

The 'Chalkface' of Cultural Services: Exploring Museum Workers' Perspectives on Policy

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Applied Social Science

University of Stirling

2012

Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained within this thesis has been submitted for any other degree at any other university. The contents found within this thesis have been composed by the candidate Vikki McCall.

Acknowledgements

Thank you very much to my supervisors Prof. Johnston Birchall and Dr. Sharon Wright. Your advice, support and guidance have been invaluable. A special thank you to Sharon – it has been a fantastic eight years working with you and I would not be submitting this thesis without your unwavering support. Thank you also to John, Biggy, Clare, Louise and my mum Dawn for reading my work – you have all been wonderful.

A big thank you to all my family and friends for listening to all my ramblings and rants about museums. A special thank you to my husband Lee and my wonderful son Connor, whose arrival mid-way through the thesis inspired me to finish.

Finally, thank you to all the museum workers and participants who helped me with the fieldwork and the thesis. I appreciate your openness and the trust that you have given me.

Abstract

The difficulties faced by services in the cultural sector have been immediate and challenging. Public services that are cultural in nature have faced funding cuts, closures and redundancies. Museum services are low in political importance and unable to provide clear evidence of their policy impact. Despite these challenges, there has been limited evidence about the policy process at ground-level. This thesis builds on theoretical and empirical ideas in social and cultural policy to present museum workers' perspectives within a cultural theory framework. Following Lipsky's (1980) work on street-level bureaucrats, this thesis presents an analysis of street-level workers' roles in delivering social and cultural policy. Museum workers' perspectives are presented through a series of case studies (drawing on qualitative interviews and observations) from three local-authority museum services in England, Scotland and Wales. The findings showed evidence that top-down cultural and social policies have had an influence on workers actions, but service-level workers' understandings were central to the policy process. Museum workers actively shaped museum policy through ground-level interactions with visitors and groups. Workers experienced policy in the cultural sector as fragmented, vague and difficult to engage with at the ground-level. Workers mainly viewed policy as meaningless rhetoric. Despite this, those working at ground-level often utilised policy rhetoric effectively to gain funding and manipulate activities towards their own needs and interpretations. Policy evaluation was also fragmented and underdeveloped within the services studied. Workers found themselves under pressure to fulfil policy objectives but were unable to show how they did this. Furthermore, there was a perceived distance from managers and local authority structures. This allowed a space for workers to implement and shape policy towards their own professional and personal ideals. Vague policies and a lack of formal mechanisms for evaluation led to high levels of worker discretion at ground-level. Economic policy expectations were resisted by workers, who tended to have more egalitarian views. Museum workers effectively managed policy expectations through a mixture of discretion and policy manipulation. Delivery at the ground-level was seen as effective – despite, not because of, cultural sector policies.

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Chapter One

Introduction

“Policy is implemented differently by senior managers, middle managers, managers and then the people who are actually on the ground, at the chalkface, that are delivering the said strategy” (Museum worker, Scotland). [sic]

Understanding and implementing policy has been a particular challenge in the cultural sector. Museum workers at the ‘chalkface’ have been expected to fulfil wide and varied policy expectations. Despite this, there is a lack of information available about policy at ground-level in cultural services. It is important to explore this, as museums are one of the main services being affected by UK economic difficulties. Local authorities are replacing paid staff with volunteers, and 40% of UK museums have reported a 10% loss in staff numbers from 2010 to 2011 (Museums Association 2011a: 4). Furthermore, museums are facing closure and the sell-off of their collections to cover local authorities’ budget deficits. The Wedgwood museum, for example, is facing the sell-off of its collections to cover a £134 million pension scheme shortfall (Museums Association 2011b: 4). The famous and award winning Brontë Museum in West Yorkshire is facing complete closure, because the local government wish to make just under £1 million in sales and savings (Wainwright 2012). The challenges, dangers and difficulties facing the services in the cultural sector are immediate and very real. This thesis presents the findings from three local-authority museum services, to show the potential policy challenges and opportunities for workers in the cultural sector. It does this by exploring how policy is, and has been encouraged to be, very distant from workers’ actions. This then allows workers to employ discretion at the ground-level. The thesis finishes by showing how museum workers are central to the policy process in their services.

This thesis contributes a more in-depth understanding of the policy process in the cultural sector, as it provides evidence of the value of museum workers’ contributions to policy. One of the ways in which the cultural sector has been an easy target for government cuts, is the lack of coherent evidence regarding the cultural, social and economic value of cultural services. As the

quote above shows, policy is implemented differently at all levels. The cultural sector as a whole is fragmented, and evidence of value and impact is hard to obtain (Selwood 2001; Gray 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007). The available data that provides evidence for successful policy outcomes is varied, unpredictable and unclear (Davies 2001; McCall and Playford 2012). Most analysis of the cultural sector has been around central government policies (Selwood *et al.* 2001) and local government policy (Gray 2004). However, the relationship between policy and whether policy objectives are achieved is both unclear and unmeasured (Selwood 2001). It is important to explore these, as social policy and culture is a neglected area of analysis (Baldock 1999; van Oorschot 2007). To take this analysis further, this thesis has focused on the ground-level to understand policy implementation in this sector. This thesis has explored the policy process, policy expectations and implementation within museum services. It has taken a ground-level approach that explored worker perspectives in three museum services in Scotland, England and Wales. It offers evidence and findings that show how important and central cultural workers are to offering key services to the public.

The focus on museum workers' perspectives is important, as it is street-level bureaucrats who ultimately make policy at ground-level through their interactions with the public (Lipsky 2010). Despite this important role, not much is known about museum workers at ground-level (Tilili 2008a). Research on cultural workers in general is lacking, despite the many conflicts and tensions in the sector (Banks 2007: 28). Examples of exploring service-level point of view have mainly been limited to a focus on social inclusion policy (Newman and McLean 2004; Tilili 2008a; McCall 2009). Current literature is primarily occupied with general trends and motivations of cultural and museum policy (Gray 2000, 2007, 2008) and museum management and politics (Gray 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011). The importance of policy in a local government context is also emphasised (Gray 2008, 2004). This thesis takes the next step and has analysed front-line workers' perspectives on how they understand and view policy at the service level.

This thesis offers the first analysis of cultural workers' perspectives in the current policy context of devolution. The main focus of existing literature has been on 'UK' or English policy. This

thesis offers perspectives from Scottish, English and Welsh museum workers, working in local-authority museum services. This is justified in that local contexts are important to cultural policy due to multiple policy influences and difficulties in managing the sector (Gray 2004, 2006). Exploring bottom-up perspectives on workers' roles and relationships has revealed the central role that museum workers have on making, understanding and implementing policy.

The challenges for the museums sector

The devolved parliaments within Scotland and Wales have had control over cultural policy since 1999, and this could potentially have significant influence in the direction of cultural services. The UK central, devolved and local governments have been fundamental to pushing the social role of cultural services, such as museums, by linking the cultural sector to goals and objectives that are not traditionally 'cultural' in nature (Gray 2007, 2008). Weil (1997) noted that "*if our museums are not being operated with the ultimate goal of improving people's lives, on what [other] basis might we possibly ask for public support?*" (in Weil 1999: 242, original emphasis). Some believe that all museums have a social responsibility and obligation to construct a more inclusive, equitable and respectful society (Sandell 2002). With these obligations in mind, cultural services, such as museums, are effectively being used as tools to attain non-traditional policy objectives, for instance social inclusion (Gray 2007, 2008). Gray (2007, 2008) has pointed out that increased instrumentalism in this sector has increased pressure to justify spending public money in the cultural sector, which has resulted in higher expectations in regards to performance and policy effectiveness. Holden (2006: 9) has claimed that the cultural sector is going through a "*crisis of legitimacy*". The need for cultural services to understand, process and communicate policy expectations and discourse has thus become much more important.

New Labour were central to introducing increasingly instrumental social policies within the cultural sector, as this is an area that devolved parliaments have had control over since 1999. New Labour in Scotland, England and Wales pursued a policy of social inclusion, learning and access for all (DCMS 2000). Since 2007 the SNP minority government in Scotland have married cultural objectives to their overriding economic and national outcomes. Scottish cultural

services are responsible for delivering wider public services and reducing inequality (Scottish Government 2008). The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), with the coalition between Welsh Labour Party and Plaid Cymru, also linked cultural services with economic outcomes. These included encouraging individual fulfilment, social capital and collective prosperity through cultural services (WAG 2008a, 2008b). It should be noted that this thesis was developed prior to the Coalition election in May 2010. The priorities and aims of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have gone through a radical realignment. The priorities of philanthropy and private investment have made their way to the top of current department priorities (DCMS 2011). The following literature focuses on the policy priorities that workers were subject to at the time of field work (July 2009 to April 2010). The similarities and differences between these policies call for an in-depth analysis of how these are understood and negotiated by cultural workers.

The linking of social and economic policy aims with cultural policies is now a significant challenge to cultural services. The non-cultural expectations, placed on cultural services, are important, as funding, support and political advocacy can be taken away if they remain unfulfilled (Gray 2007). These social expectations include goals such as greater social cohesion, health, educational achievement, participation and public engagement (Levitt 2008). One particular social objective introduced into cultural policy since 1999 is that of social inclusion, and museums have been crucial to this policy development. Sandell (1998, 2002, 2003, 2007) discussed the potential of museums in tackling social exclusion and inequality. In the current climate, *"museums are being asked by the funding bodies to assume new roles, to demonstrate their social purpose and more specifically to reinvent themselves as agents of social inclusion"* (Belfiore 2002: 103). For museums, being inclusive is being representative of diverse cultures, along with giving access and targeting non-traditional audiences for social regeneration (Sandell 1998; Belfiore 2002). Furthermore, there are numerous case studies advocating the social impact of the arts in bringing about social inclusion (Matarasso 1997; GLLAM 2000; Dodd and Sandell 2001; Dodd *et al.* 2002; Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* 2007). Despite these examples of inclusive practice, it is agreed that social objectives, especially around social inclusion, are confused, misunderstood and problematic (Selwood 2002a/b; Newman and

McLean 2004; Belfiore and Bennett, O 2007; Tiilli 2008a/b; McCall 2009). This creates a situation where:

“the arts occupy a particularly fragile position in public policy, on account of the fact that the claims made for them, especially those relating to their transformative power, are extremely hard to substantiate” (Belfiore and Bennett 2008: 5).

This has been influenced further by the recent drive for evidence based policy in the UK. However, ‘evidence based policy’ usually refers to certain types of measurement, which is currently very difficult to generate and maintain within the museum and cultural sector. Gray and Wingfield (2011) have also noted that the DCMS holds a position of low significance in terms of other government departments, with a lack of contribution to core aims. The DCMS has a low priority but is still expected to deliver policy ideas around the *“transformative power of the arts”* (Belfiore and Bennett 2008: 6), which is a very wide-reaching ambition. Further to difficulties with evidence and low political importance, cultural workers have found it difficult to engage with the policy and policy discourse (McCall 2009). Cultural workers are key actors fulfilling these social objectives, but little is known about their understandings of these policies and how they implement them.

Very little is known about the cultural sector from the perspectives of those who receive public subsidies (Selwood 2001). Funding for arts and heritage has been under pressure from both public and private sectors (Mermiri 2011). One of the main reasons for this is that central policies have dictated the main funding decisions in the sector with *“an unprecedented number of reviews, policy and strategy documents, and top-down monitoring of funding bodies as well as the organisations they support”* (Selwood 2001: 1). This has challenged the traditional ‘arms-length¹’ approach to the sector, justifying the focus of this thesis on policy and implementation. In 1999 this resulted in new policies such as ‘A New Cultural Framework’ and ‘Best Value’ for local government, which irrevocably tied funding to measurable outcomes

1 . The Arts Council was established in 1945, on the foundation of laissez-faire belief and policy. This suggested that the state should not be instrumental with culture, insinuating the ‘arms-length’ principle into the post-war culture settlement (Bennett 1995). For more detail on the history of the arts see Gray (2000).

(DCMS 1999). Museums in the UK are also facing the re-introduction of admission fees. This could jeopardize the trend of increased visitor numbers that services have enjoyed over the last 10 years. When the National Maritime Museum reintroduced a £10 fee in March 2011, they saw an immediate decline in visitor numbers (Museums Association 2011c: 7). Funding remains the main challenge in this sector. The type of spending within cultural organisations has changed to programme based funding activities (Selwood 2001). Little is known, however, on how workers negotiate and cope with insecure and limited resources.

Further to the impacts of instrumentalist policies from central and devolved governments, the contemporary museum is now categorised by an 'institutional nature', where "*the collection has met bureaucracy*" (McLean 1995: 604). Museums, as organisations, are impacted by the same changes as other public services. For example, Clarke and Newman (1997) found in their studies of public organisations that staff members were under pressure for efficiency savings, the 'can do' climate of policy making, and a decline in trust from managers, the state and the public. At the same time, they had to engage with a more user orientated and reflexive approach and struggle for legitimacy and autonomy. Museums have also been shown to struggle under the same pressures (McLean 1997; Bennett, O 1997; Selwood 2002a/b; Newman and McLean 2004; Boylan 2006). However, the intentions and purpose of museums remains unclear (McLean 1997), as do cultural policy aims in general (Gray 2009). There also remains a gap in knowledge regarding the role and impact of cultural workers (Banks 2007). This suggests that museum management, governance processes and structures should be given the same scrutiny as other institutions, to reveal tensions, negotiations and policy relationships.

Despite these challenges, several studies have shown, especially in America, that people trust museums over other institutions in society due to their ability to connect people, and offer first hand experiences with friends and family. They are regarded as more 'objective' than other institutions (Thelen 2004: 337). Museums in the UK also score high on public trust (Museums Association 2004). By placing this trust in museum staff, the public grant museums authority as public organisations (Cuno 2004). Cuno (2004) has claimed that the increased trust in

museums makes a good justification for the museums' position in a democratic culture. Despite the complex challenges facing museums, they have a central part in society. This thesis goes on to explore these challenges and opportunities from ground-level workers' perspectives.

Research questions

Much of the confusion surrounding policy in this sector can be traced back to the original policy directives, given by central and local government. Furthermore, the lack of evidence can be attributed to lack of direction and guidelines for evaluation of any potential social impacts. Thus, a gap in understanding between central government policy expectations and museum workers' understandings, perspectives and practices is evident from the literature. As a result, the thesis casts light on the following research questions:

- How do museum workers understand policy expectations in Scotland, England and Wales?
- How linked are central and local government policy expectations to bottom-up implementation?

Outline of chapters

The thesis has kept these research questions as its focus within each chapter. The literature review firstly explores the changing roles of the museum. It then goes on to show the social expectations relating to museum functions. This gives more details on the challenges that are faced by local authority museums. As shown above, there are multiple challenges facing museums in trying to fulfil wider outcomes such as social inclusion, quality of life and 'well-being'. The literature also highlights the lack of knowledge about cultural workers in this sector.

The third chapter reviews the literature about the policy process surrounding the museums sector. Current cultural and social policy analytic literature is reviewed to show that there is much more development needed in this sector. The devolved contexts of Scotland, England and Wales are shown to have both similarities and differences that could impact their cultural

services. The literature suggested that there is less policy divergence than expected since devolution. The second half of the chapter explores the idea of making policy at ground-level. This centres on Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucrats and the importance of public services in making and implementing policy. The chapter finishes with a look at the paradigms of cultural theory, and how these are important in a museum context.

The research methodology is presented in chapter four. This chapter details the research stance, case study approach and qualitative methods used. Semi-structured interviews and observation techniques were shown to be the most relevant, as they generated some valuable and in-depth data. The methods used to analyse the data are then detailed along with the ethical considerations of the research. The methodology gives details about the theoretical framework of cultural theory and why it was relevant to this research.

Chapter five presents findings related to the distance that has been created between workers and policy. It does this by showing how workers view and relate to policy as rhetoric. The findings go on to show how workers understand their low priority within local-authority public service provision and how this influences their roles. This is reflected in the lack of control and feedback mechanisms at ground-level. The chapter finishes with an in-depth look at the complex relationships between workers, management and local authorities. These themes are shown to be central to museum workers' understandings and the distance they have from cultural and social policies.

Chapter six goes on to discuss the consequences of workers' distance from policy. It does this by exploring how museum workers make and use discretion at ground-level. The chapter then examines how policy is shaped by workers' personal and professional ideals. It gives particular attention to the social roles and discourses experienced by workers in their interactions with the public. The findings highlight how increased distance from policy can give room for workers to shape policy implementation around their own understandings.

The policy opportunities and challenges, related to discretion and workers' roles in policy, are then explored in chapter seven. The chapter shows that there are unique policy challenges in

this sector, and that policy also can be used as a tool by ground-level workers. The social policy expectations around social exclusion and inclusion are then outlined as an example of policy opportunities and challenges. The chapter finishes by exploring whether there is an opportunity for further cultural diversity through devolution in Scotland, England and Wales.

Chapter eight presents more evidence and discussion around the policy making process. It gives more details on policy management, decision making and coping mechanisms employed by ground-level workers. This chapter in particular highlights how central workers are to the policy process within the museum services studied.

Chapter nine brings the findings and literature together. The discussion is structured around the research questions proposed above. The findings suggest that cultural workers use the gap between ideas and higher-level policies to obtain some control over policy meanings, making them active agents in the policy making process. Chapter ten finishes with some conclusions and shows that the research has a potentially important impact on current social and cultural policy understandings.

Chapter Two

The Social Role of the Museums Sector

Introduction

As suggested in the introduction, the museum has been subject to changing policies and structural changes. Museums have seen a development in museum purpose, role and pedagogy (Weil 1999). This chapter explores the functions and roles attributed to museums. It does this by exploring the changing role of museums and the 'New Museology'. The literature also highlighted the specific challenges to local authority museums within the museum sector. The social impacts of museums are then explored, with specific focus on community, social exclusion and inclusion, quality of life and 'well-being'. The chapter finishes by illustrating the difficulties linked to proving and implementing social policy expectations within museums.

The changing role of the museum

In the late 18th and early 19th century the view that libraries and art galleries were "*instruments capable of improving 'mans' inner life*" became prominent" (Bennett, T 1995: 18). This saw the birth of the public museum, a new institution based on collecting objects and artefacts for public education (Bennett, T 1995). First understandings of 'the museum' are always expressed in functional terms, about what a museum does, because this was a comfortable definition that did not inspire questions regarding political and moral issues (Weil 1990). Museums were characterised by exclusiveness and linked to the bourgeois public sphere, embodying related ideals and codes of conduct such as no swearing, the rule of reason, no dirty footwear etc. (Bennett, T 1995). This 19th century European model still dominates when the word 'museum' is used, but was one in which the voice of the visitor was not heard (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 151). They played a large role in differentiating the elite from the popular classes (Bennett, T 1995). The origins of museums, therefore, are based on function, collections and exclusiveness.

In the UK there is a distinction regarding art galleries and museum (which does not exist in, for example, the US) and mostly refers to either a collection of objects or distinctive buildings

(Duncan 2004). The definition given by the International Council of Museums (ICOM 2007 statutes 3.1) is:

“a non-profit, permanent institution, in the service of society and of its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches and communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”.

Noever (2001: 8) simply described museums as *“a place that makes art accessible to the people”*. His reference to art did not just mean high art and painted masterpieces but what Alexander (2003) described as the tangible, visible, and/or audible products of creative endeavour, which is an expressive product found within a particular physical and social context, made accessible and communicated to people. In recent government policy, museums are classed *“as extraordinary institutions with a unique part to play in building and sustaining community and identity – locally, nationally and internationally”* (DCMS 2006). What is clear is that the reach of museum activity goes beyond the physical confines of a building. This thesis uses the term ‘museum’ to refer to museums and art galleries, historic houses and gardens related to the museum services studied.

The perceived changes in the role of the museum are complicated. McLean (1995) showed the evolution and development of the museum from being seen as a ‘temple’, changing to a public forum. This was a change from private (research) to public (enjoyment), which has *“complicated the roots of the museum both as a word and a phenomenon”* (McLean 1995: 604). Despite these debates over definition, the original idea of a museum as a collection-focused building prevails, with the existence of a general public understanding that the museum is a ‘cultural authority’, upholding and communicating truth (Harrison 2004). According to Ginsburgh and Mairesse (1997) the ICOM definition and its criteria can be superfluous and lacking focus, as there is increasing tension between the defined criteria and museum structure. They found diversity in institutions, which classify themselves as museums, and of which half did not exist twenty years ago (Ginsburgh and Mairesse 1997:17). This has created difficulties in the foundations of the sector and helped instigate new policies and new understanding of what

these institutions do. Weil (1990) stated that it is a museum's purpose, not its activities, which should identify it. It is worth studying the mission, aims and purpose of museums to understand what it is. The debate about museum definition shows that there is a crisis of role and function. Despite this, museum workers themselves have been neglected in asking about their roles in relation to museum functions.

The cultural context of museums

In the early 19th century when the 'public museum', as we know it, was formulated, culture was seen as something for the government to manage, something in need of regulation and transformation to better morals and manners (Bennett, T 1995: 19). Williams (1979: 87) showed that 'culture' is one of the most complicated words in the English language and is used in different disciplines for incompatible trains of thought. He showed it can now stand for intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic development, a particular way of life or working practices and work for creative activity. 'Culture' has always been a concept that people find easy to use, but have trouble defining. When used in sociology it usually means norms, beliefs, values, expressive symbols or practices (Griswold 2008). Peterson (1979: 150) explored four different cultural orientations, one of which describes "*reproduction through culture*", in which we see for the first time 'culture' taking a central role in analysis and being applied to "*the realm of art*". Bourdieu's (1984, 1993, 1999) concepts of cultural capital are particularly relevant when discussing reproduction through culture, the arts, art consumption, cultural production and cultural services. The cultural field is dominated by cultural capital. As a culturally consecrated site, museums confer consecration to artists and visitors by conserving the capital of cultural goods and reproducing "*cultural dispositions*" (Bourdieu 1993: 121). Thus museums must take up a space (physical and social), or a position, in society reproduced through thought, language and the continual legitimization from the cultural classes (Bourdieu 1999). The inevitable struggle over this space, where power is subtly exerted and exercised, forms symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1999: 126). Furthermore, "*culture provides meaning, and order, through the use of symbols, whereby certain things designated as cultural objects are endowed with significance*

over and above their material utility” and this is most strongly seen in organisations such as art galleries and museums (Griswold 2008: 24).

Museums are organisations that are implicit in the production of culture and are involved in bringing cultural consumers together with objects (Griswold 2008: 75). Culture is embodied through institutions such as museums and made through certain music, sculptures, literature and other practices (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 12). Griswold (2008) in particular outlined the distinction between ‘high’, ‘elitist’ culture and ‘low’, ‘mass’ culture. The former refers to serious literature, the performing arts, art galleries and museums that are viewed as fragile, sacred and in need of preserving. The other is linked to mass production for ‘others’ and often associated with market and profit making, attributing it with less importance than ‘art for art’s sake’, which ‘high’ culture aims to embody. ‘Popular’ culture is another, but more optimistic, form of ‘mass’ culture representing the non-elite majority (Griswold 2008). This encourages a reformist role for culture, as masses are presented as uncultured in large part because they are uneducated, which the museum aims to remedy (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 11). Featherstone (1991), however, highlighted that the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture has diminished with the way culture has been integral in everyone’s lives. Although this division has been debated and refuted for a long time, it still prevails in peoples thoughts when defining culture (Griswold 2008). What makes cultural production relevant to the focus of this thesis is that it is something museums workers interpret and to provide visitors through their actions at ground-level. This thesis considers ‘culture’ to be what staff and social actors in museums think they are producing.

In social policy, ‘culture’ as actionable is more accurate, where:

“cultural symbols have the power to shape cultural identities at both individual and societal level; to mobilise emotions, perceptions and values; to influence the way we feel and think. In this sense, culture is generative, constructivist”
(Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 13).

Culture as constructivist is firstly shown by Williams (1981: 31) and he further added that looking at culture this way shows it as a system where “*social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored*”, through language, the arts, philosophy, journalism, fashion and more. Clarke (2004: 33-39) described this division as “*culture as practice*”, on which the effect of social policy on culture is focused, and “*culture as property*” where practices and behaviours are steered by cultural patterns, something individuals and groups belong to, and which belongs to them. Within the “*culture as practice*” analysis culture can be manipulated, produced and reproduced by people and subject in relations of power (van Oorshot 2007). Cultural practices and objects help construct realities as:

“Museums are deeply involved in constructing knowledge in this way through those objects, peoples, narratives, and histories that they bring to visibility or keep hidden. These processes set agendas for imagination and interpretation”
(Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 13).

Van Oorshot (2007) showed that both approaches to culture (i.e. practice vs. property) are mutually compatible, not in competition, and taking an open view of culture can make cultural analysis either too wide or narrow. There has been a backlash to this perceived change in the role as “*culture is a not a means to an end. It is an end itself*” (Belfiore 2002: 104). The literature showed that the ‘use’ of culture, and therefore cultural services, is controversial.

A new ‘museology’?

In contrast to ‘old museology’, whose aim was collecting and conserving, the ‘New Museology’ was driven by local community and people rather than objects. It has become the main focus for creating a more democratic climate, taking the museum beyond being just a building (Weil 1990; Ross 2004; Harrison 2004). The new museum was to be about ideas, not objects, and driven by viewpoints and insight (Weil 1990). Theorists of the ‘New Museology’ advocated representing, serving and integration of diverse multicultural social groups (Stam 2004). Linked to the ‘New Museology’ are discourses surrounding terminologies, such as ‘resonance’, ‘wonder’, ‘commitment’, ‘liberation’, ‘islands of hope’, ‘dialogue’, ‘platform of ideas’, ‘social re-

definition', 'cultural empowerment', 'emotional' and the 'redefinition of our consciousness', which started to appear in museums in the late 1980s (Harrison 2004: 47). Here we see a change in the role of museums to be more than simply buildings and collections.

A good example of 'New Museology' thinking came from Duncan (2004: 2), who attempted to take museums beyond merely architectural and art to propose that they can "*offer up values and beliefs – about social, sexual and political identity – in the form of vivid and direct experience*". She showed, using examples such as the Louvre, National Gallery of London and more, the transformations from elite collections to public galleries in order to serve new ideologies, and changing political and social circumstances. What this shows is that the museum is not an objective building, but something that is situated in a particular context, a context that can be manipulated towards the rituals of the powerful. This is of course similar to how other institutions function, where organisational structures occur from formal organisation rules, myths, ceremonies and rituals (Meyers and Rowan 1977). Following those themes, Message (2006) explored the 'new' museum. She showed that the role of language has a central position in new museums but lacked analysis of cultural workers and curators themselves. The literature showed that politics and rhetoric have become much more important to museums and their circumstances.

Part of the 'New Museology' placed education as a central museum function. The interaction between museum and visitors is often seen as an 'educational relationship', and the educational role of the museum has been established for many years as a concept, although the focus, character and aims are debated (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 1). Indeed, education is a key concept linked to museum delivery (Hooper-Greenhill 1991, 2004; Harland *et al.* 2000; Buckingham and Jones 2001; MGS 2005; ACE 2006; Jones 2006; DCMS 2007b; Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* 2007; WAG 2008b; Fleming 2010). Despite this, education is often an afterthought in many of the larger museums (Weil 1990). It is also limited, and often only connected, to school groups and given to junior staff (Hooper-Greenhill 2000). Analysis of the museum as an educator has been very much explored by Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* (2007), and she shows that museum workers were central to delivering educational experiences.

The 'New Museology' suggests that museums face fresh challenges, away from their original 'raison d'être' of protecting artefacts to a more market-orientated approach (Vaughan 2001: 2). Public funding for the arts and culture has become increasingly tighter, with more conditions, exposing museums and other cultural institutions to market forces (Bennett, O 1997, Gray 2000; DCMS 2006). For example Lukes (2002: xxi) noted that:

“the social functions of art... in this institutional context can produce shared meanings, cultural capital reserves, and aestheticized [sic] lifestyles that promote social cohesion, economic growth, and political stability”.

This has coincided with an increasing view of visitors as 'clients' and 'users' as well as a new customer orientation (Bennett, O 1997). For example, Gordon (2004) explained how 'the Australian museum' had to become more community-based, and described these changes as *“leading institutions [museums] to take into account the wishes of their clients”*, in this case the wishes of the Aboriginal people. Indeed, *“the biggest challenge facing museums at the present time is the reconceptualisation [sic] of the museum/audience relationship”*, from a remote to closer relationship with museum visitors (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 1). This shift in language has consequences for the roles, expectations and relationships in institutions as they struggle for legitimacy (Clarke and Newman 1997). Also, education, age and gender are still the main factors affecting cultural participation (Gayo-Cal 2006). Bennett, O (1997) also provided evidence that management has arisen as a pressing issue in museums, changing funding patterns. Management and funding issues of wider public services are reflected in museum services as well.

Challenges for local authority museums

Museums are a particularly difficult partner for government due to their political, intellectual and ideological histories (Wilkinson 2008). Despite this, local-authorities have been viewed by central government as key to developing and delivering cultural policy (Gray 2004). Despite this central role given by central government, local government has tended to view the arts as generally unimportant to their main policy aims (Gray 2002). Bennett, O (1997) has talked about

management issues within local authority museums, where *“museums owned and run by the local authorities have been acknowledged to be the key in the network of museum provision in Britain. They are the spokes in the wheel”* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992 in Bennett, O 1997: 21). Museums themselves are very varied. They can be classified, however, by their type of funding and governance structure. Firstly, local authority museums are directly involved with the local council and are 85% funded by local taxation. Of the 1,811 registered museums in the UK, 40% (716) are operated by local councils (Lawley 2003). Secondly, national museums receive 75% of their income from central government, but are administered by trusts, receiving charitable status. Thirdly, there are independent museums which have different sources, but can receive local authority grants (McLean 1995). Finally, university museums are generally classed as a different category, as they are funded by non-government institutions. Small museums are just as important as larger ones, as:

“the small museum may be uniquely structured to play a leading experimental role in helping us to explore whether the museum field can move itself at least a little way towards being... ‘community centred” (Weil 1990: 37).

Local government museums, however, have a particular set of challenges. Like other public institutions, local government museums are also struggling for legitimacy. Recent local council trends of combining departments have seen:

“Museums losing out and distanced from the decision making process... They must follow laws, rules, regulations, structures, policies and conventions pertaining to the larger bureaucracy” (Bennett, O 1997: 19-20)

Being dependant on local government for funding and important decision-making allows little flexibility (Bennett, O 1997: 20). For instance, the curators interviewed by Bennett in his study highlighted the drawback of not being able to hire or fire their own staff. In fact, *“around one in three museums in England is operated by a local authority. Many are subsumed within large local government departments and have a low profile, divorced from decision-making and struggling to remain valued”* (Museums Association 2008a). In their case study of partnerships

within a local-authority museum services in Northern Ireland, Wilson and Boyle (2004) concluded that the future looks 'bleak' for small local authority museums. Partnerships with wider services have brought some benefits to local museums, but these are often dependant on individual workers skills.

Despite this, and the problems facing public museums, there has been a lack of literature - both practical and theoretical - concerning the progress of this sector. The problems and issues outlined here are very similar to the struggles and issues facing other public services, as they also struggle for legitimacy and autonomy. Local authority museums, therefore, require much more research due to the challenges facing them in particular.

The lack of information on museum workers

When it comes to ground-level workers' perceptions and understandings, the above literature showed a gap in knowledge. It is important to look at these because MacDonald (2002) found that cultural workers hold power, as exhibitions are seen to have cultural authority. New Labour policy has implicitly suggested that cultural workers are linked closely to popular culture (Oakley 2011). Regardless of this, Banks (2007) has pointed out that there is a gap in our knowledge regarding cultural workers themselves, despite their central role in the cultural industry process and responsibility for the production and interpretation of symbolic commodities. Bourdieu (1984: 326) called cultural workers "*cultural intermediaries*", but referred to them as the "*new petit bourgeoisie*" or "*evolutionary taste makers*", who sit between the world of art and commerce, promoting capitalist cultural production. Featherstone (1991) and Wright (2005) later extended this definition of cultural workers to curatorship and other occupations that were linked to the cultural sector in a less negative light.

Little is known about 'cultural intermediaries' and cultural workers are often found to be very attached to their work (Oakley 2009). Workers are:

“reluctant to take direction or interference from government. Arts workers, producers and performers are notoriously independent and jealously guard their creative licence against what they see as the bland and coercive nature of bureaucracy” (Craik 2005: 7).

Banks (2007) pointed out that this is a difficult position, where workers are often underpaid, exploited and undermined regarding their creativity and autonomy. This is despite creativity being a big policy theme (Burns Owen Partnership 2006; Mirza 2006; Banaji *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, *“many practitioners remain ambivalent about the social roles and responsibilities of museums”*, due to the unease they feel regarding the aim of changing society (Sandell 2007: 10). Weil (1999: 243) nevertheless has warned that those museums that set themselves up to *“dent the universe”* are set to failure. Those high aims are overly ambitious and often too difficult to prove. Policy supporting workers in cultural services, however, were only focused on small business until 2008 (Oakley 2011).

Lipsky (1980) treated ground-level public service workers as professionals with general and specific skills. This is important, as professionalism can influence discretion and relationships within organisations (Freidson 1994). O’Neil (2008), in his case study of the Victoria and Albert museum, noted that there is a lack of unitary roles within museums. The ‘professional culture’ within the museums still existed even after Thatcherism. For museum workers, ‘professional’ would include a wide range of workers. It can mean those with a certain skill, white collar workers, those with attributes, power and status (Johnson 1972). Emphasis needs to be placed on the work that professionals do, and their interactions with clients (Abbot and Meerabeau 1998). Focus should be on *“professional behaviour” which is used as a term for approval for what is perceived as ethical/moral behaviour and a ‘professional judgement’ is generally seen as a sound or expert one”* (Abbot and Meerabeau 1998: 2). Public services have often combined professionals and bureaucracy to create ‘bureau-professional regimes’ that combine bureaucratic and professional elements in organisations (Mintzberg 1983; Newman and Clarke 1994: 23). Bureau-professionals are a mixture of those that are managed and are managers in local authorities (Mintzberg 1979; 1983). They are ‘semi-professionals’ (Abbot and Meerabeau

1998: 2) that are often resistant to change and work against the 'managerialisation' of the welfare state (Newman and Clarke 1994). Their work is often necessary and desirable (Abbot and Meerabeau 1998). Those classed as 'professionals', therefore, occupy a wide range of roles within public services. The next section gives much more detail on the growing literature surrounding the social roles of museums and the issues that museums face.

The social role of the museum

The previous section introduced the idea that museums are slowly changing to become more socially focused through the 'New Museology'. This section explores the different social expectations and outcomes that are now linked into museum delivery. This assumes that museums are social constructs that meet social needs (McLean 1997). Bennett (2001: 19) has argued that museums have begun to leave behind:

“restrictive implications of high or aesthetic conceptions of culture as a way of life and then pluralising this to define, as a remit of cultural policies, a concern with the ways of life of all the different groups in society: different social classes, different ethnic groups, different nationalities and so on”.

Inequality, cultural ideas about social inclusion, exclusion, quality of life, 'well-being', redistribution and poverty are highlighted as key concepts in this section. It is critically important to understand these concepts that underlie the social role of museums, as cultural workers are under increasing pressure to secure funding and demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness, value for money and long term social impact (Selwood 2002; Scott 2006, 2009). To explore museum workers' understandings effectively, the literature surrounding key concepts must be explored.

The social role of the museum has been based on an instrumental idea of the value of museums (Holden 2006; Bunting 2008). Vestheim (1994: 65) was the first to offer a definition of instrumental policy in the cultural sector, where *“cultural ventures and cultural investments [are used] as a means or instrument to attain goals in other than cultural areas”*. Instrumental policies have been mainly based on economic arguments to justify investment in the arts

(Belfiore 2004) but extend to government priorities of health, social inclusion, crime, education and community cohesion (Mirza 2006). There are also a variety of wider factors that impact on instrumental museums policy such as power, democratic deficits, professionalism and elitism (Levitt 2008). This way of looking at cultural value, however, has been thought of as narrow-minded, damaging and lacking consideration of different aspects of culture (Mirza 2006; Hutter and Throsby 2007). Gray (2002, 2007) has linked instrumentality to ideas of policy 'attachment', which is not only about goals but about the wider 'attachment' of culture to wider policies in health, social justice and more. Cultural services must not only show they can fulfil their own aims but also wider social policies such as regeneration, social cohesion and social inclusion. As these have tended to have more political support, cultural services have become the secondary contributors (Gray 2007). The commodification of culture, where services are seen for their "exchange-value" over their "use-value", also offered an explanation for policy change in the cultural sector (Gray 2000). The negotiation of this has encouraged the cultural sector to establish flexible policies for survival (Gray 2007). Gray (2002; 2007) has shown, therefore, that the social expectations in cultural sector policies have been ideologically, structurally and politically driven.

Weil (1990) was one of the first to attempt to show how museums, with the resources and high prestige that they have, can be used for wider goals and the good of society. Weil (1990: 64) did not particularly advocate increased instrumentalism on the side of the museum, saying that "*at its finest, least calculable, and most magical moments, the museum can be more than merely a communicator or stimulant*". An example of this is given by Sandell (2007: 2):

"in recent years, museums have become increasingly confident in proclaiming their value as agents of social change and, in particular, articulating their capacity to promote cross-cultural understanding, to tackle prejudice and intolerance and to foster respect for difference" (Sandell 2007: 2).

For example Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS 2008c: 5) have stated that "*museums and galleries are safe public spaces that have exceptional value as dynamic learning environments and powerful agents of social and environmental change*". There remains a lack of evidence,

however, to substantiate these claims (Belfiore 2004; Belfiore and Bennett 2007; Sandell 2007). Indeed, some have seen instrumental policies as “*policies of extinction*” (Belfiore 2004: 200). In response to this lack of evidence, Sandell (2007) and Newman *et al.* (2004) offered conceptual frameworks for researching the social agency of museums. These frameworks highlight the cultural, social, economic and political paradigms of policy in the cultural sector. Bennett (2003) accentuated the three socially orientated expectations of museums, including that they should embrace the interests of all of society, respect cultural differences and be informed by the distinctive and diverse groups they depict. Matarasso (1997) provided a key study in advocating the social role of the arts. His research indicated positive social effects, such as personal growth, social cohesion, social change and environmental and health promotion. He concluded that cultural services can become a vital contributor to social policy implementation.

Traditionally museums have been unable to contribute to socially inclusive goals because of who has run them, what was in them, the way they were run and who they are perceived to be for (Fleming 2002). After ten years of an ‘access for all’ policy, Jancovich (2011) pointed out that the general public still view museums as elitist, insular and self-reflective. There have also been harsh criticisms of Matarasso’s (1997) study in regards to his general, unsubstantiated claims without a sound methodological design, execution or conceptual basis, judging quality of live simply by his own standards (Merli 2002; Belfiore and Bennett 2007).

As we have already seen in this chapter there is a difference between what is expected of museums and what impacts museums actually have. There is a wealth of information on the social impact of arts and cultural services. Most impact studies have focused on ‘proving’ the social impact of the arts. These usually coincide with government priorities at the time of the impact study (Belfiore and Bennett 2008). This shows that the push for evidence and impact within this sector has political drivers behind it. Most of the evidence can be found in the CASE (Culture and Sports Evidence Programme 2010) database created in 2010 and hosted by the DCMS. It aims to “*strengthen our understanding of how best to deliver high quality culture and sporting opportunities to the widest audience, generating positive outcomes for society*” (DCMS 2010a). For a summary and various literature reviews see Ruiz (2004), Morris Hargreaves

McIntyre (2006), Galloway (2008), Hughes (2008), Selwood (2008), O'Connor (2010) and EPPI (2010). It has a focus on generating evidence of value and engagement in the cultural sector. The key themes of community, social exclusion and inclusion, quality of life and 'well-being' are summarized here due to their links with workers in the final thesis data.

Serving the community

Museums only continue to function at the consent and service of their communities (Weil 1990). The link between museum delivery and workers is very strong and on a community level and "*it appears cultural organisations, in comparison with other agencies, might be uniquely positioned to act as catalysts for community involvement and as agents for capacity building*" (Sandell 2002: 7). Gordon (2004) looked at community museums noting that the principles of community-based museums and heritage management can differ within different times and context. Curators can provide valuable input, but ownership is difficult to negotiate and balance. MGS (2006) identified five beneficial impacts that museum collections have on their local communities, comprising education and lifelong learning, health and 'well-being', diversity, community confidence and tourism. An evaluation on the impact of social inclusion art projects also concluded that irrespective of activity, community participation created skills and self-confidence in individuals (Goodlad and Taylor 2002). Other authors such as Jackson and Herranz (2002) and Jackson *et al.* (2006) have offered frameworks and indicators for measuring community impact. Regeneration has also been a theme strongly linked to the arts (Landry *et al.* 1996; Hawkes 2001, 2009; Evans and Shaw 2004; Evans 2005; Ludvigsen and Scott 2005). The idea that the arts can change a community and its space is therefore an established idea in the literature.

The idea of a local community, however, is rooted in its local history, traditions and culture, which can contribute to people's quality of life (Kay 2000; Bleckmann 2004). This creates opportunities, equal recognition and tolerance of various cultural traditions (Bleckmann 2004). Matarasso (1996), Lowe (2000), Jermyn (2001), OFSTED (2006), Thomas (2006), Purcell (2007) and Grodach (2009) also linked communities to identity and quality of life.

Interestingly, there is a significant link between participation in cultural activity and people being satisfied with the area in which they live. In England, the DCMS (2006) noted that those who participated in culture were 10 per cent more likely to be satisfied with where they live. Most visits (53%) to museums and galleries are made by local people (MGS 2008: 64) and 70% of the local population are interested in their local community history (DCMS 2006). Newman *et al.* (2003) reviewed several community development projects, but reported that more evaluation is needed as the 'social gains' of many projects remain elusive. Despite evidence around the importance of communities, little is known about the role of ground-level workers in linking museums to communities.

Social exclusion and inclusion

More than any other social outcome, social inclusion and exclusion have become a mainstream policy expectation in museums throughout the UK (Sandell 2002; Newman and McLean 2004; Belfiore and Bennett 2007). Sandell (2007: 3) showed that contemporary museums have focused on being "*agents of positive (libratory, empowering, inclusive) social change*" and "*agents of social inclusion*". Jermyn (2001, 2004) has also reported on the role of the arts in social inclusion. She explored the role of museums and inclusion within organisations, partnered with the Arts Council. Talking to a mixture of stakeholders, organisers, participants, artists and staff members, the findings showed that there were serious issues in the use of social inclusion language, which had many different aims (Jermyn 2004). Jermyn (2004: x) claimed that arts projects raised levels of self-esteem, pride, self-determination, control and confidence in participants.

There has been increasing attention to museums tackling certain types of inequality, such as racism, poor health, crime, unemployment and other forms of discrimination (Sandell 2002). Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* (2007) concluded in a study for the DCMS that there has been strong emphasis on social inclusion in the museums studies literature over a 5 year period. Her study claimed that the socially inclusive targets for education and community work were clear and that staff understood and approached social inclusion in a sophisticated way. Museum workers were active in overcoming barriers to social inclusion and had a clear and positive impact on

vulnerable individuals. Further studies linking social inclusion, the arts and museums have been performed by Lynch and Allan (2006) and Allan (2010). Education has also been part of making museums inclusive (Harland *et al.* 2000; Hooper-Greenhill 1991, 2004; Hamilton and Sneddon 2004; Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* 2007). These gave ground-level examples of the arts overcoming barriers to social exclusion through the use of visual arts and music.

Despite the popularity of bringing in social exclusion and inclusion ideas to museums, there are inherent difficulties with the concept itself. Social exclusion became popular in the social sciences and relevant to understanding poverty, social processes, social solidarity, participation, relational issues and deprivation (Silver 1994; Gore 1995; Rodgers *et al.* 1995; Room 1995; Williams 1998). Several academic meanings exist for social exclusion (for full descriptions and historical context see Silver 1994; Walker 1995; Walker and Walker 1997; Riggins 1997; Barry 1998, 2002; Barry and Hallet 1998; Madanipour *et al.* 1998; Williams 1998; Le Grand and Piachaud 2002; Richardson 2005; Mooney 2008; Ridge and Wright 2008), who all agreed that social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept (Byrne 1999). These issues are focused on certain groups such as disabled people, lone parents, the unemployed, young adults, and can have influence on a global, national, local, community, family and finally individual level (Burchart *et al.* 2002: 1). The literature shows quite clearly that social exclusion is not a simple idea to apply to museum delivery.

Ideas of cultural capital and cultural democracy have also been brought into policy concerning social inclusion, which further confuse the concept (Cultural Policy Collective 2004; Graves 2004; Daly 2005). Hemmingway (1999) in particular has advocated the role of leisure services in enabling democratic citizenship through enhancing 'social capital' and democratic capacities of citizens. This not only creates further confusion on the concept but Vestheim (2007) has questioned whether cultural policies are capable of promoting democracy in a climate of global capitalism.

Other barriers to implementing the social inclusion agenda define funding. Newman (2004) pointed out that verbal commitment has been high on a social inclusion agenda within policy documents, but funding has remained minimal. McCall (2010) also found that although policy-

makers in Scotland had high verbal commitment for the arts and museums, practical support still remained low. Belfiore (2002) and Belfiore and Bennett (2007), Selwood (2001, 2002a/b, 2006) have also remained sceptical of the social inclusion agenda, due to lack of measurable evidence and outcomes. Belfiore (2002: 104) in particular showed how instrumental policies, linked to social exclusion, are not sustainable in the long term and may even contribute to the 'extinction' of some cultural services. Tilli (2008a) and McCall (2009) also found that museum professionals found it difficult to understand and act on social inclusion expectations within their already challenging roles. Social inclusion, therefore, is important to the sector but there remains a lack of understanding of how social inclusion and exclusion have been understood and implemented in the UK museums sector.

Quality of life and 'well-being'

Quality of life has already been shown as a wide concept linked to communities, place and identity. For this reason it has also gained policy attention in the museums sector. There is no one accepted definition of quality of life, with general meanings circling around improving the lives of individuals through a systematic framework (Galloway 2005:12). Indicators and outcomes for 'well-being', quality of life and happiness have been suggested but remain linked to local contexts (Doyle 2009; ERS 2010). It is generally understood that it provides a framework to enable working towards improving individual lives (Keith 2001: 50). Schalock and Verdugo (2002) (cited in Galloway 2005: 26) offered indicators linked to quality of life, described under the idea of 'domains' of quality of life. Their indicators show the wide range of issues that are involved in thinking about quality of life. This ranges from emotional 'well-being' to human rights. It is clear that any organisation involved in increasing quality of life has a wide remit to fulfil.

A clearer outcome, linked to quality of life and 'well-being', is health. 'well-being' is very closely related to health and the evidence base is very strong. There has been widespread interest in how culture can create positive health outcomes (Argyle and Bolton 2005; Windsor 2005; Arts for Health 2007; Daykin *et al.* 2008; Berg Culture Unlimited 2009; Chatterje 2009; O'Neil 2010). Further studies have covered a variety of topics in relation to arts and health (Madden and

Bloom 2004; McQueen-Thomson and Ziguras 2004; Mulligan 2006; Grimm *et al.* 2007; Nathan *et al.* 2010; Wall and Duffy 2010; MLA 2011; Quinn 2011). Staricoff *et al.* (2004) and Daykin and Byrne (2006), 'Arts in Health' (2007), 'Culture Unlimited' (2009), 'North West Arts and Health Network', and the 'North West Culture Observatory' (2006) have also worked on building evidence of links between arts and health. An Arts Council England (2004) project also listed evidence of art contributing to employment, education, health and crime. This shows that the evidence base for the arts has become wide-spread and varied. As seen by the above evidence, there are a large and increasing number of organisations involved in using arts and museums to improve a wide variety of social objectives. There are limitations to this, however, which are discussed below.

Difficulties with social expectations in museums

Although government policy has introduced a range of social expectations and outcomes to museums, Coalter (1998) observed that leisure provision has never moved into a 'core' service within local authorities. He concluded that the use of leisure services as a primary driver of social outcomes will always be limited (Coalter 1998). Hewison (2011) also pointed out that New Labour policy drives, focusing on "creativity", "access" and "excellence", have been useless. Effective leadership in the sector is needed (Hewison 2004). Vague New Labour policies that encourage 'creativity' have had no practical impact on cultural services and have been largely ignored in the cultural sector.

