cultural administration discussed their frustration with EU-funding which was used for projects which failed to develop a sustainable legacy. As they put it, 'If I can see that amount of money and I could use it for something that we don't have money to do ... I want to cry alone, really'. Policy-makers focused on culture in the latest iteration of the Stockholm regional plan also made clear that 'people who really work with culture would still say "Oh, we have to fight to get it [included]"'. It is clear across all three contexts that getting culture taken seriously involves a struggle or even a fight and is an emotionally laden process.

The same former cultural policy-maker in Stockholm experienced different emotions later in his career as culture and creativity started to become central to policy-making, as he stated:

The first [regional development plan] was published in 2001 and in it for the first time that I can remember, you could read about importance of culture and creativity ... I remember ... I was so glad when I read it. So I wrote to the Board about it and said "Wow, this is historical, that you are talking about culture in that kind of plan".

It is clear from the way that these professionals talk about their role that enthusiasm and emotion play a key role in their professional engagement, with policy-makers developing the Stockholm regional development plan commenting that 'I would say we are quite proud of our creative industry that are making advertising, music industry, design, and gaming', while a top civil servant in Stockholm expressed the opinion that her drive was in part deeply emotional:

I was, you know, struck by this ... what we call some kind of 'illness' ... which is the love for the city of Stockholm. Because once you get into that organization [Stockholm City] you start to really love working there. So I'm stuck and I've been working for the city for 25 years now ...

Furthermore, emotions play an important role in the way that different parts of the cultural ecosystem function when it comes to designing and implementing cultural policy. As one organization in Manchester which distributes state arts funding discussed, emotions are important because:

I think one of the benefits of the sector that we're working in ... is the power of culture within those relationships and the power of the relationships themselves. So a lot of the organisations that we support ... have co-commissioning relationships or joint touring relationships and quite strong ties. So the view is that *it's the relationship which is the strong thing* (emphasis added).

Here, emotional connections to culture and between organisations are an important element of how networks actually function and this strength is a vital aspect in negotiating contemporary challenges to designing and implementing cultural policy. The emotional nature of processes and connections was also recognised as central in Gdańsk to attempts by the administration to involve their citizens in strategic development. As one senior member of the administration put it:

[In Gdańsk] people are open for the new ideas and new challenges. So, this is very important and of course maybe it makes some difficulties because I think Gdańsk's citizens are quite active citizens and they participate in the debate and they have different opinions, points of view. Maybe this is not the society that is very easy to manage because of the temperature of discussions is very high sometimes, but I think at the end we can find very good solutions for different challenges.

Here, the 'high temperatures' of consultation with the city's inhabitants were important in forging new policy solutions.

Emotions, cultural policy-making and 'big politics'

Policy-making is always subject to political instability at various scales. The regular electoral cycle and changes in central government can bring the potential of disruption to programmes, goals and budgets – or, on the other hand, new support for arts and culture – which shape particular contexts for the emergence of emotions. However, over and above what emerges from the three contexts studied here is that changes in the nature of contemporary politics are exacerbating these emotions, particularly around threats to culture and cultural policies. As this senior strategist from Stockholm discussed, he is afraid of the potential destabilisation of the long-established, two-party dominance of politics in Sweden:

I'm more afraid these two blocks [the left and the centre-right] that we are used to, that changed power every four years in Sweden or in Stockholm, could be another situation next election, that there will be three blocks, or four. That what party is given cultural responsibility – before it was liberals, now it's the social democrats, both parties are culture friends – but sometime it could be a party that is not so.

In Manchester these fears of cyclical political instability are heightened by the uncertainty caused by Brexit, as one key agency distributing state arts funding explained:

But there's just such a hiatus at the moment that, as everyone says, it's difficult to plan. So all we can do is look at contingencies and encourage our organisations to do the same thing until that certainty is there.

In each city, contemporary national-scale political changes are driving uneven relational topologies of power both within cities and between the urban and other scales. These produce political and emotional tensions between the urban, the national and the supra- and international, with implications for the emergence of emotions in cultural policy-making. New constellations of emotions are emerging in relation to changes in 'big' politics: rising support for the right-wing nationalistic Sweden Democrats; the politics of austerity, Brexit and regional inequalities in the UK; and the electoral success of the Law and Justice Party (PiS) and its brand of authoritarian neoliberalism in Poland.

