

Sub-National Cultural Policy —
Where the Action is?
Mapping State Cultural Policy
in the United States
by J. Mark Schuster
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Abstract

Most of the formal studies of cultural policy concentrate on the role of central governments and their approaches to supporting the arts, creative industries and heritage. Less attention has been given to cultural policy at the sub-national level despite the fact that the states in the United States, the provinces in Canada and the states of Australia, for example, all run extensive programs of cultural support. This paper introduces some new thinking about the role and contribution of cultural programs at the sub-national level, illustrating these ideas by reference to the role of the states in the United States. It is based on a pilot project for the Mapping of State Cultural Policy in the United States. This project, which is just beginning, draws its inspiration from the Council of Europe's Program of Reviews of National Cultural Policies and has been funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Biography

J. Mark Schuster is Visiting Professor of Cultural Policy at the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago where he is currently on sabbatical from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Professor Schuster is a public policy analyst who specializes in the analysis of government policies and programs with respect to the arts, culture, and environmental design. He is the author of numerous books, articles, and reports including: *Preserving the Built Heritage: Tools for Implementation*, with John de Monchaux and Charles Riley; *Patrons Despite Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy*, with Michael O'Hare and Alan Feld; *Supporting the Arts: An International Comparative Study*; *Who's to Pay for the Arts? The International Search for Models of Arts Support*, with Milton Cummings; *The Audience for American Art Museums*; and *The Geography of Participation in the Arts and Culture*; and *Informing Cultural Policy: A Consideration of Models for the Research and Information Infrastructure* (forthcoming). He is a founding member of the Association for Cultural Economics and is co-editor of the *Journal of Cultural Economics*. He also serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*.

Sub-National Cultural Policy—Where the Action is? Mapping State Cultural Policy in the United States

J. Mark Schuster

The conceptualization of cultural policy as a field of public policy inquiry is a relatively recent phenomenon (particularly in the United States where there has traditionally been a fear of uttering the phrase “cultural policy” with all of its *dirigiste* implications). To date, most cultural policy inquiry has focused either on the national level, which is a natural entry point for researchers and policy analysts moving into a field for the first time, or on the very local level, which lends itself to fine-grained case studies of particular institutions or places. The national emphasis has been most clearly evident in UNESCO’s series of booklets, *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*,¹ and in the documents generated as part of the Council of Europe’s Program of Reviews of National Cultural Policies,² but there is no shortage of other studies, papers, and research projects focused on national cultural policy. The literature on local cultural policy is a much more disparate one, with a wide variety of studies that have not tended to be located under the umbrella of one or another research initiative.

By comparison, much less attention has been paid to the policies of intermediate levels of government—e.g., state policy in the United States and Australia, provincial policy in Canada, *länder* policy in Germany and Austria, canton policy in Switzerland, the policy of the *comunidades autónomas* in Spain, or policy as has it played out through the Regional Arts Boards in Great Britain. A quick scan of the 116 substantive articles that have been published in the first fourteen issues of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* reflects this; roughly twenty of these articles have focused on local cultural policy, while only one has focused on policy issues at an intermediate geographic level; by contrast, ninety-four (four out of five) articles have been concerned with national policy or other cross-cutting issues.³

Moreover, to date most cultural policy inquiry (again, particularly in the United States) has focused on what might be termed “arts policy.” To be sure, there have been important policy-analytic forays into heritage policy, the cultural industries, and, more recently, culture and development. There has been hardly any work on cultural policy with respect to the humanities.

Though the relative emphasis on policy matters in the arts rather than in culture and on matters national rather than local is not surprising, what I wish to argue here is that there is good reason to begin to turn our analytical attention toward cultural policy more broadly conceived—which I take as one of the main purposes of this conference—and toward the cultural policies of sub-national levels of government (particularly to intermediate levels of government). My focus will be on the United States, but I am quite confident that much of my argument is just as applicable elsewhere (and not only in countries with a federal governmental structure).

I will be describing the preparatory work for a new research project on the Mapping of State Cultural Policy that we are undertaking at the Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago with the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts. I introduce this project as a way of

furthering a discussion about just what might be involved in a sustained inquiry into sub-national cultural policy.

Because my focus will be primarily on the United States, I will rather quickly abandon the awkward construction “sub-national” and replace it with the American usage of the word “state.” I apologize to readers from other countries and from those disciplines in which *state* is used as a synonym for the *national government* or for *government* in a more general sense.

Focusing on the Sub-National Level

I will assume that because we are all in attendance at a conference on cultural policy, we are more or less in agreement that broadening our purview from arts policy to cultural policy is a desirable analytical step. But what are the reasons for changing the focus of cultural policy inquiry to the sub-national level? Let me suggest several:

- Direct support for the arts and humanities at the state level is now (and has been for some time) a more important source of direct government aid to the arts, culture, and the humanities in the United States than is direct support at the federal level. Moreover, the financial importance of these state budgets is augmented by an increase in the federal funds passed through these agencies. (Recent debates concerning the budgets for the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities have often called for an increasingly large proportion of their budgets to be distributed to and through the states.)
- The move toward delegation, devolution, and decentralization in government policy making and decision making to lower levels of government has made it more important to understand how policy actually plays out at those lower levels.
- Increasingly, cultural programs and projects are being adopted to further a wide variety of societal aims (economic development, intervention with youth at risk, etc.), aims that are more likely to be pursued at the state or local level because of the closer relationship to the constituencies that are most likely to be affected. Thus, a higher priority has been accorded some elements of cultural policy in the states’ policy agendas than has previously been the case.
- Perhaps even more so than at the federal level, state cultural policies are complex, going well beyond the boundaries of state arts agencies to include state humanities councils, historic preservation agencies, community development initiatives, parks and recreation commissions, and many other agencies and programs. Thus, it is becoming clearer and clearer that legislation, projects, and programs have an important impact on cultural policy well beyond the boundaries of what one would normally consider to be state cultural agencies and far beyond the boundaries of the traditional grant-making programs of state arts agencies.