Furthermore, social exclusion, inclusion, inequality and poverty also have contested definitions, which are debated throughout academic discourse with no single accepted definition reached (Alcock 1997; Hills and Stewart 2005; Newman *et al.* 2005). Within the museum profession, social inclusion and exclusion is diverse and has remained elusive for practitioners and policy-makers (Bennett, O 1997; McCall 2009, 2010). Social exclusion has remained a very political concept, but has never been unambiguously defined (Stewart and Hills 1995). Newman and McLean's (2004) research highlighted confusion regarding the definition and meaning of social inclusion. It is difficult to characterise or classify for several reasons, including the diversity of language used to discuss it, lack of recognition, evaluation and wider policy frameworks for local

authority museums (GLLAM 2000:53). GLLAM (2000: 6) found local authority policies were “*more words than deeds*”. There is also a lack of longitudinal data, models for social impact and lack of comparative research for museums (MLA 2005). Also, Newman (2004) pointed out that measuring social inclusion is extremely difficult. Measuring participation is inappropriate, as it does not mean that people have moved from exclusion to inclusion. This is because social inclusion is a process, not a linear progression, and people are not in one homogenous group that can be easily measured (Newman 2004). Newman (2004) asked for further research on whether the social role of museums in changing behaviour positively is to be understood, and practice and policy improved.

The UK government “*has taken an unprecedented and increasingly active role in respect of the museums sector*” (Selwood 2002: 67). Not only have museums needed to change to a more democratic climate, but they must provide evidence of their impact on society, an outcome that is at the moment impossible to measure (Selwood 2002a/b). There have been studies that have suggested economic impacts of the arts in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland but there is no accepted way to measure this (Reeves 2002; SQT Ltd 2003; Dunlop *et al.* 2004; Hadley *et al.* 2006; Indecon International Economic Consultants 2009; Bakhshi and Throsby 2010; Barker and Wilson 2010). The focus on proving different impacts was seen by Belfiore (2003) and Belfiore and Bennett (2008) as failing to engage with the real purpose and aesthetic experience. Galloway (2009) explores this issue with evidence for social impact on the arts and points to the wider debate on research in general. She believes that positivist beliefs on the value of research are part of the issue with providing evidence for policy makers. More research would be beneficial in this area.

This leads us to one of the main debates within this sector regarding the ‘intrinsic’ and ‘instrumental’ values of the arts. Gray (2007) has suggested that intentions behind the policies – which have become increasingly ‘attached’ to wider outcomes – are important to whether they are understood. Local government has been the main instigator of policy ‘attachment’ strategies (Gray 2002). Short-term defensive local strategies have attached culture and the arts to diverse local policy outcomes (Gray 2004). The ‘attachment’ of policy expectations has meant

that cultural policies are to solve economic, social, political and even ideological problems in society (Gray 2007). New Labour's 'Third Way' presented the arts as merely a tool for fulfilling government objectives through their focus on social cohesion, social inclusion and urban regeneration (Selwood, 2002; West and Smith 2005). This drive to fulfil multiple agendas through the arts is really the heart of the 'instrumentality' debate within the sector. In the extreme debate around instrumentality of the arts – i.e. using the arts as a means to a specific end -, Belfiore and Bennett (2007) discussed social engineering. Bennett (1995) has pointed out the links between art and politics within this theory of "*governmentalisation of the arts*". Institutions, such as museums, are tools for advertising current political powers. In this way, instrumentality is not a new concept for the arts – rather it has been used as a powerful social weapon to achieve political ends throughout history (Belfiore and Bennett 2008: 147). However, it is impossible to view and research the arts as a singular entity that is not influenced by its context and politics. Instrumental policies to secure wide social goals are closely linked to debates on public value (Jancovich 2011: 271). For local authority museums in particular, workers are in a budget driven context that is integrated into worker activities.

Finally, museums have often been under political obligation to change under a very challenging funding environment. For example, 'Museums Galleries Scotland' (MGS 2006: 6) highlighted several funding issues from 2004/05 to 2005/06, when total expenditure on culture in Scotland dropped by more than £30.5m (6%). The 'CIPFA Ratings Review' also showed a drop of almost £7m in local authorities' spending on museums and galleries over the same period – a fall of 15%. There are also regional disparities, for example in 2004/05 it ranged from £26.83m in Glasgow to £0.47m in Argyll and Bute (MGS 2006: 6). Museum provision is very varied throughout the UK.

Conclusion

The different and contested understandings of culture and museums show that cultural practices need particular attention. The literature exposed varied and obscure meanings of what the museum is and what its role in society is. This is further complicated by its place in the cultural field, where the role of cultural services is contested.

The importance of social actors emphasises the need to address the gap in knowledge regarding cultural workers and their role in providing and fulfilling social expectations and links to social goals. The chapter demonstrated that museums are required to fulfil multiple social goals, such as social inclusion, quality of life and 'well-being'. At the same time they serve communities and play a role in generating a sense of belonging and identity. All of these objectives, however, are general, complex, vague, difficult to define and lack evidence. This thesis goes on to show how workers negotiate these complex social expectations and the opportunities and challenges they represent.

Chapter Three

Museum Policy and the Policy Process

Introduction

There is a lack of literature on the policy process and management strategies within museums services (Gray 2011). At the same time, actors at all levels can potentially influence and control choices and activities within museum services (Gray 2008). Therefore, this chapter focuses on devolution, museums policy and policy process literature so that they can later be explored in the findings. This section explores both cultural and social policies that relate to and impact museums in Scotland, England and Wales, so that later comparisons can be made between policy inputs and outcomes. Devolution for Northern Ireland has been fundamentally different than the rest of the UK and existing cultural policy is underdeveloped. For this reason Northern Ireland was left out of the comparative analysis in this thesis. Exploring both social and cultural policies concerning museums is important to the social role within museums, as cultural policies are seen to be the privileged terrain of those in authority (Miller and Yudice 2002), creating obvious tensions regarding policy aims and objectives. The policy process will then be explored with a focus on street-level bureaucracy. Cultural theory is then outlined as a way of understanding how different ground-level workers can view the systems they work within.

Cultural services and social policy

The last chapter showed the social expectations and outcomes that museums are expected to deliver. There has been an increasing 'commodification' of cultural policy, which provides the reasoning behind the increasing use of cultural policy to fulfil wider political aims (Gray 2000, 2002, 2007). This has resulted in the redesigning of the 'social role' of cultural policy and a shift from ideas around 'use-value' towards 'exchange-value' (Gray 2007: 207-208). Despite this 'ideological reorientation', social policy analysis has neglected museums as public services that deliver social policy outcomes. The welfare state has itself been remade, and language,

cultures and rhetoric have had a central and active part to play (Clarke and Newman 1997). Over the last ten years the discourse around the cultural sector has become much more focused on social policy and its links to the welfare state. For example, Tessa Jowell (the former UK minister for culture) advocated the value of culture and linked it to the welfare state:

“Sixty years ago Beveridge set this country a challenge: slaying the five giants of physical poverty... it is time to slay a sixth giant – the poverty of aspiration which compromises all our attempts to lift people out of physical poverty. Engagement with culture can help alleviate this poverty of aspiration” (Jowell 2004: 3).

Beveridge (1942) made no mention of the arts or culture in his report, but Bennett (1995) showed that the 1940s Labour party (led by Attlee) had seen culture as part of the welfare state project, and modestly supported arts and culture projects as part of the post-war settlement. Although all public services suffered in the Thatcher era, all political parties shared similar support to cultural policies, due to the importance central government had given to the national prestige of the country, the economic contribution of cultural services and the civilising mission of culture (Bennett, T 1995). It was not until the election of New Labour in 1997 and the renaming of the new Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) that the priorities of cultural services were placed so explicitly within a social policy agenda. The link between government rhetoric and social policy expectations are clear, but nothing is known about whether museums themselves have made this link within museums workers beliefs or practice.

For the UK in general, culture and museums have been part of the Home Office’s strategy for Great Britain to increase race equality and community cohesion. This strategy aimed to improve life chances, especially those of disadvantaged people, and *“without widespread social participation and a valuing of all local cultures, those from majority communities can also feel excluded or left behind by social change”*, to promote belonging, fairness and cohesion for an inclusive British society (Home Office 2005: 11). This was to be done by a more focused provision for disadvantaged groups, fostering economic growth, promoting the role of businesses, increasing community strength and improving public services (Home Office 2005). The Local Government Act (1999) also included proposals for the modernization of local

government, affecting the museum sector by committing local authority museums to long-term, forward looking local policies and to consulting the community (in Lawley 2003). The notion of economic development was built into New Labour policy for cultural services from 1999 (Oakley 2011:284). For local authorities this means:

“needing to pay attention to at least five different central government departments, four separate task forces, and ten ‘arm’s-length’ ‘sponsored agencies’, as well as at least ten statutory plans and non-statutory ones, alongside the local authority corporate strategy, best value plan, [and] individual service strategies and plans, and more or less anything else up to and including the planning kitchen sink” (Gray 2004: 39-40).

Gray (2006) showed that further challenges for the cultural sector include the absence of a clearly defined arena of action and lack of political significance for the cultural policy sector. The fragmentation and geographical scale of the cultural sector has developed policy that is more proactive than reactive (Gray 2006). This shows that the cultural sector has some very specific challenges, compared to others in the UK. Policies within the museums sector are unique, wide, varied and very fragmented. Cultural sector policy also has serious difficulties in definition, causality, attribution and measurement (Gray 2009). This leads to government policy being seen as at a discourse level rather than an operational one (Gray 2006). Joined-up approaches to overcome this are then limited in practice (Gray 2004), but museums in particular suffer from fragmented administrations and managerial regimes (Gray 2008). This reinforces the argument that museums are worthy of more analysis in regards to the policy process.

Cultural and social policy analysis

Generally cultural policy refers to *“the institutional supports that channel both aesthetic creativity and collective ways of life”* (Miller and Yudice 2002: 1), and has historically been created within an ‘arms-length principle’ from state control (Boylan 1988). McGuigan (1996: 1) has an inclusive definition of cultural policy, stating that it is about *“politics of culture in the most general sense: it is about the clash of ideas, institutional struggles and power relations in the production*

and circulation of symbolic meanings". Although research into cultural policy has a long academic history, it is only recently there has been an interest in the 'cultural industries' (or the less economically centred creative industries), which was tied to the rise of 'mass culture' and increased government attention (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). The cultural/creative industries only really came to the attention of national and local policy making after 1985 (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005), making it quite a young policy area. Scullion and Garcia (2005) recorded the fragmentation and lack of cohesion in the cultural policy field, with many competing institutional, social, political and cultural needs. Cultural policies' main concern is the systematic, regulatory guides to action that are adopted by organisations to achieve their goals, focused on regulating creative people in particular (Miller and Yudice 2002: 1).

There are ongoing definitional, statistical and conceptual problems with cultural policy (discussed in Galloway and Dunlop 2007). For example, all industries may class themselves as cultural due to the flexibility of the term already seen (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). Importantly Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005: 7) gave the assumptions, underlying cultural policy, and noticed that cultural industries often have difficulty operating when culture is assumed to be a pure public good that can be determined by experts. There is also an assumed rejection of market mechanisms, as culture is 'good for the soul' and that exposure to 'culture' has a 'civilising effect'. It is this historical 'arms length principle' (Boylan 1988: 116) that sets the context for the social role of museums and highlights the potential resentment in the sector against increased ministerial control. Central government have never been in the position to direct policy at the local or professional level (Boylan 1988). Despite more recent interest in the cultural industries, very little policy has yet to be developed, even at the local level (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). What has created more attention is the application of governmental social and economic policy in relation to cultural services.

Linking culture and social policies is still a relatively rare form of analysis in the social sciences. The affects of culture (in the broadest sense) on social policy, and social policy on culture, is explored at a societal level by Baldock (1999), van Oorschot (2007) and Pfau-Effinger (2005). Social policy analysis has tended to ignore wider culture as a source and context for social

policy (Baldock 1999). Baldock (1999: 460) argued that culture cannot become a foundation or a context for welfare reform as “*there is no direct link between culture and state welfare systems. There is no literature on how a nation’s culture leads to particular forms of welfare because there is no causal link*”. Indeed, welfare services have been established in opposition to a nations’ culture, with many welfare implementation studies arguing that local, institutional or professional cultures have undermined policy intentions (Baldock 1999). Van Oorchot (2007) also pointed out the underdeveloped field of cultural analysis within social policy, even though there has been increased attention due to social, economic and academic trends. One of the more interesting trends is the increased attention to culture in relation to new interests surrounding poverty and morals.

Working from a different perspective, Pfau-Effinger (2005), when looking at the relationship between culture and welfare state policies, discussed how they could be analysed comparatively. Pfau-Effinger’s (2005: 5) noted that culture can modify both policy and the behaviour of individuals or groups. Culture, then, is a relevant and important part of social policy analysis. Cahill (1994) extended this on services such as leisure, shopping and culture. Coalter (1989, 1996) also focused his analysis to leisure services. What makes the current context even more interesting in the UK is the context of devolution, explored below.

Museums, devolution and policy directions

After the election of New Labour in 1997, devolution became a reality in the UK. This has involved the process of the vertical transfer of powers and autonomy to smaller, territorial based regions or nations (Keating and McEwan 2006). Devolution was something that respected the different national histories of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and was developed to preserve ‘Britishness’ and improve institutional arrangements, democracy and public policy (Gamble 2006). Devolution has opened the scope for innovative policies, with each part of the UK introducing new and diverging policies, such as free care for the elderly (Scotland) and creation of a Children’s commissioner (Wales) (ESRC 2006). This chapter outlines the impact of devolution for Scotland, England and Wales and summarises the structure within each. The literature justified the need for comparative analysis in a country, where previously all policy was

centralised at UK level. The chapter aims to introduce the key literature in the field and contrast cultural policy within Scotland, England and Wales to assess the extent of policy divergence and highlight the need for further analysis on the impact of devolution.

Comparative analysis within different devolved nations in the UK is still limited, though with notable examples such as Hazell (2003), Trench (2008) and the ESRC (2006) report 'Devolution and Constitutional Change'. Keating and McEwan (2006: *ibid*) observed that

“there is a surprising lack of work on the effects of devolution to regions and nations on the policy process, policy substance and policy outcomes; there is little comparative work on the performance of regional governments”.

Although limited, there have been some specific analysis such as Greer (2006) on health and Keating (2006) on education, but there is no UK comparative study regarding cultural policies. One reason for the lack of development within social policy in the cultural areas, may be due to the devolved parliaments operating on an "arm's length" basis, through a number of 'Non-Departmental Public Bodies' (NDPBs) that are responsible for arts, sport, film and heritage in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Council of Europe 2008). There are also inherent difficulties in comparative analysis of cultural policy (Gray 2010).

Interestingly, in the UK, *“devolution so far has been a project more of participation than of policy. It has worked as an exercise in inclusion and democratic renewal”* (Jeffrey 2006: 70). Devolution has been asymmetrical, with primary legislation powers given to Scotland, secondary legislative powers to Wales and a varying settlement with Northern Ireland due to the relative turbulence of the different political factions. Jeffrey (2006) stated that Northern Ireland is very different to the rest of the UK. The devolvement of the Northern Ireland Assembly has had a different history and progress compared to the Scottish and Welsh devolved parliaments. Local authorities have been stripped of many of their functions in Northern Ireland and do not hold the same powers over museums, leisure and recreation as Scottish, English and Welsh local authorities hold (Jeffrey 2006). These are further reasons for Northern Ireland being left out of this analysis. Different nations have implemented different governance systems and

shown different commitments to UK-wide initiatives, which has been described as visionary for Scotland, precautionary for Wales and constrained for Northern Ireland (Cooke and Clifton 2005). There is evidence that further policy divergence will happen in the future due to the separation of powers between reserved and devolved functions, weakly institutionalised intergovernmental coordination and the permissive financial settlement underpinning devolution (ESRC 2006). The following section takes Scotland, England and Wales in turn to discuss the potential policy divergence and the impact of devolution.

The interesting governance issues between Scotland, England and Wales include that departments within each country are not wholly independent, not equal in influence, resources and policy making power. Furthermore, the systems are not parallel within each country as they each have a network of institutions with different regulations and various local administrations. Pierre and Peters (2000) identified that decreasing trust in the state and the increase in more participatory forms of governance mean that the state and society are bonded together in the process of creating governance. State power has become decentralised to regions, cities, communities and outwards to institutions, operating under the discretion of the state (Pierre and Peters 2000). Thus there exist multi-levels of governance for exploration in the cultural sector. Research from Harris (2006: 19) showed that, through a series of qualitative interviews with practitioners, these multi-levels of governance can create difficulties and disparities between regions in the cultural industries, with quotes indicating that:

“fragmented governance of museums... has limited influence on policy and therefore starts at a low baseline in terms of developing a more integrated approach to services... There is little ‘buy in’ from the local authorities”.

Harris (2006) mentioned that without more understanding, and establishment of a communications framework, the sector is unlikely to fulfil the government’s localism agenda. New Labour’s localism agenda has been fundamental in driving the political idea that local government should have more power to implement policy and delivery. Harris (2006) has shown the gaps in provision, but little is known about how cultural services cope and adapt to changing processes, structures, power relations and expectations from different policy-makers and

regions. The difficulty in comparing the UK nations includes that differences between them can be quite small and there is a lack of comparable data and research between countries (Raffe *et al.* 1999). This is outweighed by the other benefits such as the relative ease of access for those in the UK and the potential for policy learning that comparative analysis can bring (Raffe *et al.* 1999). For this research in particular, UK comparison can “*exemplify that ambiguity of societal boundaries*” (Raffe *et al.* 1999). Within a study that looks to understand cultural concepts and policy precincts in the UK, a comparative approach is justified. Although Raffe *et al.* (1999) had a specific focus on education; these points apply to other services, including cultural services, and justify a comparison between Scotland, England and Wales.

Scotland

Scotland has been granted more financial autonomy and powers than any other of the sub-state parliaments in Europe (ESRC 2006). The Scottish Parliament has had to build up new policy-making capacity, which is reliant on agencies and external organisations for impact and support (ESRC 2005b). The Scotland Act (1998) also gave power over local authorities to the Scottish Parliament with the explicit commitment that it would respect the role of local government to try and increase the trust between local and central government. In 2007 the Scottish National Party (SNP) formed a minority government and then in 2011 a majority government. Their agenda of independence may diverge Scottish policy even further from the rest of the UK.

Policy divergence

There has been significant policy innovation since devolution in Scotland, with 94 acts passed between 1999 and 2006, although it must be remembered that Scotland has always shown policy divergence compared to the rest of the UK (ESRC 2006; Parry 2002). Scottish policies have also been more inclined to be more socialistic, collectivistic and egalitarian than English policies (ESRC 2005b). The tendency in Scotland to advocate more public service provision and redistribution is often linked to the differing class structures in Scotland to England, with a higher proportion of working class than Scotland (although, it must be remembered that Scottish people are more likely to identify themselves as working class people regardless of occupation)

(Keating 2005). Evidence of this includes the Scottish focus on inclusion and fighting barriers to inclusion, rather than England's focus on exclusion and using targets, under the general UK agenda of increasing access and tackling social exclusion (Keating 2005). Little is known of whether Scotland's tendency towards social democratic ideals is reflected in cultural services.

On the other hand, Keating (2005) has shown where Scottish policy has uniformity to England and Wales. Until 2005 policy divergence itself has been more in line with a failure to follow the English example, rather than pioneering new ideas (ESRC 2005b). Mooney and Poole (2004) offered a critical analysis of what they perceive as the constructed view of Scotland as "*a land of milk and honey*". They argue that Scottish distinctiveness is in fact limited and that a specific Scottish social policy is yet to emerge. Parry (2002) concluded along similar lines in that the full potential of devolution has been constrained because of a need for compatibility with the old Scottish Office, Whitehall and the civil service. Also, Mooney and Poole (2004) ascertained that the claim that Scotland has more left-wing preferences may be over emphasised, given that Scotland simply has more party choice. Also Scotland is not one homogenous collective group, with marked geographical divisions (Mooney and Poole 2004). This is shown by many things, the most potent being that it has not been any more successful than England in tackling poverty levels, bad health, educational gaps and bad housing (Mooney and Poole 2004). The point to remember is that language, policy and institutional differences do not reflect the different underlying social relations in Scotland, England and Wales.

Scottish cultural strategy

Powers over cultural policy were given to the Scottish Parliament along with the relevant powers of heritage funds and object loans etc. (see for example the National Heritage Act 1980). This ended the "double arms length" style of governance in Scotland (Galloway and Jones 2010). There is evidence that they have already enacted these powers, for example the 'National Galleries of Scotland Act 2003', which granted a part of Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh to the National Galleries. There is also a specific 'Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture' committee, which is one of the 17 committees that are "*at the heart of the Parliamentary process*", for law-making, policy reviewing and providing a framework for establishing

accountability (Scottish Executive 2001). These committees have been active in forming a new culture bill that made 'Creative Scotland' from the 'Scottish Arts Council' and 'Scottish Screen' (Scottish Executive 2006a).

The Scottish Executive (Scottish Labour and Liberal Democrat coalition 1999-2007) was quick to outline their vision of Scottish culture primarily within 'The National Cultural Strategy' (Scottish Executive 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) and 'Scotland's Culture' (Scottish Executive 2006b), which was the Scottish Executive's response to the cultural consultation that had been going on within Scottish cultural institutions since 2003. Building on these lines, the Scottish Executive was committed to linking culture to actions of social inclusion, where:

“arts, sports and leisure activities also have a role to play in countering social exclusion. They can help to increase the self-esteem of individuals; build community spirit; increase social interaction; improve health and fitness; create employment; and give young people a purposeful activity, reducing the temptation to anti-social behaviour” (Scottish Office 1999: 4.34).

As well as the Scottish Executive's cultural visions, the Scottish Government (the SNP minority government elected in 2007) aimed *“to encourage the widest possible participation in a vigorous and diverse cultural life, bringing real benefits for communities and individuals”* (Scottish Government 2008). This has a much more economic focus, trying to widen access and maximise the potential contribution of culture to the Scottish economy. The cultural sector and cultural services are now part of an integrated economic strategy that encompasses all public services in attaining the purpose *“to focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”* (Scottish Government 2007a:vii). The economic strategy (Scottish Government 2007b) is classified into five strategic objectives including a wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger, and greener Scotland (see appendix A and B). To tackle this, the SNP have given fifteen national outcomes and forty-five national indicators, which local governments must fulfil. These include to *“improve people's perceptions, attitudes and awareness of Scotland's reputation”* and *“improve the state of Scotland's Historic Buildings,*

monuments and environment" (Scottish Government 2007a). These were reported by local government through Single Outcome Agreements (SOA's) (for more details see Park and Kerley 2011).

This strategic vision is different to the previous administrations, but its impact on cultural institutions in Scotland has yet to be recorded. The Scottish Government's (2008b: 5) proposed cultural strategy fully integrates the functions of cultural services with other public institutions, as "*many of those responsible for delivering wider public services have discovered the benefits of working with, and through, creative and cultural activity*". The 'Culture' document, published by the Scottish Government, sits in conjunction to the 'Single Outcome Agreements' that have been constituted as targets for local governments. This 'outcome focus' is "*the ambition to see Scotland's public services working together, and with private and voluntary sector partners, to improve the quality of life and opportunities in life for people across Scotland*" for a fairer, accountable, reflective and community based public service (Scottish Government 2008c: 1). The 'Culture' document lists the national outcomes and how culture can contribute, in a mostly instrumental way, to social, economic and political challenges as well as community and individual 'well-being', with a central role for local authorities in ensuring this provision (Scottish Government 2008b). The Scottish strategy is still relatively new, with further advice still in draft form (Scottish Government 2009a/b). The main points include the economic and instrumental focus of the role of culture, the focus on individual 'well-being' and the integration of cultural services with all other local government public services.

Current Scottish policy can also be created and delivered by 'Museums Galleries Scotland' (MGS, formerly Scottish Museums Council) and 'Creative Scotland'. MGS is the lead body for advocating best practice, funding and development for 340 museums in Scotland. 'Creative Scotland' is responsible for the arts and Scottish Screen and has published reports on a variety of topics including participation, cultural value and health (Scottish Arts Council 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009). 'National Museums Scotland' (NMS) is a charitable body, responsible for fieldwork, research, local, national and international collaboration within Scotland's six national museums. MGS (2000, 2003) had an early focus of social justice and learning, showing how

museums could work for their whole communities through partnerships, audience development, promoting social change and creating sustainability. This is illustrated not by strategy but by a series of case studies of good practice, including advice on governance and management (MGS 2008d). The national audit (MGS 2002) highlighted the range of issues relating to the social inclusion strategy - including funding, resources and training needs - with a consultative action plan. More recently, focus has been on increasing access (MGS 2008a, 2008b for example). The three-year MGS (2008c) corporate plan and governance advice (MGS 2008d) outlined how Scottish Museums can fulfil the SNP's vision for Scotland, while fulfilling MGS priorities of reviewing, consolidating and accreditation (see appendix B). The instrumental nature of Scottish policy is very clear for public service provision.

England

The size and importance of England will always make it a dominant partner to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a population never less than 60% of the total for the UK (Gamble 2006). The 'English masses' show little concern about devolution in Scotland and Wales and show no demand for it themselves (Hazell 2006: 39). Public attitudes remain with maintaining the status-quo (ESRC 2006). What England has instead is a mix of government offices, regional development agencies (RDAs) and regional chambers that (aside from London) form regionalised administrations able to localise Whitehall policies, similar to the functions of the Scottish Parliament and WAG (ESRC 2006). However, ESRC (2006) research showed that these mechanisms lack democratic accountability, confuse policy delivery and create a complex and ineffective set of government mechanisms.

English cultural policy

In England there has been an emphasis on "*a new, inclusive style of politics*" (Jeffrey 2006: 59). Cultural policy is more developed in comparison to the other devolved parliaments. The 'Department of Culture, Media and Sport' (DCMS) was renamed and refocused almost immediately, when New Labour came into power in 1997, with the aim "*to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and*

champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries" (DCMS 2006). The DCMS is the main funder and governor for broadcasting, the arts, for alcohol and entertainment, the creative industries, cultural property, the historic environment, libraries, and museums and art galleries (DCMS 2000, 2001, 2004, 2007a/b, 2008a/b, 2009, 2010a/b, 2011). While the devolved parliaments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are still establishing and setting out their cultural policy, the DCMS had a plan for museums and social change (DCMS 2000). The plan for the next decade included fostering, exploring, celebrating and questioning the identities of diverse communities, and increase partnership with other institutions (DCMS 2006, see appendix F). More recently, the 'guiding compass' for museums has been identified as democracy, which, for the government is about debate, dialogue, deliberation and what the public genuinely values (DCMS 2008a: 2).

Similarly to Scotland, the DCMS has had a strong social inclusion focus, linking institutions with social objectives from the beginning of its establishment. For example, 'Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries, Archives for All' (DCMS 2000: 21) offered strategic policy guidance for government funded and local authority museums for tackling social exclusion, including identifying people who are socially excluded, engaging them and establishing their needs, assessing current practice, developing objectives and prioritising work on social exclusion. A further study (DCMS 2007: 11) found that many museums in England had adopted clear social inclusion targets, museum staff were actively trying to break barriers to inclusion and had a focus on community cohesion. English cultural services have the most developed literature regarding their systems, policy, policy implementation and social role, making it an important and central element in a comparative analysis with the less developed cultural policies in Scotland and Wales.

The DCMS work with Arts Council England (ACE) who also have established policies around the arts in helping with regeneration, health, crime and promoting opportunities for young people (Arts Council England 2005a/b, 2006, 2007a/b, 2009, Bragg 2010). The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in England also worked with the DCMS, local government

and other agencies in the museums sector². They were funded by central government and had responsibility for creating policy guidance, improving communities, promoting best practice and excellence and advising local government (MLA 2008c). The MLA (2008a) strategic priorities include increasing opportunities for learning new skills, improving the workforce, collections, services, funding and partnerships, and ensuring that communities are inclusive, particularly for young people. This also includes championing access for all, expert management and transforming working practices, and promoting a performance culture (MLA 2008a). Since 2002 the MLA have focused on education, community development, learning and economic regeneration through the 'Renaissance' project, making museums "*great centres for life and learning*" (MLA 2008b). 'Renaissance' in the Regions was a large policy investment to decentralise funding to regional museums, and has had a large impact within different areas of England. Renaissance is a central government policy that encouraged the creation of area marketing teams within the regions, having identified marketing as a general weakness in the sector. They estimated that the economic savings of this marketing investment would be in efficiency savings (expected 3 per cent per annum), increased income (up to 20 per cent in year 3) and local-governing-body contribution (Renaissance in the Regions, MLA 2001). One of their key future recommendations was to make more connections between museum services and education, crime and health to help services with Local Area Agreements (MLA 2009: 32).

Being a partner in local governance, the MLA policy publications have shown the policy context in the museum sector as being based on civil renewal, community cohesion and localism and governance (Harris 2006: 3-6). Museums have had a large role to play in the English localism agenda as civic intermediaries, and the element of trust between the public realm and public services needs to be given consideration (Harris 2006). MLA policy indicated a growing social, economic and political role for museums in the community, and encouraged the adoption of purpose within these institutions to provide a social space for civic involvement and cohesion. Cultural services were established to be in a unique position, with unique resources, to fulfil these aims, compared to other public services.

² Museums, Libraries Archives had a strong policy influence over English museums services, especially through the Renaissance project. In 2010 the MLA was merged with Arts Council England but remained the main museums council for English museums through the fieldwork period.

Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has been described as a 'paler' version of the Scottish devolution agreement, with power over only secondary legislation (Jeffrey 2006). Despite this, the Welsh Assembly has power over aspects of health, education, local government and culture (WAG 2008). Wales has also, like Scotland, shown a more socialist trend towards service provision and traditional social democratic values compared to England (Keating 2005). There is also an increasing pressure to award more devolution powers, such as they have in the Scottish Parliament, over legislative and taxation issues (ESRC 2006). Different to Scotland, the new policy making system seems to be particularly targets-driven (Cooke 2004). In general the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has resisted the focus on access, 'choice', performance targets and league tables, preferring the old Labour values of universalism (ESRC 2006). The impact of these similarities between Scotland and Wales on cultural policy and its inherent services has yet to be analysed.

A cultural strategy for Wales

For culture in particular, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) was given devolved powers over all cultural aspects to the Welsh Assembly. This included museums, art galleries, libraries, buildings of historical or architectural interest, or other places of historical interest, the Welsh language and arts, crafts, sport and other cultural or recreational activities in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has no specific legislation yet for culture, but they have published their policy for the culture and cultural institutions of Wales. 'Creative Future – A Cultural Strategy for Wales' (WAG 2002: 5) outlined where WAG stood and then stated the commitment of delegating cultural development to local government. They have also had a strong social inclusion and social justice theme integrated throughout Welsh services, including culture (WAG 2003a/b/c, 2004, 2005, 2006).

The new coalition between Labour Party Wales and Plaid Cymru following the 2007 election resulted, very similarly to Scotland, in some specific strategic directives for Wales (see appendix C). These priority areas are underlined by a commitment to the improvement of local services

and a review of governance structures to make all services more efficient and citizen-centred (WAG 2007). The programme of government (WAG 2007: 26) also contains promoting equality, enhancing citizenship and community cohesion, regenerating communities, tackling child poverty and ensuring an effective youth and criminal justice system.

Unlike the Scottish and English central policies, culture is indeed mentioned in the Welsh government's plan through a tourist capacity, using culture to promote external markets (WAG 2007). A further promise included promoting arts and culture, with one interesting objective in stating that "*we will place a statutory obligation on local authorities to promote culture and encourage partnership to deliver high-quality cultural experiences for their communities*" (WAG 2007: 35).

The link between partnership and participation is further strengthened by the added obligations set out in the Welsh devolution agreement, including to "*promote and foster local government in Wales... new partnership founded on mutual trust... emphasis on local decisions for local people*" (Welsh Office 1997: 15). Within the powers they have, certain policy divergence and innovation can be seen promoting an individual culture strategy for Wales. This could affect museums and other cultural services within their jurisdiction. How cultural services in Wales have implemented policies within these structural and legislative constraints, compared to England and Scotland, is yet to be explored.

CyMAL, 'Museums Archives and Libraries Wales' is in fact a division of the Assembly Government, but conducts the same functions as the MLA and MGS. This includes advice and support to local museums, improving access, advice, providing funding and rendering research for the sector (WAG 2009). This makes the role of the 'Arts Council of Wales', created by Royal Charter in 1994, more important as a source of information and policy advice for developing, funding and promoting the arts that, although sponsored by the Assembly Government, has a degree of freedom. Their plan embraces priorities that are quite economic in nature, covering the creation of art, public engagement, growth in the arts economy, and growth and the development of business (see appendix D and E). The public engagement priority puts a focus on participation, audience development and the engagement of younger people (Arts Council of

Wales 2008). 'National Museum Wales' (NMW 2006), which is responsible for the seven national museums of Wales, is also a very influential body, often establishing best practice policies for local authority and independent museums. Thus the non-governmental influences in Wales are a little different from England and Scotland, which may impact on museum governance and delivery.

The illusion of policy divergence?

It has been argued that devolution is only an illusion, because there is no self-government and Westminster still holds the most important powers (Nairn 1999). Keating (2002: 11-14) claimed that the shared assumptions of the post-1945 welfare settlement, act as a hindrance and constraint to social policy divergence in the UK. The 1999 devolution of Scotland and Wales is a tactic from Westminster to be seen to decentralise power, while not giving away anything of importance (Parry 2002; Keating 2005; Wincott 2006; Mooney and Poole 2006; Gamble 2006). Indeed, Galloway and Jones (2010) have argued that Scotland enjoyed more autonomy before devolution and there has been more convergence in arts policy since 1999. The parallels between Scotland, England and Wales included a commitment to local autonomy, and are based in the notions of subsidiarity, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs (Jeffrey 2006). They also share a focus, although with different emphasis, to social inclusion policy in relation to cultural policies. Scotland, England and Wales also have a developed cultural strategy for museums and art galleries. Scotland and Wales have in general found that devolution has improved the relationships between local and central government compared to pre-1997 (Jeffrey 2006). Also, "*devolving systems of government will always bear traces of their origins in centralized states*" (Hazell 2006: *ibid*), which will help highlight the areas of divergence and making the countries similar enough to do detailed comparative analysis. These similarities and differences justify further analysis of Scotland, England and Wales in the area of cultural policy and social inclusion.

Finally, there is a lot of literature that suggests a dynamic future for UK devolution politics when different parties are elected, destroying the New Labour consensus that has kept policy equilibrium (ESRC 2006). This has now occurred in Scotland and Wales, but there is still little

academic literature in this field regarding the effect it has had. This debate is persuasive, but for cultural policy the devolved parliaments have wielded legislative and policy powers that may have an impact on cultural services already. This, with the structural and policy differences, justifies a comparative analysis to explore the changes taking place, and their impact on cultural policy and cultural services. There has also been demand (Newman 2002) for more focus on the policy process itself within social policy. The next section begins to explore the literature surrounding museums and the policy process.

The policy process and museums

The devolved policy framework in Scotland, England and Wales is only the first challenge to understanding the diverse policy process for museums. Leisure services hold an ambiguous position between individual choice, welfare provision and the market (Coalter 1990). Leisure services are seen to be under a mixed economy of welfare (Coalter 1998). The mixed economy of welfare includes state provision, public subsidy and regulation of welfare, where social needs are a central concern for social welfare institutions (Dwyer 2004). This mixed economy became dominated by market theory as in the 1980s there was a shift within policy direction regarding the management of leisure services from equality to choice within a free market – from local democracy to self-determination (Ravenscroft 1993). There are of course those who emphasise policy as structural relationships (Rhodes 1981; Marsh and Rhodes 1992; Marsh 1996), individual negotiation (Dowding 1995) and discourse (Hay 1995; Fairclough 2001). Museums, however, have never been central to this analysis.

Kawashima (1997: 20) has pointed out that museums have been left behind regarding the policy making process since the 1970s, when many museum departments merged into larger ones within local authorities. These merges were often economically motivated rather than politically (Gray 2000). This has distanced museum managers and directors from the decision making table, leading museums to create different forms of governance (Lawley 2003). Despite museums feeling distanced from policy and decision making processes, "*one important missing dimension in academic work has been an adequate analysis of the organisational forms and working practices associated with the cultural industries*", along with further analysis on policy

making and implementation in this area (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005: 9). Harris (2006: 17) noted that cultural services are having:

“concerns about the governance structures - getting them right, particularly in terms of demographic and administrative scale, and understanding responsibilities within them; as well as ensuring that value results from the effort put into partnerships”.

To explore this in more detail, the policy process along with top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy are considered later in this chapter. Furthermore, the cultural theory paradigms of hierarchies, individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism are explored. Thompson *et al.* (1990), Hood (2000) and Newman (2001) are particularly highlighted below, due to the comprehensive models they offer.

The policy making process itself is well documented by authors such as Jenkins (1978) and Hogwood and Gunn (1984). They argued that the policy process is a rational, linear process. Levin (1997) has pointed out that current ways of researching policy-making fail to capture the complex processes that are going on. Levin (1997: 51) demonstrated that the policy process can be mapped via a ‘power structure’, showing formal positions within the machinery of government and the links between institutions, actors and positions. To understand the making of social policy, documenting and identifying powers (formal, informal) and linkages (levers, obligations, and communications channels) is needed for insightful analysis (Levin 1997). Hill (1997) was careful to emphasise that the policy process does not only consist of stages, but includes political, bargaining, administrative and agenda setting processes. Hill (1997: 117) detailed different types of bargaining conducted through the policy process, which may see changes after negotiations with other groups and amendments from government and opposition members. Yanow (1987, 1996, 2000) has introduced the idea of a ‘policy culture’ and legitimizes the interpretivist approach to policy implementation. She has shown that symbols, metaphor, multiple understandings and language are important in understanding the policy implementation process. After all, there is a social choice behind all policy formulation and

decisions (Pappi and Henning 1998). Overall, however, policy implementation debates are dominated by 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches.

Another useful framework that deals with the influence of policy-makers beliefs is Le Grand's (1997) 'Knights, Knaves and Pawns'. He shows that assumptions behind the policy process has shifted from altruism (Knights), passive (Pawns) to self-interested (Knaves) motivations. In this respect quasi-markets and welfare systems are based on a particular view of what motivates people. This in turn affects how policy is made and attention must be paid to the motivations behind policy implementation (Le Grand 2003). Le Grand (2007) went further to point out a four-point model of government service delivery including 'trust, mistrust, voice and choice'. Le Grand's (2003) main point is that if any model of government is to be effective the assumptions behind it must be addressed. With Le Grand's (1997, 2003) interest in motivations behind policy-making there is also a 'renewed' interest in agency in the policy process (Wright 2012). Deacon (2004) in particular has identified varied strands of thought in which agency has become a more prominent focus than structure.

The top-down school believe that policy can be made and controlled from higher levels of policy making. The desirable outcome is to control the policy process and implementation. Street-level discretion is something to control with sanctions, performance measures, administration and management (Pressman and Wildavsky 1979; Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979; Linder and Peters 1987). Pressman and Wildavsky (1979) were the first advocates of 'top-down' analysis. This included looking at the setting of goals, the structural position of officials and an understanding of the sequence of events, where "*implementation is clearly defined in terms of a relationship towards policy as laid down in official documents*" (Hill and Hupe 2002: 44). Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) identified the characteristics of the top-down approach as being government focused, careful analysis of objectives and steering the system to achieve results. Kotler and Kotler (2000) also assumed that policy can be implemented in museums by setting clear goals and strategic planning. McShane (2007) has argued that top-down policy over the last 20 years has completely reshaped the collections of Australian museums. Top-

down policy writers assume that policy can be controlled and managed effectively within the governance system.

In contrast to this, bottom-up models place professionals as having a key role in the performance of a policy (Parsons 1995: 469). Lipsky (2010) argued that only a 'bottom-up' approach looking at 'street-level bureaucrats' provides an idea of implementation in reality. Street-level bureaucracies are "*hierarchical organisations in which substantial discretion lies with the line agents at the bottom of the hierarchy*" (Piore 2011: 146). Lipsky (2010) was the pioneer in challenging the top-down understanding of policy. He challenged the limited role of hierarchies and is often seen as a precursor to modern governance literature (Evans 2011). This was because top-down policy making is dependent on attacking professional powers in local authorities and ground-level actors (Newman and Clarke 1994). The top-down view ignores the role of the practitioner where:

"The practitioner allows himself [sic] to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation"
(Schön 1983[1991]: 68).

Schön's (1983[1991]) work has asked for more information about the more central role that practitioner's knowledge has within organisational practice. Those classed as professionals have always held an element of power (Terrance 1972). Professions have also had interesting tensions with the state which have changed over time and have a specific cultural context (MacDonald 1995). Implementation has been seen as an inherently political process with multiple exogenous influences (Pülzl and Treib 2007). Lipsky (2010) encouraged the exploration of other public services to facilitate further understanding of public-service workers. This is because:

“public policy is not best understood as made in legislatures or top-floor suites of high-ranking administrators, because in important ways it is actually made in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers” (Lipsky 1980: xii).

The next section explores the literature surrounding this idea and shows how a focus on workers was the most appropriate approach for this thesis.

Working from the bottom-up rather than top-down

The cultural sector in general has weak management, control and direction from the top-down (Gray 2006). This has led to complex and fragmented political control of museums and galleries that includes many different actors (Gray 2011). Due to this, it is important to gain experiences from the bottom-up in relation to policy, which has been a neglected area of analysis. Importantly, there also seems to be a wider implementation gap within Scotland and Wales than in England and this should be examined (Cairney 2009). Edleman (1971, 1977) has stressed the symbolic nature of policy from higher levels. It is at ground-level that action takes place. It is important to look at how workers are agents in the policy process, how they understand practice through their beliefs and attitudes to the process (Spillane *et al.* 2002: 386). Actions as well as decisions must be the proper focus of policy analysis (Hill 1997). Indeed Gray (2008: 217-8) has advocated the need for a bottom-up view in this sector:

“The development of instrumental tendencies within the museums and galleries sector (as with cultural policy in general) is not simply a matter of deliberate, top-down, central government action. The role of endogenous factors, including internal sectoral changes, working from the bottom-up is of some significance to explaining this phenomenon – particularly as central government does not have the power to directly control, in a managerial sense, what takes place within the sector”

As central government cannot control the cultural sector it is necessary to then focus on the actors who implement policy at ground-level. Writers such as Lipsky (1980), Elmore (1980), Hjern (1982) and Hjern and Hull (1982) saw these ground-level relationships as central to policy

implementation. Policy is understood through “*the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, [which] effectively become the policies they carry out*” (Lipsky 1980: xii, *original emphasis*). What Lipsky fundamentally highlights are areas of potential tension within public services (or street-level bureaucracies).

Street-level bureaucracies are very similar to museum services where performance of policy goals is nearly always impossible to measure (Lipsky 1977, 1993, 2010). Also, resources (or lack of) are usually the main tension within public services (Lipsky 2010). Furthermore, role ambiguity and conflicting goals are factors within street-level workers jobs that can lead to higher degrees of stress (Lipsky 2010). Ergo, Lipsky gave us key issues that must be explored within public service organisations and can be applied to museum services. Piore (2011) showed that street-level bureaucracy tools should be expanded to other areas of public sector management. Lipsky and Smith (1990) also later applied their analysis to non-profit organisations, funded by the government, which included community groups and neighbourhood services that met public needs. This section does this by exploring professionalism of workers, discretion, coping mechanisms and accountability.

Street-level workers and professionalism

The street-level bureaucrat is a public employee who interacts consistently with the public and works in a bureaucratic setting but retains independence in their job (Lipsky 1976). There are many contradictory portrayals of street-level workers (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003). Maynard-Moody *et al.* (2003:23) identified that workers do not necessarily see themselves as ‘street-level’ workers. They view themselves more as public workers, with the interaction between themselves and the public as key to their roles. Through their day to day activities workers produce policy as the public see it (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003). They call for more research regarding their contribution to their organisational contexts.

The context for social workers includes ambiguous policy expectations, lack of resources and demand for support (Ellis *et al.* 1999), which is very similar to those conditions experienced by

cultural workers. Street-level workers often experience inadequate resources, a demand for services that outstrips supply and ambiguous goal expectations (Lipsky 2010: 27). Furthermore, street-level workers:

“believe themselves to be doing the best they can under adverse circumstances, and they develop techniques to salvage service and decision-making values within the limits imposed upon them by the structure of the work” (Lipsky 2010: xiii).

Lipsky (2010) also emphasised the generic characteristics of street-level workers who are often restricted the use to those with particular skills. Evans (2011) offered a critique of street-level bureaucracy, maintaining that Lipsky gave insufficient time to the role of the professional. Halliday *et al.* (2009) concurred with this, when looking at street-level bureaucrats from a criminal justice perspective. They argued that inter-professional relations influence the character of street-level behaviour at ground-level. Workers often felt undervalued, and employed behaviours that made them seek value in their work. Front-line professionals were often subject to a lot of “*status anxiety*” (Halliday *et al.* 2009). This is because professional judgements are delegitimized by the priorities of budgets and resource restraint (Ellis *et al.* 1999).

Clarke and Newman (1997) showed that relations may occur between ‘old’ professionals and ‘new’ managerial roles/identities, which are worth detailed analysis in order to understand power better. Clarke and Newman (1997: 4-5) also demonstrated that the two ways of coordination, bureaucratic administration and professionalism within the organisational settlement in the welfare state, institutionalised the idea of public service, which is “*a set of values, a code of behaviours and forms of practice*”. Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005) pointed out that power relations in the field of cultural policy and cultural industries is often disguised or overlooked due to idealism. There remains a gap in knowledge regarding the power roles and relations, values and behaviours of cultural workers.

Maynard-Moody *et al.* (2003:8) noted that “*street-level work is, ironically, rule saturated but not rule bound*”. This is particularly the case for cultural workers. Although there is a level of top-

down policy influence, social generic outcomes and performance indicators are difficult to monitor. Lack of effective evaluation at ground-level effectively negates the importance of implementing organisational rules. It can be argued that ground-level workers are immune to policy directives and organisational incentives, and instead are influenced mainly by individual interest, professional norms and processes constructed at ground-level (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003: 156). Vincent and Crothers (2008) even went beyond that, to call for front-line workers to be 'street-level leaders', who can ultimately help define what it means to be a citizen.

Management

The relationship between workers and managers is of central importance in understanding policy implementation, because it is not only a reciprocal relationship, but also one of conflict. This confliction and reciprocal relationship then forces us to question the 'top-down' flow of authority from managers to workers. Implementation analysis must focus on the understandings, working conditions and priorities of those delivering the policies at ground-level. Lipsky (2010) described two characteristics of the manager and worker relationship. Firstly, he noted that the relationship is fundamentally conflictual, with different goals, objectives and outcomes. Secondly, managers and workers are equally dependant on each other with the existence of a reciprocal relationship. Managers and workers have different job priorities in general and very likely "*have more than minimal differences*" (Lipsky 2010: 18). Furthermore, workers can see managers as legitimate in one sense, but can consider policy objectives as illegitimate (Lipsky 2010). Managers are performance orientated, while ground-level workers are consistently trying to keep and expand their autonomy (Lipsky 2010).

Efforts to control street-level workers often lead to the relationship between workers and management to be fragmented. This has then enhanced issues around accountability (Lipsky 2010). It is important to note that for Lipsky, discretion comes from this conflict between managers and workers. It is about workers fighting against managerial control. Evans (2011) pointed out that this idea needs to be augmented. Discretion is much wider than this, with professional motivations linked to delivery, day-to-day function and levels of freedom. The level of professional status has an impact on managerial relationships and discretion. In his case

study, Evans (2011) noted that often local managers and workers had similar professional commitments. Where managers were criticised was regarding aspects of cost-cutting and performance targets.

For Evans (2011) the relationship between workers and management was central to understanding discretion. In his qualitative study, he interviewed managers and workers and found that the issues that they had influenced the nature of discretion. Lipsky (2010) treated managers as a homogenous group. Evans (2011) pointed out that this is not the case. Exworthy and Halford (1999) indicated that professional and managerial roles are often very blurred. There are multiple layers of management, and loyalties are not necessarily those of higher-up political expectations.

