

What are they doing, the cultural policy researchers?

or

The theoretical universe of cultural policy research (part 1)

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Abstract: The general objective is to explore the theoretical universe of cultural policy research. Or, to use another metaphor, to map the scholarly field of cultural policy studies. More specifically formulated questions would be to examine what kind of research areas are salient; what kind of theories and methods are involved and to get hold of possible voids.

The methodological approaches applied here will include both a qualitative (contents analysis) and a quantitative (bibliometry) study. The qualitative analysis will focus on the meta-theoretical debate which has taken place in the field. The bibliometric study aims at mapping the cognitive structure of the field.

The originality of this proposed research lies in the continuation of the, so far (at least to my knowledge), only empirical study in this field, presented by Frenander at the Nordic conference in Norway, August 2007.

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Introduction

Cultural policy research is a fairly new phenomenon. This should surprise no one, given that cultural policy *per se*, understood as specific public contributions to a particular area, namely the cultural sector in society, does not carry much of a history. Commonly reckoned, cultural policy is a post-war phenomenon, with the British Arts Council, established in 1946, as the starting-point.

When the French president Charles de Gaulle created a Ministry of Culture in 1959, with the esteemed author André Malraux as the first Minister, a new step was taken. From this point on, cultural policy was acknowledged as an important responsibility for governments in all Western democracies. Malraux himself not only launched an ambitious program for innovation and reform in cultural policy, he also established a department for research and development in his ministry. Though the tasks of this

department were closely connected to the formation and implementation of political strategy and therefore restricted as to what kind of questions to be asked, it is fair to say that the first stumbling steps of cultural policy research were taken.ⁱ

The independent academic research is younger and has its origin towards the end of the 1980s mainly in a context of political science. This type of perspective has since then been supplemented by many other approaches. Cultural policy research today is a truly multidisciplinary field and in no way dominated by *one* disciplinary or theoretical perspective. The research activities are often context bound, either geographically or historically, a circumstance that holds back claims on universal truths. To that extent this type of research shares a significant characteristic with other human and social science, namely the principal impracticality of pointing to any definite scientific frontline.

Since the 1980s the research has expanded forcefully. Concurrently with the establishment of cultural policy endeavours in a growing amount of governments all over the world, the questions about the objectives, legitimacy and efficiency of the policies have come to the fore. Due to the so called 'cultural turn' these questions have not lost their urgency during the last decade. As a societal perspective, culture has become an all the more conspicuous element in the politics for enhancing national or regional growth and prosperity.

Naturally, these tendencies contribute to the diversification of the research issues. Several theoretical approaches are used in current research, but exactly which they are is not yet scrupulously analysed. This paper aims at commencing such a mapping and thereby be in a position to depict an image of the theoretical universe of cultural policy research. The task can be fulfilled in various manners. One way is to look up and critically analyse the metatheoretical discourse that may exist within the field. Another way is to rely on a more empirical approach and scrutinize the uses of different theoretical perspectives represented in existing research reports.

In this article, both methods shall be applied. But it is of course impossible to make any claims to completeness. Both the scope of an article of this kind and the fact that the whole study barely is started make sharp delimitations necessary. Regarding the

metatheoretical discourse I will have to concentrate on the controversy which since the early 1990s has taken place between Tony Bennett and Jim McGuigan in the first place. Other scholars have also been involved and will be apostrophized when appropriate.

The empirical mapping of theoretical approaches and subject areas will be made on six years' editions of *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, (2002-2007). In a flash this will hopefully show the richness and diversity of research, but may also uncover undue concentration or even voids and exclusions. One important method to be used here is bibliometric cocitation analysis, which will reveal interesting patterns.

I

The metatheoretical debate

The discussion on which theoretical approaches that best suit cultural policy studies has been going on irregularly since the beginning of the 1990s. More than a dozen contributions have been made by several scholars, but two names stand out as more frequent and influential than other: Tony Bennett and Jim McGuigan. Apart from their keen interest in founding cultural policy research in a comprehensive theoretical basis, it is also easy to discern their respective affiliation to two very prominent profiles; Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas.

There are two important circumstances to be kept in mind when examining this debate. One is that it is mainly emanating from the context of *Cultural Studies*, but it soon becomes very interesting for cultural policy studies as well. Another is that a significant prerequisite for Bennett's position is the fact that he was deeply involved in the formation of The Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy at Griffith University in Brisbane. To be sure, he had begun reappraising his theoretical stance even before coming to Australia, but the experiences he gathered there were obviously instrumental in taking further his criticisms of a research allegedly all too remote from the practice of cultural policy. To a large extent, the dispute concerning the proper role of the cultural researcher, is set in the specific context of Australian history and politics, but all the same I think it contains sufficient universal issues to make it interesting for all of us.

Simply put, the fundamental object at stake in this controversy is the relation of the researcher to the political practices. The attitude one takes to that question can most probably be based on an assessment of the possibilities for the scientific society to exert influence on the formation and implementation of cultural policy. In its turn, this is a standpoint that is dependent on normative considerations about the desirability of such an influence (but perhaps one can presume that this is the ultimate ambition of each and every scholar?), but it is also dependent on different theoretical considerations about how the society and the political work. The significance of this debate is due to just that; the participants are seriously trying to elaborate on the pros and cons of fundamentally different theoretical approaches.

Let me first sketch the outer features of the dispute. It all began in 1992 with two articles by Tony Bennett. One was published in an influential anthology concisely named *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler. The other was published in the equally influential journal with the equally concise name *Cultural Studies*! In conjunction with the latter article there was a rejoinder, written by Tom O'Regan.