- One would expect cultural policies to vary across states, reflecting a range of ideas about what constitutes “culture,” about what the role of the state government ought to be in fostering and nurturing the arts and culture, and about what the concrete aims of cultural policy ought to be. One would also expect to observe interesting variation across the states in the means chosen to implement policy goals.⁴ In other words, an inquiry into state level cultural policy is likely to be a “variety generator,” pointing to possibilities and suggesting a variety of questions concerning relative appropriateness and relative effectiveness.⁵ Thus, one is likely to learn important lessons for all levels of government policy.
- The fifty experiments in cultural policy embodied in the accumulated experiences of the fifty states offer an untapped resource of information that would be of considerable practical use to the field. Accordingly, inquiries into state level cultural policy can assist in identifying “smart practices”⁶ (as well as pitfalls and roadblocks), innovative programs and innovative structures within which innovative programs can be incubated.
- At the same time, it is quite likely that one would discover that it is possible to characterize the policy variation across fifty states not as fifty different policy approaches but more succinctly as variants on a much smaller number of basic approaches. Such an attempt at categorization might actually serve as a “variety reducer,” helping to identify a set of fundamentally different approaches and to distinguish them from variants of the basic approaches; this would have the advantage of highlighting the actual degrees of freedom available in making policy implementation choices.

Though it is typically not recognized, state level cultural policy has become an increasingly important locus of interest for those who are concerned with the health and stability of the arts, culture, and humanities in American life as well as with the overall quality of American life. Yet, this rise in the importance of cultural policy at the state level has not generally been accompanied by a nuanced understanding of the cultural policy system that has evolved within each state. In effect, cultural policy at the state level has been the sum total of the more or less independent, uncoordinated activities of a variety of state agencies and allied organizations and institutions. The extent to which these entities pursue complementary aims or collaborate is not widely understood; nor is there a clear sense of what types of state policy systems enable or foreclose various cultural initiatives. What is clear is that informed public policy, with a sense of current initiatives, available resources, identified opportunities, and visible gaps, is an increasingly important goal to pursue. It is important to the front line agencies in cultural policy because they need to be more and more focused on the effective allocation of public resources and more and more creative about ways in which to take advantage of cross-agency collaborative opportunities. And it is important to those at whom cultural policy is directed because they will benefit from having access to an increasingly transparent system of cultural support and from knowing what opportunities are available at the state level in whichever agency they might be located.

To date, cultural policies and programs at the state level have received surprisingly little analytic attention either from scholars or, for that matter, from practitioners, who, more than anyone, ought to want to extract lessons from the accumulated experiences. What is known? I turn my attention to this question next.

The Literature on State Cultural Policy in the United States

For the most part, the research literature on state cultural policy in the United States is currently a literature on state arts agencies. This relatively narrow focus is due to a number of factors, among them the following:

- The policy analysis tools that have been developed to consider cultural policy at the national level have often found their first application with respect to highly visible arts councils or ministries of culture. Accordingly, it has been relatively easy to transfer these tools and employ them with respect to state level arts agencies.
- There is a formalized funding relationship between the National Endowment for the Arts and the state arts agencies, so inquiries that begin by looking at the National Endowment for the Arts naturally find their attention being turned to state arts agencies at some point.⁷ (In other countries similar networks exist: in Canada provincial arts councils or provincial ministries of culture (or both) complement and interact with the Canada Council for the Arts or Canadian Heritage; the same is true in Australia. But even in countries with a more centralized policy and support system, programs of delegation, devolution, decentralization, and *désétatisation* have been taking hold making it more important to understand how policy is actually being carried out and, occasionally, even determined at lower than national levels.)
- Arts policy has been relatively highly institutionalized at the state level through the state arts councils, all but one of which (Vermont) is a set up as a state agency. To the extent that it is institutionalized, policy for the humanities at the state level is realized through state humanities councils, which have been organized as private nonprofit organizations rather than as state agencies. Heritage and preservation issues are addressed through a variety of institutional mechanisms involving state agencies as well as private nonprofit organizations.
- A series of professional policy-analytic academic associations has developed around the arts—the Association for Cultural Economics International; Social Theory, Politics and the Arts; the Association of Arts Administration Educators; the International Association of Arts and Cultural Management— and their members, for historical reasons, have focused their attention on the arts; similar professional academic associations are not as well developed around the humanities, heritage, or culture, more generally. Perhaps the current conference is pointing the way to a set of broader applications and opportunities?

But what is actually in this literature?

Arts Policy (State Arts Agencies)

The literature on state arts agencies and, by extension, on state arts policy can be usefully divided into several categories. The first category might be described as the “growing pains literature.” Though several of the state arts agencies predated the National Endowment for the Arts, most did not come into existence until the Endowment offered block grants to each state that created a state arts agency.⁸ In these early years there was considerable discussion as to how state arts agencies ought to be organized and the extent to which the states (and the federal government) ought to fund them, thus the growing pains literature. Scott (1970), Harris (1970), Arey (1975), and Price (1976) are examples.

By the mid-1970s each of the fifty states plus several overseas jurisdictions had arts councils. This institutional stabilization of the arts led next to a “descriptive literature” dedicated to documenting the attributes of the resultant agencies. The newly formed Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts catalogued the structure and activities of the state arts agencies in a report entitled, *The State Arts Agencies in 1974: All Present and Accounted For* (NEA, 1978). The Arts Task Force of the National Conference of State Legislatures presented its own description of the activity at the state level in a 1981 report *Arts and the States* (Briskin, 1981); this work was then updated in 1984 (Zimmerman and Radich, 1984). In 1988 NCSL summarized existing legislation at the state level (Underhill, 1988). Today it provides a variety of publications and on-line services including a database of state historic preservation legislation. Some states commissioned their own research to see what their sister agencies were up to (e.g., Scudder, 1974). The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies has had the longest commitment to the descriptive literature, publishing both its series of *State Arts Agency Profiles*⁹ and a variety of reports that look at topics of special interest (Yegge, 1981; Dipko, Hauser-Field, and Love, 1993; Wax, 1995; and Barsdate, 1997).