Gray (2006) suggested that the cultural sector in particular is difficult to manage. There is an absence of governmental concern over the viability of managing cultural measurements in policy (Gray 2006). Compared to other government services, culture poses the most challenges (Craik 1996, 2005; Craik *et al.* 2003). The literature showed that understanding the relationship between workers and management is important, for comprehending what occurs within ground-level services. It also shows that discretion is of central importance, which is now explored below.

Discretion

Workers' roles must have high levels of discretion and relative decision making powers (Lipsky 2010). This is because those labelled as professionals are seen to exercise discretionary judgement in their fields. Decisions involve tackling elements of uncertainty and constraint in organisations (McGraw and Wilson 1982). For Lipsky, discretion at the front-line was the ability to use status and professionalism to implement policy according to street-level workers values and understandings. Taylor and Kelly (2006) have argued that this type of discretion is not applicable anymore to front-level workers. Instead they offered three different types of discretion that include rules, values and task discretion (Taylor and Kelly 2006). Rule discretion is bounded by legal, fiscal or organisational constraints, while value discretion is driven by

fairness, justice and professional codes. Lastly, task discretion is the ability by workers to fulfil complex activities (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 631).

Overall, discretion is generally seen as the worker's freedom to work and make decisions (Evans 2010). This means that discretion depends first and foremost on the preferences of the individual (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003: 156). Gray (2007: 205) also emphasised the importance of the intentions behind policy. This is important when looking at evidence at ground-level. The findings later focus on how cultural workers have discretion over the direction of services, making their role in delivering becoming 'attached' to outcomes of central importance.

Maynard-Moody *et al.*'s. (1990) research reinforced Lipsky's (1980) findings that discretion is common and important in public services. Maynard-Moody *et al.* (1990) argued that ground-level workers with more discretion, conduct policy implementation more successfully than those with less. They compared two different American organisations, which were implementing the same social policy around community corrections. They reasoned that street-level influence over policy implementation is much more positive, when workers are engaged rather than muted. Employers miss out on innovative and practical ideas due to the lack of authority given to those at ground-level. Workers' ideas are often ignored by higher-level policy-makers. In their comparison of services, Maynard-Moody *et al.* (1990: 838) found that giving workers more freedom to change services and make decisions resulted in organisational change being viewed as beyond simple lip-service. They conclude that "*empowering street-level workers takes advantage of their experience and street-wisdom*" (Maynard-Moody *et al.* 1990: 845). Only when increased discretion was given at ground-level, was policy implementation seen as more successful. Upper-level influence, therefore, had no discernible impact on successful policy implementation. This is important, because evidence of the ability to politically control frontline staff is, at best, minimal (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003). The literature, therefore, emphasises the importance of ground-level workers experiences of policy in the pursuit of understanding street-level services.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that Lipsky (1980) did not advocate discretion in street-level workers, which is often overlooked in the literature (Taylor and Kelly 2006). Street-level bureaucrats could operate with less ambivalence, and *“if appropriate performance measures were available street-level bureaucrats could be made more accountable for their behaviour”* (Lipsky 2010: 199). Meyers *et al.* (1998) observed very little *“positive discretion”*. The workers they observed within front-line welfare services, used routine and standardised methods of interacting with clients. Resource, time and formalised job description constraints, were effective at limiting random use of discretion. Overall evidence of workers promoting policy objectives were very rare and led to unequal treatment of clients (Meyers *et al.* 1998: 15). More recently in her study of UK welfare reform, Wright (2003) showed the diverse ways that different groups of clients are treated by street-level workers. Often street-level workers used their own ideals and values to judge and categorise users. Fletcher (2011) also showed how front-line workers actions could disadvantage groups, seeking Jobseekers Allowance. The service provided to users varied considerably within different local authority areas. Ellis *et al.* (1999) in their study of front-line social workers also pointed out that, due to the diversity of front-line services, studying from the bottom and up can only give part of the picture as regards to discretion.

A final part of worker discretion involves clients and users. Taylor and Kelly (2006: 638) pointed out that discretion can be influenced by users and community groups. They go further to state:

“the extent to which bottom-up pressure has impacted upon street-level discretion depends in part upon the knowledge of users about the service being offered and also upon the professional’s knowledge of how to make the best use of consumer involvement” (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 638).

Thus discretion is an important aspect of looking at street-level workers, but it is influenced by organisation structure, policy expectations and user involvement.

Coping mechanisms

Street level workers typically have large case loads relative to their responsibilities. Often workers are expected to perform their jobs under ambiguous and contradictory expectations (Lipsky 1979). Front-line workers can struggle to fulfil their mandated responsibilities with such case loads (Lipsky 2010: 29). In his study of social workers, Jones (2001) noted that stress from the top-down had led many workers to tears. This can lead to 'survival mechanisms' being used (Ham and Hill 1984: 140) and these can include subverting policy and rationing services (Lipsky 2010). This can have negative consequences such as displacement for workers and undermining of policy goals (Lipsky 2010). Due to this, workers begin to develop coping mechanisms to control and manage their workloads. These coping mechanisms reflect:

“compromises in work habits and attitudes... reflecting workers’ greater maturity, their appreciation of practical and political realities, or their more realistic assessment of the nature of the problem” (Lipsky 2010: xiii).

The amount of discretion afforded at the ground-level, then shapes the coping mechanisms that can be employed.

In order to cope with resource restraints, Howe (1985) observed that staff applied categories and 'deserving' and 'undeserving' to social security claimants. After three months observation in a social security office in Northern Ireland, she concluded that staff used beliefs and practices to manage their workloads and this influenced how different claimants were viewed and as such treated.

Halliday *et al.* (2009) noted that coping mechanisms are indeed widely applicable and endure throughout front-line workers practices. Hoyle (2012) has also shown that the coping mechanisms given by Lipsky can be applied to wider services such as nursing. Nielson and Vibeke (2006) also suggested, through a series of empirical results from 147 Danish companies, that street-level bureaucrats can be "enticed" to cope rather than only forced to cope. Coping mechanisms can be more than simple self-defence. Coping mechanisms can be created from the pursuit of positive outcomes, leading to greater job satisfaction. Neilson (2006) showed that coping mechanisms can be positively motivated. Street-level workers interests go

beyond simply managing their workload to enjoying their work. Furthermore, it cannot always be assumed that clients are in conflict with workers. This helps widen our understanding of street-level workers' behaviour.

Accountability

Accountability has many meanings but comes down to a means of control over the use of public resources (Ranson 2003). Museums have varied forms of accountability, which, for local government services, includes local councillors and the public (Gray 2011). When the management relationship is conflictual, accountability can be a challenge. For example:

“job performance in street-level bureaucracies is extremely difficult to measure... as street-level bureaucrats tend to perform in jobs that are freer from supervisor scrutiny that most organizational jobs, and work norms prevailing in such jobs minimize such scrutiny” (Lipsky 2010: 48-51).

Furthermore, job performance measurements are largely unclear or unavailable, which are fundamental to managers controlling workers (Lipsky 2010: 40). Accountability of street-level professionals can also include inspection, target-setting, top-down pressure, user or “customer” involvement and more localised forms of governance (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 630). Weatherly *et al's* (1980) study of accountability and front-line workers showed that accountability measures had ‘dysfunctional consequences’ and added to workers distrust of management. Instigation of performance measures also coincided with a decline in morale within the social services studied. Belfiore (2004) concludes that issues of auditing and accountability have not been met by the cultural sector.

Hood (1991), Jenkins (1991) and Belfiore (2004) have also discussed that, with the advent of New Public Management (NPM), accountability has been enhanced for services. In their bottom-up research, Dodds and Paskins (2011) showed that the majority of workers found the involvement of users can be both challenging and stimulating. User accountability, however, is still quite rare in a formalised form.

Accountability is closely linked to managerialism. Clarke and Newman (1997) explored managerialism in welfare organisation and noted that the increasing use of performance indicators, related to pay schemes and fulfilment of organisational goals and objectives, has created tensions. Within museums, there has also been an increasing emphasis since the 1980s on targets, monitoring, strategy, assurances, delivery and evidence of inputs and outcomes (see Selwood 2002 for a list of museum performance targets). Boylan (2006) also noted that funding for museums in western countries now comes with the expectation of formal contracts, performance measures, indicators and targets across a wide range of factors, not related to any professional or ethical traditions within museums. Pierre and Peters (2000) showed that workers and actors within society are increasingly reluctant to conform to state objectives, policies and interests. In the cultural services:

“the culture of performance measures and management innovations constantly implies the need for step improvements in service provision – improvements that are measured by criteria which have seldom been agreed with the practitioners themselves, and over which they may have a confused sense of non-ownership which conflicts with their sense of professionalism” (Harris 2006: 18).

The idea of ‘bureaucratic administration’, is aimed at separating personal commitments from the public through formal hierarchy, supervision, control, rules and records (Clarke and Newman 1997). This is at odds with the view of the cultural worker, which is termed as a creative, subjective and inspired position (Banks 2007). This implies a tension between management forms and cultural worker aspirations, and finding how these are negotiated would give insight to how policies are implemented.

Evaluation and measurement is particularly difficult in the cultural sector. Quantitative measurements only give a limited type of measurement for culture (Gray 2006). Survey data is severely limited in giving effective evidence for policy implementation (McCall and Playford 2012). Measuring or evaluating delivery of these outcomes is difficult with “*no means of assessing the cultural adequacy of such plans*” (Gray 2004: 44). Confusion over assessing outcomes is added to by the diversity of approaches by local authorities, no guidance about

what a cultural strategy is and the lack of clarity and understanding of 'culture' itself (Gray 2004). There are also a wide range of actors involved in the policy process at local level. This opens the sector to the influence of multiple preferences, many of which do not have a 'cultural' perspective (for example environmental planning officers who manage museum services) (Gray 2004: 43). All this is underlined with a lack of political enthusiasm at national or local level, with some authorities not even having a cultural planning officer (Gray 2004). As well as being non-statutory, cultural services are not seen to be economically viable, and are on the periphery of local government provision. Accountability is, therefore, particularly difficult for cultural services.

Difficulties with bottom-up analysis

Although bottom-up analysis is seen as an insightful way of policy analysis, it also has inherent criticisms. Sabatier (1989) has argued that many bottom-up analyses only provide descriptive accounts of workers discretion. Implementation studies have also evolved from a simple top-down and bottom-up perspective (O'Toole 2000). Furthermore, although Lipsky (2010) is seen as a bottom-up writer, Evans (2011) noted that his arguments often come from top-down as well. His views are top-down in the way that he sees effective implementation as that of fulfilling top-down strategies. In this way he does not see discretion as a positive thing, but rather something to worry about in regards to successful policy implementation. This has difficulties when applied to a sector, already shown to have multiple layers of policy influence. Gray (2004: 45-46) has argued that policy 'attachment' is not a top-down process but has in fact come from local authorities as a "*bottom-up tactical device that has different implications for the delivery, organisation and management of public services*". This has been due to short-term defensive, local strategies that have attached culture and the arts to diverse local policy outcomes (Gray 2004). Top-down expectations, therefore, are not necessarily something top-down from central government.

Gray (2012a, 2012b) also points out that cultural services are influenced by many exogenous and endogenous factors. There is a continuous interplay of structure and agency. Policy making is therefore influenced by both agency and structural factors, not just agency as some of Lipsky's (1980) work could suggest. Actors can be influenced by a variety of things including

organisational strategies, professional standards and accountability obligations in museums (Gray 2012a). Agency is therefore situational and context-specific (Duncan and Edwards 1999; Harrison and Davis 2001). Harrison and Davis (2001) give an interesting and in-depth look at how structure and agency interplay within households, which is ongoing and dynamic. This makes a scenario where *“policy is inherently messy involving, as it does, multiple organisations, actors, ideas, practices, arguments, discourses, paradigms, jurisdictions and justifications, with all of these having both independent and interactive effects”* (Gray 2012a: 4). Policy actors are involved in internal and external mediations (Gray 2012b).

This idea of a ‘messy’ policy process gives a wider view of agency and structure than Lipsky’s (1980) model initially gives. Evans (2011) shows that Lipsky’s (2010) portrayal of policy as a linear model is difficult to maintain when exploring workers perspectives. Lipsky (2010) fundamentally views the policy process as a hierarchical one where policy decisions filter down logically from the top to the bottom-level. Evans (2011) points out that a big part of policy is speculative and rhetorical. Policy is made of language, which is important to remember when talking to street-level workers. Evans (2010; 2011) effectively widened Lipsky’s narrow view of what policy is at the street-level. For example:

“while, on paper, practice appeared to be constrained by an iron cage of policy direction, it was generally understood as abstract, sometimes relevant, sometimes irrelevant, requiring interpretation and discretion to make it practicable” (Evans 2011: 376).

Much of the literature on bottom-up policy implementation stems from the belief that workers at ground-level fail to implement top-down policy objectives. This assumption is one of Evans (2011) main critiques of Lipsky. Lipsky (1980) wrote about failure to implement policies, and it is assumed that higher-level policies are positive things to deliver. A particular example is his analysis of Massachusetts state legislation, where he shows how workers undermined ‘innovative’ policy. Meyers *et al.* (1998) also set out their observations of front-line staff as failing to implement new state policies. The success of a worker’s role is in his/her ability to implement higher-level policy. For these authors, street-level workers are a hindrance to

successful policy implementation and a key factor in the failure of welfare reform (Meyers *et al.* 1998). The positive aspects of workers' discretion are often left out in the traditional street-level theory.

Howe (1991) also suggested that Lipsky's (1980) analysis is out-of-date within the era of new public management. Taylor and Kelley (2006) suggested that professionals are much less influential at street-level, due to increased bureaucratic structures. Their argument ultimately suggests that Lipsky's type, and understanding, of discretion is not applicable to modern services. This is due to increased managerial control since the 1980s, especially within the social work and teaching professions. There has been an ongoing top-down drive in "de-skilling" professionals at ground-level (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 629). Halliday *et al.* (2009), however, argued that increased managerial mechanisms have not completely obstructed worker discretion at the ground-level. There still remains space to investigate the importance of worker discretion.

No author completely rejects Lipsky's seminal work, as no-one can dismiss the potential influence of those at ground-level. Critiques have simply built on Lipsky's initial work and applied it to multiple services. Evans (2010; 2011) in particular offered new ideas around the role of managers and the worker-manager relationship. Authors such as Evans and Harris (2004), Ellis (2007, 2011) and Halliday *et al.* (2009) have also added and developed Lipsky's initial ideas. His ideas are still relevant today, but can be augmented for further understandings around professionalism, discretion and worker relationships.

Overall, bottom-up analysis is about how organisations really work. It goes beyond what formal policy shows, to highlighting what street-level organisations actually do (Brodkin 2011). Taking a ground-level view gives valuable insight to workers relationships, management strategies and policy in general. Lipsky's (2010) understanding of public service workers is useful for understanding workers at ground-level of public services. Exploring cultural workers' experiences naturally assumes a bottom-up approach for exploring policy implementation. Importantly, policy networks and theories surrounding it (see Rhodes 1986, 1992, 1997) are structured at a meso-level. This thesis takes the policy process from a micro-level analysis.

Workers' experiences, multi-positionality, identities and relationships are important to explore since they give insight to their realities as agents that can make and influence the policy process (Wright 2012). The thesis does not aim to define what policy is, but explore workers' perspectives of what they view as policy. After all:

“Policy ideas in the abstract... are subject to an infinite variety of contingencies, and they contain worlds of possible practical applications. What is in them depends on what is in us, and vice-versa” (Majone & Wildavsky, 1978: 113)

Workers are 'implementing agents', in the way that they are 'sense-makers' with prior knowledge in the field, form different interpretations of the same message and are influenced by their emotions, values and beliefs (Spillane *et al.* 2002). Rhodes (1997: 12) noted that the strength of policy analysis is that it can explore the relationships of actors within the process. Local authority museums are public services, where workers are actors that interact with the public on a daily basis. However, they are slightly different to Lipsky's traditional street-level bureaucracies. Cultural theory has helped to understand the gaps in Lipsky's approach, to give further insight to museum structures, management and workers.

Cultural theory

Further to the ground-level approach taken in this thesis, cultural theory can help give insight to peoples' perspectives, and how an organisation is controlled and run (Hood 1996). It helps to link ideals and beliefs to organisational structure. Pierre and Guy Peters (2000) drew attention to several ways to evaluate governance, including governance as structure, hierarchies (idealised model of government and public bureaucracy, command and control), as markets (in a resource-allocating, efficiency-saving, employment making capacity) and networks (with a variety of actors, institutions within a policy sector). These ways of thinking are embodied through hierarchy, egalitarianism, individualism and fatalism in cultural theory, and can be ways of life that offer viable ways for organisation and control (Hood 1996). Sandell (2002) has also noted that communities, networks, hierarchies and markets within museums have never been fully explored.

Values and worker expectations have already been highlighted as important and cultural theory ideas can help give insight to these. Cultural theory is interesting in many ways, as it helps explore “*how a given cluster of values and beliefs makes sense out of the various positions people take and practices they employ*” (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982: 9). The literature focuses on the categories such as hierarchy, individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism. These can help understand people’s ways of life, ways of thinking and how this can relate to policy.

Before exploring the four categories, emphasised above, in more detail, their origin must first be explored. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) were the first to develop these categories to show different ways of thinking. These included individualist (‘rational’ choice behaviour), sectarian (goodness, purity, equality – where markets attack goodness) and hierarchical philosophies. Douglas (1987) determined these as important, because it is essential to explore the values behind decisions and outcomes. She gave the example of a fictional trial of four men, who had been trapped for 12 days and had killed and eaten their colleague. Approaching the problem from opposing views, completely changed the way the judges in the trial saw the problem, implemented the law and decided if they lived or died (Douglas 1987: 7). Decisions can be further influenced by the institutions that actors are in, which are loaded with moral and political content (Douglas 1987). The point that can be inferred from Douglas’s work is that policy is not just created and implemented in an objective, stand-alone sphere. Instead, policy is influenced at all levels (from being made to being implemented) by actors’ values, perspectives and ways of looking at the world.

Thompson *et al.* (1990) adapted and developed Douglas’s work to offer “*five ways of life*” (a combination of cultural bias and social relations). These take in individualism and hierarchy, and add egalitarianism, fatalism and autonomy, to further understand, how social life is organised (Thompson *et al.* 1990). As a model, this is based on a grid/group continuum, which determines how much an individual’s actions and choices are restrained by groups, rules and institutions (Thompson *et al.* 1990). Peoples’ values are essential, as “*adherents to each way of life define needs and resources and the strategy they create to cope supports their way of life*” (Thompson *et al.* 1990: 39). What could be drawn from this is that the way actors define

concepts, policy and their working needs, is influenced by, and influences, their inherent way of life, or way of thinking about life. This in return, affects their actions, as each must develop this 'strategy to cope'. Interestingly, this means that it is these adopted ways of life that often constrain peoples' behaviour, not needs and resources themselves (Thompson *et al.*1990: 39). It must be noted, however, that Thompson *et al.* (1990) offered theory only, but other authors have taken these categories and concepts to apply them in different ways.

For example, Hood (2000) took the categories of hierarchy, individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism, and applied them to public services and public management (see appendix G). Looking at public services from a cultural theorist's perspective, helps focus on issues of "*attitudes and beliefs about social justice, blame and guilt, the link between human beings and the natural environment, and the nature of good government more generally*" (Hood 2000: 7). Hood (2000) advocated the use of grid/group cultural theory, as it can highlight issues of failure, control and regulation at a range of levels. It is the extent of how rules and group rules constrain behaviour in an organisation (Hood 2000). This allows analysis of patterns of control and regulation in organisations (Hood 2000). From this perspective, workers' values and ways of life affect organisations.

Taken further, organisations can only work when there is synchronization between the values and beliefs of workers, and the structure of the organisation (Hood 2000: 10). Thus the link between workers' perceptions and different forms of governance (such as public management) has already been made. The difference in using a cultural perspective, is that the links between human beings, for example the networks and the hierarchies they create, are central. Most importantly however: it focuses on the values and attitudes that underpin these formations and the value connection between them.

While Hood (2000) offered a grid/group analysis, focused on public management, Newman (2001) used the categories, first developed by Douglas (1982), to map different models of governance on a slightly wider scale. This revolves around change, based on the idea that "*change occurs as organisations seek to adapt to their environment by incorporating ideas that may be undertaken as much to win external legitimacy as to achieve performance gains*"

(Newman 2001: 27). Newman (2001) bases the model on a continuum between differentiation/decentralisation-centralisation/vertical integration and continuity/order-innovation/change (See appendix H). Newman (2001) gave several drawbacks to the cultural theory approach for looking at organisations. These criticisms include the assumption of an existing overriding 'culture', lack of focus on power and the view that individuals are detached entities, rather than actors set within both different and related discourses. Consequently, the importance of discourse and identity, are central to understanding policy within organisations (Newman 2001). Indeed, focusing on discourses allows the flexibility of viewing governance where "*multiple narratives, assumptions and expectations shape social action and guide decision-making*" (Newman 2001: 30). Looking at tensions and dilemmas in the public sector is especially interesting due to the way it reveals the lived experiences of staff, organisational change and processes (Newman 2001).

Birchall *et al.* (2005) took a different approach and adapted Hood's (2000) categories into a multi-dimensional model to represent user views (see appendix I). As part of their 'Cultures of Consumption and Consumer Involvement in Public Services' project, they used 'hierarchical', individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism to map peoples' views (in their case public service users) (Birchall and Simmons 2004; Birchall *et al.* 2005; Simmons *et al.* 2006). Birchall *et al.* (2005) showed that fatalism is an important viewpoint in expressing feelings about services. They concluded that using their multi-dimensional model, is useful for understanding the differences between aspirations and experiences. What was further interesting is that using this model highlighted cultural tensions and policy blind-spots. They found that an important aspect of expressing views is how people think of themselves in regards to public services (Simmons *et al.* 2007). Withdrawal and disconnection can occur when people's voices are not heard.

The criticisms of cultural theory and cultural studies include the vague, ambiguous and generalised understandings of culture (Milner and Browitt 2002). Cultural theory is also often criticised for its multiple uses. However, following from Birchall *et al.* (2004) and Simmons (2007) this research utilises the versatility of its theoretical concepts. Furthermore, it allows the exploration of multiple narratives from cultural workers' perspectives, because they can

potentially reveal the link between expectations, values, organisational and policy practice. A cultural value emphasis can promote, or undermine, commitment to society and organisations, for instance, “*through the personal values that members of society acquire*” (Licht *et al.* 2007). The next section explores the categories, or dimensions, that these multiple narratives can be set in.

Hierarchies

When management is discussed, hierarchy is often automatically assumed (Hood 2000). This way of thinking about public management is really linked to order, rules, rank and authority (Hood 2000: 74). Hierarchists’ think that people can be selfish, but are redeemed through control and regulation in organisations (Thompson *et al.* 1990). As a governance model, the state exerts central control of policy and policy implementation through centralised, vertical patterns of power (Newman 2001). Change tends to be slow within hierarchies, and accountability is high, with formal standardised procedures (Newman 2001). These organisations tend to be process-orientated rather than user-orientated (Newman 2001).

Hierarchical power is relational and underpins decisions that are legitimised through knowledge (Clarke and Newman 1997). Power in organisations can be seen as modes of attachment, forms of decision making, agenda setting, sources of legitimacy and relational power (how actors are positioned in structural relationships) but it is altogether dynamic and changing (Clarke and Newman 1997). Clarke and Newman (1997) showed that frictions may occur between ‘old’ professionals and ‘new’ managerial roles/identities. There remains a gap in knowledge regarding the power roles and relations plus values and behaviours of cultural workers.

The top-down policy implementation model, first offered by Pressman and Wildavsky (1979) was based on the assumption of existing hierarchies – that of a coherent, top-down structure where authority sits at the top. Hood (2000) argued that “*bossism’ – a ladder of authority, conscious oversight and inspection... links ‘accountability’ with authority and responsibility*” and makes this dimension work in organisations (Hood 2000: 51-53). Policy is made there and

trickles down the hierarchy. One point is that this hierarchist-view relies on the idea of professionals and experts, and this is a role that has been increasingly questioned by individualisation (Hood 2000). The aspect of individualism is explored in the next section

Individualism

The importance of exploring individualism and markets can be seen within different trends in public services. One trend includes the shift in language to 'consumers', 'citizens' and 'communities' within public services (Clarke and Newman 1997). Evidence of this trend was found within local authority museums (Bennett 1997). Indeed, an important area within cultural studies is the tensions between citizenship and consumerism (Miller and Yudice 2002), and the blurring identities of citizen and consumer (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). Weil (1990) also showed evidence of the changing role of museum staff and professionals. This is linked to an increasing reliance and belief in the market, which Lawley (2003) noted has introduced tensions to local authority museums in England, where success in meeting strategic goals often depends on acquiring external funding. While in the past the collections were the primary focus for the curators, it is now the visitors and their experience that is their main responsibility. Coalter *et al.* (1988) and Coalter (1995) specifically looked at the introduction of competition to sport and leisure management. They showed that the small scale of leisure markets limits its success.

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) have gone so far as to say bureaucratic government is now redundant and marketisation and individualism is the best way to inspire individuals. In this way, the individualist-view is more likely to start 'bottom-up', where all individuals drive the organisations, not only those at the top (Hood 2000: 99). Importantly, it assumes that human beings are self-seeking, rational and opportunistic and that organisations do not work, if based on benevolence (Hood 2000). Furthermore, "*the approach is characterised by a strong means-end orientation and a pragmatic, instrumental approach*" (Newman 2001: 35). This perspective assumes a lot about human nature, in that even within organisations they shall follow self-seeking, rational behaviour (Thompson *et al.* 1990). This has an impact on the type of structures, policy and implementation.

Individualism requires rewards and incentives to employees, along with competition within public services and distrust of authority (Hood 2000). Newman (2001) took this further in assuming that organisations themselves are rational actors that respond to competition for funding. Newman's (2001) rational goal model added that power lies with managers, not hierarchies with rewards for achievement targets and goals. Responsibility and accountability are given to local managers (who gain resources from performance).

Good management is central to the success of individualism. Focusing on privatization and markets has led to improving inter-organisational relationships and collaborative management (Suárez 2011). Suárez (2011) also noted that in these organisations, effective management is of central importance in gaining funding and government support for services. Literature does indeed exist on museum management (see Malaro 1994; Moore, 1997, Lord and Lord 1997, Kawashima 1997; Falconer and Blair 2003; Gray 2006; Sandell and Janes 2007) and the management of volunteers (Goodlad and McIvor 1998; Graham 2000, 2001; Hurley *et al.* 2008; Institute of Volunteers Research 2009). Previous to this academic interest, museums were 'administered' rather than managed, with management coming with the negative connotations of increased efficiency and decreasing funding (Moore 1997). Museum leadership has never been scrutinised and management is seen as the opposite of creativity: formal, shallow and rigid (Moore 1997). For museum management literature, "*the purpose of management in museums is to facilitate decisions to help the museum fulfil its ambitions, mission, mandate, goals and objectives*" (Lord and Lord 1997). However, these are still geared to understanding the management and governance of more scientific and traditional museum policies (collections, exhibition, personnel policies etc listed in Lord and Lord 1997: 51), and have not explored management coping mechanisms within the dynamic interactions of cultural and social policies. There is further confusion in the museum sector, as some museums are administered by trusts, boards of directors, local authority departments and elected members, which are subject to change and political influences (Lawley 2003). The literature is also dominated by a top-down approach to museum management, where policy begins with the boards of directors and trickles down to workers that interact with the public, and a gap remains for a bottom-up analysis.

Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism believes that people should manage themselves (Hood 2000). Thompson *et al.* (1990) argued that those who follow this way of life, view hierarchies and markets as evil institutions that corrupt people, who are inherently good. Communitarianism and participative organisation are alternative approaches that empower communities (Hood 2000:121). This approach emphasises group participation, group self-management, mutuality and ultimately face-to-face accountability (Hood 2000: 122). Newman (2001) proposed a second network-based part of her model that is based on a 'self-governance model', focused on state partnership with citizens. Communities are meant to solve their own issues, with local 'ownership' of policy goals (Newman 2001: 36). Interestingly, it is the decision-making process that is important, not just the results, in that high participation is central (Hood 2000: 128). These ways of thinking affected public management practice in different ways, which in the past have included equal pay structures, non-permanent leadership contracts, and leadership by election (Hood 2000: 141).

For Newman (2001), adaption, expansion and flexibility are important here, where power is fluid and relationships constantly changing. Mutuality, or 'groupism', where group processes regulate individuals, is important with accountability lying with peers (Hood 2000: 60-61). In some cultures mutuality can reinforce negative behaviours such as idleness and disruption (Hood 2000). Democratic norms and egalitarianism is associated with more equal societies and is associated with culture (Licht *et al.* 2007). Licht *et al.* (2007) added though that cultural dimensions (e.g. autonomy and egalitarianism) cannot predict the governance model used, and show caution in making a causal link.

Networks are very important for understanding how egalitarianism works in organisations. This approach has a lot in common with network theory (Rhodes 1997) where policy implementation is a two-way fluid process. It also gives a more complex policy picture than Lipsky (2010), since it portrays a wider set of interactions that need analysis in the policy process. In using network theory, Rhodes (1981) emphasised structural relationships within policy networks, rather than interpersonal relationships. Marsh and Rhodes (1996) downplayed the position of agents in the

policy process. It is the structural links that affect policy outcomes the most. Exogenous factors outside the network can also affect policy outcomes. This level of analysis is at the meso-level rather than micro or macro – this involves looking at structures of networks and patterns of interaction (Marsh 1995). The micro-level analysis here involved individual actions and decisions of actors within the networks and must be underpinned by a theory of human behaviour (Marsh 1995). Hay (1995) noted that individual analysis of agency then centres on individual interactions within networks. Dowding (1995) viewed networks as a metaphor, a device where agents negotiate and swap resources that determine policy outcomes. His approach put actors within the process as more central to policy outcomes. It is the bargaining between agents within the process that affects the policy outcome.

Fatalism

Fatalism is part of the model that is most neglected in modern management thought. Thompson *et al.* (1990) and Newman (2001) gave fatalism little attention. Despite this, fatalism is an important way of thinking, with the idea that management and public organisation can be unpredictable and chaotic (Hood 2000: 146). Hood (2000: 65) linked 'chancists', who manage by 'contrived randomness', to a fatalist view of the world. Elements of contrived randomness can often be seen in management mechanisms such as moving posts and operations. For example, the rationale of moving staff around by chance, can be a strategic decision to avoid over-familiarity with clients or colleagues (Hood 2000).

Thompson *et al.* (1990) described fatalism as an exclusion of some kind from the decision making process. In this way workers can feel excluded from organisational practice, feel unwanted and also powerless to change anything. When labour is meaningless, workers become alienated (Braverman 1974). Thus elements of lack of trust, participation, collective loyalty and action (Hood 2000: 147) become more important. The fatalist 'syndrome', as Hood (2000: 148) called it, includes a cynicism and general distrust of officials, lack of incentives for good practice, the rejection of participation and collective action and lack of effective checks on workers.

Birchall *et al.* (2005) have shown that fatalism is an important viewpoint in expressing feelings about services. Importantly, what they conclude is that using their multi-dimensional model is useful for understanding the differences between aspirations and experiences. Although this was applicable to service users, the application of this model would also be relevant to cultural workers for the aim of exploring aspirations/values and comparing these to their actions and experiences. For example, Simmons *et al.* (2007: 7) showed that street-level workers' values can impact service delivery in several ways, including increasing barriers to hearing user voices.

Hybrids

Individualist, hierarchical and egalitarian structures rarely exist as one type of structure. There exists, particularly in the cultural industries, hybrid forms of governing culture and industry (Pratt 1997). Each dimension listed above has its weaknesses, and having one overriding management model is impossible (Hood 2000). What is normally the case is that an organisation can have different elements from each philosophy and use many of the different management models (although there tends to be one that stands out) (Hood 2000). Importantly, Newman (2001) pointed out, that a system with different elements of hierarchies, rational choice (individualism) and networks within it will undermine outcomes. The different models are not mutually compatible, and a mixed strategy shall lack coherence and create tensions. Hood (2000) had a similar view, acknowledging that management styles can be a mix of these approaches, and hybrids are common. Effectiveness, however, "*will depend on the extent to which ideas and beliefs of the participants match the institutional structure of any control system*" (Hood 2000:70). This is very much in line with Lipsky's (2010) theory that street-level bureaucrats are fundamental to making policy. Thus the position of workers' ideas, beliefs and ways of thinking are not only central to understanding what the system is, but how effective it is as well.

Conclusion

There exist similarities and differences within the devolved administrations and policies currently being implemented in Scotland, England and Wales. The parallels between Scottish, English

and Welsh relationships within local and central government include: a commitment to local autonomy based in the notions of subsidiarity, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs (Jeffrey 2002). They also share a focus, although with different emphasis, to social inclusion policy in relation to cultural policies. Scotland, England and Wales also have a developed, and currently implemented, cultural strategy which includes aims for museums and art galleries.

Although the similarities justify analysis, the differences between the devolved administrations create the most interesting debates. The questions regarding the increased socialist element within Scotland and Wales, compared to England, is worth more investigative comparison to explore culture and cultural services' role in promoting, or mediating, these ideologies, and to see if they have indeed been exaggerated. Also, an exploration of how exactly policy has diverged in cultural services themselves, in relation to the changing policy, is needed to see if the rhetoric of change matches reality.

Lipsky's (1980) understanding of the tensions of street-level workers has been shown to be significant in the literature. Street-level workers are central to policy understanding and implementation. Yet, the literature also showed a clear gap in understanding within the cultural sector. Museum workers share management-conflicts, uncertainty and vague policies that street-level bureaucrats are generally subject to. In this way, museum workers are similar to Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucrats, whose interactions with the public make them of central importance to policy and its implementation. The findings, however, suggest cultural services can be similar to street-level bureaucracies. Being classed as such, we are able to explore workers as being policy-makers in their own right. Ultimately they are the face of policy by enabling people to interact with government services (Lipsky 2010). The later findings chapters show this in more detail.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, there is a gap in knowledge regarding workers in the cultural sector. Due to this, the focus of this thesis has been on cultural workers' perspectives and understandings of policy and practice. Three local-authority museum services in Scotland, England and Wales were selected as case studies. This entailed observation within eight museums in Scotland, five in England and four in Wales. Forty-one museum workers were formally interviewed, and an additional thirty-three informal interviews were conducted throughout the observation period. Field-work was conducted between July 2009 and April 2010 resulting in thirty-two days of observation. Participants included managers, retail staff, curators, security guards, customer assistants, volunteers, project workers, outreach, administration and educational officers. The research was approached from a bottom-up method that focused on museum services workers.

The bottom-up approach was the best method for providing effective answers to the following research questions:

- How do museum workers understand policy expectations in Scotland, England and Wales?
- How linked are central and local government policy expectations to bottom-up implementation?

The research questions required an interpretive, qualitative research approach to explore cultural workers' perspectives. This thesis also offers the first comparative bottom-up analysis that has been done within this sector. Furthermore, social policy analysis has recently started to call for research that is grounded in front-level experiences (McDonald and Marston 2005; Mead 2005). The New Labour emphasis on choice and user involvement has naturally called

for more bottom-up approaches for looking at services (Dodds and Paskins 2011). Due to the gaps highlighted in the literature, this thesis has focused on front-level workers. This chapter goes on to outline the methods used in more detail, and justify its approach. It does this by outlining the research stance. The case study approach and qualitative methods used for data collection are then described. Finally the analysis of the data is outlined to clearly show how the findings and conclusions were achieved.

Research approach

The bottom-up approach adds to the current body of policy knowledge, and has previously been seen as a neglected perspective (Hudson 1989). Recent authors, however, have rejuvenated the street-level perspective in many different fields such as criminal justice, disability, welfare, social work, health and teaching (Maynard-Moody *et al.* 1990; Ellis *et al.* 1999; Neilson 2006; Taylor and Kelly 2006; Hill 1993; Hill and Hupe 2007; Halliday *et al.* 2009; Suárez 2011; Evans 2010, 2011; Brodtkin 2011). There remains a lack of literature, however, regarding street-level perspectives in the cultural sector. A ground-level perspective can give insight to policy that has been made unknowingly, or unintentionally, due to unpredictable pressures (Miller and Yudice 2002: 2). Furthermore, due to the lack of central government control in the cultural sector, a bottom-up analysis is particularly appropriate for exploring the cultural policy sector (Gray 2008). Given these gaps within cultural and social policy analysis, Lipsky's (1980) bottom-up approach has been the most appropriate method. His studies of policy implementation at street-level have shown how important street-level bureaucrats are to understanding, making and implementing policy. By focusing on social actors at street-level, this thesis offers a new and unique analysis of the policy process within the cultural sector.

Due to the bottom-up stance there are several influences on this research because of its multi-disciplinary nature. These multiple influences stem from the general areas of social policy, cultural studies and governance. Cultural policy, as a social policy, is a relatively new branch of analysis within social policy. Cahill (1994), Coalter (1990, 1998) and Coalter *et al.* (1988) were some of the first writers to bring leisure services, such as museums, into welfare and social policy analysis. Cahill (1994) introduced the idea that social policy remits have widened to new

areas of public life, such as shopping and leisure and called for more analysis of public leisure facilities, as areas that deliver social notions like choice, participation and 'quality of life'. The literature review has also shown strong links between social policy objectives within cultural services (DCMS 2000 for example). Furthermore, museum workers themselves have been seen to place social policy expectations, such as social exclusion, as important to museum delivery (McCall 2009). The focus on social policy is one of the new and unique factors of this research, and generates important findings for this field.

Social policy and cultural studies work well together for this research. Cultural studies are interested in a mixture of power, politics, meanings and culture. Cultural studies' focus on the negotiation of social life through meaning (Alasuutari 1995), has been particularly important within this thesis, and its focus on cultural workers' understandings of policy concepts. The focus of ground-level workers within museums is also a new contribution to this field. The need for a multi-disciplinary approach has thus been taken, due to this thesis's contribution to multiple fields of knowledge.

The influence of cultural studies helps to outline this research's epistemology. It is assumed here that reality is made through socially constructed meanings. Reality is made up of participant's meanings and negotiated through the relationships they have with the World (Alasuutari 1995). Cultural workers' interpretations of meanings and rules are based on how they position themselves in their work and life. Their interpretations and understandings make up their reality. This approach assumes that each person has a unique experience of the world and that cultural services have a role in shaping minds. Meanings are thus constructed by people (Crotty 1998). Due to this, exploring museum workers' interpretations and understandings has been the best way to gain insight to workers' worlds³.

³ As this research project is based on the compilation and analysis of interview discourses and text, the postmodernist's critique of social research was also considered. For postmodernism, reason is simply an ideological belief. People are constructed and caught within various discourses (Alvesson 2002: 27). With regards to language, postmodernists argue that all researchers can see is an illusion – which results in a construction of the truth, rather than true reality. Postmodernism rejects meaning, experience and social structure to make language and text central (Alvesson 2002). However, this thesis takes an interpretivist point of view and offers viewpoints mediated by the researcher. Similarly to Bourdieu (1999), using interviews has found a wide range of views and understandings from participants' reality.

An interpretivist viewpoint has influenced the research stance, and encouraged a focus on workers' experiences. Within this epistemology, interpretivism is a strong theoretical perspective that derives from the researchers "*assumption that knowledge can be derived from participants' social reality*" (Travers 2001). Interpretive sociology is concerned with the question of meaning and studying meaning, which helps us understand peoples goals and thereby to explain their behaviour (Alexander 2003). Interpretivism "*looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*" (Crotty 1998), which is exactly what this project aimed to explore. No positivist reality is offered within this research. Instead, viable knowledge through the interpretation of social exchanges, language, relationships and social functions are explored (Flick 2006).

The interpretivist perspective requires qualitative methods as the best way of accessing museum workers' realities. The interpretive approach helped understand research participants' worlds, their shared meanings and how they adapted and viewed what was happening around them (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Thus I used qualitative methods of interviewing and observation to explore participants' meanings and realities. Although this study does not take a pure discourse analysis approach, care is taken to deconstruct the meanings and concepts of cultural workers. I followed Bourdieu's (1999: 608) view that research and everyday life goes beyond language to being a social relationship. Interviews revealed a wider and more substantial opportunity for participants to share their views, understandings and realities. The interviews conducted were successful in expanding knowledge in the field.

Comparative analysis was conducted between Scotland, England and Wales (as stated in the literature review, Northern Ireland was dropped from analysis due to lack of developed cultural policy and different local authority governance systems). The research did not constitute a 'comparative analysis' in the formal research sense. It is only comparative in the loose sense that any research, which investigates phenomenon across nations or countries, or even regions, is classed as comparative research (Clasen 1999; Dogan 2002). As explored in the literature review, devolution has become one of the main reasons for UK comparative analysis, as there

remains policy divergence and convergence within social and cultural policies within Scotland, England and Wales.

Taking a case study approach

Each case study consisted of a single local authority area in Scotland, England and Wales. For this research, an exploratory case study approach is used (Crotty 1998). Table 1 offers a full break down of case studies, interview participants and days of observation.

Table 1: Case Study Details

| Case Study | Museums Visited (observation) | Formal Interview (transcribed) | Semi-structured Interview Participants* | Informal interviews (field notes) | Informal interview participants* |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Scotland | 8 museums 14 days observation | 14 | 2x managers 4x buildings managers (curators) 2x retail assistants 2x conservation officers 2x outreach officers 2x volunteers | 18 | 1x manager 4x shop assistants 6x customer assistants 5x security personnel 2x volunteers |
| England | 5 museums 10 days observation | 16 | 3x managers 2x curators 2x customer assistants 1x security personnel 2x administration assistants 3x outreach officers 2x education officers 1x volunteer | 10 | 3x customer assistants 3x shop assistants 2x security personnel 1x curator 1x volunteer |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|---|--|
| Wales | 4 museums 8 days observation | 11 | 2x managers 1x assistant manager 5x Customer assistants 2x gardeners 1x retail staff | 5 | 2x customer assistants 1x cafe staff 2x shop assistants |
| <p>*Although participants' 'official' titles are given here, it should be noted that this is how the museum services classed their staff. Actual roles are interchangeable – for example buildings managers in Scotland called themselves curators. Customer assistants often called themselves security. The roles within the museums were wide, varied and diverse.</p> | | | | | |

Previous studies have also found local-authority museum services of particular interest for empirical analysis, due to their comparative characteristics (Stanziola and Mendez-Carajo 2011). Case studies are seen here as a full research paradigm (Hamel *et al.* 1993; Creswell 1998; Gomm *et al.* 2000). As three museum services have been studied, this made a multiple-case design for the research (Yin 2003). Wilson and Boyle (2004) followed a similar case study approach in their study of partnerships in local authority museums in Northern Ireland. Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* (2007), Tlilli (2008a/b) and McCall (2009) also used case studies that took museum workers' views into consideration. This has been a successful strategy already utilised in the field. As a strategy, "case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena" (Yin 2003). This made it particularly relevant to the aims of this study.

For some writers, museums cannot be generalised, because "to use individual museums as a unit of measure can lead us to false conclusions and ultimately distort not only the way we perceive ourselves but also the ways in which we are perceived by the public at large" (Weil 1990: 9). Weil (1990) advocated looking at museums as special and different to each other, while acknowledging the similarities. Based on this, the museum services studied made a uniquely versatile and useable case study, as their histories, contextual materials and objects are presented within easily identifiable physical boundaries.

The exact location of each case study has been kept anonymous for ethical reasons. This decision was made in response to requests from participants. The museum sector is generally

small and participants could be identified, if the museum was known. Each case study was selected, however, so that the Scottish, English and Welsh areas were similar. The disadvantages of case studies are perceptions of lack of rigour, lack of generalisation and lack of routine formulas (Yin 2003). These are significant criticisms, but this research has created a rigorous foundation of data with the use of interviewing and observation. Care has been taken to use a theoretical framework and find cases that were similar for comparison. This has allowed insight within different types of museums, and opened up more data to avoid being caught by an atypical case (Yin 2003). The next section gives details on how cases and participants were selected.

The selection of cases and participants

The museum services that make up the cases were selected on the basis of similar focus, urban status, types of building and size (see appendix J for details). To find museums with these criteria, all certified museums in Scotland and Wales were investigated, and a database compiled that gave details of the museums, governing method (local authority, trust etc.), number of staff and contact details. Within this shortlist, a local authority was selected, based on the greatest similarities between them in the amount of museums, collections content, aims and policy development. Creating a database of English museums produced difficulties, due to the number of museums involved (around 3000+), and thus the sampling procedure for England diverged to purposive sampling. I selected this approach with the aim to ensure the similarities between museums, and increase the comparative reliability of the cases.

Participants

There were 14 formal interviews in Scotland, 16 in England, and 11 in Wales. These are broken down in more detail in Table 1, which summarises the interviews and observations for each case study. A sample of each level of the hierarchy was provided (from managers at the top to volunteers at the bottom) with a range of perspectives from the 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' roles conducted. Thirty-three informal interviews were also done on an opportunistic basis when I visited each museum service. These included customer assistants,

security officers, curators, conservationists, volunteers, managers, buildings managers, and outreach, access and education officers. A mix of men and women was also sought and a balance was represented in the final findings.

The workers contacted were considered 'professionals' in the widest sense. All those working in the museum services were considered to have some specialist knowledge about the museum. Indeed they were almost similar to Mintzberg's (1979; 1983) bureau-professionals, who mixed their bureaucratic roles within the local authority services with their professional ideas. Exworthy and Halford (1999: 2) have pointed out that local government are often made up completely of bureau-professionals. This validates that the participants really had a wide range of roles throughout the museum service. They could be managers of others, and be managed at the same time. This was indeed confirmed throughout the observation period, during which all workers within different roles showed elements of cultural knowledge. Like Lipsky (2010) this thesis has been concerned with the common experiences of street-level workers. Although there are differences between the participants, the findings are mainly focused on their commonalities.

The head of each museum services was contacted for research permission. After initial contact with each service, I requested a full list of employees within the service. All of those on the list were contacted in Scotland and Wales and asked to participate. An information sheet and consent form was sent via e-mail to Scottish participants and by hand to Welsh participants (see appendix K and L). This process ended with fourteen interviews in Scotland and eleven in Wales.

The selection of participants in the English case study was more complex due to its larger size. There was also an attempt by the deputy head of department to control who I was allowed to speak to. He did this by forwarding me a list of names of workers he said I should speak too. In the interest of ethics I circumvented this by requesting a full list of employees, and informing him that I would be contacting a random selection. I began by selecting what Spradley (1979: 47) termed 'cultured informants'. This required finding, and speaking to long-standing, experienced members of staff. Once these people were identified I employed snowball sampling. Other

participants were selected from the list as well in regards to finding a good mix of roles within the museum services. Selecting these participants was done with an emphasis on keeping a balance between workers roles. This is the most appropriate method for generalisation, as the research was focused on individuals, who gave insight to specific issues within the research questions. It is justified by Gaskell (2000) who said that the qualitative selection of respondents should be based on the researchers own social scientific imagination. At the end of the English field work I had sixteen interviews with a range of museum workers. The experiences of these workers were researched through a variety of qualitative methods examined below.

Qualitative methods

Multiple qualitative methods were used, as this helps create more robust data (Yin 2003). Semi-structured interviews were the main method, followed by observation. These methods focus on uncovering meanings and understandings (Gillham 2000), which was the focus of the study. Using qualitative research methods allowed insight to what is really happening in museums - the 'informal reality' -, and helped to view the cases from insiders perspectives.

Interviewing

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were the main method used in the thesis. The field work also included thirty-three short and informal interviews. Unlike the formal interviews, these had no predetermined structure or guide and were conducted on an ad-hoc basis throughout the observation period. The semi-structured interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes to an hour (although they varied from 20 minutes to 2.5 hours). The most important and essential source within case studies are interviews, as they help access new insights, provide shortcuts to the prior history of situations and help identify other sources of evidence (Yin 2003). Interviews were the ideal research method to derive interpretation regarding respondents' experiences and environments (Warren 2002). Interviews were also the most appropriate method in relation to the research questions, as they explored the worlds of people through their beliefs and meanings, which are clarified through conversations (Arksey & Knight 1999). The use of in-depth interviewing was the starting point in mapping participants' realities, and to understand

beliefs, attitudes, values and relations (Gaskell 2000). Focus groups were considered and rejected, due to the nature of the information being gathered. Workers were reflecting on their relationships with each other and management, so focus groups may have hindered some important information. Interviews allowed insight to important relationships and meanings, while at the same time allowing the flexibility to pursue emerging areas of interests.

