The global spread of the concept of cultural policy

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ABSTRACT

The article studies UNESCO's program that, from the late 1960s onward, aimed at spreading globally the concept of cultural policy. An essential part of the program, UNESCO invited member states from different regions of the world to prepare reports on national cultural policy. That was successful in spreading cultural policy as a concept and as a governmental structure. Except for only Australia, Canada and the United States, in which cultural policy is handled at a sub-state level, all countries that produced a national report have established a ministry of culture, typically synchronously with the report. The analysis suggests that UNESCO's success was due to two factors: the process of domestication and peer pressure. This means that, for one thing, the UNESCO materials stressed differences rather than similarities, and therefore the program was not seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Rather than mentioning the program's contribution to structural isomorphism, the documents stressed that developing and reporting on a national cultural policy are means to support and promote national art and cultural heritage. Secondly, diffusion of the concept of cultural policy benefitted from international comparisons enabled by the national reports and the tendency of countries to emulate others, especially those belonging to the same reference group. These two factors were results of strategic planning on UNESCO's part. Experienced in seeking to guide national policies, the UNESCO staff members could anticipate the challenges that the program could face and the processes that different moves could trigger.

1. Introduction

In a writing published in the UNESCO Courier in 1982, Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of UNESCO, expresses his concern for the homogenizing effects of "a growing interplay of reciprocal influences," coupled with "the development of computer technology." Consequently, he writes:

These exchanges and contacts are accompanied by a growing tendency towards a standardization of tastes and behaviour, and a homogenization of certain patterns of life, thought and action, of production and consumption propagated by the uniform dissemination of the same television series, the same musical rhythms, the same clothes and the same escapist dreams.

This growing conformity, which seems to follow an internal logic of its own, is gradually invading more and more areas of human activity. […] Whole sectors of creativity are thus repressed, and societies mutilated in their individuality and their distinctive structure. Carried to the extreme, this logic could lead to the ossification of mankind since diversity, if accepted on a footing of complete equality, is an essential and fertile source of vitality for both individual societies and the whole world. (M'Bow, 1982: 5)

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As an antidote to this prospect, Mr. M'Bow promoted national cultural policy that supports cultural identity and creativity in each UNESCO's member country. Indeed, by the 1980s cultural policy was a well-established policy sector throughout the world. Paradoxically, in the name of supporting and strengthening different cultures and creativity, from the late 1960s onward nation-states across the globe had adopted the idea that each national state has or should have a thing called cultural policy: an area of government actions that protects national culture and other values deemed important for the nation. In a mind-boggling way, national states exhibit great conformity in that they claim to defend individuality.

We stress that such conformity and increased worldwide isomorphism primarily concerned cultural policy as a concept. UNESCO's program to promote and spread cultural policy did end up issuing recommendations about organizational solutions, for instance that member states should establish ministries of culture and organize the collection of cultural statistics, but the program was not intended to promote any policies in this area. On the contrary, the program stressed that national cultural policies differ from one another. One could say that UNESCO's program operated at a discursive level: it developed and spread a shared vocabulary by which states described and justified their policies and lumped them into a single thing referred to as cultural policy. In their national reports on cultural policy, governments used more or less the same categorizations to report on different areas of state activities and appealed to the same ideals, such as support for national art and preservation of cultural heritage. Such uniformity in the rhetoric speaks to the point made in neoinstitutionalist and constructionist research that conformism is a key driving force in the global travel of ideas and that it typically results in decoupling between proclaimed values and actual practices: because political leaders want to look good in the eyes of others, they use fashionable political rhetoric even if they have no intention or resources to implement the stated principles (see e.g. Bromley and Powell, 2012). Concerning cultural policy, Eleonora Belfiore (2009b) refers to a similar phenomenon by the concept of bullshitting: speakers justify their views by appealing to such alleged effects of a policy that they know others to believe in and value highly (such as art boosting economic growth), even if evidence supporting the belief is paltry.

Yet the program succeeded in more than just disseminating a shared vocabulary by which national states the world over describe and justify their version of this thing called cultural policy. The shared vocabulary also resulted in growing structural isomorphism. Governments have, indeed, followed UNESCO's recommendations and established ministries or state departments for culture. Partly due to UNESCO's activity, also academic research in this area has become institutionalized in several programs and publishing outlets.

There is, indeed, a vast scholarship on cultural policy. In addition to numerous studies on a single country, there is comparative research. By inviting member states to report on their policies in a similar fashion and by endorsing comparative cultural statistics, the UNESCO program itself contributed to the development of such an approach. For example Bustamante (2015) uses UNESCO's survey data about cultural actions and policies collected in 1980 (103 countries) to analyze national differences in this area. According to the analysis, one can identify four types of countries regarding cultural policy: omnipresent, non-existent, state-centered and decentralized. There are also studies that compare the cultural policies of two or more countries (Belfiore, 2009a; Wyszomirski, 1998; D'Angelo and Vespérini, 1998; Looseley, 2011; Zimmer and Toepler, 1996) or discuss policies within an entire region (Lee and Lim, 2014; Rodríguez Morató and Zamorano, 2018; Mangset et al., 2008). The focus of this article, however, is not on differences or similarities between national cultural policies.

Another strand of literature is concerned with the genealogy of cultural policy in modern society. Paul DiMaggio (1982), for example, discusses how the emergence of the distinction between high and popular culture in its modern form was a precondition for public policy towards culture in both the United States and Great Britain. Similarly, several other authors have noted that, from the 19th century onward, public support for art or "high culture" has been used as a means of behavior modification, as an instrument capable of "lifting" the cultural level of the population (see e.g. Miller and Yúdice, 2002; Bennett, 1995). Later on, the objects or activities considered worthy of state support, as well as the objectives of public subsidy, have changed and multiplied. As interesting as this scholarship on cultural policy is, it also falls beyond our scope. Here we are not interested in the formation of the motives behind or key function of cultural policy but only in how the UNESCO program contributed to disseminating worldwide the idea that each nation-state has its own cultural policy.