One thing that characterised the emotional context of cultural policy-making in the three cities was a fear of the threats posed by these political changes to the role that culture could play in urban development and essentially the meaning of culture itself. These developments generated emergent emotions of a lack of optimism, and fear, paranoia and paralysis. As one arts organisation implementing cultural policy in Manchester said:

... Basically I have to say I don't feel very optimistic about the state of things in terms of the government that we've got in power at the moment and I think they are just dismantling everything that the arts represents in terms of art and wellbeing.

Here, emotions are emergent because of the feeling that the purpose of the arts and culture and what they can achieve in society is under threat from this 'big politics'. There were similarities in the Stockholm case, where one cultural intermediary in the city stated that in the context of contemporary political shifts:

... And threats, I think there's a big threat like everywhere with the extreme Right, and the changes in understanding of culture in this case. And this is something we have also discussed here ... the hijacking of cultural heritage by the extreme Right. We have a publication in the bookshop where, for instance, a curator in Hungary describes clearly and frighteningly how systematically all the cultural directors were exchanged when the extreme Right came to power. And this is what will probably happen elsewhere, quite soon.

Interestingly, the fear expressed here relates both to Stockholm but also a much more geographically widespread context and chimes with emotions felt in the cultural policy sector in Gdańsk in the run up to the 2019 election, as one local government arts official described:

So, they [the people working in the urban administration] are all scared. There is kind of sense of paranoia. There are also a lot of controls because, you know, Gdańsk is one of the cities that central government is going after. So they are all like really scared. Which I can understand but it should not paralyze everything, you know ... but I can understand that kind of sense of fear ...

A cultural intermediary in Stockholm expressed the sense of embodied emotion that is emergent in the face of potential political changes in Sweden when they said that '... if Moderaterna [The Moderate Party – liberal-conservative] and Sverigedemokraterna [Sweden Democrats – populist, national-conservative] collaborate on cultural policy, I get shivers'.

The potential for changes towards more right-wing, and especially more populist national-conservative styles of politics, not only brings challenges to the ways that the arts and culture are framed politically, but it also brings material challenges to implementing the arts and culture. Authoritarian neoliberal regimes are characterised by a tendency to coerce other parts of the state and organisations and individuals (Tansel 2017), in ways that also shape the emotional context of making and implementing cultural policy.

In Manchester, funding and implementing arts and culture have become increasingly emotional due to the impact of over a decade of austerity politics presided over by an increasingly right-wing Conservative administration. More than £30 billion in spending reductions were made to welfare payments, housing subsidies and social services between 2010 and 2019. While these are not direct cuts to spending on the arts and culture, they have significantly impacted the context in which the cultural sector operates and impacted on its goals. The impacts of this austerity programme have been widely felt, but principally in the more marginalised areas and parts of

society, including young people, that are the specific groups which those involved with implementing cultural policy are seeking to engage and support. As one community arts group in Greater Manchester said:

... Since the Conservative government, 60% of local authority funding has gone. 60%. And they're saying this New Year coming up that half of local authorities won't receive any government aid. Half. And where is that going to hit? That's going to hit in the north of England ... towns like the Greater Manchester boroughs that have already had their budgets massacred ... Children and young people ... their education has had enormous cuts. Their wellbeing in particular – the suicide rate, depression and mental health rate which has risen dramatically. And we've seen this in the children that we've worked with ... the mental health services have been cut, the youth centres virtually gone, let alone Sure Start.¹ That's what's been cut, what local authorities are having to cut. We're seeing the impact now with the knife crime ... So this is really worrying actually and it's difficult to talk about the future ...

Here central government policy on funding is significantly affecting the communities which cultural policy is seeking to engage and impacting on the ability of cities to implement arts and culture programmes, creating anxiety and uncertainty.

This is also seen in the case of Gdańsk where the liberal politics of the city stands in explicit opposition to the right-wing authoritarian neoliberalism of the central government, a situation which has considerable impacts on cultural policy. As one local government arts officer put it 'Gdańsk is perceived by the national government to be not on their side ... Gdańsk is not very ... Ummm ... "of the right political flavour"'. As a result, it was felt that 'There are different ways that they thought they would punish the city' (Grassroots arts organisation), and this included a reduction in funding from the central Ministry for local cultural programmes. Another feature of coercion was interference in the nature of culture, with the central Ministry favouring programmes and events with a more traditional, conservative, religious or nationalistic element. Both of these developments contributed to the emergence of the fear and paranoia discussed above.

