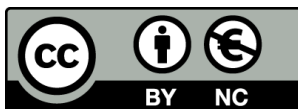


RETHINKING THE GOVERNANCE OF LOCAL
CULTURAL POLICY
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Jordi Baltà Portolès



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DOCTORAL THESIS

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from the Perspective of Sustainability**

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2023



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2023

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- Baltà Portolés, J. (2020). A Rights-based Approach to the Local Governance of Culture. Kann Kultur Politik? Kann Politik Kultur? Warum wir wieder mehr über Kulturpolitik sprechen sollten. M. Wimmer. Berlin and Boston, De Gruyter.
- Baltà Portolés, J. (2020). When Art Opens Spaces of Possibilities: Policies, Tensions, and Opportunities. Forces of Art: Perspectives from a Changing World. C. Kuoni, J. Baltà Portolés, N. N. Khan and S. Moses. Amsterdam, Valiz.
- Baltà Portolés, J. and H. Bashiron Mendolicchio (2021). Cultura, medi ambient i emergència climàtica: Com actuar en l'àmbit de la gestió i les polítiques culturals locals. Barcelona, Diputació de Barcelona.
- Baltà Portolés, J. (2022). Llum d'emergència: una mirada des dels drets culturals i les polítiques culturals locals. Fusée de détresse. P. Fernández Sobrino and G. Ledegen. Rennes, L'âge de la tortue / Presses universitaires de Rennes.
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List of acronyms

ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
BeC	Barcelona en Comú
CCCB	Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona)
CERC	Centre d'Estudis i Recursos Culturals (Centre of Cultural Studies and Resources, belonging to the Provincial Council of Barcelona)
CoNCA	Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts (National Council for Culture and the Arts, Catalonia)
CiU	Convergència i Unió
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DEAL	Doughnut Economics Action Lab
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
FEMP	Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICUB	Institut de Cultura de Barcelona (Culture Institute of Barcelona)
ICV	Iniciativa per Catalunya – Verds
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
US	United States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
XEC	Xarxa d'Espais Comunitaris (Network of Community Spaces, Catalonia)

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Back in Barcelona, a few months later I joined the Interarts Foundation, where I would work for over 13 years. I am forever indebted to its founder, Eduard Delgado, whose vision, passion and knowledge for culture and cultural rights are difficult to match and have inspired me, as well as several generations of cultural managers, in Catalonia and elsewhere. Eduard passed away in February 2004, leaving a huge void in the field but also a path which I and many others have been aiming to follow since then. Alfons Martinell, a close colleague and friend of Eduard's, and the Chair of the Interarts Foundation in those early days, was then, and continues to be, an inspiring voice in all matters related to culture and sustainable development.

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Abstract (English)

This thesis considers how the climate crisis and broader sustainability challenges call for a revision of approaches to cultural policy and, more specifically, what this implies for the governance of local cultural policy. Cities and local spaces are relevant settings because the frictions generated by sustainability become particularly apparent there, and because it is at the local level where conditions may exist for sustainable, culturally-adapted pathways to emerge. Addressing the governance of local cultural policy is also particularly significant because governance provides a setting for the collective negotiation of such tensions, and for the subsequent evolution of cultural policy.

In order to address this topic, I have drawn on cultural policy studies, sustainable development studies, and public policy analysis, as well as my own previous practice and observations, and have conducted a case study in Barcelona, examining a set of tensions that arise in the conceptualisation and practice of governance of local cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability: namely, the 'local ownership versus diversity tension', the 'territorial versus multi-level tension', the 'citizen participation versus public responsibility tension', and the 'broad versus narrow scope tension'. Given that I adopt a broad understanding of governance, the case study examines formal decision-making spaces and policy documents (e.g. the Council of Culture and the local government's cultural strategies), as well as grassroots processes that illustrate negotiations between community initiatives and public authorities, analysing how they are mutually related.

Through the examination of existing knowledge on culture and sustainable development, I present six propositions in order to align cultural policy with the implications of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. They include engaging more overtly with societal conflicts and tensions, acknowledging how culture is interdependent with other spheres of life, contributing to the broadening of cultural capabilities while fostering an ethics of responsibility towards nature, enabling a dynamic negotiation between permanence and change, and providing spaces for multiple narratives to emerge, coexist and interact.

Building on these propositions, and on an analysis of the conditions that may allow governance to evolve and to inform cultural policy change through a 'policy feedback' process, I provide a set of directions for a new governance framework in local cultural policy. The framework addresses the values and principles that should inform governance-related policy-making (e.g., focusing particularly on the human dimension of sustainability, fostering a cosmopolitan outlook in cultural policy, and combining the strengthening of governance with measures to address inequalities in cultural life), the mechanisms that determine participation (e.g., understanding governance as a connective, open space, that explores the boundaries of the cultural realm, and combining participatory opportunities at several territorial levels), and the methods of governance (e.g., adopting 'community of practice' methodologies that connect thinking, learning and doing, and strengthening the mobilisation, generation and interpretation of diverse forms of knowledge).

Resum (català)

Aquesta tesi planteja com, en la perspectiva de la crisi climàtica i altres reptes relacionats amb la sostenibilitat, cal repensar els models de polítiques culturals. Més concretament, es demana per les implicacions d'aquest context per a la governança de les polítiques culturals locals. Les ciutats i els espais locals són entorns significatius perquè les friccions que genera la sostenibilitat hi són especialment visibles, i perquè és a nivell local on hi pot haver les condicions necessàries perquè emergeixin alternatives sostenibles i adaptades culturalment. Abordar la governança de les polítiques culturals locals també és especialment important perquè la governança ofereix un entorn per a la negociació col·lectiva d'aquestes tensions, i perquè les polítiques culturals evolucionin conseqüentment.

Per tal d'abordar aquestes qüestions, he partit de literatura existent en matèria de política cultural, desenvolupament sostenible i l'anàlisi de polítiques públiques, així com de la meua pròpia pràctica i observacions anteriors, i he elaborat un estudi de cas a Barcelona, per analitzar un conjunt de tensions que apareixen en la conceptualització i la pràctica de la governança de les polítiques culturals locals des de la perspectiva de la sostenibilitat: la tensió entre l'apropiació local i la diversitat; la tensió entre aproximacions territorials i multinivell; la tensió entre la participació ciutadana i la responsabilitat pública; i la tensió entre l'abast ampli i l'abast reduït de les polítiques culturals. Atès que adopto una noció àmplia de la governança, l'estudi de cas aborda tant els espais formals de presa de decisions i els documents polítics oficials (com ara el Consell de la Cultura i els plans estratègics de cultura) com els processos de base que exemplifiquen les negociacions entre les iniciatives comunitàries i el govern local, i analitza de quina manera es relacionen.

Mitjançant l'anàlisi del coneixement existent en matèria de cultura i desenvolupament sostenible, formulo sis propostes per alinear les polítiques culturals amb les implicacions de la sostenibilitat, l'adaptació i la regeneració: entre d'altres, un abordatge més explícit dels conflictes i les tensions socials, el reconeixement de la interdependència entre la cultura i altres esferes de la vida, la contribució a l'ampliació de les capacitats culturals alhora que es fomenta una ètica de la responsabilitat envers la natura, el foment d'una negociació dinàmica entre la continuïtat i el canvi, i l'aportació d'espais perquè múltiples narratives emergeixin, coexisteixin i interactuïn.

A partir d'aquestes propostes, i de l'anàlisi de les condicions que poden permetre l'evolució dels models de governança i la influència d'aquests en el canvi de les polítiques culturals mitjançant un procés de "retroalimentació de polítiques" (*policy feedback*), la tesi proposa una sèrie de direccions per a un nou marc de governança de les polítiques culturals locals. El marc aborda els valors i principis que haurien d'influir les polítiques relacionades amb la governança (la prioritització de la dimensió humana de la sostenibilitat, el foment d'una perspectiva cosmopolita en les polítiques culturals, i la combinació d'un enfortiment de la governança amb mesures per abordar les desigualtats en la vida cultural), els mecanismes que poden determinar la participació (la comprensió de la governança com un espai obert i de connexió, que explori els límits de l'esfera cultural, i la combinació d'oportunitats per a la participació a diversos nivells territorials) i els mètodes de governança (l'adopció de metodologies pròpies de les "comunitats de pràctica", que connectin la reflexió, l'aprenentatge i l'acció, i l'enfortiment de la mobilització, generació i interpretació de diverses formes de coneixement).

Resumen (castellano)

Esta tesis plantea de qué forma, en la perspectiva de la crisis climática y otros retos relacionados con la sostenibilidad, es preciso repensar los modelos de políticas culturales. Más concretamente, se pregunta por las implicaciones de este contexto para la gobernanza de las políticas culturales locales. Las ciudades y los espacios locales son entornos significativos porque las fricciones que genera la sostenibilidad se hacen especialmente visibles en ellas, y porque es a nivel local donde pueden darse las condiciones para que emerjan alternativas sostenibles y adaptadas culturalmente. Abordar la gobernanza de las políticas culturales locales también es especialmente importante porque la gobernanza ofrece un entorno para la negociación colectiva de estas tensiones, y para que las políticas culturales evolucionen consecuentemente.

