RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cultural policies and urban transitions green politics, democracy in the time of the pandemic

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Abstract

Urban and Cultural transition refers to several levels, with the environmental one occupying the minds. This transition raises the question of a new politicization of culture, of which cities are the theater. We will illustrate this point in the first part. In the second part, we will discuss this first point by posing the hypothesis that the politicization of culture is not a cyclical but a structural phenomenon, and that it includes certain peculiarities that must be taken into account at the time of urban transition. On the other hand, there is a transition resulting from the pandemic situation that the world has endured for the past 2 years. It is no less crucial for cultural policies, and has already obvious implications for the relationship that polity has with cultural policies. This is the third point we will address.

Keywords Cultural policies, Environmental transition, Cities, Green politics, Pandemics

Introduction

The cultural sector has traditionally been structured by two major opposing principles: *preservation*, which entails the protection of cultural heritage, and *creation*, which concerns all areas of innovation in the performing arts. Urban environments have always been privileged spaces for initiatives of cultural preservation and artistic creation. (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). Cities harboured the monuments which constituted, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a patrimonial heritage to be preserved. They have also long acted as a hub for creators, a locus for social exchanges between fellow-creators and patrons that have made urban areas the matrix of artistic innovation. In the history of art, all major transitions have taken place in cities, even if this has involved, in many cases, the appropriation of non-urban forms (African art or land art, for example). Today, cultural policy[1] faces two major transitional issues which

are not strictly speaking ruptures in the art world, but which could potentially redefine the relationship between art and society, and between culture and politics. We are currently in the midst of a political transition at several levels, with the ecological transition being at the forefront of our contemporary concerns (Kangas et al. 2018).

This transition raises the question of a new politicization of culture, with cities acting as the main theatre for this process. There are three dimensions to this politicization of culture. First, there is the partisan dimension, with the rise of new ideological currents and political parties. Secondly, there is a critique addressed to the "professional" dimension of cultural action from a redefinition of it from a more territorial basis. Finally, we can discern a new tendency for certain political leaders to claim a right to intervene directly in cultural affairs, which has major implications for the relationship between culture and politics. We will illustrate these points in the first part.

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[1] To talk about cultural policy, one generally uses the singular in English, unlike in French. However, with regard to urban policies, their diversity of context, investment and orientation pleads for the use of the plural, which is what we are doing here.

These three new developments could lead us to believe that we undergoing a major political transition from a culture without politics to a politicization of culture. The latter is often perceived in a pejorative way. The second part of this article provides a critique of this vision. We will hypothesize that the politicization of culture is not a situational phenomenon but a structural one, and that it has certain singularities that must be taken into account at the time of urban transition. Among these singularities, we will observe the question of paradigm shifts in the cultural sector. The notion of paradigm can be defined as the framework of ideas and norms that indicates not only the goals of public policy and the type of instruments used to achieve them, but also the very nature of the problems to which they are supposed to face (Hall 1993). The notion of paradigm shift is particularly interesting to use to understand transitions, and in particular those that affect the relationship between city, culture and society. We will plead for a singularity of cultural policies in these dynamics of change which do not see paradigms succeeding one another, as in other areas of public policy, but as accumulating on top of one another.

This explains why the political dimension of culture is not a new phenomenon, but a structural fact. This leads us to posit the following point: transition should not be conceived as a radical rupture that makes one world follow another, but rather as a reconfiguration of one world into another. In the third part, we will illustrate this vision of the transition by examining the consequences of the pandemic on the relations between culture, territory and urban society. The pandemic appears, for many actors, as a vital challenge to the cultural world. We will show how it arouses a three-dimensional shock. On the one hand, there is a "shock of reflexivity", which pushes everyone to question their place in the new cultural and political configuration. Then there is an "innovation shock", which leads the actors to invent new responses to an unprecedented situation. Finally, there is a "hermeneutic shock," which leads the political, cultural and scientific communities to question the meaning of cultural policies in the contemporary urban world.

All the empirical observations presented in this article are based on twenty years of qualitative and quantitative research about cultural policies in France (Négrier and Teillet 2021; Djakouane and Négrier 2021), among other comparative studies (Négrier et al. 2013; Bonet and Négrier 2018; Dupin-Meynard and Négrier, 2021). Even if they are centred on the French case, we presume that many observations could more or less easily be adapted to other national contexts.

Political transition: politics, policies and politicians

The professionalization of the cultural sector (Dubois 1999), the obvious interests of actors dependent on public funds, and the rhetoric of public service, have all been powerful factors in the depoliticization of cultural policies[2] Yet, we have recently been witnessing the emergence of what we could call the "(re) politicization" of urban cultural policies. We will first examine this (re) politicization" at the local level, by examining the political initiatives of Green mayors in France. Secondly, we will examine this process through the prism of the cultural policies promoted by Territorial[3] Cultural Projects. Finally, we will analyse a third form of "(re) politicisation' based essentially on political decision-making reactivated in cultural matters.