At the same time, this political tension between the urban and the national shapes the emergence of other emotions within the cultural policy scene. In Gdańsk, there is a strongly developed and surprisingly cohesive pride in a local identity based around the idea of Gdańsk 'standing against' central government. This identity is also an emotional one based on a discourse of the city being politically and culturally distinct in Poland, as an open, tolerant, immigrant-friendly port city, aware of difference, and being the city of the Solidarity movement. Manchester has long mobilized a discourse of a particular 'Manc attitude' which is also about difference, independence and finding your own ways of doing things, which has found particular expression in the cultural scene and everyday life of the city following events such as the 1996 IRA bombing or the 2017 Manchester Arena attack. These emotionally charged identity formations are produced and reproduced through culture and in opposition to the central government.

However, the socially and geographically uneven distribution of wealth and influence within cities creates another, overlapping topology of power in which emotions are differentially enfolded in the enactment of cultural policy. One example from Manchester brings out how internally within cities the ability to influence cultural policy and access funding is differentially distributed between organizations with different levels of power and varies along social axes of class and race. These create an emotionally charged context for the Arts, as one arts organization recounts:

... The money is now going into bigger and bigger organisations so the gatekeeping is very particular to those organisations and that is a real issue for artists and groups and creativity and culture in the region ... It's largely white, middle class and that's very worrying ... You know people might think [things have] changed but they haven't ... it's gone backwards in terms of the representation of people of colour working within the subsidised arts and the working class particularly as well. Most people are from the educated classes ... definitely people who are more alike each other ... So that's very worrying and I think that's up to the arts to address that in the subsidised arts sector particularly.

In Stockholm, the picture is more mixed. Some interviewees raised a general fear of large cuts, but the redistribution of resources devoted to culture to the outer districts of the city was supported, albeit generally without strong emotional reactions.

A further complexity is introduced into the interwoven topologies of power and emotion that the current political context is creating when an international dimension is also considered, particularly the relationship of the urban and the national to the EU. In the UK context the combination of austerity politics, the creation of a 'hostile environment' for immigration which has affected the granting of visas by the Home Office to performers to visit the UK, and Brexit has created a complex picture for the intersection of cultural policy and emotions (Anderson et al. 2020; Jones et al. 2017). One impact of Brexit is that it has fuelled racial and ethnic tensions in precisely the more marginalised communities where arts organisations are trying to use the arts and culture to support marginalised groups and community cohesion. One arts organisation in Manchester related how in their programmes in one borough of Greater Manchester (which had one of the country's highest 'Leave' votes) they had to negotiate a tense political and emotional landscape.

... Obviously also Brexit is going to hit communities ... 'Borough X' has not got the best reputation in terms of being multi-cultural partly because it hasn't had a lot of migration in recent years and that only really started in the early 1990s with the dispersal programme with refugees ... and I think that a lot of [them] that initially went there had a very, very hard time ... And I think some of the local media are quite afraid ... don't want to be seen to be supporting anyone. So it will have an impact on communities ... we can't be making trouble for people in the communities ... but that's going to increase, with the hostile environment and everything, it's going to increase ... That's one of the fears.

Brexit from the EU, and the longer-term 'hostile environment' around visas is also having a direct impact on the ability of organisations in Manchester to maintain international cultural activity which was previously seen as exciting but is increasingly linked with feelings of uncertainty:

Brexit's a disaster to the arts because Manchester ... you know it feels like it's a very international city, you hear all the different European languages ... Artists have been able to move about in Europe, so you do have quite a lot of artists that go and stay and work for a while in each other's country ... It's always moving and its exciting ... all those influences, diversities, the reason why we all value diversity because it brings new thinking, new ideas and most people involved in creativity just love that. I think the uncertainty at the moment is mainly around movement of people and skills in particular and that is a particular worry for people and the potential increase in costs around touring work and materials ...

These points were echoed by a community arts cultural intermediary who commented:

Brexit could pull us back a bit. Also with the 'hostile environment'. It was difficult before, but it's become ten times more difficult to bring international artists into the country. So on the level of having the opportunity to work with diverse artists, I think that is really upsetting, feels like "Oh God, we're going backwards again."

