

Cultural policy in France - Genesis of a public policy category

Vincent Dubois vincent.dubois@misha.fr

Professor – Centre for European Political Sociology (GSPE)

Extracts translated from *La politique culturelle. Genèse d'une catégorie d'intervention publique*, Paris, Belin, 1999, 381 p., by Cristina Fernandez, Jean-Yves Bart and Luc Vailler.

Abstract:

This paper is a partial translation of a book published in French, which puts forward a socio-historical analysis of the relationships between cultural and political/bureaucratic field. This analysis sheds light on the conditions of the emergence, shaping and institutionalisation of a State policy regarding culture in France, from the late 19th to the 20th century. In this perspective, what is now called “cultural policy” is considered as the product of the history of power struggles, wherein the main stakes are the legitimate definition of culture and the definition of the legitimate functions of the State. The historical comparison reveals that these power struggles have long hindered the shaping of a “cultural policy”, which only took place starting in the early 1960s. It also shows that the persistence of these issues led to an “institutionalisation of vagueness” of a policy whose object could still not be precisely defined by the late 20th century. This research thus contributes to the history and sociology of the cultural field, as well as of the State and State intervention. By analysing the conditions and limits of a State definition of culture, it also sheds light on the modes of expression of the State’s symbolic violence. The notion of category of public intervention developed used in the context of this research is embedded in the elaboration of a broader framework of analysis, aiming to account for socio-historical processes of institutionalisation of groups, relational structures, representations and constitutive normative frameworks of what is called a policy.

Keywords: cultural policy, policy category, state, symbolic power, socio-history.

Résumé :

Ce texte est la traduction partielle d'un ouvrage paru en français. Celui-ci propose une analyse socio-historique des rapports entre les champs culturel et politico-bureaucratique, qui met au jour les conditions d'émergence, de mise en forme et d'institutionnalisation d'une politique d'État en matière culturelle, de la fin du XIXe à la fin du XXe siècle en France. Dans cette perspective ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui « politique culturelle » est considéré comme le produit de l'histoire des rapports de force dont les principaux enjeux sont la définition légitime de la culture et la définition des fonctions légitimes de l'État. La comparaison historique révèle que ces rapports de force entravent durablement la mise en forme d'une « politique culturelle », qui ne s'opère qu'à partir du début des années 1960. Elle montre également que la persistance de ces enjeux conduit à l'institutionnalisation par le flou d'une politique dont l'objet ne peut être précisément défini, encore à la fin du XXe siècle. Ce travail apporte ainsi une contribution à l'histoire et la sociologie du champ culturel, de même qu'à celles de l'État et de son intervention. En analysant les conditions et les limites d'une définition étatique de la culture, il contribue aussi à rendre compte des modes d'exercice de la violence symbolique de l'État. La notion de catégorie d'intervention publique forgée à l'occasion de ce travail s'inscrit dans l'élaboration d'un cadre d'analyse plus vaste visant à rendre compte des processus socio-historiques d'institutionnalisation des groupes, des structures relationnelles, des représentations et des cadres normatifs constitutifs de ce qu'on appelle une politique.

Mots-clés : politique culturelle, catégorie d'intervention publique, Etat, pouvoir symbolique, socio-histoire.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| GENERAL INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| PART ONE | |
| AN IMPROBABLE CATEGORY | |
| CULTURE AND POLITICS BEFORE “CULTURAL POLICY” | 10 |
| Chapter I - Culture versus the State | 11 |
| Chapter II - An impossible policy | 12 |
| Chapter III - The repetition of an absence (1920 – 1958) | 12 |
| PART TWO | |
| THE BIG SHIFT | |
| ORIGINS AND AMBIGUITIES OF THE CULTURAL POLICY | 13 |
| Chapter IV - A Ministry for culture | 16 |
| Chapter V - The contradictions of cultural planning | 16 |
| PART THREE | |
| THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF VAGUENESS | |
| PROFESSIONALISATION OF CULTURAL ACTION AND CULTURAL | |
| BROADENING | |
| Chapter VI - A paradoxical professionalisation of cultural policies | 20 |
| Chapter VII - The state versus culture? | 21 |
| CONCLUSION | 22 |
| An undefined yet successful category | 22 |
| From cultural policy to cultural practices | 24 |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS (BOOK) | 27 |
| NOTES | 28 |

Cultural policy in France - Genesis of a public policy category

Vincent Dubois vincent.dubois@misha.fr

Professor – Centre for European Political Sociology (GSPE)

Extracts translated from *La politique culturelle. Genèse d'une catégorie d'intervention publique*, Paris, Belin, 1999, 381 p., by Cristina Fernandez, Jean-Yves Bart and Luc Vailler.

General introduction

Cultural policy – the existence of this public policy category seems to be self-evident, on the same level as educational, social or economic policies. Yet, it does not merely reflect the objective reality of the problems tackled by the authorities. Like the environmental, family, consumer or urban policies,¹ it is linked to the social classification that produced public action and that is produced by it in return. First of all, it consists in the classifying and shaping of objects and social problems, some of these objects being designated as belonging to the “cultural” category rather than another one, and treated accordingly. This is the reason why – in the case of French policy – a “cultural” vision of the book industry or graffiti became imperative, as opposed to an exclusively economic perspective in the first case or an exclusively repressive one in the second.² The classification and shaping of intervention practices give coherence and meaning to a set of necessarily different acts, discourses, expenditures and administrative practices. Indeed, what is there in common between the subsidies granted to the street arts festival of Chalon-sur-Saône, the Louvre’s renovations and the announcement of a law on public readings? In fact, very little, except for the same “cultural” labelling in the distribution of public acts and spending, as well as a common integration within the main public

principle of legitimisation – the “democratisation of culture” that has become a “categorical imperative”.

Cultural policy, then, should not be considered as a transhistorical category. Of course, the intervention of the authorities in artistic matters is a fairly ancient phenomenon.³ This long history does not however imply that there has always been such thing as a cultural policy. The genesis of this policy is not limited to the origins of the different forms of support for the arts by the authorities. It also consists of a specific integration and ordering of these multiple interventions as a whole that is more than the sum of its individual elements. Yet, we cannot understand this integration and ordering without first taking into account the specific historical conditions of its emergence.

Finally, the “cultural policy” category cannot be transposed as such to every institutional configuration. Apart from the institutional organisation or the “styles” of public action, frequently studied in comparative approaches,⁴ it is more fundamentally the very definition of the object of public policy which varies greatly from one country to another.⁵ The German *Kulturpolitik*, which has a long history, includes a set of artistic, educational, sports and leisure activities.⁶ The Italian policy of “cultural goods” largely overlaps with heritage protection and is distinct from the management of music and theatres, dealt with by a Ministry of

Tourism and Performing Arts.⁷ “Public support for the arts” – the expression “cultural policy” being only lately and hesitatingly used in Great Britain – has only recently been extended to popular entertainment and other “cultural industries” to create a new whole.⁸ In the Netherlands, the Ministry created in 1982 established links between cultural activities that are heterogeneous according to French classifications: welfare, health and cultural affairs.⁹ In other places, such as Québec or Belgium – focusing on western examples only – cultural policy is essentially structured around the language issue.¹⁰ At the European level, culture is still not organised as a category of Community action: it is only integrated in programmes that are not specifically cultural and is the object of programmes that are as of yet weakly unified.¹¹

This book aims to show how culture was shaped as a public policy category in France, where cultural policy is generally considered as one of the oldest and most ambitious sectors of public policy. It is often cited as a model – in a positive but sometimes also a negative way – in other countries, especially in Europe. Yet, even in the French example, the definition of culture as a public policy category has limits, contradictions and oppositions. This category has indeed “succeeded”, if we compare it to past attempts at structuring a policy field that were either more or less abandoned (who remembers leisure policy in France today?) or failed almost immediately (the short-lived Ministries and policies “for the Quality of Life” in 1974 or “of Free Time” in the early 1980’s). Culture is objectivated in institutions and social roles, and forms one of the domains that are assessed when governments leave office. However, culture is not a clearly defined sector of public action. Pierre-Michel Menger remarks that in comparison with other public policies, cultural policy is characterised by:

*“the multiplication of activities, areas and modes of intervention, the heterogeneity of actions, the indifference, powerlessness or hostility towards every form of rationalisation by the government regarding people and cultural matters, which would require the promulgation of precise and clear objectives, the organisation of priorities into a hierarchy, the rigorous management of resources and the methodical assessments of results”.*¹²

Looking for a precise definition of culture in official speeches and texts would be useless. At the local level and specifically at the municipal level, the autonomisation process started in the 1970s and steadily gained momentum throughout the next decade, but cultural services are always endowed with other responsibilities (animation, festivals, education, etc.) and/or remain in competition in the management of culture, in which they do not always have a monopoly.¹³ At the national level, despite the creation and the progressive reinforcement of the ministry, culture remains divided between numerous institutions. Among the main ones, we could mention the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Association for Artistic Action (AFAA) for the diffusion of French culture abroad and international cultural exchanges, the Ministry of Education, especially for arts teaching at school, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Youth and Sports for popular education and associations, etc.¹⁴ The changes in the Ministry’s attributions also show this uncertain sectoral division: the incorporation of public libraries, which were attached to the Ministry fifteen years after its establishment; architecture, integrated at first and then moved to the

Ministry of Equipment before being reintegrated into the Ministry of Culture in 1996; or French language, whose general Delegation left the Prime Minister's services the same year. It is an uncertain division indeed for an area in which there are internal differences, particularly at the central level. Except for those dedicated to general administration and cultural development structures,¹⁵ the ten departmental structures of the Ministry form as many relatively autonomous territories – the so-called sectoral directions¹⁶ – and are very different from one another, even in their geographic localisation.¹⁷ The very negative reactions among civil servants and the professional milieus affected by the fusion of music, dance and theatre into a large internal division of performing arts in 1998, highlight this strong internal differentiation.¹⁸ There is not only one group of State agents but also numerous professions and more or less institutionalised university curricula (librarians, curators, chartists, theatre professionals, teachers, graduates of the National School of Administration (ENA), etc.). There is neither a unified public body of experts nor a homogenous, stable group, clearly identified as the sole legitimate interlocutor.¹⁹ Cultural policy certainly forms a heterogeneous and vague nebula.

What are the logics and reasons behind this uncertainty? This question will guide our analysis. In this case, there is more to it than the common uses of vagueness and ambiguity in the elaboration of compromises that make public policies.²⁰ Forty years after the creation of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and despite the huge body of scholarship that has tried to understand public action for culture, we can no longer be satisfied with the usual anthropomorphic interpretation of an indecisiveness linked to the “young age” of this ministry. The lexical interpretation is also common although not more

satisfactory. By explaining the problem of the institutionalisation of this intervention through reference to the polysemy of the word culture, this type of interpretation forgets what the origin of this problem is, that is, the use of this word to talk about a policy.

It is rather to the genesis of this policy that we must look for the reasons of this uncertain character. The analysis of this genesis reveals that it took a “big shift”²¹ for culture to be constituted as a category of public policy, and it is precisely from these specific conditions of emergence that problems to define this category arise.