Ecologists and cultural policies

The recent election of environmentalist mayors, many of whom do not feel bound by existing political norms and frameworks, has partly renewed ways of exercising power at the municipal level. Innovative forms of political intervention and institution-building have appeared, driven by a new set of political values. The ideas of citizen participation and cultural rights, have been foremost among these. The policies implemented in Grenoble since the 2014 election of mayor Éric Piolle of the Green party (EELV: Europe Écologie Les Verts) have often been used as a point of reference, most often to underline the difficulties and the tensions that have arisen with the cultural sector. Depoliticization could have been a way to create a cultural consensus by establishing a reassuring continuity in the distribution of available public resources. But budgetary constraints have imposed certain policies or have been used to justify them. In doing so, Piolle and other Green mayors have (re)politicized the management of cultural affairs. The Grenoble experience was one of an uncertain see-sawing between horizontal consultation and vertical decision-making, ultimately leaving many with the feeling that authoritarianism had prevailed over the promised program of citizen participation and consultation. Salvation could have come from anchoring political decisions in a solid repository of cultural policies. This is what has been attempted by pluralizing the word "culture" ("to cultures", therefore), thus assuming cultural diversity as a core policy objective. But it does not replace what a well-thought-out reference to cultural rights could have provided. Unfortunately, the first Piolle

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[3] The notion of "territory", in spite of its growing use in international literature, remains quite rare. In our paper, it is distinguished from the notion of space by the explicitly political dimension it implies. To speak of territory rather than simply of space is therefore to directly pose the question of location in terms of representation and legitimacy (Elden 2013).

team seemed unfamiliar with this subject as it was put on the EELV program. Rather than constructing, with the modesty that befits experience, a policy based on cultural rights, both to diagnose what exists and to draw upon existing perspectives, the Grenoble cultural discourse hesitated between the denunciation of the past (the "Malraux-Lang years", the failures of democratization), the praise of citizen participation and the celebration of creation and creators (who are nevertheless at the heart of the heritage denounced). Such an ambivalence is far from having been received kindly by a local or national cultural milieu which seemed favorable to change but only for its's own benefit.

However, contrary to what those in the cultural sector could have hoped for, the difficulties encountered did not prevent Piolle's re-election in 2020: more than 53% of the votes cast in the second round in 2020 were in his favor, against 40% in 2014. Did the cultural policies carried out by Piolle have a positive influence on this success ? Or, on the contrary, since the subject of culture has now become a lesser concern, did the criticisms which targeted his cultural policies have no electoral repercussions? Regardless, one can only be surprised at the virtual absence of links made in "green" municipalities between ecological transition and cultural policies. For green local goverments too, it seems that remain a gap between "decarbonizing culture" (Irle et al. 2021) and implementing an urban cultural policy.

Democratizing the making of cultural policies

The promotion of Territorial Cultural Projects (PCT), their inclusion on the political agendas of many inter-municipal bodies, departments and regions and EPCI[4] is a phenomenon as widespread as it is surprising. In fact, there is no legislative or ministerial policy obligation here. Undoubtedly, certain initiatives such as the Local Education to Art and Culture's (EAC) plans for reading can be considered as PCTs, but the dynamic of the latter, which is multifactorial, is elsewhere (Négrier, Teillet, 2019). Local and Regional administrations and agencies invested in the making of these projects have a tendency to use a methodology, procedures, and a vocabulary that make PCTs an arid, depoliticized and even disconcerting object for non-professionals and novices in the field of culture. But one ideological current carries these initiatives: that of citizen-participation in the public elaboration of local cultural strategies. The promotion of these

projects must be situated within a broader series of societal concerns about the current state of democratic life, the flaws in representative bodies and the mixed results of revitalization by local democracy.

Seen in this light, the democratization of public policy making through citizen-participation and horizontal-consultation, as often proposed by the development of a PCT, takes on a less technocratic and more political meaning. Likewise, by targeting the common spatial good and not only that of cultural organizations and structures, the PCTs invite us to question the established framework of public cultural policies, the inherited sectoral divisions (cultural, socio-cultural, social, etc), past choices, and current professional standards. Questioning these divisions and conceptions is thus another political dimension open to the PCTs. Finally, calling upon actors beyond the usual circles of professional expertise to carry out the diagnostic work needed for the elaboration of public policies, is a way of bringing democracy to life through the "production of knowledge for action, to which any individual concerned by a problem. public contributes, with equal competence, in order to provide a satisfactory solution"(Laugier 2018). It is to this conception of a less institutional and more procedural democracy, a conception of democracy promoted by John Dewey, that the Territorial Cultural Projects can contribute.

A spineless politicization ?