In short, the Bennettian position was that the Cultural Studies tradition, which initially was based on Marxist thinking, then modified with a Gramscian perspective and on top of that mixed up with "textual analysis", had moved too far up in the academic ivory tower. Bennett was not happy with that. Against the background of his work on the establishment of the public museums in England during the 19th century (See Tony Bennett, 1995) and against the background of his activities in Australia he tried to formulate a more pragmatic and practically engaged alternative. The conclusion in the article in the journal was clear:

As an alternative, then, cultural studies might envisage its role as consisting in the training of cultural technicians: that is, of intellectual workers less committed to cultural critique as an instrument for changing consciousness than to modifying the functioning of culture by means of technical adjustments to its governmental deployment. (Bennett, 1992 a, p. 406)

The educational goal of cultural studies should, according to Bennett, be that the students graduated as “cultural technicians”, not cultural critics. By all means, a rather provocative statement.

In the other article Bennett elaborated his rejection of Gramsci and the notion of hegemony. Due to the influence from the Gramscian tradition Cultural Studies had come to be mistakenly focussed. The Gramscian perspectives were, Bennett claimed, “limited in their capacity to theorize the forms of political conflict and relations specific to the functioning of particular cultural technologies” (Bennett, 1992 b, p. 31). What he referred to as “cultural technologies” was precisely the ability he ascribed to public museums of changing the values and conducts of the population. But not only had scholars of Cultural Studies steered their search-light in the wrong direction, the concept of culture they hailed was also mistaken. In stead of leaning against Raymond Williams’ broad conception of culture as “a whole way of life”, Bennett wanted to design a more instrumental concept, embedded in a clear political context. Culture, he wrote, “is more cogently conceived [...] when thought of as a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which the forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation” (ibid. p. 26).

His theoretical alternative to these mistakes was to launch the Foucaultian analysis of power and discipline in modern society. At this point in time it was Foucault’s concept of ‘police’ that was crucial. Later, in his book *Culture: A Reformer’s Science* (1998), he instead referred to another, but similar, idea of Foucault’s conceptual palette; “the governmentalisation of the state”, or “governmentality” (Bennett, 1998, p. 76). The leading idea, though, was the same. In Bennett’s view Foucault was better to “think with” than Gramsci and opened possibilities for the intellectuals not only to take a theoretical stance in the (cultural) political questions but also to work in a more pragmatic way to develop “more specific and immediate forms of political calculation and action likely to improve the social circumstances and possibilities of the constituencies in question” (Bennett, 1992 b, p. 32).

This new position of Bennett’s may be epitomized as stating that the revolutionary zeal of the Cultural Studies researchers had made them not only miss out on

reformist improvements of (cultural) policy but even hindered them. Now, the students of Cultural Studies should, instead, wholeheartedly go into the administrative structures of government in order to achieve exactly that type of reforms. To say this was of course a provocation, but to begin with his opponents were rather considerate.

Next to Bennett's article in the journal *Cultural Studies* there was a commentary made by Tom O'Regan; "(Mis)taking Policy: Notes on the Cultural Policy Debate" (O'Regan 1992). His main objection was that Bennett tended to promote a kind of perspective that was too much "top-down". To do that was to misinterpret Foucault, O'Regan thought. The French thinker was just as much liable to be invoked as an inspirer of a "bottom-up" perspective, which meant that he was useful to social movements and grassroots activists as well as to the professionals in the government administration. By this claim O'Regan tried to mediate between the "cultural technicians" of Bennett's and the "cultural critics" of the cultural studies' type. But at the same time, he underlined his own ambiguity; was it "fence-sitting", or was it a "recognition that both dimensions are important to critical and pedagogic programme" (Ibid. s. 420-21)?

Yet another Australian contribution to this debate was an article by Stuart Cunningham in the anthology *Nation, Culture, Text: Australian Cultural and Media Studies* published in 1993. He placed the different positions on a more common left-right range and characterized his own position as "centrist" (Cunningham, 1993, p 127). He explained his position in the context of the current political discourse which lacked "a social-democratic view of citizenship" and was in need of shifting

its 'command metaphors' away from rhetorics of resistance, oppositionalism and anti-commercialism on the one hand, and populism on the other, toward those of access, equity, empowerment and the divination of opportunities to exercise appropriate cultural leadership. (Ibid. p. 137)

Cunningham had used the same wording in a previous article, so Bennett had been able to quote it with approval in his journal article in 1992 (Bennett, 1992, p. 396).

The left-right range was repeated by Jim McGuigan in his book *Culture and the Public Sphere*. Here he devoted the first chapter to discuss the theoretical points of departure for cultural policy research. McGuigan promptly placed Bennett on the right wing and O'Regan to the left with Cunningham in the centre. In this respect his distribution of positions was no surprise. But he wanted to supplement the left-right range with another type of categorization, which I think is more important to him. Both Bennett and O'Regan referred to Foucault, and it is the contradiction between his theoretical realm and the one associated to Jürgen Habermas that McGuigan held as the decisive dividing line. The Bennettian shape of Foucault's thinking was, McGuigan asserted, especially susceptible of surrendering the critical ambitions and possibilities. If the analysis of cultural policy is directed towards what Foucault had named micropower and governmentality it easily tends to stay within the framework of government and transform itself to an instrument for the power that be.

In order that the cultural policy research shall be able to keep a critical distance to the political practice it must possess certain theoretical instruments. McGuigan was certain that Habermas could offer precisely those instruments. Cultural policy cannot be an issue solely for government and public administration, but must be countervailed by "the public sphere", the famous concept taken from Habermas' book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962). McGuigan was explicit:

Fundamental [...] is the normative view that, in a democratic society, 'the public will', however that is understood and constructed, should decisively influence the conditions of culture, their persistence and their potential for change. (McGuigan, 1996, p. 22)

He fully agreed with Habermas' standpoint that 'the public sphere' is both a central analytic tool and a normative guide to democracy. Consequently, for the rest of the book McGuigan's strategy was to "deploy the critical ideal of the public sphere as a normative reference point" (Ibid. p. 28).