Let us first go back to the time of the structuring of a social space of culture, as we know it nowadays – the turn of the 19th century.²² The affirmation of the autonomy of this space not only led to an opposition to economic reasonings – arts vs. money – but also to denounce anything that might be perceived as government or bureaucratic fiat. The question of artistic creation was then partly constructed against the State. It was also at that time that intellectuals who “went to the people” to give them culture found in this proselytism a way to organise themselves as a group, by opposing an alternative to the traditional methods of political representation.²³ Relationships between culture and the people were a second problem, which was central to the structuring of the cultural field, also constructed against the State and its representatives by artists and intellectuals. The “freedom of art”, “art and the people” – these problems took center stage within larger social and political issues. The construction of an antagonism between the arts and the State was cognitively linked to the separation of the Church and the State and gave artists an opportunity to take a stand on the role of the State and the principles of the Republican regime. The emerging debates on “people's culture” – such as the ones that took place amongst

the advocates of a “people’s theatre” – were used by intellectuals as an opportunity to talk to the people, on its behalf and to express its vision of the social order and the ways to transform it. Constructed against the State, these questions did not trigger much investment from public agents – ministers, authorities, and civil servants – who already had few resources to invest. Discredited in advance, they could not work and even less play a role in this area. For a long period starting at the beginning of the Third Republic, public intervention for culture was not very unified, institutionalised and, in fact, not very central. Admittedly, from the end of the 19th century, a legal and institutional framework for the cultural market was developed – with intellectual and artistic property – as well as heritage protection. However, even though there were divergences between different sectors (on which we will subsequently elaborate), cultural production was generally carried out without any public assistance. Artistic production and the organisation into a hierarchy of artworks mostly followed private considerations. The State did not purchase or order many artworks, and when it did, it was generally unconcerned with the renewal of aesthetic forms.²⁴

From the 1960s, with the establishment of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1959, the creation of a “cultural development plan” or the expansion and specification of cultural policies at the municipal level, culture became firmly established as a category of public policy. State agents gained a new influence in the production of culture. Public institutions played a dominant role in mechanisms of cultural legitimisation. From this moment on, “recognition became intrinsically linked to the State’s level of support. Artistic certification and public aid could no longer be dissociated”.²⁵ What was true for theatre was also true for other areas, such as sculpture. The art market and the mechanisms for the selection and

hierarchization of artworks were linked to public intervention if not determined by it. Thus, in two or three decades, the relationships between public organisations (museums, purchasing funds) and private operators (art dealers) had been reversed. The actions of public organisations determined the activity and the choice of private operators, rather than ratifying the results of these as they had done before.²⁶ Entire areas of cultural production only existed through and for public intervention, and the principles that governed them were defined in the adjustments between State agents and artists.²⁷ Public policy for culture created the emergence and the development of new positions, in the now closely intertwined worlds of “cultural professions” – animators, mediators, administrators, cultural managers, etc. – and public administration – directors of cultural affairs, graduates of the National School of Administration (ENA) specialised in the field, etc. There were increasing numbers of political speeches on culture and from the government to the municipal councils of big cities, specifically “cultural” jobs created huge investment from agents of the political field.

Once culture was instituted as a category of public policy, the questions directed against the State at the turn of the century reappeared, but in the opposite way. Of course, the spectre of “official art” loomed, with references to the aesthetic manipulations of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union - the threat was frequently brandished by the opponents of publicly commissioned and sanctioned art. However, now that State agents were in charge of it, the issue of the arts and the State was not really raised in terms of a binary opposition anymore, but rather as a way to assert the necessity of public intervention in the preservation of the autonomy of the artistic field. The question of the “democratisation of culture” was no longer the privilege of intellectuals

opposed to the authorities' institutions. It now had its own experts appointed by the Ministry, who used this very Ministry to define a role of the State. They imagined and assessed public policy plans that were supposed to facilitate the democratisation of culture. Nevertheless, the shift did not provide an answer to these questions. In public institutions of the central administration or local authorities, or in debates in the media – they remained very contentious and opposed competing visions of the social world, generalisations on the future of civilisation, the distribution of power, or social cohesion. This is a first explanation to why cultural policy stabilised in a vague and open form. Historically, artists and intellectuals directed cultural problems against the State in an all-embracing manner. The establishment of culture as a State category reflected and reproduced the proliferating and fluctuating character of these pre-existing constructions.

However, by limiting the analysis to the question of historical roots, one would fail to consider all the consequences of the huge shift in the treatment of culture. Indeed, this historical shift that made the State a place where culture was defined is in itself at the origin of that vagueness that, in a sense, it requires. From culture against the State to the State producing culture – with the elaboration of a cultural policy, it is the monopoly of the right to talk about culture that is brought into play. By organising interventions and creating cultural institutions, State agents are involved *de facto* in the definition of culture, taking away at the same time the monopoly of talking about culture from those who – mostly artists and intellectuals – successfully claimed this position in the past. State intervention in the production and definition of culture therefore creates resistance and opposition. The numerous warnings against growing State control on culture and minds, which recurrently

denounce propaganda and cultural technocracy, are an example of this resistance. There are many other possible scenarios, but here is how Jean Dubuffet illustrates it:

*“I know only one side to the State – the side of the police. In my opinion, all the departments of State Ministries only have this side and I cannot imagine the Ministry of Culture in any other way than as the police of culture, with its police prefect and commissioner. This side, for me, is highly hostile and repulsive”.*²⁸

“The legitimacy of the competition of ideas, and the freedom that the State must respect with regard to cultural activities”²⁹ do not only shape the general principles of liberal democracies. These ideas are placed at the centre of the relationships between cultural production and the authorities, the latter always being suspected of avoiding them, and always being expected to show that they update them. Kept under a close watch, public policy more generally stirs up disputes about the definition of culture, in which old exclusive prescribers, who are now in competition with State agents, deny the State's legitimacy. In fact, from the radical critique of the 1960s denouncing the administration of a “bourgeois culture” by a State paternalism to the neo-conservative intellectuals of the 1980-1990's combating a supposed relativism of the Ministry of Culture threatening “real culture”, the question of the definition of culture has always been central in the debates on cultural policy.

Resistance, opposition, and opposing definitions: cultural policy has evolved within this set of constraints, and from that moment on has been created in a manner characterized by denial and euphemism. The choice of public procedures highlights this. With their commissions, councils and expert consultations carried out by the

cultural sector, they give numerous signs of dialogue and flexibility, proof of the State's non-intervention.³⁰ It is probably within this insistent suspicion that it is necessary to find the reasons for the adoption, by the official creators of cultural policy, of a "style" – "openness", "passion", personalisation, etc. – that, in their language, dress code and relationships they have with their interlocutors, differentiate them from the rest of the public administration. Moreover, the incomplete definition of cultural policy could be the key element of this forced *mise en scène*. The "vice" of administrative formalism is the homage paid to the "virtue" of freedom and of the creative drive of artists who readily transgress limits and boundaries. The indecision and the vagueness of this policy are perhaps therefore less the sign of its "weakness" than the essential factor of its successful institutionalisation.

Here, we have solid foundations to answer the question of the consubstantial vagueness of cultural policy. However, to be exhaustive, it is necessary to remember two characteristics that exclusively belong to the political treatment of cultural matters. The first one comes from the special role played by cultural matters in distinction strategies of social groups and the diffusion of representations within the social space. The procedures that agents and social groups use to mobilise instruments of culture in order to highlight their differences and to promote their own vision of the world are well known. It is therefore not necessary to spend too much time on them.³¹ It is nevertheless important to draw out all their consequences as regards the development of a cultural policy. From the political celebration of a popular culture in the 1950-1960s to the promotion of "middle classes" through the organisation of their access to cultural consumption in the 1960-1970s and to strategies of the "rehabilitation through

culture" of "marginal" groups – immigrants, "young people living in suburban areas" – in the 1980-1990s, the public treatment of culture is regularly seen as way of representing different social groups. This purely social dimension of cultural policy does not seem as prevalent today as in the past with the rather blunt opposition of proletarian culture vs. bourgeois culture. It has not vanished, however. Considering the political imperative to produce a consensus and to give a unanimous representation of the social space, this inevitable embedding – to borrow another notion from Karl Polanyi – of cultural policy within social relationships, does have an impact regarding the possibilities to define a policy of culture. It will inevitably raise important issues which are practically inextricable. This dilemma therefore generates avoidance techniques, notably the designation of an unreachable horizon. This happened in Malraux's times, with State cultural legitimism, when the social dimension of culture was completely transformed into the myth of the people's communion in the admiration of the great works of art. It was thought to be the last resort for civilisation. It is avoidance as well, when you consider this public cultural ecumenism that consists in binding together different definitions of culture – from fine arts to ethnology – or through the refusal to choose between the promotion of techno music, the protection of the French language and the restoration of Roman chapels – running the risk of being accused of wasting taxpayer money, relativism and demagoguery.

Finally, the state definition of culture is constituted as an issue that is all the more potent and whose scope is all the more general, because it creates contests in which the protagonists found their position on a dual claim to talk about the social world and to embody universal values: intellectuals and artists,³² State agents.³³ We thus understand the intensity and the

general scope of the debates brought on by the historical shift that makes the State a place where culture is defined. As at the turn of the century, the debates on culture and the State take place at the general level of the fundamental values that need to be protected and of the social model that has to be defined. We are no longer in the perspective of the affirmation of the autonomy of cultural production but rather, in the perspective of the definition of a cultural policy. One can cite the recurrent attempts to give legitimacy to State cultural action. Consider for instance the lyricism which, following the path of André Malraux or Jack Lang, Ministers of Culture do not seem to want to abandon in their declarations. One can also recall the explicit production of a “major society debate” in the Plan commissions at the beginning of the 1960s, or within the *Conseil de développement culturel* (Council of Cultural Development) at the beginning of the 1970s. Or one can recall the latest attempt, the establishment by Catherine Trautmann, then Minister of Culture, of a monitoring commission of the *Front National*'s elected members, explicitly following the model of anti-fascist monitoring committees of the 1930s. These attempts demonstrate a universalistic pretension of State agents to intervene in internal affairs of the cultural area, and are regularly denounced as such, in the manner of Eugène Ionesco's humoristic injunctions, that the Ministry of Culture content itself with being a “Ministry of Supplies” for artists. They are also denounced in the alarmist prophetic tone of “liberals” observing the erosion of the last protections of the “individual” and “civil society” with the production of values and beliefs by the “cultural State”. Social agents who take a stand or mobilise against the authorities in power – political opponents, artists or intellectuals – are not to be outdone in the mobilisation of universal categories. They trigger controversies around questions as vast as

the modes of political representation, the respective place of the State and cultural professionals in society or the relationships between “morals” and public action. This profusion of discourses, their high level of generality and their multiple implications characterise the cultural policy to which they assign this quite distinctive place in public policies. Their action contributes greatly to blurring the borders of a policy which becomes the battleground for the confrontation of wider social and moral values.

The impossibility of finding a definition of culture as a category of public intervention now has a more complete explanation. First, artists and intellectuals have historically directed cultural problems against the State in a globalising manner that makes their contours unclear. Secondly, the institution of culture as a public category of intervention ratifies these pre-existing constructions and their fluctuating character. Moreover, the very conditions of the shift prior to the establishment of culture as a public policy category lead to euphemisations and avoidances that further dilute the borders of this category. Framing such a policy requires at the same time that it be framed in due form, that is, focusing on the absence of a restrictive definition of the cultural space, and the guarantee of flexibility and adaptation to innovation in relationships with this social space, which sees itself as a locus of perpetual movement. Finally, if we add to this the strong embedding of cultural matters within social relationships, the protagonists' pretension to debate on culture and the State's pretension to embody the universal, we can understand how cultural policies constitute this moving space criss-crossed by wider all-embracing controversies. Culture, as a public intervention category, which represents a specific social area, can therefore only become stable through its structural vagueness.

To illustrate this point, we first need to go back to that antagonism between culture and the State, constructed at the turn of the century and which hindered for a long time the possibility of a State cultural policy (part I). We will thus be fully able to understand the consequences of the reversal constituted by the establishment of culture as a State category, study its conditions of emergence and analyse its effects. We will then look at the two major moments of cultural policy institutionalisation. First, the beginning of the 1960s, with the building of institutions (Ministry, Plan, etc.), the invention of a policy and the uncertain and controversial definition of its territory (part II). The second institutionalisation of cultural policy took place in the 1980s, when public credits for culture reached an unprecedented level and when the cultural administration played a new role in the administrative area and in the regulation of the cultural area. However, neither the rapid development of this policy, nor the professionalisation that occurred at that time put an end to the uncertainty of its definition and to the debates that it stirred up. The renewal of the controversies with regard to the notion of culture is a strong reminder of this (part III).

PART ONE

An improbable category Culture and politics before “cultural policy”

Public policies in the cultural field are said to have mostly failed before the 1960s, especially under the Third Republic. According to most critics, there was extremely little funding due to the absence of political backing, a heavily bureaucratic and confusing organization, and a total inability to support contemporary creation because of a dominant conservative,

backward-looking ideology. They judge a few isolated people and the beginning of the *Front Populaire* period more positively but overall, their assessment is very negative.

