

Cultural Policy Transformations: The Rise of Illiberalism

**Working Meeting organised by the Research Cluster on
Arts Production and Cultural Policy in Transformation (ACPT)**

8 and 9 October 2020 | Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen, Germany (online)

This meeting is targeted at discussing contemporary cultural policy transformations, specifically the rise of illiberal and populist parties and movements and finding ways how to address these developments through research collaboration.

The international cultural policy researchers invited will address urgent questions such as:

- | How do the rise of populist, nationalist and illiberal parties and movements affect cultural policy and the production of arts?
- | How do measures such as censorship and media control, budget cuts and exchange of leadership personnel impact art and cultural institutions?
- | How do art and cultural institutions act and react upon those transformations of cultural policies?
- | How do counter-movements form and how do they try and react, e.g. by means of creative protest?
- | What is the role of cities e.g. as spaces of progress, freedom and tolerance—and how does this relate to developments in peripheral and rural regions?
- | What kind of cultural policy discourses do right-or left-wing, populist forces generate, how do they influence decision-making and the public sphere?

The meeting is organised by the [Research Cluster on Arts Production and Cultural Policy in Transformation \(ACPT\)](#) based at Zeppelin University (ZU). The Research Cluster ACPT unites different research areas across ZU to enable an interdisciplinary approach on the central fields of cultural production, cultural organisations and policy as well as the transformation of audiences within the university and through various collaborations with international researchers and practitioners.

Programme Day I

Thursday, 8 October 2020

14:00–14:10 **Opening Address**

Klaus Mühlhahn
President of Zeppelin University

14:10–14:30 **Welcome and Introduction**

Anke Schad-Spindler
Postdoctoral researcher and coordinator at ACPT

14:30–14:50 **Milena Dragičević Šešić**

Cultural and Memory Policies in Times of Illiberalism – South-Eastern European
Partocracies Against Cultural Counterpublics (or Limits of Cultural Professionalism)

14:50–15:10 **Wolf Iro**

Cultural Work in Illiberal Political Contexts: A Typology from Practice-Based Experiences

15:10–15:30 **Discussion**

15:30–15:50 *Coffee Break*

15:50–16:10 **Thomas Hélie**

Between the Quest for Respectability and Radical Resurgences.
For a Localised and Comparative Approach to the Uses of Cultural Policies in Cities
Governed by the Rassemblement National in France

16:10–16:30 **Anke Schad-Spindler**

Cultural Policy and the Politics of Cooperation

16:30–16:50 **Discussion**

*Part II of the programme continues
on Friday, 6 October at 10:00 (CET).*

Programme Day II

Friday, 9 October 2020

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- 10:00–10:10 **Welcome and Introduction**
Anke Schad-Spindler
Postdoctoral researcher and coordinator at ACPT
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- 10:10–10:30 **Friederike Landau, Oliver Marchart**
Agonistic Cultural Policy (AGONART) – Case Studies on the
Conflictual Transformation of Cultural Quarters
- 10:30–10:50 **Valerie Visanich**
Transformations in Cultural Governance: Devolution and Inclusion Strategies
in Regional Cultural Policies in Malta
- 10:50–11:10 **Discussion**
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- 11:10–11:30 *Coffee Break*
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- 11:30–11:50 **Quirijn Lennert van den Hoogen**
Cultural Policy Transformations from a Dutch Perspective
- 11:50–12:10 **Serhan Ada**
Is Sustainability Still Possible in Illiberal Times?
- 12:10–12:30 **Discussion**
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- 12:30 **Reflections & Outlook**
Only for the invited speakers; see personal emails for the Zoom access link

MILENA DRAGIĆEVIĆ ŠEŠIĆ
UNIVERSITY OF ARTS BELGRADE, SERBIA

Cultural and Memory Policies in Times of Illiberalism South-East European Partocracies Against Cultural Counterpublics (or Limits of Cultural Professionalism)

Context: Hybrid partocratic stabylocracies of SEE with centralized regimes, raised populist cultural policies using all available resources (institutional, financial, political...); there is no transparency (no free public media); all institutions are “usurped” (seized); nativism replaced former socialist cosmopolitanism... From time to time, regimes would act as pseudo-autocracies (Zakaria), demonstrating “false liberal tendencies in order to consolidate their regime”. With elections that do not have equal conditions for all, they are establishing “legitimacy” (Ghandi) in front of international community, although most of domestic cultural elites belonging to cultural counterpublics alert international public opinion how questionable it is.