The global diffusion and establishment of the concept of cultural policy has attracted much less attention. Existing studies on the history of the concept of cultural policy locate its invention at the end of World War II, with the founding of the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1959 as a key moment (Bennett, 2001; Dubois, 2008)[1] Closest to our topic, Gabriela Toledo Silva (2015) has studied the way UNESCO coined the category of cultural policy from the 1960s onward. Drawing on Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, she notes that the coining of the idea of cultural policy was a slow process whereby the term was associated with certain spokespersons, mediators and contexts that, when collectively mobilized, made it inseparable from practice. "Cultural policy is thus a way to both talk about and do something in a certain manner, according to certain principles" (Silva, 2015: 3). Silva, however, concentrates only on describing how the process of establishing cultural policy evolved within UNESCO; she does not discuss how it was adopted worldwide.

There are, however, other studies on how international organizations play a role in spreading fashionable concepts worldwide. For instance, Vlassis and de Beukelaer (2019) study the way several intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), including UNESCO, have globalized the "creative economy" policy agenda and created new forms of cultural industries governance. Another related

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[1] The French were definitely key players in promoting the idea of cultural policy within Unesco, but this narrative ignores the point that the first countries to establish a ministry of culture belonged to the Socialist block: e.g. Poland in 1944, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Estonia in 1953, and Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic in 1954.

study is Michael Elliott and Vaughn Schmutz's (2012) analysis of how the recognition of a common, universal "world heritage" came about. Drawing on world society theory scholarship (see e.g. Meyer et al., 1997), the authors show that in that case, too, the United Nations (UN) system, along with a whole network of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), intergovernmental agencies (like UNESCO) and other actors that grew around it, was key to the consolidation of a universal perspective. As will be discussed in the subsequent pages, the same applies to the global diffusion of the concept of cultural policy, formulated at UNESCO in the 1960s and then spread across the world within a couple of decades.

The diffusion of the idea of cultural policy provides us with a good case to try and understand how the global spread of ideas work. Strang and Meyer (1993) argue that there are certain institutional conditions for diffusion, the key of which is "theorization." It means that a model is formulated at a rather general level, detached from particular contexts in which it is first employed, or which serve as food for thought in creating the model. Therefore, Strang and Meyer note, scientists and policy experts serve a role in constructing models that are assumed to be universally applicable. But what about other strategies that the key actors use to promote and spread a concept or idea? In this particular case, how did the UNESCO program succeed in establishing the concept of cultural policy in such a short time? That is the question we address in this article.

As will be discussed in more detail later, we argue that UNESCO had two main strategies in institutionalizing cultural policy as a concept and as a self-evident policy area across the world. In this instance, we do not conceive of strategies as necessarily conscious rationales. The choices made may have been intuitive. We consider them as strategies only in the sense that they brought about the final outcome.

It is also important to note that, as an international organization, UNESCO has a very special kind of actorhood. Funded by its member states, it is a high-level forum for intellectual exchange (Hoggart, 1978: 25-26), and in that sense its agenda and activities are dependent on the views that attract support among the delegates. UNESCO sets international normative standards— conventions, recommendations and declarations,[2] which all pass through a complex decision-making process through the Executive Board, the Member States, the Director-General, and finally the General Conference, which decides about their adoption normally by consensus. In other words, the normative standards adopted by UNESCO represent the will of the member states. However, the UNESCO staff plays a crucial role in steering the process whereby an initial idea eventually leads to a "standard-setting instrument" (UNESCO, 2018: 118) that is acceptable to all member states, and in controlling that member states take measures to implement the standards adopted by the General Conference. In this latter sense UNESCO can be considered as a strategizing actor. More or less the same applies to all IGOs: they are dependent on member states, but they do more than just facilitate cooperation. As Barnett and Finnemore (1999: 700) put it, IGOs "exercise power as they constitute and construct the social world."

In the case in point, UNESCO contributed to the recipient countries *domesticating* the concept. By domestication we refer to a process whereby an idea is "translated" (Callon, 1986) to the local conditions and becomes considered as a self-evident part of the domestic world (Alasuutari and Qadir, 2013). In this case it meant that in its publications UNESCO stressed that cultural policies differ. Accordingly, the participating countries were asked to describe what they do in the area of cultural policy by preparing a national report. UNESCO also organized regional meetings in which the local themes regarding cultural policy were brought to the agenda. However, at the same time UNESCO gave a format that each national report should follow.

The second strategy was to utilize peer pressure among countries. That is, by making sure that countries from different corners of the world produced their national reports already at an early stage, UNESCO provided the countries joining the program at a later stage with at least one forerunner amongst their reference group. Arranging regional meetings also helped in spreading the concept. Consequently, in a relatively short time, participants created a globally spread vocabulary that defined and constructed a new policy domain, an international community of policymakers that ran the operations belonging to it, and an epistemic community of scholars that produced knowledge on it.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. We first discuss the background and theoretical framework of this article in more detail. After introducing the data and methods, we discuss the two strategies mentioned above. By way of conclusion, we discuss the implications of the empirical analysis for a better understanding of how the global diffusion of the concept of cultural policy was possible.