There is a final form of (re) politicization that is more diffuse but no less discernable. It is marked first and foremost by the involvement of elected officials in fairly abrupt decisions (the launching or interruption of an initiative or a project), with little or no public concertation (including within their teams). Despite being made by political actors, these decisions seem devoid of a vision or a rationale capable of giving them any political meaning. This absence of an intellectual framework reflects certain political decisions-makers' desires to regain control over cultural choices through arbitrary means, despite the oft-stated conviction that these decisions coincide with the concerns and aspirations of the broader public. In this way, cultural affairs do not cease to be a political issue. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find coherence in these arbitrary decisions, which might be seen as an expression of the "Great confusion", to use Corcuff's (2021) term. They reinforce the drift of political discourse, towards ultra-conservative positions. But are these political choices without political criteria of choice a novelty?

The myth of cultural policies without politics

It is indeed very significant that, in the context of contemporary urban transitions, the politicization of cultural policy is being experienced as a novel development: as if

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[4] EPCI: Etablissement Public de Coopération Intercommunale. This is an inter-municipal institution to which municipalities delegate a certain amount of competences. This delegation is partly mandatory, and partly dependant of the collective will. The case of cultural policies belongs to the second category.
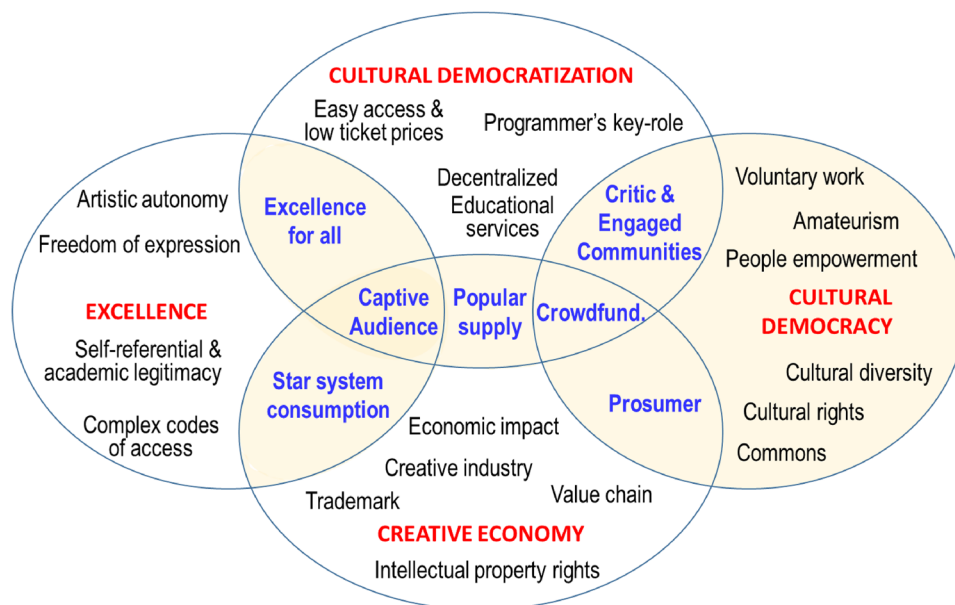
Fig. 1 Participation in cultural policy paradigms. Source: Bonet & Négrier, 2018

politicization was not an intrinsic part of the conditions for the effectiveness of public policies. Let us remember this iron law of any cultural policy: it is always the unstable result of two intersecting instrumentalizations: making culture with politics, and doing politics with culture. Why then is the politicization of cultural issues the subject of so much, often pejorative, commentary? Three answers can be given. The first reason, as we have mentioned above, is that the cultural field has experienced, for the past forty years, a continuous phase of professionalization which has gradually nourished the development of standards and professional reference documents. These were all the more useful to political representatives, who came to see a lever of positive identification in their support of the cultural sector. From then on, making culture with politics—a major project for any professional—consisted in allowing elected officials to take ownership of the benchmarks first forged in (the cultural sector?) sectors. Doing politics with culture—a major project for all politicians—therefore consisted of a double translation: creating electoral affinities through cultural action, and exploiting the cultural potential of political campaigns. By nature, this balance is unstable. But it is arguably at the heart of any historical period, as far as we can see.

Paradigmatic stacking

There is, however, a specificity to the politicization of culture, compared to other forms of sectoral politicization. It interests us in more than one way, when we think of the urban transition. This singularity lies in the evolution of paradigms which give the action an ideological

framework. Let us make a comparison with the paradigm shift that took place in the agricultural sector in the 1960s. In this decade, the system of peasant-based polyculture based on individual ownership of land and manual labor gave way to a new policy based on monoculture, mechanization and the food industry. Land consolidation has reshuffled the cards in favor of the Fig. 1 of the agricultural entrepreneur saddled by bank loans and debt Prior to this radical change, the peasant on his plot of land was a symbolically central figure in the public consciousness. Today, this figure has become an object of nostalgia. This paradigm shift took time, but it was nonetheless a clear substitution of one order (political and sectoral) for another.