Once government arts support in general and state level arts support, in particular, had become sufficiently well established, they began to attract the attention of researchers in academia, most notably economists, political scientists, and sociologists. Dick Netzer’s *The Subsidized Muse* (1976), in which he focused on the National Endowment for the Arts but also included some early important work on the politics and the economics of support for the arts at the state level, is, arguably, the best known contribution, but there have been many others that have included or have focused on the state level; Owen (1977), Backas (1980), Platt (1988), Arian (1989) and Dworkin (1991) are examples.

There are two streams within this part of the literature that are particularly strong. The first includes inquiries that explore the relationship between federal policy and funding and state policy and funding. Authors writing in this corner of the literature are concerned with the extent to which there is, and the extent to which there should be a logical division of labor between the federal level and the state level. To what extent can these levels complement one another? To what extent do funding and political realities make them converge? Svenson (1982), DiMaggio (1991) and Love (1991) are examples. The second stream is more economic in inspiration, seeking to explain the variation in legislative appropriations for state arts councils across states.

Hoffebert and Urice (1985); Schuster (1990); Netzer (1992); and Abrams, Brache, and Prinz (1996) have all contributed to this literature.¹⁰

Finally, there is one small corner of this literature that may deserve special mention. This corner might be called the “California literature.” Because the experience of the California Arts Council has been so unusual, particularly the period under Governor Jerry Brown during which the council was reorganized to be administered by artists with a strong streak of populist cultural policy and an attempt was made to replace the democratization of culture with cultural democracy as its fundamental principle, California has attracted an unusual amount of attention. The changes can be clearly seen by contrasting Scott (1971) with Savage (1989), Coyote (1998, pp. 327-346), and Adams and Goldbard (1978).

Humanities Policy

By way of comparison, consider another sector of cultural policy: humanities policy. According to my colleague, Larry Rothfield, who has been examining the humanities side of cultural policy at the state level as part of our project, the literature on humanities policy is:

...almost completely non-existent. One need only compare the web site of National Federation of State Humanities Councils to that of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) to see the disparity. The state humanities councils web site is subordinated within the web site of the National Endowment for the Humanities, with no links of its own to any research. NEH’s web site’s link to News and Publications takes one to a site that includes a further link to Working Group Papers, but that takes one to a blank page, symptomatic of the absence of research at the national as well as state level! Another way of putting this is to say that literature on humanities policy is nearly non-existent, whether at the state or national level. There is, of course, a lot of policy-focused argument about the humanities, but it is focused almost entirely upon the academic humanities, in particular the university-based humanities, and is often white-hot with ideological fervor. State education agencies have produced some policy analysis of interest on the humanities, but the other branches of the public humanities (historical societies, libraries, museum education programs, state archives, and humanities-rich public television and radio programming) have not received the attention of much policy analysis.¹¹

Heritage Policy

Heritage policy is another important component of state cultural policy. We have not yet had the opportunity to conduct a careful scan of the heritage literature to see the extent to which state level heritage policy is documented and discussed. However, preliminary inquiries indicate that, with the exception of one chapter by Elizabeth Lyon (1987), “The States: Preservation in the Middle,” there is very little that focuses on state level policy in the United States.¹²

Cultural Policy

If the research-based literatures on state *heritage* policy and state *humanities* policies are small, the literature on state *cultural* policy is miniscule. To be sure, there have been calls for the more explicit development of state cultural policy, but few have taken on the task of mapping or analyzing the existing components of state cultural policy. There are, however, three notable exceptions.

In the United States the Western State Arts Federation seems to be taking something of a lead in this regard. They have now held two symposia under the rubric of *Cultural Policy in the West* (WESTAF, 1999 and 2000). These symposia are significant in the American context, because they signal a level of comfort in discussing “cultural policy” that has heretofore been absent from the American policy debate. They are also significant because they recognize the possibility that cultural policy in the western United States might be different from cultural policy elsewhere—that it is not simply to be a clone of policies and programs undertaken at the national level—itsself an endorsement of the importance and relevance of sub-national cultural policy.

The second exception can be found in the work of the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds. In the past year they have launched their “Power of Participation” initiative to build audiences and participation in the arts and culture. One of the programs funded under this initiative, “State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation,” targets policy at the state level by providing an incentive to state arts agencies to adopt new, more effective guidelines, programs and funding practices aimed at encouraging broader public participation in the arts.¹³ Thirteen state arts agencies have received grants under this project, which will include a rigorous evaluation process to inform future policy and programs.

The third exception is recent work supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, a private foundation located in Philadelphia. In August of 1999 Pew’s Culture Program announced a \$50 million initiative, “Optimizing America’s Cultural Resources.” One can get a quick sense of just how controversial the phrase “cultural policy” is in the United States by reading some of the key documents surrounding this program. Originally entitled “Optimizing America’s Cultural Policies,”¹⁴ this program was as quickly restyled as “Optimizing America’s Cultural Resources” when controversy ensued.¹⁵ For critics of the Pew initiative, the specter of state *dirigisme* loomed large. Why was a “policy” called for? Wouldn’t this just lead to more bureaucratization of the arts and culture? Why couldn’t this money just be spent on direct provision of the arts or, better yet, be used to support artists?

To date Pew has made a number of grants under the auspices of this program, many of them to build the research, data, and information base for cultural policy analysis and decision making. Two of their grants, however, have entered them directly into the realm of state cultural policy. The first is a feasibility study entitled “Fostering Innovations in State Cultural Policy.”¹⁶ This study, coordinated by RMC Research Corporation under the institutional umbrella of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, is designed to identify and document conspicuously effective examples of state policies in the areas of the arts, the humanities, folklife, and historic preservation. A series of working papers has been commissioned from experts in each of the

subfields, and the results documented in those papers will form the raw material for documentation, communication, and replication activities.