2. Playing the game of epistemic governance

In the bulk of previous research, the worldwide diffusion of policies has been approached from a top-down perspective, within which it is assumed that a model is first created somewhere, after which it is spread to countries and organizations the world over, with IGOs and INGOs functioning as conduits. According to world society theory, governments enact exogenous models because countries are conformists: a wealth of research shows that, rather than suitability, connectedness to INGOs promoting a model best explains whether a country enacts it (Schofer et al., 2012). To take an example of this research tradition, Jang (2000) has studied the global spread of ministries of science and technology. According to it, the science ministry became an expected and legitimated governmental structure since the late 1960s. The amount of discourse on science and technology and the number of memberships of each country in the International Council of Science Unions (ICSU) were the factors that strongly affected the founding of science ministries.

More in-depth analyses of the way ideas travel show that the formation and worldwide diffusion of conceptual or organizational innovations are parallel processes. Models are modified and further developed while they travel in two ways. First, policies are

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[2] These different types of normative standards bind member states to a varying degree (UNESCO, 2018).

typically formulated in and marketed by IGOs and INGOs, in which delegates from several countries take part in the process. Second, the implementation of a reform is always a process of translation that changes the concept or concepts on which it is modelled, and such modifications often influence recipient countries and feed back to the organizations that advertise the model to other countries (Alasuutari et al., 2016; Syväterä and Qadir, 2015). In that sense, the construction and diffusion of worldwide models is not a simple top-down process.

To get a better understanding of such processes, we need to realize that governance—both in national and international contexts—is epistemic: it functions through acting upon and affecting people's conceptions of reality and of themselves as actors. Therefore, here we approach the global spread of the concept of cultural policy from an epistemic governance perspective, which means that we scrutinize the particular ways in which actors influence the comportment of others by utilizing and affecting others' understandings of reality (Alasuutari and Qadir, 2014; Alasuutari and Qadir, 2019). At a general level, we can say that those who seek to bring about change act upon others' constructions of what the world is, who we are, and what is good or desirable (Alasuutari and Qadir, 2014). When engaged in such epistemic work, actors make use of commonly held beliefs of the social world (Alasuutari and Qadir, 2016) and in persuading others they appeal to authoritative sources and subjects, whether it is a question of facts or moral principles (Alasuutari, 2018). This framework resembles the theory of epistemic communities (Haas, 1992), but is larger in scope. While the latter focuses on studying how a particular group, for instance scientists, influences opinion-formation and policies by acting as a community of like-minded people, the epistemic governance framework scrutinizes the strategies of anyone who tries to influence others. In a sense it could be argued that actors aim to form their target population into an epistemic community, but that is not necessarily the case: it may be enough that people agree on a single point and for different reasons. In a nutshell, the epistemic governance framework is not a theory of who governs but an analytic by which to identify the various means of influencing others.

What, then, does existing research tell us about the strategies that actors such as UNESCO or the political leaders of its member states use to advance their objectives? For one thing, as the study of rhetoric has shown, a speaker who wants to convince others appeals to principles she assumes others to honor and makes use of beliefs she imagines others to have (Perelman, 1982; Halliday et al., 2010). Second, actors make use of existing knowledge about the likely reactions and social processes that their acts may trigger.

For instance, actors can make use of people's willingness to belong to a reference group such as the "modern world" (Alasuutari, 2016: 5, 10, 35) or a more specific group of nations. This is evident in that actors taking part in politics make comparisons and copy ideas from other countries within a nation's reference group. Cultural, political and geographical proximity makes citizens and politicians particularly interested in how a challenge such as an economic downturn has been met with in a particular country or group of countries (Pi Ferrer et al., 2018). In defending their views, political actors can also take up negative examples as reference societies (Waldow, 2016), but those countries also need to be known to the audience and play in the same league, so to speak.

Actors may also make use of the discourse of state competition (Fougner, 2006; Genschel and Seelkopf, 2014; Horsfall, 2010): people want to copy success (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). For instance, international league tables create the belief that top-ranking countries have a winning model, which others want to copy. The OECD's Pisa study is a good example: in several countries actors seeking to change national education policies capitalized on the country rankings to promote their objectives (Steiner-Khamsi, 2003; Takayama, 2008). Choosing the point of reference depends on the speaker's motive: comparison with a better-performing country works for critics, whereas those justifying the current policy use as their yardstick countries that rank lower in international comparison (Steiner-Khamsi, 2003; Rautalin and Alasuutari, 2007; Rautalin and Alasuutari, 2009).

For these reasons, producing comparative data has become a standard activity of IGOs and INGOs that aim to promote policy changes in different countries. Whether motivated by identification with a reference group or by competition, these organizations—and policymakers referencing the comparisons—utilize peer pressure, with the objective that laggards follow the lead of best-performing countries or nations associated with being "modern" (Alasuutari, 2011).

IGOs creating international standards also need to anticipate and manage the question of national sovereignty and uniqueness. Especially if they recommend a policy that is modelled on a Western country or associated with an organization that has a bad reputation, they may be accused of imperialistic meddling (Boli, 2008: 98) or cultural imperialism (Tomlinson, 2002). Therefore, the narrative of how a model has been created and what function it serves for potential adopters is a crucial part of its ability to spread globally. For instance, the social policy model of conditional cash transfer has been marketed as a program that was developed in Mexico, from where it spread to other Latin American countries and beyond, although the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank played a key role in creating and designing the Mexican program (Heimo, 2019). However, in many contexts national actors advertise their views by specifically appealing to IGOs' recommendations, because they are commonly respected as authorities. Rather than actors imposing constraints on nation-states, IGOs emphasize their roles as consultants that suggest best practices based on expert knowledge on what works. When a recommendation comes from an authoritative IGO, it is considered more reliable and hence national policymakers can use it to create a "boomerang pattern of influence" (Keck and Sikkink, 1999). There are national differences in how common and beneficial it is to justify a reform by appealing to policies adopted elsewhere and whether or how international comparisons and rankings are referenced in the political debates (Alasuutari and Vähä-Savo, 2018; Alasuutari et al., 2019; Alasuutari, 2014).