In cultural matters, it is quite different. The successive paradigms that have propelled human art into the political order have not substituted one another. Rather, they have accumulated. While we speak today of "cultural rights" as the new frame of reference for cultural policies, a large majority of cultural actors continue to act under the auspices of the movement for cultural democratization that dates back to the 1960s. This movement, which has since then experienced rapid development, has given rise to a paradigm that has flourished in metropolitan centers: the creative economy. But if we extend the spectrum further, we will find still find among contemporary cultural actors, a resolute support for the paradigm that we associate more to the traditional Secretary of State for Fine Arts of the early twentieth century: artistic excellence. One paradigm, far from supplanting the other, is perpetually in the process of negotiating its place among

the others. There is thus no dominant figure of the actor of cultural policies, and the city provides on the contrary a very diverse portrait gallery, from the Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture (MJC) to arthouse cinema, from opera to street artists, cooperative places with theatrical or choreographic labels. The city is the space *par excellence* for the often contentious multiplicity of cultural policies riven by power relations. For behind the facade of kindness and solidarity, actors in the cultural field are often jockeying to impose their narratives, the universality of their paradigm, and their legitimacy. Often, during the struggle for positioning within the field of culture, the actors of each of these paradigms typically proclaim that their vision is the only one that is valid. We hear, on the one hand, the fiery speeches of the masters of venerable institutions that claim to carry on, in splendid isolation, the heroism of art for art's sake. Others refute it in the name of the injunction to provide social access to culture. A third group often points to the backwardness of these approaches, insisting on market interests and its necessary neo-Keynesian support through public finances. A fourth position consists in refuting all of these visions to promote "the" new paradigm: cultural rights, the only legitimate horizon of cultural policies, otherwise doomed to decline.

Hybrid and strong urban cultural policies

Of course, none of these exorbitant promises are actually ever fully fulfilled in whole. What gives shape to the cultural configuration of each of today's cities and metropolises is, on the contrary, the particular combination of these values and their incarnation in public and political space. The diversity of these approaches can be seen in various domains of public policy. For instance, there are policies of public reading which are inspired more by the model of democratization, while others make appeal to "cultural rights". Other policies insist on the transversality of the cultures around the book. Likewise, some policymakers have shifted strategies of public reading to the inter-municipal scale, while others are more concerned with encouraging individual reading at home. The same is true of the projects of managers of national stages, opera houses and third places, of which we can see a variety of concretizations in French and European metropolises. While such differences exist between cultural fields, their combination in urban spaces is nonetheless very diverse, both in intensity and in the preference given to a particularly dominant approach.

Pessimists might see in this scattering of politicizations a sign of yet another fragility in a sector that is not lacking in weaknesses: a structural lack of resources, a weakening of the ministry (of culture?) vis-à-vis that of finance, a loss of power in regional offices vis-à-vis the

prefects, and a slow decline of major charismatic political figures that have historically ensured the vitality of cultural action. Not only is the sector weak, but it disperses its political vocation in many possible directions.

We believe the exact opposite. The expectation of a radical paradigm shift, driven by powerful actors overthrowing the old guard, and assisted in this initiative by a crowd of mediators familiar with the new discourse and sensitive to the same images, belongs to the past. The contemporary dynamic of political change no longer proceeds, in the various sectors of public action, by substitution but by hybridization.

Let's take an example. In our research on the issues of citizen participation in contemporary cultural policies, we have schematized the great diversity of paradigms within which this participation can be attached. As can be seen in the figure below, the paradigms that serve as a reference for the actors are of at least four kinds: excellence, democratization, creative economy and cultural democracy (or cultural rights). Two lessons can be drawn. On the one hand, the paradigms are not completely separate, but intersect in several places. On the other hand, cultural participation is everywhere, which means that all the paradigms remain valid at the same time to define what constitutes cultural policy adapted to the contemporary world. It is this accumulation that contributes to the hybridization and politicization of cultural affairs.

The best environmental policy specialists are now showing what is at stake in the accumulation of public policies that are sometimes inspired by opposing paradigms. The politicization of culture, like the politicization of the environment, and of many other sectoral policies, places at the heart of its reflection the conditions for a positive hybridization, one that offers a compromise between potentially rival valuation schemes but, like the prisoner's dilemma (Axelrod 1984), collectively punishes solitary calculation. It could be argued that this is the justification for a kind of preservation compromise. In this way everyone is guaranteed to find, in cities, the discourse that suits them. On the contrary, we believe that this path of compromise is one that is likely to redefine cultural activities which, because they have undergone a fairly long—albeit incomplete—phase of professionalization, are believed to be legitimately closed off from others. To politicize culture is to govern its hybridization.