However, a distinctly different set of emotions emerge in relation to the international scale in the case of Gdańsk and its relationship with the EU. Here, a strong engagement with the EU supports the city and its liberal political stance against the central government in Poland. In practical terms, EU funding is invaluable for arts and culture in the city in a context where the national Ministry is providing significantly less funding in this area. Several interviewees were proud to point out that per capita, Gdańsk is the most successful city in Poland in gaining EU funds. However, going beyond this Gdańsk draws on engagement with the EU to strengthen its distinct identity, by equating its discourses of the city as open, tolerant, and welcoming of difference with equally imagined discourses of 'Europeanness'. The Solidarity movement of the 1980s is here a source of pride and inspiration signifying resistance to the *current* national government, its Euroscepticism and national conservatism.

While the EU was seen in part as carrying the threat of bureaucratisation – one art activist described the paperwork associated with writing bids for funding as 'a horror' – the way that the EU was talked about was entirely different emotionally from how the central government was talked about. Cultural policy-makers in the city spoke of the EU and the opportunities it offered for the exchange of ideas and values in positive, even glowing terms, encompassing hope and pride in stark

contrast to the fear and anger expressed in relation to the central government. In Stockholm, in a further contrast, the EU did not feature much at all in the responses of interviewees and was discussed in a rather neutral fashion.

Conclusion

The aim of this article is to argue for the need to bring consideration of emotions into analyses of cultural policy-making. By developing trends across a multi-disciplinary set of literatures we have sought to break down the implicit binary dichotomy between rationality and emotion which has tended to render the cultural policy literature 'emotion blind'. Analyses thus need to incorporate attention to how a fluid, shifting constellation of emotions associated with cultural policy-making are emergent in different spaces and times (cf. Gross 2019; Bennett 2015), involving different mixings of excitement, happiness, satisfaction, boredom, frustration, anger and fear (cf. Mangset 2020), amongst others.

We argue that the role and emergent nature of emotions are shaped by practices and interactions in the everyday lives of policy-makers at a range of scales. This necessitates an approach that explores the intersection of cultural policy-makers' everyday, mundane professional practices and spaces (cf. Khan 2019) with the impact of dramatic changes in the broader political context (cf. Pain 2009). Anderson and Holden's (2008) notion of 'affective urbanism' draws attention to the links between uneven topologies of power and the complexities of emergent emotions in urban space, which we have applied to understand the role of emotions in the cultural policy-making context. We argue that these 'emotional regimes' of cultural policy-making are not simply territorially produced or bounded, but are emergent within a multi-scalar tension. The distribution of uneven topologies of power in the urban sphere (Anderson and Holden 2008) is thus related to the multi-scalar politics of cultural policy-making in place. This means that analyses must bring together the everyday, embodied world of emotions experienced by cultural policy-makers with broader political shifts, echoing the development of an 'emotional geopolitics' (Pain 2009, 2010) focusing on 'how emotions are deployed, played out and felt in geopolitical events and phenomena' (Pain 2010, 238). We, therefore, argue that analyses of emotions in cultural policy-making should focus on the emergence of multi-scalar and multi-emotional forms of 'affective urbanism' comprising 'emotional regimes' which are context specific, encompassing local urban politics in relation to national-scale political contexts and supra-national and international relations (and cf. the argument of Varró and Bunders (2020) on the need for this multi-scalar understanding of policy-making).

Furthermore, we argue that adopting this approach is of particular relevance now given the rapid and profound changes that are occurring in the broader political sphere contextualising cultural policy-making. A destabilising of many long-established political landscapes, a move towards right-wing politics in many countries, and in particular the rise in differing forms of authoritarian neoliberalism (Bruff and Tansel 2019) around the world are producing new political environments for cultural policy-makers. Culture has long been a sphere in which various 'culture wars' are played out. In the current political climate, we feel that a re-engagement with this view of culture through the lens of multi-scalar emotional regimes is both topical and urgent. Given that variants of authoritarian neoliberalism have rapidly taken root in a variety of contexts around the globe – from the USA under Trump, Russia under Putin, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, and Brazil and beyond – it is timely to attend to the complex interplay of emotions, politics and power as central to the processes of cultural policy-making and implementation at a range of scales.

Note

1. Sure Start aimed to support the learning skills, health/wellbeing, and social and emotional development of children under four in disadvantaged areas. Established by the Labour government in 1998, funding was significantly cut by subsequent Conservative administrations.

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