Para abordar estas cuestiones, he partido de literatura existente en materia de políticas culturales, desarrollo sostenible y análisis de políticas públicas, así como de mi propia experiencia y observaciones anteriores, y he elaborado un estudio de caso en Barcelona, para analizar un conjunto de tensiones que aparecen en la conceptualización y la práctica de la gobernanza de las políticas culturales locales desde la perspectiva de la sostenibilidad: la tensión entre la apropiación local y la diversidad; la tensión entre aproximaciones territoriales y multinivel; la tensión entre la participación ciudadana y la responsabilidad pública; y la tensión entre el alcance amplio y el alcance reducido de las políticas culturales. Dado que adopto una noción amplia de gobernanza, el estudio de cas aborda tanto los espacios formales de toma de decisiones y los documentos políticos oficiales (como el Consejo de la Cultura y los planes estratégicos de cultura) como los procesos de base que ejemplifican las negociaciones entre las iniciativas comunitarias y el gobierno local, y analiza de qué forma se relacionan.

Mediante el análisis del conocimiento existente en materia de cultura y desarrollo sostenible, formulo seis propuestas para alinear las políticas culturales con las implicaciones de la sostenibilidad, la adaptación y la regeneración: entre otras, un tratamiento más explícito de los conflictos y las tensiones sociales, el reconocimiento de la interdependencia entre la cultura y otras esferas de la vida, la contribución a la ampliación de las capacidades culturales al mismo tiempo que se fomenta una ética de la responsabilidad hacia la naturaleza, el fomento de una negociación dinámica entre la continuidad y el cambio, y la aportación de espacios para que múltiples narrativas emerjan, coexistan e interactúen.

A partir de estas propuestas, y del análisis de las condiciones que pueden permitir la evolución de los modelos de gobernanza y la influencia de estos en el cambio de las políticas culturales mediante un proceso de “retroalimentación de políticas” (*policy feedback*), la tesis propone una serie de direcciones para un nuevo marco de gobernanza de las políticas culturales locales. Este marco aborda los valores y principios que deberían influenciar las políticas relacionadas con la gobernanza (la priorización de la dimensión humana de la sostenibilidad, el fomento de una perspectiva cosmopolita en las políticas culturales, y la combinación de un fortalecimiento de la gobernanza junto a medidas para abordar las desigualdades en la vida cultural), los mecanismos que pueden determinar la participación (la comprensión de la gobernanza como un espacio abierto y de conexión, que explore los límites de la esfera cultural, y la combinación de oportunidades para la participación a varios niveles territoriales) y los métodos de gobernanza (la adopción de metodologías propias de las “comunidades de práctica”, que conecten la

reflexión, el aprendizaje y la acción, y el fortalecimiento de la movilización, generación e interpretación de distintas formas de conocimiento).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Theme, background and motivation

This thesis considers how the transformations brought about by the climate crisis and broader sustainability challenges, affecting both natural systems and the relationship of humans with the planet, call for a revision of the ways in which cultural policy has been conceived in recent decades. More particularly, it addresses how approaches to governance in cultural policy at the local level may need to be revised in this light. I will approach these questions through a combination of disciplinary perspectives, including cultural policy studies, sustainable development studies and public policy analysis, as well as with an analysis of policy documents and one case study conducted in Barcelona.

I can trace my interest in these themes to my personal and professional experience. Furthermore, as the thesis will demonstrate, they are relevant for cultural policy research and practice more broadly. At a very general level, my thesis emerges from a consideration of the factors that can make collective life in a given community attractive to those who live in it. In this respect, besides basic needs such as housing, nourishment and safety, a set of intangible aspects also contribute to my understanding of collective life. Among them is a sense of belonging and connectedness to a community and place, expressed both in a network of family and friends and in the broader acknowledgement of membership in a given, plural society, which informs my sense of identity and meaning and also involves responsibility towards others. Many of these intangible elements of collective life are developed in what we know as ‘cultural life’ – understood as a ‘living process, historical, dynamic and evolving, with a past, a present and a future’ (UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 2009: para 11) where culture is shaped and re-shaped, and which ‘strongly suggests the collective’ (Thornberry 2008: 9).

A concern with the factors that enable a sense of the collective and the common may have been, perhaps inadvertently, one of the reasons why I studied political science first, and cultural policy second. In the early stages of my work as a researcher and consultant in the field of cultural policy, in 2001 I joined the Interarts Foundation, a think-tank based in Barcelona which addressed local and regional cultural policy with a strong European and international scope. At the core of Interarts’ work was the exploration of the connections between culture and development. This drew on a range of contributions which, particularly since the 1970s, had suggested that development goals should not revolve exclusively around economic growth but should also take into account cultural issues, such as ways of life, collective identities, heritage and creative practices, and that approaches to development needed to be tailored to local contexts and consider their cultural impacts (Girard 1972, World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, Arizpe 2004, Fukuda-Parr 2004, Kovács 2010, De Beukelaer 2015). The European report *In from the margins* (European Task Force on Culture and Development 1997), written by a task force involving Interarts’ founder Eduard Delgado, and the Catalan and Spanish edition of which had been published by Interarts in the late 1990s, was a major source of influence for me in those early years.

Investigating the connections between culture and development leads to a rather open understanding of cultural policy, which recognises how cultural policy is shaped by broader economic and social factors, while also seeing the rationale and processes of cultural policy as closely connected to goals and resources that lie outside the formal precinct of culture (i.e. going beyond a narrow focus on the arts and heritage). Indeed, the effective 'scope' of cultural policy, and to what extent cultural policy generally fails to fully engage with the cultural dimension of public life, has been a frequently discussed issue in academic literature and in policy documents (Mercer 1993, rev., World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, Hawkes 2001, Teixeira Coelho 2009, Barker 2019, Martinell Sempere 2021).

Inevitably, tensions between cultural and other goals emerge in this context – e.g. between placing emphasis on the economic or social potential of cultural activities when these are seen as *means* or *resources* to achieve 'non-cultural' goals, and seeking a more 'autonomous' realm for culture, which is less explicitly dependent on other types of goals. Placing culture in connection with development also involves examining the trade-offs that emphasising instrumental benefit entails, and considering more comprehensive, complex understandings of how culture can simultaneously provide different kinds of value (see e.g. Matarasso and Landry 1999, Delgado 2001b, Belfiore 2002, Holden 2004, O'Connor 2016, Hadley and Gray 2017, Meyrick, Phiddian et al. 2018, Belfiore 2020). This has also involved, at least in the tradition I followed, considering the ways in which different cultural aspects may be connected to specific interpretations of development, such as human and sustainable development (Delgado 2001b, Hawkes 2001, Sen 2004, Pascual 2007b, Martinell Sempere 2010, Duxbury, Hosagrahar et al. 2016). Working for several years, since the mid-2010s, as an advisor to the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), a global network of local and regional governments, and my ongoing consultancy work for local and national governments in different contexts, has provided insights into these relationships as well as the tensions between different policy goals, particularly when implemented in practice.

Within the exploration of the connections between culture and broader societal development, one particular element which has informed my approach is the affirmation of the right to take part in cultural life as central to the dignity of all human beings. This is one of the rights enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights and has been reflected in other international human rights documents thereafter (e.g. the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), as well as in national constitutions and laws. Several of the texts which have informed my work over the years relate to this topic, and particularly to the understanding that cultural policies may make citizens' exercise of cultural rights a goal or a guiding principle (Delgado 2001b, Donders 2004, Laaksonen 2010, UCLG 2015, Vickery 2018, Baltà Portolés 2020a). This rights-based framing has some parallels with the ethical approach proposed by human development scholars such as Amartya Sen when suggesting that the enrichment of human lives through participation in cultural life embodies the well-being and the freedoms that 'we seek in development' (Sen 2004: 39). At a personal level, I have engaged as a human rights activist at Amnesty International since the late 1990s, and that practice has also informed my work as a researcher and practitioner in the cultural field, placing it in a human rights framework.

Seeing the right to take part in cultural life as a basis for cultural policy has several implications, among which two elements are particularly relevant for my thesis. Firstly, I would argue that it is at the local level, i.e. in cities, towns and neighbourhoods, where the conditions for exercising

this right should particularly exist, through the existence of enabling policies, cultural facilities and services, etc. (Martinell 2014). This can be placed within a broader set of urban studies which have emphasised how local areas are particularly suited to policy innovation and can more effectively address contemporary challenges (Barber 2013, Landry 2014, Khanna 2016). While the strengthening of digital spaces nowadays leads to a ‘deterritorialisation’ of many human processes, including cultural participation, I would claim, as several contemporary authors have suggested (Barber 2013, Martinell 2014, Khanna 2016, Klinenberg 2018), that local spaces remain key both in terms of provision of basic services and the building of collective life. Focusing on the local level also serves to emphasise that, despite their universal nature, cultural rights shall not be applied equally everywhere, but rather ‘grounded’, through ‘a systematic analysis of the ... embeddedness of rights in the overlapping realms of social and cultural life’ (Vickery 2018: 8) – that is, acknowledging that varying local circumstances will require specific forms of implementation. Ultimately, in this thesis I will present some general directions for the governance of local cultural policy, which could later be situated or grounded according to local circumstances. At the same time, it is national governments (or ‘States parties’) that are primarily held accountable by international human rights law, including in the field of cultural rights (UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 2009). Therefore, legal responsibilities and pragmatic reasons are distributed across different territorial levels and call for a sophisticated understanding of the multi-level nature of cultural rights and their policy implications. Of course, challenges generated by sustainability today also have a strong multi-level nature, which again calls for a sophisticated, complex governance approach, as I will argue later.