This paradigmatic hybridization affects both the cultural sector and urban policies. For cultural policy, the challenge is to build a legitimacy that is accepted not only by self-interested and already convinced actors. For urban policies, it is a question of justifying their development not only for dense and metropolitan spaces, but of giving them meaning beyond the borders of the city, in a context of urban sprawl. And in this democratic

challenge, culture plays a major role because it is in cities that the most important cultural institutions are established, and where the greatest number of cultural actors live. The denial of hybridization is therefore fraught with a risk: that of artificially reinforcing a divide between urban and rural cultures which are nevertheless undermined by sociological developments. Indeed, not only is urban civilization tending to become more widespread, but this development has been further reinforced during the pandemic, which we will now discuss.

Cultural policy and transition: the triple pandemic shock

When it became evident that the pandemic, at the twilight of 2019, would impose itself as a global phenomenon with dramatic consequences, we had already been conducting a year of research within CEPEL on festivals, their practices, actors and public policies (Djakouane, Négrier, 2021). We were therefore able to estimate fairly quickly the impact of a global cancellation of events in economic, social and artistic terms, on the basis of a study of some 200 performing arts festivals. We were asked to extend the scope of our study to the entire field of festivals, which led us to integrate events centred around the visual arts, literature and film. We expected to double our sample size, on the basis of a questionnaire that would take into account all aspects (programming, human resources, partnerships, budgets, etc.) of festival organisation. The implementation of this new component resulted in the collection of an unprecedented 1399 responses. The question of why we were able to collect such an unheard of sample size is relevant for our analysis. We can tentatively assume that this large influx of responses is indicative of a dramatic shift in attitudes toward (academic? social science ?) research, against the backdrop of an unusual concern for an industry as a whole.

While it is difficult to draw all the lessons relating to the impact of an event such as the pandemic on public policies, it is nevertheless our role to submit our observations to debate, especially since part of our reflection deals with our own relationship with communities of actors. Our analysis is largely based on the sector to which we have devoted a significant part of our work in recent years: cultural policies. As a sector dependent on social interactions, the "cultural" sector is obviously affected first and foremost by so-called "social distancing" measures, which are in reality more measures of physical distancing. If the relationship to culture is constitutive of the individual, the individual's development is massively social, and convivial. The situation of confinement deals a psychological blow that almost everyone experiences as violent, long-lasting, anxiety-provoking,

unevenly dramatic, and without a clearly defined end-horizon. However, we will extend our findings to other areas for which we have direct evidence, or observations already made and published by other colleagues.

We will consider in this article three phenomena which do not occur in the normal course of public policies, and which impose themselves on their protagonists in the face of dramatic event. These phenomena can be expressed as "shocks": of reflexivity, innovation and hermeneutics. We will detail each of its content and scope by addressing in turn the actors, public policies and, finally, the role of the researcher in these configurations.

Reflexivity

One of the predictable effects of mass-confinement and shutdowns is the greater free-time that many of the protagonists suddenly have, and the momentary expansion of their ability to think about their world. It is common to oppose reason and emotion. But when one is taken out of the routines of everyday life, emotions push people to question what went without saying. The "reflexivity shock" is this phenomenon by which each actor is led to ask existential questions about their place in society. Of course, these questions are always present, in a latent way, if only in stammering or inflamed expressions at the beginning of one's career, or in the inflections people experience in the middle and end of their careers. But, in the cultural sector as in others, this questioning is more often than not subsumed by the routines of everyday life. The emergence of this uncertainty is the first result of confinement. The major reflective question, for artists and cultural actors, is that of the exceptionality of their status in a disaster-stricken world. If the artist's role is no longer a kind of exception in urban life, how can it not give way to banality? This is his existential dilemma. When the desperate search for a chance of survival in a vocation leaves them a little time, it is this shock of reflexivity that artists are faced with, a reflexivity that is as rich in anguish as it is in potential.

It is therefore understandable that many actors in the cultural domain resolve the dilemma by using attitudes studied by Albert O. Hirschmann on the subject of consumer reactions to the failure of companies or institutions in the quality of their service (Hirschmann 1970). "Voice" expresses a protest addressed, on the behalf of the the artists and actors concerned, to the institutions which do not honor their commitments, or against exceptional measures dictated by the situation. It is thus an active resistance to the new situation. "Loyalty," which consists in more or less blindly respecting hierarchical rules and instructions is no less widespread, both among agents of artistic and cultural institutions, and among beneficiaries of public policies (companies, associations

cultural, creative)."Apathy", which is neither loyalty nor active resistance (Bajoit 1988), is observed amongst all the actors who, in this reflective exercise, resign themselves to hoping for a possible return to normal, a future identical to the past. "Exit" is the reverse effect of the same introspective move: it results in an exit from the system, and the search for another destiny. In the United Kingdom, where social and cultural measures to support the cultural sector have been comparatively weak, 34% of musicians have made the decision to retrain outside the sector musical, according to research conducted by the Union des Musiciens.