The focus for the semi-structured interviews was given in a discussion guide (see appendix M). Flexibility was allowed for probing, clarification and follow-up questions to pursue any areas of interest that came up in the interview (Arksey and Knight 1999). Discussion guides are vital in trying to understand people's realities (Gaskell 2000). Furthermore the discussion guide acted as a structure, so that Scottish, English and Welsh workers were asked the same structured questions to allow comparisons.

The interviews were one-to-one, and took place mainly in participants' work spaces. Care was taken to try and have a private space. Interviews taking place in the familiar everyday areas put participants at ease (Smith 1995), although there were sometimes various interruptions. Finding a private space was a challenge for about ten of the interviews that took place in England. Following this, these interviews were done within local coffee shops to avoid communal working areas. This approach meant that participants were at ease, and able to provide all details of their work. Rubin and Rubin (1995) have suggested that interviews in an informal environment, sipping coffee, are often the most successful.

Recording

Each interview, with the participant's written permission, was recorded using a digital recording device. Recording the interviews allowed me to observe body language and other expressions. Gaskell (2000) advocated recording the interviews, as it helps with later analysis, and allows the interviewer to concentrate on what is said. Body language is an important part of an interview, and was often noted throughout the transcripts. Other advantages of audio recording included the increased ability to concentrate on what is said, being allowed to show the conversation

verbatim and indicating pauses and emphasis (Arksey and Knight 1999: 105). This has been invaluable in writing up and analysing the findings.

The disadvantages included the lengthy transcription process and that recording the interview can “*increase nervousness and dissuade frankness*” (Arksey and Knight 1999: 105). On a couple of occasions participants showed a noted nervousness in being recorded. One participant in England kept going back to the device and saying “*oh I shouldn't have said that if I am being recorded*”. I had to stop recording and take notes in two interviews in Scotland. Despite this, however, I did get some very frank and in-depth data. The recording device did not stop participants from speaking about their roles and understandings. Also, the extensive transcription process, which took me 4 months, added to my own connection to the data.

Observation

A total of thirty-two observations were conducted over the course of the field work period between July 2009 and April 2010. Fourteen days were spent in Scotland, ten in England and eight in Wales. Observation within each case study was distributed between the different museums. The time spent in each museum varied within the different services, due to their different size and number of workers within them. Observation days also include any tours, exhibitions or extra activities taking place within the museum services. Two days was the average duration observing in each museum, but four days were spent in the larger museums in Scotland and England. Relevant behaviours and environmental conditions were applicable to help answer the research questions, making observation another important source within the case study approach (Yin 2003; Atkinson and Coffey 2003). Ellis *et al.* (1999: 278) in their qualitative study of social workers emphasised the value of observing front-line workers and clients, to find out about real service delivery. As insight was required regarding how policy expectations and objectives are negotiated within museums through the actions of cultural workers, it was justifiable to have periods watching workers in their working environment. By being a temporary member of the relevant setting, it is much more likely that researchers shall unveil the “*informal reality*” (Gillham 2000: 18). Indeed, a lot can be learnt by spending a morning in certain social settings (Travers 2001). This way the researcher will reach an intimate

familiarity with the setting, and achieve the richest possible data (Loftland and Loftland 1995). For these reasons, and more, this method was utilised along with interviews.

Field notes was the central tool employed while observing within each museums service. Gillham (2000: 54) stated that the maintenance of field notes is essential, and that they should include running descriptions, ideas remembered at various times, ideas and provisional explanations, personal impressions and feelings and actions to follow up. A total of six note books were filled with observations, two for each case study. These contained the informal interviews that were conducted on an ad hoc basis and helped with later analysis and writing.

Observing was the key method for counter-acting the more positive version of workers actions that would be collected throughout the interviews. It is natural that workers would place a positive spin on their actions and activities. The observation period was aimed to help cross-reference the data, and make it more authentic and trustworthy.

Data analysis

Analysing the data consisted of a mix of manual and computer based methods to ensure a fully rounded interpretation. First hand analysis and interpretations were written in the note books I was using for observation purposes. Any interesting notes, thoughts or analysis were written down as field notes and at the bottom of each transcript as I was going through the transcription process (they were then integrated into my main analysis memos later). Analysis of the interview transcripts and field notes was a step-by-step process that enabled me to be immersed in the data. This process allowed the evidence to be recorded in a logical manner for cross-analysis and re-checking data.

This research was both “*data-driven*” (Silverman 2000) and structured by a “*thematic framework*” (Ritchie *et al.* 2008). The cultural theory framework was chosen at the beginning stages of the fieldwork, and helped structure some of the final findings into polarized fields for analysis (which Alasuutari (1995) sets out as one of its main uses). Having such a framework helped ideas to develop and made links between key concepts (Matthews and Ross 2010). It should further be noted that other frameworks from Bourdieu (1993) and governance literature

were also considered in detail before using cultural theory. In conjunction, the analysis was also driven directly from the data. Key themes arose naturally from the in-depth semi-structured interviews and observation data. The use of Lipsky (2010) as a conceptual framework, for example, did not appear until the data showed more insight into the role of museums workers in the policy process. This meant that data analysis was an evolving process of inductive and deductive processes.

When the transcriptions were completed, all formal interviews were put into the qualitative software package QSR Nvivo. For this research an Nvivo file was created very early in the process. Prior to field work it held any thoughts and ideas, derived from the literature review, in the form of a research diary. It also contained a folder with notes from supervision meetings. In this way the Nvivo package was used as a versatile, organisational tool for the duration of the thesis. It also helped to increase the validity and audibility of the research (St John and Johnson 2000).

Once the interviews were uploaded into the Nvivo software, in-depth coding and analysis began. As said before, the first stages of the analysis were data-drive. Codes, trees and nodes were selected from themes found in the data. Corresponding memos were created and linked to each node and tree, to record thoughts and analysis of the data. These were central for writing up the findings later, as the software showed all the cross-themes available in the coded data. The majority of nodes and themes have come directly from the data. Themes from cultural theory and the theoretical model, set out below, also drove the analysis of the data. Separate categories of hierarchy, individualism, egalitarianism and fatalism were created as trees in their own right. Any data that covered these categories were labelled as such. The analysis, then, was a mixture of inductive and deductive approaches.

The field notes were not transcribed and uploaded to Nvivo due to time restraints. Instead these were coded and analysed by the use of colour coding and post-it notes to bring out themes. The notes were dated and reviewed continuously, as they kept the field work phase fresh in my mind throughout analysis. The field notes were central in creating a picture of the museum services that were observed.

By using both manual, and computer, methods with inductive and deductive analysis, more depth was gained with the data, which helped to avoid taking out selected and exotic data (Fielding and Fielding 1986). Also, recording field notes and observations on transcripts helped keep evidence grounded in its context.

Most importantly for this thesis, the data analysis techniques helped to address the reliability of the research, as it maintained a 'chain of evidence' that allowed visibility of the journey to the conclusions. This is essential for the integrity of case study approaches (Yin 2003: 105). Furthermore, the benefits of using Nvivo included the ability to keep the transcribed interviews close to its interpretation, and they allowed easier insight to any patterns in the data (Yin 2003: 111). This was the best way to create a legitimate interpretation and trustworthy findings.

Theoretical framework

To help the data analysis, the following theoretical model was used. I used a descriptive analytical theory, as it aimed to help describe participant's attitudes and expectations and how they work together. Cultural theory, governance and street-level implementation have been drawn on to help understand and explain the research data. This framework helped to understand what values workers had, and the structures inherent in current policy expectations. It also offered a structure for data collection, so that data generated in Scotland, England and Wales was systematically compared.

The literature review has already offered a summary of fatalism, hierarchy, individualism and egalitarianism, but this section shall quickly describe how they were used. Hood (2000), Newman (2001) and Birchall *et al.* (2005) offered different theoretical models that were a mixture of governance and cultural theory. The model below is an adaption of elements from their models. For cultural services, Hood (2000) and Newman's (2001) models are indeed applicable in their own context, and help give insight and understanding to ways of thinking about public management, and also how change can occur in each setting. Yet, for the questions this research asks, neither of them is entirely appropriate. Ultimately, I have explored

cultural workers' experiences and understandings of policy. This is the foundation of the

Table 2 – Theoretical Framework

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authority - Control/regulation - Top-Down | <p>Egalitarianism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networks - Community - Citizen participation |
| <p>Individualism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rational Goal Model - Market systems | <p>Fatalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apathy - Lack of policy drive |

In table 2 we can see an individual, egalitarian, hierarchical and fatalist model that can help categorise ways of thinking. Hood (2000) explicitly said that the type of model that he used can open up the opportunity for comparative analysis. It is specifically used as a frame of analysis of organisations in the attempt to compare “*recurring streams of ideas*” (Hood 2000: 14). Newman (2001) on the other hand, offered a model that gives us more insight into the governance and policy side of organisations. Birchall *et al.* (2005) showed how these categories could be used to understand actors' perspectives. The models were adapted and combined to create a framework that helped understand cultural workers' views. The categories themselves, hierarchy, individualist/rational goal, egalitarianism/networks/self-governance and fatalism, were very relevant. What was less relevant were the grid/group analysis (Hood 2000), and change and centralisation (Newman 2001) aspects in previous models.

The model helped me organise the data on two levels. Firstly, it structured and gave insight to the workers' expressed values and aspirations. For example, if they expressed themselves in an individualist way (personal goals, market views), or an egalitarian way (focusing on community, the public). Also, categorising policy expectations and workers' values, gave me insight to how these values were structured in policy action and implementation. This model used already established categories that have helped with data collection analysis of the research questions. By using established models, with acknowledged comparative value as a foundation, this research can claim to have a strong base for a robust analysis.

Ethical considerations

The following section explores the ethical considerations of the research including confidentiality, anonymity, power and issues of informed consent. Due to this project being funded by the ESRC, it adhered to the ESRC Research Ethics Framework (2005), and also to the Social Research Association (SRA 2003) ethical guidelines. The main ethical issues are discussed below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Those who were interviewed and observed through participant observation were offered confidentiality and anonymity. This was important to the research, as participants needed to offer opinions and perspectives without worry of repercussions. The museums used as case studies were not named. At the beginning of the process the area was not going to be made anonymous. However, this was an issue with the English case study, where there was a worry about bad publicity. A decision was made to make the areas studied anonymous, to protect those services and the workers within them.

Full confidentiality and anonymity was given to research participants within the museum services studied. Only participant roles are sometimes indicated in the thesis but only if it is relevant to the point being made in the findings. This is due to the community of museum services being very small, so identifying participants would be relatively easy, if the area was known. Furthermore, in Wales for example, nearly all staff participated. They shared negative points about their services and managers that could potentially have a negative effect on their job. An ethical consideration is potential harm to people, as a consequence of their participation (SRA 2003). In dealing with people that are subject to public and government scrutiny, this research was also concerned about harm to reputations. Sharing non-anonymous findings had the real potential of creating distress for participants. Protecting these workers was the priority within this thesis, at the expense of providing finer detail and context in the findings. To avoid this, workers are named in the following way:

- Cultural workers A ,B,C, D and so on for the Scottish case study;

- Cultural workers 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on for the English case study;
- Cultural workers I, II, III, IV and so on for the Welsh case study.

Throughout the field work my field notes were on my person at all times. It was very surprising how many workers asked or tried, to read them. One English manager kept asking me who I had spoken to, and tried to find out who had participated in the study. All these questions were deflected successfully, and information stored securely. All paper copies were stored in a locked drawer in a secure office. All electronic data is, and will continue to be, password protected. The Nvivo transcripts were made anonymous, before being uploaded into the software package. This shows that I take the protection of participants very seriously, and have taken all steps to ensure no identifiable information shall be given or published.

Power in the research process

Research has revealed power dynamics within researcher–researched relationships as inherent and complex (Scott 1984; Cotterill 1992; Holliday 2007; Aldred 2008). The researcher and researched relationship is influenced by perceptions of social, cultural and personal differences (Tang 2002). My experience within each museum service was generally very positive. The vast majority of staff were very trusting, and shared many experiences with me through the interviews and observation periods. With the exception of one museum in England, I was welcomed into the background of museums staff’s working life. I often found tea-break chats in staff rooms the most productive place for frank, informal interviews. It was often here that ground-level staff felt they could share their ‘gripes’ (as they termed it).

As mentioned above, I was denied background access in one English museum. Through the interview and observation period I waited three separate times for more than 30-45 minutes for an interviewee to ‘collect’ me from the public foyer. This included being made to wait after closing time. I was not allowed access behind the scenes or staff rooms, and had to use the front-desk to access people. Furthermore, information had been sent out about me without my knowledge – for example I was sent e-mails that had information attached to them regarding me. Lyon (1995) noted that these can be common dilemmas for post-graduate students, due to

resistance by management for open information. Long delays could also have been strategies to limit research access (Adler and Adler 2003). I managed this situation by conducting more interviews (both formal and informal), than previously planned within this museum.

The power relationships observed were gendered in nature. It has been observed that the researcher's gender and the participants' ideas around gender do sometimes influence the research process (Padfield and Procter 1996). The times that I was required to wait, were when waiting to interview male managers. Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003) noted that men may try to control interviews or situations with women, by diminishing their legitimacy and power. Resistant behaviours, such as that listed above, were all conducted by men within the museums studied. Gendered power dynamics are often found at the top and bottom of hierarchies (Adler and Adler 2003). There were also controlling behaviours used by the male front-line staff. This was shown in the following extract from my field notes:

'I am getting the feeling of this place being a male-club for front-line staff. Many times I am seeing older male FLWs [front-line workers] talking together (Including discussing me I think!) I am not allowed to talk to this club they have avoided me and as often as not make no eye-contact. I am finding the women more open' (Field notes, England). [sic]

These experiences were very interesting, as in all the other museums in Scotland, England and Wales, my experience was with open and trusting staff, who often had no prior notice to my being there. I established a high level of rapport and trust with many workers which produced a lot of insightful data. Some staff took me on personal tours of non-publicly accessed spaces in the museum to express their own views about their museums and work. Verbal consent was always asked for in these situations. To counter-act the limitations of this particular museum, I spent four days observing to try and gain more data. This helped me repeat and portray workers' actions and experiences.

Informed Consent

I aimed to keep participants as informed as possible (as stated in the SRA 2003), and consent was viewed as an open and ongoing process in this research. An information and consent form (see appendix K and L) gave all the information regarding the project that participants would need to know, including the research's aims, purposes and potential impact of the research being published. This was sent to managers at the beginning of access negotiation. I requested that it was sent out to all staff within the service, so that they could then make an informed decision whether to participate.

The initial sharing of information and consent forms was done in each service. I sent the information sheet and the consent form separately per e-mail to those I was asking to interview (which was the main method for contacting and booking staff to be interviewed). Formal consent was given by all those who participated in the interviews. However, middle managers and curators often forgot to share this with workers staffing the museums on the ground-floor. In the majority of cases I turned up on the day agreed for observation, without the staff knowing who I was. In Wales, for example, only a small note was left in the work diary saying "*a girl called Vikki will be visiting today let her in for free*" [sic], was all that staff knew. To cope with this, I carried extra information and consent forms in my handbag to give to staff that I was visiting. Verbal and written consent was given by all workers in the Scottish and Welsh case studies.

Consent for observation, however, was not obtained from all the staff in the English case study as this was so big. Care was taken not to include any notes on those who ignored, or avoided me. Denied consent was very clear. In one case I approached a patrolling staff member, said hello, and he turned around and walked the other way. Verbal consent for observation was asked for from the majority of ground-level staff, due to the shorter interactions. The SRA (2003) suggest that within observation studies, the researcher should be careful not to infringe on personal space, obtain consent ad hoc and note any behavioural patterns that may be denying consent. This advice was adhered to, and I was careful to be overt in my research actions.

Regarding the case of visitors, however, it must be noted that museums are public spaces:

“there can be no reasonable guarantee of privacy in “public” settings since anyone from journalists to ordinary members of the public may constitute “observers” of such human behaviour and any data collected thereby would remain, in any case, beyond the control of the subjects observed” (SRA 2003: 33).

Voluntarily visiting this public space justified quick observation without informed consent. This type of interaction was further justified, as I balanced informed consent with minimising the disturbance to subjects and the subjects' relationships with their environment (SRA 2003: 35). I was able to maintain this balance with discretion and caused no harm or distress. The result was some in-depth, interesting data that is now presented in the next four chapters.

Chapter Five

Creating Policy Distance in the Cultural Sector

Introduction

The following four chapters present the findings of the thesis. They centre on the argument that exploring workers' perspectives are central to understanding the policy process in the cultural sector. This is important, because museum workers have not previously been placed at the centre of policy analysis in the museum sector. The findings also begin to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis (page 11).

This chapter explores how workers view policy and what this meant to workers' relationships. The chapter shows clearly that distance from central and local policies has been reinforced on many different levels. This chapter explores the influence of policy and the objectification of policy expectations. It then highlights the low priority of museum services, and what this means to workers actions. Finally, the different structural relationships between front-line workers, management and local authorities are explored. The findings show that workers find it difficult to reconcile government policy expectations with ground worker activities.

Policy as a distant rhetoric

Policy priorities were seen mostly as a simple narrative, or rhetoric, which workers found difficult to apply to ground-level activities. Throughout the field work process workers often asked me, if I was speaking to the right person. Policy was perceived to be far away from ground-level roles, such as security, retail, customer assistants and curating, so workers often tried to refer me to someone else. The most frequently asked question throughout the field work process was: 'Policy? What do you mean by policy?' In trying to find out how linked central and local government policy was to ground-level implementation this was indeed a finding in itself.

Distancing the idea of higher-level policy from everyday roles helped museum workers to create distance and discretion for themselves at ground-level. Museum workers often labelled policy as simply a distant rhetoric. Understanding of policy changed in accordance with participants' positions and engagement. Policy was described in a way where it almost exists as a separate entity, something not only separate from front-line workers, but from the museums services themselves.

"I'm quite realistic enough to know that there are people who plan policy and there are people who implement policy. And I think that, well they are not a million miles apart obviously but there is a huge gap, gulf in the middle. Eh, people who write policy think 'oh that's my job done. I've written the policy, there its 10,000 words it's done' and it's the same with policy documents from the Scottish Government or from the Council. You're like well, I know the guy doesn't implement the policy as it's stated (low, sarcastic tone) but they have a policy. So it's like a tick box mentality really. We have a policy (tick motion with hand)" (Museum Worker (MW) A, Scotland). [sic]

The same museum worker quoted above was an exceptionally dedicated worker within his museum's service. He personally took group tours around his area to share his local knowledge about the art, architecture and monuments. These tours were offered in his personal time and for free. One very wet day in July, I took the tour myself and thought the worker's knowledge and enthusiasm for his area was remarkable. The tour was about the 'marriage of the different aspects of culture' in the area. The museum worker had introduced me to the group, and the people on the tour reported to me their enjoyment of his specialist knowledge of the area. He had brought his own research of old photos of the areas we toured to show changes through time. After an informed lecture on one of the area's monuments, one in the group nodded to me and said to me 'God is in the detail' (field notes, Scotland, 23.07.09). As the worker's initial role was in preservation, this was voluntary work beyond his paid remit. To him, working with the public was the 'real' policy work. Formal policy was very distant to this

museum worker, who was voluntarily standing in the wet and cold to share his cultural knowledge.

Policy in the cultural sector is so vague that government policy has often been seen at a discourse level rather than operational (Gray 2006). The relationship between workers and policy is shown here to have further complexity. This is because for many workers policy was only held as a rhetoric – as words, as corporate speak, or management speak or what the council says or as the meaning of bureaucracy itself. Edelman (1971; 1977) stressed the symbolic nature of policy. He also argued that policy is made from the manipulation of language at the top level to frame the political agenda. Museum workers found it difficult to link to this ‘idea’ that exists on paper – and the majority of workers very rarely saw a physical policy itself. It existed through management narrative and was communicated ‘down’ a chain. Policy was seen as a symbol of management. By placing policy as a remote narrative, museum workers effectively distanced themselves from central and local government policy expectations. This in turn gave workers more room to interpret and implement activities in alignment to their own expectations, beliefs and professional norms.

*“If you talk about the word policy sometimes it, you know, it’s bureaucratic speak isn’t it. But actually if you think about what policy means it really means it’s about the delivery and how we do that” (Museum Worker (MW) 11, England).
[sic]*

“So I would like policy makers to mean what they say. I think there is a lot an awful lot of hollow talk in strategy and policy” (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

The perception of policy being hollow, as only being words on paper with no meaning attached to them, has been seen to have an effect on museum workers’ way of thinking about the job and position itself. Framing policy as a narrative, made it easier for workers to disregard top-down policy expectations. Policy became “*more words than deeds*” (GLLAM 2000). This was another mechanism that distanced workers from the structures of the service and the policy process. Museum worker A described this as becoming ‘disenfranchised’ from the service.

“Again I’m not being cynical... But... Policy has got to be implemented, it’s got to be realistic and it’s got to meet smart objectives. You don’t need to be a bloody eh, head of department or senior manager or whatever to understand them. They are pretty simple things. But I just don’t like this shilly shallying attitude that, well we have a policy but we are not going to implement it. I think that is cynicism at it’s worst really. It’s a waste of time and that’s terrible as its wasting the energies that people are putting into it” (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

Museum worker A above believed that policy is made without an idea of how it is implemented. More importantly, he also believed that those who make policy above him, did not expect it to be implemented. Describing this process as being ‘disenfranchised’ suggests that this was also linked to a perceived deprivation of power, or ability to make decisions. A gap between policy and practice suggested cynicism, apathy and a feeling of distance from the museum services that workers were in. Fatalism was inspired, because policy can be seen as meaningless – *“internal garbage”* (field notes, Scotland, 29.08.09). Fatalism is explored in more depth in chapter six, but a feeling of separation existed in workers understandings of their role in the policy process. The result was a non-ownership of policy, and the expectations attached to it, at ground-level.

“Policy, really well we just don’t need it” (MW 1, England). [sic]

“So that certain projects that would be good to do don’t seem to fit anywhere in what’s required for measurable outcomes. But you think that it would be so good to do something but it doesn’t fit so. Sometimes the policies that come top-down, yeah it can be limiting” (MW 7, England). [sic]

RESEARCHER: When you think about policy how you do feel?

“(Laughs) ‘Gah yuk’ (making a noise) like that (laughs)” (MW 8, England). [sic]

“Don’t know really. I think like, its kind of far away do you know what I mean? From what I am doing. Don’t know why” (MW X, Wales). [sic]

For the majority of ground-level workers the idea of policy elicited negative emotional responses. The structural expectations built around policy were seen to be very distant to the agents at the ground-level. The above evidence reinforced the perceived distance between workers' jobs and policy and that there needed to be a required 'fit' with policy outcomes and museum workers ideas. Policy presented an obstacle that museum workers felt they need to work around. Some workers felt that improvements could be made to make implementation more effective, but *"I have fed back in the past but not now as nothing ever got done. Always told well we are too busy" [sic]* (field notes, Scotland, 29.09.09). Through this mixture of disenfranchising themselves and 'not bothering', workers effectively demoted the importance of formal local and central government policy within their roles. This, in turn, contributed to furthering the distance between themselves, management and the local authority that they work within.

Museum workers often discussed wider priorities and expectations in relation to their roles. As demonstrated above, however, the idea of 'policy' could incite negative reactions with museum workers. Participants showed a mixed understanding, but were aware of the politics behind policy changes.

"And the emphasis on museums in the last few years have played a fairly canny political game in trying to align themselves against social issues and showing the relevance of that...And consequently have aligned themselves with government so... it's a combination of direct government direction along with people wishing to move down that route to be seen to be part of that movement"
(MW 11, England). [sic]

Workers could also sometimes interpret and change the policy to align with their own activities and ideals:

“From my own personal experience of policy is that, I think there is a gap between stated policy and delivery. And there is quite often that there is eh, there is a service that we have been doing for years and years and years and it has a certain way of operating and then policy comes in. And what you do is...

you tweak the language, or you tweak what you do to fit the policy and then you can demonstrate you are actually doing the policy. When in actual fact the vast majority of is continuing along the way it always has. And it’s on the periphery. It’s not actually fully integrated into em, the service which you run... So (laughs) so we will go, okay, there’s that social inclusion fund, what do we need to do to get that. We need to get, we want to do X but I’ll tell you what. This sounds awful doesn’t it? (smiles)” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

Evidence showed that although workers distanced themselves from policy, they could effectively utilise it to meet their own agendas. Policy placed as a distant narrative presented an opportunity for implementing workers own ideals and agendas. Museum workers have been successful in ‘tweaking’ policy language and narrative to meet more cultural ends, related to the museum services. These findings suggest that this policy ambiguity could present opportunities for workers to utilise policy, and align it with, their own interpretations. The distance created and recreated in the sector, allows some aspects of freedom to decide policy direction at ground-level.

The low priority of cultural services

The museum services within this project had an unprecedented distance to the overall local government structure in which they function. Often workers believed they were at the bottom of all local government priorities. For example, there was a feeling from the staff that their museums had no natural home within the structure, which has led them to be continuously moved between local government departments. The whole system was “*illogical*” (field notes, Scotland, 24.08.09). One of the services studied had been moved within the local authority structure three times in the last four years. The same service moved their front-line staff from

museum to museum, often on a weekly basis. This contributed to feelings of vulnerability, worry and displacement for many of the staff within the service. The relationship between them and the public was often then compromised as a result. One staff member reported that she had no confidence to approach people in her current museum, as she was just getting used to the other museum, and said that she felt as though she had nothing to offer visitors due to various moves between museums (field notes, Scotland, 30.08.09). This had had a serious effect on her motivation to work. In a role that is dependent on workers' participation and enthusiasm, insecurity in working practice can clearly have a negative effect on workers roles.

What makes museum services different to Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucracies is that museums do have something to lose if they 'fail their clients'. Low visitor figures are often met with closure of buildings and loss of jobs. One such example in the Scottish case study was a small community museum within the service. Despite continuous campaigning, the building was closed down and there were suggestions from management that this was only the first closure in consolidating the service in light of cuts. Many of the museum services staff had been involved in setting up and helping the museum and this affected workers' motivation (field notes, Scotland, 17.08.09). Delivery is highly imperative for museum services, due to their low importance within local authorities.

It was suggested that cuts in local authority budgets meant that heritage and cultural services always were the first to be reduced.

"Museums within that are very much the Cinderella... but I think museums are not a statutory part of council provision and I think they are a soft target to always hit with budget cuts" (MW D, Scotland). [sic]

Museums within the local authority hierarchy were viewed as at the bottom:

“We appreciate that there is only one pot of money available. And there is always pressure to spend that money on the bigger things on education and social services on eh crime prevention. And if you were doing the budget you would say oh that care home needs you know, essential maintenance over the museum needing a coat of paint. It’s understanding that but appreciating the way we are in that pecking order. And showing we are important and needed”
(MW 13, England). [sic]

Scotland is the only country in the UK that does have museums as a statutory part of their local government service delivery, but workers still had a deeply entrenched perception that museums are an optional extra for local government. Many expressed worries about the next general election⁴ and cuts have indeed affected the cultural and museums sector. Instead of being in a ‘bubble’, museum workers showed awareness of their political surroundings, and the potential impacts it may have. Structure and agency are interplaying here as workers are being influenced by internal and external elements. The distancing activities that museum workers engaged in, may be motivated by the perception that museum services were the ‘Cinderella’ of local government provision. The low priority given to the services may also be one of the reasons for local government to allow this distance that workers can use to gain more control over service delivery.

The low priority of the museum services had both positive and negative applications to the service. For funding, this always meant that cultural services were asked to be cut first. For the last seven years all of the museums had seen core budgets decreased. There was an emphasis on accessing project funding that had one to three year life terms. Hierarchies were also generally seen as getting in the way of communication.

⁴ The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition was elected in May 2010, two months after fieldwork was finished.

“I personally – but this could be more about my nature rather than you know sort of having a business mind about it – I personally don't like the hierarchical feature of the work place. I think what you get, or you can get managers in the top abusing their positions... And I think people right down the bottom of the chain feel very underpowered a lot of the time. They can't really participate in how the museum is run” (MW 9, England). [sic]

So, the current structures suggested that workers could feel disempowered. In contrast, however, this also presented opportunities. Often workers mentioned that the services' lower priority in local authority hierarchies, allowed them a larger degree of autonomy. Conversely, being of low priority could gain managers and workers less policy pressure:

“You may find that museums are not even explicitly mentioned at that corporate services level. They might speak of it in festivals and cultural services, libraries. It might not even mention the word museum”

RESEARCHER: What have you been asked to do to fulfil your local authority agreement?
(talking about the Scottish Government SOA's)

“Not a huge amount. I think because we are so far down the hierarchy and its one of those subsets of how where we perceive culture to be. We are not really, I suppose it's not really specified” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

This had the ability to free up decisions and directions for museum managers. It also showed that although the local authority hierarchies were important, the hierarchies of power within the museums' subset service could achieve relative autonomy. However, due to decreased funding the abilities to make wide-ranging decisions are of course limited. These challenges have been well documented in the cultural sector (Selwood 2002; Gray 2006; Belfiore and Bennett 2007). The opportunities of being *“below the water-line”* (MW F, Scotland), however, are less well known and could help to encourage ground-level discretion. This is reinforced by the weak monitoring of those at ground-level, explored below.

Weak monitoring mechanisms at ground-level

Workers generally found it difficult to describe how they were monitored. They also struggled to give examples of performance indicators, or formal feedback mechanisms, at ground-level. Museum worker 11 gave a particularly good example of the informal way that the museum services was monitored. He was a collections-focused, middle manager, whose role had slowly been downgraded when there had been “*another layer of management put above me*” (MW 11, England). Mid-way through the interview he pointed to one of his shelves, and told me that it held the last official annual report done of the museum’s services. It was from 1993. Museum worker 11 described how senior management very rarely knew, or checked on, how key parts of the museum were run.

“Acquisition, from my perspective, the acquisitions policy is an absolute necessity because it is such a key part of accreditation. That’s been part of my book, part of a general collections management policy, which I have drafted up various times. My senior managers have never been that bothered about it to be honest. But it has enshrined our approach to many things like acquisition, human remains, research, enquiries, conservation. But I don’t necessarily think my senior managers feel the pressure to have that written down as a formal policy because they haven’t bothered about it so much. Whereas obviously with accreditation you need to say well here is the document. So I would always have liked the time to develop a proper collections policy that linked across everything that we do. This would then feed down to a set of manuals on how we work day to day managing the collections. I mean it’s sort of there in draft form... Some people have seen drafts of those sorts of things then forget they have seen them. Again, that’s about the fact the senior management don’t enshrine these things as much as they should do. But it is our approach to contemporary collecting. I have had documents written - several documents in the last 5 years - saying what that is and I still get members of staff saying we don’t have an approach to contemporary collecting” (MW 11, England). [sic]

Museum worker 11 also pointed out that there were serious communication issues in the structure and the way that the museums service was run. These themes were very similar in the Welsh and Scottish case studies. The findings show that key aspects of delivery were left to be drafted by workers at service-level. These were very rarely checked by senior management. There was a view that they were busy with other political priorities. In this way the day-to-day activities of the museum were shaped very much by workers at ground-level. Difficulties with communication, lack of acknowledgement of work already done and lack of interest from senior management indicated that this was not monitored closely. Workers at ground-level did not, and were not expected to, feedback or track their performance. The above evidence also hints a distance between management structures, and these are explored below.

Structural distances and complex relationships

Throughout the fieldwork workers were quite responsive to questions surrounding the management of their role. The topic of managers, local authorities and managerial control was also one of the most popular topics brought up spontaneously by cultural workers. Lipsky (2010) argued that managerial relationships are built mainly on conflict, and the findings show evidence of this. Evans (2010), however, pointed out that for street-level workers this relationship is more complex. Also, the structural restraints for one manager could be very different between museums (Gray 2012b). Not all management/worker relationships are ones of conflict. Within the museum services many of the workers that I spoke to, were classed as managerial, but did not align themselves as 'management'. Those in high level positions within the service often held onto, and emphasised, their professional roles and beliefs in museum provision. Furthermore, most workers, when speaking about 'management', did not mean their own manager. Indeed, when I asked 'do you mean your manager'? The response was often *"no no not at all they are all right they understand my role and what we are trying to do"* (field notes, Scotland, 29.08.09). As Evans (2010) suggested in his observations of street-level bureaucrats, 'management' is not a homogenous group. What is clear from the findings, however, is that museum workers' relationships with their managers were a central theme when discussing policy, roles and implementation. This section explores exactly how museum

workers discussed the management of their roles and service. It also discusses the challenges, faced by workers within their relationships to managers, local authorities and the public. Insight to the policy process is given by outlining these challenges, and also the opportunities this can make for workers.

Museum workers and management

One of the central relationships that concerned museum workers in their roles were with 'management' but no matter what level participants were at within the service, their management was a key point of discussion. Many front-line workers shared the view that it was *"better if management don't come here. Better if they stay away and let you get on with it"* (field notes, Scotland, 25.08.09). The data further showed that museum workers were bringing in their own understandings, definitions and priorities, and applying them to the services that they work within. There was a clear sense that management priorities do not run in line with some museum workers' priorities around the collections or museum's function.

When the relationship between workers and managers is conflictual, the authority to implement policy can reside with low-level workers (Lipsky 2010: 25). The hierarchical governance structure of local government was seen as counterproductive to the implementation of high-level priorities. This is unsurprising, as the majority of workers viewed being run by local government as a barrier to good museums governance. Interestingly, workers wanted both better management of the process and more freedom to make their own decisions. This may stem from the way management were perceived to manage the process. For example:

"Eh, they [management] can be misuse a section from time to time and get away with it. Some of the rules on restructuring for instance I think that the lines have been blurred a few times em, but they are plain always but sometimes I think the management can act like they are running a small business. That's you know, but we are not we are council and they have to be reminded" (MW 14, England).
[sic]

“And our political masters in particular think very short term” (MW 11, England).

[sic]

Managing the museum services as a business was often seen as counter-productive to workers internal ideals. Front-line staff's ideals were often linked to an egalitarian view of how the museum should be run. This was often connected with community and user-involvement. Here we see a clear gap between street-level workers ideals and practice, which is very common in street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky 2010). The gap between ideals and practice increased workers' discretion.

Layers of management

This section explores museum workers' management structures. Before going into detail, it should be explained that management structures were different and complex for each of the case studies. Details cannot be given for the exact structures, as that may identify individual services and compromise the anonymity of the services studied. Museum workers did not generally have a specific idea of their own service structures. Those higher up the hierarchical structures were of course more aware of its shape and size, but workers mainly discussed 'management' as a 'catch all phrase' for those working above them in the structure. Museum workers were more comfortable talking about the structure they work in as 'management' over hierarchy or network. One front-line worker mentioned that *“as far as needs go there is a “chain of command” that lists what to do. I know what I am to do. The manager mainly leaves it there”* (field notes, Scotland, 28.08.09). He was able to draw a hierarchy of how he saw the service:



This was drawn by a worker who had been in the service for 30 years, as the others in the museum at the time claimed they could not tell me. The majority of participants did not seem too concerned about the hierarchies above their immediate managers. This was attributed to general confusion over the local authority structures that the museum service was in. An interesting thing about the drawn hierarchy above was that the front-line worker (who was a customer assistant) did not draw a place within it for the curators. As curators had been changed to the title of 'buildings manager', this gave further evidence of ground-level workers distance to management. It also showed evidence that the title of 'curator' was slowly being phased out of the museum service, and this is discussed later in more detail.

Services were seen to be complicated and have many layers within them. Evidence suggested that there are several types of workers that group together within each service. Front-line workers, who held the title of customer assistants or security, tended to distance themselves from the 'professional' roles such as curators. This was expressed through an 'us' and 'them' mentality that really came through in the informal interviews throughout the observation period. In Scotland there was also a perceived distance between retail workers and customer assistants. What the front-line workers had in common, however, was a perceived distance from 'management'. Management was generally seen as ineffective by most museum workers. It did not matter if it was front-line staff, middle or high-level managers that were participating; all those, beyond participant's immediate managers, were generally seen not to communicate effectively. Interestingly, only a minority could really go into detail about who 'management' were, and it was often used as a way of referring to the central local council. The 'catch all' term of 'the management' was also linked with layers of bureaucracy within the service.

"There are special meetings to involve people in work around policy at different levels. But again I am not sure that works very effectively, down through different tiers of the organisation. So em, I think we are an organisation that has a huge (emphasis) number of internal meetings and yet we still seem to struggle to communicate (MW 11, England). [sic]

“Em, unfortunately I think it’s the managers here that make it harder. I just think we should be talking to each other a bit more. I think we should be communicating a bit better” (MW 5, England). [sic]

Museum workers’ tendency to look on management as a separate entity for running the museum services was interesting. ‘Management’ was often used by interviewees in a symbolic way to discuss those in charge. It was used to refer to both higher managers and the local authority governance structures. Workers were rarely specific about how the service was run and by whom. Lack of communication and information was a very common complaint. However, despite the perception that this was a management issue, there is a continuous distancing by museum workers between themselves and management.

“Yes there is [a hierarchy] but I think that’s defined by the council more than anything else. Em, more than by ourselves really. You have the manager, management team, and everyone and the council defined grades as things go. So that kind of thing is set out for us, it’s not our... It’s passed down to you so...” (MW 3, England). [sic]

Here we see workers taking no ownership of the structures that they work within. There was also a perceived gap between front-line workers and managers or “*those people up in the offices*” (field notes, England, 11.03.10). Many front-line workers were unaware of other functions of the museum such as outreach and community work which were conducted at a middle management level.

“You never recognise people in the office, most of them I have not seen before... Curators are there but you don’t know them they become moles, really. Come out when things need fixed” (MW 6, England). [sic]

The overall picture was of various factions within the museum. This shows the careful consideration needed when discussing ‘museum workers’. Although these workers make up the front-line of services, and are the people that interact with visitors, they are not a homogenous group. Curators, customer assistants, security, outreach, community and retail

workers also view themselves as separate to the others. What unites front-line workers, however, is their general distrust of management.

The way workers refer to 'the management' was a form of 'othering' (Lister 2003). There was a consistent disassociation between workers (us) and management and 'the council' (them). Museum workers often referred to 'our service' or 'our museum' in opposition to 'the management' and 'the council' which they dehumanise and group together as a large singular entity. There was also a feeling that these structures were an imposition on the service and workers. All of these groups actively distance themselves from the higher tiers of authority. The next section looks at this in more detail.

Distrust of authority

Distrust of any authority is one of the many things that street-level workers generally have in common (Lipsky 2010). There was a general perception of 'mismanagement', lack of management, petty politics and lack of response to museum workers feedback.

"Yes there is a lot of mismanagement. And I have turned around to say management is not management material... Management now we are lucky to see once a year" (MW VIII, Wales). [sic]

"Well centralisation is all well and good but we need to have the best people making the decisions and just pushing it out. And allowing the museum to get on with it"

RESEARCHER: More freedom but proactive decision making?

"Yeah. And taking the petty local government politics out of it" (MW 13, England). [sic]

In response to this there are clear views that decisions should be made within museums, not within the local government. Effective decision making was viewed as a ground-level activity. One ground-level worker noted that *"management need a shake up and kicked out the door to*

be honest” [sic] (field notes, Scotland, 29.09.09). The hierarchical governance structure of local government was seen as redundant. This was unsurprising, as the majority of workers viewed being run by local government as a barrier to good museums governance.

“We you know, conduct ourselves in a certain manner without actually thinking ‘I’m following the policies of the council’. You know? We try and work in what you think is a sensible and professional way. Common sense really if they need help try to help them” (MW IV, Wales). [sic]

Some of the mistrust of management can be seen to stem from the way they are viewed to run the museum services. The majority’s perspective was that management and local authorities failed to respond to issues quickly or effectively. The evidence has already shown that workers do relate to policy in this way, as they frame it as an empty narrative. We see here that some museum workers viewed policy as a symbol of management and politics at higher-levels in the hierarchy.

Furthermore, there was a suggestion that museum workers tended to work according to their own ideas of professionalism, separated from management. Asking management to just *“let them get on with it”* suggested that some museum workers viewed management as representing politics. This was a barrier to their roles. Everyday working life did not necessarily have to link in with policy at all.

The ambiguity, associated with policy expectations, goals and functions of the museum services (as explored in the last section) is a theme, found in most street-level bureaucracies. This affects manager’s ability to control policy and delivery (Lipsky 2010: 40). Evidence here suggested there were continuous distancing strategies, employed by museum workers on ground-level. By encouraging this distance from management and local authority control, museum workers were active in trying to generate the freedom they felt they needed in order to deliver their roles.

This freedom is further enhanced by the perceived lack of effective management. Indeed, the evidence above suggested that some museum workers only had interactions with management

once a year. Street-level bureaucrats do tend to be in roles that have less supervisor scrutiny (Lipsky 2010: 50). Lipsky (2010) suggested that this may be due to claims of professionalism. This freedom generated a degree of discretion for front-line workers.

The distancing of management was one of the coping strategies used by museum workers to obtain more discretion within their roles. By 'othering' (Lister 2001) management workers effectively distanced themselves from management policy expectations. When this distance was secure and communication difficult, museum workers became less accountable for management policy outcomes. The distance generated, allowed them room to instigate and follow their own ideals and expectations for the museum's services.

Challenges to museum workers' freedom

On the other hand, not all workers found that this structure allowed for more discretion over delivery. There was also a lot of frustration when managers controlled front-line workers' abilities to make day to day decisions. Museum workers often saw room for improvement and became frustrated that they lacked the power to change things.

"They [management] listen, say they understand and then do absolutely nothing... No I actually think we don't have any decision power really and that's fine" (MW VIII, Wales). [sic]

"If people who are working on the front-line have some part to play [in policy]....it's a very condescending attitude that managers, senior managers and indeed policy makers have to those who are implementing policy... they think they do not understand the issues (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

Museum workers found it difficult to place themselves within the local authority structure and service as a whole. Within the museums service itself, workers were encouraged into hierarchical structures that they felt had been imposed on them. Thus, distancing strategies are both a reaction to imposed management control and a way to encourage more freedom of choice at ground-level. This interplay of structure and agency is important to local-authority

museums in particular as each authority has different political expectations attached to them (Gray 2012b). There is constant negotiation between workers and management. When communication breaks down between them they attributed it to management miscommunication. Although they generally express a wish that communication was more effective, this distance gives them a certain amount of discretion. Museum workers effectively used the distance they created as a means to simply “*get on with it*” (field notes, Scotland, England and Wales). The problems inherent in this structure do not only stem from a lack of trust in management, but from being a local authority museum as well. This is shown quite clearly in the next section.

Museum workers and local authorities

The research involved museum services within a local authority in each of Scotland, England and Wales and this had a major impact on how museum workers’ viewed policy. Tensions and distance from management was also linked to distrust of the local authority structure in which they worked. O’Faircheallaigh *et al.* (1999) have noted that the arts sector has often been “*reluctant clients*” to government and this was mirrored by some participants. Museum workers had many reflections on their employers and their relationship with the local authorities themselves. Like their views on management, often this relationship was seen as distant.

“... when you work in the museum you are separate from the council in a way. Except when you get a few general emails. About policy and where we plan to go. But you feel kind of, well I do, separate really. I guess it’s because I have worked in different parts of the council they all work... slightly differently. So I don’t feel, I mean when people ask and you say you work at the museum people don’t relate to you working for the council. And when you tell them it’s like oh no not for those (laughs)” (MW 1, England). [sic]

Similar to ideas of ‘management’, a feeling of distance was very common between the museum services and local government. There was also evidence that this distance was encouraged by

museum workers. This was due to some interactions with 'the council' by the museum workers themselves or from the negative reactions from others to their positions as council officers.

"When I first started the job the first project that I worked on I walked into a group of about 30 people and was introduced by the person there as he said I worked for the council and immediately there was 'boos' and everyone eh, just kind of immediately let me know they were not huge fans of the council. So from that moment on, it really was the first thing I had ever done, I made myself clearly identifiable as the museum, working for the museum rather than the council..Because people are a lot more sympathetic to museums and are...

interested and keen to work with the museum not the council. And they probably know that the museum is funded by the council but it's like a different entity. And it's very useful to have that. I work for the museum rather than I work for the council" (MW 2, England). [sic]

Workers can distance themselves from the local authority as a coping mechanism within their work. Experiences have shown that being seen as a council officer can have negative impacts. The distance generated allowed them to work with groups without the negative connotations that may be linked to 'the council'.

This was also applicable to the local councillors that were involved in the service through their position in the local authority. At an exhibition opening that I attended in Scotland, a worker commented that *"oh she is usually wheeled out for these things. I don't think she even writes the speeches herself I think it is done for her"* (field notes, Scotland, 31.07.09). Councillors were seen by some workers as a political 'face' for the museum services. As the main advocates for museum services in local government, the perception that councillors were ineffective at ground-level reinforced the distance they had to local government.

Distancing activities

The findings have shown that museum workers can be seen to actively distance themselves from the local authorities that they work for. Evidence showed that museum workers created and recreated this distance through their own discourses and actions. The local authority was generally stated as ‘the council’, and seen almost as a separate organization from the museum service itself. For example:

“I mean I’ve got, we have customer standards that we work to. The council has its own standards and those are things and we need to work to... Yes the council has its own policy and customer standards and they have a customer care training course which is a half day. ” (MW I, Wales). [sic]

RESEARCHER: When you talk about ‘them’ and their policy, do you mean local government then?

“Yes. Sorry. That’s a good point... I mean us. That’s a very interesting point actually. That says it all actually doesn’t it (sighs). It shows the extent that we feel connected and comfortable in an organisation (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

As some of the workers viewed ‘the council’ as a separate organisation to the museum’s services, a perceived distance between policy and practice was understandable. Policy that was seen as council policy had difficulties generating a sense of ownership within museum workers. Workers related to themselves as museums officers rather than council officers. Interestingly, this separation was promoted within the local authority service structures, as museum services have been isolated in corporate departments, where they found it difficult to integrate. The line between ‘them’ and ‘us’ has an element of physicality, with staff viewing ‘us’ as those based within on-site office venues (of course there are divisions within this ‘us’). Also, different departments are encouraged to work with each other through partnership programmes (at the same level as external organisations), which may promote the feeling of isolation within the service. There were no activities to integrate the service with other council services, except some centralisation of marketing functions. Even in the smallest case study area in Wales,

museum workers perceived the local council as something so large that it was incomprehensible to know what was happening. The perception of isolation was exacerbated to the point, where museum workers saw the council almost as an opponent.

“The council are sometimes very reluctant to listen to the people who are actually on the ground who are saying this is how we can improve it. This is what we want. So it’s always an ongoing battle” (MW IV, Wales). [sic]

Actions that encouraged the ‘ongoing battle’ were another distancing technique. Museum workers’ perceptions often positioned ‘the council’ as their largest adversary rather than ally. The perceived separation and isolation that museum workers felt between themselves and the local authority they work for also had a basis in the discourses within policies outlined by the local authority.

“... Museums and heritage and culture probably have a bit of an issue as far as local authorities and bodies are concerned... we fit within them but most of the stuff is written as not being a part of the authority” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

The local authority policies written for the museum service placed it as a separate entity from the council. Workers often felt distance from other public services in the local authority. As with management, there was a ‘them’ and ‘us’ feeling from museum workers. This was reinforced by ideas that there were separate council policies and museum policies, rather than departments that were working according to the same corporate priorities. This was sometimes linked to the difference between the non-statutory museum services and the rest of local council services. Museum workers expressed a sense of disorientation regarding where museum services should actually be within the local authority structure.

“What we argued as well was that in terms of a story, in terms of unlocking the stories and the heritage, in the collections that we have. We argued and argued that the current set up doesn’t allow us to do that effectively. Our story is fragmented. It lacks cohesion, it lacks a sense of empathy of place” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

This evidence showed that perceptions of distance between museum services and the overall local authority were structurally linked. It was also reinforced through perceptions on policy and discourse. This had some effects at ground-level, as museum workers tried to find their position within an unstable and unpredictable structure. It gave the idea of constant negotiation between the service and museum workers for different outcomes. Distancing activities from workers allowed them freedom to work with groups of people, without the negative effects of being associated with 'the council' as a whole. On the other hand, it also created challenges in creating a 'cohesive' service. Furthermore, although there is structural distance, it always has an effect on "*internal policy terms*" (Gray 2012b: 5). Uncertainties in structure and policy expectations encouraged fragmentation within the service. This fragmentation and uncertainty over roles, allowed museum workers a central role in shaping the direction of their activities and delivery.