The second state cultural policy grant that Pew has made is for our project, a topic to which I will return after one final diversion.

Strategic Plans and Cultural Plans

Although not published in a manner that makes them easily accessible as research documents, there is another, more practice-oriented literature that is beginning to grow in the field of state cultural policy in the United States—the body of strategic plans developed by state arts agencies or by consortia of state cultural agencies. This attention to planning—if not to more explicit policy—has been driven, at least in part, by the fact that the National Endowment for the Arts requires each state arts agency to submit a state plan for review once every three years.¹⁷ All state arts agencies qualify for some Endowment funding, but they do not all receive competitive funding, which is apportioned on the basis of the quality of the planning process, the plan, and its proposed implementation with particular emphasis on arts education and arts in underserved areas. Ed Dickey, Director of the State and Regional Partnership office at NEA, points out that the extent to which they are good examples of strategic planning varies.¹⁸

Yet, among these strategic plans is new evidence that state agencies are beginning to think about their missions more broadly, pulling together coalitions of state-level cultural organizations to develop state level Cultural Plans. In one of the background papers compiled for the Pew Feasibility Study on Fostering Innovation in State Cultural Policies three examples are highlighted: *The Culture of Oregon: Cultural Development Plan for the State of Oregon* (1998), which, among other things, called for and led to the creation and funding of an Oregon Trust for Cultural Development, which will function as an endowment for the arts and culture in Oregon beyond the normal activities of the state cultural agencies; the *Oklahoma State Cultural Plan* (1995), which was produced by the Oklahoma Cultural Coalition, a consortium of arts, humanities, and cultural services agencies and organization; and the New Century Community Program in Maine (1999), which was the result of a collaboration of seven state cultural agencies (five state agencies and two private non-profit organizations involved in cultural policy at the state level).¹⁹

At this point it is difficult to discern the extent to which these cultural plans are narrowly strategic, interested more in leveraging further resources from the state than in developing a truly coordinated cultural policy. This is, of course, an empirical question amenable to research. What is interesting about these plans from a research perspective is that they form a body of documentation around which these agencies can begin to be held more accountable for their activities; once you put your intent in print, you invite inquiry as to whether that intent is being fulfilled.²⁰ Moreover, these documents in their own right could provide the fodder for an interesting research project on state cultural policy that would compare actual policy as revealed through agency actions to espoused policy.

This tour of the literature demonstrates that there is a growing level of interest in questions of state arts policy and state cultural policy, and that this interest is not only among academics, it is among practitioners as well. If I am correct about the relative importance of state level (sub-national) cultural policy in the entire portfolio of government cultural policy, there is a lot of work to be done. The first step to be undertaken is a careful documentation of the current state of state cultural policy.

Mapping State Cultural Policy

Important work on the mapping of cultural policy has taken place over the last fifteen years under the auspices of the Council of Europe's Program of Reviews of National Cultural Policies. This program was created to give member countries a chance to articulate their cultural policies and to have them reviewed by an outside panel of examiners.

Though I expect that most of the participants at this conference are familiar with this program to some extent, it may be useful to provide a quick summary. Once a country requests to enter into the program and has been accepted, it follows four steps (with a fifth added more recently):

1. The preparation of a "National Report" by a team designated by the country whose policy is under review. This report is intended to set out the "official" view of the national authorities with respect to their policies on the arts and culture. The ministry or government office in charge of cultural affairs must endorse it.
2. The naming of an international team of "examiners" or "experts" who, acting in their individual capacity rather than as representatives of any organization or institution, visit the country, conduct interviews, and supplement the National Report with the collection of additional documentation.
3. The preparation of an "Examiners' Report" with recommendations and further questions. This report is a compilation of the conclusions of the examiners' evaluation made in response to, and in dialogue with, the National Report.
4. The presentation of the two reports at a Hearing ("Review Meeting") before the Culture Committee in Strasbourg, which would include the Minister of Culture of the country under review, other staff involved in that country's national cultural policy, and the examiners.
5. A National Seminar held in the country itself, accompanied by the publication of the two reports in both English and French and often in the local language of the country under evaluation. (This last step was begun several years ago with the completion of the reports on Slovenia.)

To date seventeen national reviews have been completed,²¹ four are underway,²² and six other candidates are on the waiting list.²³ The seventeen pairs of reports plus the countless other documents that have been generated during the evaluation process

comprise a rich database of information on cultural policy at the national level in Europe. (A selected bibliography of publications emanating from this project can be found in the appendix to this paper.) Quite a lot has been written on the country-by-country successes (and failures) of the Program for Evaluation of National Cultural Policies,²⁴ but what is most clear is that the program has resulted in an unparalleled compilation of, and reflection upon, the cultural policies in the participating countries.

With the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, what we are currently trying to do is to adapt the Council of Europe model to a consideration of state cultural policy in the United States. We have received funding for a pilot project to map state cultural policy in one state, and I would like to conclude this paper with some remarks on our work to date.

A Pilot Project

The few cultural plans mentioned above notwithstanding, the notion of a state cultural policy is virtually unknown in the United States. To our knowledge, in no state, even those whose cultural agencies are organized under a state cultural commissioner, is there a cultural policy document that one can pull off the shelf as a basis for such an inquiry. While not surprising, it is important to keep in mind the factors that contribute to this lack of coherence: (1) state cultural policy has either been intentionally spread across a number of agencies and institutions, each with related but distinctly different notions of itself, its role, and its aims, or it has been picked up by agencies who historically one would not have expected to become involved in cultural activities; (2) in such a context, it is not common to think of the aggregate of these agencies, institutions, actions, and policies as constituting a conceptual whole; and (3) much state cultural policy is implicit rather than explicit, being the result of actions and decisions taken without any strong sense of policy intention.²⁵

But the first barrier in applying the Council of Europe model to the United States is that there is no preexisting cross-cutting organization that is currently in a position to offer this kind of review to its members. Moreover, state arts agencies, which are the most likely points of entry for an inquiry into state cultural policy in the United States, are unlikely to be able to (or want to) commit their resources to compiling what would be the state equivalent of the European National Reports. The pressure to spend resources directly on the arts and culture rather than on inquiry to inform policy is often too strong. Even if there were a preexisting organizational structure, it would be unlikely for a state to volunteer²⁶ or help pay for such an inquiry. Thus, we felt that it was important to bring all of the resources for both sides of the inquiry—the mapping of cultural policy and a reflection on that policy—to the table.