Among the actors to be considered in this analysis of Covid-induced "reflexivity" are those who are the target of cultural policies: the consumers of cultural goods and services, that is to say, the public. They too participate in this reflective momentum, questioning and being questioned about the effect of the pandemic on their desire for culture and, above all, on their propensity to return to their previous practices once sites of cultural activity have been reopened (GECE 2020). We know today (Le Monde, October 28) that the forecasts of the earliest surveys, which predicted a return as soon as possible, for most of the people questioned, to their previous practices, were overly optimistic. As figures released in October 2021 (Harris Interactive 2021) indicate, social behavior remains durably affected by the impact of the pandemic, in two ways.

The first effect is a sharp drop in the intensity of cultural outing practices. Attendance numbers in movie theatres, the most popular of all cultural activities, have dropped nearly 30%. The second is the unprecedented audience of of safe values (mainstream artists, blockbusters), as if audiences were seeking, in a period of resumption of activity, to guard against the risk inherent in cultural release. In this regard, we can draw a parallel between this data and those from other surveys on festival audiences (Djakouane and Négrier 2021): their new spectators, those who enter for the first time in their lives, have three dominant characteristics in common: they limit their participation to one or two shows (low intensity); come to see artists they already know (safe bet) and always go out accompanied (friendly prophylaxis).

On the public policy side, the reflective exercise is no less intense, even if it is not the introspection of a single person but that of a heterogeneous environment, that nevertheless achieves some coherence through a common frame of reference and tools. In this regard, cultural policy has faced the formidable question of its "non-essential" character. This question has been raised by the shutdown of places and businesses (theatres, bookstores, and exhibition venues) which, though bringing together less dense crowds than say, public transport systems,

(which of course remained operationql during the pandemic), were nevertheless forced to close. A binary question (essential or non-essential ?) has arisen for cultural policy and, consequently, for all of its protagonists. A few years ago, Pierre Muller theorized this always problematic link between sector referential and global referential (Muller, 2015), in a similar way that Pierre Bourdieu and Rosine Christin examined the logics of domination specific to a linked, dialectical field, with a more global logic of domination (Bourdieu and Christin, 1990). Here, it is also—whatever the coherence or the uniqueness of the reference framework for cultural policies (Dupin-Meynard, Négrier, 2021)—a question of adjustment between these and the expected from public policies taken as a whole. By comparison, the same reflective exercise within the military or hospital sectors can lead to other consequences.

The case of the military sector, which organised civilian missions (the transfer of patients between regions and the delivery of materials and personnel in emergency situations) illustrates the transformation (more than the questioning) of the place of the military within society.

The example of the medical sector shows how the pandemic has modified the influence of certain categories of actors and their priorities. In this case, the role of emergency physicians in the organization of hospitals, as well as the function of epidemiologists in the medical and hospital research sector, has undergone significant permutations. Regarding epidemiology, older work in the sociology of health, going back to the analysis of AIDS treatment in France (Borraz, Loncle-Moriceau, 2000), had already shown how the pressure of public-health crises could be appropriated and oriented towards the benefit of certain actors within public policy circles.

The place of the social science researcher has been no less affected, if only because he is subject, like the others, to this reflective shock. On the one hand, the tumultuous times we have been living through are powerful levers for our own self-reflection. This can transform the researcher's relationship to his field. Usually, social science researchers have a virtual monopoly on the time that others lack (officials, artists, operators). We have seen that this extraordinary moment of distancing is, for all, analytical. As a result, it redefines the frontier between action and research, and nurtures unprecedented possibilities of co-production, cooperation / competition for the intelligibility of the repositories, instruments and purposes of public policies. In the cultural sector, the researcher (and beyond, the research) is expected to translate the unstructured uncertainties that the actors undergo into facts that can be objectified, compared, and held at a distance. This expectation offers the researcher both classic issues (distance to the object, axiological

neutrality, etc.) and new dilemmas, such as, for example, that of the treatment of the emotional dimension in the manufacture of diagnoses of both personal and collective situations. Should we see this phenomenon merely as a factor disturbing the clarity of a rational analysis, or on the contrary as a vector of its contemporary expressiveness? (Faure, Négrier, 2018). Undoubtedly, the researcher is confronted, in this context, with the need for a change of outlook, and for a more active interdisciplinarity, in short for greater innovation. We must now address these many forms of innovation that have emerged since the pandemic.