Secondly, cultural rights have fundamental implications not only for the *goals* and the *outputs* of cultural policy (for instance, by adopting policies and measures aimed at broadening citizens’ opportunities to access and participate in cultural activities), but also, methodologically, for its *processes*. The latter involve transforming governance mechanisms in order to make them more open to the engagement and participation of citizens in deliberation and decision-making (Fribourg Group 2007, Pascual 2007b). The transformation of governance is the specific topic on which I will focus.

The consideration of these aspects today is inevitably affected by the climate crisis, which underpins reflections about the future in all areas of life (Latour 2015, Beck 2016, Hage 2017, Latour 2017). Sustainability challenges threaten the continuity of human life, including its cultural dimension, and, as a result, restrict opportunities to exercise the right to take part in cultural life (UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights 2020). Furthermore, there is extensive evidence that some cultural aspects, such as consumerism, are significant drivers of the planetary crisis (Clammer 2016) whereas others, such as traditional knowledge and creativity, can be the source of solutions and innovation to face the crisis (World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, Clammer 2016, Baltà Portolés and Bashiron Mendolicchio 2021). In terms of cultural policy, there is a need to revise its scope (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017, Barker 2019, Martinell Sempere 2021), consider under which conditions culture may be relevant to sustainability (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017), as well as how governance models should evolve in the light of these challenges (De Beukelaer and Freitas 2015).

As I will describe in chapter 3, there is an extensive corpus of literature which has examined the connections between culture and development and also, more specifically, between cultural policy and human or sustainable development (see e.g. World Commission on Culture and

Development 1996, Martinell Sempere 2010, Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017). Likewise, the implications of reflections on sustainable development and of the right to take part in cultural life for cultural policies at the local level have been addressed in several academic and policy documents (UCLG 2004, Martinell 2014, Miralles 2014a, UCLG 2015, UNESCO 2016). However, the specific implications of sustainability for the governance of local cultural policy have been underexplored, both in academic literature and in practice, as observed in my experience as a consultant providing support to local governments in their drafting and implementation of cultural policies and strategies. I think that the challenges that sustainability and adaptation to the climate crisis pose today require comprehensive changes in the understanding of cultural policy, and that this also needs to be reflected in governance models. It is in particular on these themes that my thesis will focus.

1.2. Key concepts

Several of the concepts which are central to my thesis, including ‘culture’, ‘cultural policy’, ‘sustainability’ and ‘governance’, have multiple meanings and are highly context-dependent. As a result, it is necessary to specify here my understanding thereof, which I will explore further in detail in the coming chapters.

Culture

Providing a definition of culture is a complex exercise, given the multiple, frequently opposed meanings of the term in both English (Williams 1983, rev.) and other languages (Monegal 2022). Whereas no definition of culture will ever be final, presenting my understanding of culture becomes important in the context of my thesis, in order to set my particular position around one of the central concepts I will engage with. This also serves to reduce the risk of making an empty usage of the term, given the prevalence of references to culture in many different contexts (Eagleton 2018).

My understanding of culture encompasses, firstly, those factors which enable a particular group or community, of whichever nature, to share a sense of the collective, as expressed in customs, beliefs, values and practices (Throsby 2000). Secondly, it includes specific expressions, including arts and creativity, and the legacy of such creativity in the form of cultural heritage, which may reinforce or challenge the understanding of the collective. Thirdly, culture provides a space to generate meaning about individual and collective lives and relationships with our environment. Rather than these meanings being separate, they are connected to one another in ways that may be mutually reinforcing or mutually challenging (Barbalho 2021, Monegal 2022). These connections are intrinsic to culture and yet are often unseen, for culture may operate as a ‘social unconscious’ (Eagleton 2018: viii).

Culture operates both at the individual and collective level. While I agree that ‘[all] individuals are vehicles of culture, as well as participants in its development’ (UCLG 2015: 11), culture does not evolve through individual contributions only, but rather through dialogue and interaction (Hawkes 2001, Teixeira Coelho 2009, Jullien 2017). The consideration of the individual and collective nature of culture should be central to cultural policy, which should concern itself both with the availability of individual opportunities to create new expressions and make sense of

one's life and with the existence of spaces for interaction, ranging from collaboration to discord. In this respect, while all individuals may be vehicles of culture and participants in its development (UCLG 2015), they do not influence collective culture in equal terms (Barbieri 2021), something which is important as per the cultural rights perspective which informs my thesis.

One final observation concerns the need to understand that the interactions which inform culture involve not only humans but also relations with the broader environment in which we exist. While, particularly since the Enlightenment, the prevailing views of culture in the West have tended to oppose it to nature, the ways of inhabiting the world which make up our culture integrate, often unperceived, our relations with the planet, including the exploitation of nature. Negotiating a different, more explicit position for nature in our understanding of culture, which recognises interdependence (Latour 2015, Clammer 2016, Van Doreen, Kirksey et al. 2016), and which may draw on traditional and Indigenous knowledge (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010, Pascoe 2014, Escobar 2019, Yunkaporta 2019), emerges as an important element here.

This understanding of culture informs my understanding of cultural policy as presented in the next sub-section. Yet while cultural policy needs to take into consideration the broader meaning of culture, it also requires a relatively manageable scope (Teixeira Coelho 2009), thus having to operate in the space between the broad meaning of culture and the more or less tangible set of objectives, processes, policies and measures which embody it.

Cultural policy

My understanding of cultural policy concerns the set of policies and measures, as well as informal processes, which have a bearing on the ability of individuals and groups to develop their identities, make sense of their lives, express themselves creatively, access diverse cultural content and expressions, and retain connections with the tangible and intangible heritage from the past.

This definition is relatively broad, in a number of ways. Firstly, by referring to a set of policies, measures and informal processes, I go beyond a narrow understanding of cultural policy as embodied in some written, formally adopted tools only (as in a 'cultural policy law' or a 'cultural policy document'). This is in line with some approaches to public policy which highlight the importance of associational and informal relationships in shaping policy-making (John 2012). Secondly, this definition could include policies and measures adopted by different agents (e.g. private media corporations, given their effects on cultural life (Martinell Sempere and Teixeira Coelho 2015)). While I will focus on cultural policy as adopted by public authorities (though frequently negotiated with other actors), given their specific legal status as bearers of public authority and because of their responsibilities vis-à-vis human rights and forms of governance of cultural policy, the fact that public cultural policies are rarely hegemonic in the cultural sphere (Vickery 2018) needs to be acknowledged. In this respect, my focus on governance as a space in which several stakeholders interact and negotiate issues which frequently embody conflicts and tensions serves to acknowledge the non-hegemonic place of public actors. Thirdly, this understanding of cultural policy deals with processes related to identity-building, creativity, access to diverse content and connections with heritage, and therefore goes beyond a narrower focus on 'the arts' or 'the arts and heritage', even though these remain important aspects in cultural policy. Fourthly, and partly related to the previous points, cultural policy in this sense

may be adopted not only by government departments or other public bodies which have an explicit remit on culture (e.g. a Ministry of Culture or Arts Council) but also by others which have bearing on the development of identities, creative expression, and heritage preservation, etc. (e.g. Ministries of Education, Media, Urban and Regional Planning, etc.).

Cultural policy can serve many purposes and 'rationales'. In a critical perspective, it can be interpreted as 'a site for the production of cultural citizens' (Lewis and Miller 2003: 1) and as a way to obtain consensus for a particular social order or transformation (García Canclini 1987). It can also be seen, more narrowly, as a process to determine '... the conditions of culture, the material and, also, the discursive determinations in time and space of cultural production and consumption' (McGuigan 2003: 34). As per its more explicit goals, they can include national prestige through the presentation of heritage and creativity, an educational or 'civilising' mission, a correction of the market by supporting those cultural forms which are less likely to be supported through market mechanisms, or the broadening of opportunities for citizens to exercise their cultural rights (Bennett 1995, Delgado 2001b). My particular approach to cultural policy is informed by a perspective based on the right to take part in cultural life, and to what extent policies and measures are conducive to broadening opportunities in this respect – i.e. how, to use McGuigan's terms above (2003), cultural policy can set the conditions for everyone's right to take part in cultural life. However, translating the legal formulation of cultural rights into clear, specific cultural policy has frequently emerged as a challenge (Vickery 2018), something which this thesis, building on the work of others (e.g. Martinell 2014, UCLG 2015), modestly aims to address. I also adhere to a critical perspective such as that proposed earlier by Lewis and Miller (2003), aware that there is a risk that cultural policy tools be deployed to 'produce' a particular cultural order irrespective of individual rights, something that will inform the research process.