In our initial conversations with the Project Advisory Board that we had formed, it became clear that a state would have to be both interested and well positioned to take advantage of such a project. As we begin to explore the possibility of conducting our pilot in several states it became immediately obvious that state level policy and programs is often tied quite closely to local politics and personalities. In these cases, it was difficult to imagine that there would be much interest in an inquiry that would make transparent policies and decisions that might be better left invisible. A well-positioned state would be one in which the cultural agencies and programs

would be interested in collaborating and in which they were willing to view their activities through a policy lens. It would be important, at least for the pilot, that the agencies did not see themselves as only in competition with one another for limited public resources, but, instead, were willing to see themselves as each making a contribution to a broader set of cultural initiatives.

The process that we have embarked upon clearly draws its inspiration of the Council of Europe, but it differs in important ways. Because we wanted to involve our whole project team in the entire project and because there will be no strict equivalent of the National Report—a description of the cultural policy endorsed by the cultural authorities—we will only use one project team. We recognize that this will make it important to distinguish clearly between mapping (description) and reflection (evaluation). Because we have no track record with this type of inquiry, either within the United States or elsewhere, and because no state has gone through this type of process before, we have intentionally left the final stages of the project to be designed when we are nearing completion.

In our pilot project we will map and review the cultural policy system for a single state working across agency boundaries. The process that we are following includes seven steps:

1. **Commitment Meeting:** This meeting, held in the proposed pilot state, is intended to discuss the proposed project with key stakeholders and to obtain a firm commitment to participate. To be successful this project will require the willing participation of the key agencies and their staffs.
2. **Framework Development:** During this phase the project team will develop and test interview protocols for the fieldwork portion of the mapping process.
3. **Policy Documentation—Phase I:** Members of the project team will visit the pilot state to interview key individuals involved in the various aspects of state cultural policy. These interviews will be with representatives of the primary agencies and programs of state cultural policy and will lead to a draft map of the current profile of state cultural policy, which will be circulated for comment.
4. **Policy Analysis I:** During this phase the project team will discuss the profile of cultural policy that has been observed in the field and formulate a set of questions concerning the implementation and impact of the various elements of the revealed cultural policy.
5. **Policy Documentation—Phase II:** At this point the project team will return to the field to interview organizations and institutions that are the targets of state cultural policy. Particular attention will be paid to several different geographic and demographic areas of the state. At this point we will also include state agencies and programs that were not included in the first round.
6. **Policy Analysis II:** After the second round of fieldwork, the project team will produce a document reflecting upon the design and implementation of cultural policy in the

pilot state. This document will be written with an eye to providing valuable external feedback.

7. Final Report and Final Meeting: The pilot project will conclude with a final report and a final event. The event will be designed in consultation with the key stakeholders in the pilot state in order to be maximally useful in furthering the discussion of state cultural policy that will be begun by the mapping process.

It is our expectation that the full mapping and review process will take between twelve and eighteen months.

To identify a pilot state, we began by asking our Project Advisory Board to nominate likely candidate states; five or six were suggested. After a number of conversations, we decided to try to pitch our project first to the State of Washington; there was reason to believe that key agency heads would be interested in such an approach. The Executive Director of the Washington State Arts Commission was quite open to our offer, and she agreed to convene a meeting of key agency representatives in early November. We met with a dozen or so representatives of what had been identified as the key cultural agencies. This meeting was quite remarkable. By all accounts, it was the first time that that group of individuals had gotten together in one room to discuss their common policy interests. They endorsed the proposal and pledged the cooperation of their staffs.

At that meeting we were challenged to make our inquiry truly comprehensive. If we were going to take seriously the notion of a cultural policy crosscutting a wide variety of state agencies and programs—and not just the ones normally considered “the cultural agencies”—we would have to work very hard to come up with as complete a list as possible. So, the first task became identifying all of the nooks and crannies of the state legislative and agency structure in which cultural programs and initiatives might be found. I have appended our current working list of agencies and programs to this paper. One of the first “results” of this project is the discovery of how rich and complicated this list actually is. It would be fair to say that as this list emerged our partners found themselves getting more and more excited about the project as they began to discover programs and agencies about which they had had no previous knowledge; we, on the other hand, have found ourselves getting increasingly wary as the magnitude of the task we have set for ourselves has become clearer.

We are currently in the framework development phase of the project, and we have just encountered our first tricky conceptual issue. One of the distinctive features of the Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago is its commitment to feature and pay attention to humanities policy, an area that has often been neglected as researchers and practitioners have replaced the phrase “arts policy” with the phrase “cultural policy” with no accompanying change in the boundary of attention. While the team is in agreement that the state humanities council, the state historical society, the state library, and the state archives all contribute on the humanities side of state cultural policy, where it gets a bit more complicated is when we consider the realm of state colleges and universities. Unlike the arts, the humanities are produced primarily, or at least substantially, within universities by scholars. Ignoring the policies and organizational practices with regard to the humanities within the university system would mean

missing much of the action, especially since the university-based humanities necessarily stand in tension, if not conflict, with programs and policies in the public humanities as represented by state humanities councils.

On the other hand, a foray into the curriculum-based humanities at state colleges and universities would also seem to necessitate a foray into the curriculum-based arts. We would not want to rectify one imbalance by creating another. Yet, to enlarge our study in this way could be quite time consuming and might risk setting the project team up as a sort of de facto visiting committee for academic departments (a visiting committee that the university, itself, had no hand in creating). The problem of being perceived as a de facto visiting committee is of less relevance in the other agencies and programs we will be considering because there is no tradition of such an inquiry.