Innovation

ThE second "shock" caused by the pandemic can be referred to as an "innovation shock". Exceptional situations can lead actors to propose new, inventive solutions and formulas. The cancellation of shows, concerts and tours and the closing of cinemas have prompted a multitude of online services and offers of free access to catalogs. Certain festivals encountered during our investigation have invested time and resources into partially reconfiguring their programming as an online event. Many have done so without knowing anything about the nature of the digital space, and without any sense of the revenue these online events generate, or even to the social practices it generates, triggers or restricts. While some of these innovations are only linked to the pandemic context and will disappear along with it, others already constitute improvements that certain actors see as long-lasting. This is the case with teleworking, almost absent from practices in the cultural sector before the pandemic. Let us take the example of film festivals, which have few large operators among the 200 or so events in this sector organized in France each year. Their online transfiguration (partial or total) has opened up a hitherto almost untapped possibility of dialoguing with the authors of the works, when it becomes impossible to defray the costs of an in-person intervention. For many of them, the popularization of remote tools has made this possible, an innovation that will remain, according to several festival managers, the added value of the pandemic (Djakouane, Négrier, 2021). Most of the innovations linked to remote tools (online concerts, participatory plays, deployment of platforms, general extension of technical vectors of expressiveness) have two characteristics. The first characteristic is that they were not created wholesale during the pandemic, but that they have been facilitated and encouraged by this public health crisis. This is notably the case with teleconsultation in the medical field. These are therefore more social innovations than purely technological ones. The second characteristic is that these innovations pose considerable challenges

in economic and social terms. At the economic level, the question is that of the place of new remote interactions in value chains within sectors with multiple actors. Here, the music sector is directly and brutally affected by the question. How are artists paid by these distribution platforms and tools? What treatment should be reserved for intermediaries (bookers, turners, producers) whose unique contribution is thus threatened? At the social level, questions logically arise—educational, geographic, economic—of access to these new vectors, but also of the impact of the individualization of practices on the disintegration of collectives (professional or territorial). Naturally, these issues emerge as new challenges for public policies.

Public policy making has also been affected by this pandemic-induced "innovation shock". The pandemic offers a relatively rare example of a moment when the cardinal instruments and principles of public policies falter or reveal their contingency, allowing organizations to find a long-sought after lever for their own legitimacy. Two examples support this claim. On the one hand, in cultural institutions, the accounting principle of pay for "service rendered" implies that no final remuneration can be made to a service provider, even under contract, who has not yet performed his service. In the context of safeguarding the cultural environment, the accountants of the establishments were asked to no longer take this principle into account.

Public officials also extended the evaluation of their policies to the analysis of what the beneficiaries had actually done with their grants. Further funding for the following year was made contingent on these results, providing policy makers a way of exercising control over cultural actors that went beyond the usual rules and protocols. Our second example is the case of National Music Center, created just before the pandemic. The presence of heterogeneous organizations from the private and public sector, such as the SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers) and the General Directorate for Creation of the Ministry of Culture led many to think that the National Music Center would have a hard time finding its place in the web of private and public actors. However, the pandemic offered the CNM the unexpected context which allowed it to forcefully pass from the status of novice to that of savior of the music sector, and to accumulate in a short time a capital of influence that no "normal" period could have granted it.

But these innovations, in the institutional order, can also raise doubts, insofar as some have the effect of undermining public freedoms, the right to privacy, or even the principle of deliberation on which the legitimacy of public action rests (Blondiaux, 2001). Each of these points gives rise to three debates. The first concerns

the question of the proportionality of policy decisions enacted during a public health crisis. The second debate concerns the very justification for such breaches of democratic principles. This is the case, for example, with the use of defense secret protection for decisions taken by the executive power, in a prolonged state of emergency (Alliès 2021). Finally, the third debate concerns the long term maintenance of such innovations conceived in an exceptional moment. However, we know that some of the innovations (technical, economic, legal) which result from such contexts have become ingrained in everyday life. This is why the discussion of their scope, the risks they entail, is more necessary than ever.

The "innovation shock" has also had an impact on social science researchers in three ways. On the one hand, they must familiarise themselves with new digital instruments and tools which sometimes have a direct impact on the accustomed modes of transmission of knowledge: a conference paired with a live dialogue box transforms the nature of the exchange and the form of co-production of knowledge through debate. This is all the more true as they have access to audiences that are quantitatively and qualitatively very different from the relatively small circles of the seminar presentation. Secondly, researchers now have the possibility of accessing professional public policy forums which are usually almost impossible to attend and which have greatly increased in number during the pandemic. Finally, it has also prompted enlightened debate in the social sciences on all the consequences that the proposed innovations, beyond the mirage of decision-making efficiency, technological transparency or automated access, could have on civil society.