One reason why a concern for sovereignty is not voiced despite a flow of international influences is the process of domestication that the introduction of a model always triggers. IGOs and national policymakers also anticipate and utilize it. By domestication we mean the process whereby exogenous models are translated to the domestic context in such a way that actors tend to conceive of the end result as somehow inherently local. In any case, local actors' focus is on the national differences rather than similarities, which are easily regarded as technical, natural and irrelevant. Regardless of how little or much exogenous models are adapted to the local conditions, the foreign stimulus for the reform is soon forgotten. And when the turmoil caused by the introduction of a new idea

calms down, the idea in question is naturalized: it changes from something to think about to something to think with (Qadir and Alasuutari, 2013).

As will be discussed in the subsequent sections, the UNESCO program utilized the two above-mentioned phenomena, the creation of peer pressure and the process of domestication, in spreading the concept of cultural policy. The program could emphasize diversity because it concentrated only on endorsing cultural policy as a concept and governmental structure; it not only acknowledged national and regional differences but welcomed reporting on them.

3. Data and methods

The primary data for this article consists of two datasets. The initial starting point was to collect and analyze all 71 national reports published in the UNESCO series Studies and documents on cultural policies (1969-1999) to scrutinize how these member states (or rather, the rapporteurs doing the job) described the cultural policy of their own country. The various analyzes of these reports, not only their contents but also in what order different countries produced their reports and how these countries were spread geographically, led us to collect another dataset: the list of countries that have established a ministry that has the word culture or its derivative in its native language name. To create that dataset, including information about the year that ministry was established, we started by going through the compilation of Wikipedia entries of culture ministries (Wikipedia, 2020) and the list of national members introduced on the webpage of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA, 2020). We then studied the information found about each ministry in the country in question and in other sources to find out about the name of the ministry in native tongue and when it was first named with the term culture in it. That was important because our objective was not to study the entire history of how governments have begun to create policies regarding art but only to trace the spread of the construct of culture as a term depicting a governmental structure under which those policies are collected.

In addition to these data, we naturally made use of documents that record the formation and establishment of cultural policy as a concept and a policy sector in UNESCO and in the UN member states that were involved in defining and developing it during the first three decades of the concept's inception. We both have decades-long experience in cultural policy research, but the tracing of relevant documents was also guided by the analysis of national reports: we traced back the concepts used in those reports to their appearances in UNESCO documentation regarding the cultural policy program. These documents include the reports of all expert groups and intergovernmental meetings on cultural policy, as well as resolutions of UNESCO's general conferences from 1966 to 1999. This time span ranges from the onset of UNESCO's decision to add the cultural policy program onto its agenda and budget till the end of the years during which national reports of cultural policy were published.

All the country reports and documents related to the UNESCO program are available online in the Unesdoc database. Most of them have already been processed through optical character recognition (OCR). If a document only existed as scanned pictures of the original pages, we converted it into a searchable format by OCR. That way, we could search for the occurrences of all terms across the entire data. The quality of some of the scanned documents reduced the accuracy of these searches, but we do not think that it affects the reliability of the empirical analysis.

In the study, we use two different research designs. On the one hand, we take a diffusion research perspective to the country reports and to the founding of culture ministries. That is, we scrutinized the pattern by which different governments took the decision to produce a report of cultural policy in their country: in what order this practice spread across the world. The same applies to studying how establishing a culture ministry spread worldwide. In this case our interest was also in testing whether producing a national report on cultural policy increased the likelihood that a culture ministry will be established.

Second, we studied the ways in which national cultural policy is described in country reports. This entailed an analysis of the potential links between concepts brought up in UNESCO documents and meetings and those appearing in national reports: for instance how the agenda changed from the first UNESCO meetings to the next ones. In this instance we also analyzed potential differences in the average frequency with which different concepts appearing in UNESCO documents are used in the reports of different types of countries.

4. Facilitating the process of domestication

The order in which different countries followed UNESCO's suggestion to produce a report on their cultural policy differs from the typical diffusion pattern, which suggests that the program was active in steering the process. According to previous research, innovations in policymaking typically spread first among wealthy states, and developing countries join the bandwagon later (e.g. Schofer and Meyer, 2005).[3] In this case, however, several developing countries produced their reports at a very early stage.

To scrutinize in what order different countries embraced the concept of cultural policy, in Fig. 1 the countries which produced a national report are divided into four groups by applying Rogers' (2003) theory of the diffusion of innovations. According to Rogers's categorization, the first 16 percent of the total number of adopters are called innovators and early adopters, the next 34 percent are termed the early majority, the next 34 percent comprise the late majority, and the last 16 percent are named as the laggards.

As can be seen from Fig. 1, the diffusion pattern of the concept of cultural policy deviates considerably from what could be

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[3] There are of course exceptions. For instance, repressive states ratify human rights treaties at least as frequently as non-repressive ones. That is because repressive regimes are less constrained by domestic forces and therefore free to entertain high levels of decoupling between policy and practice (Hafner-Burton et al., 2008).

1 = INNOVATORS AND EARLY ADOPTERS (16): United States, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Japan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Tunisia, France, Italy, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia, India, Bulgaria, Sweden

2 = EARLY MAJORITY (22): Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Nigeria, Poland, Senegal, Federal Republic of Germany, Philippines, New Zealand, Hungary, Liberia, United Republic of Tanzania, Afghanistan, Ghana, Kenya, Romania, German Democratic Republic, Canada, Republic of Korea, Republic of Zaire, United Republic of Cameroon, Togo

3 = LATE MAJORITY (21): Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Jamaica, Peru, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Republic of Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea, Iraq, Australia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guatemala, Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Austria

4 = LAGGARDS (8): Mongolian People's Republic, Sudan, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Yemen Arab Republic, Ethiopia, People's Republic of China, Nepal, Palestine

Fig. 1. Cultural policy national reports.

expected. The innovators and early adopters form a rather diverse group. In other words, the countries that produced a national report in the first wave are scattered around the world and they comprise both wealthy and poor states. Hence, the spread of the concept of cultural policy does not comply with the typical pattern of diffusion in which the developed countries adopt a new model first, after which it is advocated for the developing countries.