The analogy that museum workers were battling for their place within local authorities reinforced the idea that their position was an important one within the process. Furthermore, it also showed that they are in a place where negotiation is achievable. There must be a certain amount of discretion or there would be no position to struggle from. Although in an uncertain structure, this could potentially create room for movement at ground-level and potentially more freedom.

The challenges of working within a local authority

Museum workers discussed a series of challenges as a result of being within a local government museum. The main challenge was described as general budget constraints. This came from an idea of lack of power over generating and controlling funds within the museum services. When talking about the challenge of being a local government service, the term 'restrictions' was also a popular phrase. These included restrictions in employing people, budgets and policy development.

“Budgets are just pathetic. When I first started here as an assistant curator twenty years ago the amount of money in the section I worked into then was just over a thousand pounds.... The annual budget now is about the same” (MW 11, England). [sic]

As well as budget constraints, communication was stated as the largest challenge within the local authority. This was similar in Scotland, England and Wales, especially in regards to policy development. As seen before, communicating effectively was seen as a particular challenge, and was attributed especially to being within a large local authority organisation. Difficulties in communication were often attributed to the large bureaucratic processes that existed within the local authority structure.

“... it's also very frustrating very often the treacle that you end up wading about in to get things done” (MW 11, England). [sic]

“It's very difficult to get things done. And you find it very frustrating and it's like glue, the best way to describe what you have to get through. Before you do anything you need to write reports, and people need to see that it goes to someone else and it goes on and on and on. And at the end of it all you're told there is no funding to do it... it's partly government because the government changes its position and their priorities and these priorities change as well” (MW 13, England). [sic]

“I find the same thing is like everything else with local government – it's a paper shuffling exercise. It's, everything you write down, that doesn't seem to get seen from one year to the next. It just disappears into a filing cabinet. Ticks the box” (MW IV, Wales). [sic]

Paper work and long bureaucratic processes were shown to be both a challenge and an opportunity for increasing museum worker discretion. It is a challenge because, although museum workers generate distance from local authorities, they cannot disassociate themselves from all the processes within it. These processes were often viewed as a waste of time,

unending and ineffectual to their everyday roles. Distancing techniques, then, not only are a way for museum workers to generate more freedom within roles, but also to try and gain some autonomy within the local authority bureaucratic process. The complex bureaucratic process can also expose opportunities to increase discretion and autonomy. As Museum Worker IV in Wales pointed out, often it involves 'paper shuffling', which is not monitored very closely. It suggested a lack of close scrutiny of ground-level from local government.

What is clear here is that museum workers' relationships with the local authorities that they work for were complex and dynamic. Museum workers found themselves in multiple roles – both as council officers and museum service officers. These positions had different, and often contradictory, roles and expectations attached to them. Being part of 'the council' and part of their museum's services meant that museum workers needed to negotiate a different set of images in relation to the public. There was often resentment towards the local council from the public and museum officers. There was a balancing act between establishing partnerships and relationships with the community and general public accountability. The next section takes these ideas further by exploring workers' perceptions and relationships with visitors.

Museum workers and the public

The relationship between museum workers and the public was seen to be unique in local authority service provision. Evidence from above has already shown that the museum's distance from local authorities makes their position different from other public services within public perceptions. The autonomy and authority of the consumer should be most evident in leisure services as they are not concerned with primary needs but pleasure and experience (Coalter 1998). Museum workers benefited from not being seen as council workers. Although public interaction was a key part of their roles, museums are not regarded as a direct link with government organisations such as with the police or social services (Lipsky 2010). One key difference is the right to participate freely in cultural services. This makes a unique policy interaction between workers and the public.

'Visitor' or 'audiences' were applied as the normal definition, but often 'users' or 'stakeholders' were used as a descriptive as well. This usually linked visitors with the economic benefits of museums. For some diverse participants, museum workers' actions were more like 'wooing' due to their 'hard-to-reach' nature (field notes, England, 25.03.10). A difficult role for workers was to encourage and convince these groups that the service had something to offer them. When these relationships are established they were highly prized. An example of this was a project called 'The People's Panel' in England. It involved taking a cross-section of the area's population, mostly from hard to reach groups, and integrating them into museum activities. 'The People's Panel' was successful for two years running (as stated in an independent evaluation report commissioned by the museum service that took views from those involved throughout the process). 'The People's Panel' helped to create public gallery exhibitions, leaflets and information boards/cards for the museum.

"We had a very very committed group of people. And my (pause) difficulty was that that project is over and the funding is finished and I actually have a different brief now. And so the panel would love to continue and it's finding ways to keep involving them. Em, which is very challenging. They are used to delivering things but as a team with a huge amount of support. I mean they are a group of people with very different backgrounds and some needing much more support than others which was the idea of it" (MW 10, England). [sic]

User-involvement in the museums was set around the context of using the space to share general views about other services. As well as talking about the museum service, the museum space allowed discussion between neighbourhoods and different areas of the cities. Another such example was the links made between the museum services and foster care agencies in the English and Welsh case study. This link opened up services and visitors for new foster care families to integrate children into the 'mainstream'. Effort went into maintaining the links made to future mutually supportive interactions.

Interacting with the public

What makes street-level workers central to the implementation process is their interaction with the public. It is through those exchanges that policy is finally made and acted out (Lipsky 2010). During the periods of observation, daily interactions were studied within the museums' services. The types of interactions within the museum were very varied. These could include questions at the front door regarding bus routes to full three hour tours around the city. The most common groups that were observed within the museums were school groups and people with mental and physical disabilities. Workers involved in these exchanges were a mixed group within the museum hierarchy. The workers involved in these groups included outreach officers, customer assistants, department heads and even security personnel. Managers were also observed having face-to-face time with the public through such events as exhibition openings and community meetings. Most workers in Scotland, England and Wales made a point of stressing the importance of public interaction. One example of workers trying their best to give visitors what they needed was in the Scottish study. One worker, who stood at the front door to greet visitors, had taken it upon herself to create an FAQ book for the museum. She had noted all the common questions that visitors asked and had information from exhibitions, local genealogy, church histories, even to where the no.10 bus took people (field notes, Scotland, 25.08.09). Compiling this information was a time consuming role, not specified by management. Workers based in other museums often told me about her and often phoned her for any information they needed requested by visitors. This was an example of workers using their discretion and being creative and active in their role.

As the findings show, the perception of being 'socially useful' within these museums, was a key motivation for workers. For example, almost all ground-level workers that patrolled museum floors gave examples of activities, where they sought to improve a visitor's experience of the museum. Another example from Scotland included a customer assistant, who went out of her way to take families up to the play areas so they could interact with the museum at different levels. When taking me on a tour of the museum, she took me to the playroom and specifically went through the costumes, activities and objects that children could touch (field notes,

Scotland, 21.08.09). Another example in the Welsh case study involved one of the under-gardeners, working in the museum grounds. Although it was not part of his remit, he often took visitors on a tour of the grounds and introduced them to the different plants and animals. He also often gave general gardening advice (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). The idea of being 'socially useful' is also a key element of Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucrat. Street-level bureaucracies involve experiences of public policies in places that are to do with welfare and a 'sense of community'. Thus museum workers can be shown to fit into Lipsky's (1980) general principles of street-level bureaucracies. These interactions were of central importance to both making and implementing government policy.

A key feature of public interaction within museums was its voluntary nature. Museum workers did not tend to interact with non-compliant or involuntary members of the public (as compared to welfare recipients, for example, who have to interact with workers to receive welfare). This was because the majority of interactions are instigated by the public themselves – no-one *has* to come to the museum, for example, as a condition for welfare benefits. However, there is a qualification to this observation. In activating social policy objectives, such as social inclusion, museum workers have been going beyond the physical confines of museums to meet certain public groups. Outreach workers often went to places that had never had any interaction with the cultural sector. Furthermore, in trying to represent marginal and disadvantaged groups, workers had experienced hostility and rebuff. In Scotland, for example, one museum worker was asked "*why do wish to increase my pain?*"[sic] when visiting a member of the public to ask for help on an exhibition about the slave trade (field notes, Scotland, 17.09.09). This is ironically in line with Lipsky's (2010: 54) observation that only poorer or disadvantaged groups of people tend to be non-voluntary participants of public services. The element of choice is usually left to the white middle classes, who make up both the majority of workers and visitors. This example in particular showed how the museums policy could be viewed by vulnerable members of the public as intrusive. The curator's role here was crucial in shaping how that policy is viewed and implemented. There were also examples of diverse treatment.

“[MW was discussing a project with young offenders] And it was quite funny almost we were getting you know almost frowning looks from visitors and even staff you know. And em, in fact, some of the comments that I got back from various staff members. One of them was ‘I followed that boy all the way down the museum to make sure he didn’t do anything wrong’ you know and I said to him you know you don’t have to do that he is not going to start destroying (laughs) the museum you know.” (MW 9, England). [sic]

Museum workers ‘constructed’ their visitors by making judgements and assumptions about certain groups in the museum, showing key similarities between museum workers and Lipsky’s (2010) street-level bureaucrats. Workers own judgements and perceptions were shown to shape their activities. One worker in Wales took this to the extreme through his antagonistic security activities. In trying to protect the museum and grounds one worker became ‘obsessed’ with logging visitor actions in a black log book. These books had gone missing when issues arose and they were asked for. This had put other staff in a difficult position. They had felt *“interrogated by the council”* with *“too many power plays on the site”* (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). Two members of staff discussed with me in detail, how he would watch the footage from the security camera and log any names of dog owners, who had failed to clean up after their pets the grounds. As the camera was originally established as an anti-vandalism deterrent, the legality of the workers actions were brought into question. One visitor was so upset in finding this out that she was considering going to the police and trying to charge the worker for ‘stalking’ (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). These examples show that workers actions were not always positive in regards to visitor interactions. By not following security policy, for example, this worker had brought his activities, and thus the museum, into question. The museum worker had used his discretion and freedom at ground-level and employed it in a questionable way. This is yet another example of workers using discretion to push boundaries, and ‘make’ their own policy.

As seen above, museum workers’ relationships with the public are central to their working experiences. The findings show several examples of how workers shaped their own

interactions with the public regardless of policy. Some of those interactions had a policy influence at its foundation (such as contacting potential partners for exhibitions on the slave trade). For Lipsky (2010), it was interactions with the public that centralise street-level workers within the policy process. It is through intercommunication with the public that policy is made. This section introduced the visitor/museum worker relationship (although museum workers as policy-makers are later explored in chapter eight). Looking at this dimension of local-authority museum services was of central importance from a ground-level view. This was also shown through the themes of public accountability and social expectations in relation to visitors and user-involvement that are explored below.

Public accountability

The very nature of public services is that they should revolve around, and serve, the general public. Although museums are for the public in general, local authorities have the added distinction of a public service, due to their existence on local authority subsidies. They were also governed and run by the local authorities that delivered the majority of other public services in the area. Front-line workers were often expected to be advocates on 'clients' behalf due to services being generally thought of as in "*the public interest*" (Lipsky 2010: 8). Furthering this theme, workers were much more likely to identify with 'the council' when discussing accountability with the public.

"If I was working not in a council but in a university or something then it would feel very different. You know, we are, we do feel we are dealing with the public.

That we are their servants in effect" (MW 14, England). [sic]

It is interesting that being a council worker was related to being a public servant. A council worker is defined here, as someone who deals with the public. Being of service to the public was noted by the museum worker as a point of difference from other museums. It suggests that workers within the local authority sector may view their services as more public orientated than other types of museum. This was often linked to having higher levels of public accountability.

“Yes so from my point of view all the council rules and regulations apply so you have to think like a council officer at all times really... I think this has to be, you have to remember who you are and what you are doing. And what you say, and that things are being recorded (looks at recorder and smiles) you know is important and particularly what you write down. Because it reflects on the museum, on the council and on me” (MW 14, England). [sic]

This suggested that workers place the public as important to their roles. Although workers felt distance towards local authorities, they still applied the public accountability element of being a public servant to their roles. Accountability was described by workers as being aware of what you were doing, and being able to justify your actions. Thus, although there is a fundamental distance between workers and ‘the council’, they often retained their sense of accountability to the public. This suggests that the distancing techniques of museum workers were not about establishing the museum as a stand-alone entity – but rather as a way of increasing their own accountability and discretion. This idea was linked, although not explicitly, to central and local government policy expectations.

Working with the ‘social’ in local authorities

The previous section has shown that although there is distance between management, local authorities and workers, there is still an important connection in regards to public accountability. This was seen by some as a two way process. The first was that workers were representatives of the council in the public realm. The second was that workers saw themselves as serving the public. In each case workers prioritised the relationships they had with visitors. The theme explored here is whether these perceptions are linked to policy expectations. Perspectives on social policy in particular, and how this works in local government, are given as an example. In general, there was some confusion on whether being a local authority museum enabled or hindered more social outcomes.

“I have only ever worked in local authority museums and what I personally think is that the only reason, no not the only reason but a very strong reason why museums are becoming more socially minded is because of the, you know, the policies that are coming from central government... So in a way I think they were forced to become more open minded. But I personally think that that is a good thing” (MW 9, England). [sic]

“If we were solely LA funded we couldn’t do half of the social things we do. In fact we could only do a miniscule amount” (MW 4, England). [sic]

There was a perception that the museum had become more socially orientated, but there was an element of coercion from top-down. The motivations behind museum workers’ actions are then difficult to determine. Although they may have personal motivations in regards to social outcomes, they have obviously been affected and impacted by central government expectations. The data showed that this has been motivated by funding but this had to be accessed elsewhere than the local authority. Museum workers showed both resistance (or talked about others’ resistance), while at the same time placing policy intervention as a positive element in museum change. There was also a perception that these interventions are manipulative.

“It’s just local government perhaps that gets more of the politics and policy. Social policy. There is a lot of sort of social engineering going on through culture nowadays so I think that feeds into local government museums” (MW 7, England). [sic]

Here we see, like Le Grand’s (1997) ideas around Knights, Knaves, Pawns and Queens, that museum workers often aligned themselves as ‘Knights’ in selflessly delivering public services. The values they express are often of a more egalitarian focus. At the same time, there are elements of ‘Knaves’ in that they undermine policy direction to align it with their own ideas of museum function. That this is a more socially orientated alignment does not particularly take away from the underlying self-determination of those actions.

There are mixed perceptions with regards to the impact of social policy expectations in museums. The suggestion that policy has forced a measure of open-mindedness towards certain groups of visitors, contrasts with expressions of public servitude. Lipsky (2010) helps us understand this contradiction a bit better in his analysis of street-level bureaucrats. Street-level bureaucrats tend to be the first advocates of users, but they encounter tensions within this relationship. These tensions can be created when workers are required to allocate social values without any help to define and achieve these objectives (Lipsky 2010). The evidence clearly shows a gap between how museum workers would like their relationship to users to be, and the reality that their roles allow. Those tensions seem to be linked to policy.

The evidence from museum workers, offered above, does highlight the policy origins of social objectives. They are not explicitly against social objectives, but workers found it difficult to relate to its policy context. Workers continuously expressed the importance of the social role of their museum, and the effect it could have on visitors. Tensions became apparent when they were related to top-down policy initiatives. Workers valued their role as custodians and interpreters of social values and history, but resented the political dimension of this work. This in turn affected the relationships that they formed with visitors and users. The following section explores the dimension of user-involvement in more detail.

User-involvement

The findings showed that there was an element of public servitude in museum workers' perceptions of their role. One way to express, or show, an element of public servitude is through promoting user-involvement. Communitarianism and participative organisation are alternative approaches that empower communities (Hood 2000:121). For workers to place visitors and users as a priority, user-involvement would be an element of the relationship. Involving visitors/users within the museum process was indeed seen as a priority for many who believed this was the best way to develop policy.

“But if I was to approach this practically I would try and not have my own input into it and try and consult as widely as possible and ask people in that area what they want” (MW 9, England). [sic]

The data also showed that museum workers linked democracy to community voice and access. As the basic meaning of citizenship is membership of a community (Lister 2003), museums then have a place within the larger citizenship debate. One motivation behind the drive to involve visitors was that the majority of staff emphasised through interviews and observation that the museum’s services belonged to the local community.

“We are funded by the tax payer we are understanding that local people should have a say within their own service” (MW 15, England). [sic]

RESEARCHER: How important do you think community participation is in the museum?

“Very. I think that’s what defines what goes into it. As we were saying earlier the people of [the city] are paying for the thing. They are the shareholders” (MW 3, England). [sic]

There was an ongoing theme of ownership, and this was linked in museum workers ideas of democracy. It was their role to allow visitors access to the museum space, which was already seen as their right. Another aspect that enforced this was the advocating of free access to their services. This had particular tensions in Wales, where access was charged for. Museum workers were shown to negotiate this by giving discounts (which was against council policies) to older people, students and families. Museum workers employed their own discretion, when presented with a group that met their own criteria for discounted tickets. In this way they were able to initiate their own discretion and initiative at ground-level. Despite policy emphasis on economic outcomes, observations showed workers placing (certain) public groups as priority (field notes, England, 12.03.10). They employed activities to make their museums accessible and prioritised their own views.

As suggested by Lipsky (2010) in regards to street-level workers, museum workers were indeed the major advocates of 'clients' within the service. This was not only a perception that was shared in interviews, but was also shown through their activities. It must be noted, however, that although there were numerous activities, where museum workers employed their actions to the benefit of visitors, they also said that user-involvement was generally limited. Also, advocating and helping users, as shown above, is subjective and selective to individual workers. In all three case studies in Scotland, England and Wales, only two front-line workers were able to give an example where a formal visitor complaint had changed the way they delivered the service. In many of the museums visited, the formal mechanisms for feedback (comments cards and box) were missing. Although there were very good examples of user-involvement, such as 'The People's Panel', there was no ongoing formal consultation or provision. When visitors were involved, it was generally a project-based programme. Although these were heralded as successful, this generally made it short term and difficult to maintain. To summarise, museum workers were shown to be advocates of users but the formal mechanisms and structures involved, limited their capacity to be so. Although policy expectations were centred on user-led involvement in Scotland, England and Wales, the nature of service provision made these possibilities short term only. Workers' roles in regards to visitor or user-involvement were pivotal, as formal mechanisms were ineffective and overlooked. Importantly, when museum workers were able to employ their own discretion and control over delivery, they were often more effective in delivering policy expectations around user-involvement.

Conclusion

Evidence here suggests there are distancing strategies employed by museum workers on the ground-level. By encouraging distance from management and local authority control, museum workers were active in trying to generate the freedom they felt they needed to deliver their roles. Distancing techniques, the low priority of services and general lack of scrutiny often contributed to increased discretionary freedom for museum workers. They used this freedom at ground-level to 'make' policy through their interactions with visitors.

Museum workers' relationships with the local authorities that they work for were even more dynamic. The local-authority museum services studied had an unprecedented amount of distance between them and workers at ground-level. Museum workers encouraged this distance between local authorities, their policies and the museum services. Workers prioritised themselves as museum officers over council workers, which allowed them to form partnerships and relationships with the local community and visitors that were distanced by negative connotations related to local council services.

Gaps and tensions between workers, management and policy expectations have been highlighted. There were a range of expectations and meanings attributed to policy narratives. Furthermore, there were indications of clashes between management strategies for realigning museums, and museum workers' expectations of their own roles. Museum workers placed themselves as central to policy and service delivery by building distance between themselves, management and local authorities. This made their roles and interactions with the public even more important. Workers used any room created by conflict and distance to shape interactions with their visitors. Although policy was seen to be influential in directing some activities, it was how the worker negotiated and directed the activity that formed the implemented policy.

Although the relationship between workers and 'the council' was seen to be relatively distant, workers were seen to view themselves as public servants with a high degree of accountability towards visitors. Although museum workers' personal support of user-involvement was strong, central government influence was shown through activities related to social policy outcomes. Central government policy was viewed as enabling opportunities for social outcomes, but this was often seen as manipulation of the public.

The worker-user relationship was seen to be dynamic. Workers perceptions and actions show a clear public-orientation. However, there were limits to user-involvement, with very little visitor feedback affecting front-line delivery. This chapter introduced the idea of how museum workers can become the central policy-makers in this sector. Workers were able to implement their own ideals through their interactions with the public, because of the uncertain and fragmented

working structure and high levels of discretion. This, ultimately, allowed them to shape the visitors experience of the service.

Chapter Six

The Consequences of Policy Distance

Introduction

The last chapter showed that policy was experienced by museum workers as a distant rhetoric at ground-level. This distance to higher-level policy expectations was reinforced by the low priority of cultural services and distance from management and local authority structures. This chapter explores the affect of the distance sometimes felt by museum workers. The findings here are structured around some of the core ideals and understandings that museum workers discussed. These included the core functions of their museums along with economic and social functions. Social discourses, such as quality of life and 'well-being', are also looked at in more detail. By revealing how cultural workers' perceive these policy expectations, this chapter gives insight to the impact of museum workers within their services.

Using discretion to make policy

Museum workers were shown to use policy to improve working conditions and create opportunities within their roles. Those workers, who could negotiate the gap of policy as stated and policy as practice, were usually seen by other workers as the best at their job. At the same time, workers could exploit this gap (such as the CCTV activities in Wales). Other workers were always quick to refer me to other individuals within the organisation whom they saw as effective in using their discretion to make policy work within the museum. Similarly, street-level workers hold a certain amount of discretion within their roles (Lipsky 2010). Data has already shown that the gap between front-line workers and local government policy could open up opportunities to create and change policy directions.

The findings also show that museum workers at ground-level can use this discretion to make policy. This not only happens through their interaction with the public, but it is a conscious action. For example:

“I guess I’m left to get on with things and to kind-of invent my own policy anyway. You know it’s just the way things are sometimes. Its kinda if things aren’t broke don’t fix it. You kinda get left a bit to the side. So I guess how much of it [governing] is related to me or local government is difficult to pick out” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

This is very important when examining the policy process. The idea that workers are left to make and implement their own policy makes higher-level expectations less important within the cultural sector. Central and local authority policy itself was seen as simply a narrative until it reached museum workers activities on ground-level.

“I mean I tend to think I get on with my day job and I do the things I am required to do in my job description and other people in different jobs can think all this up and can explain the blurb, justify our services and show that we are value for money etc. etc. and account for our time and money spent and it seems to be to have been done in a whole variety of ways and has not impacted very much on what actually happens” (MW H, Scotland). [sic]

The relative autonomy of ground-level workers, especially curators who view themselves within a professional status, created a certain amount of discretion in day-to-day workings of the museum’s services. This impacted the decisions, workers made at ground-level, which in turn created the overall agency behaviour. This, ultimately, made the museum workers participating in the study the important policy-makers in their museum services.

Multiple influences

Policy making, however, was not as simple as only being the result of museum workers ideals and discretion. There were multiple influences at ground-level as a consequence of policy distance. Museum workers were influenced by multiple policy ideas, people and organisations. Indeed, interactions and situations are often too complex to be able to align them with full sets of rules (Lipsky 2010). Lipsky (2010) allowed that behaviours are shaped by policy rules and

regulations to some degree. The evidence suggested that local government rules in particular were seen as influential by museum workers.

“Our local government, that’s who directs our policy. We have central government saying museums should be doing x,y,z, then they say well its nothing to do with us, local government decide that” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

There was also evidence that museum services direction could be influenced by a single person, who is dominant in the local authority service:

“I don’t really feel that comfortable about single people having that much authority really. So I guess if that’s the way it happens but yeah I don’t feel terribly comfortable because sometimes you wonder what their qualifications are and their background. Because I think, you know, some of the people we have had sometimes have a certain interest in like jazz or contemporary art and they let that spill over and you think well that’s just because you like that it’s not fair for everyone else” (MW 5, England). [sic]

Here we see that both individuals within the wider local authority and within the museum services could influence policy direction and make policy. Policy making therefore, was viewed by workers as taking place at multiple levels, with a focus on local government level. Interestingly, sometimes policy making could be seen as doing nothing – or policy implementation through inaction. Influence from voluntary and third sector organisations was seen to be minimal, even though multiple partnerships were in place. Museum workers were aware of central government directions as well, but found it difficult to pin down exactly what that influence meant in regards to their everyday activities. Devolved government quangos, such as the MLA, MGS and CyMAL, had important accreditation criteria, which could influence the working and shape of museum policy, but mainly on a collections level rather than social policy level.

Gray (2006) has noted that due to the weak management and strategy of the cultural sector, an individual can have a significant influence on policy direction. A good example of this was in the

Scottish case study, where one of the most successful cultural activities was an LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) exhibition. This was started by an LGBT activist, who had made various requests to the local council. Those who talked about it had highlighted that its success was driven by one individual member of the public and the museum workers enthusiasm.

'And she said look what you should be doing is going out and interviewing the ancient dykes. Which is lesbians over 50 (laughs). And I said well yeah but it would just be tokenism if I went out and did some interviews... And I said right, you've got money, I've got willpower (laughs) so... We had a pilot, well first of all we had a meeting which em, we asked the activist to invite people to the meeting" (MW F, Scotland). [sic]

The individual here controlled the money, direction and those involved in the exhibition. This example shows how strongly one individual can influence workers and the direction of museum services.

The influence of community groups was also important. One community group had formed an official 'Friends of the Museum' society in Wales. The museum workers reported certain tensions with the association, which seemed to be ongoing. They mentioned that there is a lot of "power plays", with members of the group using the museum to "score points" against other members against whom they held personal grudges. Participants mentioned they are all mayors, ex-mayors, Welsh speakers, who think they are the "bee's knees". There were many examples where these prominent members of the community had "crossed boundaries" by cutting down trees, violating health and safety rules and attending children's events without permission or disclosure passes from the local council (field notes, Wales, 23.04.10). This created tensions for workers:

"It's a tough role being piggy in the middle and sometimes I could do without it really" (MW XI, Wales). [sic]

This particular participant negotiated these tensions by seeking allies within the friends group, rather than the local council. As seen in the literature review, street-level workers decision-

making power can be limited or enhanced, depending on the level of users' status and knowledge (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 638). This emphasises the powerful position of the group within the community within that particular museum.

The perceived role of communities, volunteers, and even philanthropic individuals, could influence the activities of front-line workers very strongly (none of which museum workers relate to as 'policy'). The impact of discretion, therefore, opened up multiple routes of involvement in the delivery of the museum services. Overall, this creates a dynamic picture of policy making, but one where museum workers have a larger role than they generally perceive.

Policy 'attachment'

Local authority 'attachment' has been shown to be important (Gray 2004) and there was evidence of this in Scotland, England and Wales. Local government has been the main instigator of policy 'attachment' strategies, and 'attachment' of policy expectations has meant that cultural policies are to solve economic, social, political and even ideological problems in society (Gray 2002, 2007, 2008). One example included the foster care work with local families. In both England and Wales the museum services worked with foster care organisations. Through this work, museums engaged with community and learning teams throughout the local authority service. This was 'attached' to policy expectations around increasing access and learning. It was also attached to programmes that tried to stop young people dropping out of formal education. They were diverse programmes linked to social outcomes.

The best and most frequent examples of attachment were shown through the multiple partnership programmes that workers were involved in. Despite mixed understanding of policy expectations under the idea of partnership, nearly all museum workers saw it as an important, and even essential, part of working in the cultural sector.

“The big word for all government nowadays is partnership. In, you know, big total capital letters in neon (putting hands up). It really is that important so working with these groups, is almost policy led, council policy, and possibly the most important work we do” (MW VII, Wales). [sic]

Partnerships mentioned were the NHS, local GPs, child care departments and individual foster families. Local societies (such as geographical societies) were also common partners. Also tourist boards, wildlife groups, mental health groups (such as MIND), local cafes and children and young people's agencies, local businesses, dementia groups, health and social care were given as examples of partnerships. There were many examples of policy 'attachment' shown from ground-level perspectives.

Museum workers formed many partnerships but viewed them as being driven from local government level. Although these motivations were apparent, the making of partnership was specifically seen as a ground-level activity.

"Partnerships are formed on a ground level. Council cannot do that as it's done on project level... It is what we are there for" (MW J, Scotland). [sic]

Museum workers were forming the policy and developing the related activities. Although other people and groups can be influential, it is those at ground-level that negotiate access and interpret user needs. This shows that there is freedom to interpret policy at this level. Added to the distance that exists between workers, management and local authorities, this contributes to the idea that workers have a certain amount of discretion over policy direction in these services.

Shaping policy with workers' ideals and understandings

Previous chapters have shown that museum workers have professional discourses and cultural ideals within their roles. Lipsky (2010) also believed it was important to look at street-level bureaucrats personal ideals within their roles. This section explores museum workers' perspectives of their roles and the overall functions of their museums. Without this insight, it was difficult to compare government policy expectations with museum workers understandings. Furthermore, exploring workers' perceptions helped highlight the potential impact of employing discretion at ground-level. This section shows that the relationship between museum workers' expectations and social policy expectations can be based on conflicts and tensions. The connections between politics and social policy are interesting, and challenge the notion that the museum is a 'neutral' and safe space (Thelen 2004). This idea was important for workers for

understanding what their museum was. It was a place where people could explore identity and purpose. For workers, the museum was not about displaying an instrumental change in values.

“Unless it has a role and purpose and if it does tie in directly with the social agenda, you know, or GP [doctors] practices, then they are not interested” (MW 12, England). [sic]

Many museum workers viewed the ‘core function’ of museums as having changed. This included the demotion of traditional collections-based roles as a museum priority. Furthermore, the ‘social’ was linked to the ‘political’ in top-down management initiatives. This created tensions and difficult negotiations for museum workers, as they tried to work to their individual beliefs and ideologies. Museum workers were fighting for control over the focus of their work and thus control over museum delivery.

“It’s very different working here or in another department or in like social services. People who work in heritage are there because they love that sort of thing” (MW 1, Wales). [sic]

It was also noted in Scotland, England and Wales that this dedication was often taken advantage of, with workers frequently being asked to go beyond their remit. One worker in Wales, for example, had been letting the museum borrow her sit-on lawnmower for years, and she felt that the council had made no effort to buy new equipment for the museum, as the workers were ‘*filling the gaps*’ (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). One poster in a staff room read ‘*overworked, undervalued, underpaid*’ (field notes, Scotland, 25.08.09). Using personal time and resources was cited a lot as part of the role of a museum worker. After interviewing museum worker 11, he said he was going to meet some people, who were monitoring the moths in the area. They were tracking them and registering any variations due to climate change. He mentioned that this had been part of the museum service twenty years ago, but when funding ran out he kept it going in his personal time. He also remarked that:

“You feel a guardian for that hidden potential that others can’t always see and being asked to compromise that creates that sort of tension. So you end up doing both in your own time supporting the organisation in ways perhaps you shouldn’t. Curators give their weekends free most of the time. To some extent people are prepared to do that but they can be pushed over the edge potentially as well” (MW 11, England). [sic]

It shows real dedication from workers at ground-level to deliver a wide service. However, in these situations the impact of this could result in different levels of exploitation. Ground-level workers used the freedom and expertise that they had, but this could be taken advantage of. Despite this, street-level bureaucrats are often satisfied and do a reasonable job with the resources that they have (Lipsky 2010). The fulfilling nature of roles should not be neglected (Lipsky 2010) and this is explored below.

Working beyond job remits was seen as necessary by workers that wished to implement their social ideals. Lipsky (2010) stressed the gap between personal ideals and service delivery. One example is the movement away from traditional museum practice to social and economic outcomes, which has compromised what workers perceive as ‘core’ functions. This increased ‘attachment’ has been seen to take the cultural sector away from traditional cultural outcomes (Gray 2002). This ‘attachment’, however, can also be driven from ground-level, as workers try to implement their own social ideas. Linking their work into the community, for example, was a key ideal with many workers in Scotland, England and Wales. Increasing people’s quality of life was seen by museum workers as a positive social outcome from their work. An example of this from the Welsh case study included the workers’ fight to keep the wooden council benches on the museum grounds all year round. Although a small point, the workers had noted that many older people walking in the winter were struggling with their health and needed somewhere to sit (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). They felt that walking and experiencing the museum grounds was central to many people’s quality of life. Through my observation I witnessed several workers engage visitors in conversation. They could later inform me of names and what ailments those visitors were suffering from (one had cancer and another had Parkinson’s

disease), and how much the museum kept them going. One worker noted that a visitor, he knew, had been told he would die two years ago, but was still visiting the museum grounds nearly every day. He was convinced that the peaceful atmosphere of the grounds contributed to the visitor's ongoing fight with Parkinson's disease (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). Ground-level workers in Scotland, England and Wales consistently linked their museum delivery to improved health outcomes.

Interestingly, workers ideals were often in line with higher policy expectations – but they remained mainly unaware of it. As the literature review showed, health is one of the main social policy outcomes linked to cultural service delivery. This alignment in policy aims did not seem to be influenced from the top-down policy expectations in the sector, but instead from workers ideals. Workers at ground-level of these services went above their job descriptions to try and improve life for those who visited. This type of implementation within the community generated pride and meaning to jobs that were often perceived as insecure, underpaid and exploited.

The perceived 'core', 'economic' and 'social' functions of the museum

Gray (2002, 2007) argued that cultural policy in recent years has become 'instrumental' in using cultural services to fulfil wider policy agendas. One front-line worker described this dichotomy as 'new school' and 'old school' workers. He placed himself in the 'new school' category and, while having a cup of tea with me in the local café, he went through everyone he classed as 'old school' (collections orientated) and 'new' school (those who want to 'make a difference'). He respected both sides and gave examples of the good work they both did. However, different factions were clear and they were linked to the different functions of the museum and often it was '*dog eat dog*' (field notes, England, 25.04.10). Museum functions, therefore, were not simple, and different workers ideals and understandings often competed within the services studied. This argument is based on the idea that there are a set of natural, and historically based, museum activities compared to those activities 'imposed' by central and local government. This creates a false dichotomy between the "instrumental" and the "intrinsic" activities of cultural services (Gibson 2008: 248). Gray (2008: 211) highlighted these intrinsic,

or 'core' functions, in the museums sector as "*curatorship, education, entertainment and the infra-structural management of resources*", although these are not universally agreed.

What museum workers regard as museum activities, then, is important to establish. Policy that takes museums away from these core activities, can be seen as harmful and threatening to museums in general (Belfiore 2002; Holden 2004; Gray 2008). By exploring museum workers' perspectives, insight can be gained to what they believe the role of the museum is, or what it should be. This is a key when exploring their roles in the policy process, as the literature cannot give a set definition of what a museum is or what its core activities should be. The situation is further complicated, given that cultural policy was seen to have diverged from 'cultural' outcomes to incorporate, or be used, to fulfil a wide range of governmental priorities (Gray 2007). Given this complexity, it could be argued that asking museum workers what they do is the only way to establish this for the specific case studies. As local contexts are very important in this sector, it could be argued that only museum workers could give insight to these roles. With the importance of local contexts in mind, the following section presents museum workers' perspectives on their working roles and museum functions. It shall begin by looking at perceived 'core' functions, followed by economic and social roles attributed to be museum functions. Overall it explores how workers used any freedom they had, to adapt roles and functions to their own understandings.

Core functions

The 'museum' was a complicated public service to explore. It has been seen as an organisation, an institution and an authority on truth (Harrison 2004). For museum workers it was also a work place and site of tension and opportunity. In looking at core functions for museum workers, the collections were seen as the starting point for any museum. It was the collections that made a museum unique and 'real'.

“The only thing that makes a difference between a museum and a historical piece is the presence of the physical collections... what we have to start with is these physical things and what stories they tell us. And that’s the real difference as far as I can see. It’s what makes museums unique because of these things that we have are real” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

Collections were seen as the ‘root’ of the museum by the majority of the participants in Scotland, England and Wales. Not only were collections important, but most museum workers believed it was what made their museum a unique service.

There was a sense, however, that the collection-centred point of view was slowly being lost within the service.

“It is an ongoing battle to try and get people to understand the importance of the collections and the need for a gallery” (MW 7, England). [sic]

“... I am very interested in access to the collections and preserving them and protecting them. For future generations. And I guess sometimes that seems to be in opposition maybe to what other colleagues might be wanting to do. Where management might be wanting to take us” (MW 5, England). [sic]

“The collections are a bit neglected. I don’t think they know what to do with them. There is no, there appears not to be any long term plan although there may be that I’m not aware of.... I think, I don’t know, but I don’t think the management are interested in having curators as such looking after the collections” (Volunteer 1, England). [sic]

Although the importance of the collections was an ongoing theme through museum workers’ dialogue, this was placed alongside the idea that getting support was a challenge. Museum function was contested and resisted in relation to policy. This had created tensions for museum workers, who found themselves in a defensive position. Being collection-focused was often seen as being ‘anti-management’. There was a clear gap within each service between

professional curator ideals and management expectations. The tension between 'core' and other duties became conflictual, especially when workers believed that their freedom to focus on their ideals was compromised. When managerial control was seen to challenge workers' understandings of museum functions this caused tension. It has also generated a sense of guardianship, as curators see themselves as parents, defending their collections against management and policy change.

"I'm basically a sort-of custodian" (MW E, Scotland) [sic]

"And em so you feel a guardian for that hidden potential that others can't always see and being asked to compromise that creates that sort of tension" (MW 11, England). [sic]

Most ground-level workers expressed pride in the objects and collections within the museums they worked in. This role was placed in opposition to management and policy expectations. Museum workers' roles have been diversified away from the collections, as this role was viewed as becoming less important in the museum from the top-down. In England for example:

"...I know there is a lot of dissatisfaction at the moment because the role of the curators in this museum has been downgraded" (Volunteer 1, England). [sic]

Furthermore in Scotland, curators had been restructured into 'buildings managers'. In Wales the heritage service was more managerially driven, with curatorial managers being more 'events' managers and drivers for economic generation. The last employee with the title 'curator' had left a year previously and never been replaced. Although museum workers still perceived collections as central, structural changes had tried to re-align those roles to managerial and economic driven activities. These moves were shown to be contentious:

“There are so few people to actually do these core things and you bring people in to inspire them and there will be nothing left worthwhile to show them... And you still need these objects, you still need them to be conserved so they are in the same condition, that they are worth showing to people and that you can collect new things and keep them going” (MW 2, England). [sic]

This has resulted in devaluation of professional roles within museums. The diversity of new roles has contributed to de-skilling of the traditional role of the curator. The diversification of the job had forced museum curators to fulfil other roles.

Looking at the ‘core function’ of the museum is an example of where workers discretion has been limited. The managerial control mechanisms that have restructured roles have compromised workers freedom in fulfilling what they perceive as key museum functions. In Wales, for example, customer assistants at ground-level were learning about one museum and its collections in their own personal time to close the cultural knowledge gap, left in the service. They were worried about specific aspects of preservation regarding the collections, as they were untrained (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). Furthermore in the Scottish case study customer assistants, who had previously been based in one museum, had been ‘pooled’ to a centralised rota. They were often given one week’s notice on which museum they would be working in. This had led to feelings of anxiety and redundancy. Some workers had felt comfortable in their knowledge of specific museums, and struggled to absorb new knowledge for each of the museums in the service (field notes, Scotland, 30.08.09). This had resulted in a devaluation of cultural knowledge within each service. Another impact had been a distancing between ground-level staff (who are focused on collections) and managerial staff (who are focused on policy and management). For curatorial staff, being a guardian of the collections was central to museum delivery, but this function is a ‘battle’. Gray (2002) has suggested that policy development in the cultural sector could weaken core meanings and functions of services. Here we have seen clear evidence of this from ground-level workers. Using discretion to fill service gaps was often a necessity. These findings show that the struggle for discretion at ground-level is an ongoing negotiation.

Economic functions

Economic expectations clashed with the collections-led focus for some workers. 'Traditional' roles were seen to be replaced with a stronger managerial and economically determined remit. Many museum workers noted that this has always been a facet of museum delivery, but in recent years it has become more of a policy focus.

"So the main purpose of a museum is the care of collections, and the access to the public. We have to make sure we don't lose that with the cultural tourism which essentially canvassing of bringing money in. We have to be ever so careful in what we do because with the income generation we are expanding the chief executive here wants to see that we are bringing money in"

RESEARCHER: And that works for you?

"Yes it does. Because em, proving to the director of the environment that we weren't soft, that we didn't expect everything to come to us we were actually trying to turn things around so that we weren't saying 'oh yes we are part of the local authority you make sure we can last'. Instead we are going to try and help ourselves. Yes it does work" (MW V, Wales). [sic]

Talking about the service as a business was particularly strong in Wales. Those at management level in particular, had aligned themselves strongly to try and fulfil economic policy expectations. Scottish workers were much less likely to do this, which corresponds with the perception that Scottish policies are inclined to be more socialist, collectivist and egalitarian than English policies (ESRC 2005b; Keating 2005). Interestingly, Welsh workers were more likely to be more individualistic about the running of museums in a way that makes money, or at least pays for the service.

"I don't think a museum can sit back and expect people to just pour money into it I think it has got to play a role itself to a degree to self- fund" (MW IV, Wales). [sic]

This view, however, was in the minority in all the case studies. Local government and management's tendency to see the museum as an asset and a resource, had led to ideological tensions between different functions in the museum. This had led to conflict, where ideas of 'policy' and 'process' are set in opposition to 'what the museum is'. The perception was that managers were trying to run it as a 'business', while, in opposition, museum workers are trying to provide a public service. This highlights what Gray (2012b) terms as the three structural factors: those of ideology, rationality and legitimacy. Ideas of 'business' and 'cost efficiency' were not seen to work together with the museum's core function. It had reduced the amount of discretion that workers could employ at ground-level.

"I would say the only reason the museum service can deliver is through the enthusiasm or bloody mindedness of people like myself... And people who are enthusiastically communicating it. In adverse circumstances. We had to fight two years ago for annual diaries... that cost 19p each.... I said this to the head of service... That's just outrageous that they are trying to get us to deliver a service with no commitment or support from managers" (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

There was a clear tension between traditional functions and the local government's economic expectations. Although museum workers engaged with the narratives of business and the museum as a resource, overall they worried that focusing on generating income in museums would have negative impacts.

"On top of that the last 6 months in particular has seen a sudden heavy emphasis that we will have to change to an organisation that can produce income. I think this is really dangerous and it's bad news and we have been here before. And you're on the slippery slope again where profit becomes everything when at the end of the day you're spending all your time chasing your tail doing something that is irrelevant to what you should be doing – working on real things and presenting them to the public. And this business has to be subsidised it doesn't make a profit" (MW 11, England). [sic]

This had created a gap in priorities between managers and museum workers about what the museum should be working towards and delivering. In response to these tensions, management had consolidated their influence by downgrading and de-professionalising the role of curators, so that they have less influence on policy and museum function. This was similar to the 'de-skilling' strategies discussed in the literature review (Braverman 1974; Taylor and Kelly 2006). From museum workers' perspectives this had led to compromises on what they consider the core functions of museums to be.

Social functions

Another theme that has been shown to be influential is the instrumental 'social' function of the museum. In the last ten years there has been an increase in top-down pressure to deliver social outcomes, alongside the drive for efficiency and the economic contribution of museums (Gray 2008). Museum workers employed multiple understandings and terminologies, when talking about social outcomes. As these are so wide and diverse, they cannot all be explored. They are also an eclectic mix of expectations, outcomes, actions and 'wish-lists'. In talking to one retail worker about social policy, she thought that it was a lot of different words that mean the same thing (field notes, Scotland, 28.08.09). To focus on related policy, the next section takes the most common policy rhetoric and gives more detail about them from museum workers' perspectives. These included social outcomes such as quality of life and 'well-being'. When talking about the social impact of the museum, museum workers were much more likely to talk within these concepts.

Quality of life

Improving visitors' quality of life was already mentioned as a desired outcome of ground-level workers actions. The literature review also highlighted that generating/increasing quality of life was the main social outcome required of cultural services. This makes exploring museum workers' definitions and understandings important from a bottom-up perspective.

Quality of life was one of the more vague and general outcomes that workers engaged in. Museum workers' definitions were slightly different in Scotland, England and Wales.

“Em, depends on quality of life if you see it as expanding cultural knowledge then yes definitely” (MW X, Wales). [sic]

“We say the quality of life for the people of [the city] is influenced by the amount of cultural opportunities for people” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

Hence, definitions of quality of life were very much reflections of the local and cultural areas the workers were in. Scottish workers linked it to increasing cultural opportunities for visitors, while in Wales it was linked to knowledge. In England it was more likely to be talked about in the context of cultural learning (below). All museum services linked policy to health outcomes. There are differences between the *definition* of, what *contributes* to and what *outcomes* are made through increasing quality of life (Hagerty *et al.* 2001: 81, my emphasis). The most common references are around satisfaction with life, well-being and health (Galloway 2008). In regards of what contributed to quality of life, there was agreement that it was a subjective, individualised idea. Museum workers often attributed quality of life to the personal learning experience of visitors within the museum.

Interestingly, in England quality of life was sometimes linked to an economic agenda rather than to social impacts. This perspective and link was unique to the English case study, as Welsh and Scottish participants were more likely to link quality of life to cultural opportunities and participation.

“And then there is much more stuff like quality of life. The theory is if people are happy and healthy then that is a benefit for everyone and therefore an economic benefit. But it’s a lot harder to measure that” (MW 2, England). [sic]

“...On a general level having good quality museums are crucial if you want that there... It’s eh, a service that’s quite easy to whittle away at if you are having money problems as a council. But it is important [quality of life] and it’s quite a good form of marketing for the city, let’s be honest. You bring people in. [An exhibition] is said to bring in ten million quid” (MW 3, England). [sic]

Scottish workers were more inclined to link quality of life to the emotional changes that a museum can create.

“Yeah I think it really can be there is no doubt about that because quality of life is not just about having a roof over your head or being fed properly I think it’s about the emotional and intellectual ‘well-being’. And I think museums are very much about that... The emotional” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

The above quotes show that outcomes were linked to ‘well-being’, which is explored below and for some museum workers trying to improve people’s lives in this way, was very important. The impact of these activities could be seen through some of the experiences of volunteers.

“Put it this way I think my quality of life is better for coming here. I enjoy my two days a week working as a volunteer in the museum. So I would say that improved my quality of life as a person” (Volunteer 1, England). [sic]

The above evidence highlights some important points. Firstly, there were confusing definitions and wide-ranging impacts of ideas of quality of life. Secondly, key themes around the definition and impact of quality of life were different between the Scottish, English and Welsh workers. English workers were more inclined to see it as part of an economic agenda, in that improving quality of life brought economic benefits to the museum’s services and to people who use it. In Scotland it was more inclined to be linked to cultural opportunities and emotional outcomes. For Wales it was consistently linked to learning, health and knowledge. For Welsh workers, visiting the museum could generally impact someone’s lives positively. Surprisingly, the higher-level economic policy context shown in the literature review was stronger for cultural services in Wales rather than Scotland. This makes it difficult to link any policy impacts for this discourse. Therefore, museum workers’ perspectives on what was a key policy narrative, did not necessarily link to the current policy context. Museum workers expressed their own definitions, understandings and views of key social ideas. These are clearly varied and implemented in different ways. Although there were clear examples of workers trying to improve visitors’ quality

of life, they did not link this to policy discourse. Workers also varied in estimating their own impact.

“I don't really see how you can improve someone's quality of life. Too big an ask policy wise” (MW 1, England). [sic]

“I don't really consider myself capable of improving anyone's quality of life. But what we could do you know is making an interesting afternoon for them” (MW IX, Wales). [sic]

Evidence has shown, then, that there is a gap between policy and workers understandings of quality of life. There were also varied definitions within and between services. Also, museum workers used their ideas and applied them within specific contexts – usually working within their own ideals and expectations around other outcomes such as learning. These definitions and understandings were further diversified in the devolved context of Scotland, England and Wales. Museum workers' understandings did not specifically link up in any obvious way to their own national policy context or expectations.

'Well-being'

Quality of life and 'well-being' were used interchangeably through museum workers discourse. One distinction with 'well-being' is that it was mostly centred on the idea that participation in cultural services produces health benefits. There was a general difficulty in breaking down what 'well-being' actually is. The policy discourse itself was familiar, but like quality of life, its definition differed between museum workers. Museum workers mostly expressed the idea of 'well-being' as making people 'feel good' in the form of a fun experience.

“Sometimes they can handle real things and I think that gives people a, well, you feel good when you do that sort of thing” (MW 14, England). [sic]

Second to feeling good, museum workers in Scotland, England and Wales positioned their museums as places to relax and “*get away from the world*” (field notes, Wales, 22.04.10). In

relation to health benefits, the museum workers mainly focused on the effect of the environment, or “safe space”, (field notes, England, 12.03.10) had on visitors.