These accounts of the past, which sometimes directly reproduce the authorized comments of the time – that is, of the agents of the cultural field – tell a story that is the complete opposite of an epic: no heroes, no adventures and no prophetic visions, just mediocrity, routine and narrow-mindedness. They are certainly pervaded by retrospective judgments enabled by subsequent developments in art history. Public action is accused of not having benefited to the works of art that turned out to be the most aesthetically significant – case in point, the long-lasting neglect of impressionism in public purchases.³⁴ The assessment of this failure came mostly from those who, from Jeanne Laurent to André Malraux, worked to implement a cultural policy and used the Third and Fourth Republics as counterexamples in order to legitimise and stress the innovation of their project.³⁵ These negative epics have recently been revisited to provide a more balanced vision of that period, occasionally for rehabilitation attempts with aesthetic and political implications: erasing the suspicion of academicism in order to free art history from the shackles of the ‘terrorist’ supporters of modern art,³⁶ praising the unfairly underrated prescience of the authorities of the time in order to celebrate the “Republican model”³⁷ or nostalgically remembering the place that humanities, literature or conventions were thought to have taken.³⁸

We do not aim to denounce or rehabilitate anything or anyone, but merely to take another look at this history and explain what diametrically opposed retrospective judgements – absence of policy vs. “project”, “system” or Republican cultural “model” – both tend to overlook: the historical constitution of

Chapter I Culture versus the State

functions and categories of the State (in this case cultural policy) and the weight of historical configurations in the generation – or not – of these functions and categories. In order to give an account of these historical constructions and configurations from the turn of the 20th century to the end of the 1950s, we have to point out the conditions that made the formalisation of a public policy on cultural matters impossible. These conditions are first and foremost linked to the relationships between the bureaucratic and the cultural field. The founding period of the 1890/1910s will be our starting point. Admittedly, at that time, the French state had little – financial and human – resources and State agents – notably MPs – were concerned with limiting expenditures and therefore limited the development of public intervention. But there were other aspects. The relationships between the bureaucratic and the cultural field were characterised by the autonomisation of the cultural production and diffusion fields, which had a number of effects: the delimitation of the artistic field constructed in opposition with other fields likely to impose their heteronomous principles, such as economy or politics; then, with the figure of the intellectual, the affirmation of a political function opposed to the practise of official political functions (Chapter I). State agents, placed in a delicate position, internalised their illegitimacy to intervene on cultural matters – somehow objectivated in precarious institutions and positions (Chapter II). These conditions of impossibility started at the turn of the century and have consistently been present in the structure of the relationships between the bureaucratic and the cultural field and were reproduced until the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Chapter III).

If, during the “settling” years of the Republic, there were relationships of proximity and mutual recognition between intellectuals, artists and scholars on the one hand, and politicians and civil servants on the other hand, a clearer separation gradually took shape and became established in the 1890s.³⁹ This separation, which leads us to consider the opposing relationships between State and culture, originates from the way cultural production is structured. We will discuss these logics of cultural production in this chapter – in particular the controversies around visual arts and theatre, these two areas being the main objects of public intervention for what was then called “fine arts” (*beaux-arts*), as well as key domains in the structuring of cultural debates. On some level, the dismissal of public intervention and of the State in general by artists and intellectuals is a manifestation among others of the global opposition to heteronomous principles that shapes and maintains the autonomy of the fields of cultural production. But that is not all there is to it. Indeed, this dismissal is even stronger now that artists and intellectuals openly show ambitions that result in their being in competition with State agents. Having progressively left behind the “art for art’s sake” retreat – a characteristic of the “heroic period” of autonomy, a lot of them become politically involved in the name of art and the values they claim to embody with their art. The development of small journals is a good example. They started out as organs of artistic schools confined to aesthetic and esoteric discussions, and have gradually hosted debates on society, politics, philosophy and art. Another example is the rise of aesthetic and political actions of artists and intellectuals who aim at establishing new relationships between art and the people. The recurrent expressions of the rejection

of the State are thus not only a tactical way of preserving a recently gained autonomy; they are also part of renewed relationships of competition between cultural producers and State agents. In the founding period of the turn of the century, it is in this opposition to the State - necessary in order to protect cultural producers from what was now denounced as political interference, and useful for the establishment of their position as legitimate producers of discourses on the social world aiming to represent what is universal - that cultural problems (conditions of the creation, shaping and objectives of cultural proselytism) have been conceived and constructed.

Chapter II An impossible policy

*“One needs more than a little abnegation to accept the task of finding a few words to define the fine arts in terms of political economy: finding limits where there are none, trying to isolate operations of the human mind and nature that merge and overlap. Such an activity is the consequence of the unfortunate spirit of specialisation that smothers us and brings us down, as the language of human knowledge becomes a heavier burden. The more we learn, the more we drift away from the divine perceptions of the unity of the world. We need to classify our knowledge in a multitude of sciences, confine ourselves to them, and being thus absorbed, our eyes are distracted from the sublime sight of the whole”.*⁴⁰

Constructed against the State, cultural issues only generated little investment from its agents who, placed in a delicate position, had internalised their illegitimacy to deal with such matters. MPs, governmental staff, and theorists of administration only play a forced and uncertain role. This internalised

illegitimacy was also objectified in the precarious positions and institutions of the fine arts. The civil servants and the ministers’ roles were badly defined, as budgetary and administrative organization charts fluctuate. In fact, nothing materialised into a clearly unified “policy”. The incompetence of state agents in artistic matters, their illegitimacy to act in this field, and the representation of a natural opposition between art and the State can be analysed as “well-founded illusions” in the relationships between the areas of institutional policy and cultural production. The uncertainty of intervention practises and the instability of the institutional constructions and positions contribute to create these well-grounded illusions.

Chapter III The repetition of an absence (1920 – 1958)

Established at the turn of the century, the conditions that prevented the shaping of a policy on cultural matters remained in the following decades. The relationships between cultural producers and State agents were reproduced, under partially different forms, but with identical effects: the de-legitimisation of their “interference”, the correlative weakness of their investments, and consequently, the indecisiveness of the institutional forms of public treatment of culture. The competitions to represent the people and, in general, the struggles to express the social world have also been reproduced in the new efforts to bring culture to the people and the debates that they stirred up. This has been revealed by the analysis of the collective mobilisations for culture – in which most of the principles and methods of the social treatment of cultural matters were established until the 1960s – and the relationships between these mobilisations and public institutions. In this case, those relationships were ambivalent – and most

of the time hostile – and did not help the integration of these principles and modalities of cultural action to the State institutions and policies. These State institutions and policies have remained weakly structured, and have been marked by a series of unfinished projects and failed experiments.

PART TWO

The Big Shift

Origins and ambiguities of the cultural policy

A State policy of culture emerged at the beginning of the Fifth Republic. A specific ministry was created, and policy was produced and implemented in institutions such as *Maisons de la Culture* (Houses of Culture), in positions, political or administrative roles (a minister, cultural managers) and in speeches and texts (the decree of the ministry's creation, numerous public statements, administrative reports, etc.). All the different operators of the objectivation of a policy were now consolidated in a coherent system. After years of rather tentative public management of the so-called “fine arts”, the authorities claimed they had a “cultural mission” to perform and they formalised a “doctrine of action” (in their own words). From then on, within State institutions – ministry, Plan commissions – the issues of freedom of creation, diffusion and even definition of culture, which until then were treated outside the State and to some extent directed against the State, were discussed. In this second part, we will try to explain the modalities and the consequences of this shift, and show how the conditions in which it occurred shaped the emergence of the cultural policy and its institutionalisation.

The emergence of a cultural policy cannot be seen as the answer to a “problem”, the affirmation of a “political will” or the acknowledgement of a “social demand”.⁴¹ The rationalist outline of the institutional answer to a pre-existing problem is a particularly inefficient explanation here, precisely because a particular problem had not been identified. We may think about the social inequalities regarding access to culture, but they were not particularly strongly denounced at the end of the 1950s and there was no movement to demand that the government deal with the issue. They officially became a problem that had to be solved because of public intervention – they were not perceived as such before. The “political will” thesis does not match what we know about the direct conditions of the genesis of this policy either. There were no preliminary debates; the policy seems to be the result of politico-administrative improvisation where passing opportunities played a major role – see in particular the conditions of the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Likewise, no mobilisation, no pressure, no “demand”, even vaguely expressed, preceded the emergence of the cultural policy. There was no public controversy, no appeals from cultural or political authorities, no transactions between mobilised groups and high-ranking officials,⁴² like in the case of consumption⁴³ or environment,⁴⁴ precisely because there were no mobilised groups and no investment from high-ranking officials in these matters.⁴⁵ It seems more useful to keep in mind the general socio-historical conditions that might have supported this emergence than to look for direct causes in vain. If, as we have tried to show, the affirmation of the autonomy of the cultural production fields, through the systematic rejection of the heteronomous principles it entails, was a condition that made the structuring of a State policy impossible, the opposite is probably also true: The progressive crystallisation of

these social areas has led to less consideration of the “dangers” that threatened their – always relative – autonomy after the “heroic” period of the “conquest”,⁴⁶ thus making possible, even advisable, a public policy considered by artists as helpful, and not only as interfering. Moreover, the increase of time spent within the educational system – over longer periods, the increase of the relative importance of cultural capital within social relationships, as well as the “rise of the middle classes”, precisely characterised by the importance of their cultural capital,⁴⁷ are certainly involved in the construction of cultural issues as political issues. This construction could be understood by taking into account and shaping the “aspirations” created in these social transformations. Along with these transformations, the changing role of the State should also be considered, with the increase of its different types of resources. The emergence of a cultural policy could also be considered as an expression among others of the general boom in State intervention after the Second World War, and particularly of the increasingly dominant role of the State in terms of “management of the symbolic” – the development of educational policies, the mobilisation of State expertise or the increase of governmental communication policies all attest to this.⁴⁸ The materialisation and the development of a cultural policy took place within the broader context of these processes of transformation of public policies.

Crystallisation of the cultural production area, development of schooling, growing role of the symbolic in public action (and vice versa): these changes are essential, but cannot be seen as explaining factors:⁴⁹ first, because, unless we posit the hypothesis of a “French exception” that would have to be precisely defined, they cannot enable us to explain why comparable changes in other Western countries did not come with similar

political innovations. Then, if these general transformations appear as conditions of possibility, there are missing links such as group mobilisations – organisations representing the middle class, artists, or within the State administration – that might have linked them more clearly to the emergence of cultural policy.

Here, we chose to focus on the time or places where this policy was implemented, the agents who produced it, their practise and the relationships in which they were involved, as well as the concrete modalities of this emergence, which occurred from 1959 and the beginning of the 1960s, i.e. during the “settling” period of the new political order built around Charles de Gaulle and codified in the 1958 Constitution. During this key period, the formalisation of the cultural policy and the definition of a cultural authority were shaped.⁵⁰ The terms of cultural policy, programme or planning were integrated to the politico-administrative terminology. The creation of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs confirmed the idea that culture is a national prerogative and contributed to the progressive supremacy of the central level. The leaders of the Ministry strove to give meaning and unity to the various actions developed within the Ministry and in its name. They marked their territory, notably by dissociating themselves from related Ministry departments such as Youth and Sports or Education. This was the first time that the elements pertaining to a cultural policy were selected and gathered, that its objectives were announced, and that the legitimate modalities of its production were defined.

This first institutionalisation of cultural policy has to be understood within its proper context: the arrival of the Gaullist regime.⁵¹ There are similarities, even homologies, between the shaping of a cultural policy in André Malraux’s time and the modalities of transformation of the political regime. In both cases, a radical

change was announced. The previous system was highly depreciated, and a clean break with the practises that characterised that system – too many middlemen, compromises – was proclaimed, to make way for a “national communion” renewed thanks to the establishment of a direct relationship between the people and their leader and between the public and great works. Just like the advent of the Fifth republic, the shaping of the cultural policy was characterized by the promotion, for modernity’s sake, of “rational” political practices partly based on technical skills and tools.⁵² With the new regime comes the redefinition of the criteria for political skills: this is what shows, in particular, the emergence of technician ministers, as opposed to the existing parliamentary model. Of course, the Minister André Malraux was certainly not one of these technicians. However, the invention of cultural policy involved attempts at rationalisation, as the important role of planning – and sociological expertise - in the development of public cultural programmes shows. Following paths partly similar to the advent of the Fifth Republic, the shaping of a cultural policy also constituted a means to bring about political change. It acted as a symbolic marker, displaying what analysts described at the time as the revival of the *politique de grandeur* and also contributed to this revival: the relegation of past elites was also relevant in the cultural area, and the contemplation of great works was also supposed to favour the communion of the people transformed into an audience. The specific conditions and modalities of this genesis have had consequences on the way cultural policy has been carried out in France: they closely linked it to the emergence of the Gaullist Republic, and endowed it with a political aura that made it much more than the simple product of an administrative specialisation. Political in the partisan sense, indeed, with a strong presence of Gaullist networks, but also in

the sense that this newly formed public action was among the elements that symbolised the change of regime. This was, in the general sense, the political dimension of the cultural policy: it helped symbolise and organise the modalities of the relationships with the people and the ways to exercise power that characterized the new political order established in 1958. Therefore, the advent of the cultural policy does not only entail the emergence of a new ‘sector’ of State intervention, it is also a new place for the elaboration and diffusion of the State’s representation of the social space.