On the question of how to treat the university-based humanities, we have been debating three different options, which can be roughly characterized in the following manner:

- To draw a distinction between curricular and non-curricular arts and humanities activities at the state colleges and universities and take a look only at the non-curricular activities. This would include arts centers, museums, humanities institutes, and other cultural organizations that contribute to the life of the university but also have a target audience outside of the university community.
- To try to establish a baseline of "normal investment in curriculum" and try to map any extraordinary program or policy, as well as the extra-curricular activities identified in the first option. As above, this would include both the humanities and the arts.
- To bite the bullet and include all of the university-based arts and humanities, both curricular and non-curricular. A daunting task that I fear could lead us into a morass.

In a sense, we are having a debate between depth and breadth, a debate that is being fueled by our desire to be comprehensive.

A number of problems and pitfalls await. In the Council of Europe's Program of Reviews of National Cultural Policies the mapping (descriptive) task and the reflective (evaluative) task were clearly separated by the device of having two reports compiled by different teams—the national report and the experts report. We will be proceeding with one team and will have to keep clear the distinction between our descriptive work and our reflective work.

We hope to be able to follow a relatively neutral research-based approach to our inquiry, but our interviewees will want to put their best foot forward and may even exert pressure to turn this into a lobbying-on-behalf-of-the-cultural-agencies exercise. On the other hand, we may encounter pressure to just produce a catalog and to steer away from judgements. It would be disappointing if that is all that we end up doing. We may encounter pressure to intervene to "fix" current problems. Our interviewees may wish to "use" us more as consultants than as researchers.

And the question of boundaries to our study will arise continually. We have decided to leave out sports and to limit our forays into programs focused on nature and the environment (unless they have some clear heritage or other cultural content). We have included some private nonprofit organizations as primary actors of state cultural policy even though they are not technically state agencies; as in all fifty states, the state humanities councils is a private nonprofit agency and in Washington, at least, much of heritage policy is administered through the Washington State Historical Society and the Eastern Washington Historical Society, both private nonprofit organizations that function as specially designated “trustee agencies” of the state. And, as I have already pointed out, we will need to resolve our debate concerning the boundaries of the humanities vis-à-vis the arts.

And there are undoubtedly many others that we have not yet foreseen. In two years time when we reconvene once again, I hope that I will be able to report on all of the problems that we will have overcome and on the results we will have achieved.

Because we have taken the metaphor of mapping quite seriously, particularly for Phase I of this project, we will need to regularly remind ourselves and those with whom we will be working of the fact that a map is a *representation*, and only one representation out of many possible ones. Different mapmakers decide to highlight certain features and to pass over others, and to do so they use a variety of graphical conventions. Our work is not dissimilar. We will assemble a map that we hope will represent in an interesting and somewhat opinionated manner the ecology of cultural policy at the state level in Washington, but in the end it will be our map, reflecting what we have heard and observed but also reflecting our own cognitive maps and our own disciplinary approaches. And this is how it should be. We will hold a mirror up to the cultural policy of the state of Washington and ask whether that reflection is a clear one, whether it reflects what was intended, and whether it is a useful in enjoining a debate about the policies and programs it seeks to represent.

Hypotheses

In the process of designing this project, we have tried to operate as much as possible with a blank conceptual slate. Because we are mapping we are hesitant to begin with too many preconceived notions and too many tentative conclusions. Yet, we have not been immune to forming tentative hypotheses, which, after all, are necessary to shaping any social scientific inquiry in a useful way. This has been particularly true for hypotheses focusing on the important differences we expect to encounter between state-level policy and national policy.

Let me suggest an even dozen:

Hypothesis₁: Because it is closer to the citizens, state-level policy will pay more attention to participation, to audiences, and to amateur activities than national policy.

- Hypothesis₂: Because it is closer to the citizens, state-level policy will be less likely than national policy to favor the fine arts over the popular arts or high culture over popular culture.
- Hypothesis₃: Because it is closer to the citizens and to various constituencies, state-level policy and programs will be more likely than national policy to seriously engage diversity and multiculturalism in identifiable ways.
- Hypothesis₄: Because it is closer to the citizens, state-level policy will be more likely to reflect concerns of geographic distribution.
- Hypothesis₅: Because it is closer to the citizens and to various constituencies, state-level policy and programs will be more likely to engage the debate between “cultural democracy” and “the democratization of culture” as guiding principles than will national level policy and programs (which will favor the latter).
- Hypothesis₆: Because state-level policy is based more on a set of fluid political relationships, state-level policy and programs are more likely than national policy and programs to be affected by politics and personalities.
- Hypothesis₇: Because state-level policy is likely to be based more on political influence and a set of political relationships among the cultural agencies, the legislature, the political leadership of the state, cultural organizations, and various constituencies and individuals, it will be even more difficult to find explicit statements of policy than at the national level.
- Hypothesis₈: Because state-level policy is likely to be based more on political influence and a set of political relationships among the cultural agencies, the legislature, the political leadership of the state, cultural organizations, and various constituencies and individuals, line item budgeting is more likely to be in evidence than at the national level.
- Hypothesis₉: Because states have been more entrepreneurial in finding alternative resources in an era of tax limitations, there is likely to be more experimentation with non-tax sources of revenue at the state level.
- Hypothesis₁₀: State agencies that are directly linked to federal funding sources and comparable federal agencies, e.g. state arts councils, are more likely than agencies without such linkages to have policies and programs that are similar to federal policies and programs.
- Hypothesis₁₁: At the state level a wider variety of institutional types and policy surrogates will be engaged in implementing policy, both because of clearer resource constraints and because of a higher level of comfort with locally-known entities.

Hypothesis₁₂: Because the key cultural agencies at the state level tend to be state arts councils, and because they are often quasi-independent with their own boards, there will be a tension between the cultural field's desire for this type of independence and the state government's desire for explicit policy formulation and policy accountability.