Bennett's and McGuigan's affiliation to Foucault and Habermas respectively is unambiguous right from the start. They will be repeating their stances and

arguments, and go into polemics with one another at several occasions up to now. The latest example I have found is McGuigan's article "The Politics of Cultural Studies and Cool Capitalism" from 2006. Other scholars have lined up with McGuigan in his criticisms against Bennett and Foucaultianism; the American Jonathan Sterne is one and the Danish Henrik Kaare Nielsen another.ⁱⁱ

Each one of the opposite camps refers to a giant of social philosophy for support. McGuigan and Kaare Nielsen are unremittingly emphasizing Habermas' theorizing of "the public sphere" or "the life-world" as instances independent from political or economic power and proper points of departure for critical analysis and possible oppositional practice against the government's cultural policy. Bennett and his friends argue that Foucault's notion of "governmentality" and his general analysis of social power is especially well suited as a springboard for a research praxis that can intervene into the politics and thereby make a difference. In spite of their controversies, both sides still agree on how important it is that the research results may be useful in practical life.

If this contention is to be solved it is of course of great interest to further penetrate the works of Foucault and Habermas themselves to see how they construct their theories. It goes without saying that such a serious and comprehensive study of these two voluminous and complex theoretical constructions falls far beyond the scope of this article. We will have to limit our discussion to a couple of aspects which are significant in this context. Here we are helped by an anthology befittingly named *Foucault contra Habermas*, containing seven essays dealing with similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses in the protagonists' theories (Ashenden&Owen, 2000). We will of course have to carefully acknowledge that the seven authors do make their own interpretations and that they all share an explicit view in favour of Foucault. Although we must bear this in mind when trying to make any conclusions, I nevertheless think that many interesting and critical remarks which are of great value for us are raised against both theoreticians.

The approaches and conceptual apparatuses for the critical analysis of modern society differs widely one from the other. Habermas uses concepts like "public sphere", "life-world", "law", "democracy" and "welfare state", while the conceptual

world of Foucault is made up of terms like “genealogy”, “governmentality”, “discipline” and “normalisation”. The participants in the anthology therefore rightly ask whether there really may be any common arena where the two works can be meaningfully compared. In spite of the differences they do mean that there is. Several articles argue that when you come to the bottom line both Habermas and Foucault are struggling with the same question: how to critically analyse the political anatomy and rationale of modernity and the therewith connected issue about the conditions for critical political practice in this society. However, they arrive to this common ground from diametrically opposed positions, a matter that is nicely elucidated in a couple of the articles. The interesting thing for us to note here is that, posed in this way, the problematic does have a considerable bearing on the quarrel between McGuigan and Bennett.

The fundamental difference between Habermas’ and Foucault’s analyses of society can in an extremely crude and short way be described as while the former is normative, the latter rather is relative. Habermas’ project aims at formulating universal norms for a human and social communication able to guarantee a free and democratic society. As already well-known he operates with an analytic division of society in “the system” and “the life-world”, where the latter is both the potentiality and the guarantor for a non-coercive and undistorted communication. This is where you find the norms for how free human beings in a free, equal and rational debate can reach mutual agreement. The critical objection to this attitude, inspired by Foucault and framed by Samantha Ashenden, amounts to the allegation that the Habermasian postulation of a life-world that is really free from power is false (Ashenden, 2000, p. 156). The falseness of this postulation leads to an “essentialisation of the life-world”, which disregards the circumstances in which the concept itself was conceived. Actually, Habermas will, so the argument runs, build his normative theory on the

possibility of determining a ‘proper’ relation between state and civil society. In this way, Habermas’ account replicates the tensions between the natural and the managed found within liberalism. (Ibid. p. 157)

The point is that Habermas purportedly does not realise that the state, the civil society and the private autonomy also are historically constructed entities which

means that you cannot, consequently, find any place outside the power from which critique can be practically enacted. It is simply a fundamental mistake to think of “the life-world” or “the civil society” as immaculate and pure, with no traces of power.

Foucault’s project is different. “Rather than search for universally valid criteria of justice (for example, in an ideal of communicative consensus), Foucault suggests the more modest approach of giving an account of what we are, of the relationships that constitute and circumscribe us”, Ashenden writes (Ibid. p. 159). In short, what the followers of Foucault mean is that Habermas’ project in a way is imprisoned in the situation that Foucault tries to analyse with his genealogy. We find ourselves, at least in the societies characterised by the legacy from the Enlightenment, in a process of “normalising democracy” (Dean, 2000, pp. 166-194). This normalising process actually makes up the whole framework and context within which Habermas’ analysis moves. In that Habermas neither makes any criticisms against the legacy from the Enlightenment – which according to Foucault is dual: on the one side it is “liberty”, and on the other it is “discipline” (Foucault, 1998/1974, p. 259) – nor approves of its historic contingency, he is captured by it. Foucault, on his side, has, according to his advocates, other objectives. His ambition is not to scrutinize the preconditions for Universals, but it is to make an analysis of how the modern, liberal societies develop methods for “normalising” and “disciplining” the individuals. You might say that he contextualizes them and their political order but he does not make any judgement about their values, which is exactly what Habermas sets out to do.

Here we can clearly see the connection with the dispute between Tony Bennett and Jim McGuigan; is it possible to construct a solid ground from which you can, both in theoretical and practical terms, effectively criticize the existing political system? The answer from McGuigan and Habermas is; yes, there is a position that enables us to make statements as to how things should be arranged and from where we also can direct critical remarks on how things are. From Bennett and Foucault the answer is; no, there is no such position. In stead we have to try and oppose the system from within and pragmatically find the best way possible to be critical and questioning. The conclusion on Foucault’s stance, formulated by Ashenden, is, I think, very expressive: “Foucault’s approach [...] is an approach which takes the givenness of our concepts as a question to be addressed” (Ashenden, 2000, p. 160).