These conditions and the practices related to them place the production of the cultural policy in a space of reference and competition that is more “global” than ‘sectoral’.⁵³ There is neither a profession nor a sector whose “misadjustments need to be regulated”,⁵⁴ but the people in general, a dimension thought to be essential to the “human condition” (culture), a “mission” (democratising its access) and through this, objectives that involve the protection of civilisation facing the “sex, money and death trinity”, in the Minister’s words.⁵⁵ This large reference space, with multiple implications, in which the producers of cultural policy – ministers, senior civil servants, planners – place it is matched by multiple and far-reaching issues, from the redefinition of the legitimate forms of political representation to the new means of production and diffusion of state visions of the social world via the competition over the definition of culture. These issues and competitions are all the more powerful as the various categories of agents – local officials, artists, various cultural intermediaries – dispossessed or relegated by the emergence of cultural policy, because of their exclusion, are eager to polemicize the debates around the shaping of this policy.

Because it is the bone of contention of heated struggles, the definition of the object of state cultural policy is characterized by denial and euphemisms, and the principles and objectives assigned to it are very broad and give it an uncertain form. The “big shift” through which cultural problems built against the State become problems of the State is bound up with the more specifically political conditions of the advent of the Fifth Republic. Thus, cultural policy, from its first institutionalization in the early 1960s, is much more vague and ambiguous than most other so-called sectoral policies, as case studies of the two main operators of this policy will show us: the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Chapter IV) and the elaboration of cultural planning between 1960 and 1965 (Chapter V).

Chapter IV A Ministry for culture

The creation of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs can be seen as a political *coup* taking the form of an institutional innovation.⁵⁶ It is possible to assume that this innovation was one of many tactical manoeuvres from the protagonists of the conflicts that led to the advent of the Fifth Republic – precisely, among those that played up the newfound *grandeur* of the State, and in particular of its new leader, thanks to the change of regime. This new ministry can be seen as the invention of a “new figure of the State-society relationship”, in Pierre Rosanvallon’s words, more than the result of one of the three typical factors of the creation of a ministry according to him: “administrative logics of specialisation”, “management of emergencies” or “requirements of clientelism”.⁵⁷ It is however necessary to discuss the precise conditions and the practical modalities of this invention: it comes within a framework of multiple relationships and competitions – between

the government and the cultural field, within the political field, and between administrations. There was not much of a preformed project, but there was an opportunity to grasp, which was not done according to a programme but in a politico-administrative “improvisation”. Despite major uncertainties, this innovation, which even its promoters thought temporary and fragmentary, progressively settled within the bureaucratic field and little by little, deeply changed the terms of the culture/State relationship.

Chapter V The contradictions of cultural planning

From the organisation of the Sixth Plan in 1961, French planning started taking cultural issues into account. The “Cultural equipment and artistic heritage” commissions and working groups that were developed during the elaboration of the Fourth and Fifth Plans (which respectively cover the years 1962-1965 and 1966-1970) were at the time a key locus of production and legitimisation of cultural policy. This was made possible by the fact that the Ministry of Cultural Affairs had very few resources – the Plan was able to provide assistance, to some extent, in terms of credits, qualified staff and the constitution of a capital of information and expertise that was until then nonexistent. The Plan commissions allow for the accumulation of the credit provided by its members, who very often have leading positions in their respective areas. Expertise is combined with democratic consultation in the production of a “doctrine” of cultural action that largely contributes to the legitimisation of this new policy.

As it was the locus of the production of principles, objectives and limits of cultural policy, cultural planning was a decisive operator of its objectivation. The Plan commissions produced texts that set a

general framework of intervention and scheduled measures and medium-term expenditures.⁵⁸ The conditions of the production of these texts – the formal rules on planning and writing a report – consolidated this task of objectivation, which entailed a carefully argued presentation of the action carried out, making it visible and understandable: current situation, issues to resolve, objectives, resources. In this perspective, the Plan commissions' reports are more elaborate and numerous than documents produced by the Ministry. Indeed, many important texts – due to their normative scope and diffusion – elaborated by the leaders of Cultural Affairs were precisely presented before the commission or one of its working groups.⁵⁹ The Plan reports, more than mere administrative documents, were the main and most widely available texts on cultural policy. They were frequently mentioned in the press, and it was mostly on the basis of the Plan reports that governmental cultural policy was commented and discussed.⁶⁰ They served as a reference – admittedly sometimes a negative one – for anybody (local officials, intellectuals, civil servants, parliament members, etc.) who wanted to have a say on cultural policy issues.

At the same time, the Plan's cultural commissions framed the area of the public agents who were authorized to produce this policy. This area organized the intervention of new categories of agents in the treatment of cultural issues – senior civil servants, experts, sociologists – as well as the exclusion of numerous categories of agents who, like artists, had little weight in the Plan's institutions, even though they played a major part in the construction of cultural problems. The Plan, supposedly an institution of "consultation", also shaped the selection of State-approved agents who were entitled to intervene in cultural issues.

This recomposition of the group of agents entitled to talk about culture

inevitably transformed the way culture was discussed: it was adjusted to the principles in use in the definition of public action, as the systematic use of statistics and reliance on experts show. Furthermore, cultural commissions provide platforms for a very general discourse on the social world that, beyond issues of cultural infrastructure, defines legitimate ways of considering social issues. There are two contradictory aspects of cultural planning: On the one hand, with the application of technical procedures, the selection of agents according to their presumed skills and the importation of supposedly scientific systems of thought, it limits the group of the agents who are entitled to talk about cultural policy and culture in general. On the other hand, it triggers endless debates on the definition of culture, the role of the State, the desirable model of the society to come and therefore blurs the boundaries of the policy that it is supposed to define.

PART THREE

The institutionalisation of vagueness

Professionalisation of cultural action and cultural broadening

When Minister of Culture Jack Lang took office in 1981, he declared: "twenty-two years after its birth, it is time that this Ministry reach adulthood and be a complete Ministry, with a proper budget and administration".⁶¹ The period following the arrival of the new majority in 1981 seems to confirm this statement. Between 1981 and 1982, the Ministry's budget unprecedentedly grew by 74% - a trend that continued over the following years.⁶² The Ministry's resources and, more generally, the resources of the public cultural institutions increased significantly and drawing up cultural policies became a

fully-fledged administrative and/or professional task. The issues linked to them generated higher political efforts than ever before and were largely visible in the media. Culture therefore played a new role within the political and administrative fields. The opposite is also true. Public finance in the survival of the arts is essential. As part of local and national cultural policies, new structures were created (such as the *Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain*, media libraries, etc.) while others were developed or redefined (such as museums), considerably broadening and transforming what was then known as the cultural offer. In short, the Minister's wish came true as the Ministry and its cultural policy appeared to be reaching adulthood.

As with the first phase, this critical second phase of cultural institutionalisation as a category of public policy is linked to major political change. The following are a brief reminder of the intensity of these bonds. The increase of cultural public offer and its promotion as an essential political concern is linked to the social structure of the new majority's support base. Apart from intellectuals and artists, greatly mobilised during François Mitterrand's election campaign,⁶³ members of the socialist party (*PS*) were also, to a larger extent, active supporters. They were mainly recruited from the middle class which had an important cultural capital and benefited the most from public cultural action.⁶⁴ The "cultural" construction of the presidential role by François Mitterrand,⁶⁵ his ties to the Minister of Culture⁶⁶ and, finally, the fact that the President had more political and media-friendly capital and titles which allowed him to discuss culture⁶⁷ than his post-Malraux predecessors⁶⁸ also show the relationship between political change and the development of cultural policy. These relationships are explained by the fact that public treatment of culture is a powerful expression of political change that gives meaning to the numerous acts

accomplished in its name: cultural action, originally a product of political change, becomes a symbol of political change. One remembers Jack Lang's declarations announcing the "transition from darkness to light" in 1981, referring to the first actions and projects accomplished by the new government – assistance to developing countries, reduction of working hours, abolition of the death penalty – and stating that the government has forty Ministers of Culture. Beyond this rhetoric, culture constituted *de facto* one of the means to confront and contrast a past made out to be weighed down by traditions, hierarchies, uniformity, conservatism with a future full of imagination, creativity, liberty, youth, diversity and open-mindedness, to quote some of words used at the time.⁶⁹

In this new step towards institutionalising cultural policy, two phenomena – *mutatis mutandis* – similar to the ones observed in the previous period are again brought into play. While the space of public agents who produced this policy is shrinking, the object of this policy is expanding and becoming more fragmented. Concerning the first phenomenon, the development and institutionalisation of cultural policies led to an exclusive redefinition of the legitimate producers of these policies, starting from a professionalisation process. Specialised university curricula and degrees were created, downgrading in the process both "cultural activists" and other volunteers. "Professional" references and rhetoric gained more and more importance at the expense of the past experience of public agents, stigmatised as "ideological" and "naive". Regarding the second phenomenon, the "cultural democratisation" proselytism is combined with the strategies of rehabilitating hugely diverse objects and practises, which until then were excluded.⁷⁰ Cultural policy was no longer to be concerned only with traditional art forms but worked towards

legitimising culturally “minor”, “popular”, or “marginal” art forms such as rock music, comic books, circus, photography, fashion, industrial architecture, etc.

The two major aspects of the cultural policies of the 1980s - the professionalisation of culture and the broadening of the definition of the word “culture” - may seem contradictory but they are, in reality, intertwined. In fact, if constituting cultural policies as a market in which “professionals” compete leads to the shrinking of the space of agents empowered to intervene, then their potential scope of action is also increased. First of all, following a classical process,⁷¹ the creation of a group of specialists comes with the development of distinction strategies leading to more and more differentiations between “cultural projects”. In the words of one of the leading “cultural managers”, “everyone knows that the race for results and distinction began when economics and communication became an integral part of the profession”.⁷² Then - and this is directly linked to this race - the competition between these specialists - special assistants at the Ministry of Culture, managers of cultural institutions, local heads of Cultural Affairs, etc. - encouraged them to look for “opportunities”, “gaps” and alliances, all of them becoming more numerous and varied, linking cultural action with tourism, economical development, incorporating cuisine or ethnographical heritage for the elderly or prisoners, etc. These strategies to broaden the market were all the more efficient and unrestrained as no one - including political “decision-makers” - was in a position *a priori* to close the field belonging to culture by separating the possibilities of public cultural policy. The local cultural policies analysed at the beginning of the 1980s by Erhard Friedberg and Philippe Urfalino “grew more than they have been managed”. This is due to the monopoly of the definition of

“offer” by cultural professionals and the inability of elected officials to take responsibility for defining priorities. Just like these policies, it is more the definition of culture as a category of public policy that seems controlled by the “inflationist vicious circle” of the “cataloguing game”, which results from the specialisation of professional roles in this area.⁷³ The expansion of public cultural intervention linked to the so-called cultural rehabilitation policies not only comes from the conversion of administrative and political leaders to cultural relativism or the ethnographical definition of culture. Above all, it was propelled by the rapid development of the professions of cultural “mediators” or “administrators” and the relationships in which these agents were involved.⁷⁴

This second defining moment of the institutionalisation of culture as a category of public policy confirms and reinforces the first stage of the process: it is a vague category that has been institutionalised only because of this vagueness.⁷⁵ The professionalisation of functions linked to public cultural action is less characterised by the clear definition of positions and roles than by the increase of their attractiveness. They incorporate heterogeneous forms of work status, recycling rather than excluding social agents from diverse backgrounds and their accompanying principles and references. This attractiveness is huge, given the ability of the production of cultural policies to enable access to positions of “specialists of the general”. These positions articulate and merge the social universes of culture, media, administration and politics and, with them, their privileged modes of representation of the social world, from the aesthetic field to political engagement and communication techniques (Chapter VI). The extension of the “field of objects” (Foucault) of cultural policy does not so much harden boundaries

by filling the gaps as it maintains the uncertainty of its limits and finalities. Moreover, this “excrecence of Cultural Affairs”⁷⁶ again stirs up controversies on the definition of culture instead of creating a relativist consensus. These controversies are all the more intense that they are in line with larger competitions – mainly between “intellectuals” and government representatives – for the definition of legitimate representations of the social space and the pretension to embody universal values (Chapter VII).