The most important cultural battles today relate to culture and politics of memory, including politics of oblivion and forgetting... As SEE countries came late to transition, belonging (for different reasons) to culture of humiliation (Moisi, 2009) they started to redefine their cultural identities with discourse of national megalomania and xenophobia. For Serbia it was medievalization, for Northern Macedonia antiquization, for Montenegro distancing of once common Serbo-Montenegrin identity (based on common language and myths), for Bosnia and Herzegovina re-creation of different ethnic identities vs. common Bosnian one, for Kosovo – pan-Albanian Illyrian identity (authenticity on the territory), etc. National cultural canons are revisited and politics of memory became major tool of implicit cultural policies. Monument and renaming policies, national celebrations (state ceremonies), theatre repertoire and even film and TV series production, are contributing to those processes.

Dr. Milena Dragićević Šešić, former President of University of Arts, Belgrade, Professor of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation. Board member of the European Diploma in Cultural Project Management (Brussels), EQ-Arts, Amsterdam. The UNESCO technical facility expert. Published 20 books, 200 essays, translated in 17 languages (cultural & memory policy, management, activism). Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques 2002. ENCATC fellowship laureate 2019. University of Arts laureate 2004, 2019.

[Further information](#)

My research will explore effectiveness of such cultural policies, focusing on monument production on one side, choosing case studies from each state, and state ceremonies (festivals) on the other. Specific attention will be given to the ethics of cultural organizations and of cultural professionals, that are accepting to participate, or even lead such processes.

WOLF IRO

GOETHE-INSTITUT, MUNICH, GERMANY

Cultural Work in Illiberal Political Contexts: A Typology from Practice-based Experiences

On the basis of many years of practical experience in international cultural work (specifically in Russia and Israel), the lecture will develop a typology of project formats that allow the treatment of difficult social issues even in an illiberal political context.

Wolf Iro studied Comparative Literature in Cambridge and Slavic Studies in Oxford and Moscow. He completed his doctorate at the LMU Munich on the Russian Jewish writer Isaak Babel. Since 2004 he has worked at the Goethe-Institut. From 2009 to the beginning of 2014 he worked as head of regional program work in Moscow, then as director of the Goethe-Institut in Israel and now heads the cultural department in Munich.

[Further information](#)

THOMAS HÉLIE
UNIVERSITY OF REIMS, FRANCE

Between the Quest for Respectability and Radical Resurgences For a Localised and Comparative Approach to the Uses of Cultural Policies in Cities Governed by the Rassemblement National in France

Many specialists in radical right-wing movements try to grasp the changes in the Rassemblement National (ex-Front National (Davies, 1999)) from surveys on changes in its ideology, its partisan organisation or its electorate (Crépon, Dezé, Mayer, (ed.) 2015; Mauger, Pelletier (ed.), 2016); other, rarer and more recent surveys (Belmessous, 2019 ; Faury, 2020), study these evolutions on the basis of the public policies implemented at local level, particularly since the 2014 municipal elections which saw the party expand its local audience with the winning of eleven cities, six of which were renewed in the first round of the last municipal elections in March 2020. These questions, relating to the evolution of the Rassemblement National (RN) and the policies it implements locally, are fundamental in that they allow us to analyse the legitimisation process by which this party tries to demonstrate its capacity to govern, while trying to contain the stigmas of its previous local political experiences, at the end of the 1990s (in Toulon, Orange, Marignane and Vitrolles), and for which cultural policies have been an important issue (Bresat-Bodet, 1999 ; Guiat, 2007 ; Dubois, Matz, 2017).