Here, I will not try to make any investigation into which answer is the logically and philosophically most sustainable one. However, I cannot refrain from wondering: If Habermas is inscribed in what Foucault names “liberalism”, but still offers us a normative foundation for attacking the system whenever it is not functioning ideally, then Foucault is standing by the side offering a sophisticated manner of saying “that is how the system is”, but he cannot point to any positive basis neither for raising internal critique nor for suggesting alternatives. He can do nothing but state that we are confronting phenomena that are not “natural” or “eternal” or “suprahistorical”. Whose position is the best one to take as a departure for political action? Regardless, one may think, if the proud slogan of the French revolution – Liberty, Equality, Fraternity – did have a specific relation to a specific historic conjuncture, perhaps it still can be used as a guideline for theoretical and practical actions against conditions which do not live up to the content of the slogan?

However, the choice between Habermas and Foucault might perhaps be solved by referring to a third party. Elsewhere I have, with the help of the concept of hegemony in Antonio Gramsci, tried to analyse the history and current situation of Swedish cultural policy (Frenander 2005, Frenander 2007). My analysis aimed at showing how the political and ideological hegemony of the Swedish social democratic policy, epitomized in the notion of the “Home for the People”, was built up on the tight couplings between the three spheres of society; the political, the economic and the civil. Swedish political life was in all important ways organised around this idea of a “Home for the People” for more than four decades and is one very significant aspect in understanding the unique stability of Swedish politics during the last century. The very distinctive political discourse ‘surrounding’ the whole project also gave specific results concerning cultural policy. The ‘whys’, ‘hows’ and ‘whats’ of this debate was from the outset quite preconceived and circumscribed by the general discourse.

I believe there are many reasons to consider the approach of Gramsci as an interesting and yielding alternative to both Habermas and Foucault. The dual concepts of “system” and “life-world” that the German philosopher operates with are quite abstract and I think it is questionable to lump together “state” and “market”

into the single concept of “system”. According to Habermas the actions in the state are coordinated by the medium of “power”, whereas the actions in the market are coordinated by the medium of “money”. Both are, however, in this view logically interdependent on the same kind of rationality; what he calls the instrumental or strategic rationality. On a very abstract level of reasoning it may possibly be justified to make such a statement. But if you look, on a more concrete level of analysis, at the actions taken in the two social areas I would claim that the strategies or rationalities involved very often are contradictory. It may be true that this varies over time and from place to place, but abstracting away from contradictions and conflicts in the name of a putative common rationality makes, as far as I can understand, the analysis weaker than it otherwise could have been. The Habermasian type of power analysis runs the risk of becoming too general and blunt to be really useful in a concrete empirical study.ⁱⁱⁱ

Foucault’s analysis of power, on the other hand, conceives of itself as leaving the overarching perspective in order to dive deeply into the mechanisms of power. By using concepts as “micro power” or “bio power” he suggests that it is possible to grasp the kind of governmentality that permeates any given society. Power is everywhere, Foucault asserts; it does not radiate from a distinct centre subjugating the whole of society. The problem with this view, I believe, is that it tends to make the power anonymous. There is no notion of interest integrated into Foucault’s approach, which makes his analyses – however penetrative, sophisticated and unveiling they be – lack “direction”, in a way. Who is reaping the profit from the fact that we all, apparently deliberately and happily, submit to the discipline that “the power” orchestrates?

I would like to suggest an answer that might overcome the difficulties and the traps which I think are visible in Habermas and Foucault. This answer is really an old and well-tested model for the analysis of the contemporary capitalist society. A model which is made up of three social spheres; the state, the market and the civil society. Besides Gramsci, this idea has been launched by e.g. the historian of economics Karl Polanyi in his book *The Great Transformation* (2001/1944) and, later, by the British politologist Bob Jessop (see Jessop 2002). My proposition is to use this model in combination with the concept of hegemony from Gramsci. I believe that the kind of potential conflicts in the Habermasian system hinted at above may be fruitfully

catered for at the same time as the concept of hegemony allows us to locate the place of power. It will be possible to point out certain agents/groups/elites/classes as considerably more powerful than others; it will be possible to clarify the manner in which the spheres are linked to one another and, hence, to understand how the balance of interests is, temporarily, fixed; and it will be possible to discern the relations of domination between the spheres. All this will tell us where in society to find the power. And as cultural policy is fit into the totality, the critical analysis of it must possess adequate tools. I think the Gramscian approach, as sketched here, will equip us with such tools.

Finally, it must of course be emphasized that my investigation is far from comprehensive. Many more interesting and productive approaches to cultural policy studies have been elaborated in contexts which I have not looked at here. Suffice it to mention the classical models typologised by Harry Hillman-Chartrand and Claire McCaughey, penetratingly and constructively commented by Per Mangset, as one example (Hillman-Chartrand & McCaughey, 1989, Mangset, 1995). A couple of other Nordic scholars have also made sharp contributions to the development of theory: Dorte Skot-Hansen and Geir Vestheim (Skot-Hansen, 1999, Vestheim, 1995).

II

The Bibliometric study

Apart from this qualitative investigation of a meta-theoretical debate within the field of cultural policy studies, we have also carried out a bibliometric analysis based on 130 articles published in our leading international peer review publication, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2002-2007.^{iv} That is the same as to say all articles in these volumes, all available on-line.