Hermeneutics

The third shock is the "hermeneutical shock". It no longer leads to questioning oneself and one's practices but rather the meaning of it all. Since Pierre Muller (2015), we know that the question of meaning is one of the most fundamental in understanding public action. Moments of crisis throw the question of meaning in particularly sharp relief. For cultural actors whose practice is essentially a form of social encounter, the notion of social distancing appears to be in total contradiction with the nature of their activity. In fact, the observation of measures of social distancing, of imposed reduction of crowd sizes and of more or less advanced forms of social control (of the verification of vaccination passes and the state of health of the public, for example) involves as many attacks on what constitutes the essence of cultural practice: the friendliness and the removal of barriers. It is because of the emergence of these new practices of restraint and social control that certain cultural actors have not simply reconsidered their roles, of their capacity for innovation but rather the very

meaning of their activity, which combines competition, passion and vocation. As we mentioned earlier, this is how we can understand the phenomenon of defection, of a flight from the cultural sector. Obviously, the problem that this poses is all the greater since there is no certainty that those who defect from the cultural field would not also be those who correspond least well to the various objectives of a cultural policy. On the artists' side, are these "defectors" those who have the least creativity, the least ability to transmit it to a diverse audience ? On the side of cultural managers, are the "defectors" those who have the least capacity for effective mediation between the art world and the political world, between artists and society ? Through the prism of the actors, we see that the question of meaning extends to the entire spectrum of public policies. In the anatomy of this moment, there are also all the issues of meaning that cultural policies have faced for years. The great division between the spirit of the Fine Arts for the greatest number and cultural democracy for and by all has rather diminished in recent decades, without all the protagonists taking note of it (Négrier Teillet 2019). In the name of survival, the crisis inevitably poses formidable questions of the balance of power between large and small, private and public. The notion of ecosystem, in this context, has an unprecedented success in the cultural sector.

All this leads us to pose a triple hermeneutical question. The first is that of the structural diversity of the cultural sectors. Whether we are talking about permanent places, festivals, the artists themselves or public actors, we are always led to identify a comparable composition where a very small number of powerful operators materially and symbolically dominate a sector made up of a overwhelming majority of small and medium. The management of the pandemic requires a reflection on the meaning of a public policy vis-à-vis actors whose contradictions of interests are taken to the extreme. It poses the question of the vocation of a ministry of Culture in relation to the role that can be played by local authorities, foundations of general interest, independent actors, lucrative or not. Interestingly, this questioning of the state can take on different meanings. At the beginning of July 2020, Roselyne Bachelot, Minister of Culture, inaugurated her new functions as Minister of Culture with a "positive break" indicating the implementation of a policy on festivals, thus breaking with 17 years of the opposite injunction: thebelief that festivals were not, with some exceptions, a legitimate object of intervention for the State. On the other hand, in the health sector, the model of state concentration of decision-making, and its institutional corollary of a defence council in the matter, has been the subject of a well-argued discussion. It concerns both the relevance of an ultra-concentrated decision-making model, the

ousting of certain actors from the process, even though they are at the heart of the action (for example: firefighters), and on the failures of the resulting modes of coordination (Bergeron et al. 2021).

The second question concerns the link between the aims of a policy and those built on other foundations, that is to say the meaning of the borders between sectors of public action. We are thinking in particular of all the debates that put cultural policy to the test of the challenges of ecological transition (Irle et al. 2021), of educational performance or of well-being and health (Langeard et al. 2020).

Finally, the third question is the broadest and touches on the meaning of a cultural policy in itself in the contemporary world. Its purpose should no longer be to cater solely to the interests of its tribe, or to flatter the egos of the so-called new aristocracy (unfairly pinpointed by Nathalie Heinich (2005), but to rethink a legitimacy which, for culture, is always critical, subject as it is to the permanent dialogue between fiery support and critical dissent.

Conclusion

The cultural field is unique in that it places all transitions under the influence of uncertainty. This uncertainty affects objects (what is a legitimate cultural object?), instruments (are public policies more effective when held at arms' length or when imposed through direct administration?) but also paradigms: as we speak today of cultural rights or cultural democracy, many actors are still attached to the paradigms of excellence or democratization. Culture, as a domain, is the compromise elevated to the rank of an art. This permanent compromise explains why the transition is intrinsically political. At the same time, the cultural field shows us that the idea of a passage from one state to another is not the right way to describe the transition. It would be best to describe this transition as occurring not from one world to another, but from one world into another. This is the idea that best corresponds to the notion of "paradigmatic hybridization" that we have defended. Is culture a good transitional tool for cities? Yes, if we preserve this idea of a transition not from one world to another but from one world into another. This is true from an artistic and social point of view, with the dual need to inscribe cultural policy in the history of art, but also in contemporary democratic issues. But culture can only be a good tool of transition for cities if it is itself conceived of as being in transition. However, on environmental issues, we can see a still strong tendency to deny the carbon footprint of cultural activities: the refusal to sacrifice the creative ideal to sobriety, to consider art as an exception to the goals of sustainable development, and to promote the exceptionalism of culture at the cost of ecological regression. We still have a long way to go! Finally, is the city the right scale to think about cultural transition? If culture (in the institutional sense of the term) has always had the city as its cradle, urbanity has spread, and today there is not much singularity left in the city compared to the rural world. The city is no longer the only scale of relevance for cultural policies, even if it still contains a very dominant part of cultural activities, institutions and funding. Thinking about culture in the urban transition is therefore an issue of reciprocal transformation of culture by territories, and of territories by culture.

Declarations

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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