The challenge of our research is precisely to identify and analyse, 'from below' and by placing it in the socio-economic context of each city, the repertoire of RN cultural policies, particularly in the context of the above-mentioned process of partisan legitimisation. On a methodological level, the aim is to carry out monographic analyses of the cultural trajectories of RN cities, which are often small (with the exception of Perpignan, 120,000 inhabitants, won in March 2020), in order to show the different uses of cultural policies. More precisely, the cities selected in the sam-

Thomas Hélie is an assistant professor in political science at University of Reims, France (CRDT), and associate researcher at Sciences Po Toulouse (LaSSP). His research in the field of cultural policies focuses, in a comparative perspective, on the implementation of major cultural facilities, public-private partnerships and cultural policies in small and medium-sized cities. More recently, he has initiated a comparative research programme on the financing of cultural policies, based on a four-year multi-sectorial seminar (2018-2022), supported by the ministry of Finance (IGPDE), and on a Franco-Slovak bilateral research project (Hubert Curien-Stéfanik, 2020-2021).

ple are those that have been sustainably acquired by the RN, as well as two newly won cities, in order to try to follow these policies 'in the making'.

At the current stage of the survey, three types of cultural policy uses (which merit further research) have been identified. Firstly, there is a common practice based on 'localised identity use' which values local, traditional and popular cultures, and which is supposed to represent 'French identity', while stigmatising, more or less explicitly, cultures which are considered as 'foreign' (the 'Pig Festival' in Hayange is a typical example). In itself, this first ethno-cultural use of cultural policies is fairly broadly in line with what can be observed at national or local level in the context of other experiences mentioned in the first meeting of the Zeppelin University seminar (Zamorano, Karaca, Weigl...).

However, two other uses of cultural policies emerge, according to variations between cities, which are based on a tension between the quest for respectability and radical resurgences. In the first case, cultural policy seems to constitute a reservoir of legitimisation, especially when it concerns cultural institutions and certain consecrated genres, as can be observed in the case of Perpignan; in this framework the use of cultural policies seems to prolong the attempt to normalise the party politically, raising the perplexity of agents in the cultural field, and even the possibility of controlled 'accommodations' (Fauray, 2020). In the second case, on the other hand, the policy pursued appears to be a powerful tool of control (Boureille, 2017 ; Belmessous, 2019), or even cultural segregation, especially in the field of cultural and socio-cultural associations. Often more discreet, this register, which appears in part to be a reproduction of old political practices, is interesting in that it can give rise, under certain conditions, to discrete forms of resistance or mobilisations of a more general scope, the effects of which should be assessed in the local political field.

ANKE SCHAD-SPINDLER

ZEPPELIN UNIVERSITY, FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY

Cultural Policy and the Politics of Cooperation

Cooperation is ubiquitous as an explicit demand of programs and projects in the cultural realm or as an implicit requirement in everyday living and working together. Cooperation is part of the DNA of cultural policy, a compound noun consisting of two tremendously complex, complicated, and essentially contested, halves in a tense relationship.

In my presentation I would like to focus on cooperation as an explicit agenda in cultural policymaking implemented through projects with two or more organizations and some of the challenges that come with it. Specifically, I would like to look into the role of the European Union in fostering cooperation through projects. I develop my arguments based on theoretical and empirical references, particularly tapping my experience working as an evaluator of cooperation projects in the cultural sector since 2006. What are the challenges and potentials of cross-national cooperation in overcoming illiberal tendencies?

Anke Schad-Spindler has been working in international research and consultancy projects in culture and related fields since 2006. In 2017, she graduated with a PhD (distinction) in Cultural Institution Studies from the University of Music and Performing Arts (mdw) Vienna. She is a Post-Doc researcher at the Research Cluster on Arts Production and Cultural Policy in Transformation (ACPT) at Zeppelin University.

