

## **Explorative Network: The Future of Cultural Policy**

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### **RELEVANCE**

Cultural policy agendas in Denmark and across the Western World are under pressure, leading to polemic research titles in recent years such as "The end of cultural policy?" (Mangset 2018) and "Culture is bad for you" (Brook et al. 2020). Digitalization and a constantly changing cultural landscape challenge longstanding understandings of the aims and means of the Nordic cultural policy model. Furthermore, policy making today often takes its point of departure in collaborative processes and wicked problems, such as migration, health, or climate agendas (Torfing & Triantafyllou, 2017). This explorative network aims to explore new concepts, develop research agendas, and define empirical priorities in the light of this dramatically shifting political, economic, and technological landscape that is impacting cultural policy making.

There is broad consensus on how to conceptualize the history of cultural policy in the 20th century (eg. Duelund & Bille Hansen 1995), and the aims and means of the Nordic cultural policy model are well delineated (eg. Duelund 2003, Bille 2012, Hylland & Stavrum 2018, Sokka 2022). A major challenge to this existing cultural policy paradigm is the way in which digital media, algorithms and new, platform-based communication infrastructures have influenced citizens' production and consumption patterns. but cultural consumption is now increasingly taking place through podcasts, streaming services and social media (Valtysson 2020, Pedersen 2020), affecting how people meet and interact with cultural products and how value is attributed to cultural events (Reason & Lindelof 2017, Hansen & Degn 2022). Furthermore, the massive rise in the supply of content and the revenue streams that accompany the rise of streaming services and the massive support of cultural projects by private funds radically changes the importance and scope of national cultural policy distribution principles in the so-called attention economy (Rose 2015, Pedersen 2018).

Another major challenge concerns the documented demographic bias in the use of the publicly funded cultural institutions. Despite decades of cultural policy efforts, it is still the well-educated and well-off who use the cultural institutions to a greater extent than the rest of the population (Vestheim 2012; Bille 2021); over the past decade it has become clear that the basic cultural policy ideal of democratization of culture has at least partially failed (Hadley & Belfiore, 2018). And still, the aims and means of cultural policy have been surprisingly stable (Mangset & Hylland 2017).

Urgent questions about the social significance of art, audience engagement, cultural democracy and inclusion have been raised, particularly in the English-language research literature (eg. Kawashima 2000, Belfiore and Bennett 2008, Walmsley 2019, Hadley 2021), and a similar focus has been central to the Danish research literature (Skot-Hansen 2008, Friis-Møller 2012, Bolt et al. 2014, Lindelof 2014, Stevenson, Kann-Rasmussen & Balling 2016, Hansen et al. 2022). It has, for instance, been explored how state-funded museums, theaters and concert halls conceive of their audiences and work

with new forms of analogue and digital involvement (eg. Forsare & Lindelof 2013, Erikson et al. 2020; Kann-Rasmussen & Rasmussen, 2020; Achiam et al, 2021, Lindelof & Janssen 2022). This goes hand in hand with the development of new evaluation models and ideals of evidence-based policy making (Hansen 2019; Belfiore 2021) and with the emergence of organizations such as the audience agency *Applaus* and the newly founded *Kulturens Analyseinstitut* as an independent institution under the Ministry of Culture. While research and academic literature is obviously attuned to the transformations impacting the cultural sector, what gets less attention is what the implications of these transformations are for cultural policy making. All too rarely the fundamental aims and visions of cultural policy are debated.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of The Future of Cultural Policy Network is to raise the fundamental research question: *What are the aims of cultural policy today, what rationales and normative justifications underlie them, and what means can be used to achieve the desired goals?* To do so, the network brings together Danish cultural policy researchers with special knowledge about cultural management, digital culture, cultural economics, participatory culture, audience studies and cultural evaluation with scholars from the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries to develop a strong, interdisciplinary research environment to analyze and discuss cultural policy in Denmark with comparable international cases and with policy makers.