Chapter VI

A paradoxical professionalisation of cultural policies

The title of a “manifesto for a new conception of cultural action” - *Profession: cultural engineer*⁷⁷ - the title of a magazine for “cultural administrators, mediators, managers” – *Cultural Profession* – or the title of an article on the executives of the Ministry of Culture⁷⁸ - “Culture: the *rue de Valois* professionals” are a few examples of the significant professionalisation of cultural administration functions, which was a major transformation during the 1980s.⁷⁹ Thanks to the increase of public cultural budgets, the traditional positions of the cultural field (artists, authors, film-makers, etc.) benefited from conditions that favoured the permanent exercise and recognition of their profession. Furthermore – and this is what shall be examined in greater detail – the cultural mediators who form the heterogeneous ensemble (administrators, heads of departments and institutions, animators, etc.) of agents who base their position on the drawing up of cultural policies and are located at the centre of their production, assert their professional qualification – in both senses of the term – and then contribute to it by modifying the praxis of public cultural action. Just as priests are “members of an organised firm of

salvation”, cultural administrators are like magicians and prophets, acting according to their personal commitment, talents or charisma.⁸⁰ Voluntary functions have become permanent and paid activities; specialised university curricula in culture administration and management have appeared; socialisation and representation spaces such as specialised workshops have been developed. Labels, norms, and professional vocabulary have gradually taken over, changing the habits and, therefore, the style of public intervention.

However, this professionalisation takes on specific forms that only partially correspond to the usual criteria used by the sociology of professions.⁸¹ First of all, this process does not rely on the more instituted positions of public management of culture, such as librarians and museum curators whose professions are more established,⁸² but promotes generalists who want to fulfil the criteria for professionalism. Secondly, it affects numerous public agents of varying status and position more than a specific body of agents, such as civil servants from local and national administrations, heads of institutions and mediators with “on-site experience”. Finally, if this process is based on the development of knowledge and specialised skills – particularly with regard to administration and management – it is also about rhetorical affirmation and the effects of belief. The frequent use of the words “profession” and “professionalisation” by the people concerned testifies to this. The change in progress is due to objective elements as well as the growing claim for professional identity by agents who often have poorly-established positions in comparison to their counterparts in closely related sectors of public action, such as the educational or social sectors.

If this professionalisation bears the clear hallmark of the conspicuous manipulation of the external signs of

professional status, it is still real in its modes and consequences. By claiming a professional identity, the agents who have the combined and non-codified functions of “mediation” or cultural administration contribute to the definition of a professional identity, incorporating a set of positions, even if they remain objectively heterogeneous. As is often the case, this individually and collectively claimed professional identity is defined primarily *in opposition* to various antagonists: the amateur who does not comply with the requirements of “professional quality”; the “opportunistic” politician who neglects the rigour and coherence necessary for a “real cultural project” or the *socio-cul*,⁸³ necessarily opposed to *la culture exigeante* (high culture) and reduced to pottery and basket-weaving. By defining themselves as specialists of cultural administration, these agents create new paths: from theatre to a municipal department of culture; from public cultural institutions to a *Direction régionale des affaires culturelles*; from the Ministry of Culture to a public or private cultural institution, etc. Envisioning and presenting these successive positions as different positions in the same career,⁸⁴ they map out a single professional world. Finally, the claim for professionalism, if it affects the way the producers of cultural policy see their posts, also transforms their practices: the progressive constitution of a peer group leads to the establishment of norms⁸⁵ which, though rarely codified, must be respected. In times when professional positions have yet to be defined, and for those who have yet to fill them, one understands that cultural administrators might have to over-invest in conformity with the drawing-up of these professional standards, contributing to the creation of a movement towards professionalisation and, in any case, to the strengthening of its practical outcomes.⁸⁶

Therefore, while this specific professionalisation process did not lead to

a definition of public cultural policy (in a sense, it has been the opposite), it has, however, affected its forms. The imposition of the professional reference as an all-encompassing imperative has *de facto* hugely transformed the content of national and local cultural policies.⁸⁷ It is more the area of possible actions that has been modified, especially in the attempt to replace ideological principles and militant imprecision with the “quality” and “thoroughness” of professionals. This management-oriented evolution, tangible at the time in the cultural activities of both the private and the public sector⁸⁸ - as in many other social realms and within public administration in general - gives the impression of a “depoliticised” public policy, where the political and the social can only be expressed in the terms of the new rhetoric of professional neutrality.⁸⁹ Opposition no longer takes place between elite and popular culture, but between productions of “good” or “bad” quality. The social inequalities regarding access to culture are henceforth considered from the perspective of “cultural communication” and marketing techniques. In other words, this change in the perception of culture and cultural action has only obscured the links between social and cultural hierarchies, thus contributing to the transformation of the forms of domination linked to the complication of social relationships due to an increasingly elaborate differentiation of social spaces.⁹⁰

Chapter VII

The state versus culture?

One of the unexpected effects of the professionalisation of cultural administration is its contribution, through strategies of market expansion, to the extension of the domain covered by public cultural policy. More than the boundaries between public, private and social spaces, it is the boundaries of “culture” that have

become more uncertain. Public cultural policy – initially based on a proselyte strategy of “democratising” the legitimate culture – was from then on composed of strategies of rehabilitation and explicitly became a means for cultural legitimisation and for social legitimisation through culture.⁹¹ Just as “cultural inflation” makes its object increasingly inaccessible, the combination of these two strategies complicates and obscures the objectives of cultural policy. Moreover, the policy of cultural broadening faces huge obstacles that jeopardise the efficiency of these “magical” operations of adding value by attaching a “cultural” tag.⁹² The “state magic” clashes with the difficulty of State administrations to be accepted and recognised as legitimate institutions of cultural legitimisation. Thus, as well as the restoration of cultural forms not recognised as such until then, State relativism feeds controversies on the definition of culture, the authorities’ legitimacy to define it and, finally, on the very foundations of cultural policy.

Conclusion

“Is there an arts department in the human brain?”

- In the current state of knowledge, my answer to the question is no.⁹³

An undefined yet successful category

It has not always been possible to turn culture into a field of public policy. The assertion of an autonomous cultural production in the late 19th century delayed the appearance of a formalized policy in this area for a long time. The weak attempts at intervention from the public sector were denounced as contrary to the necessary separation of Art and State. Those who dealt with fine arts in the third French Republic, whether in parliament,

government, or in public administrations, often held precarious positions, and their practices remained rather unrecognized. Furthermore, the main cultural issues – conditions of creation, relations between culture and people – were to a great extent directed against the State, by artists and intellectuals who intended to embody universal values through opposition to an order established by the state.

It is only from the early 1960s onwards that culture emerged as a state domain. Contrary to what had been done until then, governmental institutions were created and stabilized, as well as public positions, and a state cultural policy was established. The state slowly became a key element in the cultural field, and its agents actively – and often decisively – took part in formulating related questions. The genesis of culture as a field of public intervention marks a “big shift”, as cultural matters, constructed against the state, became state matters.

Cultural policy is a relatively stable field of public intervention. However, public intervention remains uncertain. It is regularly called into question; its foundations are complex, unclear and unstable. It is a rather vague category, unspecified (what is specific to it?) and above all undefined (what is its scope?).⁹⁴

The analysis of the main stages of its institutionalization proves it. And it is precisely because of the shift that marks its birth that cultural policy is so undefined. As the social space of culture became autonomous before public authorities intervened, the latter must show respect and recognition of its autonomy, with, for instance, a rejection of an “authoritarian” definition of culture by the state, which leads to a skilfully maintained uncertainty as to the scope of state cultural policy. “I had made quite a sensation when I declared at the *Conseil des ministres* that I was the only minister who didn’t know what culture was”, writes André Malraux in *Le Miroir des Limbes*. To know that it is

impossible to know and define “what culture is” seems to be the first requirement for a culture state official. The shift constituted by the birth of culture as a field of state intervention nonetheless revives the rivalry between artists and intellectuals and state agents, focused on the problem of defining culture. Cultural policy can thus be seen as the opportunity for a public controversy and open questioning.

All of this goes to show that the undefined and scattered aspect of cultural policy, resulting from the circumstances of its birth, cannot be considered as the failure or the limit of its institutionalisation; this aspect is both the condition and the consequence of institutionalisation. The lack of precision is really meant to make the participation of public authorities in the definition of culture less visible, and therefore more acceptable. The best proof thereof is probably the contradictory injunctions continuously addressed to the producers of cultural policy ever since it became institutionalized: support a field of intervention and avoid any kind of classification; create institutions against conservatism, which is inherent in all institutions.

In all the stages of its definition, cultural policy has been *de facto* elaborated in the name of an ideology of decompartmentalization, the aim of which is to break up existing boundaries, be they vertical – between social categories – or horizontal – between different areas. It was the case in the early 1960s, when André Malraux and the self-proclaimed pioneers from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Plan rejected the social character of cultural hierarchies and practices in the name of a new mission of the state – to make culture more accessible – and worked on suppressing the classifications set up by the *Beaux-Arts*. It was the case again, after this heroic stage, when there was talk of “de-sanctifying” culture and bringing it into everyday life, and even into

the development of cultural equipment and its integration in cities, Beaubourg being the epitome of this idea.⁹⁵ This “de-sanctification” was to be carried out by erasing distinctions between disciplines and different moments of social life.

It was even more the case during what is known as “the Lang years”, when cultural relativism ruled, though this relativism itself should be put into perspective.

Recent trends in French cultural policy, especially towards fighting exclusion and re-weaving social bonds, are a confirmation of this characteristic of its history. Cultural policy producers often present themselves as political and bureaucratic managers of Antonin Artaud’s cultural programme of who protested in *The Theatre and its Double* “against the widespread idea of culture as something separated, as if there was culture on one side and life on the other side”.

Besides this ideology of decompartmentalization, there is a structuring and structural contradiction: the assertion of the anti-institutional aspect of cultural policy institutions, and therefore of this policy itself. When the cultural policy characteristic of the new ministry was invented, institutions were created to fulfil this “project”: the Houses of Culture. But little by little the very definition of these institutions contrasted them with already existing institutions, and even with the concept of institution. A House of Culture is, as one of its first managers puts it, “a machine against machines”.⁹⁶ This opposition regularly reappeared, as with regional funds for contemporary art, created in the early 1980s against the concept of museum.⁹⁷ Is it not the destiny of the Ministry of Culture itself, as Jack Lang said several times, to disappear once its goal – “to impulse cultural creation” – has been achieved, and this administrative structure has become useless or even counter-productive? Criticisms of the risks created by the cultural apparatus mentioned by Jean-Claude Passeron are

assimilated and repeated, not only rhetorically, in the very “apparatus”.

Even though they were denied, the appearance and the institutionalization of culture as a field of public intervention did revive the controversies over the definition of culture and the legitimate relationship to culture, which were all the more intense and wide-ranging as they confronted agents in competition over the definition of universality and who was entitled to represent it. These conflicts and the historical elements they convey – notably the history of social habits of culture as a vector of the representations of the social space and a bridge to universality- help locate cultural policy and the definition of its object at a crossroads of a myriad of conflicting issues. Cultural policy is the field of both practical and symbolical interaction between numerous institutions, social groups and areas, between artists and state agents, intellectuals and the lower classes, those who possess cultural legitimacy and politicians, the media and civil servants... Cultural policy can also be seen as a crystallisation and a symbolization of these interactions at a given time in history. Therefore cultural policy and the related issues can be considered as “more than topics, more than institutional elements, more than complex institutions”, as a social phenomenon which “represents all sorts of institutions at the same time”. In other words, “a complete social phenomenon”⁹⁸ as Marcel Mauss famously wrote.