There are also indications of the typical story in that countries such as the United States, Great Britain and France are among the very first countries, the "innovators" as Rogers calls the first 2.5 percent. These countries were also well represented in the groups of experts which produced the first reports on what cultural policy means. For instance, the 32 participants who took part in the first round-table meeting that UNESCO organized in Monaco in 1967 (UNESCO, 1969) formed an impressive assembly, including professors Pierre Bourdieu, Joffre Dumazedier and Richard Hoggart, the first director of the legendary Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and a later Assistant Director-General of UNESCO (Hoggart, 1978). UNESCO also organized another roundtable meeting at its headquarters in Paris in 1968 under the title Cultural Rights as Human Rights, with professor Ernest Gellner as the rapporteur (UNESCO, 1970a). However, the very first countries to publish a national report also include such unlikely innovators and early adopters as Japan, Tunisia, Cuba, and Egypt.

This pattern of diffusion did not evolve by happenstance. It was part of UNESCO's strategy of emphasizing diversity, which is why a large variety of countries from all around the world were invited to participate at the very beginning. Similarly, many developed countries joined in at a much later stage.

Emphasizing that cultural policies vary between countries was a central theme in the various reports that UNESCO published. Defining cultural policy as "the sum total of the conscious and deliberate usages, action or lack of action in a society, aimed at meeting certain cultural needs through the optimum utilisation of all the physical and human resources available to that society at a given time" (UNESCO, 1969: 10), the first report in the UNESCO series stresses already on the first page that "obviously, there cannot

be *one* cultural policy suited to all countries; each Member State determines its own cultural policy according to the cultural values, aims and choices it sets for itself (UNESCO, 1969: 7). Similarly, the preface to the series in which the national studies were published, reprinted verbatim in several national reports, states that "as cultures differ, so does the approach to them; it is for each Member State to determine its cultural policy and methods according to its own conception of culture, its socio-economic system, political ideology and technical development" (Cappelletti and Italian National Commission for UNESCO, 1971: 6).

By emphasizing that cultural policies vary and by inviting very different countries to take part in the program right at the beginning, UNESCO preempted the impression that it is imposing a Western model on countries that represent entirely different cultures and traditions. Rather than a potential threat to national cultures, the studies and reports depicted UNESCO's cultural policy program as the champion of cultural diversity. For instance, in the *Cultural policy: preliminary study* it is noted that state-led cultural policy "is essential in order to strengthen awareness of nationhood and thus facilitate the growth of an original culture which will meet both the deepest aspirations of the people and the requirements of the modern world" (UNESCO, 1969: 10). Similarly, in an introduction to the 1982 Mexico City Conference, which had cultural diversity as a central theme on its agenda (Unesco, 1982f), Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of UNESCO, stresses the importance of state cultural policy actions in preserving authentic cultures:

> In a number of countries, oral tradition is the authentic memory of the people and, swelled by new contributions from each generation, explains the world in all its diversity. In most cases too, its symbolism opens a door onto a fabulous world of the imagination. The data recorded in the oral tradition must be rediscovered and collected, for to destroy or banish them to oblivion would be irreversible. (M'Bow, 1982: 7)

The people engaged in introducing the concept of cultural policy did not seem to notice any contradiction between the concern for diversity and originality, on the one hand, and the quest for creating a unanimous view on what cultural policy is and what its aims are. That is because state policies and administration were constructed as a sphere that is not part of culture, even though culture was given a fairly broad, anthropological definition. To use John Meyer's (2000) concepts, culture appears to denote "expressive culture," which is separated from "instrumental culture." According to Meyer, nation-states prefer to express uniqueness and identity on matters of expressive culture—such as variations in language, dress and food—and do not want to differ too much from each other in the realm of instrumental culture, assumed to be governed by universally valid principles of rational actorhood.

The contents of the national reports show that particularly some member states indeed emphasize the distinctive features of their cultural policy. Consider the report of North Korea, which advertises the socialist regime's own *juche* ideology as guideline for the country's cultural policy:

> To integrate the *juche* principle into our arts and literature, we have made a juchian humanistic science of those arts. Korean writers and artists have accepted the task of describing man as an independent individual and of defending sovereignty. They reflect the noble morality and spiritual life of our people who shape their own history, and they translate juchian ideas into reality, inculcating into the working masses an attitude worthy of the masters of the revolution. Our creative artists also consider it their responsibility to bear in mind the struggle of the working classes to safeguard their independence. Thus, they put into practice the fundamental requirements of the *juche* ideology. (Chai Sin, 1980: 21-22)

This report states clearly what kind of art is acceptable in the country. In literature and fine arts socialist realism is declared as "the only valid creative style of our time" (Kim, 1976: 23). The report of the Soviet Union is similar in that it assigns artistic culture a key role "in the training of a new type of man" (Zvorykin et al., 1970: 49), hence taking critical distance from the "Bourgeois" idea of art as an expression of individual creativity. As to art institutions, socialist countries also have their specialties, such as the Museum of the History of the Communist Party in Romania (Balan, 1975: 44) and the permanent Exhibition of National Economic Achievements of the U.S.S.R. (Zvorykin et al., 1970: 25). The developing countries' reports also have their own emphases. For instance, revitalizing traditional dances banned during the colonial era are given special attention in the reports of former colonies (e.g. Cultural Division of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1975; Ndeti, 1975; Fasuyi, 1973).