[Further information](#)

FRIEDERIKE LANDAU

RADBOUD UNIVERSITY NIJMEGEN, NETHERLANDS

OLIVER MARCHART

UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Agonistic Cultural Policy (AGONART) Case Studies on the Conflictual Transformation of Cultural Quarters

Agonistic Cultural Politics (AGONART) – Case Studies on the Conflictual Transformation of Cultural Quarters approaches the field of cultural policy with an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on political and conflict theory as well as literatures on social movements and artistic activism. With a conflict-theoretical perspective, we study local cultural political constellations in Vienna, Graz and Linz, Austria, to identify specific local funding policies, priorities and guiding values.

In a systematic comparison, AGONART not only provides an empirically-driven overview of contemporary landscape of urban cultural policy in Austria (gathering a data corpus including qualitative interviews, participant observation, ethnographic site visits, field observations, and critical policy document analysis), but conceptualizes processes of negotiation between independent, self-organized local cultural producers and policymakers through a lens of antagonism. Beyond the predominant focus on consensus and success of public policy research, AGONART considers local policy coalitions and networks as formations of ‘conflictual cooperation’, attending to the necessary and productive dimension of conflicts.

In the face of the ongoing global COVID19 pandemic, the project raises questions about the vulnerable infrastructures of independent arts and cultural production

Friederike Landau, Assistant Professor at the Geography, Planning and Environment Department at Radboud University, Nijmegen. Ph.D., dissertation on “Agonistic Articulations in the ‘Creative’ City – On New Actors and Activism in Berlin” (published as monograph with Routledge). She was a postdoctoral fellow at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada, where she work on the politics of public art at the example of murals in Vancouver’s Chinatown.

[Further information](#)

Oliver Marchart is a philosopher and since 2016 Professor of Political Theory and History of Ideas at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Vienna. His main research interests are theory of democracy, political history of ideas, social movement research, political discourse analysis and populism.

[Further information](#)

in all three cities: What strategies of survival are being articulated in light of the pandemic? How does the pandemic affect the articulation of political claims for public funding for the arts and culture? What new alliances emerge between actors from cultural politics and administration and stakeholders from cultural and artistic scenes? In sum, AGONART aims to theorize new modes of political agency and mobilization, drawing from real-life activism in selected cities.

VALERIE VISANICH
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MALTA

Transformations in Cultural Governance

Devolution and Inclusion Strategies in Regional Cultural Policies in Malta

This presentation is on the policy-making process of regional cultural strategies in a small state. It reflects on plans to have strategies for decentralisation, diversification and procedures to maximize cultural participation particularly amongst the increased economic migrant population - notions that go against the current climate of an illiberal populist logic. This presentation raises questions on space-specific cultural policies by referring to specificities and similarities of different regions in the small state of Malta (316 km² with over half a million population). It explores barriers for the implementation of these policies including in regional budgets, lack of human resources and at times lack of innovation.

Herein, I refer to a research between 2017-2020, designed as a guiding frame for the first plan to have five distinctive regional cultural strategies in Malta. This research with key stakeholders in every region in Malta raised important issues on how culture on a national and regional level has often been regarded in terms of instrumental and utilitarian practices, often ignoring minority cultures.

Discussion is focused on the distinctiveness of regions in a small island state and on recommendations how value and power can be directed to regional administrative actors. It explores ways how culture can play a key strategic role in the development of the region and lead to cultural diversity by placing attention on minority cultures.

Valerie Visanich, PhD, is a Senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of Malta. She is one of the authors of Malta's national Cultural Policy and has led a research team to design the five regional cultural strategies in Malta. She occupied the position of a chairperson within the European Sociological Association, Research Network Sociology of Art (RN02) between 2017-2019. Valerie is the co-founder, and board member of the Malta Sociological Association. Her latest published work is her monograph entitled Education, Individualization and Neoliberalism: Youth in Southern Europe (Bloomsbury). She is a co-editor of the forthcoming book series The Sociology and Management of the Arts (Routledge).