Sustainability, adaptation and regeneration

Whereas cultural policy is the specific field on which my thesis focuses, sustainability operates as the encompassing backdrop which leads me to consider how cultural policy and its governance may need to evolve. The term 'sustainability' is often used interchangeably with 'sustainable development', which the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) famously described in 1987 as development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: para 27). While this remains a promising prospect in the abstract, a critical perspective in 2023 suggests that the needs of today's generations, not to mention those of the future, are already being compromised, indeed threatened, by much of what 'development' has generated, including climate change, the loss of biodiversity and increasing social and economic inequalities in many societies around the world.

Therefore, if 'sustainability' is to remain relevant, it needs firstly to recover its original, 'normative' meaning (De Beukelaer 2015) and acknowledge the inherent tensions that exist between the environmental, economic and social dimensions of development and, particularly, how the pre-eminence of economic growth threatens the preservation of conditions for constructive social relations and planetary care (see e.g. Dessein, Soini et al. 2015, Escobar 2019). Related to this is, secondly, the need to acknowledge that 'sustaining' the current state of things

is no longer sufficient, but that a different cosmovision is necessary – as expressed by ‘adaptation’, which involves a more balanced, respectful relation with the environment (Sennett 2019, Klinenberg 2021), and ‘regeneration’, which involves redressing the damage done and contributing to the restoration of a more balanced human and planetary ecosystem (Hawken 2021, Klinenberg 2021). While, for the sake of simplicity, I will frequently refer to ‘sustainability’ only, my understanding of sustainability is a critical one, which calls for integrating adaptive and regenerative elements to fully achieve the promise of recovering balanced relations among humans and between them and the planet.

Thirdly, I would also posit that, in addition to its environmental, social and economic components, sustainability needs to consider the importance of cultural aspects, which inform lifestyles, societal values, expectations and the design of future horizons (Hawkes 2001, Clammer 2016). Recognising the importance of cultural aspects here involves both integrating them in approaches to the future (including in public policies) and critically examining how some cultural aspects (e.g. lifestyles, values) preclude a balanced relation between humans, and between them and the planet. And fourthly, sustainability today requires overcoming the nation-based perspective which informs mindsets and policies, and finding a new balance between local and global developments (Beck 2016, Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017), in a multi-level perspective.

Governance

As in the previous examples, ‘governance’ is used in many different contexts and with multiple meanings, and this can lead to confusion (Lynn, Heinrich et al. 2001, Frederickson 2005, Čopič and Srakar 2012). Focusing in particular on the governance of public policies, the understanding that there exist a set of ‘common affairs’ that require negotiation between different stakeholders and can result in conflict or cooperation (Commission on Global Governance 1995) is particularly significant to me. More precisely, I would adhere to Dessein et al’s definition of governance as a set of ‘processes of social interaction involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes, based on values and principles such as local democracy, transparency, citizens’ participation, cooperation and exchange’ (2015: 38).

Therefore, the governance of cultural policy as I understand it refers to the values, principles and processes that shape deliberation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation in cultural policy. Values and principles, whether explicit or implicit, affect practice and process, including, for instance, who takes part and who does not, and how, as well as the extent to which, cultural policy integrates a holistic perspective which connects it with environmental, social or economic aspects. Similarly, formal arrangements in decision-making may be more or less inclusive of different stakeholders and adopt a more or less comprehensive, holistic or interrelated perspective, something that arises as a requirement in the light of the understanding of sustainability presented above, the broad understanding of cultural policy I described earlier, and the consideration of human rights as a requirement in cultural policy processes and goals.

1.3. The problem I intend to address: A need to rethink the governance of local cultural policy

This thesis emerges from the consideration that, if current challenges related to sustainability involve a mutation of our relation with the planet (Latour 2015) and call for a comprehensive revision of human values and behaviours, and if cultural aspects are closely connected to such values and lifestyles, then existing approaches to cultural policy should be revised. This would introduce a more central consideration of the ways in which cultural aspects may challenge or enable sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. This has implications both regarding the *substance* of cultural policy (e.g. its scope, including how the relations between humans and between them and the planet should be part of the remit of cultural policy; and the nature of specific programmes and measures) and its *methods* or *processes*, including governance – e.g. who engages in deliberation and decision-making, what this implies, what mechanisms exist to make governance inclusive, transparent and effective, etc. Of course, substance and method are interconnected here, because, for instance, a broader scope in cultural policy should also involve recognising more stakeholders as relevant to the governance of cultural policy.

How the governance of cultural policy may need to evolve in the light of challenges posed by sustainability, and what this involves particularly at the local level, is the ‘intellectual problem’ or ‘paradox’ (Dunleavy 2003: 23) that I intend to address in this thesis. More precisely, I have identified some specific tensions in the conceptualisation and practice of governance from the perspective of sustainability, namely:

- The tension between an interpretation of the governance of cultural policy which relies primarily on the engagement of local communities and on the preservation of local culture as a ‘commons’, which may be more adequate in terms of devising ‘situated’ approaches to sustainability but may involve excluding ‘outsiders’ (Ostrom 1990, Pascoe 2014) and the understanding that culture needs exchange and interaction to thrive (Hawkes 2001, Sen 2004, Teixeira Coelho 2009). Can the governance of local cultural policy reconcile local ownership with openness to diversity? If so, how? This is what could be termed the ‘local ownership versus diversity tension’.
- Partly related to the point above is the tension between governance models which are primarily territorial, as in related to cultural life in a specific physical place, and the recognition that culture evolves in a multi-level setting, where the local, the national and the global constantly interact. Acknowledging this complexity should involve recognising that any territorial process of governance is inevitably incomplete, and fostering the emergence of cosmopolitan mindsets (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017, De Beukelaer 2019, Sennett 2019), which assume the interdependence between different levels of action. So, while I would emphasise the importance of the local level as the space where cultural rights may be made effective more easily, as other authors have done (Martinell 2014), and this makes local governance central, this seems to call for a ‘connected’ understanding of the local, which integrates elements from other levels of action. Accepting that local governance processes are incomplete may however clash with the need for deliberation to effectively inform decision-making and action, i.e. to lead to some concrete results. Can the governance of cultural policy combine a territorial focus and a cosmopolitan recognition of interdependence? If so, how? This could be termed the ‘territorial versus multi-level tension’.

- The tension between the move towards more open and participatory governance mechanisms, which take advantage of people's knowledge and foster ownership, and the acknowledgement that public authorities have a distinctive position because of their democratic legitimacy, which in turn may limit the ability of other stakeholders to intervene significantly in decision-making. And, also related to this, the ability of public authorities to recognise that local communities may have different levels of maturity regarding their ability to engage in policy deliberation and programme management, and to develop adaptable, tailored approaches accordingly. Can equality and ownership be combined in the design of governance approaches? If so, how? This could be called the 'citizen participation versus public responsibility tension'.
- Underpinning all of these is also a broader tension regarding the effective scope of cultural policy. While, as stated earlier, I would claim that a broader scope of cultural policy is needed, which engages more easily with broader sustainability issues, public policies tend to carry the legacy of past performance and often develop incrementally (Lindblom 1959). There could also be a risk in excessively broadening the scope of cultural policy to the extent that its object becomes too vague and limits its ability to exert change (Teixeira Coelho 2009). So, how can cultural policy be made more relevant to sustainability while retaining focus and effectiveness? This is what we could call the 'broad versus narrow scope tension'.

These four tensions underpin my research. I will explore them through the analysis of evidence in the case study and existing literature, and I will return to them in the conclusions.

Why does this matter for research and practice?

I would suggest that revising the governance of cultural policy in the light of sustainability is an important issue for ethical, scientific and pragmatic reasons. The ethical argument derives, firstly, from the assumption that considering the implications of what the late French philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour termed the 'New Climatic Regime' (2015) – that is, a context in which the certainties of the past are no longer valid, and where a more dynamic relationship with the planet, recognising nature as an agent, is needed – is a necessary, pervading imperative across all areas of human action today, including academic research and policymaking (Latour 2015, Hage 2017). Secondly, the theme of my thesis also relates to my preference for cultural policy committed to the right to take part in cultural life, which should have implications in the field of governance, by generating contexts which enable citizens to engage in deliberation and decision-making, thus making their cultural rights effective.

The scientific argument relies, firstly, on the observation that, while the relation between culture and sustainability, and its policy implications, have been well researched in the past, as references presented throughout the thesis will evidence, little attention has generally been paid to the revision of governance models in the light of sustainability (Meuleman 2013, De Beukelaer and Freitas 2015). The need to revise approaches to governance in the context of sustainability has been observed in fields other than culture as well (Jackson 2017, Moreno 2020). There is, therefore, a certain 'gap' in knowledge. Related to this is a second point, which concerns the limited connection between public policy studies, cultural policy studies and sustainability studies, which I modestly intend to address through the combination of approaches and

literature. Thirdly, by drawing on cultural policy reflections from English, Spanish and Catalan-speaking authors I aim to connect existing knowledge in the field of cultural policy and its governance. In particular, there are contributions around local cultural policy and sustainability in Spain and some Latin American countries (e.g. Delgado 2001b, Nivón Bolán 2006, Teixeira Coelho 2009, Martinell Sempere 2010, Barbieri 2014, Miralles 2014b, Vich 2014, Sánchez Belando 2015, Pascual i Ruiz 2021) that have not often been integrated in Anglo-Saxon cultural policy literature.