The preceding pages provide numerous examples of this phenomenon, from André Malraux’s prophetic “attestations charismatiques”, or charismatic tokens, in the de Gaulle years, to the rise of cultural careers in the 1980s, at the time of a confused professionalisation, or the role Jack Lang played as the incarnation of governmental spirit.⁹⁹ The over-abundance of cultural policy is not necessarily a sign of weakness.

It shows “the strength of this weak aggregate” and the power of attraction of this category “that would have tended to weaken if it had been composed of clearly separate units or if relationships between the components of this heterogeneous aggregate had been explicitly ruled by stable and transparent systems of evaluation and anticipation”.¹⁰⁰

From cultural policy to cultural practices

The object of this book is to show how culture became institutionalized and legitimized as a field of public intervention. The processes of legitimization and institutionalization fall within the double framework of practices and representations. Our survey has been focused on the practices and representations of cultural policy producers and their closest “constituency” of opponents or authorized commentators, such as artists or cultural professionals. The practices of social agents towards whom politics/policy and culture are normally directed, be they called people, audience, non-audience, citizens, etc., were only approached through the distorted vision of political and cultural regulators. This analytic bias is linked to our construction of the object, which is neither an assessment of cultural policy nor an analysis of its reception in various social groups. The aim is to understand how cultural policy was constructed and established as a policy. This bias was also justified insofar as, as often happens, the people, or audience, etc., to whom cultural policy is supposed to be directed, is very often absent from it, or has a very limited presence as something else than an object and an instrument of conflict between those who pretend to speak in its name. This research, through an insight into the practices and representations of specialists, is nevertheless aimed at better understanding

those of non-specialists. The preceding developments should be seen in this light.

The link between cultural policy and cultural practices is at first glance obvious: politics should be a means to democratize practices. The assessment made from this point of view is quite simple and confirmed in many surveys, especially those carried out under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture. The rise in “cultural supply” due to public intervention only had a limited impact on democratisation, defined as an increase in the proportion of “practising recipients”. Between 1973 and 1988, the proportion of French people visiting places of legitimate culture did not move, while the number of these places increased steeply with the development of public intervention.¹⁰¹ Among the practices defined as cultural in these investigations, the most immune from official cultural action, such as individual radio-listening or television-watching, experienced the sharpest increases. Democratization also remains low when defined as access to cultural practice (or consumption) for social groups that were not culture users. The social origins of culture users have hardly changed in the last thirty years. However, the development of cultural policy has been a key factor in intensifying the practices of groups that were socially predisposed to practice, i.e. the middle class, increasingly integrated in the school system. Cultural policy is the accomplishment of Flaubert’s programme, rather than Antonin Artaud’s. Flaubert urged “to bring culture to the *bourgeois*, rather than turn the people into the object of cultural proselytism”.¹⁰²

While this approach can be useful – even when taking literally a policy whose main legitimizing principle is democratization – to consider the relations between cultural policy and practices in such terms presents the risk of transposing to this analysis a political schema with all the ambiguities and issues it conveys.

What is exactly “to democratize”? What is to be “democratized”? Our aim is to consider other ways of viewing this issue and to go back more precisely to the object of the book, which considers the internalization of state cultural categories by non-specialists and relationships between these categories and non-specialist practices.

To paraphrase Marx,¹⁰³ one could say that implementing a policy does not only create an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. Is the invention of a new field of public action not accompanied by the definition of a new domain of practices? Does the elaboration of cultural policy not create its own recipient, and bring about the necessity of practice? Does it not convey patterns of practices and of relationships to practices? It is true that cultural practices existed long before cultural policy appeared, but they were not necessarily regarded as part of the same category. With cultural policy, they are duly registered, classified and numbered.¹⁰⁴ Defining this area of practice amounts to deciding that some practices are cultural while others are not and to prescribing as well as describing.¹⁰⁵ This categorization falls within the frame of political and statistical representation, but also institutional divisions, different categories of agents, expected behaviour... in short, the frame of practices.¹⁰⁶ We can therefore say that by creating or facilitating cultural specialization and institutions specific to cultural matters, cultural policy helped underscore, despite the apparent will to “decompartmentalize”, the separation between “art” and “life”, as early 20th century artists and later Antonin Artaud used to say.

Secondly, while everything points to the fact that reference to “democratization” gave cultural policy, which is mainly confined to a policy of culture supply, a rallying cause rather than precise modalities, we can also say that the success of the myth of cultural

democratization yielded effects on practices, if only because it contributed to assert the need for practice. “To make culture available to all” is a ground concept of cultural policy that could well be shifted. One could wonder whether the aim is not to make all citizens “available” to culture, as defined by the agents of “democratization”, and according to the modalities they prescribe. Regarding the lower classes, to which “democratization” is supposed to be chiefly directed, *populiculteurs*¹⁰⁷ always condemn self-exclusion and “it’s not for us” attitudes that help set up the symbolic barriers shutting out access to culture. The development of cultural policy only had limited effect on widening access, but it made it possible and necessary. There has been a shift in the feeling of cultural unworthiness. Externalization towards practice (“it’s not for us”) has maybe given way to a feeling of guilt for not practicing (“it’s made for us and we don’t take advantage of this opportunity”). The systematic overestimation of cultural practices in investigations – similar in that aspect to underestimation of abstention in election surveys – or the fact that the people surveyed feel they have to justify the low level or the absence of practice, allow us to posit this hypothesis.¹⁰⁸

Lastly, some patterns of cultural practice and relationships to practice are prescribed, organized, and made more or less desirable and possible in public cultural action. We need to rely on an as-of-yet unavailable social history of practice patterns that would show the role played by public agents in instilling legitimate ways of practicing, in library, museum and theatre regulations, for instance.

In the absence of studies, we will merely give a few facts on the latest period. The Ministry of Culture’s legitimizing of marginal, minor, working-class, young people-oriented practices took place at the cost of a reshaping of these practices according to the requirements of legitimate

culture. The aesthetic interpretation of graffiti proposed in the above-mentioned exhibition did not necessarily fit with the painters’ interpretation and how they wanted it to be viewed. “Rock policy”, which consists in fostering the assimilation of technical savoir-faire and the integration to a professional market, does not necessarily correspond with how this musical practice is considered, lived and practiced by those who devote themselves to it. The professionalisation of culture, brought about by the cultural policy analyzed in the preceding pages, it is not without consequence on the relations to practice. The split between professionals and amateurs that marked the birth of professionalisation, which public intervention in culture had helped create, led to a devaluation of amateur practice, which is now hailed by cultural policy producers.¹⁰⁹ The institutionalization of cultural policy and the professionalisation of cultural activities are also linked with the decline of practice in collective structures – clubs, associations, cultural movements – in which practices such as outings, visits, debates, participation to programming, etc. were organized. One can see a link between the kind of relation to the public that slowly came to be the norm in public intervention in culture – cultural marketing and the media tend to replace proselytism “in the field” – and the often regretted evolution of practices towards attitudes described as passive, individualistic, and consumerist. If, as Jean-Pierre Changeux writes, there is no “arts” department in the human brain, the way this “department” is established in the state – Durkheim’s “cerebral-spinal system in the social body” – could very well have an influence on the way we see culture and consider our own practices.

Table of contents (Book)

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: AN IMPROBABLE CATEGORY

Culture and politics before “cultural policy”

CHAPTER I: CULTURE VERSUS THE STATE

Art and the State: the construction of an antagonism

The separation of the fine arts and the State

The production of a political incompetence

Art and the people: the invention of a counter-policy

Pretenders against the official policy

A literary policy

CHAPTER II: AN IMPOSSIBLE POLICY

The internalised illegitimacy of a monitored intervention

A limited intervention

A “delicate” topic

Incidental forms of justification

An institutionalised illegitimacy within uncertain state forms

Aborted republicanisation attempts

Institutional constructions and legitimacy deficit

Ill-established positions of the agents of fine arts administration

CHAPTER III: THE REPETITION OF AN ABSENCE (1920-1958)

Cultural movements and public authorities

Mobilisations for the people’s culture

The limits of a convergence – cultural movements and the authorities

in the beginning of the Popular Front

Jeune France under the Vichy regime – a State movement against the State?

People et Culture at the time of the Liberation

– Towards the production of a “public sector”?

Story of a not very institutional history

Appendix: When the State gets involved in theatre.

PART TWO: A BIG SHIFT

Origins and ambiguities of the cultural policy

CHAPTER IV: A MINISTRY FOR CULTURE

The conditions of innovation and their consequences

A political coup

The uncertain delimitation of a territory

A policy of rupture

Installation and oppositions

A Ministry “like the others”?

An institution that produces debates

CHAPTER V: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CULTURAL PLANNING

A field of production of cultural policy

The invention of cultural planning

Space of positions and the creation of a policy – a selective participation

The social conditions of the legitimisation of cultural policy

A scientific policy – statistics and cultural actions

The conditions of a collaboration

A mobilisation for research – the Bourges conference

Institutionalisation of science, institutionalisation through science?

From the shaping of a policy to a public debate

The elaboration of a “doctrine” of cultural action

The existence and the boundaries of the cultural policy under review

From discussion on boundaries to boundless discussion

PART THREE: THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF VAGUENESS

Professionalisation of cultural action and cultural broadening

CHAPTER VI: A PARADOXICAL PROFESSIONALISATION OF CULTURAL POLICIES

A professionalisation policy

The conditions of professionalisation

The policy of cultural work

The emergence of a vocational training market

A policy of professionals?

Strategies of reconversion and uncertainty

Social technologies of the administration of culture

CHAPTER VII: THE STATE VERSUS CULTURE?

The extension of a registered designation

From the diffusion of rare goods to a certification policy

A controversial attempt of cultural legitimisation

“Defence of culture” and criticism of the cultural policy

CONCLUSION

The success of a vague category

From policy to cultural practices

NOTES

INDEX

Notes

¹ These are only a few examples that have been specifically analysed to highlight categorisation issues. See LASCOUMES Pierre, *L'éco-pouvoir. Environnements et politiques*, Paris, La Découverte, 1994; LENOIR Rémi, "Politique familiale et construction sociale de la famille", *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 41, no. 6, December 1991, p. 781-807; PINTO Louis, "La gestion d'un label politique : la consommation", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 91-92, March 1992, p. 3-19; JOBERT Bruno, DAMAMME Dominique, "La politique de la ville ou l'injonction contradictoire en politique", *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 45, no. 1, February 1995, p. 3-30.

² See SUREL Yves, *L'État et le livre. Les politiques publiques du livre en France (1957-1993)*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997. The case of graffiti is studied in the last chapter of this book.

^{3,3} For a legal and institutional perspective, see MESNARD André-Hubert, *L'action culturelle des pouvoirs publics*, Paris, LGDJ, 1969 and *Droit et politique de la culture*, Paris, PUF, 1990. For a historical analysis, see POIRRIER Philippe, *Histoire des politiques culturelles de la France contemporaine*, Dijon, Bibliest, 1998 (1996).

⁴ Substantial centralisation and state control in France but substantial decentralisation in Germany and Italy, reference to the arm's length principle and use of a quango with the *Arts Council* in Great Britain, etc.

⁵ See VESTHEIM Geir, "Instrumental Cultural Policy in Scandinavian Countries: A Critical Historical Perspective", *European Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 57-71; GRAY Clive, "Comparing Cultural Policy: a Reformulation", *European Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1996, p. 213-222. There are no studies that provide an international comparison of cultural policies, only institutional summaries by countries, published by the UNESCO or the Council of Europe.

⁶ LABORIER Pascale, *Culture et édification nationale en Allemagne. Genèse des politiques de la culture*, doctoral thesis in political science, IEP Paris, 1996.