[Further information](#)

QUIRIJN LENNERT VAN DEN HOOGEN
UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN, NETHERLANDS

Cultural Policy Transformations from a Dutch Perspective

This paper first provides a brief overview of the (meagre) cultural policy transformation in the Netherlands. Then it sketches two research perspectives of such transformations that might be helpful for international comparative analysis. The first focuses on policy as text (Bell & Oakley), analysing trends in cultural policy documents over time. In this project, I have researched trends in Dutch cultural policies related to instrumentalization of such policies, neo-liberal tendencies, New Public Management and nativism. The methodology, which is based in the value regimes of Boltanski & Thévenot, allows for international comparison. The second perspective focuses on centre-periphery dynamics in cultural politics, arguing that in a globalising world, policy systems based in national cultures may be hard to sustain in the long run.

This paper presents the contours of a comparative research project on the role of art and culture in peripheral regions across Europe. It is informed by the growing inequalities between cities where the 'winners of globalisation' reside and the peripheral regions in Europe that are not so well-connected to the global economy. The project aims to assess the strategies of cultural agents outside major city centres by asking how the spheres of arts and culture, the local economy and 'the social' interact in peripheral regions. Do these interactions contribute to sustainable (local) cultural/artistic milieus and to regional development? And how can such a contribution be demonstrated.

Quirijn Lennert van den Hoogen, PhD., studied Business Administration and Arts and Arts Policy at the University of Groningen. For several years he worked as an official for cultural policy in the Netherlands at provincial and municipal level. Currently, he teaches art sociology and arts policy at the University of Groningen. He was editor-in-chief of the Dutch Handbook for Cultural Policy and a member of STEP (Project on European Theatre Systems). He initiated the national working group of cultural policy researchers at the Boekman Foundation in Amsterdam.

[Further information](#)

SERHAN ADA
ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY, TURKEY

Is Sustainability Still Possible in Illiberal Times?

The presentation will draw on two previous texts written at an interval of four years (Ada, 2016; Ada, 2020) and will seek to expand these into two questions about founding concepts.

There was a time when we used the descriptive adjective “neoliberal” in all our analyses and exposés. And this, for decades. Now it seems that we have a brand new adjective: “illiberal”. This novelty should be considered as a big step forward despite having the odd “liberal” in it. The previous one with the same root was based on a colossal illusion: liberal, hence freedom, rights, laissez faire, etc. It literally turned out to be deregulative, arbitrary, even oppressive. The first question then is, what led us to replace the term neoliberal?

Sustainability was also an essential reference, a sine qua non for all of us scholars, analysts, project officers, etc. in the culture scene who were also working hard to include culture as a fourth pillar to add to the notorious “economy-environment-society” trilogy (in other words, the 3 Ps, namely profit, planet, and people). Should we continue to cling to our unwavering foothold of sustainability at a time when profits are shrinking, the earth is under an imminent threat of extinction, and people are subject to steady impoverishment while culture is striving for survival?

The second question is: Is it fair and just to blame a nanoscopic creature as being responsible for shaking the pillars of sustainability? Those questions might seem rhetorical or epistemological, yet they are indeed ontological; and relevantly so for the further execution of our scholarly and intellectual tasks.

Serhan Ada, Associate Professor at Istanbul Bilgi University, is the head of the Cultural Management (BA & MA) Programme of Istanbul Bilgi University and the founding Director of santralistanbul, an international center for arts, culture. He is also the director of the graduate level (certificate) Program of Fashion Management, and Design Culture and Management. Ada was a visiting professor at GI-OCA-Innovation and Organization of Culture and the Arts Master Program at University of Bologna, Cultural Advisor to Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Vice Chairman of Anadolu Kültür A.S. (an independent cultural network creating artistic structures and improving local cultural policies in various cities of Turkey), Interim President of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO on Cultural Diversity and founding member of AICA Turkey (International Association of Art Critics).

[Further information](#)