Finally, I would suggest that the pragmatic argument for my thesis is twofold. On the one hand, it relates to the frequent perception among local policymakers and civil servants that cultural policy receives limited attention, and limited resources, when sustainability strategies and related policies and programmes are designed (Baltà Portolés and Bashiron Mendolicchio 2021). Related to this is the risk that cultural policy receives even less attention in a context in which the planetary crisis becomes a central concern in policymaking and public budgets – that is, an argument based on a ‘threat’, which makes the revision of cultural policy necessary if it is to retain relevance. On the other hand, there can be an argument based on an ‘opportunity’, emphasising that creativity is necessary to enable adaptation (Clammer 2016) and that critical times can produce ‘normative horizons of common goods’ (Beck 2016: 4), both of which could be new bases on which to strengthen the position of cultural policy within public budgets. Progress in this respect, however, requires revising governance models.

Given the diverse set of reasons behind the research, the thesis aims to make a contribution which is both academic and applied – in line with the aforementioned observation that public policy analysis often aims to improve decision making (John 2012), the acknowledgement that cross-disciplinary knowledge is necessary to envisage new ways of life but that applied, adapted models are needed as well (Albelda 2018), and my understanding of the researcher’s moral responsibility towards the world he or she analyses (Smith and Deemer 2000).

Hypothesis and research questions

Based on the aforementioned ‘intellectual problem’, the hypothesis I posit is that models of governance of cultural policy need to evolve in order for cultural policies to retain relevance in the light of sustainability challenges and the need to foster adaptation and regeneration in the context of the New Climatic Regime. While this could be valid at all levels, I will examine it in particular at the local level, both because of its importance in terms of enabling the right to take part in cultural life (Martinell 2014) and for how in many Western countries, including Spain, local and regional governments hold the largest share of public cultural funding (Budapest Observatory 2019). At the same time, as already observed, I adopt an interconnected, multi-level understanding of the challenges I intend to address, which calls for analysing the relationship between the local and other levels of action.

In this light, the central research question of this thesis is as follows: what conditions and mechanisms may enable the governance of local cultural policy to remain relevant and be conducive to sustainability, adaptation and regeneration? In order to respond to this broad question, I will successively address more specific research questions, including the following:

- Under what conditions may culture and cultural policy be relevant vehicles for the fostering of processes of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration at the local level?
- To what extent are existing governance frameworks in local cultural policy consistent with the potential of culture in terms of sustainability?
- To what extent is there some space, in governance frameworks, for the introduction of new approaches which are in line with new societal needs?
- How could the governance of local cultural policy be revised in order to enhance relevance given the challenges generated by sustainability, adaptation and regeneration?

These research questions inform the structure of the thesis, and particularly chapters 3 to 7. The four tensions around governance that I outlined earlier cut across these research questions and I will address them throughout the thesis, before returning to them in the final chapter.

1.4. Theoretical approach

The focus of my research concerns explicit policies and mechanisms, as well as values, beliefs and ‘unwritten rules’ that shape governance processes in local cultural policy, and which are affected by socio-cultural and institutional contexts. This determines my ‘ontological perspective’, in the terms proposed by Jennifer Mason (2002), i.e. the nature of the phenomena or social ‘reality’ that I wish to investigate. Power relations and socially-constructed habits affect, often invisibly, the ways in which cultural policies unfold, and in turn determine the effective ability to exercise the right to take part in cultural life and the potential connections with the building of sustainable societies. The association between these concepts is loose, and, in line with what critical realism suggests (Bhaskar 1978, Sayer 1999) and with the complexity that is inherent to social interaction, there can be no consistent, systematic regularities or causality when analysing the relation between cultural policies and sustainability, adaptation or regeneration. However, some plausible relationships may exist, as suggested e.g. by ‘policy feedback’ scholars in the field of public policy analysis, who point to the ability of policies to shape aspects of political culture in the long term (Mettler and SoRelle 2014).

Similarly, power relations and socially-constructed habits also determine the space of that which is visible, resulting in what anthropologist Ghassan Hage has termed ‘mono-realism’, or ‘the idea that there is one, and only one, reality that our thought is, or can be, connected to’ (2011: 8). However, I adhere to his view that ‘there are always minor realities in which we are equally enmeshed’, and that recognising these minor and repressed spaces may provide room to explore the utopias that already exist but that are seldom acknowledged (*ibid.*). Cities and urban spaces, where several, frequently invisible, historical and social layers co-exist (Greeley 2018), illustrate well this coexistence of many initiatives and ‘realities’ of which we are never fully aware. In this respect, one of the aims of my research is to examine existing phenomena which lie at the margins, and which could provide knowledge and inspiration for approaches elsewhere.

I acknowledge that the set of aspects that inspire my research have at least two important implications from a research perspective, which I will now spell out. Firstly, in both the exploration of the connections between culture and sustainability and in the affirmation of

cultural rights as a basis for cultural policy lies a normative basis. In the Western, progressive tradition where I have learned, and within the professional circles of cultural activists and organisations where I have worked (e.g. Interarts, UCLG), there is some agreement that culture, including the ways in which communities build values and make sense of their lives, as well as how this is expressed in customs, creative expressions and the tangible and intangible heritage that is passed on through generations, are meaningful to foster lives worth living. An assumption is made here that mainstream approaches to development, and sustainable development, are incomplete, that culture, as a positive force, needs to be recognised in them, and that cultural rights are one of the sources of legitimacy for such approaches (Delgado 2001b, Hawkes 2001, UCLG 2004, Martinell Sempere 2010).

Therefore, I cannot claim neutrality when approaching the theme of my thesis, partly because, of course, 'there is no neutral question' (Bourdieu, Chamboredon et al. 1991 [1968]: 41-42). Indeed, our intuitions, as expressed in our framing of questions, are 'closely bound up with our fundamental options', i.e. our values and beliefs, and thus 'cannot be *wertfrei*'¹ (Taylor 1971: 51, see also Denzin and Lincoln 2008). As suggested by 'critical' or 'criticalist' approaches (Guba 1990, Hammersley 2013, Waller, Farquharson et al. 2016), any research is located in a particular socio-historical context, and is affected by the researcher's own values. This is particularly the case in an area like social and policy studies, because 'the social sciences are part of their own field of inquiry' (Bhaskar 1978: 20). Furthermore, public policy analysis often has a strong normative element, because it frequently aims to improve decision making (John 2012).

Indeed, a second important observation here concerns the connection between the process of research and the potential to effectively contribute to revising practices. In my case, this involves contributing to the revision of existing approaches to the governance of local cultural policy. In line with my previous work as a consultant and advisor to several governments, I do not see public policy research as an autonomous process, but rather as one which reflects on and can subsequently inform policy design and implementation (Bennett 2004). While this could be seen by some as a deficiency in academic terms (because there is an interest, and a pragmatic engagement, in the object of research rather than a presumed detachment therefrom), I would suggest that acknowledging that I am part of the phenomena I research and the 'reality' I construct, and that my values are enmeshed in the construction of meaning and knowledge, provides a basis for moral responsibility towards, and active engagement in, that world (Smith and Deemer 2000, see also Seale 2002). This is also in line with my commitment, as a researcher, to contribute to knowledge in my field of research, as well as to those who have taken part in the research process.

Recognising this should not detract from, but rather reinforce, insofar as possible, the need for a reflexive and critical approach when doing research, which contributes to '... reflexively mov[ing] outside of ourselves' (Hage 2012: 287) and which involves reflecting critically on our existing explanations of the world, and 'unlearning' some of them as more complex approaches become present. This may be seen not only as a guarantee of scientific research, but also as a condition for its quality and ultimate relevance. The need to be reflexive gains particular relevance in the field of cultural policy and management, where a 'missionary zeal' among cultural professionals frequently prevails and recognition of errors and failure is often

¹ That is, neutral, value-free or impartial.

discouraged (Jancovich 2019). While, as stated above, I come from a tradition that sees the integration of culture in broader policy approaches to development as a desirable step, I also commit to reflecting critically on weaknesses existing in these discourses.

1.5. Methodological approach

The cross-disciplinary and complex nature of the themes I am addressing and the availability of several relevant theories lead me to combining sources and approaches, opting for a form of triangulation or the *bricolage* suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2008). While I situate my project primarily in the social sciences, and particularly in cultural policy studies, I also draw on elements of development studies, cultural studies and public policy studies among others. Within policy studies, the aforementioned 'policy feedback theory' (Mettler and SoRelle 2014) and the 'advocacy coalition framework', which explores how coalitions of agents sharing similar beliefs may contribute to long-term policy change in contexts of uncertainty and ambiguity (Cairney 2013), are particularly useful.

I have chosen to use primarily qualitative research methodologies (literature analysis, semi-structured interviews, direct observation, personal knowledge) for several reasons, ranging from the nature of research, including the aim to provide depth to complex issues, to recognising the value-laden nature of my inquiry and how I interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings given by people (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Waller, Farquharson et al. 2016). Qualitative methods also seem particularly appropriate given the inadequacy of quantitative measures for most cultural research (see e.g. Meyrick, Phiddian et al. 2018).