However, when one considers the overall structure of the reports, like what activities are described as belonging to the realms of culture and cultural policy, the reports are very similar to each other. In them, countries report on support to art and artists; how they run or support museums, mass communication and other cultural institutions; and how the administration of all this is organized.

The uniformity of the national reports is no wonder because UNESCO gave the member states detailed instructions about how to organize a national report on cultural policy. As it was put in the Preface to the series in which the national studies were published, reprinted in most reports, "the studies deal with the principles and methods of cultural policy, the evaluation of cultural needs, administrative structures and management, planning and financing, the organization of resources, legislation, budgeting, public and private institutions, cultural content in education, cultural autonomy and decentralization, the training of personnel, institutional infrastructures for meeting specific cultural needs, the safeguarding of the cultural heritage, institutions for the dissemination of the arts, international cultural co-operation and other related subjects" (Cappelletti and Italian National Commission for UNESCO, 1971: 6).[4]

The uniformity of the national reports is also evident in the vocabulary and discourses used in describing the principles on which

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[4] Similarly, for the 1982 World Conference on cultural policies, countries belonging to different regions of the world compiled regional reports based on a detailed UNESCO-produced questionnaire on national cultural policies (UNESCO, 1982b; UNESCO, 1982a; UNESCO, 1982d; UNESCO, 1982c; UNESCO, 1982e).

Table 1

Means of hits of concepts mentioned in reports by country type.

Country type	Cultural needs	Cultural development	creative	innovative	artist	indigenous	cultural diversity	copyright
Advanced economies (N=14)	3.8	10.4	14.4	2.8	70.9	1.9	1.0	4.4
Socialist countries (N=17)	4.0	16.4	32.6	2.3	98.8	0.2	1.5	3.2
Developing countries (N=40)	2.3	9.8	14.6	1.9	49.6	6.0	3.7	2.5
Total (N=71)	3.0	11.5	18.9	2.2	65.6	3.8	2.8	3.1

the policies are based. The reports justify eloquently the described state activities by telling how they create and support national unity and patriotism, enhance citizens' creativity, or cater to citizens' needs regarding their leisure time activities. The influence of the UNESCO program to develop its Member States' cultural policy is visible in those justifications and in the discourses by which reports conceive of this policy area. The key concepts introduced in the expert meetings and in the intergovernmental conferences are recurrently used in the national reports.

Considering the vast disparities between the countries which produced the reports, one would expect that the frequency with which the key concepts appear in the reports differ between different types of countries. To check that hypothesis, we compared the frequencies of key concepts introduced in the UNESCO circle. Of the 71 countries that produced the national cultural policy report, 14 can be classified as advanced economies, 17 as socialist countries and 40 as developing countries. The analysis showed that the differences are surprisingly small also in that respect. Most of the key concepts are equally used throughout the reports; there are notable differences between the country groups only in the case of five terms (see Table 1). Socialist countries' reports tend to have more mentions of cultural needs, cultural development, creativity and the words artist or artistic, whereas in advanced economies' reports there are slightly more references to the concepts of innovation or innovative. The developing countries' reports have the lowest means of all the key concepts compared here. However, the differences are highly significant only in the use of the terms creative and artist. We also checked many more keywords, 30 concepts altogether, but the rest are used less frequently and do not make a difference between country types. New concepts were introduced in regional and general meetings throughout the time span studied here, but by the end of the 1990s they had not become key catchwords in the country reports.

In all, our qualitative and quantitative review of the national reports shows that the concept of cultural policy was well domesticated to countries throughout the world. In other words, the discourse of cultural policy created in the expert meetings and general conferences, authorized by international conventions and recommendations ratified by UNESCO Member States, was adopted as the vocabulary by which governments describe their own ideals, policies and principles. This program made it commonplace to merge certain state practices into a single whole called cultural policy. Part of the vocabulary found in the reports is just window-dressing: authors use the same trendy concepts to look good in the eyes of the international community, even though actual practices may be something quite different—or the rationalism with which state activities in this area are described is a far cry from how and why those tasks are handled. But the codification of cultural policy also meant changes in actual practices as responses to the fact that those practices were now framed in new ways. The UNESCO program also created a transnational network or community within which new ideas and trends were created and diffused, to be introduced in and adapted to national contexts.

One of the consequences of the worldwide spread and domestication of the idea of cultural policy was the instituting of an administrative structure that is responsible for managing this policy area. Many activities lumped together under the new concept had been part of public policies in most states well before the term was coined, but the UNESCO program also created new needs. For instance, preparing a national report required at least project-based funding and administrative support for collecting the facts and figures. Consequently, states began to establish cultural policy research institutes or "documentation centres," which was recommended already in the first expert report (UNESCO, 1969) and in UNESCO general conferences' resolutions and in other documents (UNESCO, 1970b; UNESCO, 1977). Furthermore, all these state activities created a need for trained researchers and policy experts in this field, and "training of specialists, organizers, administrators and others responsible for carrying out cultural policy programmes" was also mentioned in a UNESCO meeting resolution (UNESCO, 1970b: 22). Therefore, the UNESCO program greatly contributed to the creation and institutionalization of cultural policy as an academic research field or discipline. Currently, there are several academic programs focusing on cultural policy research, the first International Conference on Cultural Policy Research (ICCPR) was held in 1999, and the *International* (formerly European) *Journal of Cultural Policy* was established in 1994 (ICCPR, 2018).