Let me stress that these are only preliminary hypotheses that arise from our reading of the literature and our early project meetings and discussions. Whether or not they will be borne out remains to be seen.

Perhaps we can devote some of our discussion time today to suggest other hypotheses about the differences between national and sub-national cultural policies and programs; such a discussion would be extremely helpful to us.

In Summary

By way of a summary, let me review what we are up to.

We have articulated five project principles:

- We are interested, like the Council of Europe, in playing a role in the conceptualization and refinement of the field of public policy in the realm of the arts, the humanities, heritage, and culture.
- We are interested in serving the interests of clarity and transparency in public policy and program design and implementation.
- We accept that there is a difference between reviewing and evaluating policy and reviewing and evaluating programs. We believe that both are important.
- We are offering a service. The primary beneficiary should be cultural policy in the state.
- But we are also conducting research in order to build knowledge. The secondary beneficiary should be those who can learn from our inquiry.

Our specific goals are not dissimilar from those of the Council of Europe's Program of Reviews of National Cultural Policies:

- To understand the entire ecology of cultural policy at the state level better by paying particular attention to gaps, duplications, complementarities, inconsistencies, and opportunities.

- To implement an understanding of cultural policy that goes beyond the arts, narrowly conceived, to include the humanities, cultural heritage, and cultural industries (i.e. profit making as well as nonprofit cultural activities).
- To understand cultural policy at the state level better by making what is implicit explicit.
- To bring together a wide variety of policy-relevant materials for the first time.
- To encourage more challenging, more self-reflective thinking on the part of policy makers.
- To encourage an informed and lively debate on cultural policy at the state level.
- To enable policy actors in the state to see more clearly the results of their policies and programs and to adjust them accordingly.
- To enable policy actors in other states to compare their experiences and to learn from these results and adjust their own policies.
- To look at the causal relationship between actions taken in the name of cultural policy and the results.
- To focus on policy and program effectiveness, on value for money, rather than on absolute levels of funding.
- To identify current practices that are particularly innovative.
- To draw lessons about the formulation and implementation of cultural policy at the state level.
- To provide an impetus for further action in policy formulation, planning, program design, and program implementation.
- To develop tools, approaches, and methodologies that can later be used for cross-state comparison.

The extent to which we will succeed remains to be seen.

Notes

¹ UNESCO was quite active in documenting national cultural policies in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly through the publication of its series, *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*. This series ultimately resulted in the publication of booklets documenting the then existing cultural policies in some fifty member countries. For fifteen years or so this collection, despite the lack of comparability from document to document (i.e. from country to country), provided the only available information on comparative cultural policies at the national level.

² For a summary discussion of this program and the documentation that has resulted from it, see J. Mark Schuster, *Informing Cultural Policy: A Consideration of Models for the Information and Research Infrastructure* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, forthcoming).

³ This analysis includes Volume 1, Number 1 (1994) through Volume 7, Number 2 (2000) of *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*. Note that the first three volumes (six issues) were published under the title, *The European Journal of Cultural Policy*. The one article that explicitly considers cultural policy at the intermediate level is Elisabeth Wolf-Csanády, "Cultural Regions: A Model of Innovative Public Financing of the Arts?" *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1999. Of course, a number of the published articles make reference to sub-national policy issues, and at least one makes a national/sub-national comparison.

⁴ The underlying assumption here is that state arts agencies are less and less likely to be clones of the National Endowment for the Arts, simply mimicking that agency's structure and programs at a more local scale. If this has been true historically in the arts, it is much less likely to have been true in other cultural subfields where there is less of a parallel to the Endowment's conscious efforts to provide incentives for the creation of state arts agencies.

⁵ I adapt the phrases "variety generator" and "variety reducer" from Christopher Hood, *The Tools of Government* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1986).

⁶ I have in mind here the distinction made by Gene Bardach between "best practices" and "smart practices." Bardach is rightfully skeptical that best practices that will transcend a wide variety of local conditions can be identified. Rather, he urges a focus on smart practices, which build upon local knowledge and local conditions to create a better policy fit. With a focus on smart practices even more is to be learned. Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* (New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2000), pp. 71-85.

⁷ A case in point is Dick Netzer, Dick Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse: Public Support for the Arts in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁸ Eventually all of the states created state arts agencies, though for many years in a number of states the state-level budgetary commitment failed to match the financial commitment of the National Endowment's various state partnership programs. For a discussion of this see, Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse*, pp. 79-93 and 185-187.

⁹ The most recent of these reports is Lisa Wax, *1994 State Arts Agency Profile* (Washington, D.C.: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, January 1995). This report summarizes agency operations for the 1994 fiscal year.

¹⁰ Schuster (2000, pp. 83-89) looks at this question the other way around by testing state level appropriations as one of the explanatory variables in a model that seeks to explain variation in artistic participation rates across states.

¹¹ E-mail correspondence with Professor Larry Rothfield, The Cultural Policy Center, The University of Chicago, January 12, 2002.

¹² E-mail correspondence with Robert Stipe, North Carolina State University, April 15, 2001.

¹³ <http://www.wallacefunds.org/frames/subframesetart.htm>

¹⁴ Marian Godfrey, "Optimizing America's Cultural Policies: A New National Initiative, 1998-2000," White Paper, Culture Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 1998.
http://www.pewtrusts.org/ideas/ideas_item.cfm?content_item_id=335&content_type_id=22&issue_name=Cultural%20policy&issue=20&page=22&name=White%20Paper

¹⁵ Some of the early reactions to the announcement of this initiative included: Judith H. Dobrzynski, "Heavyweight Foundation Throws Itself Behind Idea of a Cultural Policy.," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1999, p. E-1; Alice Goldfarb Marquis, "Culture has no Infrastructure," *The New York Times*, August 9, 1999, p. A15; Thomas Hoving, "Culture Resists Top-Down Policy," letter to the editor, *The New York Times*, August 10, 1999, p. A-16; Caroline Abels, "Pew Trusts hopes to Spark Informed Debate on 'Cultural Policy'," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 16, 1999, p. D-1; and "The Pew's Five-Year Plan for Bureaucratizing the Arts," *The New Criterion*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1999, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ <http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/innovation.shtml>

¹⁷ Some, but by no means all, of these strategic plans are available from the web sites of the various state arts agencies.