The aim of the analysis and discussions is twofold: First, to collect and map significant changes in the cultural policy-making processes and cultural economic priorities in Denmark over the last decades, in order to create research-based knowledge about the extent to which they align with the overall discursive shift in focus from production to consumption of culture. The discursive dimension of cultural policy is central to the production of meaning and difference in cultural life (Hall, 1979), but it does not necessarily have any direct connection with real political changes. Secondly, to use this knowledge to develop and qualify the way cultural policy rationales and their underlying assumptions are discussed, both in research and in policy making processes.

## **Research topics**

To better understand cultural policy rationales and their challenges and potentials in the digital age, the analysis and discussions are centered around three themes. Central to all three is digitalization as a basic condition, and the relationship between the (cultural) economic priorities and the cultural policy discourse and goals.

### *(1) Changing rationales of cultural policy in a digital age*

- how have major changes in society affected (the enactment of) cultural policy rationales?
- how are cultural policy rationales formulated and effectuated nationally, regionally, and locally?
- what are the normative justifications and rationales of cultural policy?

### *(2) Evidence-based evaluations – and its consequences for cultural policy making*

- How do different cultural evaluation paradigms identify and locate cultural value?
- What are the implications of data-driven policy making?

- What would an evidence-based cultural policy look like?

*(3) Partnerships and business models – and their implications for policymaking*

- What new processes of policy making follow from new actors, new cash flows, new partnerships?
- What characterizes from the perspective of cultural policy making cross-sector collaborations in e.g. health and well-being; tourism; urban development?
- How can private organizations and public cultural policy supplement each other in efficacious ways?

**NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

The purpose of the network is to discuss cultural policy rationales and visions in a digitized world. The main activities are research seminars and stakeholder workshops, structured around the three research themes.

*Research workshops and stakeholder seminars*

Each year the network will hold one research seminar and host one stakeholder workshop focusing on policy issues in practice. Each activity will be hosted by different network members and in year one and two the output from the research seminar will be utilized in the following stakeholder workshop (see below for details). The final stakeholder workshop will present the results of all activities and include key cultural policy agents in the discussion of the implications of these for the future of cultural policy making. In addition, the network will present central discussions and key findings in an international research context on a yearly basis, e.g. in a joint panel at the ICCPR (International Conference on Cultural Policy Research) in 2024 and at NCCPR (Nordic Conference on Cultural Policy Research) in 2025.

Start date Februar 1, 2023	2023				2024				2025			
End date December 31, 2025	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Project coordination, PI Lindelof & Bille	[Activity spans all quarters from 2023 to 2025]											
Research seminars w international participation		[Pink]				[Pink]				[Pink]		
Stakeholderworkshops				[Blue]				[Blue]				[Blue]
Conference participation, site and date is TBA						[Teal]				[Teal]		
Workshop about proposal writing												[Cyan]
Publication and Dissemination			[Purple]	[Purple]				[Purple]	[Purple]		[Purple]	[Purple]

*Output*

Building on the seminars and workshops, the network will publish a joint publication with the working title “Cultural Policy of the Future: Cultural policy rationales in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, as a special issue in a leading international journal (e.g., *Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy*). In addition, the network will contribute to public conversation throughout the grant period, through prominent industry and policy channels, such as *Connecting Audiences* (knowledge broker publication), Kulturmøde Mors and Folkemødet (largescale public congresses), podcasts focused on the Danish cultural sector (hosted by Applaus), and in the daily press. Ultimately, the network aims to leverage these activities and connections created over the grant lifecycle to form a research application to the NordForsk-program or Creative Europe.

## **RESEARCH MEMBERS,**

### **The Future of Cultural Policy** (*alphabetic order*)

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Associate professor in Cultural policy, Library development and Organizational development. University of Copenhagen, Denmark

**Rasmus Rex. Pedersen**, RUC

Associate professor in Digital Communication, Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University, Denmark

**Steven Hadley**, Dublin

Research Fellow Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Trine Bille**, CBS (co-leading the network)

Professor of Cultural Economics, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

### ***Associated partners***

CKI (Centre for Art and Interculture, v/ CEO Niels Righolt)

Applaus (v/ Ph.D. in Cultural management and teaching consultant, Søren F. Møller)

Region Skåne (V/Director of cultural affairs, Gitte Wille)

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