⁷ The intense debates between the advocates and opponents to the establishment of a Ministry of Culture following the French model in Italy and the nickname given to this institution – *minestrone*, to emphasize the heterogeneity of its components, similar to the ingredients of the Italian soup – clearly show the reluctances to imagine culture as a unified field of public action. See MONSAINGEON Guillaume, "Un ministère pour

la culture ? L'Italie entre traumatisme, tutelle et tentation", *Le Débat*, May-August 1997, no. 95.

⁸ The Department of National Heritage and then the Department for Culture, Media and Sports were successively created in 1992 and 1997. As in the Italian case mentioned above, these innovations have stirred up intense oppositions and were also ridiculed for the unlikely pairings they created. The Department for National Heritage was for instance referred to as a "Joke Ministry".

⁹ WANGERMÉE Robert, "Tendances de l'administration de la culture en Europe occidentale", *Revue française d'administration publique*, no. 65, January-March 1993, p. 11-24.

¹⁰ For a general and official presentation of cultural policy in Québec, see ARPIN Roland, *Une politique de la culture et des arts*, report for the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Québec, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1991.

¹¹ See VAN CAMPENDHOUDT Luc, "Le marché unique contre la culture", *Liber*, no. 31, June 1997, p. 12-14. Attempts of unification of a Community cultural policy are in progress, with the establishment of the unique "Culture 2000" programme in 1998.

¹² MENGER Pierre-Michel, "L'État-providence et la culture. Socialisation de la création, prosélytisme et relativisme dans la politique culturelle publique", in CHAZEL François (ed.), *Pratiques culturelles et politiques de la culture*, Bordeaux, Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, 1987, p. 46. See also the similar comments of FRIEDBERG Erhard, URFALINO Philippe, *Le jeu du catalogue*, Paris, Documentation française, 1984; SAEZ Guy, "Les politiques de la culture" in LECA Jean, GRAWITZ Madeleine (ed.), *Traité de Science Politique*, Tome 4, Paris, PUF, 1985, p. 387-422; SAEZ Guy, *L'État, la ville, la culture*, State thesis in political science Université Pierre Mendès-France, IEP Grenoble, 1993, p. 63 and following.

¹³ For a general overview on municipalities, See d'ANGELO Mario *et al.*, *Les politiques culturelles des villes et leurs administrateurs*, Paris, Documentation française, 1989; URFALINO Philippe, "La municipalisation de la culture" in CHAZEL François (ed.), *Pratiques culturelles et politiques de la culture*, op. quoted p. 53-73; *Cahiers de L'IHTP*, "Les politiques culturelles municipales : éléments pour une approche historique", no. 16, September 1990; POIRRIER Philippe *et al.*, *Jalons pour l'histoire des politiques culturelles municipales*, Paris, Documentation française, 1995; DUBOIS Vincent (ed.), *Politiques locales et enjeux culturels : les clochers d'une querelle (XIX^e-XX^e siècles)*, Paris, Documentation française, 1998. Information on departmental and regional levels can also be found in these two last books.

¹⁴ The Ministry of Culture was able to establish that more than twenty ministries other than the Ministry of Culture contributed to “culture” State expenditures up to a total of 42.7% in 1984 and 55% in 1993. See *Développement culturel*, “Les dépenses culturelles des ministères en 1984”, no. 69, March 1987; “Les dépenses culturelles des ministères autres que le ministère de la Culture en 1993”, no. 116, March 1997. It is possible to consult the complete results of these budget studies, in *Documentation française*.

¹⁵ Created at the beginning of the 1980s, the *Direction du développement culturel* (Direction of Cultural Development) was dissolved in 1986 and then re-established in the more modest form of a Delegation for Development and Training. For information on the first period, see LION Bruno, “La prise en compte du développement culturel par les institutions administratives”, *Politix*, May 1987, p. 25-32.

¹⁶ Directions of theatre, music and dance, archives, heritage, edition, museums, *Centre national de la cinématographie (CNC)* (National Centre for Cinematography), Délégation aux arts plastiques (DAP) (Delegation for the Plastic Arts).

¹⁷ The central services of the Ministry of Culture are located in fifteen different sites (rue de Valois, avenue de l’Opéra, rue Saint-Dominique, rue Jean-Lantier, rue des Pyramides, etc.) Most of them should be gathered in one building. See “Regroupement des services centraux du ministère de la Culture”, *Lettre d’information du ministère de la Culture*, no. 402, December 21, 1995.

¹⁸ See *Lettre d’information du ministère de la Culture*, no. 19, December 3, 1997 and no. 32, July 1, 1998. For a good overview of these hostile reactions – and more generally of the criticisms levelled against the actions of Catherine Trautmann’s Ministry regarding shows – consult the numerous articles published at the time in *Le Monde* newspaper about these reactions.

¹⁹ See Pierre Lascoumes’s similar comments on environment. LASCOUMES Pierre, *L’Éco-pouvoir*, op. cit. p. 15-22.

²⁰ LINDBLOM Charles, *The Intelligence of Democracy*, New York, Free Press, 1965, quoted in CROZIER Michel et FRIEDBERG Erhard, *L’acteur et le système*, Paris, Seuil, 1977, p. 311; PAGE Benjamin, “The Theory of Political Ambiguity”, *American Political Science Review*, no. 70, 1976, quoted in MARCH James G., *Décisions et organisations*, Paris, Editions d’organisation, 1991, p. 78.

²¹ POLANYI Karl, *La Grande Transformation. Aux origines politiques et économiques de notre temps*, Paris, Gallimard, 1983 (1944). The preface of Louis Dumont makes me prefer the phrase “big shift” to the original English title: *The Great Transformation*.

²² On the affirmation of the autonomy of the artistic field at the end of the 19th century, see BOURDIEU Pierre, *Les règles de l’art, Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Paris, Seuil, 1992.

²³ On the creation of the “intellectuals” group, see CHARLE Christophe, *Naissance des intellectuels*, Paris, Minuit, 1990. On intellectual mobilisations for culture, see RITAINE Evelyne, *Les stratégies de la culture*, Paris, Presses FNSP, 1983.

²⁴ MONNIER Gérard, *Des Beaux-Arts aux arts plastiques, une histoire sociale de L’art*, Besançon, La Manufacture, 1991.

²⁵ URFALINO Philippe, “Les politiques culturelles : mécénat caché et académies invisibles”, *L’Année sociologique*, vol. 39, 1989, p. 104.

²⁶ For more information on these topics, see Raymonde Moulin’s works, which since the 1960s have helped to understand the scope of this change. The results in *Le marché de la peinture en France*, Paris, Minuit, 1967 can be compared with the ones presented 25 years later in *L’artiste, L’institution et le marché*, Paris, Flammarion, 1992.

²⁷ It is the case in musical research, a key element of policies on contemporary music. See MENGER Pierre-Michel, *Le paradoxe du musicien. Le compositeur, le mélomane et l’Etat dans la société contemporaine*, Paris, Flammarion, 1983; *Les laboratoires de la création musicale*, Paris, Flammarion, 1989. VEITL Anne, *Politiques de la musique contemporaine. Le compositeur, la “recherche musicale” et l’Etat en France de 1958 à 1991*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1997.

²⁸ DUBUFFET Jean, *Asphyxiante culture*, Paris, Minuit, 1986 (1968), p. 11-12.

²⁹ URFALINO Philippe, “Les politiques culturelles : mécénat caché et académies invisibles”, *art. cited p.* 82.

³⁰ See for example about plastic arts and the *Fonds Régionaux d’Art Contemporain* (Contemporary Art Regional Collection): FOUR Pierre-Alain, “La compétence contre la démocratisation ? Création et re-création des Fonds Régionaux d’Art Contemporain”, *Politix*, no. 24, décembre 1993, p. 95-114 and *Intervention publique et art contemporain : la création des Fonds Régionaux d’Art Contemporain, leur insertion dans le monde de L’art et leurs politiques d’acquisition*, Thèse de Science politique, IEP Paris, 1995; URFALINO Philippe, VILKAS Catherine, *Les Fonds régionaux d’art contemporain. La délégation du jugement esthétique*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1995.

³¹ See BOURDIEU Pierre, *La distinction*, Paris, Minuit, 1979.

³² PINTO Louis, “La vocation de l’universel ? La représentation de l’intellectuel vers 1990”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 55, 1984, p. 23-32.

³³ For information on the “monopolisation of the universal” by State agents, see BOURDIEU Pierre, *La noblesse d’État*, Paris, Minuit, 1989; “Esprits d’État. Genèse et structure du champ bureaucratique”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 96-97, mars 1993, p. 65-85.

³⁴ CABANNE Pierre, *Le pouvoir culturel sous la V^e République*, Paris, Olivier Orban, 1981.

³⁵ LAURENT JEANNE, *La république et les Beaux-Arts*, Paris, Julliard, 1955. See André Malraux’s main speeches in MALRAUX André, “Discours inédits”, *Espoir, Revue de L’Institut Charles de Gaulle*, no. 2, janvier, 1973; *La politique, la culture*, Paris, Seuil, 1996; *André Malraux ministre. Les Affaires culturelles au temps d’André Malraux, 1959-1969*, Paris, Documentation française, 1996.

³⁶ VAISSE Pierre, *La troisième République et les peintres*, Paris, Flammarion, 1995.

³⁷ GENET-DELACROIX Marie-Claude, *Art et État sous la III^e République. Le système des beaux-arts, 1870-1940*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1992.

³⁸ FUMAROLI Marc, *L’État culturel. Essai sur une religion moderne*, Paris, de Fallois, 1991.

³⁹ CHARLE Christophe, *Naissance des intellectuels*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ AYNARD Édouard, “Les Beaux-Arts et l’économie politique”, in SAY Léon, CHAILLEY Joseph (ed.), *Nouveau dictionnaire d’économie politique*, Paris, Guillaumin, 1890.

⁴¹ To quote the spontaneous interpretations of the apparition of a public policy. See MÉNY Yves, THOENIG Jean-Claude, *Politiques publiques*, op. cit., p. 159-166.

⁴² See the elements of the model genesis of a policy presented in BOURDIEU Pierre, CHRISTIN Rosine, “La construction du marché. Le champ administratif et la production de la “politique du logement”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n° 81-82, mars 1990, especially p. 66.

⁴³ PINTO Louis, “La gestion d’un label politique”, art. cit.

⁴⁴ LASCOUMES Pierre, *L’éco-pouvoir*, op. cit.; CHARVOLIN Florian, *L’invention de L’environnement en France (1960-1971). Les pratiques documentaires d’agrégation, L’origine du Ministère de la protection de la nature et de L’environnement*, thesis in political science and sociology, IEP Grenoble-École Nationale Supérieure des mines de Paris 1993.

⁴⁵ Except the lone article by Robert Briche published in 1956, “Pour un ministère des Arts” (“For a ministry of the Arts”, art. cit. In a 1996 interview, the author declares that “Marcel Waline, a law professor at the University of Paris, made Michel Debré read the study, who really enjoyed it”.

⁴⁶ See BOURDIEU Pierre, *Les règles de L’art*, op. cit. For further reading on the reduction of the vigilance threshold of artists regarding the risks for their autonomy, see BOURDIEU Pierre, HAACKE Hans, *Libre-échange*, Paris, Seuil-Presses du réel, 1994.

⁴⁷ See BOURDIEU Pierre, *La distinction*, op. cit.; BOLTANSKI Luc, *Les cadres*, op. cit.

⁴⁸ For further reading, see NEVEU Érik, *Une société de communication ?*, Paris, Montchrestien, 1994, p. 133 and following.

⁴⁹ We are following the methodological approach consisting in not trying to find the “causes” at all costs but rather focusing on the “activity of actors thought through ‘structural’ contexts” formulated by DOBRY Michel, *Sociologie des crises politiques. La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles*, Paris, Presses FNSP, 1986.

⁵⁰ The notions of institutionalisation, formalisation and critical juncture are borrowed from LACROIX Bernard, LAGROYE Jacques (dir.), *Le président de la République*, Paris, Presses FNSP, 1992.

⁵¹ For further reading, see GAITI Brigitte, *De Gaulle prophète de la cinquième République (1946-1962)*, Paris, Presses de sciences Po, 1998. Also useful on the developments following the arrival of the Fifth Republic.

⁵² See DULONG Delphine, *Moderniser la politique. Aux origines de la V^e République*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1997.

⁵³ For further reading, see JOBERT Bruno, MULLER Pierre, *L’État en action*, op. cit.