Bibliometry is very much *en vogue* presently. Many universities, for instance, use this method when trying to rank the skills and excellences of different researchers or research teams. Private and public funds awarding research grants are also using this method in assessing the success of the scholars applying for money. However, bibliometry is to be used with a substantial amount of moderation. But, when used in that way, it can definitely yield interesting results.

Bibliometry is a quantitative approach counting publications of one sort or another and/or writers. This is often done by the way of citations analysis, which is the method we have used here. A nice figure may help create an overview of related methods and terms:

Figure 1 Sketch of related terms of Informetrics, modified from Kärki & Kortelainen (1998).

The analyses made possible by different bibliometrical methods can well be used to visualize diverse aspects of scientific communication. You may for example discern *regional patterns of research*, i.e. the article production of different nations may be mapped both synchronically and diachronically, thereby disclosing either the position of a nation or the trend in its publication pattern. The same method can be applied to individual researchers, very often with the intention to assess his or her position in the current scientific field (Persson, 1991).

Another aspect that may be visualized is *research collaboration*. A bibliometrical mapping can show a geographical view of the connections between countries or between universities or other institutions.

A third aspect is the possibility of visualizing the *cognitive structure of a research discipline*. The basis for this is the necessity of references in scientific research and these references can be studied with bibliometrical measures. Thereby you can visually present the intellectual basis and scope of any research field of choice. It is this kind of visualization that is made here.

Epistemologically there is no consensus as to which the theoretical foundation of bibliometry is. Usually, there are two prominent names mentioned when this matter is discussed. One is Robert K. Merton, the sociologist of science, and the other is Thomas S. Kuhn, the historian of science. For the Mertonian way the general code of conduct for researchers that bears the acronym CUDOS is the basis for the analysis, while for the Kuhnian way, the concept of paradigm is obviously central, which implicitly reveals that this approach is more apt to investigate conflict and change within the society of scholars. We have leaned to the Kuhnian way here, which means a focus on citations. By looking closely into the interdependence pattern of who is referring to whom a scientific community can be identified and its cognitive structure be shown.

A fundamental prerequisite for bibliometrical analysis is the scientific insistence on making references to corroborate a certain claim etc. Without this kind of formal scientific communication and a universal adherence among researchers to such praxis, there would be no chance of doing bibliometry at all. But what is the exact signification of references and citations? It can be multiple, as this citation from a renowned library and information scholar shows:

Citations are the formal, explicit linkages between papers that have particular points in common.

[...] the citation is a precise, unambiguous representation of a subject that requires no interpretation and is immune to changes in terminology.

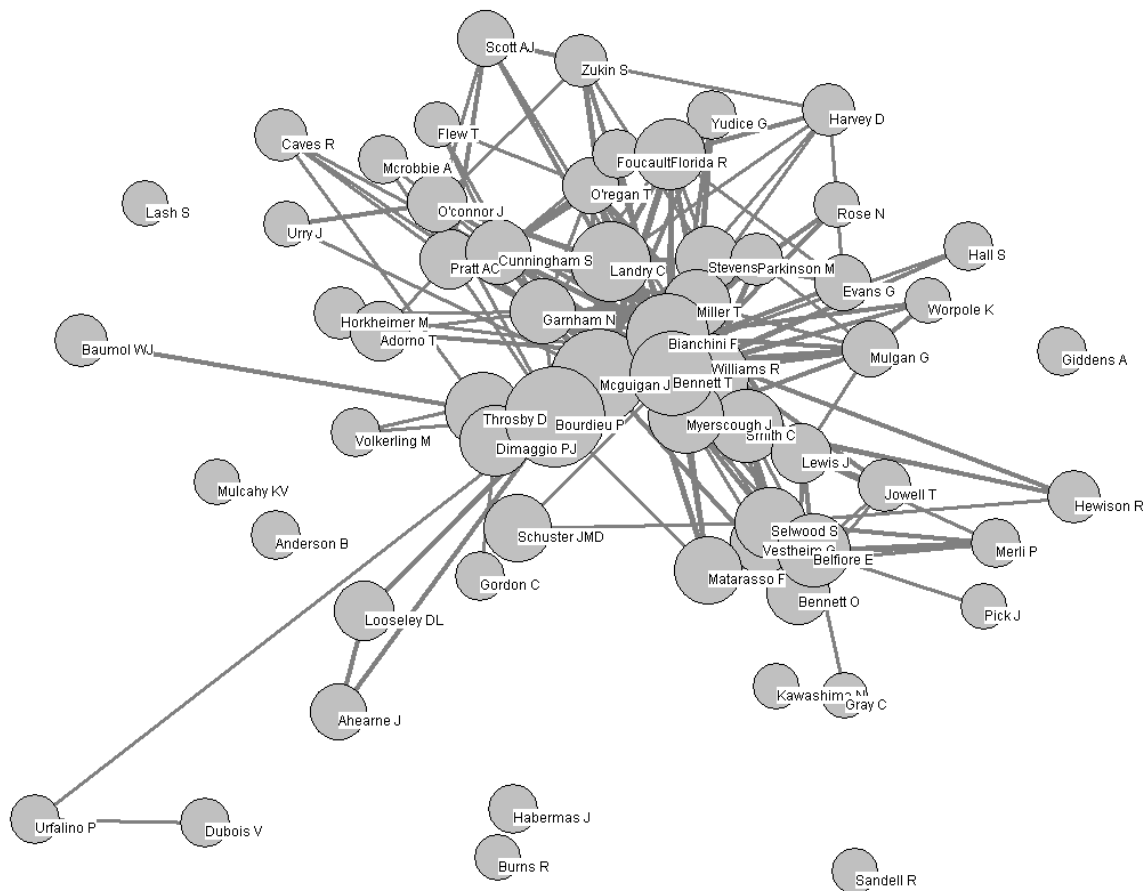
Metaphorically speaking, citations are frozen footprints on the landscape of scholarly achievement; footprints which bear witness to the passage of ideas. [...] So it is with citations in respect of growth and development of scientific knowledge; they give substantive expression to the process of innovation, and, if properly marshalled, can provide the researcher with an analytical tool of seductive power and versatility. (Garfield, 1964)