The institutionalization of cultural policy in national states is also evident in the establishment of ministries that carry the term culture or its derivatives in their name (see Fig. 2). Some countries had ministries dedicated to culture already in the 1940s; following the example of the Soviet Union, several socialist states also established them. Among Western countries, having established its ministry of culture in 1960, France was a predecessor and active in promoting the idea of such a governmental structure to other states. According to our count, by 2018, 164 countries have established a ministry of culture. As Fig. 2 shows, the number of culture ministries grew rapidly particularly in the 1970s and 1990s.[5] There were certainly also other motives behind states establishing a ministry of culture, but the UNESCO program obviously affected the trend. Except for states in which cultural policy is handled at a sub-state level, all countries that produced a national report have established a ministry of culture, typically synchronously with the report.[6]

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[5] In 14 cases we could not find the year the ministry was established, which is why Figure 2 only covers 150 countries. It is most likely that the countries with missing information established their ministries during the last three decades.
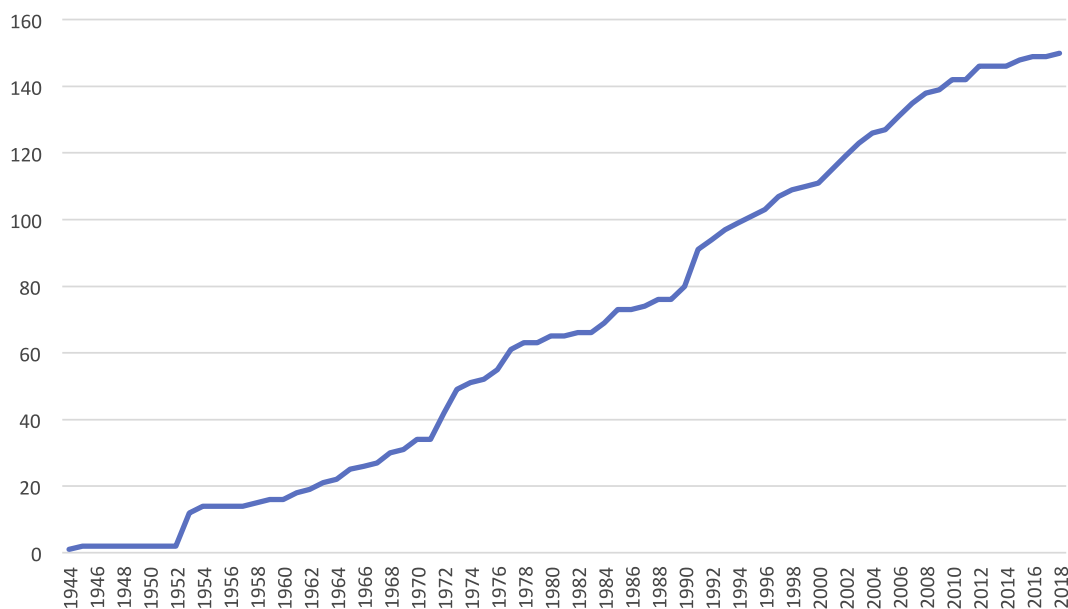
Fig. 2. The number of ministries of culture by year.

The instituting of culture ministries shows, we suggest, two things. On the one hand, it reflects the need to assign civil servants to the task of collecting statistics and reporting on cultural affairs, as they were described and lumped together in the UNESCO program. On the other hand, it shows that it became increasingly fashionable to name a ministry that way: "culture" became a self-evident area of public administration, whether it was combined with, say, education, science, sports, or tourism.

5. Creating peer pressure

The global spread of the idea of cultural policy also benefitted from the creation of peer pressure. This is evident when we look at the pattern that the making of national reports observes (see Fig. 1). Spearhead countries spread across the world were followed by their neighbors in the next wave. For instance, in Europe innovators and early adopters—Czechoslovakia, Finland, Great Britain, Sweden, USSR, and Yugoslavia—were followed by early majority countries: Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Similarly, in North America the USA was followed by Canada, and in the Pacific area New Zealand was followed by Australia. In that sense the first countries to produce those reports acted like bridgeheads for the flow of the concept of cultural policy in each region.

UNESCO seemed to make use of peer pressure consciously. The UNESCO secretariat had prior experience about the way innovations are best spread across the world. Inviting certain countries to join the program was standard practice in that UNESCO classifies its member states into five regions: Africa, Arab states, Asia and the Pacific, Europe (including North America), and Latin America and the Caribbian (Singh, 2011: 28; UNESCO, 2018: 141-143).[7] UNESCO's intention was to make sure that the concept of cultural policy became familiar and started spreading simultaneously in all of these five regions.

The idea behind asking member states to prepare studies on national cultural policy was to make possible cross-national comparison, identification of good practices, and learning from them. This intention was stated clearly in the Preface of the national reports:

> The methods of cultural policy (like those of general development policy) have certain common problems; these are largely institutional, administrative and financial in nature, and the need has increasingly been stressed for exchanging experiences and information about them. This series, each issue of which follows as far as possible a similar pattern so as to make comparison easier, is mainly concerned with these technical aspects of cultural policy. (Cappelletti and Italian National Commission for UNESCO, 1971: 6)

It was stressed in many UNESCO reports that the creation of a common terminology regarding cultural issues does not mean that cultural policies should converge. Rather, a thesaurus of cultural development serves "as a common language to be used in the exchange of information at world level, while providing the different regions and the constituent countries with the means of

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[6] The federal states which produced a country report but have not established a culture ministry are Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States. As to those states, Germany does have state-level coordination between ministries of culture established in its states.