⁵⁴ To quote the terminology of MULLER Pierre, *Les politiques publiques*, op. cit.

⁵⁵ For further reading on Malraux’s speech, see MORIN Violette, “La culture majuscule : André Malraux” *Communications*, n° 14, 1969, p. 70-83.

⁵⁶ For further reading on the notion of “coup”, see DOBRY Michel, *Sociologie des crises politiques*, op. cit., especially p. 21 and following.

⁵⁷ ROSANVALLON Pierre, *L’État en France*, op. cit.

⁵⁸ *Rapport général de la commission de L’équipement culturel et du patrimoine artistique. IV^e Plan*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1961; *Rapport général de la commission de L’équipement culturel et du patrimoine artistique, V^e Plan*, Paris, Documentation française, 1966. During the preparation of the Fifth Plan, the work group reports were published as well.

⁵⁹ e.g.: “L’action culturelle”, exposé de Pierre Moinot, loc. cit.; “L’action culturelle. Principes-Réalisations-Projets”, document réalisé par Émile Biasini, directeur du Théâtre, de la musique et de L’action culturelle, octobre 1962, Archives du Département des études et de la prospective, ministère de la Culture. Unless mentioned, all the non published sources originate from this fund.

⁶⁰ Here is a non-exhaustive list of articles specifically dedicated to cultural planning: *Le Monde* publishes in 1962 and 1965 a series of articles (18, 19, 20 October 1962, 28 May, 13 August, 31 October, 13 November, 29 and 30 December 1965). This book is especially dedicated to this topic: BENSARD Georges, *La culture planifiée ?*, Paris, Seuil, 1969. An official presentation of “the cultural policy in France” is almost entirely dedicated to the Plan: *Cahiers Français*, n° 138-139, October-December 1969.

⁶¹ Quoted in “Un bilan culturel du septennat. Les voix sacrées de la rue de Valois”, *Le Monde*, March 3, 1988, p. 15.

⁶² “Le budget du ministère chargé des Affaires culturelles de 1960 à 1985”, *Développement culturel*, October 1986, n° 67.

⁶³ PINTO Diana, “La gauche, les intellectuels et la culture” in HOFFMAN Stanley, ROSS George, (ed.), *L'expérience Mitterrand*, Paris, PUF, 1988, p. 275-290.

⁶⁴ For further reading, see SAWICKI Frédéric, *Les réseaux du parti socialiste*, Paris, Belin, 1997. On the intensification of cultural practises of the middle classes due to the development of public cultural action, see PASSERON Jean-Claude, “Figures et contestations de la culture. Légitimité et relativisme naturel” in *Le raisonnement sociologique*, op. cit., p. 291-314; DONAT Olivier, *Les Français face à la culture, de L'exclusion à l'éclectisme*, Paris, La Découverte, 1994.

⁶⁵ See LEHINGUE Patrick, PUDAL Bernard, “Retour(s) à l'expéditeur. Éléments pour la déconstruction d'un « coup » : la « Lettre à tous les Français » de François Mitterrand, in *La communication politique*, Paris, PUF-CURAPP, 1991, p. 163-182, in particular p. 168.

⁶⁶ Regularly emphasised in the media, and sometimes compared to those of de Gaulle and Malraux, especially in Alain Duhamel's book on the two “big” presidents of the Fifth Republic.

⁶⁷ See the – mediocre – biographies of Jack Lang: DESNEUX Richard, *Jack Lang, la culture en mouvement*, Paris, Favre, 1990; HUNTER Mark, *Les jours les plus longs*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1990/

⁶⁸ From 1969 to 1981 Edmont Michelet (1969-1970), André Bettencourt (1970-1971), Jacques Duhamel (1971-1973), Alain Peyrefitte (1974), Michel Guy (1974-1975), Françoise Giroud (1976-1977), Jean-Philippe Lecat (1978-1981).

⁶⁹ See RENARD Jacques, *L'élan culturel*, Paris, PUF, 1987. Former student of the *École Nationale d'Administration (ENA)*, Jacques Renard has held different positions within the Ministry of Culture between 1975 and 1981, and in Jack Lang's cabinet in 1982-1986 where he later became assistant director (1988-1992) before being appointed

directeur de l'Administration générale du ministère (1992-1993).

⁷⁰ See PASSERON Jean-Claude, “Figures et contestations de la culture...” *art. cit.*. Also see MENER Pierre-Michel, “L'État-providence et la culture...”, *art. cit.*

⁷¹ This process has been highlighted in BOURDIEU Pierre, *Les règles de l'art*, op. cit., especially p. 221.

⁷² DJIAN Jean-Michel, *Profession Culture*, n° 1, November 1992, editorial.

⁷³ FRIEDBERG Erhard and URFALINO Philippe, *Le jeu du catalogue*, op. cit.

⁷⁴ The link between “the broadening of the notion of culture” and the strategies of professional recognition is suggested in URFALINO Philippe, “Les politiques culturelles : mécénat caché et académies invisibles”, *art. cit.*

⁷⁵ On the hypothesis of the “cohesion through vagueness” and the “strength of a weak aggregate”, see BOLTANSKI Luc, *Les cadres*, op. cit. p. 474-475, p. 480 and following.

⁷⁶ To quote the polemical title of FUMAROLI Marc, “De Malraux à Lang. L'excroissance des Affaires culturelles”, *Commentaire*, vol. 5, n° 18, Summer 1982, p. 247-259; vol 8, n° 30, Summer 1985.

⁷⁷ MOLLARD Claude, *Profession : ingénieur culturel*, Paris, Charles Le Bouil, 1989 (1st edition La Différence, 1987).

⁷⁸ From ROUX Emmanuel, SCHMIDT Olivier, *Le Monde*, December 31, 1993.

⁷⁹ This chapter is about the transformations that took place during the 1980s and their manifestations as they were seen in 1994, when this research was completed. The more recent inflexions of these different processes are not taken into account.

⁸⁰ WEBER Max, *Économie et société*, volume 2, Paris, Plon, 1995 (1971), in particular p. 172-175 and 190-203.

⁸¹ These can be summarised as follows: “the existence of a theoretical knowledge and specialised training, the appreciation of the competence of the profession's members through formal examinations, the establishment of a professional organisation, the emergence of a professional code, the provision of an altruistic service”. PAICHELER Geneviève, *L'invention de la psychologie moderne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1992, p. 42-55. See also CHAPOULIE Jean-Michel, “Sur l'analyse sociologique des groupes professionnels”, *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. XIV, n° 1, 1973, especially p. 89; MAURICE Marc, “Propos sur la sociologie des professions”, *Sociologie du travail*, n° 2, 1972, p. 213-225.

⁸² For further reading on the librarian profession, see SEIBEL Bernadette, *Au nom du livre. Analyse sociale d'une profession : les bibliothécaires*, Paris, Documentation française, 1988 and the

contributions of Isabelle Charpentier and Olivier Tacheau in DUBOIS Vincent (ed.), *Politiques locales et enjeux culturels...* op. cit. On curators, see OCTOBRE Sylvie, “Dilemme de la professionnalisation : le cas des conservateurs de musée”, communication au groupe de travail sur les politiques locales, Comité d’histoire du ministère de la Culture, 23 janvier 1998.

⁸³ Derogatory term used from the early 1980s, short for socio-cultural.

⁸⁴ According to Everett Hughes, in HUGHES Everett C., “Institutional Office and the Person”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 43 (3), 1937, p. 409-410.

⁸⁵ Governing the scheduling of shows or exhibitions, the style given to projects by financial partners, the terminology used to present them and even the presentation of folders, documents, posters, etc.

⁸⁶ An ongoing criticism against the cultural effects on development of public action in this area is, in fact, due to the standardisation and conformism that would have resulted.

⁸⁷ For further reading on a local illustration, see PONGY Mireille, “Politiques culturelles territoriales : une approche en termes de référentiel”, in *Papiers du GRESE*, n° 6, Autumn 1989, p. 19-32; *Approches de la la production culturelle territoriale*, GRICC, Toulouse, 1989; SAEZ Guy, “Le règne des professionnels” in *Villes en recomposition. Les politiques culturelles à Grenoble et à Montpellier*, Grenoble, CERAT, 1990.

⁸⁸ Eve Chiapello shows that, due to the transformation of the social position of artists and management practices and references, the “artistic critics” of management and administration have considerably lost importance in favour of a “reciprocal hybridisation” which can be seen in the “artistic organisations” (publishers, orchestras, post-production audiovisual societies) of the commercial domain but also within modern and aesthetic innovations domains. CHIAPELLO Eve, *Artistes versus managers. Le management culturel face à la critique artiste*, Paris, Métailié, 1998.

⁸⁹ This “professional and “administrative” change of public cultural intervention is not unique to France. It can be seen in Germany, for example. LABORIER Pascale, *Culture et édification nationale en Allemagne...* op. cit., p. 625 and following.

⁹⁰ For a general presentation of an analysis of the transformations of the domination modes linked to the social spaces” differentiation and the hypothesis of the “extension of the legitimisation circuits”, see BOURDIEU Pierre, *La noblesse d’État*, op. cit., p. 548-559; CHAMPAGNE Patrick, *Faire l’opinion*, Paris, Minuit, 1990, p. 276 and following.

⁹¹ PASSERON Jean-Claude, “Figures et contestations de la culture”, art. cit.; MENGER Pierre-Michel, “L’État-providence et la culture”, art. cit.

⁹² BOURDIEU Pierre, DELSAUT Yvette, “Le couturier et sa griffe : contribution à une théorie de la magie”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n° 1, 1975, p. 7-36.

⁹³ CHANGEUX Jean-Pierre, *Raison et plaisir*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1994, p.123

⁹⁴ On the distinction between unspecified and undefined, see BOLTANSKI Luc, *Les cadres*, volume cited, p.482.

⁹⁵ See PINTO Louis, “Déconstruire Beaubourg...”, article cited.

⁹⁶ For such an analysis, see URFALINO Philippe, *L’invention de la politique culturelle*, volume cited, in which Gabriel Monnet’s expression is quoted.

⁹⁷ See the cited works of Pierre-Alain Four.

⁹⁸ MAUSS Marcel, “Essai sur le don”, in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris, PUF, 1985, p.275 and 145 respectively.

⁹⁹ One could also mention the role Philippe Douste-Blazy and Catherine Trautmann claimed to play as moral safeguards against the far right.

¹⁰⁰ BOLTANSKI Luc, *Les cadres*, volume cited, p.474.

¹⁰¹ At these dates, proportions were 12 and 14% respectively for theatre, 7 and 9% for a classical music concert, 27 and 30% for a museum. The survey was carried out on a representative sample of the French population over 15. The survey takes into account answers given in the last 12 months. See DONNAT Olivier, *Les Français face à la culture*, volume cited, p.156. There is no need for an examination of methodology, as would be the case if the figures were really used. The latest figures are available in the last edition to date, *Les pratiques culturelles des Français. Enquête 1997*, Paris, Documentation française, 1998.

¹⁰² FLAUBERT Gustave, letter to Louise Collet, cited in COMPAGNON Antoine, *La troisième République des lettres*, Paris, Seuil, 1983. My thanks to Bernard Pudal for having drawn my attention to this text.

¹⁰³ MARX Karl, *Introduction générale à la critique de l’économie politique*, (1857), reproduced in *Philosophie*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 443 and following.

¹⁰⁴ On statistical classifications, linked to and by analogy with state classifications, see DESROSIERES Alain, *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique*, Paris, La Découverte, 1993.

¹⁰⁵ BOURDIEU Pierre, “Décrire et prescrire”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* n°38, 1981, p. 69-73.

¹⁰⁶ LACROIX Bernard, “Ordre politique et ordre social”, in LECA Jean, GRAWITZ Madeleine, *Traité de science politique*, volume 1, Paris, PUF, 1984, esp. p. 503.

¹⁰⁷ From “people” and “culture”, refers to a movement that aims at bringing out culture to the people.

¹⁰⁸ On this subject see the survey carried out by ARSEC on how the absence of cultural practice is justified.

¹⁰⁹ See recent surveys published in *Développement culturel* and the articles and declarations of the minister related to the subject in *Lettre d'information*, published by the Ministry of Culture.