¹⁸ For its part, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies has NASAA has developed a State Arts Agency Strategic Planning Toolkit, which is available to members through their web site. They are currently in the process of expanding this web site to include examples of state plans and links to state plans.

¹⁹ John Hammer and Jessica Jones, "Humanities Working Paper," written for The Pew Charitable Trusts Feasibility Study on Fostering Innovation in State Cultural Policies, draft.

²⁰ In this regard it is interesting to recall King and Blaug's classic article on the Arts Council of Great Britain, in which they call the Arts Council to task for not seeming to do what they said they were going to do. Karen King and Mark Blaug, "Does the Arts Council Know What it is Doing?" in Mark Blaug, ed., *The Economics of the Arts* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976).

²¹ In chronological order: France, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Finland, Italy, Estonia, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Romania, Albania, and Armenia.

²² Andorra, Moldova, the Slovak Republic, and Turkey.

²³ Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Georgia, and Malta.

²⁴ See, for example, John Myerscough, et al., *Comparative Study: European Programme of National Cultural Policy Reviews*; Christopher Gordon, "Cultural Policy Reviews: Some general and methodological reflections on the Council of Europe's programme of reviews in Member States (1985-1999)," paper commissioned by UNESCO, published in *Culturelink* 30, Vol. 11, April 2000, pp. 173-201, reprinted in *European Perspectives on Cultural Policy* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2001); Ritva Mitchell, "The Appraisal of National Cultural Policies, a Council of Europe Programme—The Dilemma of Cross-National Comparisons (1st part)," *Circular: Research and Documentation on Cultural Policies*, CIRCLE Newsletter, No. 3, 1996; Ritva Mitchell, "The Appraisal of National Cultural Policies, a Council of Europe Programme—Comparability of Results: Several Basic Questions (2nd part)," *Circular: Research and Documentation on Cultural Policies*, CIRCLE Newsletter, Nos. 4/5, 1996; and Sara Selwood, "Book Review: Policy Notes 1-5, Cultural Policies Research and Development Unit, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg," *The International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 6, No.2, 2000, pp. 319-320.

²⁵ In the actual project it will be important for us to be sensitive to the difference between what might be called "intentionally implicit policy" and "unintentionally implicit policy," and to attempt to detect the presence of both.

²⁶ Of course, what it would mean for a state to "volunteer" as opposed to a state agency volunteering is problematic in and of itself.

Appendix A

Draft Working List of Agencies, Institutions, and Programs Involved in State Cultural Policy
State of Washington
January 14, 2002

Primary State Agencies, Commissions, and Programs

Office of the Governor

- Blue Ribbon Arts Taskforce (1998)
- Washington Reading Corps
- Washington Governor's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Washington State Arts Commission

- Art in Public Places
- Other WSAC Programs

Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

- Office of Community Development
 - Community Development Programs Unit
 - Building for the Arts Program
 - Community Development Block Grant Programs
 - Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
 - National Register of Historic Places/Washington Heritage Register
 - Historic Preservation Plan
 - Cultural Resource Inventory
 - Preservation Tax Incentives and Development
 - Local Preservation Programs
- Office of Trade & Economic Development
 - Economic Development
 - Business and Tourism Development
 - Tourism Development
 - Rural Tourism Development
- Seattle Office
 - Film Office

State Library

- State Librarian

Office of the Secretary of State

- Archives and Records Management
 - State Archivist
- Oral History Program
- Legislative Oral History Program
- Regional Archives

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

- Planning
- Interpretive Services
- The Millennium Trail

Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation

Department of Transportation
Highways & Local Programs Service Center
Heritage Corridors Program

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Curriculum and Instruction
Visual and Performing Arts

Department of Labor and Industries

Washington State Colleges and Universities
University of Washington
Burke Museum of Natural History
Henry Art Gallery
Meany Hall for the Performing Arts
Washington State University
The Museum of Arts at Washington State University
The Evergreen State College
Evergreen Gallery
Longhouse Education and Cultural Center
Washington State Library Media Center
Eastern Washington University
EWU Gallery of Art
EWU Digital Gallery
Exhibit Touring Services
Central Washington University
Collaborations for arts in education.

TVW (Washington State's Public Affairs Network)

Office of the State Treasurer
Revenues for Distribution
Convention and Trade Center Tax
Hotel-Motel Special Excise Tax (Transient Lodging Tax)
Hotel-Motel Tax (Stadium Tax)
Local Sales and Use Tax
Maritime Historic Preservation Tax

Department of Agriculture
Agriculture Commissions
Wine Commission
Apple Commission
Fairs Commission

State Convention and Trade Center

Washington State Commission on African-American Affairs

Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs

Trustee Agencies (Nonprofit organizations designed as state trustees)

Washington State Historical Society
Office of the Director
Washington State History Museum
WSHS Research Center
State Capital Museum
Heritage Resource Center
Center For Columbia River History

Eastern Washington State Historical Society
Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture
Research Library and Archive

Non-Governmental Organizations Involved in Policy at State Level

Washington Commission for the Humanities

Nonprofit Organizations Created (in part) by the State

Centrum (a nonprofit center for the arts and creative education)

Artist Trust

Other State Agencies, Commissions, and Programs

Department of Natural Resources
Signatory to the Memo of Understanding/Interagency Agreement on Cultural Tourism.

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Signatory to the Memo of Understanding/Interagency Agreement on Cultural Tourism.

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Note: While we feel that we have completed a fairly complete scan of the literature on arts policy, we have just begun our inquiry into humanities policy and heritage policy. Thus, these lists are preliminary and incomplete. We would appreciate any references to other relevant sources.

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