[7] UNESCO also has another grouping of Member States, which is for the purpose of elections to the Executive Board (UNESCO, 2003: 64-66; UNESCO, 2018). In this instance the relevant grouping is, however, the definition of regions with a view to the execution of regional activities.

expressing their own cultural characteristics" (UNESCO, 1977: 63). Such common language then serves policymakers and administrators, who want to develop means by which to "promote culture" (UNESCO, 1969: 47):

Most countries feel the need for definitions, norms, or analysis grids which form, as it were, a control panel for leaders of cultural policy. Within these broad frameworks each country will put what it likes, but—by this means—it will know exactly where it is, what it is doing and how it is placed with regard to the objectives it has set itself. Statistics have no value in themselves, but have become one of the instruments of cultural action. (UNESCO, 1969: 47)

The quote above states that statistics enables each country to see how it is placed with regard to its own objectives. And globally standardized definitions, norms and measures also serve cross-national comparison, which national actors can use to justify changes to national policies, either through evoking the state competition discourse or by appealing to conformity to the country's reference group. UNESCO facilitated such political tactics.

Organizing regional conferences was part of this strategy. The proposal that UNESCO organize regional conferences regularly was made already in the Venice meeting in 1970 (UNESCO, 1970b: 31), and the plan was realized in five regional conferences organized: Europe in 1972 (Unesco, 1972), Asia in 1973 (Unesco, 1974), Africa in 1975 (Unesco, 1975), Latin America in 1978 (Unesco, 1978), and Arab Member States in 1981 (ALESCO, 1981). And as was decided in the 1970 Venice conference, the world conference on cultural policies was arranged in Mexico (Unesco, 1982f), where all the regional conferences were reported on (see footnote 4).

These conferences had a clear effect on national reports being issued in different regions. While the regional meetings were being planned, member countries in the region were asked and incited to produce their national reports, to be then discussed and compared in the meeting. For instance, several central African countries—Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of Zaire, Senegal, Togo, United Republic of Cameroon—published their studies shortly before or after the 1975 Accra conference. Similarly, most Latin American countries produced their reports in a single wave as part of the late majority during the years close to the 1978 Bogota conference.

6. Discussion

In this article we have scrutinized the process through which UNESCO spread the concept of cultural policy worldwide. Between 1969 and 1999 71 countries around the world published a national report of their cultural policy, which meant that at least in these countries policymakers and people at large became familiarized with this concept. And releasing country reports did not end with the UNESCO program. Later on, the Council of Europe also launched a program which, from 1986 onward, carried on the UNESCO-initiated tradition of commissioning national cultural policy reviews.[8] UNESCO's efforts to institutionalize cultural policy materialized also in other ways, for instance in several states establishing ministries of culture. At present, a great majority of countries have one. UNESCO's advocacy was surely not the only reason for instituting a culture ministry but taking part in its program by producing a national report seemed to increase the likelihood that such a ministry is instituted.

Since the program was clearly a great success, we asked what the recipe of its success was. Existing diffusion research typically names mechanisms that facilitate the transnational spread of innovations or policies by, for instance, identifying factors that differentiate leaders from laggards. In such an approach, the focus is on the characteristics of the adopters, whereas the creation of a model or the ways in which it is actively promoted receives less attention. In this study, instead, we scrutinized the strategies that the creators of the idea of cultural policy employed in diffusing it.

The results of empirical analysis indicate that UNESCO's success was due to two factors: the process of domestication and peer pressure. This means that, for one thing, the UNESCO materials stressed differences rather than similarities, and therefore the program was not seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Rather than mentioning the program's contribution to structural isomorphism, the documents stressed that developing and reporting on a national cultural policy are means to support and promote national art and cultural heritage. Secondly, diffusion of the idea of cultural policy benefitted from international comparisons enabled by the national reports and the tendency of countries to emulate others, especially those belonging to the same reference group.

Triggered by UNESCO's activities, these two processes behind the program's success were not mere serendipity. They were instead result of strategic planning on UNESCO's part. Experienced in seeking to guide national policies, the UNESCO staff members were aware of the likely challenges that the program could face and the processes that different moves could trigger. The choices made in the UNESCO program must be seen against this background as efforts to control and to make use of the likely institutional logics that inform state actions. That is why, for instance, UNESCO documents stressed the diversity of cultural policies. Countries from all continents, belonging to different reference groups, were invited to report on their cultural policy already at the first stage of the program.

The process through which cultural policy was spread across the world and made into a self-evident concept is a good example of epistemic governance (Alasuutari and Qadir, 2019). Those promoting the concept acted upon common conceptions of the world, including people's desires and values. If and when policymakers and their voters do not suspect that a proposed policy threatens their values or, even better, if they believe that it serves their interests and objectives, it is much more likely to be enacted than, say, by force and coercion. In that sense, the art of governance is the challenge to phrase a proposal in such a way that it appears to be in line with people's own beliefs about what is the right or necessary thing to do. Though aiming to steer others, governance is dependent on their current views and bubbling trends.

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[8] By now, 32 country reports have been published in that program (Council of Europe, 2019)

Therefore, we also need to relativize UNESCO's role as a single change agent in disseminating the concept of cultural policy. After all, UNESCO's decisions are always result of knotty negotiations between the member states, which are enacted only if states are committed to them. There was surely plenty of strategic planning in UNESCO's leadership and amongst various other actors who wanted to advance the program's goals, but no single mastermind steered the process. Besides, the story of UNESCO creating, defining and disseminating the concept of cultural policy must be seen as one example and component of what has been called the cultural turn in social sciences: a trend whereby culture became a popular part of the vocabulary by which scholars, consultants, policymakers and ordinary people explain society. As we noted earlier, some emblematic figures of the cultural turn, like Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Hoggart, took part in the UNESCO program. Rather than being a key actor, UNESCO simply surfed on the wave of a changing manner by which society is conceptualized as an object of governance.

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Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2020.101445.

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