Of course, it is very difficult to know why every individual citation is made.^v Bibliometry, being a quantitative method, counting citations so to say without discrimination, may therefore be seen as a very blunt tool. And, indeed, it is very important to know how and when to use it, and to make careful interpretations of the maps produced. In my view, though, it may be a very good complement to a more arduous and time consuming qualitative analysis of the contents of hundreds of articles.^{vi} In a pretty fast and lucid way you can get a notion about the area of scholarship you are interested in; who are the most cited authors, who seem to be in the centre and who seem to be in the periphery, between which authors do the connections look the strongest?

After these introductory comments, we may go direct to the outcome of our bibliometrical analysis, which is a so called MDS map. MDS stands for Multi Dimensional Scaling, meaning that a distance matrix is created on the basis of the mass of cocited authors. Based on the coexistence of authors' citations they may be spatially located in relation to each other. In this case we have used the reference lists of the articles as the basic material for the analysis. Other options are possible; you can use individual citations or keywords, for example. The sum total of author references collected in this case is almost 4000, and a rule of thumb concerning the reliability and validity of an investigation is that the smaller the material used, the less statistically stable the outcome is. A stress factor exceeding 0.2 is definitely to be avoided. So, the MDS map of the field of cultural policy studies, based on the scientific communication in *IJCP*, look like this:

Frenander: Theoretical universe ... part 2

Stress=0.17142



What is it we are seeing? In a glance you get an overview over the field *in toto*, and you also get a sort of instant orientation about who are making up this scientific field. Without having to read all the articles which form the empirical basis of the map you get an understanding of who the researchers are, who are closer to one another than to others, who share interests and so on. The bigger the circle the more citations are received by the author, so you can rather safely assume that those authors are influential. In what way is, however, not to be concluded on these data. They may be forerunners, to be paid academic reverence to. They may be positively acknowledged as the most interesting scholars, or they may of course be referred to as fundamentally mistaken and examples to repudiate. A qualitative assessment of that kind is in need of further intellectual work in order to be appropriately done. In this map you can also get some indications of theoretical inspirers outside the field itself (ex. D. Harvey or A. Giddens).

Conceivable interpretations

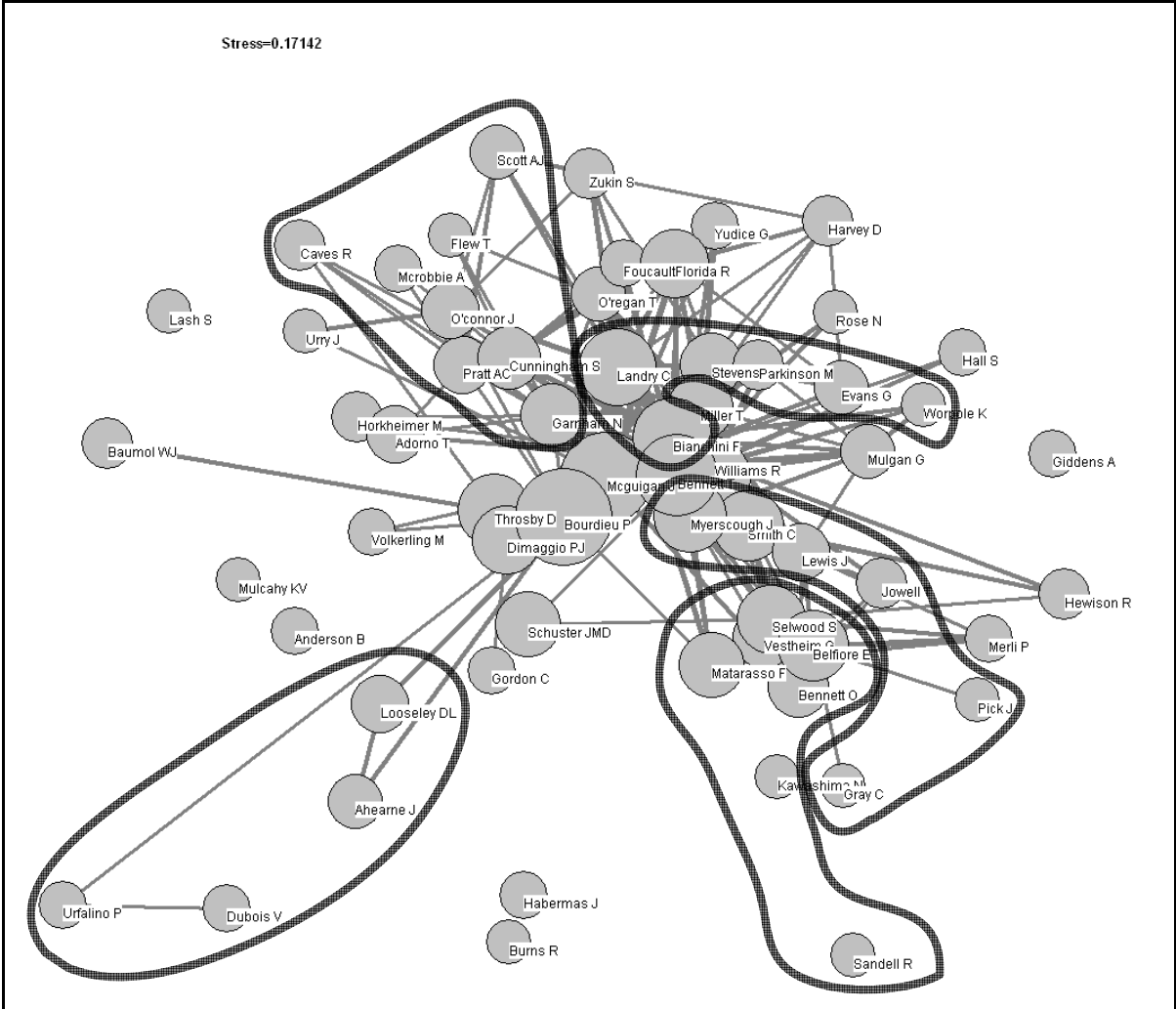
Looking more in detail we can see that the two contestants in the metatheoretical debate are both centrally placed in the field. But they are not alone there. Several other scholars are as frequently cited as those two are. This, I think, is an indication to the multifarious character of our research field. As is obvious from the map the scholars do come from many different academic disciplines and are busy researching different aspects of cultural policy. This observation may tentatively be interpreted in, at least, two ways. One is that the field is open and non-hierarchical, in a sense. There are few theoretical imperatives to be followed, and there seems to be no single dominating scholar that “must” be referred to. You may say that the fences surrounding this area of scholarship are fairly low, thereby inviting research based on several theoretical approaches as well as research conducted with the help of many scientific methods; quantitative as well as qualitative, big surveys as well as deep interviews or close reading of documents.