“People calm down when they are in here. They pick up vibes and calm down. They de-stress, especially in museums” (MW 6, England). [sic]

“If you come here you have the grounds to wander in and it’s a very pleasant space. It’s quite a healthy space to walk around. But yes I think it could help people’s ‘well-being’ if... Again you have had people with Alzheimer’s or memory loss problems who come in” (MW D, Scotland). [sic]

[when discussing the People’s Panel mentioned earlier] “So some things that people said clearly revealed positive health benefits. So people would say things like ‘it’s given me a reason to get up’ or ‘I really look forward to Wednesdays I haven’t used the bus for years’. One person said that living in sort of supported accommodation em, one of the older members of the panel said it was great because it got you out. Got your mind going. It was absolutely clear that it was really important to everybody in different ways” (MW 10, England). [sic]

The idea of the museum space being ‘neutral’ could be significant here. Workers’ viewed the museum as a non-manipulative space. This allowed people to leave the other demands of life behind. The passivity of collections does not demand much from the visitor - they were not being sold anything, there were no adverts. Workers believed that this environment contributed to visitors’ ‘well-being’. Any form of instrumentalism could compromise this benefit for the visitor.

“In our evaluation we are looking at what people’s responses have been around ‘well-being’ and I think health wise we are talking about exercising things like that I think it’s easier for other people in the departments of the council to look after peoples ‘well-being’ in that instance. When you are talking about mental health issues and other sources of ‘well-being’, depression, things like that, then museums can definitely offer something... And that was part of a bigger thing they were doing in prescription but the evaluation of that seemed to be extremely successful. In, and that was what I was saying about social capital, keeping people out of GP’s surgeries and improving their mental ‘well-being’ (MW 2, England). [sic]

The health benefits that were linked to improving ‘well-being’ were also consistent between Scotland, England and Wales. ‘Well-being’ was linked to both mental and physical health by many museum workers. The evidence suggested that participation could not only improve health physically and mentally, but in some cases prolong it.

“It can improve people’s ‘well-being’ because we can see that aspect because they have very busy lives and they come in here just to get things right in their head. They can walk around and they can deal with things again” (MW VI, Wales). [sic]

Museum workers’ understandings of ‘well-being’ would seem to be centred on the museum’s ability to generate ‘inner qualities’ that help people enjoy and cope with life, so they “*can get things right in their head*”. Visits to the museum were particularly seen as beneficial to older people. Not only was the museum available for visitors in general, local GP’s were prescribing visits to the museum, and museum workers were supporting that role. Importantly, in this example it had been evaluated as a successful venture, as an alternative to visits to GPs. Thus museums were not only in a support role; they were partners with other local government departments and the NHS, helping those in need of mental health support.

In regards to evidence of the link between health and the arts, Hamilton *et al.* (2002: 402) noted that, although the arts have been increasingly seen as a tool with direct and indirect benefits for health, evaluation remains inappropriate and elusive. Much of the current evidence is anecdotal. It is true that much of the evidence given by museum workers was anecdotal, but it was nevertheless rich in detail. There were also systematic qualitative evaluations offered in the English case study that disclosed many museum workers perspectives on this particular social outcome. Museum workers themselves also seemed aware of the drawbacks in working within the 'well-being' discourse:

“Kind-of ‘well-being’ it’s hard to pin down a definition of it because you’ve got to think do you mean being healthy and types of exercise. But if you kind of look at mental health, you know, and the stages of ‘well-being’... Someone’s perception of their lives are very different from others. It’s very hard because all these things are about getting statistics and feedback and evaluation and they find that they compare one thing with the other on an equal footing” (MW 2, England).
[sic]

To summarise the findings around 'well-being', there was strong evidence that museum workers saw this as a valid outcome in regards to increasing individual's physical and mental health. More than any other social outcome, museum workers were able to connect to activities and outcomes that they had perceived personally. They also saw the difficulties surrounding the measurement and evidence required by policy-makers that this is a justifiable outcome from museums activities. The themes connected to 'well-being' were much more consistent than those of quality of life, and museum workers seemed more confident in talking about these outcomes. There was a lot more consistency between policy and museum workers ideas on 'well-being'. Unlike economic expectations, 'well-being' was a good example of where policy and museum workers expectations aligned. Effective implementation of top-down policy expectations was much more likely, when workers understood and agreed on the outcome. Expectations did not always need to be conflictual if workers believed that the concept aligned with museum functions.

Conclusion

This chapter showed that ground-level workers could employ discretion, and that this could shape actions at the ground-level. Employing discretion was an ongoing process that required constant negotiation. The data showed that workers were influenced by a mix of service policy, structures, users and their own values and expectations.

When workers were asked about the 'core' economic and social functions, they highlighted some interesting points. The distance created between workers, managers and local authorities, shown in the last chapter, was seen to create tensions and conflict between worker and manager expectations. When managerial expectations did not align with professional ideas, actions were taken to limit discretion at ground-level. This chapter demonstrated that discretion can be used at ground-level, but this has been limited in several ways. One of the methods of control included the complete restructuring of professional roles within the museum services studied.

Despite this, the continued importance of collections and curatorial roles over economic objectives was expressed by many museum workers in Scotland, England and Wales. This was linked to a context of a 'battle' between front-line workers and management, a scene of conflict and negotiation. Despite the drive to bring economic functions to museums and workers, underlying collections-focused values were still prevalent. Although policy expectations had become increasingly instrumental, museum workers' perceptions and actions had not reflected this. Instead, workers employed forms of resistance in reinforcing their traditional ideals of museum functions. Museum workers had individual and professional beliefs about the social role of their own museums. These values, however, were difficult to link with central and local government discourse.

This shows generally that museum workers do indeed generate and adopt their own understandings of policy expectations within their local contexts. This makes them important in understanding the policy process within their services. The next chapter goes on to explore the opportunities and challenges that this had created for museum workers.

Chapter Seven

The Opportunities and Challenges of Cultural Sector Policy

Introduction

This chapter now goes on to explore the specific policy challenges and opportunities that were evident within the museum services studied. The policy outcomes of social inclusion are then explored as an example to disclose how workers used, and were challenged by, policy outcomes from local and central government. The final section within the chapter explores the opportunities for cultural diversity in the devolved nations of the UK. The chapter also gives further evidence that museum workers are central in utilising policy as they see best.

Policy challenges at ground-level

The museum and cultural sectors in general have specific policy challenges (Gray 2004, 2006, 2009). The literature review highlighted the general, vague and ambitious policy outcomes, expected from all the devolved UK governments. We have also seen that museum workers' understandings of policy are fragmented, diverse and influenced from multiple levels. This was further highlighted when comparing the Welsh and Scottish case studies. Both Wales and Scotland had devolved government cultural policy aims that were uniquely national in nature. There were also more general national priorities, such as regeneration. The overall policy initiative was to make the area that the museum service was in, one of the best places to visit in the country. This was an overall strategy that the Welsh museum workers (both senior and front-line) understood and supported.

“But yes we are supposed to contribute to the regeneration of the whole of Wales. As a place where people want to come and visit, stay locally, spend locally, shop locally and visit local sites and attractions” (MW I, Wales). [sic]

“So yeah the position of the authority which is something as such that by 2025 em, [the area] will be a shining example of the sort of county people can enjoy living in. Em, the priorities at the moment yeah that works for us we feed into that it’s not difficult” (MW V, Wales) [sic].

In Scotland, on the other hand, there was no obvious aim, strategy or objective that staff were able to explain or support. With a service plan that was a little less specific, and used open concepts such as social inclusion (which has already been explored), front-line workers in particular had no concept of what the service was working toward. This has led to a lot of uncertainty with workers.

“Who knows what just might happen [regarding SNP policy]. I think what, what happens to the staff and what’s happened to me is because the bigger picture is just so uncertain. A big wobbly blancmange thing” (MW F, Scotland). [sic]

This shows that workers were indeed subject to different local authority expectations. So far, the findings from previous chapters have shown that ground-level workers views, understandings and experiences have been surprisingly similar. Although some workers did connect to local government policy, others viewed themselves as very disconnected. Some workers expressed, what could be termed as a fatalistic, perspective of their role.

Fatalism

Chapter five explored the idea that workers viewed policy as a distant narrative. It also showed that they encourage this distance through their own rhetoric. The findings have shown that ground-level workers could use this distance to their own advantage, by shaping activities to their own ideals. There were, however, times when the distance from policy could cause negative impact for workers. The idea of policy being some kind of ‘story’ was often linked to a fatalistic attitude by some workers. Some museum workers showed signs of being fatalistic, when thinking about policy within their museum’s services. Other people ‘do’ policy (field notes, England, 27.03.10). Workers felt that they were:

“never consulted not even on small things. You get memos... then you’re a colleague. You become sick of it, become apathetic. If you walk with a man with a limp you get one. Fall in with the others. Sick records are terrible there is no comeback” (field notes, Scotland, 29.09.09).

Because of this stance, policy became something that museum workers found hard to connect to:

“I think sometimes when there are curatorial staff I think they might sometimes follow the agendas in quite a cynical way and not really believe in it themselves and sometimes disapprove of what they are trying to do” (MW 9, England). [sic]

“Yes he is very much on the policy wavelength [talking about a colleague] when I usually just can’t be bothered. Can’t be bothered I just want to get on with my work (laughs) (MW F, Scotland). [sic]

“So there is an issue of policy ownership - it is something managers do” (MW 5, England). [sic]

There was clearly a lack of policy ownership from some museum workers at ground-level. This reinforced the distance that workers expressed towards the idea of policy in general. The idea that ‘management’ owns, or embodies policy, is a repeated theme. Some workers expressed this as a feeling of disempowerment. Experiences of feeding back ideas to managers had often resulted in no action, which had led to widespread apathy. In one museum in Scotland this was a very strong feeling from ground-level staff. Many workers expressed that they had tried repeatedly to change things for the museum. These were not necessarily large changes – they included changing light bulbs, which in cases they could not do, because they did not have that kind of clearance from the local council. Another was simply cleaning – the current cases on display were stained and dirty. Staff wanted to clean the glass, but management said they would touch or damage the objects (field notes, Scotland, 31.08.09). The inability to even make small improvements on the ground-level shows that discretion was not enjoyed by all workers in the museum services studied. Maynard-Moody *et al.* (1990) also highlighted that street-level

workers' ideas are often ignored from those higher up due to lack of formal authority. Lack of decision making power and the view that workers are unable to influence, or improve, their working environment has contributed to a fatalistic way of thinking about their roles.

"Well, you know, we all voice certain things but what we find is its best not bothering because no one's going to listen to you anyway. They will just turn around and say well this is the way it's going to be and we've got no choice"
(MW IV, Scotland). [sic]

The evidence suggests that some workers felt that they did not possess enough discretion at ground-level to change activities. Museum worker's ability to make decisions and shape their services was limited by formal control mechanisms, such as health and safety policies and bureaucracy. It shows that this apathy was not only related to the tasks that they were doing, but also the wider policy process and agenda.

The findings show that workers can be in a position where they cannot form or connect to their own service strategy. The inability of the cultural sector to form a coherent strategy then has foundations at ground-level. The evidence here shows that it was already linked to a fatalistic way of thinking by museum workers.

RESEARCHER: How is your work evaluated and monitored?

"Yeah not very well... I think its apathy you know I think em, we all know it and we have all been to training courses and we all sort of say it ourselves you know we must evaluate these projects but I don't think it happens very much. I think people who read your evaluations, I certainly have done a few in my time and felt I had done something really important you know, conclusions, from it but it hasn't made a blind bit of difference" (MW 9, England). [sic]

“Frustrating things include nothing but writing reports that aren’t going to make a difference, answering emails, sending out statistics. You need to have statistics to be collected but oh my god it’s tedious! I’m just talking about internal garbage that comes into that variety. There are a lot of projects that are very long before they come to fruition” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

The quotes above suggest that previous work by participants has not been acknowledged by the local authorities they work for. This had led to museum workers giving up on certain projects and trying to evaluate their work in general. It suggests that workers could also influence the policy process by resisting, rather than implementing. The idea that their opinions and feedback do not make any difference to the service, has led to workers increasing their distance from the policy process. This is interesting as New Labour policy has often been about ‘making a difference’ (Jones 2001). This shows that, although some museum workers wished to make a difference, they felt that they were not often given the opportunity to do so.

The workers above hinted that a fatalistic way of thinking was something that had developed over time. It also showed that apathy and fatalistic attitudes could be influenced by top-down policy, procedures and practices, rather than from users or visitors. Jones (2001) noted the same frustration in state social workers at the front-line of local authority services. Stress, anxiety and aggravation at ground-level were often caused by agency and government policy. Bureaucracy and tight budgets could restrain the service from developing creative ideas and were cited as an issue. Experiences can become increasingly negative, as the realities of lack of decision making power are found in the post.

“I got some support before trying to raise the profile but it was difficult because if there has been someone who has been in the post a long time and they’ve tried and seen that it’s been really difficult they’re almost well, why bother it’s not going to get you anywhere” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

“When there is no money in the pot they are not going to spend any on these old buildings. You do start to get to feel neglected. You are made to feel like you are simply tolerated you know, as a service rather than necessarily valued” (MW H, Scotland). [sic]

Furthermore, the perceived gap between management and workers, as explored in the last chapter, has also influenced feelings of being undervalued. Thompson *et al.* (1990) note that lack of participation and feelings of not being valued in an organisation can lead to fatalism. The differences between ‘old’ school’ and ‘new’ school workers was a theme continued here. Importantly, this is not a situation that museum workers wanted to be in:

“I think the workers here are passionate about what they do. And they really really do care. But they are worried about their future... They see they can’t get things fixed, and they are banging their heads against a brick wall. And nothing seems to happen. It’s all bureaucratic and... But it would be good to know what lessons we need to learn internally” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

Cultural sector workers are traditionally thought of as passionate and dedicated (Banks 2007). Workers have shown they care about their services, as the inability to change services for the better has led to frustration (field notes, Scotland, 25.08.09). Hood (2000: 148) calls this the fatalist ‘syndrome’, which includes cynicism and general distrust of officials, lack of incentives for good practice, the rejection of participation and collective action and lack of effective checks on workers. Workers felt that their work situation had sometimes gone beyond their control and their voices were not heard by senior managers. These situations could lead to a feeling of fatalism around their work, which is shown to have a detrimental effect on policy delivery.

The above findings show the effect that not having discretion can have at ground-level. Not possessing enough freedom or decision making power, could restrict workers’ abilities to improve things in the museum services. Previous findings have shown that workers in the museum services go beyond their official remits, because they believe in their cultural service. What was clear from the evidence was that workers *wanted* things to improve. They had often

tried to contribute their own personal ideas and improvements. Budgets were not cited as the main challenge – rather the lack of listening from management, bureaucracy and higher levels of the hierarchy. Increased discretion at ground-level could be utilised to the services benefit.

Using policy as an opportunity at ground-level

There are specific policy challenges in this sector, as explored above. What was interesting from the research was that museum workers also used policy in positive ways. Policy did not always offer only challenges and red tape for workers. They often showed a pragmatic approach to policy. They were able to utilise it to create opportunities within their roles. Current literature tends to emphasise the lack of evidence regarding the impact in the sector (Belfiore and Bennett 2007). What this section shows is that museum workers are not inactive members, capitulating to the onslaught of top-down policy expectations. Indeed, giving street-level workers increased discretion over front-line activities can lead to more effective policy implementation (Maynard-Moody *et al.* 1990).

Although policy is often seen as a separate entity, there were many examples of workers utilising it to their own benefit. This was mainly done through attempts to understand the quite complex policy process that they were in. For example, there were often attempts to ‘humanise’ the process in a bid to understand it.

"We are always talking about Renaissance it's become like sort of a person to us almost (laughs)" (MW 3, England). [sic]

“Well, on the whole I think it’s quite useful. To think of [the cities] parenting strategy or something like that and trying to find ways that we can work with... because one of our aims is about parental engagement so you know just trying to have to find ways to work with other departments and seeing what the national agendas are and the local agendas. I suppose I might feel differently if I was more senior and was being given a different agenda, an ever changing agenda that I was supposed to work to. But at my level I haven’t been asked to do that so it’s more that most of the policies I have looked at have either given me a broad idea of whether I am doing the right thing (laughs) or have been useful in providing a framework to work within” (MW 10, England). [sic]

The evidence suggests that workers may not accept all policies and were influenced very strongly by their own values. Museum worker 10 connected to some written policy, but still enjoyed the distance from policy required to implement it. The quote from museum worker 10 is also interesting in other ways. The museum worker viewed policy as something that links the museum to the wider agendas of government – and this is seen in a positive light. There is also acknowledgement that people at different levels of hierarchy within the organisation were working to different agendas instead of an overall agenda. Most importantly, this museum worker felt that policy could provide a framework to fulfilling his role. Local government policy was seen as a tool to enable partnership and creative work.

“Maybe I’m a bit more I have a more of an old fashioned approach where I would prefer, you know, our policies our policy making and our decision making to be more clearly written down then move on to do dynamic creativity” (MW 5 England). [sic]

“Okay I think I’m a bit weird because I really believe in stuff like that [policy] and I find it quite interesting. I think yeah actually that’s before I studied museums. I think before then I would have said boring, I’m not interested, too dry, doesn’t apply to me. And now I find it quite interesting and its where all the key things are hidden. And you’ve got to be aware of them to do your job properly” (MW 9, England). [sic]

“I like policy (smiles). Yes I think it just helps everyone to know what they are doing. And what their place is and where they are going” (MW 5 England). [sic]

Workers are positioned differently when relating to policy. ‘Policy’ had the potential of connecting workers to a common goal, as it set out rules and expectations. The evidence showed that for some workers policy brought order and focus to diverse roles within the services. It was even used as a tool to cope with difficult council mechanisms and processes:

“Yes I used policy as a tool when I read up on it – but they don’t help you in that way. They em, because I’m seasonal but even the personnel don’t know some of their own policies. There is a total lack of communication... But I’ve never known really for councils to be very good policy holders. Unless it suits them” (MW VIII, Wales). [sic]

Policy, then, could be used as a tool by workers at ground-level, despite the lack of communication around policy within services. Indeed, museum worker VIII suggested that policy can help where management communications have failed. For her, it was a mechanism that helped bridge the gap between ground-level workers and management. The evidence also suggested that staff were able to use policy to meet their own priorities on a local government level. Staff saw policy as an enabler for putting heritage on the local council agenda.

“Yeah it’s a tool [policy]. And people ask me, because we don’t always get asked where we feed into policy. Sometimes it’s going through a web to see where we fit in. If people ask me then I make sure that heritage is in there somewhere doesn’t matter what it is. Healthy [area agenda] for example we do heritage walks and maybe we will do an extra one a year or something. We’ve got the cyber coach downstairs which is an initiative by the active lifestyles officers in the council so that staff at lunch time can be more active. And we have taken that for them because we would appear in a document somewhere (laughs)” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

Museum workers actively attached their services to other priorities within the local government to increase their validity and importance. This reinforces why cultural service agendas often are ‘attached’ to other policy agendas (Gray 2002). In this scenario, however, it shows that ground-level workers can encourage this as well as central and local government. Furthermore, Halliday *et al.* (2009) took Lipsky’s (1980) ideas further and noted that street level bureaucrats (in their example it is within the Scottish legal system) write reports as a way of generating credibility and self-esteem. Like Halliday *et al.*’s (2009) workers, using policy as a tool is an ongoing practice in legitimising cultural work and the museum services.

Museum service plans were also seen as a tool for wider policy attachment. The policy agendas, discussed by workers, were based within their specific local contexts and placed within the overall local government policies. Although there were individual service plans, they were mainly focused on connecting the service with the local government agenda. There was often the sense that the service plan was there because it was a policy imperative. It was not necessarily needed for running the museum services. Service plans were not viewed as something that was particularly adhered to, or drove activities in a significant way.

“Our service plan is slightly out of date. Haven’t got an up-to-date one at the moment. The last one was really to do with diversity and eh, for commitment to community. It’s probably social inclusion based that’s the word I should say” (MW D, Scotland). [sic]

“And with targets in the health service and things and everywhere else targets in museums have reflected those kind-of, that kind-of general consensus I guess on both the governments and the people who are being governed that the target groups should be people that we particularly care about” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

The findings show that service plans were often reflective of other agendas. Despite this, there was an indication that some workers had some choice of which agenda to attach themselves to. As has been discussed already, museum workers have described the distance they often feel they have from local government authority. This in turn has generated, as some feel, less policy pressure from local government agendas. Museum services policy has been seen to reflect the general policy consensus, as described above (another example is the wide idea of ‘regeneration’ in Wales – although notably on the area service plan, corporate priorities are listed as regenerating communities, responding to demographic change and modernising education). Within this reflective element, there are examples of specific attachments to policy agendas (such as ‘Healthy Eating’, or ‘Active Lifestyles’ policy in the English case study). The findings show evidence of attachment, but these were both driven by bottom-up and the top-down policy-makers.

In the literature the ‘attachment’ described by Gray (2002, 2004, 2007) is often seen in a negative light. Authors have described it as a negative effect on cultural policy, especially with the reliance it has created on project funding from other policy initiatives (Bennett and Belfiore 2002; Selwood 2002). What is shown in this evidence, however, is that often museum services have a choice of which policy directions they wish to reflect, or attach to. Higher-level policy was vague enough to insert current activities into it in creative ways.

“Over 50% of workers in museums are volunteers across the sector. So people are going to do it irrespective of what policy (laughs) policy direction of priority directions there are” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

The nature of the workforce often diversifies the service in a way where attachment can seem a natural function. There is more autonomy within the policy decisions process than the literature

suggests. This in turn had led some museum workers to view policy as an enabler, which opens opportunities, rather than shuts them down. The objectification of policy, and the distance workers created, led to a view that policy itself could be used as a means to an end. Museum workers have been shown here to see policy as not just a limiting, bureaucratic factor in their roles, but actively engage with it and use it as a 'tool' to produce their own outcomes. The next section looks at social exclusion to provide more evidence of ground-level workers overcoming policy challenges, and also utilising policy to their advantage.

The opportunities and challenges linked to social inclusion

Social inclusion in particular is given further consideration in this thesis, as it has been a significant policy focus since 1999. It is also a significant example of "attachment" (Gray 2002, 2007) of a policy to wider outcomes in the museums sector. In both central and devolved governments, social inclusion was a New Labour driven policy concept that expanded through the UK. For museums, the DCMS (2000) saw social inclusion as a driving force that could help museums create positive social change. As a social concept, social inclusion has also attracted the most attention within the cultural sector. Within the museum profession, the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion are diverse, and have remained elusive for practitioners and policy-makers (Bennett 1997). Museum workers have consistently shown confusion over what social inclusion means and over the clear gap between policy and practice (Newman and McLean 2004; Tlili 2008a; McCall 2009). As shown in the last chapter, social objectives were linked to a political and policy context by museum workers, and social inclusion was very much linked to local and central government agendas. This section explores briefly museum workers' understandings of social inclusion. The practices of social inclusion and the relationship that policy has to museum workers ideas of policy are then explored in more detail. The process of using social inclusion is explored as we look at the networking affects that its activities have generated. This section shows how social inclusion has created significant challenges, but also opportunities, for museum workers.

Social Inclusion as a policy concept

Social inclusion was understood differently between services and workers. Social inclusion as a concept was generally seen as going 'out of fashion' in England but not in Wales. Museum workers were aware that different concepts went in and out of fashion and this contributed to their reluctance to adopt different policy ideas. Social inclusion was noted as less applicable in England and was rarely brought up as a way of describing social outcomes. Other terminologies such as equality were becoming more popular. Social inclusion was used as a label for multiple activities.

RESEARCHER: Is social inclusion still relevant?

"Not that particular one no. I mean the council has policies. Policies obviously equality ones. So we have policy were we are supposed to... well we are to bring it in. I don't know how to answer this one. Obviously including everything. Not discriminating before men and women. Eh social, err, I suppose there is the BME's all the disabled all those people we try to make it possible for them... Sorry this isn't my world at all but there are policies which are, you know, accessible" (MW 14, England). [sic]

"It's not something I would say is at the forefront no. It might be something that is similar to what we do now just under different names" (MW 2, England). [sic]

The terminology of social inclusion was rarely used by English museum workers. When it was used it was linked solely to a policy agenda. The origins, aims and objectives of this agenda were unclear, as they were based on a vague and general idea of what social inclusion was. There was also confusion over the origins of the social inclusion agenda, not just at local and central government levels, but within the organisation itself.

In contrast, many workers in the Welsh case study saw social inclusion as a relevant policy idea. Social inclusion was still seen as a central terminology in policy discourse, although it was becoming less used. This was a good example of how workers coped with changing policy within their roles. The changing political and management agenda was perceived to be a changing trend.

“Nearly all the funding we apply for has the aim to widen your target audience. The Cymal grants have cross cutting themes. One of them is social inclusion and bringing people in and I think they are quite proactive on that front” (MW I, Wales). [sic]

RESEARCHER: Is the idea of social inclusion important now?

“Yes it is politically. It’s getting to, well yeah, politically and financially because it depends on which group you are talking about really... So it just ticks the political boxes. But as you say where is social inclusion as such? On the policy framework it’s not as high profile as it was. Education in the 80’s was right up there, social inclusion in the 90’s was there but it’s still there” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

This evidence clearly outlines how social inclusion was linked to political and policy discourses. The policy process was not politically neutral – it was a political process and workers had to balance and negotiate different demands. Understandings of social inclusion were diverse and confused in all the services studied. Social inclusion was a political entity – it was linked to the process of delivering policy within the service. Social inclusion was positioned as a politically driven agenda, not necessarily an outcome or goal to deliver.

There were mixed opinions between museum workers in Scotland; those who still saw the social inclusion agenda as relevant, and those who said the direction had now changed. Generally for Scotland, it was seen as something they have been doing for a very long time in their museum’s services.

“Yes there was key audiences that the council was explicit about. That they wanted to engage with. (Uses fingers to indicate different groups): Children and young people, black and ethnic minorities, LGBT, elderly. And they were key sort of target audiences. They felt, you know, that they were excluded and should be engaged with. What we did in terms of supporting that agenda, that policy, and we shifted our events and workshops and exhibition programme to reflect those key audiences and we reported on that” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

The data shows that there were differences in the understanding and the perceived relevance of social inclusion in Scotland, England and Wales. However, all Scottish, English and Welsh museum workers linked social inclusion to a political and policy agenda. This had had an effect on the direction of museums by changing the focus of activities.

The linking of social inclusion to political and policy discourse shows that museum workers viewed social inclusion as a *process*, rather than an outcome. Social inclusion has become a means to an end, not only an end in itself. The social agenda within museums in Scotland, England and Wales has matured from the social inclusion agenda set by New Labour in 1999, and has enabled further social activities and outcomes. The next section explores how social inclusion policy also enabled positive outcomes for museums and visitors.

Social Inclusion as an ‘enabler’

Social inclusion was seen as a general and vague concept by workers, but it was also seen as a tool to generate positive outcomes. The ambiguity and mixed understandings of policy at all levels could work to the benefit of workers at ground-level. Current professional rhetoric shows that social exclusion has determined the way museums demonstrate their social relevance (Newman 2004b). These positive outcomes were both applicable to the museum as an organisation and positive for visitors to the museum. The political focus on social inclusion has over the last ten years allowed cultural services to integrate and link themselves onto larger national agendas in Scotland, England and Wales. Social inclusion policy discourse was so wide and all-encompassing that it had enabled museums to engage with central and local

government on a policy level. Social inclusion policies, as we will see below, have opened up opportunities for museum workers to use their understanding and discretion at ground-level.

Museum workers' ideas about social inclusion firstly reinforced the view that policy was able to give a focus and a link between the service and other agendas. It was also perceived to be a way to link more closely to visitors.

RESEARCHER: Are you familiar with the term 'social inclusion'?

"A government drive to bridge and encourage all sections of society to engage with well, everything" (MW E, Scotland). [sic]

The 'linking' abilities of social inclusion activities were not only seen as beneficial to museums themselves, but were seen as positive for individuals. There was a sense that museums were capable of linking people to society in some ways.

"But a group of people who were not part of a traditional museum and not a gallery going audience... And our aim was to build their confidence and enjoyment in using museums and galleries. And from our point of view we wanted to get a new perspective sort of incorporated into our work through them" (MW 10, England). [sic]

The idea that the museum can 'ground' people and link them to society was very prevalent. The museum was seen as a bridge, a link, between individuals, communities and wider society. Ideas on social inclusion were linked to wider society, which could be reflected through the objects and collections. Social inclusion activities, such as outreach programmes, helped to reach groups and bring them into 'mainstream' society.

"So the museum is helping people actually make sense of it, of their world" (MW 15, England). [sic]

"The idea is you may wish to – and may not wish too – is to get people back into mainstream society soon as possible" (MW I, Wales). [sic]

Museum workers, then, viewed ideas of social inclusion as the opportunity for visitors to be linked and integrated to wider social structures. Policy here provided not only an opportunity for workers to link into wider agendas, but for visitors as well.

For participants, social inclusion was a terminology that unlocked government funding. In all the case studies, social inclusion policy had opened up wider funding opportunities. In Scotland, social inclusion was mentioned as an opportunity for funding that they would never have had in the first place (field notes, Scotland, 25.08.09). It should be noted, however, that this has been in the form of short-term project funding, not long term secure funding.

“So (laughs) so we will go, okay, there’s that social inclusion fund, what do we need to do to get that. We need to get, we want to do X but I’ll tell you what... So we are looking around for funding that will help support that. So the social inclusion agenda – ‘yup we can help you on that. If it’s working with, you know pre-fives – ‘yup we can help you with that’. So... it to keep the core service going we are jumping through hoops and trying to get money from other sources (smiles)” (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

Museum Worker C shows engagement with policy narrative as a tool to various ends. Stevens (2011) would call this as “*getting the story to fit*”, where policy actors try and fit with the policy narrative and use it to tell a story. For a sector that has seen decreased local authority funding for several years (in Scotland budgets had been frozen in real terms for at least five years), telling the story has become much more important. For this worker, it had also opened the door for more diverse funding opportunities. Gray (2008: 217) pointed out that policy ‘attachment’ has allowed the cultural sector to gain access to diverse funding it had previously not been able to access. The museum workers here portrayed the ability to access this diverse funding, and use policy rhetoric to demonstrate how the museum can deliver various outcomes. Museum workers were shown to be extremely adaptable to a variety of agendas in order to access funding. This is a clear example of using discretion at ground-level to help service delivery and implementation.

In summary, the social inclusion agenda had opened opportunities for workers in three main ways. The ambiguity of the agenda allowed workers to link museums into wider government agendas in a coherent and politically significant way. This brought several benefits, including a perceived ability to link to more diverse visitors. Also, it had opened funding opportunities that has allowed workers to deliver different aspects of the museum service. The social inclusion agenda, however, was clearly seen as a political process. It was not an end in itself, but a tool to deliver other aspects (such as collections care) of the museum services, within a highly politicised agenda. The next section looks at how social inclusion policy also gave workers a forum to express and work on their own egalitarian views on equality and equal opportunities.

Social inclusion as an opening for egalitarian views

Museum workers were motivated by funding and by their own views and understandings of how their services can contribute to the social agenda. Egalitarianism was at times shown to be the natural perspective associated with service delivery.

“I’d always thought that we should be less structured in these regimes and mixing together and if that would help” (MW 14, England). [sic]

“So if you have got job positioning and really very clearly defined roles what it is that’s good. But you don’t have to have this higher status sort of symbols that go with it I don’t know. I would personally level the pay. Make it more even to what people at the bottom and people at the top are paid” (MW 9, England). [sic]

Perceptions of equality were often expressed through museum workers’ definitions of communities and community work. Museum worker 10 noted that they should be representing communities better through networks and community working. However, what was clear is that although the values of egalitarian views expressed by many museum workers, this was not particularly seen as the way that the sector works at the moment. They were likely to talk about it in the context of the way it *should* be, not the way it is.

For example, social inclusion policy has been able to propel museum workers' personal beliefs and ideologies on equality and diversity forward. Social inclusion had become a way of articulating and implementing museum workers already held beliefs.

"If you're interested in equality or a wider agenda it comes naturally. Personally I couldn't identify the specific social inclusion agenda document policy but I think I do it naturally" (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

Social inclusion had also enabled museum workers to express their own egalitarian ideas about equality and equal opportunities. Activities, based on equality between people in society, had been seen to be a continuous part of museum workers' roles.

In regards to the political dimension of social inclusion, outreach and inclusive activities had generated various networks for participants. Social Inclusion was very much linked to networking.

"And also with the community engagement team have started a programme to promote it through foster care. And support networks... I think it may be more of about using specific networks in those target audiences and communities that you are trying to reach" (MW 10, England). [sic]

"I think it's about connectedness. It's about shared experience. It's about commonality. It's about people being able to express that and the sense of community. Like likeminded people have the same sense, set of experiences that they can make connections with... So they can belong" (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

"I would say the connections with certain groups for events. So em, so events that we are having over quite a few days with the local youth up in [City] and the LGBT group. But we do our best with them we try and get contacts there. We are working with people like the black environment network. We work with people, you know, people wouldn't think but we do" (MW VII, Wales). [sic]

Social inclusion policy had opened up opportunities to link with local communities, and engage with visitors in the long term. It was also linked to sharing ideas, support, connections, values and history. Museum workers had built up effective networks under the policy banner of social inclusion. This legitimised their activities, and provided a framework for their egalitarian views.

Egalitarian ideals here were not particularly focused on equality, but more making and linking communities of people. Ideas around 'community' were very much the focus on these networks and partnerships.

“What’s been happening more and more in terms of that I think is the museum we are being asked more and more by the community and community groups to have use of the building. Like we had an event a couple of weeks ago for international mother tongue day. And bringing people together with different languages in [the city]. And it was really diverse people with Indian dancing that sort of thing” (MW 8, England). [sic]

Museum workers showed commitment to various social inclusion agendas and the ideals behind it. However, there was a lack of commitment from local and central government to the maintenance of the networks that workers had built. Many museum workers saw effective networks as being in danger.

“Governments may be forced to review all the various commitments which would really be very sad. You have to keep building upon it. It’s like maintenance if you just stop it all those strands will just wither away. Those relationships you have built up with people and the community will just die and we will just go back to where we were” (MW 13, England). [sic]

This shows that although social inclusion policy was seen as a political process, it had encouraged different social outcomes for museums and their workers. These had been viewed as the most successful part of museum delivery by museum workers. This shows that it is not the concept of social inclusion itself that is important, but rather the process that the policy had generated. By targeting hard-to-reach groups of people, the museum had built up important

and wide reaching networks that allowed them to access new audiences, successfully linking to communities and shared resources. It had given room for workers to explore and implement their own understandings and beliefs. This process also produced some barriers to social inclusion that are explored in the next section.

Social inclusion policy as a barrier

Social inclusion, as part of the wider social agenda, was linked to the 'new school' ideas, introduced in the previous chapter. In this way it could be seen as a barrier to the 'traditional' activities within the museum that many museum workers saw as unrepresented and under-funded.

“Social inclusion is an ideal. But it’s not physically possible to do what you want to do as the buildings need attention, for example, some of the buildings have not been changed for 25 years” (MW J, Scotland). [sic]

“So there are lots of people who feel excluded I think because of whatever you do try and bring them in. And I think to some extent it’s a lost battle...”

I’m not sure that setting up lots of projects to engage with teenagers is really actually very fruitful. And it’s not simple but what I really don’t like is projects like that thrust upon you because of political reasons and doing it for the sake of doing them so you have ticked a box on somebody’s agenda em, to show that we have tried to be socially inclusive” (MW H, Scotland). [sic]

Often fulfilling social policies had a detrimental effect on what museum workers view as the core functions of museums. Short-term project funding could be seen to harm other museum functions as it does not contribute to the ongoing core needs of collections care and maintenance. Also, workers have already been seen to react negatively to political manipulation. When social inclusion was linked strongly to the political agenda, workers often reacted negatively to the policy. Workers do not always react positively to structural influences that are seen as inherently political. This shows that museum workers can place barriers in front

of the social inclusion agenda. This rejection of the social agenda was not particularly linked to a rejection of ideals around equality and inclusion, but rather the political and policy elements of the agenda. There was resentment towards what was viewed as a top-down policy that ignored fundamental functions of their work.

Furthermore, contrary to fulfilling museum workers' egalitarian ideals, some workers felt that targeting groups through social exclusion policy projects had an adverse effect.

"You know maybe the priority groups that we are working with actually exclude the groups that would be the best to work with" (MW 7, England). [sic]

"Targets in museums have reflected those, kind-of, that kind-of general consensus I guess on both the governments and the people who are being governed that the target groups should be people that we particularly care about. To the extent of us who are not in these target groups have almost felt excluded as well. You know those who no one is making particular provision for" (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

Finally, although inclusive policies were shown to open funding opportunities, some activities such as the 'open doors day' policy lost funding for Welsh museums. This was seen to compromise other activities, such as children's workshops (field notes, Wales, 23.04.10). Furthermore, social inclusion policy was seen as tokenistic due to project-led funding. Activities can have a short life-span with little impact.

"We take up a lot of work or something with a community group and we do it and have a big hurrah, fantastic, and we are ticking the boxes, and then we will say 'cheerio' we have done you and we move on. That's the difficulty of the issue" (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

The evidence shows that the social inclusion policy agenda could also create organisational barriers, such as loss of revenue. Groups could have, and then lose, support. Furthermore, at times it promoted exclusion, and undermined museum workers' ideals and working roles.

Overall, social inclusion as a policy concept opened up opportunities, but also limited them. The ambiguity of the concept had created more freedom of interpretation at ground-level, but its ambitious purposes placed it as an untenable outcome for workers. The policy drive opened up avenues of funding for museum services, but this tends to be short term and precarious. What is clear, however, is that policy was used, and understood, differently in the various case studies. Interpretation and delivery depended on individual museum workers' perspectives and buy-in to policy expectations. When workers at ground-level had enough discretion, they were shown to have a central role in utilising social policy to implement their own ideals and activities. Workers were shown to be interactive agents, central in using and creating policy. The next section explores whether they did this differently in Scotland, England and Wales.

Does policy create opportunities for cultural diversity?

In the literature review, top-down policy was shown to be diverging in its focus through Great Britain. To summarize, this included a particular focus on "*enabling museums to understand the true challenges of inclusiveness is thus a major museum development activity, and is a priority for the next decade*" and '*promoting education, health, well-being*', or '*supporting vulnerable people*' in England (DCMS 2006: 3, 14). In Scotland, there is a focus on inclusiveness, but also on generating pride and enhancing Scotland's reputation. Museums are also expected to contribute to Scotland's strategic objectives including a healthier, safer, greener, smarter, wealthier and fairer Scotland (Scottish Government 2007). For Wales the social policy emphasis was on learning through culture. Stated learning and social outcomes also remain similar to Scottish and English policy, including 'skills', 'creativity', 'confidence', 'inspiration', changes in 'attitudes', 'values' and 'behaviours (such as social cohesion), with the inclusion of employment creativity (WAG 2008b: 4). The top-down policies throughout Great Britain share a lot of similarities, but they offer a different focus in Scotland, England and Wales.

Previous sections have already explored some of the cultural policy similarities within the museum services studied. What has been striking about the evidence so far is the similarity of understanding and opinion throughout Scotland, England and Wales. On the whole, the challenges, understandings and attitudes, expressed by workers at ground-level, were

remarkably similar. There were of course competing understandings of policy at ground-level. Many museum workers discussed clashing expectations in regards to policy. However, this seemed to be based on resource priorities, not policy expectations themselves. Indeed some more senior workers noted that there was an alignment within national and regional policies:

“I say there is a really strong alignment between them. Two sets of priorities. To be quite honest both the cities corporate plan and the one that came down from Renaissance are both phasing towards the same kind of performance indicators. That are used nationally. So there is an alignment in the way we are recording success. Some of the words are subtly different but essentially you know, the priorities are very very similar... It was led by, you know, what the expectation was of the DCMS and what they wanted out of us as a museums service. Em and then what we did was move that on in a way that became real for the staff here. Sometimes there is a bit of a gap in policy and reality” (MW 12, England). [sic]

“As luck would have it with the main priorities of the county being utilising education, regeneration and demographic change they are all things that we feed into anyway. Because with minimum standards for accreditation, care of collections, care of the buildings and access to the public so it all works in together very well” (MW V, Wales). [sic]

The museums sector is often painted as a sector full of partial and contradictory policies. However, evidence does show that in England and Wales some workers saw a certain alignment in expectations of museums. It should be noted, however, that the above participants were on senior manager level, and had a significantly more developed understanding of policy. Despite this, national and local indicators were often seen to work together well in England and Wales.

On the other hand, this was not the case for Scotland. Museum workers were still confused about how they fit into the Scottish Governments economic agenda.

“The Scottish Government doesn’t have that, [discussing ‘ticking boxes’] it’s much woollier really as you have these single outcomes and so on. And when you see the paper there are only two of them that we give thought to and so on. And it’s very (makes a sighing noise) woolly” (MW J, Scotland). [sic]

Thus there was a distinct difference between the perceptions of Scotland’s central government’s approach to policy, compared to England and Wales. The Scottish museum workers could not indicate where they were placed within the Scottish Government’s policy agenda. The evidence suggests that Scottish workers found it more difficult to link to central and local government policy expectations⁵. This, however, does not indicate that activities at ground-level were any different in Scotland, England and Wales.

The diversity of nationalism, place and belonging

One area where workers’ understandings diverged in Scotland, England and Wales, was ideas of nationalism, place and belonging. These are particularly important when looking at museums, as they can be influenced by exogenous political pressures (Gray 2008). This of course presented different challenges within each museum service’s local context. Museum workers’ understanding of their museum service was linked closely to communities. Museums workers believed that their museums could help people integrate, and make people feel like they belong in the local community. This was done by helping them access history and being a space to generate connections.

“So that [belonging] is then very much about those people in their community. But it’s not necessarily the case in all museums sites” (MW D, Scotland).

“You get a sense of belonging in this place yes because in this day and age everything is replaced so quickly” (MW 6, England). [sic]

All the case studies established the feeling that the museum is in opposition to the transient world outside. This is an interesting idea, as museums are often considered reflective of society

⁵ The Scottish National Party had only held their minority government since 2007 before the field work was conducted in Scotland in 2009. It is not surprising that the new policy agenda had not been communicated to ground-level workers.

(Hooper-Greenhill *et al.* 2007) and society is dynamic and changeable. This idea of belonging is very much linked to issues of identity, as a museum is perceived as an 'anchor' to a place.

"And again the traditional look as well. And identity and group identity. I mean for myself I didn't live here and when I arrived here I didn't know anything. I actually found it a bit daunting there are so many different areas in [the city] and it is very diverse. And just being in the museum has made me feel much more grounded. I really think the museum contributes to an area not just economically but psychologically" (MW 9, England). [sic]

"The value from museums from the social aspect is that they are places, relatively safe places, where people can explore ideas, opinions, contribute to a debate that is quite often about identity and sense of place and where they are from and they are trying to make sense of that" (MW C, Scotland). [sic]

'Place' here seems to encompass the museum and geographical area, but also appear to include national and even international identities (for example through local community work to Egyptian or Chinese exhibitions). The role of museum workers within this concept involved being guardians of the place and collections that link communities, society and the world (as explored earlier). There was also a sense that this is actually the job of local government museums, rather than national museums. Local museums were defenders of 'place' for communities and local people, while the nationals were seen as for tourists and not expected to generate the same sense of belonging that local museums could. A popular way to describe these ideas of belonging was through 'sense of place'.

"... It's a magical setting in its own right. It's a start to find out about the story here and more and more about the history and the sense of place"

RESEARCHER: What did you mean by sense of place?

“I think I have got that from the council! But I don’t mean it necessarily the way they say it I don’t know... It was something to do with the course we went on the other day about em, a Welsh welcome.. It’s all about promoting Wales and a sense of place” (MW II, Wales). [sic]

The idea of ‘sense of place’ seemed to be more connected to a policy agenda than ‘belonging’, which museum workers saw as being more about the local community. There was a suggestion that this may be based on the duality of Welsh culture between English and Welsh speaking communities as *“they try to hold on” (MW IX)*. One museum worker described the English and Welsh speaking *“parallel communities”*, even within the museum service itself (field notes, Wales, 25.01.10). There was tension within local communities that had caused resentment. According to some workers, the role of the museum was to generate a sense of nationalism, to make all people, who live there, feel like they belong. Overall, however, the focus of museums and museum workers was very local and also linked to promoting or reflecting identities.

“If they know that their family had that kind of background then they can use it to understand about who they are. It’s like personal fulfilment I suppose. It’s linked to identity” (MW III, Wales). [sic]

The local and national ideas linked to belonging, were linked to perspectives around identity as well. In regards to policy, identity and belonging are very much connected to the countries in which it was produced. Scottish and Welsh central government written policy has generally been nationalistic, focusing on the creation and maintenance of Scottish and Welsh culture and reputation. Only in Wales did workers sometime reflect nationalistic goals.

There was almost no focus on ideas of Scottish or English nationalism. Indeed, many Scottish workers were seen to actively undermine nationalist policies. The ‘Scottish homecoming’ (a year-long agenda to promote Scotland) was a focus for derision.

“And I hate the idea that any political party was motivating the museums service in any way. To meet their ends. And I am aware of some people within have strong views that the SNP have been pushing the Scottish agenda... But this is very parochial, and it’s something I feel very strongly about that we Scotland fit into the context of Europe and the rest of the world. And we are viewed and as a modern society and the constant harking back to tossing the caber and whisky and tartan is very retrospective and really backwards” (MW G, Scotland). [sic]

“But to me the strategy doesn’t seem to be linked... As far as having a strategy for museums if it is not linked to great council policy or social departments or libraries it seems to be more fragmented now” (MW G, Scotland). [sic]

Promoting nationalist policy was one area, where workers at ground-level showed diverse understanding and limited buy-in. Museum workers in Scotland consistently prioritised a local focus and giving knowledge about the World (not just their country) to local people. Scottish ground-level workers often challenged and diverted what they saw as political pressures. The Welsh case study had particular challenges around local identity and language. Museum workers also showed themselves to be quite politically aware, and sensitive to what they saw as political manipulation. Devolution can be seen here to have had an impact on museum workers’ priorities and understandings. The evidence suggests, however, that workers had many more similarities than differences at ground-level of museum services.

Conclusion

One of the main challenges at ground-level included the degree of apathy in workers towards the service. This was related to workers’ viewing policy as anything other than a meaningless rhetoric. Also, fatalism and apathy appeared to have developed from disillusionment in regards to cultural roles. Museum workers within the sector had often tried to instigate and negotiate change, but to no effect. They felt that large hierarchies and bureaucracy restricted their freedom and decision making capacities. Also, previous experiences had led workers to feel

undervalued. 'Making a difference' was important to workers within the sector (their inclination to egalitarian idealism is an example of this), but workers felt they were rarely listened to.

Ergo, fatalism was linked to ground-level workers' feeling of being unable to exercise their discretion. Freedom at ground-level was important for workers to fulfil their roles. There were many examples of workers using their discretion and having an impact on visitors and the service. Workers were indeed able to utilise policy to open opportunities for themselves, when they had a level of freedom to do so. Museum workers were often engaging in mechanisms that helped them understand and use policy. Policy was sometimes seen as a bridging element to high-level government agendas that gave focus and design to workers roles. However, there were also examples of workers' using discretion to employ diverse treatment of visitors. Evidence did show that in England and Wales there was a certain alignment in expectations of museums. Scottish workers, however, had difficulty linking in with the devolved governments economic agenda. The museums sector was often painted as a sector full of partial and contradictory policies.

At local authority level, workers were seen to use policy as a tool to fulfil their own agendas. Social inclusion was a good example of doing this, such as for accessing funding to fulfil other museum functions. Gray's (2002) 'attachment' of policy agendas, was also taken further than local authority level. Ground-level workers consistently showed their own actions in 'attaching' activities to wider policy agendas. Policy 'attachment', then, was also shown to be a ground-level activity that workers used to help fulfil their own service expectations. The evidence shows that workers have more choice and freedom to be able to 'attach' than previous literature has suggested.