Combining and triangulating methods is also a necessary condition in order to provide further breadth and depth to my topic (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Waller, Farquharson et al. 2016). In particular, I have drawn on an analysis of academic literature in the fields of cultural policy, public policy studies, development and sustainability studies and other relevant areas, as well as a case study focused on Barcelona. The literature review has allowed me to provide a critical understanding of the relation between the governance of local cultural policy, sustainability, and urban studies, and the knowledge existing in these areas which my research aims to further deepen.

The case study that I conducted in Barcelona also combined an analysis of literature, including policy documents and academic research, as well as media sources where relevant, 12 semi-structured interviews with policymakers, civil society activists, and other stakeholders connected to governance processes, as well as direct observation. It is further enriched by my previous knowledge of the local context, as this is also the city where I have spent most of my life. My initial studies in political science provided me with a good knowledge of the local political system and, later, work as a researcher and consultant in the cultural field has frequently involved engagement with local cultural policy in Barcelona (Baltà and Grimaldi 2011, Baltà Portolés 2016b). While this provides me with some explicit and tacit knowledge about the local context, it also involves reflecting critically on my position, how this has shaped my assumptions and perspectives, and being open to revising acquired knowledge (Smith and Deemer 2000, Mason 2002). Furthermore, it is also necessary to look for commonalities between evidence in Barcelona and phenomena elsewhere, and to consider to what extent knowledge can be

generalised (Payne and Williams 2005, Giorgi 2006, Patton 2014). I have taken this into consideration throughout the process, including by relying on sources from other cities and from urban and local cultural policy studies more generally, and by critically reflecting on my position. The aim to present knowledge that can be moderately generalised has also informed the formulation of conclusions.

The use of case studies and ‘naturalistic inquiry’ serves to understand practices in their specific context, something that is particularly important in the field of culture, contributing to a holistic understanding of phenomena in their specific context (Patton 2014). This also provides the setting for conducting interviews and contrasting the views presented in literature, including in official policy documents. Interviews, in turn, provide insight on the specific meanings given by local actors to aspects of culture and sustainability, and depth on the challenges related to governance and sustainability in specific contexts (Seidman 2006).

In line with the triangulation approach, both the recruitment strategy for interviews and the analysis of related literature (e.g. policy documents, academic texts, blogs, etc.) have aimed to collect diverse perspectives, including, for example, policymakers, civil society activists, artists, academics, etc. In order to generate the local sample of interviewees, I combined ‘intensity sampling’ (i.e. a focus on policies or programmes which I considered to be significant from the perspective of governance, culture and/or sustainability) and ‘snowball or chain sampling’ (i.e. asking some interviewees for recommendations of other policies, programmes or individuals to be examined or interviewed, in order to broaden the sample) (Patton 1990).

Ethical aspects

I described the sampling methods and provided the questionnaire for semi-structured interviews, as well as its accompanying documents (sample e-mail to request an interview; plain language statement; and consent template), in a Human Research Ethics Application submitted to the University of Melbourne’s Human Research Ethics Committee in 2020, which was subsequently accepted. The project was considered minimal risk. I have taken into account this ethical commitment, as well as the similar guidance provided by the University of Girona (Canimas Brugué and Bonmatí Tomàs 2021), throughout the development of the thesis.

No relevant difficulties in terms of ethics have arisen in the context of the research. All interviewees have signed the consent template provided and no-one has asked to end an interview in the process.

Case study

The choice of Barcelona derives from my familiarity with this context, its relevance to the topics analysed, and the diversity of experiences available within the city and its surroundings, which make it ‘information-rich’, and can lead to knowledge when examined in depth. Since the 1980s, Barcelona has developed an extensive network of cultural facilities and made its commitment to cultural policy explicit, as exemplified in particular in two cultural strategies that connected culture with broader local challenges, including economic and social aspects (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999b, Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a). The city’s cultural policies have also

been informed by the approach to culture and sustainable development promoted by international network UCLG, as exemplified in its policy documents Agenda 21 for culture² (UCLG 2004) and Culture 21 Actions (UCLG 2015), which informed Barcelona's 2006 revised cultural strategy (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a) and the establishment of a new governance forum, the Council of Culture.

More recently, cultural rights have become an explicit guideline in local cultural policy (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021b) and some cultural aspects have been integrated in the city's major strategies with regard to the climate emergency (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020). Civil society groups have initiated significant cultural initiatives with a participatory component, often at a neighbourhood level. They have also connected cultural processes with social, educational and environmental aspects, as in the case of community arts initiatives and the initiatives in 'community-led management' (Tudela Vázquez 2017, La Hidra and Artibarrí 2018) which I will discuss later. Exemplifying some of the tensions I outlined earlier (and, particularly, the 'citizen participation versus public responsibility tension'), this process has generated some disagreements between civil society groups and local authorities.

In 2015, an independent, citizen-led movement turned political party took office and has aimed to transform existing policy approaches in areas including citizen participation and city governance (e.g. through major public consultations and the design of more collaborative approaches to the management of public services and venues, involving civil society groups (Direcció de Democràcia Activa - Regidoria de Participació i Districtes [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2016, Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021)), the uses of public space (for example the 'superblocks' which reduce car traffic to promote pedestrian use and play areas), and adaptation to climate change (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020). Initiatives adopted by the City Council, particularly through the Cultural Rights Plan launched in 2021 (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a), effectively show an aim to broaden the scope of cultural policy, building on earlier initiatives (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018), but have not involved very significant changes in governance structures.

These processes play out against a context marked by mass tourism, gentrification and the visible effects of the 2008-2013 financial crisis and the COVID-19 crisis, all of which generate tensions in the environmental, social and economic spheres. Furthermore, over the years, some large-scale cultural projects have been framed by the local government's broader social and economic objectives (for example the Forum Barcelona 2004, which was to a large extent driven by urban regeneration aims and the positioning of Barcelona at global level). Both this, which presents traces of a 'global city' (Sassen 1996, Schouten 2011, Dharsai 2014), and the diversity of cultural traditions and expressions existing in the city (Catalan language and culture being the city's own, which coexists with Spanish and a diverse range of migrant and visiting identities and expressions) raises issues from the perspective of the tensions between local ownership and diversity, as well as that between a territorial focus and a multiplicity of levels (García 2004, Illas

² Authors of the Agenda 21 for culture chose to use a small c for 'culture', rather than a capital C, even in the English version of the document, perhaps echoing Jon Hawkes' distinction (2001) between 'Culture' as the work of artists and 'culture' as a set of values and practices held by a community. I have retained the official title of the document and thus use 'culture' when referring to the Agenda 21 for culture.

2019, Roig i Badia 2021). As the thesis will show, these tensions observed in Barcelona serve to connect the local case with broader developments at the global level.

This case study focuses, in particular, on the governance of local cultural policy particularly since the adoption of the *New Accents* cultural strategy in 2006, though it also addresses some earlier developments when further context was necessary. In keeping with the understanding of governance as a set of ‘processes of social interaction involving multiple stakeholders’ (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 38), I have examined both governance in public-sector bodies such as the Council of Culture and in spaces which result from the interaction between public, private and non-profit bodies, such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris.

As the analysis presented in the following chapters will explain, these developments illustrate the tensions resulting from opposing trends in the light of sustainability and globalisation – between a ‘situated’ approach and openness to interaction; between territorial governance and cosmopolitan mindsets; between the legitimacy of public authorities and the impulse towards more open, participatory forms of governance; and between the need to broaden the scope of cultural policy and the aim to have a manageable remit of action. The thesis combines the case study with the broader literature review, in order to connect local tensions with broader reflections on the governance of cultural policy and sustainability.

I am aware that any methodological choice, such as the election of a case study, involves trade-offs (Patton 2014, Waller, Farquharson et al. 2016) and that, even if I provide new insights and knowledge, my object of analysis will remain alive and generate new questions, for this is inherent both in social sciences (Bhaskar 1978, Hage 2018) and in the reality of culture itself. We can at the most offer partial theories, always subject to re-examination. This demands a humble attitude in research, and an open, sensitive approach to alternative voices and realities. At the same time, reflecting on the methods chosen and placing the findings in a broader context can be a step towards generating valid knowledge which can be ‘moderately generalised’ (Payne and Williams 2005), as my thesis aims to achieve.

1.6. Thesis structure

The structure of the thesis has been inspired by the ‘opening out’ model suggested by Patrick Dunleavy (2003), which involves combining a presentation of the evidence, connections with existing literature and discussion throughout the thesis. Therefore, a combination of different types of evidence and discussion, including aspects drawn from the literature review and the analysis of the case study, are woven together throughout most chapters.