This assessment is made in a positive spirit, so to say. The picture in the map can, however, be interpreted in a more negative way. The other side of the coin may be expressed as disclosing a fundamental immaturity of the research on cultural policy. Especially if you apply a Kuhnian terminology. Then it is easy to see that we are dealing with a scientific field that is clearly pre-paradigmatic. The data collected by the researchers is not made in any overwhelmingly systematic way, neither are the problems analysed very common between the different studies. There are quite a few competing “schools” in this society of scholars. Perhaps you could say that the field is characterized by a certain amount of methodological and theoretical anarchy, of the kind recommended by Paul Feyerabend? If that is the case, perhaps the situation is not that bad, anyhow? So seen, we would namely find ourselves in a revolutionary era – on our way to something new? But as the field hardly can be said yet to be firmly established, such a conclusion would obviously be premature.

The bibliometric study applying cocitation analysis also make it possible for us to identify different subareas of research interests connecting the scholars. This manoeuvre, to be sure, is not possible to do without some qualitative knowledge of the substance of the research carried out in the field. This kind of interpretation is most easily made by taking the article’s titles as the indication of contents.

A map of such areas concerning cultural policy research visible in *International Journal of Cultural Policy* in the beginning of the twenty-first century would look like this:

Frenander: Theoretical universe ... part 3



-  1. Creative industries
-  3. Traditional cultural policy (British)
-  5. Democracy, public sphere and culture
-  2. Cultural planning, cultural cities
-  4. Traditional cultural policy (French)

Cluster number *one*, “creative industries” is made up of eight scholars all concerned with different aspects of ‘cultural’ or ‘creative’ industries. This area of interest is a relative newcomer to the study of cultural policy, involving a broader concept of cultural policy than previous research, which has largely been concentrating on

government activities. Stuart Cunningham and Nicholas Garnham are receiving the highest amount of citations, 13 each.

A *second* cluster that can be identified is collecting scholars studying “cultural planning”, especially with regard to urban regeneration. Here you can note that a couple of prominent researchers, Richard Florida and Sharon Zukin, are located outside the cluster; an indication, I believe, that this type of quantitative bibliometrical analysis is not flawless and has to be handled carefully. Franco Bianchini is the most cited author; 20 posts.

Cluster *three* and *four* are dealing with a more traditional aspect of cultural policy studies, namely the national one, Great Britain and France respectively. Interestingly enough, the two authors most referred to are both British; John Myerscough (on British cultural policy) and David Looseley (on French).

The *fifth* cluster is concerned with aspects of democracy, the public sphere and culture. The notion of cultural policy engaged here is rather traditional, or focused on the state, perhaps revealing an interest in questions about the meaning and role of culture in modern societies. Is there an intrinsic value in arts and culture itself, which should be safeguarded by the state, in order to enhance democracy? Eleonora Belfiore receives the highest amount of references, 16.

A general observation that can be made is that there seems to be a dominance of authors having English as their vernacular. This is no surprise; English is the academic *lingua franca* of today and it is of course a great advantage to be able to write in your own language. A fact we all must learn to live with, as far as I can see. But, perhaps it is a condition that tends to distort the field, as the example on French cultural policy might show?

To conclude: The picture we get mirrors but a part of the international research on cultural policy carried out throughout the world. We must bear that in mind! The question of language mentioned above is one important reservation to be made. Another one is of course the limitations of the empirical material. There are only articles published in *IJCP* included. Relevant articles published in other peer

reviewed scholarly journals are not included, no more than all monographs and anthologies are. What we get is, with the limitations mentioned above, the knowledge basis as reflected in the leading international journal.

This is a field consisting of a host of mutual contacts, which can be visualized through the device of cocitations. It seems as though there are texts and authors belonging to a sort of canon within this realm of scholarship. Or, to be more accurate, there is a group of scholars who receive quite a lot of citations, but what the reason is for their frequent presence in the material is not readily shown in the MDS map.

It is interesting to see how many scholars there are in the field as a whole. And then only a tiny part of them is represented in the map! Several hundreds of the authors collected in the database are not displayed. At the same time it is obvious that the scope of interests is rather widespread; the theoretical or subject based affinity between some of the authors must be considered quite limited.

III

ICCPR 2006

I shall also shortly share some of the findings I made in a little study of one of the sessions of the last international conference in Vienna, August 2006. I was interested in what kind of theoretical grounds there are for the research in our field. For that reason I chose to look more closely into the session called “Theoretical and methodological approaches to cultural policy” which gathered 26 papers. I also generally checked the keywords used by the authors in the pursuit of their theoretical affiliations.