The concept of social inclusion was misunderstood, vague and generalised by museum workers. Museum workers also showed that ideas of social inclusion were linked to a political and policy process. They connected to it more as a process for political activity, rather than a terminology. Implementing a social inclusion agenda had enabled some museums to link with wider agendas and funding. Social inclusion activities had been seen to help link and ground people to wider society. It also allowed museum workers to pursue personal ideologies based

on egalitarian values. The short-term, political nature of funding, also made this a barrier to workers traditional roles.

The perception of policy as only 'hollow talk' was linked to fatalistic perceptions from museum workers. Gaps between policy and practice were seen by workers to inspire cynicism, apathy and a feeling of distance from the museums service itself. On the other hand, museum workers were seen to use policy to meet their own priorities. There was more autonomy within the policy decisions process, than the literature suggested. This in turn had led some museum workers to view policy more as a tool that had the potential to open opportunities.

Chapter Eight

The Policy Making Process in Practice

Introduction

The previous chapters introduced the idea that museum workers at ground-level had a range of influences on implementation and, ultimately, policy making. Workers could overcome various challenges, and distance themselves from policy and local government structures. This had often allowed room to utilise policy to implement their personal ideals and expectations. As a consequence, museum workers' views on policy are of central importance to understanding this sector. Museum workers are then best placed to reveal a better picture of what the policy process actually is. This chapter now explores museum workers as the makers of policy in this sector. It highlights museum workers' views on the policy process. It does this by exploring views on delivery and accountability to peers and the public. Policy management, decision making and coping mechanisms are then explored in more detail, due to their importance to street-level bureaucrats. The findings reveal a deeper understanding of the roles of museum workers within this complex policy process.

Implementation at the 'chalkface'

The above chapters have shown the fragmented nature of the service structure, which has allowed workers the opportunity to be active in the delivery of the service. In the quote used in the introduction, museum worker A described his role as being at the 'chalkface' (page 5). Working at the 'chalkface' was originally a concept used to describe face-to-face teaching. Museum worker A was alluding to being on the front-line with visitors. This front-line position required interaction with the public, and was separate to policy and management practice. Several museum workers were driven by views from the 'chalkface'. For Lipsky (2010), it was here where bottom-up implementation of policy begins. Bottom-up implementation is made through interactions with the public and where street-level bureaucrats can 'make' the

governmental policy (Lipsky 2010). Many workers understood their role in policy making. Some also understood that it is what they do that makes the policy itself:

“Policy is it’s just the definition of what we do isn’t it? Em... I think it’s helpful. I mean it has to be doesn’t it? ... If you talk about the word policy sometimes it, you know, it’s bureaucratic speak isn’t it. But actually if you think about what policy means it really means it’s about the delivery and how we do that” (MW 12, England). [sic]

“I don’t deliver policy at that level [talking about higher-level] I deliver it intuitively I guess... But, well, you know policies are only as good as its implementation” (MW A, Scotland). [sic]

In the context of bottom-up implementation, written top-down policy becomes less important. Higher-level policy expectations were more readily dismissed. Workers’ ideals and actions were more important, and should be the focus in understanding policy in this sector.

“I guess I’m left to get on with things and to kind-of invent my own policy anyway. You know it’s just the way things are sometimes. Its kinda if things aren’t broke don’t fix it. You kinda get left a bit to the side. So I guess how much of it [governing] is related to me or local government is difficult to pick out” (MW B, Scotland). [sic]

Here we see that individuals within the museum services can influence policy direction and make policy. For Lipsky (2010) it was only the activities that museum workers engage in and their interaction with the public that constitutes actual policy. Previous chapters have shown that policy itself was suggested as simply a narrative, “*blurb*”, a “*waste of time*” and an “*annoyance*” by museum workers. Policy was only useful as a framework to help museum workers original objectives and access funding. These perceptions restricted the impact that policy may have in day-to-day activities.

“I mean I tend to think I get on with my day job and I do the things I am required to do in my job description and other people in different jobs can think all this up and can explain the blurb, justify our services and show that we are value for money e.tc. e.t.c. and account for our time and money spent and it seems to be to have been done in a whole variety of ways and has not impacted very much on what actually happens” (MW H, Scotland). [sic]

The English case study also gave a good example of how ground-level actions were so important for policy-making. Museum workers had a lot of interaction with school groups. Partnerships had been continuously promoted between the museum services and local secondary schools. Interaction between workers and students were seen as a key issue in delivery. At the end of this course, students were awarded a valid diploma that counted towards qualifications to higher education. In discussing the programme, Museum Worker 4 talked about the positive outcomes from their interaction with students.

“Yes so they responded in a very creative way [to a mentoring programme] and made films and worked with other students also acting as mentors so. It sort of yeah, it was sharing” (MW 4, England). [sic]

Workers were able to view tangible outcomes such as films and team working, such as diplomas and various art works. The success of the programme was related to the enthusiasm from the staff and the interaction with the students. The overall impression was of negotiation between workers’ ideals and local government policy expectations. Some workers saw it as an ongoing ‘battle’. What was clear was that bottom-level workers had some autonomy over policy (although this had limitations), and could be one of the main policy-makers within their services.

The relative autonomy of ground-level workers, especially curators who viewed themselves within a professional status, could create a certain amount of discretion in the day-to-day workings of the museum services. This is similar to Lipsky’s (1980) street-level bureaucrat. Lipsky argued that high levels of discretion and autonomy can result in street-level bureaucrats becoming the policy-makers. This is done through the decisions, workers make at ground-level,

which in turn creates the overall behaviour of the service. Lipsky (2010) allowed that behaviours to some degree are shaped by policy rules and regulations– and we see above that local government rules and policy goals in particular, are seen as influential in this sector. However, interactions and situations are often too complex to be able to align them with a full sets of rules (Lipsky (2010). As we have seen in previous chapters, the perceived role of communities, volunteers, and even individuals has influenced the activities of front-line workers very strongly (none of which museum workers related to as ‘policy’). Overall, this created a dynamic picture of policy making, with interplay of structure and agency, where museum workers had a central role.

Museum workers’ perspectives of the policy process

Insight was also gained by looking at how museum workers viewed the policy process, and how it worked. Interestingly, despite the central role that museum workers took in policy making, museum workers generally described the process as a top-down one through a hierarchy. Lipsky (2010: 16) did note that museum workers do generally accept legitimate authority, and do not view themselves in positions to ‘dissent’ successfully. This is important, as most of those who were interviewed, did not often see themselves as subverting the policy process. The role of local authority and higher management authority was generally accepted.

Museum workers did not find it easy to explain current policy priorities or processes. This could stem from uncertainty and lack of communication from the local authority. Here we see clear evidence of a gap between ground-level workers and the rest of the official governance structure:

“Well it’s just I think the whole situation of being run by local government is that the top jobs change all the time and they all have different priorities and they all have different attitudes and you get great support from some people and other people are not interested in you at all. And it’s all kinda going on while at the same time we are still here trying to run the museums and collections because that is what we have got to bring our audience in. And at times what is...”

happening is the local authority are doing things that are, or can be, irrelevant to what we are actually trying to do and we are not always sure that the people who are working there are really understanding what it is you are there to do” (MW H, Scotland). [sic]

“As a service it’s really poor. I don’t really know where we are going, what the priorities are – you get a few headlines. For example there is a strategic plan but I have never seen it or been asked to circulate it or asked what I think about it” (MW 5, England). [sic]

Museum workers often felt ‘lost’ when speaking about policy and being specific about what their corporate priorities were. Workers were working within a hierarchical structure that they did not understand. Workers found it difficult to link local authority governance to the activities they were doing at the ground-level.

“Em, it always does seem like we work about ten years behind national initiatives that things take a long time to filter through and actually get implemented and by the time we actually start working on them the whole scenario has moved on somewhere else” (MW 11, England). [sic]

There was a sense of hierarchy within the management and control structure inside the individual services. Workers also stressed that there was a hierarchy of services in the local authority itself. Museums, within this hierarchy, have already been shown to be at the bottom. This hierarchical process also clashed with, what some workers described as a network approach.

“So we treat our venues as strategic areas in their own right. Because that’s where people come into contact with the museums service. And say there are plans for [lists venues] and they are driven by those sorts of overarching corporate priorities. They are very much owned by us. So we devise those...”

and we get permission if you like to carry that forward. Through, you know, the provision process if you like. So we get permission from the head of the directorate, they have a regular meeting to discuss the process and more members ratify that in more detail I suppose. So yeah we have the venues and we have collections management policy for example we have a learning policy, a community engagement policy. So we had all of those which are you know fed and influenced by the em, em, corporate priorities" (MW 11, England). [sic]

The picture described by museum workers shows a mixed governance approach. This is unsurprising in modern governance structures, where services are delivered by networks of organisations that challenge central direction (Rhodes 1997: 3). The nature of a networking process is that any part of the network can be seen to have an opportunity to influence policy direction. Indeed, *"a network will run its own affairs if the policies are of low salience to the government"* (Rhodes 1997: 13). Power is not seen to be solely at the top of the hierarchy, or with an individual manager (except in the case of funding). One of the keys to power is individual personality (Rhodes 1997). The findings show that processing top-down policy expectations would be more challenging to implement, as policy making, interpretation and delivery is not a linear process. Museum workers' description of a policy process that is a 'network', sets a corresponding context to the arguments of increased discretion in the sector. Networks can work interdependently with many organisations, and power is fragmented, with values and ideologies as key (Marsh 1996). This allows for a sector that can be influenced by individual understandings, such as those from museum workers.

Thus there is a multitude of influences that direct policy, and of course these influences go both ways. Policy implementation does not simply flow 'down' from higher up in the hierarchy. One example of bottom-up influence was that of the human remains policy, created by another museum but used by the English case study. Museum Worker 11 had described this as the largest influence to their own adopted policy and actions on human remains. Despite the copying of another museum's policy, other museums were not generally seen as part of the

policy process neither in the data nor in wider literature. Museum Worker 11 went on to describe the policy process, as he saw it:

“Well we had a director come in about four years ago and she was an expert in fine art and things and she was told by her director above her in the council that she needed to refocus the museum to the twenty-first century to produce contemporary art exhibitions that then will engage young people and put us on the map... So yeah she started to write a policy that would have written out some of our historic collections. And there was opposition both internally and externally about that and as a consequence the other collections might have been downgraded in importance and support but they are still here. Still being used. So that’s been an interesting few years of internal struggle” (MW 11, England). [sic]

The above evidence is a classic example of the tension between top-down policy and implementation. In this example ‘the council’ and management have tried to change the direction of the museum’s services. The museum’s director wrote the policy, specifically steering the museum. However, there was opposition from museum workers and the public to this policy direction. In the end, the policy drive was unsuccessful, as there was minimal change in activities at ground-level. The main change was within the narratives used in the museum. Actual change in working patterns, or use of collections, did not happen – top-down implementation failed. This resistance can be seen as ongoing through the process of ‘internal struggle’. This gave insight to the policy process, and also the role of museum workers within it. Here is an example of museum workers successfully challenging, and then undermining, policy that did not align to their own expectations of the service. This reinforced the idea that *“discretion depends first and foremost on the preferences of individual bureaucrats”* (Meyers and Vorsanger 2003: 156). Museum workers’ ability to create increased discretion and freedom at ground-level is thus linked to their understanding of the policy process.

Understanding delivery

The previous section has shown the difficulties that workers have in understanding the policy process they are in. This had made museum service outcomes difficult to demonstrate. Policy delivery was an ongoing activity for workers as well as for managers.

*“We will deliver [policy] but it’s incredibly painful. Hugely stressful on the staff”
(MW 11, England). [sic]*

“You know alongside doing all of that you have to keep up with policy and policy doesn’t normally affect the core running of the museum. So much in that things have to be done – floors have to be cleaned. Policy is not going to change that fact” (MW 2, England). [sic]

Museum workers often gave the impression that policy delivery of high-level objectives was a difficult process. In this way, policy implementation was distanced from the everyday roles - or core activities – of museum workers. Some workers had distanced ideas of ‘delivery’, ‘implementation’ and ‘strategy’ as separate parts of their roles. As previously demonstrated, there was a difference between everyday activities and policy rhetoric. For these workers, implementation was not part of a top-down, or rational, process. Implementation and delivery was understood differently at all levels, but still remained separate from core activities.

Delivering policy outcomes has been especially important when implementing New Labour policies, with their emphasis on ‘delivery, delivery, delivery’ (Newman 2002: 347). The first difficulty was that workers negotiated and delivered an *experience*. Not all museum workers agreed what this experience should be for visitors. For example, museum workers’ understandings of learning and enjoyment differed.

“It’s different for lots of different people isn’t it really. Education, interest, enjoyment, something exciting” (MW 1, England). [sic]

The main quantitative measurement for delivery in museums was visitor figures. In all the case studies, visitor figures were recorded by simple click machines and the results sent to

managers. This was the only comparable data available between museums in the different services.

“You just have to look at our visitor figures we are one of the most visited services in the country. And we have got high visits for learning, you know, and deliver against all the corporate priorities. So generally I think we are delivering” (MW 11, England). [sic]

Delivering against corporate principles also highlighted the importance of where these museums sit in the local authority. The services all sat in corporate based department, priorities lean towards economic-based outputs. This presents a challenge, as the only visible measureable output was visitor figures.

Importantly, museum workers noted that the impact of what they do and their interactions with visitors and users did not end with delivery.

“... Using what we are doing as a stepping stone whether it's in the museum or onto more training or more learning or more stuff to do with healthy lifestyles or that. There are loads of things we are like a stepping stone onto. Like more volunteering, and things like that. And yeah we have had people who come back and do more volunteering at the museum and things like that” (MW 2, England). [sic]

This again highlights museum workers' ideas of the museum being used as a bridge to enable outcomes. Museums are more part of the foundation for policy delivery, than in the periphery. Although this shows that effective implementation is difficult, museums can make delivery for other services easier.

In general, museum workers felt that successful implementation was achieved through delivering ongoing relationships with organisations and community groups. However, these were seen as difficult to maintain. Keeping successful projects going long term was impossible due to their short-term funding.

RESEARCHER: What do you think are the main barriers you come across to implementing policy?

"I think it's very difficult to get over, well I think the message is there now, but for me its sustainability... There must be a commitment" (MW 13, England). [sic]

Museum workers deemed a project a success if they saw an ongoing impact due to their interactions with the public. This was often described in the way of further training for workers, volunteers and the general public. Museum development, along with positive comments and feedback, also showed effective implementation. Impacts for outcomes such as social inclusion, were deemed 'almost impossible' to prove. This shows that although workers are central to policy delivery, they still find it difficult to show what is being delivered at ground-level.

Visible outcomes of policy were rare. Finding the outcomes of policy implementation was expressed as generally difficult in a museum's context. This difficulty was exacerbated by the subjective outputs – that are often seen as intrinsic – of delivering a museum services. Policy outcomes are almost invisible in relation to museum visitors. For example, some of the outcomes of implementation included education, interest and enjoyment. Front-line workers also talked about a "*generational effect*", where they were passing down (or facilitating) knowledge through the generations (field notes, England 23.03.10). That a visitor had been entertained, learned something, or felt closer to their ancestors, is something that is almost impossible for front-line workers to measure or continuously observe. Front-line workers admitted that their understandings of outcomes are often a 'feeling' they get from visitors. Implementation as a 'feeling' is very difficult to research and pin down.

Accountability to peers

The above evidence shows that providing evidence of policy implementation was a big challenge for workers. As museum workers have been shown to be central to the policy process, their role in accounting for their services must also be explored. One way that workers regulated bottom-level delivery was through group regulation. 'Groupism' is where group processes regulate individuals, but accountability is with peers (Hood 2000:60-61). It is an

important concept that is aligned with egalitarianism and mutuality. This coincides with previous conclusions that workers were more inclined to an egalitarian way of thinking. This way of regulation was reflected in the service structure as well. Many workers worked within 'teams' in each of the services. All structures reflected team working, and a group was usually responsible for a certain site, target audience or activity.

In Wales there was an example where the front-line workers had grouped together to make sure another employee did not take on privileges and power that he was not entitled to.

“Because this person decided he was site manager. And you have another person here nice enough but he now says I should be in charge of the site because I’m the only one full time here (laughs) and I’m not demeaning it, it’s a lovely place to work but it needs to be controlled. The team needs to be controlled” (MW VIII, Wales). [sic]

Formal processes had been taken against this employee (in the form of complaints of intimidating behaviour against the other employees). This was a classic example of group regulation. Front-line workers forced change by making management take responsibility for what they saw as a worker taking unofficial powers in the service.

However, it was rare that a situation reached higher level of hierarchies within local authorities, and problems were much more likely to be worked out within the smaller teams of the service. Part of these actions was a desire to keep decision making powers at a lower level in the service. Often great pains were made to keep the service as separate as possible from being associated with the central local authority. Museum workers were more likely to look 'down', rather than 'up', for direction within the service, and more evidence for this is shown below.

Democratic accountability and constructing 'the visitor'

Involving visitors/users within the museum process was indeed seen as a priority for many who believed this was the best way to develop policy. Rhodes (1997: 5) noted that *“self-steering interorganizational policy networks confound mechanisms of democratic accountability focused*

on individuals and institutions. *Effective accountability lies in democratizing functional domains*". Furthermore, communitarianism and participative organisation are alternative approaches that empower communities (Hood 2000:121). By making users the focus of policy delivery, workers can gain more power within the service.

"But if I was to approach this practically I would try and not have my own input into it and try and consult as widely as possible and ask people in that area what they want" (MW 9, England). [sic]

Museum workers said museums could not only encourage democracy, but be a central point to democratic actions within communities.

"The [museums] aspiration is to kind-of focal point the democracy and get people contributing ideas and have conversations in different ways. But the museums are trying to get people involved and I think that what I was talking about earlier with the community partnerships is the same. And getting people to kind of show case their ideas and have a chance to meet other people who are in similar situations.. [The museum] will be kind-of like a village hall for the whole city" (MW 2, England). [sic]

Museums were positioned as a tool for democracy within local communities. This, in turn, encouraged visitors and users to discuss ideas, and engage with each other and other groups. The museum did not give visitors rights, but it was seen as a potential forum that allowed users to challenge and explore narratives. By encouraging voices, this in turn could empower and encourage participation in political and democratic processes. The political element goes against some workers' ideas of neutrality of museums, but the idea of a 'forum' made the museum a space for working political ideas, while not being political itself.

User-involvement in the museums was more set around the context of using the space to share general views about other services. As well as talking about the museum service, the museum space allowed discussions between neighbourhoods and different areas of the cities. A further element of accessing citizenship is the museums' role in encouraging volunteers. This provided

a link between people and work, which is a central element of New Labour's "*rhetoric of responsibility*", which portrays work as essential to individual 'well-being' (Lister 2003: 20). The above data shows that museum workers believed in user-involvement and were involved in actions that encourage participation.

However, there was a limit to the extent of museum workers' encouragement of visitors to be involved in the shaping or running of the service. In the museum services visited, user-involvement was a project-based activity. It was embodied in one-off funded projects that can be individually evaluated. The limitations of user-involvement were clear, when museum workers were asked if any changes were made from visitors' feedback, comments or involvement. Despite projects such as LGBT in Scotland and the 'People's Panel' in England (see page 127), there was limited evidence that users had shaped or changed anything major within the services.

RESEARCHER: Has anything fed back from visitors changed anything you do?

"No. I don't think that works either. Perhaps the displays we will listen to what people say about those" (MW 14, England). [sic]

Although discussed positively, there was little evidence that users' views, feedback or involvement had created lasting or prolonged changes within any of the museums' services. This suggests that while museum workers used the rhetoric of user-led delivery; this has little impact on how they ran the service. This suggests that they utilised the rhetoric to help justify their policy actions at ground-level.

The gap between higher policy expectations and workers' actions did not always lead to positive service delivery, however one activity was observed in each service: the continued construction of the 'visitor'. The construction of clients is part of a generalising process to put distance between users and workers (Lipsky 2010). Museum workers continuously constructed and deconstructed the people they interacted with.

“I think people kinda want to appear to be of a higher social class than they are sometimes... I think sometimes it is the way I talk and the way I interpret the house to people. I make comparisons” (MW E, England). [sic]

Another example of this was through observing front-line workers watching and ‘categorising’ certain visitors. Often these were older visitors or school groups. In the English case study mothers with prams, were often viewed and discussed negatively by front-line workers. There was a perception that they visited “*just to use the free facilities*” and not the museum. Some workers gave them the “*benefit of the doubt*”, if they took their toddler to see the stuffed animals. Only by showing, they were a ‘proper visitor’, were they promoted from ‘noise makers’ to ‘visitors’ (field notes, England, 23.03.10). The findings are similar to Wright’s (2003) observations that front-line workers can give derogatory labels to client-categories. Users could be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in line with their judgements. These internal views and ideals affected the way workers treated and interacted with these visitors.

The construction of clients is important in the interactions between the public and workers. Through socially constructing ‘clients’, street-level workers employ a social process that turns ‘people’ into general and faceless ‘clients’ (Lipsky 2010: 59). Lipsky (2010) pointed out that people react to workers’ actions by self-evaluating themselves and the environment. The feeling of ‘not feeling welcome’ in a museum is an example of this. When observing visitors in the case study museums, they often looked to workers to see how they should behave. Several front-line workers told me that they were asked questions on behaviour and ‘the right thing to do’ by visitors (field notes, England, 10-25.03.10). The nineteenth-century rules around ‘expected’ museum behaviour (Bennett 1995a) are still seen to be felt by visitors. In relation to this, users can often react to policy and develop strategies to overcome issues (Lipsky 2010). One of the main methods of doing this was through various comment books. For example:

“Did not receive a nice welcome showing that the needs of the visitors are unimportant to the staff” (Visitor Book Comment, Scotland, 10.01.07 and noted in field notes 21.08.09). [sic]

The findings suggest that implementation at the 'chalkface', could result in a different experience for different visitors. When workers had room to implement their own ideals more freely, this also came with their internal prejudices and values.

On the other hand, museum workers often expressed the need to deliver a positive service to visitors (although the above evidence shows not all types of visitors). Sometimes this was expressed through challenging managers in regards to policy delivery. For example, previous chapters have discussed museum workers' perceptions of 'tokenism'. Tokenism was seen as something that impeded service delivery.

"... There is a huge danger of tokenism. Huge danger. And we are possibly going to fall into that if we are not careful. And that's really sad. There are some policies areas in which I really don't like... Then the idea that you can just parachute in people from these communities I don't think personally is the correct way" (MW 11, England). [sic]

Museum workers mostly believed that they delivered well against this background of tokenism. Outcomes of community projects were defended vehemently as going beyond the tokenism that is encouraged by policy.

"It was a heritage lottery funded project so there are obviously particular communities I needed to draw people from. And at the same time I needed to make sure that, it is quite difficult really, but people didn't feel like they were being asked to join in a tokenistic way. And they were there as individuals. They were not supposed to be representing a particular group" (MW 10, England). [sic]

Museum workers here were constructing and categorising the groups that the policy asked them to interact with. Front-line workers successfully subverted the generalising process that street-level bureaucrats tend to employ with their clients (Lipsky 2010). From museum workers' perspectives it was policies from top management that encouraged this process. In spite of policy that encouraged categorisation, museum workers were active in de-constructing complex

and dynamic policy groups. This is the opposite of Lipsky's observations of the outcomes of unequal power relations between workers and the public. The data showed that workers saw written policy and management actions as encouraging the generalisation of visitors. The generalisation of visitors then, was often a result from unequal power relationship between workers and management. This gives another example of where museum workers felt the need to 'overcome' policy and implement their own policy. The evidence also highlights the decision making processes that workers engaged in, which is explored in more depth below.

Decision making

The decision making process is important, because museum workers' understandings and actions towards visitors constructed policy outcomes. Also, the decision-making process in museums is shown to be fragmented, which opens up opportunities for multiple actors (Gray 2011). What I found when observing street-level workers was that the more decision making power that they had, the more discretion they could use around implementing policy. An interesting trend has been the increasing pressure to involve those in exhibitions in the decision making process. User-involvement in the museums studied was linked to 'who makes decisions'.

"So it is about decision making. Obviously we have targets to reach in terms of numbers and a lot to outreach projects you know is about how many people have you worked with... you know the ability to work with 9 people for 6 months kind of but what we are really looking at now is the level of decision making. And in terms of... it's about co-creation. It's about running our services in partnership with local people" (MW 13, England). [sic]

By constructing this view, workers could justify asking for more decision making powers in the name of creating a user-led service. Being user-orientated, or public-orientated, has been a general policy trend in recent years. Specifically in the cultural sector, there have been *"increasing efforts in both museum and library sectors to involve people more deeply in the development, delivery and management of services, in order to make services more responsive*

to local communities" (Arts Council England 2011: 24). Here we see evidence of ground-level workers harnessing this policy expectation to their own advantage. Like social inclusion, it showed evidence of workers utilising policy as a tool to increase their own discretion. By encouraging user-led decision making they ultimately shifted power from higher management to ground-level.

However, whether this strategy is generally effective is questionable, and actions that try to involve users were shown to have a limited effect. Museums workers struggled to give examples of user-led activities. The effectiveness of user-involvement seemed to be focused as small and discrete projects. Community consultation does not tend to be rooted in organisational processes (Renaisi, 2011; ERS 2010; Lynch 2011). The findings here have shown that museum workers tried to involve users, but front-line workers did not have the power to make decisions based on that feedback. For example, museum workers in all of the services struggled to describe changes from user involved activities. Simple feedback mechanism such as the comments book seemed to have little effect. One worker in Scotland described how they photocopied the book and sent it to a manager, but had never heard anything back in all the time she had worked in the museum (field notes, Scotland, 28.08.09). The structure of the LA made sure that long-term changes driven by users did not happen easily.

On the whole, there were not a lot of activities on this level of decision-making in the museum that involved users. Indeed, there were challenges to museum workers' own involvement in decision-making processes.

"Getting different communities in - it's all something that we feel we are really behind and want to happen. But I think sometimes it makes you feel those decisions are being made over and above what you are trying to do or you're not included in it or you are made to feel perhaps sometimes that you're not part of that process" (MW 5, England). [sic]

There was an emphasis on user and community involvement in each case study. However, evidence showed that current structures and decision-making processes shut down possibilities

for user-driven changes within the service. Participation and involvement focused projects were small and short-term funded. Lasting effects and networks were not maintained within the services studied. Long-term change was not central to local-authority museums' agendas. Workers are therefore confronted with a variety of issues and challenges at ground-level. In response, they have developed different coping mechanisms and these are explored below.

Coping mechanisms

This chapter has explored how museum workers have understood and perceived the processes around them. It is one based on conflict of interests, rather than a unified vision. However, museum workers, who have been shown to be active agents in the policy process, reacted to it in different ways. This had led to workers creating various coping mechanisms to counteract any issues or barriers that they see in the policy process. Lipsky (2010) in particular explored how street-level bureaucrats cope with barriers. He showed how they develop certain coping mechanisms to relate to policy, in reaction to what they see as a bureaucratic process. Lipsky (2010) pointed out that these coping mechanisms can be durable and long term as a result of workers trying to relate policy with practice in their organisations. There were many examples of front-line workers taking a stance against particular policies. Some museum workers have been seen to treat policy as an 'ongoing battle' that reinforced subversive forms of coping mechanisms.

"Perhaps we are fighting a rear-guard action trying to keep the old sort of university museum" (MW 14, England). [sic]

"...so it is an ongoing battle to try and get people to understand the importance of the collections and the need for a gallery. I mean sometimes it means working around the polices that are imposed top-up... top-down sorry rather than bottom-up. So that certain projects that would be good to do get done but which don't seem to fit anywhere in what's required for measurable outcomes" (MW 7, England). [sic]

Working 'around' policy was not the only reaction that museum workers engaged in to try and challenge policy. The following example shows the ability of front-line workers (in this case a volunteer) to challenge policy for their own outcomes.

"And we are putting together a course on the suffragettes... So I asked the curator if I could take them and she said absolutely not [discussing a set of Pankhurst cards made in the early 1900s in support of the Suffragette movement]. And I said what do you mean. And she says well it's policy I can't let them out they need to be in a glass case dadadada. And I said but that's crazy. And she said well it's policy, it's policy. Then I thought about it, and me being me, next week said I think that's a rubbish policy. I really think that that is just rubbish policy (voice gets higher, passionate tone). And I said there is this superb set of cards which would be a wonderful education thing, teaching thing and I said you know if you let it sit in the back of the archive or whatever or just let it appear under a glass case sometime.. I mean it is crazy. Anyway I got this funny e-mail that said 'after due consideration...' (Laughs). But even then they would only let me have a sample! By that time I'd got a fighting spirit. I said this isn't good enough (Laughs) this isn't good enough. You know this is the WEA [Workers' Educational Association] they will take very good care of them. So gradually from getting them out and putting them back... Finally I had all I needed and they made a full set of them" (Volunteer B, Scotland). [sic]

Often workers gave examples of offering management their own reports and findings to try and make a different argument for museums strategy direction. For example, museum worker V in Wales had given her economics focused director the 'Joseph Rowntree Foundation's' research reports to try and emphasise the social elements that could be tackled within the museum's services. Furthermore, in Scotland there was evidence of pre-empting policy directives by e-mailing the activities that were being done within the service to people in the local authority. This was both to keep the service "on the map" and to avoid being inundated with policy and

being overworked (field notes, Scotland, 24.08.09). These examples show that front-line workers can, and do, challenge higher-level policies.

Not all coping mechanisms should have an undermining effect of street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky 2010). Lipsky (2010) argued that this is down to the level of discretion front-level workers often employed. A good example of this in the case studies includes museum workers changing the charging policy for museum services. Officially, the Welsh museum service studied had no student or family rate tickets. However, museum workers continuously gave family and student discounts at OAP rates, as they did not agree with the price of admission. Most of the Welsh workers felt that the services should be in line with the rest of the UK and offer free admission. This is an example of discretion, influenced by front-line workers ideas of deserving and undeserving users (Lipsky 2010). Workers actively changed policy, when they saw it necessary.

There was also evidence of museum workers employing adverse working practices in reaction to policy failure. Actions, such as refusing work or doing minimal work, are examples of workers trying to discredit, or challenge, supervisors (Lipsky 2010). Another example from Wales included a worker, who had a disagreement with the council on its employment policy actions.

“And I thought well okay I’m playing by the book this year. I gave them a two page letter telling them [the Council] of the many things I have done over and above and outside my duties. Including lending out a sit down lawnmower because they did not have anything at the time. And the house staff quite rightly said oh why should we be doing that?” [sic]

RESEARCHER: Do you think it will change anything?

“No they will just think I am being subversive... And I turned around and said well helping you out has not been appreciated and therefore I will stick to my contract” (MW VIII, Wales). [sic]

The evidence shows that museum workers are far from powerless in their reaction to policy directions. Current literature often places creative workers as inanimate objects against the onslaught of powerful organisations (Banks 2007), but here museum workers show they are not passive precipitants of government policy. Museum workers actively engage with policy directives in ways that can help or hinder their implementation. The policy process within these services, then, consists of a negotiation of activities between workers, management and local government.

Conclusion

Ground-level workers are seen to generally understand the importance of their role – or the ‘chalkface’. This had led to effective implementation of social values within the service. It also brought in variations in experience for different visitors, as workers brought their own values to the process. Providing evidence of delivery, however, was a severe challenge for these services. This made delivery and accountability a complex process within the services studied. To cope with these processes, there was evidence of ongoing group regulation within the sector. Furthermore, workers had developed a rhetoric of democratic accountability. Workers emphasised community and user involvement within all of the services studied. Providing a user-led strategy, was an effective mechanism where it is difficult to provide evidence of policy delivery. Evidence of this involvement, however, remained limited and short-term. This is yet further evidence that museum workers were active in constructing policy outcomes and were fundamentally the important policy-makers within their services.

Workers had developed various coping mechanisms to help cope with, and subvert, the policy process. These included challenging policy directly, working to contract and using their discretion to sidestep current policy. These coping mechanisms, and the ability of museum workers to change and adapt their roles, supports the conclusion that they are central to the policy process. The evidence has made it clear that the negotiation between workers, their managers and the local authorities is ongoing. When this situation is happening, Lipsky (2010) said it is important to question the assumptions that policy implementation flows with authority from the top to lower levels. It is not as simple as ‘bottom-up’ or ‘top-down’, as workers are still

seen as being influenced from multiple levels. The role of workers becomes increasingly important to understanding working conditions and priorities for policy delivery.

Ultimately this chapter has highlighted workers' perspectives on the challenges that face higher-level policy-makers in implementing central and local government policies. Policy making within the museum services was truly multi-layered and complex. Implementation at ground-level within these services is not generally linked to higher level expectations. Museum workers often felt that there was policy fragmentation within this sector. The findings show that it goes beyond a gap between professional ideals and practice. What we see above, is a fundamental flaw in the structure of the museum services. The inability of connecting to policy expectations is influenced by competing structures. Running museums as a business, with economic functions in a very bureaucratic and hierarchical system, has made ground-level workers feel insecure. Workers were being asked to be more socially orientated by higher level policy drives, but lacked communication, understanding, structure and feed-back mechanisms. Ground-level uncertainty and the very confusing structure of the museum services, has helped create barriers to the implementation of higher-level policy expectations. Service delivery was seen as most successful when those on ground-level enjoyed higher levels of discretion.

Chapter Nine

Discussion

The previous chapters highlighted the ways in which museum workers perceived, made and implemented policy within their services. This chapter brings all the findings and themes from previous chapters together. The following discussions are structured around the research questions that were proposed at the beginning of the thesis. The first question “*how do museum workers understand policy expectations in Scotland, England and Wales?*” is discussed by exploring the variety of museum workers’ understandings of policy. Complex structures within museums contributed to these understandings (or lack of understandings), and a gap between policy and workers’ ideals reflected this. The second question “*how linked are central and local government policy expectations to bottom-up implementation?*” was explored throughout the findings. This chapter discusses the complex structures of local-authority museum services, and the conflicting relationships within them. Workers are found to use policy to fulfil their own expectations and goals. Overall, the findings and following discussions highlight that museum workers are much more central to the policy process than previously acknowledged. They can be key agents in shaping cultural policy and the experience of visitors within their service. The following chapter explores this in more detail.

How do museum workers understand policy expectations in Scotland, England and Wales?

The findings chapters have clearly shown that workers at ground-level are central to policy understanding. Although they were influenced by higher-level rhetoric, workers generally viewed policy as an ineffectual narrative. This led to workers prioritising their own ideals and beliefs when interacting with the public, which had led to a clear gap between workers’ understandings and higher-level policy expectations. The interpretivist view that is taken in this thesis, has allowed for discussion of workers as “*not so much fixed but malleable, fluid, and subject to interpretation... When collective identity is activated, it produces a shared way of thinking (a*

social mind) that perceives certain situations as troubling and in need of attention... this can lead to action" (Griswold 2008: 101). The many similarities of workers' perspectives throughout Scotland, England and Wales on the museum, management, local authorities and the public, were indeed a product of shared views. In this way ground-level workers showed that they could often influence policy understandings and actions within their services. It is these understandings that shaped their visitor experience. The next two sections discuss this in more detail.

Ground-level workers control of policy understandings

The data confirmed Gray's (2008) argument that policy is both externally and internally driven within museums. This thesis goes further to argue that museum workers at ground-level can be the key to understanding policy direction. The low priority of museum services within local authority structures had created a system where policy implementation was less rigorous from the top-down. Management mechanisms for control were shown to be weak, as workers encouraged distance from local authority management and control. This distance allowed some museum workers to subvert or enforce policy expectations, in line with their own beliefs on what the museum should deliver.

Ground-level workers have never before been acknowledged as the central policy actors within this sector. Current literature emphasises the influence from central and local government strategies on the cultural sector. The literature review gave details of Gray's (2000, 2004, 2007) theories of commodification, policy 'attachment' and instrumentality of cultural policy. This policy 'attachment' by local authorities, was indeed shown to have had an effect on museum workers' understandings and actions. In Wales, for example, regeneration and nationalist policy goals were widely held, and mirrored those of the local authority. In this respect, "*the bottom-up nature of attachment strategies allows for the possibility of local control over what is produced, where and when it is produced, and the purposes of production*" (Gray 2004: 43). The findings took this idea further, and have shown that service-level perspectives on policy are of key importance. The evidence has suggested that ground-level workers have had more local control around the purpose of museum delivery than has local government. This has

implications for ongoing analysis in the cultural sector as *“although structure and agency are at work continuously in society, the analytical element consists in breaking up these flows into intervals determined by the problem in hand”* (Archer 1995: 168). Although local government structures were seen to have a controlling impact (especially around budgets and bureaucracy), the museum services were often able to adapt their current activities into the changing local government policy discourses.

One example of workers actively attaching activities was given in the example of social inclusion policy in the findings. Here, workers had attached their own activities to the discourses of social inclusion. Social inclusion funding was then channelled to fulfil multiple aims at ground-level. Previous literature had usually focused on the problems brought up by social inclusion policy (Newman and McLean 2004; Tlili 2008a; McCall 2009). This thesis has agreed with the conclusion that social inclusion is ambiguous and almost impossible to implement. However, the findings have also shown that this high-level policy weakness can be used to workers' advantage at ground-level. Social inclusion funding in the Scottish case study, for example, had contributed to core functions and maintenance of the museum services. The ability of museum workers to adapt their own understandings, also suggests that they draw from a wide (and perhaps unconscious) pool of professional abilities (Schon 1991). The gap between policy and practice was still clear, but this gap was used by workers to integrate their own local activities and needs for the service.

The assumption in the literature that museums are becoming 'new' museums and the prevalence of the 'new museology' (Harrison 2004; Ross 2004; Weil 1990) is challenged by these perspectives. There is a clear indication that traditional roles, centred on the importance of collections are still prevalent. This indicated a gap between museum workers' perspectives and some of the assumptions that motivate policy within the museum. Current policy assumptions around access, democracy and education are linked to ideas within the 'new museology'. In the literature review, for example, Harrison (2004: 47) was shown to provide linked discourses that included 'commitment', 'liberation', 'islands of hope', 'dialogue', 'platform of ideas', 'social re-definition', 'cultural empowerment', 'emotional' and the 'redefinition of our

consciousness'. New museums are seen to be based around their social purpose, rather than their activities (Weil 1990). Although certain social activities were important to museum workers, the collections were still seen as the foundation of their museums. Ideas from the majority of ground-level workers did not generally reflect the theoretical evolution that has been assumed to be behind changes within museums and policy.

The data showed that museum function is in constant negotiation between workers and management. Workers often shared the multiple and often contradictory expectations within their roles. They often saw their role as an 'ongoing battle' at the ground-level. There was still a key group within each museum services, who saw themselves as the 'guardians' of traditional museum functions. Sandell (2002) warned that museums that resisted their social role run the risk of becoming irrelevant. This has created tension due to increasing pressure to meet political targets that do not account for the varied functions of the museum (West and Smith 2005). The findings, however, showed that workers did not resist the social role; they believed it should go in harmony with museums core functions. Workers did not resist the social role of the museum in general. What they did resist was imposed and politically linked expectations that compromised core function and delivery (as they perceived it).

Workers were shown to be creative and resourceful in employing their discretion. The findings showed many examples of workers going beyond their remits to ensure a wide service and visitor experience. Often, knowledge of the local contexts and people were shown to be a real advantage for visitors for feeling welcome (Welsh workers' relationships with the visitor, suffering Parkinson's for example). On the other hand, workers did act like traditional street-level bureaucrats in categorising and generalising users. Visitors were sometimes subject to negative judgements (such as young mothers), and this was seen to influence the way that workers treated different groups. Wright (2003) noted that applying moral judgement at ground-level can render some users 'undeserving of help' from workers. Indeed, agency is "*intrinsically moral and thoroughly differentiated (by identities, multiplicity of selves, multipositionality and varying degrees of reflexivity)*" (Wright 2012: 323). Policy-makers can be unaware that they are employing their agency to the harm of others (Wright 2012). This could result in a different level

of service for users. In a sector that has been subject to increasingly diverse social inclusion policy aims, this shows that workers actively apply their own understanding and judgements when interacting (or not interacting) with different visitors. They have been influenced by their own motivations in their decision making and activities. Like Le Grand (1997) has pointed out, it is important to look at the assumptions behind policy making. Museum workers had inherent assumptions about some visitors. Issues of choice and voice, however, were not prominent within the research findings. The emphasis on resource issues and managerial conflicts placed Lipsky's (1980) street-level framework closer to the data. It also further implies that a gap exists between policy and practice, and shows workers as active agents at ground-level using their own discretion.

Lipsky (2010) was critical of street-level bureaucrats turning against policy, or trying to minimise or maximise discretion. He had an underlying assumption that street-level worker should try their best to achieve policy-makers' intentions (Evans 2010). Evans (2010), however, pointed out that this view often disregards professional attributes of street-level roles. Some examples in the findings, showed museum workers consciously disregarding and subverting policy, because it worked in visitors favour. Changing the pricing charges for disadvantaged groups, for example, was an example of workers making the museum more accessible, despite local government policy. Workers saw themselves as "*doing good by stealth*" (Lister 2001). They do not view themselves as being particularly subversive – they saw themselves working for the good of the museum. The majority of workers worked for the museum, and the local government were simply their employers. The museum and visitors experience tended to be prioritised over policy. By acting as they saw best, workers effectively took control of policy at the ground-level.

The social role of museums is a complex subject. In general, workers found it difficult to link to social policy, and instead employed socially-orientated activities on a day-to-day basis. Workers often expressed a more egalitarian view of museum delivery and function than managers. This was shown mainly through their rejection of business-orientated discourse and policy. Workers advocated (although not always delivered) a more user-led process within their

museums' services. The social role of museums cannot ultimately be separated from the museums historic functions, as they have always had the power to influence what people think, feel and affect, and influence attitudes and values (Bennett 1995). What was shown was that museum workers tried to develop a counter-narrative by employing professional discourses on what it is to be a curator, to control and understand their functions. As suggested by Abbot and Meerabeau (1998), the thesis has mainly focused on professional behaviours to give an insight into actions. Museum workers were 'professionals' or 'semi-professionals' in a very wide sense. This was because museum function and delivery was drawn from both personal ideologies and inherited, historical and professional ideals. What the findings have shown is that museum workers' social views and ideologies are much more important to the social role of museums than policy.

As explored in the literature review, providing effective evidence to policy-makers is an ongoing debate within this sector (Selwood 2002; 2010, Hooper-Greenhill 2004; Holden 2004; Selwood *et al.* 2005; Gray 2006; Galloway 2008; Snowball 2008; Scott and Soren 2009; McCall and Playford 2012). Providing policy evidence needs much more in-depth analysis in this sector in general. Giving evidence of delivery is complicated, due to the mixture of non-cultural corporate policies and many subjective outcomes. The various museums councils in Scotland, England and Wales are well aware of the need to justify their monetary support for the arts. A recent report for the DCMS noted that:

“there has been recognition, both within central government and in parts of the publically funded cultural sector, of the need to more clearly articulate the value of culture using methods which fit in with central government's decision-making”
(O'Brien 2010: 4).

The use of economic tools to articulate this message, and align to it, is needed (Bakhshi *et al.* 2009 in O'Brien 2010: 4). The perceived instability within services is reflected on a wider scale through the UK, as sectors, such as cultural services, are suffering severe cuts in public spending. Workers do not have the tools or instruments to show, or justify, their achievements and outcomes. Outcomes policy has to be measureable (such as with the SNP strategy, see

appendix A), and this is difficult within museum services. The findings have clearly shown that ground-level workers need to have a more central role in creating the evidence needed for advocating museums.

The ability to employ discretion was further encouraged by the exceptional distance between museum services and local government. Street-level bureaucrats in other local government services, such as social services, have been shown to be under many more control mechanisms (Evans 2010; 2011). The distance from local government encouraged workers to view policy as an insubstantial narrative. Although there is evidence that these narratives have filtered down and impacted museum workers' understandings, the effects on workers' actions were limited. Museum workers still had a lot of control at service-level. Lack of policy interest and accountability for policy outcomes had given workers a certain amount of discretion in the day-to-day interactions with visitors. Although funding is still within local authority and higher managerial control, museum workers are active in fitting current activities into policy narratives to access it. Museum workers can then become much more central to shaping policy within this sector.

The gap between ideals and policy

One of the reasons that museum workers could undermine higher-level expectations is that there is a clear gap between some policy ideas and workers' ideals. There was still a clear conflict between what was seen as core roles in the museum and policy expectations. It was reflected in the apparent 'battle' about the role of the museums' service between workers and management. The 'core functions' of museums was something already explored in the literature review (Weil 1990; Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Ross 2004; Harrison 2004), and the findings showed that this is still a very relevant debate. Ultimately curators hold a professional role that has required training in specialist knowledge around collections and preservation. Most street-level workers see themselves as professionals, and can have professional ideologies that they employ in their roles (Lipsky 1980). Evans and Harris (2004) noted that gaining high-levels of professional discretion can have a positive impact on services. There were many examples in the studies, where workers had used local and cultural knowledge to enhance visitor

experiences. Workers were active in increasing their own cultural capital in relation to their roles (Bourdieu 1993). Take, for example, the worker in Scotland who used his personal time to take groups on personal tours to the monuments in the area. He voluntarily organised the tours and gave groups his specific knowledge of the area. As the worker's initial role was in collections preservation, this was completely beyond his paid remit. His special knowledge was from previous education, interest and enjoyment. Workers in the museum services studied held a wealth of knowledge about their local area, which otherwise was inaccessible. Successful delivery was often done when policy aligned with workers' priorities and ideals. Hood (2000) has noted that this is indeed when policy is most effective.

This perceived professional role of workers – especially the curatorial aspect in the service – was by many workers to be seen to be under attack. Curator roles had slowly been eroded and devalued by each of the local authorities that were studied. This appeared in the findings, where management had consistently phased out curator roles within the service. When skilled workers had left, they had not been replaced. This had left customer assistants with no academic museum background, using their personal time and initiative to replace lost cultural knowledge. Furthermore, management strategies in Scotland had 'pooled' staff, and in effect distanced them from their ability to use any cultural knowledge that they had attained. Management strategies to maintain control of workers were indeed seen in each museum service.

The view that professional roles were under attack within the sector, had contributed to the defensive position that some museum workers had taken in relation to changing policy expectations. These have been perceived to change worker focus towards social and economic issues at the expense of collections-focused work. Economic expectations had been encouraged by the placement of museums under corporate departments, and the perceived 'push' of business language and market mechanisms. Authors such as Braverman (1974) would call this the continued deskilling of the labour force. The structures of capitalism dictate the replacement of skilled workers with semi and low-skilled workers. Cultural workers have often been the focus of 'de-professionalization' strategies (Braverman 1974; Buchloh 2001). This

would coincide with Gray's (2007) argument about the increased 'commodification' of culture. This is, however, in line with the changing content of work within the public sector (Halford *et al.* 1997; Halford and Leonard 1999). Public funding for the arts and culture has become increasingly tighter, exposing museums and other cultural institutions to market forces (Bennett 1997, DCMS 2006). The rise of 'marketisation' of culture, therefore, has coincided with the attempted 'de-skilling' of some museum service workers. There has been an ongoing top-down drive in "de-skilling" professionals at ground-level in other public services as well (Taylor and Kelly 2006: 629). This was one of the most significant structural restraints on museum workers agency that was seen in the findings. The perception that workers at ground-level had about being under attack did coincide with higher-level structural changes and decisions.

This, in turn, was linked to the view that management were trying to change the role and function of museums and workers. Tensions had been created for museum workers in these services. Ground-level staff, who worked closely with collections, were seen to be losing control over museum function and direction. Museum worker 11, for example, gave a clear indication of the low importance given to collections and collections policy by senior management. It is important to note, however, that workers were aware of the dichotomy between 'intrinsic' activities within the museum and other expectations (for example the 'old school' and 'new school' labels placed on workers). Gibson (2008) also pointed out that this is not a simple black-and-white argument. Museum workers consistently showed that they agreed with the social aims within their organisations. They individually believed that their services had a key social role, even if they viewed themselves as collections-focused. They generally saw themselves, however, as much more realistic, than the generalised policy expectations that they were aware of. What they often resisted was 'business' analogies towards their public services that had encouraged defensive strategies around traditional preservation and collections-based roles. This was in reaction to the perception that management were targeting their decision-making power and professionalism. Again this shows a gap between government and bottom-up expectations, as workers aimed to preserve their own perceptions of what the museum should be delivering. Halliday *et al.* (2009) also argued that increased managerial mechanisms

have not completely obstructed worker discretion at ground-level. There still remains space to investigate the importance of worker discretion.