Chapter 2 serves to introduce the context of Barcelona and its cultural policy, identifying the aspects that embody the relationship and tensions between cultural aspects and sustainability, and how these have informed cultural policy developments and related governance frameworks. It serves as an introduction to the city and to the aspects that will be examined progressively in subsequent chapters. Chapter 3 analyses the relationship between culture and sustainability and its policy implications, with the aim of considering under what conditions cultural policy may be a relevant vehicle for fostering processes of sustainability. Chapter 4 examines how the tensions resulting from the relationship between culture and sustainability take shape at the local level, as illustrated by the case of Barcelona. Chapter 5 considers why and how governance frameworks

in local cultural policy may need to evolve, in the light of the challenges generated by sustainability as well as in view of the set of tensions related to governance that I presented earlier in this chapter. Chapter 6 explores, in the light of public policy studies and evidence obtained in Barcelona, to what extent, and how, approaches to the governance of cultural policy can be expected to evolve in the light of new challenges and demands. Chapter 7 discusses the findings of previous chapters and how the evidence in Barcelona is relevant to cultural policy elsewhere. On this basis, it identifies a set of directions to orient new approaches to the governance of local cultural policy to make it more consistent with the challenges posed by sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. Finally, the conclusions of the thesis in Chapter 8 consider the contribution made by the thesis with regard to the intellectual problem outlined earlier and present ideas for subsequent research.

Chapter 2. Barcelona: Cultural policy, governance and sustainability

This chapter aims to introduce the context of cultural policy in Barcelona, the governance frameworks existing in this field and some of the challenges and tensions between culture and sustainability which are visible locally, thus providing the context for the case study that I will further explore in subsequent chapters. To this end, I will first briefly describe Barcelona's geographic location, relevant demographic factors and political framework. Secondly, I will present the main issues relating to the city's cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability, including the adoption of local cultural strategies in 1999 and 2006, and what this has implied in terms of governance. In this field, I will pay particular attention to the Council of Culture, a governance mechanism established by the 2006 cultural strategy, *New Accents*, as well as to more recent debates on 'community-led management', as a form of participatory management or 'self-government' which has been introduced particularly at neighbourhood level. Further to presenting the local Barcelona context, the chapter discusses in particular a set of events and debates that have generated tensions, and which serve to exemplify the four tensions on the governance of local cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability I outlined in the introductory chapter. I will return to them in the closing section of the chapter and will explore them further in subsequent chapters.

In order to elaborate this chapter I have used existing literature, which is referenced throughout the text, information obtained through interviews, which are also quoted where relevant, and my own previous, contextual knowledge, including its political system and cultural policy developments throughout recent decades, which I have acquired through a sustained interest in local politics and previous professional engagements in cultural policy research and analysis. Whether readers are familiar with Barcelona or not, the chapter will provide the backdrop for the issues that I will examine thereafter.

2.1. Barcelona: Some basic traits

Geography and society

Located on the Mediterranean coast, in the North-Eastern corner of the Iberian Peninsula within South-Western Europe, Barcelona has an area of 101 km² and a population of 1,660,000 inhabitants in 2021 (Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2021, Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya 2022). It is the largest municipality in a two-tier metropolitan agglomeration, the first of which ('metropolitan area'), comprising 36 municipalities and a total area of 636 km², has a total population of approximately 3.3 million inhabitants; and the second one ('metropolitan region' or *àmbit metropolità*), comprising 164 municipalities (including the aforementioned 36) and a total area of 2464 km², has a population of approximately 4.9 million (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya 2021a, Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona 2022a, Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona 2022c, Viquipèdia 2022). The latter figure classifies it as one of the six most populated metropolitan areas in Europe, after London, Paris,

Madrid as well as the Ruhrgebiet and Berlin areas in Germany, both of which have similar aggregated figures to those of Barcelona (Eurostat 2016).

Barcelona is the capital of the 'autonomous region' of Catalonia, one of 17 which make up Spain on the basis of the 1978 Spanish Constitution. With an area of 32,108 km² and a total population of 7.74 million in 2021, Catalonia currently accounts for approximately 16.3% of the Spanish population (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya 2021b). The percentage has increased only slowly in recent decades (it was 15.8% in 1981) but experienced a more marked increase in the preceding period: in 1950, with a population of 3.2 million, Catalonia accounted for 11.5% of Spain's then 28.1 million inhabitants (ibid.). The increase was due to a large extent to the inflow of migrants from poorer areas in Spain as industrialisation advanced in the 1950s and 1960s and led to significant changes in the social makeup of Catalonia and its linguistic uses. Particularly in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, where a large proportion of internal migrants settled, social interaction increasingly combined the uses of Catalan and Spanish languages (Candel 2014 [1964]).

The demographic makeup of the population changed further since the late-1990s, as a result of international migration. Whereas in 1996 Spanish nationals accounted for 98.1% of the official census in Barcelona (only 29,000 people were non-Spanish nationals), the figure had dropped to 83.4% a decade later (when 270,000 inhabitants were non-Spanish nationals) and has further decreased, though more slowly, to 77.6% as of 2021 (Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2022a). Non-Spanish nationals are currently 371,000, in a population of 1.6 million (ibid.). This includes 130,000 nationals of other European countries, 126,000 from America (mainly Latin America), 89,000 from Asia and 25,000 from Africa (Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2022b). Actual figures are likely to be higher, as some foreign migrants, particularly from Latin America, as well as Africa and some other non-EU countries, are not officially registered (Fanjul and Gálvez-Iñiesta 2020). Given that cross-border mobility of citizens and workers is largely facilitated in the EU, it is likely that citizens of other EU countries reside in Barcelona for relatively short periods of time without being officially registered there. Overall these trends have resulted in a significantly more diverse city.

Local government

Local elections, held every four years, serve to elect 41 councillors serving the City of Barcelona as a whole, drawn from the lists presented by political parties ('party-list proportional representation') (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2019).³ The City's Mayor is generally a member of the party having most councillors, except if a coalition of smaller parties represented within the City Council join forces to elect an alternative candidate (ibid.). The Mayor then appoints the members of the local government, primarily among other elected Councillors. Since the first democratic elections after the death of dictator Francisco Franco (1939-1975) and the adoption of the Spanish Constitution were held in 1979, the Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC), a social-

³ No elections are held at the metropolitan level. The Metropolitan Authority (Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona), led by a council made up of councillors from the 36 municipalities in the metropolitan area, has a limited range of competences, in areas including regional planning, public transport, and water and waste management. (Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona 2022b)

democratic party and the regional branch of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), led the local government between 1979 and 2011, often in coalition with other left-wing parties. Following the 2011 elections, centre-right party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU, a party which advocated more autonomy for Catalonia and which later embraced proposals for Catalan independence) led the Council until 2015. Between 2015 and 2023, local government was led by left-wing citizen platform turned political party *Barcelona en Comú* ('Barcelona in Common', BeC), frequently in coalition with PSC.

In this thesis I will focus primarily on developments between the adoption of the *New Accents* cultural strategy in 2006, under a PSC government, and the final term of the BeC-PSC coalition government (2019-2023).⁴ I also refer to some earlier developments in order to provide additional context. Table 1 below presents the main policy developments covered in this thesis and the parties involved in local government since 1999.

Table 1: Chronology of major cultural policy developments in Barcelona (1999-2023)

Main events covered in this thesis and governmental coalitions

Year	Major cultural policy developments covered in this thesis	Leading parties in local government		
1999	1 st Cultural Strategy adopted	PSC, in coalition with ICV and ERC		
2000				
2001				
2002				
2003				
2004	Forum Barcelona 2004 / Adoption of <i>Agenda 21 for culture</i>	PSC, in coalition with ICV		
2005				
2006	<i>New Accents</i> revised cultural strategy			
2007	Council of Culture established	PSC, in coalition with ICV		
2008				
2009				
2010				
2011				
2012			CiU	
2013				
2014				
2015			Steps towards an 'urban commons' policy start	BeC
2016			Cultural Rights Plan and Culture Pact adopted	BeC, in coalition with PSC
2017				
2018	BeC			
2019	BeC, in coalition with PSC			
2020				
2021				
2022	PSC (from June)			
2023				

⁴ Local elections held in May 2023 led to a change in government, with PSC now leading a minority government at the City Council since late June 2023. At the time of submitting this thesis (early August 2023), it is early to determine significant policy shifts.

Spanish legislation grants all levels of government (i.e. national, regional and local authorities) some competences in the field of culture. In practice, responsibilities in this field are largely decentralised, with local authority expenditure amounting to 64% of all public cultural expenditure in 2016 (Villarroya and Ateca-Amestoy 2019). Meanwhile, regional and central authorities accounted for 22% and 14% of that expenditure respectively (ibid.). The strong reliance on local government in cultural policy, similar to that of other European countries with a federal or quasi-federal structure (Budapest Observatory 2019), and the absence of much responsibility in leading cultural policy within central government, has meant that reflections on cultural policy in Spain have frequently been connected to local policymaking. This is also reflected in the work of provincial councils (known as *diputacions* in Catalan or *diputaciones* in Spanish), which provide support to municipal policymaking in some regions (as in the case of the Centre of Cultural Studies and Resources, CERC, established by the Provincial Council of Barcelona), associations of municipalities (such as the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, FEMP), and cultural observatories connected to local authorities (such as Vigía, a Cultural Observatory established by the Province of Cadiz).