From that, admittedly very small, investigation I anyhow made a couple of clear observations. One is that sociology and political science are the most common academic subjects providing theoretical guidelines. Apart from those two there is a vast array of other theories, taken from widely different disciplines, which are employed in cultural policy studies. The diversification is considerable and in many cases the level of sophistication is very high.

Another observation is that many scholars have an inclination towards qualitative analyses. Perhaps they form the majority, but that would be an uncertain thing to say, mainly because those who are doing qualitative studies are more eager than the others to explicitly state their theoretical and methodological approaches, so they are quite simply easier to take note of.

With that proviso made you may extract a trend towards an increasing awareness of the ideas behind and the motives for the cultural policy conducted in different countries and contexts. A kind of linguistic or 'discursive turn' could be noted at the Vienna conference. Many research projects concerning policy issues where the discursive level was salient were presented, and generally the utilisation of various kinds of discourse analysis was emphasized.

These findings are of course but a few pieces of the great jigsaw puzzle that constitute the full picture of cultural policy research all over the world, but together with the other observations presented above, we can hint at some important reflections.

IV

Conclusion(s)

What reflections are to be made against the background outlined above? What is there, really? Is any specific theoretical direction dominant? If so, how it is to be named? Social science? Sociology? Cultural studies? Arts and humanities? Or are those too general terms to be properly used in this connection? Are we better off to talk about Postmodernism, or Neo-Institutionalism, or Urban Studies, or what? No, I do not think that is the way to go. As we have seen there are many different approaches on many different levels and all linked to various knowledge interests. And indeed, I am quite happy with this situation. But is there any conspicuous void?

Yes, I do think there are some important theoretical strands that are more or less absent in the material examined here. First, you do not see much of Marxist theory or concepts and the second thing I miss is Post-colonial studies. Both of them are needed, I think. Seen against the instrumentalisation and marketisation of politics in general and cultural policy in particular (recently analysed by Clive Gray regarding the British example) the urgency of the Marxian commodity analysis should

automatically be acknowledged. The tendency of the contemporary, almost totally global, capitalism of considering everything as a commodity, as an exchange value, is all the more pressing. All dimensions or qualities of people, processes, services or objects other than being quantitatively measured and put a price on are suppressed. The one-dimensional society analysed by Herbert Marcuse fifty years ago is becoming more and more of a reality. Culture cannot eschew this process. Or can it? Perhaps is the task of cultural policy to try and articulate an oppositional stance against an increasingly commercial and superficial society and fight for other values than exchange values? To concentrate on the use values of art and culture. But that begs the question; which are they? The research on cultural policy might be in a position to make critical contributions on this one.

Another aspect of the Marxian thinking to be revitalized may be a more strictly defined and rigorous class analysis. "Class" is a notion which is defined in many different ways these days, not least within the context of cultural policy where Florida's concept "the creative class" has obtained a lot of advocates among politicians and administrators (Florida, 2002).

In my opinion, the post-colonial perspective is as urgently felt. Global capitalism is accompanied by an equally global cultural imperialism, the common centre of which still rests in Western Europe and the US. The cultural politics outlined and implemented in the former colonial powers is embedded in the political and economic structure which is the historical legacy of the colonial epoch. Many intricate ideological presumptions, political connections and economic interests, which often are taken for granted, are lurking beneath the surface, just waiting to be disclosed and scrutinized. The kind of post-colonial analysis of the French cultural policy, launched by David Looseley a couple of years ago, is really needed as well as it is exciting and important (Looseley, 2005) .

The final conclusion, then, is that cultural policy studies are not united by any theoretical or methodological considerations or interests. That is, of course, nothing new! In their introduction to the book *Citizenship and Cultural Policy* the editors Denise Meredyth and Jeffrey Minson state that the "cultural policy discussion is made up of polyglot dialects" (Meredyth & Minson, 2001, p xiii). It is the *area* that is

common ground. Cultural policy studies are no academic subject or discipline; one can examine the area taking one's point of departure in either of several social and human sciences. Perhaps it is even so, as Tony Bennett formulates it: "cultural policy studies is perhaps best seen as a pragmatic grouping of a broad range of applied disciplines rather than a field that possesses – *or is capable of possessing* – a more theoretically based sense of itself" (Bennett, 1998b, p 272, my italics, AF).

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ⁱ The Director was Augustin Girard, the doyen of cultural policy studies. One of his most renowned assistants was Pierre Bourdieu, whose activities in the Ministry were absolutely formative for his style of doing both theory and research practice. The Department was formed in 1963 and Girard was its Director for more than thirty years. See Jeremy Ahearne: "Public Intellectuals and Cultural Policy in France", *IJCP* Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 332.

ⁱⁱ Jonathan Sterne (2002). "Cultural Policy Studies and the Problem of Political Representation". *The Communication Review*, no. 5.

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ⁱⁱⁱ Obviously, Habermas has since refined his analysis, e.g. in the book *The postnational constellation* (2001), but the references made to him in this debate on cultural policy studies do not concern this later development of the theoretical apparatus.

^{iv} The study has been carried out by Martin Jönsson, project assistant and MA in Library and Information Science.

^v The Library and Information scientist Eugene Garfield has made a list of fifteen possible reasons to make a reference to someone or something. The list ranges from "1. Showing reverence for the pioneers" via "8. Consolidation claims on previous results" to "15. Contest other authors' claims on ideas and results" (Garfield, 1964).

^{vi} If the database used is properly and coherently formatted, that is. In this present case the references were very differently formatted from article to article, so a lot of manual work had to be invested before the real job could begin!