Museum workers continuously tried to work according to their own ideals and expectations. The rejection of nationalist agendas was a good example of this. Scottish museum workers promoted local contexts and wider world exhibitions over solely national ones, especially if they were linked to policy. This was done to specifically subvert Scottish National Party policy expectations. Many workers in Scotland actively resisted policy expectations, to protect the museums as a neutral political space. They actively resisted the party politicisation of museums in creative ways. They showed strength, creativity and discretion. It showed that museum workers were active and resourceful in negotiating policy delivery. This ability to negotiate and align the service to coincide with their own ideals and expectations shows the amount of discretion they had within their roles. Gray (2008) noted that within museums and galleries there has been a process of internal choice between education, entertainment and curatorship activities. Workers had a more active role in shaping activities than has been previously accepted. The evidence indicated a variety of distancing techniques employed by workers. Ground-level workers are the key actors in the negotiation of policy and its implementation.

How linked are central and local government policy expectations to bottom-up implementation?

Museum workers had a lot of discretion over the direction of services, making their role in delivering 'attached' outcomes of central importance. The above discussion around gaps in workers' understanding and policy also show that museum workers could obtain more discretion and control over policy direction. This was sometimes due to workers' distancing themselves from management and the local authority. They continuously employed their own interpretations of museum roles and functions and social outcomes, which made museum workers of central importance to policy making, understanding, delivery and implementation. Pfau-Effinger (2005) pointed out that the interactions between state, policies and social practices of individuals is complex, and that individual behaviour cannot be determined by state policies. Welfare state policies are the result of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between social actors in

relation to ideas and interests (Pfau-Effinger 2005: 12). Thus museums faced the same challenges as other public institutions, and policy was indeed made through the negotiations of social actors at ground-level.

The findings have shown that policy intentions were vague, and that museum workers interpreted them differently in multiple contexts. Museum services also had quite a complicated structure that encouraged distance at the ground-level. Within this structure there was clear evidence that showed gaps in understanding between workers, management and local authorities. Confusing structures and conflictual hierarchical systems limited the understanding of top-down policy expectations at ground-level. Evans (2011) pointed out that much policy is speculative and rhetorical. Policy is made of language, and the findings showed that politics and rhetoric are central elements to museum workers understandings of policy. Indeed, discourse has become a central element in shaping New Labour policies and activities (Fairclough 2000, 2001). In the same way, discourse has become much more important to museums (Duncan 2004; Message 2006). The findings reflected this, but museum workers also actively framed policy as a rhetoric to create distance. They were not passive participants in the policy process, but active agents in trying to control and direct it. This was shown through their attempts to utilise policy for their own ideals and agendas.

The previous discussion also invites the question of whether the lack of implementation of higher-level policy has led to a 'governance failure' in the sector. The 'gaps' between what happened at the top of local authorities and at the bottom, suggests some kind of governance failure. Top-down policy does not have a significant impact on the ground, and ground-level creativity does not filter to the top. Policy failure, however, *"is purely a matter of perception"* (Hay 1995: 50) and the perception of failure is simply a matter of narrative. Top-down policy is so vague, it reinforces Edelman's (1971; 1977) observations that policy can be made to be simply symbolic. Museums and galleries, after all, are social apparatuses that possess and bestow symbolic power through cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993). The policies of the cultural sector are so distant to museum workers that this encourages the question of whether politicians actually expect them to be implemented. A sure sign of this scenario is where central

government pass policy, but do not make the resources available for their implementation (Hill 1997: 134). The same situation was clearly reflected in the findings. Coalter (1995) pointed out that many leisure service policies have 'failed', due to the giving of service objectives without methods of implementation. Museum workers were subject to multiple policy expectations, but are under constant funding pressure.

Although the voluntary nature of public interaction within the museum makes it unique, it also contributes to the creation of a vulnerable service. The current climate within the cultural sector is a good example of its instability. Museum services often find they are the forefront of public sector cuts – with current museums quangos being merged with Arts Council England- with a reduced budget of 30% (BBC News 2010a). Furthermore, some local governments have started to abolish funding all together (BBC News 2010b). Not only have museums needed to change to a more democratic climate, but they must provide evidence of their impact on society, an outcome that at the moment is impossible to measure (Selwood 2002). It suggests that higher-level policy-makers engage in discourses around the arts, but do not expect them to be fulfilled.

Another sign that higher-level policy is simply symbolic was the lack of formal accountability mechanisms at the ground-level. There is an inherent assumption in Lipsky's (1980) work that implementation does need to be controlled effectively to be successful. In the cultural sector, however, auditing has continuously been seen to be a mechanism that is 'hostile' to creativity (Hewison 2011). This is one of Evans' (2011) main critiques of Lipsky – that he was inherently a top-down writer, who did not question the idea that top-down policy should be fulfilled. Contrary to this, the findings show that implementation of higher-level policy does not always reflect successful delivery. Indeed, workers effectively delivered their services *despite* policy. Museum workers were able to employ successful agency. Much of the literature regarding street-level bureaucrats assumes that workers are to be controlled, and that top-down implementation is desirable. This thesis explored the idea that workers can be more effective when they had more discretion over activities. Indeed, they could sometimes manipulate control mechanisms, such as policy, and use them to their own advantage. Lack of autonomy

over their roles could lead to fatalism and 'governance failure'. Overall, some museum workers were much more active agents in policy, than previous studies have acknowledged. The gap between central and local government could, in some cases, be a positive thing for ground-level delivery.

How conflictual relationships can lead to increased worker discretion

Evidence offered in the findings chapters clearly showed a structure where museum workers were negotiating multiple roles within their working relationships. The gaps highlighted between museum workers, management and local authorities suggested a structure that allowed negotiation, discretion and autonomy at ground-level. Therefore, tensions between museum workers and management expectations were reflected in the local authority structure, with clear gaps between bottom-level workers/curators and management. This in turn, could open opportunities to employ discretion and museum professionalism at ground-level. The idea that workers can employ discretion within their roles is central to Lipsky's (1980) understanding of street-level bureaucrats. In a context that has evolved through 'New Public Management' (NPM) since the 1980s, this is a surprising finding for these services. Other authors have noted that NPM has decreased the capacity of professionals (Taylor and Kelly 2006). Also the structure of the museum services studied were a varied mix of different hierarchical, egalitarian and management approaches. These structures form the 'site of struggles' (Bourdieu 1993: 38) and, as the cultural field can possess relative autonomy from the field of power (especially as regards to its economic and political principles of hierarchization), museum workers have space to negotiate their own power relations and increase discretion. This was an ongoing challenge for workers to negotiate within their services.

With enough discretion, however, workers and managers can handle mixed governance styles (Meuleman 2008). Indeed, policy is nothing without implementation at ground-level (Barrett and Fudge 1981). The evidence shows that the low priority of museums may have protected them from increased control and performance targets relative to NPM. As seen above, policy is still a 'symbol' and distant narrative for most workers. Indeed, workers have questioned whether policies were meant to be implemented at all.

In relation to the literature review, this is a significant finding. Bennett, O (1997: 19) pointed out that recent trend of councils combining departments has seen “*museums losing out and distanced from the decision making process*”. Also, being dependent on local government for funding and important decision-making, allows little flexibility in that “*they must follow laws, rules, regulations, structures, policies and conventions pertaining to the larger bureaucracy*” (Bennett, O 1997:20). This research showed that museum workers actively engaged in increasing distance from local authorities (for example, the worker who presented himself as a museum worker, rather than a council worker). Furthermore, workers found this distance from ‘the council’ to work in their favour in visitor engagement. Many museum workers tried to distance themselves from the negative connotations, visitors felt towards ‘the council’. This thesis does not mean to underestimate the serious funding issues in the sector, but the low importance of services has allowed workers a certain amount of discretion in their interaction with visitors. Participants were not subject to the same amount of regulation as teachers and social care workers, for example, in local authority services. Workers’ perception of freedom at ground-level was sometimes enhanced by the low priority of the museum services. This distance was of particular importance when trying to fulfil social expectations and roles with museum delivery.

Conflicting structures

Evidence suggested that tensions within the museum services could be structural in nature. It is important to acknowledge the difference between process and structure. The dynamics of governance processes revealed a lot about the makeup of the service, along with tensions and contradictions in control strategies. The dichotomy, highlighted in the literature around ‘core’ and new policy-linked instrumental activities (Gibson 2008), was also reflected in the structures, in which museum workers find themselves. Instrumental policy goals were attached to management rhetoric, while collections and ‘intrinsic’ activities were shown to be ground-level worker priorities. This was highlighted very clearly by museum worker 9 in England. He immediately placed himself in the ‘new school’ category (as he termed it), which he described as those, who want to ‘make a difference’ with what they do in the museum. Those in the ‘old

school' category are old archaeologists, some curators and collections managers – those linked to the 'intrinsic' activities within the museums. The 'new school' was linked to community and inclusion work, something that particular museum worker was passionate about, which were more in line with 'instrumental' activities introduced by central and local government policies. This showed that the gap between the ground-level and top-down policy could be ideologically and structurally reinforced.

The findings have given much insight to museum workers' understandings of policy and governance. What we saw in the findings went beyond a simple gap between workers ideals and policy. It stemmed from a fundamental clash in belief systems and different opinions on how the museum services should be governed. Those at the bottom were mostly aligned with an egalitarian view of looking at their work. This was shown through many workers' needs to be public-orientated, and also through their social values. It was also shown via their rejection of 'business management', and management trying to bring market ideals into the museum services. Hierarchies were only seen to cause problems and resentment for ground-level workers. The suggested clash of structures can be linked to the different dimensions of cultural theory. The complex and dynamic structures that museum workers find themselves in, can be seen to be a mixture of hierarchical, egalitarian, individualised and fatalist structures (Hood 2000). Cultural theory offered some understanding of how conflicts between ideals and values can be reflected in the structures, in which they work.

Although set in a hierarchical structure within a local authority setting, the distance generated by both workers and the local authority, allowed for other forms of governance at ground-level. Museum workers periodically offered negative perceptions of the effectiveness of management, and local authority structure, communication and management. The services studied, formed a unique local authority service, and thus the governance structures were different to those of other services within local government. Museums are allocated a very low priority, this in turn allowed for more opportunities for museum workers to employ their own policy interpretations. Although the larger picture of local authority governance was not really dealt with, museum workers were articulate in discussing their own roles, perceptions and functions. Formal local

government hierarchy and policy became much less important at ground-level in relation to delivery. Museum workers were able to employ their own priorities. Formal government mechanisms (such as the bureaucratic processes that were like *'treacle'*) offered a challenge to overcome, rather than a method of functional delivery. Literature often showed the difficulties in understanding governance processes in this sector. However, this thesis shows that having a centralised picture of the sector would not only be difficult, but extremely challenging. Not only do local contexts differ from service to service, but delivery is dependent on museum workers within those services. Although themes can be highlighted, it is front-line worker activities that are ultimately central to policy and governance processes.

Most workers viewed policy as an 'imposed' expectation by top management. There was clearly a lack of ownership from museum workers at ground-level. This was linked to fatalism, which is one of the paradigms of cultural theory (Hood 2000), and this way of thinking was significant in the policy context of museum services. To compare it to other paradigms, such as an egalitarian perspective, communities are meant to solve their own issues, with local 'ownership' of policy goals (Newman 2001: 36). However, museum workers often expressed a non-ownership of higher-level policy. Hierarchical systems are designed for high accountability at a management level, but evidence showed that workers believed there is no accountability within the flawed hierarchical system. This is significant, as hierarchies are only effective when linked with accountability (Hood 2000). Individualist ways of thinking were centred on marketing and business ideas, but museum workers could not negotiate this in, what they saw as a public subsidised, service. When policy becomes meaningless, it can lead to the alienation of workers (Braverman 1974). The IMF (2001) considers policy ownership as involving the "*willing assumption of responsibility of an agreed outcome of a programme of policies*". The findings show that ground-level workers were not generally consulted about policies within their organisation. There were also challenges in communication in general within the local authority structures. This meant that an 'agreed outcome' was usually very rare. Outcomes were passed down from higher-level policy-makers. Due to this, policy was seen to be 'imposed' rather than mutually agreed upon, and this made workers feel disempowered.

When workers felt that they did not make a difference, they could lose their enthusiasm for their roles within the service. They could perceive themselves to have no stake in any policy expectations within the service. The findings show that, when workers enjoyed higher levels of discretion, they were more effective at delivering their service. Running museums as a business with economic functions in a very bureaucratic and hierarchical system, had made some ground-level workers feel lost. Workers were asked to be more socially orientated by higher level policy drives, but lacked communication and understanding. This had led to confusion at ground-level. The system of control, used within the museum services, could be described as a hybrid. These hybrids can be unstable and can cause side effects (Hood 1996). We saw a clash of ideals around egalitarianism and markets, which is reflective of what workers and managers believed the museum should be delivering. This had an impact on higher-policy expectations that were associated with higher levels of the hierarchy. The difficulties for public services include the link between bureaucracy and ineffective hierarchy. Furthermore, policy tends to be made in a more ad hoc fashion in this scenario (Hood 1996). Conflictual relationships and structures, then, have contributed to the gap between policy understandings and implementation. Within these conflictual relationships, the ground-level workers hold the power over decision-making and implementation (Lipsky 2010). This again shows how central workers were making, negotiating and implementing policy within their services.

Utilising policy at ground-level

Visitors, or users, were discussed frequently by workers. One area, where government and worker perceptions could be seen to be linked, is through the narrative given to user involvement. Museum workers were able to interact with their visitors on their own terms, which were seen to fulfil policy aims such as increasing accessibility (although not necessarily through formal mechanisms). Evidence suggested that museum workers' prioritised their relationship with visitors, implementing their ideas of public accountability. As control mechanisms, such as competition and review, were seen to be rejected at ground-level, the idea of mutuality becomes more important at this level. It was interesting to see workers look to visitors, rather than management and the local authority, for issues of accountability. Peer-group controls were seen

to be in operation (such as the Welsh case study, where workers tried to limit an unauthorised use of power). In this case “*mutual surveillance... overcomes anti-system entrepreneurship*” (Hood 1996: 220). Workers have then utilised policy rhetoric around ‘users’ to focus their activities at ground-level. The argument of being user-led also helped them justify their service. In a service where delivery was very difficult to provide evidence for, claiming that you are user-led was an effective control strategy.

User-involvement was advocated in each service, but in reality had had little impact on the way services were run. There were several examples of users having made a difference, especially in Scotland, but the majority of workers could not think of examples of how visitors had shaped their services in the long term. In regards to visitors, there was a link in policy and workers’ expectations, but they failed to be consistently applied in practice. Jancovich (2011) has pointed out that effective and sustainable participatory decision-making processes must be fully understood by those implementing them. What this evidence suggests, therefore, is that workers were able to utilise policy rhetoric and shape it to their own uses. The “*museum is a specific configuration of discourses*” (Noever 2001: 8), and policy could be regarded as symbolic by both high-level and ground-level policy makers. By objectifying policy as a narrative – such as user-led narrative – it could be utilised as a tool for other means. A user-led strategy was something workers could understand and implement, as it was aligned with their egalitarian ideals. There is a gap, however, between this ground-level rhetoric and implementation.

The evidence showed that tensions could be created when workers were required to allocate social values, without any help to define and achieve these objectives (Lipsky 2010). The evidence clearly showed a gap between how museum workers would like their relationship to users to be, and the reality that their roles allowed. Lipsky (2010) has suggested those tensions could be policy based. Within a museum context, this is an interesting point to highlight. Agents on the ground-level have a key role in allocating, interpreting and communicating social values. Museums have an “*obligation to deploy their social agency and cultural authority in a way that is aligned and consistent with the values of a contemporary society*” (Sandell 2002:

18). Museums have a much wider impact and central role in shaping and reflecting history. There are always concerns that this ability will be misused (Sandell 2002), such as in the 'social engineering' concerns of museum worker seven. Museum workers found themselves in the position of advocating social impacts and values, but unable to link it to top-down mechanisms. This makes their role in the interpretation and delivery of policy of central importance to the visitor experience.

Previous chapters have shown how central museum workers are to understanding and shaping the policy within their services. Their different priorities, ideals and ideas are important when forming delivery of the service and shaping interactions at ground-level. These ground-level ideas are shown to take precedent over national policy divergence. This would inhibit any influence influenced by devolution. Higher-level policy expectations can influence ideas at ground-level, but workers ultimately decide how to implement and deliver.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

Museum workers perceived themselves to be the guardians, the last defence, in an ongoing battle to deliver collections to the public. The passion and care of objects and stories was very clear when observing the everyday working lives within the museum services studied. Many museum workers cared deeply about their delivery and the public's experience. The complex structures that they are in had created tensions and conflict between workers, management and local authority expectations. The balance to promote a non-political service, with social and economic policy expectations was an ongoing battle for these services. There was a clear and dynamic interplay of both structure and agency influences within the museum services studied. Ultimately workers trusted their own ideals when interacting with the public and shaping their actions. This had led them to utilise their own discretion in different ways and to push boundaries within the service.

Through the utilisation of their own ideals and understandings, ground-level workers have been highlighted as central to the policy making process within the museum services studied. The thesis has shown that workers' actions are indeed influenced in a variety of different ways by users, museum bodies, central and local government and more. However, when implementing policy, they often end up relying on their own ideals for implementation. Although there are many factors in the policy process, this thesis argues that museum workers are the key agents in understanding museums policy. This is a whole new way of thinking about the policy process within this sector. This thesis has therefore contributed to current research in both cultural and social policy fields. Cultural policy literature has been shown to focus mainly on central government policies. A gap in knowledge regarding cultural workers was also prevalent throughout the literature. Museum workers at ground-level had a range of influences on negotiating policy understandings and delivery within their services.

This thesis offers the first comparative street-level analysis of three museum services in Scotland, England and Wales. This thesis had taken three case studies of museum services in Scotland, England and Wales, and shown that ground-level workers have a central role in making policy. The comparative view was necessary in the context of UK devolution. The main finding was the striking similarities of museum workers' perceptions at ground-level. The challenges and opportunities highlighted in the findings have been applicable throughout Scotland, England and Wales. One exception has been the added nationalist policies of Wales and Scotland. Welsh workers' ideals were seen to be more amenable to nationalist policies around language, regeneration and tourism. Local language barriers were seen to play a role in the perception that Welsh should be applied and promoted in the area. In contrast, Scottish workers were seen to rebel against national policy expectations, which they linked to political agendas. In conclusion, the local context of the museum services was more important than the national one. The literature showed that language, policy and institutional differences do not reflect the different underlying social relations in Scotland, England and Wales. The gap between higher-level policy and museum workers has meant that workers are looking at policy expectations as empty discourse. Activities at ground-level remained generally unaffected, as workers pursued the ideas they held already. This included little impact from users, as feedback mechanisms were weak, and had not influenced many long-term changes at ground-level. This was similar in Scotland, England and Wales. The evidence therefore has not indicated any significant divergence in cultural practice due to devolution within these services.

The research has also contributed to the ongoing policy literature focusing on street-level bureaucracies and bureaucrats. It has shown clearly that public museum services can be studied as street-level bureaucracies. They are unique in many ways, but the central issues of discretion and professionalism are still very important debates. The high levels of discretion at ground-level and difficult working structures, placed museum workers as key agents in the policy process. Museum services, more than any other service, suffer from lack of resources and low political priority. The findings indicate that discretion is even more important in this context, as museum workers must be creative and resourceful to deliver a full service. They have shown themselves capable of utilising policy to access core funding for the service. They

have given up personal time for the public and to share their own cultural knowledge. Discretion was also employed to push boundaries (such as the CCTV activities), and workers employed their own subjective judgements on users. Museum workers are therefore shown to be similar to other street-level bureaucrats, who often rely on discretion to deliver their services.

The research also takes the street-level bureaucracy literature further. As cultural services are new to this conceptual framework, it has uncovered unique opportunities that other public services may not have. Museums were different to traditional street-level bureaucracies, due to the unique and voluntary interactions with the public. They are not regarded as an '*encounter with government*', like social services or the police (Lipsky 2010). One key difference is the right to participate freely in cultural services, which could provide a unique opportunity for local and central government to engage audiences. Museums, although a local government service, have often sidestepped the negative connotations that are usually linked to 'the council'. Museums, then, provide a unique opportunity and interesting public space, in which to deliver social policy. This thesis therefore contributes a new and interesting field to pursue within social policy analysis.

The thesis has also applied the paradigms of cultural theory throughout. Overall, cultural theory has been a useful framework for understanding the complex structures of the museum services studied. This is because the structures involved, were linked very strongly to workers' ideals and ideologies. Museum workers tended to be egalitarian in their views, and this was reflected in how they perceived the museum should work. Overall, the service was still dominated by a hierarchical structure. The hierarchical structure was blamed for many of the services tensions in communication and policy. Individualistic notions of the market and business were severely criticised by many participants in the museum context. Fatalism was shown by a minority of workers, but was still significant within the museum services studied. Overall, however, the museums workers expressed their museum services as a hybrid mix of these approaches and this could create tension and conflict. The structures were mostly viewed as overly complex and ineffective.

These local structures were shown to be more important in influencing and shaping ground-level perspectives than the national structures in which they were embedded. The challenges and experiences of workers were remarkably similar in all of the case study areas in Scotland, England and Wales. This is a new and very interesting development for research in the cultural sector. It has often been assumed that devolution would engineer a divergence between Scotland, England and Wales. Although there were some differences such as the emphasis on language in Wales and political nationalism in Scotland, most workers shared very similar experiences. For example, ground-level workers shared the same conflictual relationships with management and local authorities and shared very similar values around museum function. This study aimed to gain insight into the effects of devolution and can conclude that for these local authority museums the local governance structures were far more influential to workers actions.

Gray's (2007) argument of ongoing policy 'attachment' within the cultural sector was indeed mirrored quite strongly at ground-level. Workers were subject to multiple influences and expectations. The findings also showed how museum workers themselves actively attached their activities to central and local government expectations. It meant that 'attachment' was not necessarily left at central and local government level, but also pursued at ground-level. This provided opportunities for workers, but also contributed to the ongoing challenge of justifying publically subsidised museums.

One of the ongoing debates in the cultural policy sector is how to raise political awareness of the positive impact of the arts. Placing museum workers as central agents to the policy process gave rise to specific challenges. A strong and unified voice within the cultural sector would hopefully raise political awareness. A unified policy voice should, *in theory*, place cultural services in a better funding position. The findings have shown, however, that this is extremely challenging. It would be difficult to implement a general museums strategy, never mind a cultural sector strategy. The findings also indicated that top-down intervention challenged museum workers' understandings. Although they utilised policy in creative ways, this was usually connected to what they were delivering already. Museum workers were shown to

deliver activities despite top-down policy expectations, rather than in response to them. A sector-wide strategy would need to start from the ground-up to be applicable to street-level services.

Another challenge for creating a strong political voice for the sector was the perception that policy was 'hollow talk'. The findings suggested that policy was seen as mainly symbolic in this sector. This was reinforced by the lack of resources and mechanisms for delivery. This had encouraged workers to distance themselves from policy and express a lack of commitment to policy rhetoric. This situation has made it all the more challenging to create a cohesive argument around the justification for public provision. Museum workers already find it difficult to voice their 'policy significance', and this thesis shows that a new approach is needed.

The thesis has also shown that although policy is important in a funding capacity, the top-down 'attachment' (Gray 2007) of museums onto other policy agendas, has coincided with a lack of development at ground-level. There were limited mechanisms to measure, or provide, evidence for social and economic policy expectations. The findings also showed that higher-level management were not that interested in feedback of museum delivery. Workers were aware of their own roles in delivery, but fought against policy directed outcomes that infringed on core duties and ideals. The three museum services were based in economic-focused departments within local authority structures. This called for more economic priorities that were difficult to assess, as there was a lack of mechanisms allowing cultural workers to give evidence for policy implementation. One of the main policy challenges in this area is providing verifiable evidence of the implementation of social, cultural and economic goals. This thesis suggests that policy evaluation should begin at ground-level.

This means that implementation of higher-level policy expectations will be challenging without engaging ground-level workers. The main reason for apathy or fatalism in the service was lack of ownership of policy goals. Workers indicated that through increased communication and engagement they could understand, and relate to, policy goals (as some already had). The team structures within the museum services studied helped uphold the conflicting groups of 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' led workers. Those at ground-level tended to reject policies

instigated at higher levels within the hierarchy. Managerial (or rather local authority) control had been seen to be weak in the services studied. Policy objectives, such as business orientated expectations, were seen to be diverted, when they clashed with workers views. Any changes instigated from top-down would find implementation challenging in this structure. Higher-level policy-makers should consider the positive aspects of letting ground-level workers have more discretion. Indeed, it is the relatively high level of discretion that has allowed workers to cope with the current complexity of museum services structures.

The challenges facing museum workers may be set to become even more demanding and complex in the current policy climate. The Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition government of 2010 have instigated severe funding cuts across the UK. The 2010 manifesto claimed that they would “*maintain free entry to national museums and galleries, and give national museums greater freedoms*” (HM Government 2010: 14). However, with this pledge the culture department faces 40% cuts and 50% redundancies within the coalition governments first term (Wintour and Brown 2010). Furthermore the coalition have emphasised voluntary work through the ‘Big Society’, philanthropic giving and ‘sustainable business models’ for culture (DCMS 2011: 2). Only 2% of overall donations goes to arts and heritage in the UK, and 49% of the cultural sector receives no support from philanthropic individuals (Mermiri 2011). Furthermore, business and money-making models contrast with the original pledge of free admission (and we have already seen that some museums are charging anyway). Also, this thesis has shown that business discourses do not communicate well to those at ground-level. A more clear strategy for implementation and communication is needed from central government.

The 2010 Coalition government’s cuts will have a serious impact on cultural service provision, in the way of funding cuts and restructure. This thesis, however, also shows that workers viewed policy discourses (such as business ideas) as merely symbolic. They sometimes felt that policy is made with no intention of implementation. More research is needed into politicians and higher-level policy-makers’ understandings and intentions around the cultural sector. Museum workers found it difficult to prove that they are implementing policy – but are they expected to? Do politicians engage in cultural provision on a mainly rhetorical level? The coalition’s priorities

for the cultural sector also state that the DCMS must “*ensure accountability to Parliament for our policies and the money we spend*” (DCMS 2011: 3). If the attention given to the cultural sector is more symbolic in nature, it could have serious repercussions to those trying to justify cultural provision and funding. It also suggests that the policy process itself within the cultural sector needs to be further researched.

Overall, this thesis presents some real challenges to the cultural sector as a whole. The need for cultural services to understand, process, and communicate policy expectations and discourse has become a pressing matter. Funding is still a challenge to the ongoing maintenance of museums’ core functions. Professional roles are being continuously deskilled and workers cannot connect to higher-level policy discourse in a significant way. Despite these challenges, this thesis has shown that higher-level policy expectations have also created opportunities. Instead of being powerless against the onslaught of multiple expectations, museum workers have acted as key agents in picking what they need from policy and applying their own understandings. Through a mixture of creativity, they have used the resources they have to deliver within their services. Cultural ground-level workers need to be given more policy ‘voice’ to create more policy ownership at ground-level. Museum services present unique policy opportunities to deliver multiple objectives, including social ones. This can be done by utilising museum workers’ experiences and the public space that museums offer. If higher-level policy-makers wish to implement the social objectives set out in policy discourse, they must start at the ‘chalkface’ of cultural services.

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Appendix A: The SNP Strategic Approach for Scottish Policy Development

(Scottish Government 2007)

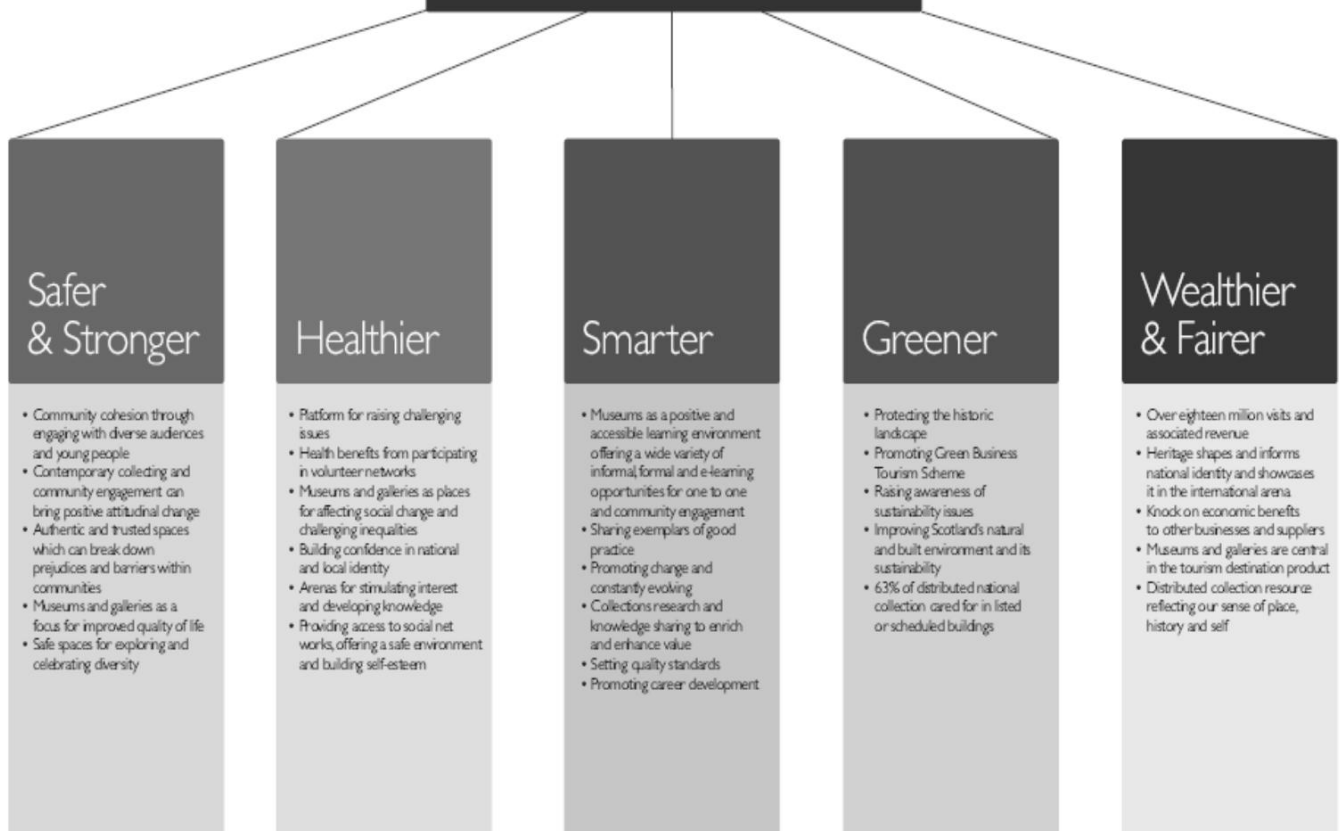


Appendix B- Museums Galleries Council Strategic Plan for fulfilling SNP Objectives

(MGS 2008c: 6)

Museums and galleries help deliver on the Scottish Government's 5 objectives in a variety of ways. Here we illustrate just a few.

National Strategic Objectives for Scotland



Appendix C – Welsh Assembly policy priorities

Images from the Public Value of Learning in Museums, Archives and Libraries –Explaining the Generic Social Outcomes (Welsh Assembly 2008b)



Appendix D –Arts Council of Wales three-year strategic plan

(Arts Council of Wales 2008: 7-8)

| One Wales Priority Area | Our Contribution |
|---------------------------|---|
| A Rich & Diverse Culture | We are the key delivery agency for the Arts & Culture priorities outlined under this priority. |
| A Healthy Future | With other partners, we will work to implement the actions outlined in our Arts & Health Strategy which will contribute to the improvement of the patient experience in Wales. |
| A Prosperous Society | <p>In Wales, the creative industries have been identified as a key driver of business growth, as is the role of culture.⁵</p> <p>We support, working with a range of other partners, the creative and cultural industries sector by investing in organisations, and by developing and supporting their individuals.</p> <p>We contribute towards the regeneration of communities by investing in infrastructure as part of our capital development programme, and arts projects and activities through our other annual investment programmes.</p> <p>Through our European Funding Strategy, we are working with WAG, local authorities and Creative & Cultural Skills to develop workforce training, and business support services for those working in the creative and cultural industries.</p> |
| Living Communities | The arts, particularly through artists-in-residence programmes, can act as catalysts for change within a social housing context. Outcomes of our work have included environmental improvements, alternative energy strategies for lighting schemes, a whole range of community safety initiatives, projects tackling drug abuse and community buy-in to the regeneration process. |
| Learning for Life | The arts have an important role to play in learning for life for individuals. Our work engages with people from young to old, through initiatives and interventions at schools and places of learning, through to community settings. |
| A Fair & Just Society | The arts can contribute to the development of a fairer and just society in Wales, through its impact on the lives of both individuals and communities. We are well placed to work with other organisations on cross-cutting and targeted programmes; we are committed to working to increase the levels of public engagement in the arts. |
| A Sustainable Environment | We will continue to run our business and deliver our work within the framework which contributes towards achieving a sustainable environment for Wales. |

Appendix E – Arts Council of Wales Key performance Indicators

(Arts Council of Wales 2008: 11)

| | |
|--|--|
| The Creation of Art | By 2011 we will have a different pattern of support, financial or otherwise, allowing a focused and innovative arts sector to flourish |
| Public Engagement | By 2011 we will have increased the level of public engagement in the arts in Wales by 3% |
| The Arts Economy & Growth | By 2011 we will have increased our turnover from £39.8m to £43.8m and at least 10% of our income will come from new sources |
| The Development of our Business | By 2011 we will be amongst the top 50 best employers to work for in Wales |

Appendix F – English Policy Priorities

'Understanding the Future: Priorities for England's Museums' Policy Document Priorities'

(DCMS 2006)

| Central Priorities | Secondary Priorities |
|---|--|
| Museums will fulfil their potential as learning resources. | Museums will be embedded into the delivery of education in every school in the country. |
| | Understanding of the effectiveness of museum education will be improved further and best practice built into education programmes. |
| | The value of museums' collections as a research resource will be well understood and better links built between the academic community and museums. |
| Museums will embrace their role in fostering, exploring, celebrating and questioning the identities of diverse communities. | The sector needs to work with partners in academia and beyond to create an intellectual framework supporting museums' capacity to tackle issues of identity. |
| | The museum sector must continue to develop improved practical techniques for engaging communities of all sorts. |
| Museums' collections will be more dynamic and better used. | Government and the sector will find new ways to encourage museums to collect actively and strategically, especially the record of contemporary society. |
| | The sector will develop new collaborative approaches to sharing and developing collections and related expertise. |
| Museums' workforces will be dynamic, highly skilled and representative. | Museums' governing bodies and workforces will be representative of the communities they serve. |
| | Find more varied ways for a broader range of skills to come into museums. |
| | Improve continuing professional development. |
| Museums will work more closely with each other and partners outside the sector. | A consistent evidence base of the contribution of all kinds of museums to the full range of public service agendas will be developed. |
| | There will be deeper and longer lasting partnerships between the national museums and a broader range of regional partners. |
| | Museums' international roles will be strengthened to improve museum programmes in this country and Britain's image, reputation and relationships abroad. |

Appendix G - Public-Management Organization: Cultural Theory Applied

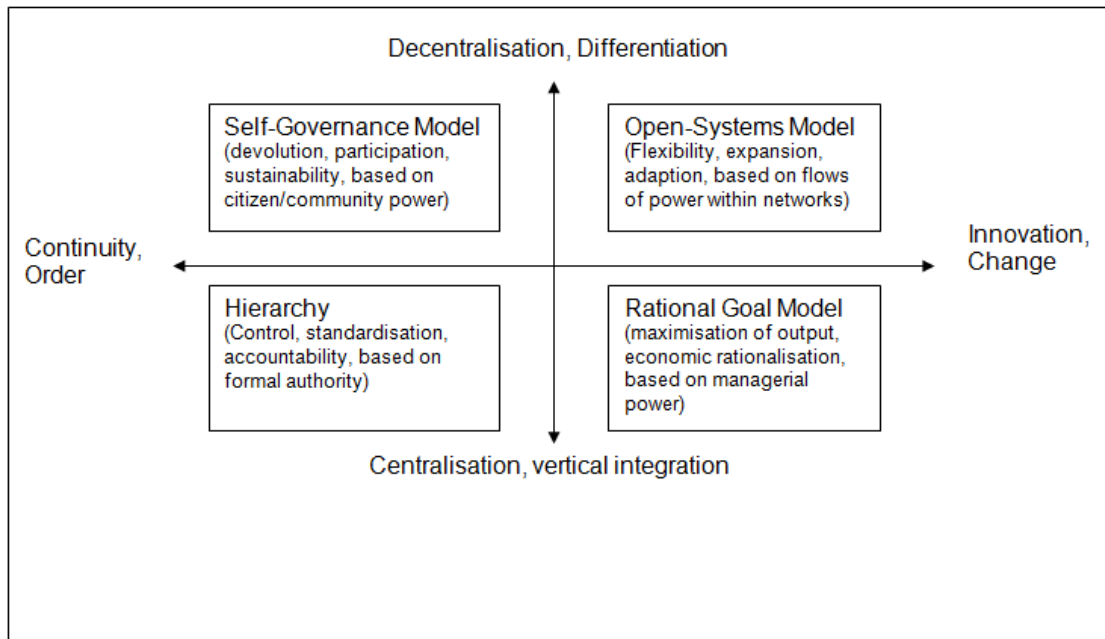
(Hood 2000: 9, 26)

(Grid=regulation by rules that can stop individual choice, Group=individual choice stopped by groups)

| "Grid" | | 'Group' | |
|--------|--|---------|---|
| | | Low | High |
| High | <i>The Fatalist Way</i> Low-cooperation, rule bound approaches to organisation | | <i>The Hierarchist Way</i> socially cohesive, rule bound approaches to organisation |
| Low | <i>The Individualist Way</i> Atomized approaches to Organisation stressing Negotiation and bargaining | | <i>The Egalitarian Way</i> High-participation structures in which every decision is 'up-for-grabs' |

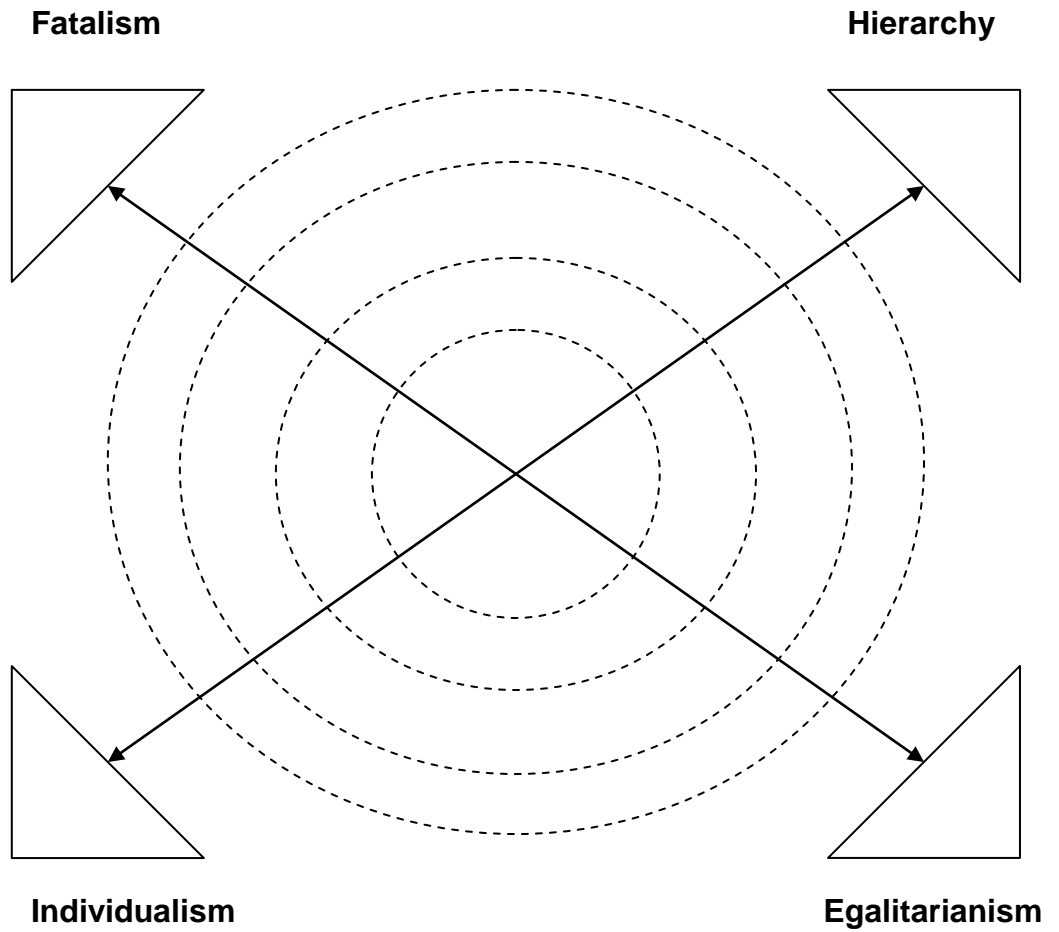
Appendix H - Models of Governance

(Newman 2001: 34/38)



Appendix I - Choice and Voice: Hearing the Public in Public Services

(Birchall *et al.* 2005)



Appendix J– Case Study Criteria

- The majority of museums in the area are run by a service within the local authority council (LA's)
- All were Unitary Local Authority services
- All LA's have devolved leisure services into trusts while cultural services remain with the local authority
- Each area had a museum that focused on representing the areas local history
- Each area had a castle/house that can be hired for corporate and local events
- Each area had four or more museums governed by the LA service
- Each area retaining over ten staff members (this included unpaid members of staff)
- Were accredited members recognised museum under MLA and MGS regulations (with the exception of one museum in Wales that had lost accreditation).
- Retained an available and accessible public space for general use of the public (buildings based museums)
- All services had a website

Appendix K – Information sheet

Museums and Social Policy – exploring museums as organisations that can deliver social objectives (working title)

An ESRC Funded Project 2008-2011

This document is a research project summary which includes relevant information for potential research participants. Your participation is greatly appreciated and please read the following information carefully before signing the consent form on the final page.

The Project

Within the culture and leisure industry there has been a move towards utilising social objectives within museums. Many new social policies have been created with the aim to encourage the involvement of those at risk of social disadvantage and to increase the quality of life of individuals. Cultural services are not traditionally part of social policy objectives and this project will attempt to explore the perspectives, understandings and attitudes of current museum workers to these social objectives, how policy has impacted them and map the policy and governance processes involved in placing social policy objectives within cultural services.

Who will be doing the research?

This research will be done by Vikki McCall a research student and the University of Stirling. The research will be supervised by Professor Johnston Birchall (johnston.birchall@stir.ac.uk, 01786 467981) and Dr Sharon Wright (sharon.wright@stir.ac.uk, 01786 467688) also from the University of Stirling. Further details can be found at <http://www.dass.stir.ac.uk/staff/showstaff.php?id=68>.

Who is paying for this research?

Vikki McCall is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and subject to ESRC rules and Ethical Guidelines. For more information see www.esrc.co.uk.

What is involved?

The research will include two weeks observation within the museums in your area. This could further include an hour's face to face interview with different members of staff which will be digitally recorded at the interviewee's convenience. Questions will be asked about your involvement, perspective and attitudes to cultural concepts, social objectives within the museum and museums policy. As well as interviews, the researcher shall be observing staff practices and actions over the two week period, which may be recorded in a field diary. Overall 30 interviews are planned within six different museums, with further interviews planned in other areas within Scotland, England and Wales. Throughout the two week period further observations may be taken and conversations noted regarding museum activities.

What happens after the two week period?

All information from interviews will be kept confidential and only used for research purposes. Furthermore all actions or conversations heard and observed shall be fully confidential so that nothing can be linked to research participants.

Also, all information will be made anonymous where no names are disclosed. No information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. Furthermore the museum and area itself shall not be named to help keep the confidentiality of participants.

However, all participants must be aware that this research has the potential to be published and to be seen by members of the media (TV or Newspapers).

What it will be used for

This information will be used in a PhD thesis for the Department of Applied Social Science, University of Stirling as part of a three year project. Furthermore, it may be published in an academic journal and used in further academic papers.

Also, all participants can opt for their research to be used in further research (after being made anonymous) within the consent form.

Appendix L – Consent form

Participant Informed Consent Form

DATE

As an informed participant of this research project:

I am aware of what my participation involves including the potential outcomes of the project and what the information will be used for.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I also understand that my participation is voluntary; that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw freely at any stage of the project.

Please tick the appropriate box

- I agree to take part in this project
- I agree to the interview being recorded

In regards to the potential use of your information for further research please tick the appropriate box:

- The information I provide can be used by other researchers as long as my name and contact information is removed before it is given to them
- The information I provide cannot be used by other researchers without asking me first
- The information I provide cannot be used except for this researchers projects

Name: (Please print)

Signature: Date:
[sic]

Appendix M- Discussion Guide

1. Opening the interview

Hi there, thanks for doing this interview with me, I will try not to take up much of your time. As I explained to you on the phone/e-mail this is for my PhD thesis within the University of Stirling. There are no right or wrong answers, I am only looking for your perspective, views and what you think and feel. Remember all you tell me today remains anonymous and confidential, and you can refuse to answer a question at any point. I shall introduce different aspects of the research to increase your understanding so please feel free to ask me questions any time.

Name and title:

2. Introductory Questions

Can you describe your role in relation to the museum?

What work does this involve?

Do you like working within your role?

What is good about it?

What do you least enjoy about it?

How would you describe what your museum is? How would you define it as an organisation?

What then do visitors offer visitors?

How can they access this offer?

What unique qualities do you think museums have compared to other social services?

What is your understanding of culture?

From your perspective, what role does culture play within your museum?

- How do you negotiate your idea of culture within the museum?

Do you think you can use culture to change behaviour?

How?

3 Exploring Concepts

What kind of value do you think your museum gives to your audience?

What value it can give to those who don't visit? (i.e. socially excluded)

Do you think you can impact positively on visitors' behaviour?

In what way?

Do you think your activities here can increase confidence in individuals and communities?

How?

How would you know?

Do you think the museum can positively contribute to someone's well-being?

How?

How would you know?

What do you think people can learn here?

how do they access that learning?

What is your understanding of identity?

- Is this individual, community or national?

Are there any actions taken within museums that aim to encourage people's sense of belonging? (looking for examples of practice)

OR - How does the museum represent this understanding of identity?

- Individual, community or national level?

The term 'quality of life' is often used in museums policy – what do you think this means?

Do you think you have a role in improving peoples 'quality of life'?

4. Social Exclusion and Inclusion

Who would you like to see more of in your museum? (try to distinguish the main target user – are they defined as an 'excluded' group?)

Do you try to bring people in who are not traditional museum visitors?

how? Any examples?

Why do you think these people you have identified do not visit your museum?

Are you familiar with the term 'social inclusion'?

How do you define it?

What do you think it aims to do?

How does your museum contribute to it?

Are you familiar with any policies regarding it?

What do you think the social inclusion agenda aims to achieve? How could these be achieved?

- What are the advantages of a social inclusion agenda?

- What are the disadvantages for the social inclusion agenda? Challenges?

5. Social and Economic Objectives

What current policies are you aware of?

- What do think policies are aimed to do?

What current aims and objectives are you working towards in your museum?

explore: is this built on increasing access and participation

If so, participation of who?

Who does your current policy represent

How are your aims monitored and evaluated?

Do you think museums can contribute greatly to economic growth?

How?

What are the main barriers to your implementing these policy aims and objectives?

Do you find any conflict or contradict each other?

How do you cope with this?

6. Policy and Governance

What role do you perceive your audience to have in relation your museum?

- What kind of experience do you think they expect?

- How do your visitors communicate with you?

Are they involved in any decision making processes? How?

- If so, have their views affected any practices in your museum?

is there an existing hierarchy or structure? A formal or an informal one?

- Who would you say created the policy direct within your museum?

Do you have a relationship with policy makers?

- Negative or positive?

How is your work here monitored?

- Do you work to any performance indicators?

Do you participate in any performance reviews?

Do you have any particularly successful partnerships with other organisations?

What is your relationship to central government?

- Where do you think museums feature in their priorities?

What is your relationship to your local government?

7. Wrapping up

Thank you very much for your time, your answers will help me so much with my project!

Space for comments/ Observations

[sic]