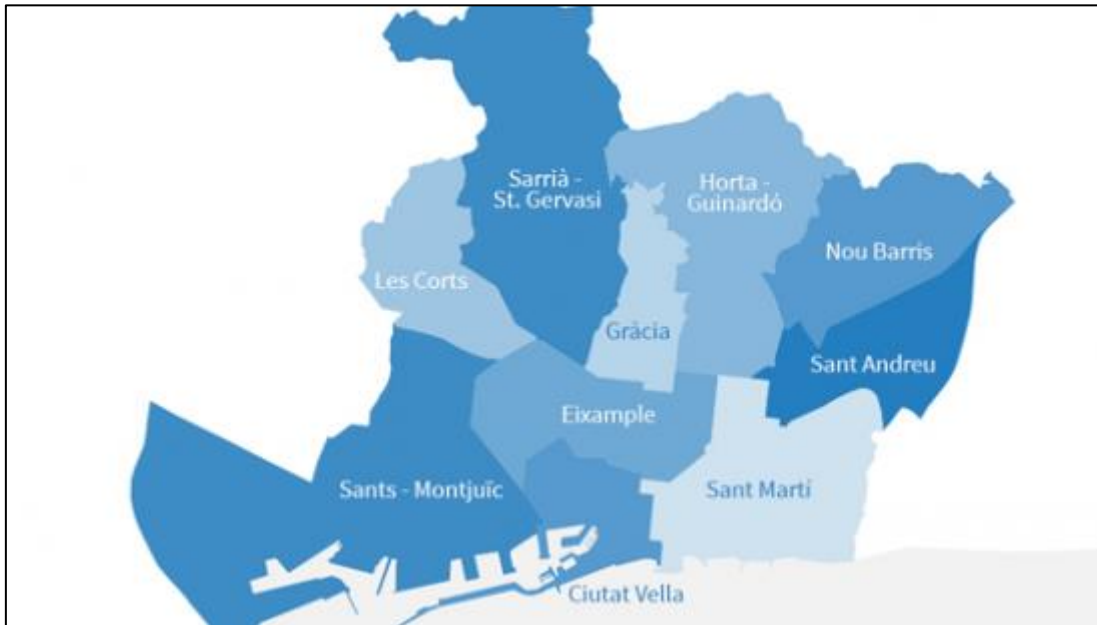
The Municipal Charter of Barcelona, a Law adopted by the Catalan Parliament in 1998 and validated by the Spanish Parliament, and revised subsequently, which recognises the specificities of Barcelona as a local authority, describes the City's competences in the field of culture, in areas including supporting citizens' cultural projects, preserving cultural heritage, disseminating culture at the district and neighbourhood level and supporting cultural organisations (Parlament de Catalunya 1998). The Charter also sets out competences in the field of the environment, including the aim to make Barcelona a 'sustainable city' (Ibid.: art. 102; translation mine).

City structure and citizen participation

On the basis of a structure established in 1984, Barcelona is divided into 10 districts (see Map 1), which operate as administrative and political units, with populations ranging from 82,000 (Les Corts) to 270,000 (L'Eixample) (Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2021). To a varying degree, districts also embody distinctive identities, often resulting from their past history as independent towns (e.g. Gràcia, Sant Andreu or Sants) or more contemporary struggles to connect neighbourhoods that had developed separately but faced similar challenges in terms of urban planning and service provision (as in the case of Nou Barris – literally, the 'nine neighbourhoods'). At the same time, because districts are large and amalgamate different neighbourhoods, some distinctive area-based identities may coexist within one district, something which is valid both for places like Gràcia and Sants, itself part of the broader district of Sants-Montjuïc, as well as for other historical areas including Sarrià (part of the district of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi) and Horta (part of Horta-Guinardó).

⁵ In addition to parties cited earlier in this thesis, this table refers to ICV (Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds), a left-wing and green political party, no longer existing, some members of which later joined BeC; and ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), a left-wing, pro-independence party.

Map 1: Barcelona's districts



Source: Ajuntament de Barcelona

The political autonomy of districts is limited, as no direct elections at the district level take place (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2019). Instead, District Councils are made up of representatives appointed by local political parties, with a representation proportional to the share of votes obtained by each in the relevant district at the city-wide elections (ibid.). Districts have competences in a range of areas including citizen participation and some aspects of urban planning, and have a consultative role in several policy areas, including culture and the environment, where the city has competences (Parlament de Catalunya 1998). Deconcentrated administrative services are in charge of implementing local policies at district level, in areas such as the coordination of community cultural facilities (such as *centres cívics*, the publicly-owned neighbourhood centres providing adult education, cultural activities and spaces for local associations to meet and organise events), citizen information and social services (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2015, revised version). City regulations establish that at least 15% of the city budget needs to be implemented by districts (ibid.: art. 5.3). The city government appoints one of its members to lead the implementation of policies in each of the 10 districts (ibid.: articles 12-13).

The aforementioned Municipal Charter of Barcelona refers to citizen participation as a principle informing all areas of local competence. This involves the establishment of consultative councils at the city level (such as the Council of Culture, to which I will refer later), the ability to develop 'citizens' initiatives' to petition decisions in specific policy areas of the City Council's competence, as well as a range of spaces at district level (Parlament de Catalunya 1998: articles 30-37). Each district includes one Citizen Council (which provides advice to the District Council and holds the district services accountable), Sectorial Councils (with functions similar to the Citizen Council, in specific policy areas, including environment, urban planning and mobility; as well as social rights, culture and sport), and Neighbourhood Councils (with functions similar to the citizen council, in

each of the 73 neighbourhoods that make up the city) (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2015, revised version).⁶

Another tool for citizen participation recognised by the Charter is the ability for not-for-profit organisations to manage public services and facilities on behalf of public authorities following a public call for tender (Parlament de Catalunya 1998: art. 34). This model, known as ‘civic management’ (*gestió cívica*), builds on Barcelona’s historical record of working class self-management (Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2018) as well as some precedents in the management of some *centres cívics* by non-profit organisations, since the 1980s.⁷ The adoption of the ‘civic management’ model in local regulations has been justified, by both public authorities and advocates of the model, mainly on the grounds of strengthening citizen participation, rather than public management efficiency (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2002, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2013, Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). Its legal recognition in Barcelona remains a particularly unique case in the Spanish legal framework.⁸ This specificity, and the lack of a sufficiently enabling legal framework at Catalan, Spanish or EU level, have meant that the effective implementation of ‘civic management’ has been slow and limited to the management of venues rather than service provision or works (Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2018) and that this continues to raise doubts within the City Council’s legal advisory teams, thus generating internal negotiations with other sections of the local government.⁹ I will return to this issue later in this chapter.

2.2. The local government’s cultural policy

Local cultural strategies: An evolution in the positioning of culture vis-à-vis urban challenges

Since 1979, the Barcelona local government has included the figure of a Councillor or Deputy Mayor for Culture, as the person leading the design and implementation of local cultural policy and establishing connections with broader local government goals and strategies. In some periods, responsibilities in the field of culture have been distributed between more than one Councillor or Deputy Mayor, as a result primarily of power-sharing arrangements in coalition governments. In the 2019-2023 term, for instance, in a coalition government involving BeC and PSC, the culture portfolio was held by a BeC Deputy Mayor, whereas a PSC Deputy Mayor oversaw a different portfolio covering tourism and the creative industries (Barcelona en Comú

⁶ Population in the 73 neighbourhoods ranges from just under 700 in La Clota, a quasi-rural area in the district of Horta-Guinardó, to 58,000 in Sant Andreu, the central neighbourhood in the district of Sant Andreu. As of 2021, 42 of the city’s 73 neighbourhoods had 25,000 inhabitants or less. (Departament d’Estadística i Difusió de Dades [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2021)

⁷ Cotxeres de Sants and Centre Artesà in Gràcia were some early examples, largely in response to civil society demands in these neighbourhoods. The process has sometimes been fraught with tension and combined different management models (e.g. mixed management, consultative councils, involvement of professional organisations, etc.), as each city district had, and has continued to have, some autonomy to determine their preferred management model. Cf. (Miralles 1993a, Miralles 1993b, Sánchez Belando 2015, Centre Artesà Tradicionàrius 2019, Castillo Cerezuola 2021).

⁸ Interview with Albert Martín, Senior Officer, Active Democracy and Decentralisation, Barcelona City Council, 19 March 2021.

⁹ Interviews with Albert Martín, Senior Officer, Barcelona City Council, 19 March 2021; and Laia Forné Aguirre, urban sociologist and former advisor for Citizen Participation, Barcelona City Council (2015-2019), 16 July 2021.

and Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya 2019), which somehow ‘divided’ the realm of culture between those activities that were seen as less relevant to the economy and those that were more explicitly connected to it.

The effective implementation of cultural policy is primarily entrusted, since 1996, to the Culture Institute of Barcelona (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona, ICUB), an autonomous body within local government (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2005). ICUB directly manages the management of some public cultural facilities (e.g. museums), organises some major cultural events (e.g. the City’s official Christmas celebrations, its Carnival and the summer arts festival), provides funding to private and non-profit cultural organisations, and provides the secretariat to the City’s Council of Culture, a representative body which, as we shall see, takes part in the governance of cultural policy (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2005, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). In collaboration with the city districts, it is also in charge of overseeing the network of *centres cívics*, the effective management of which is in most cases entrusted to private companies or not-for-profit organisations, through public calls for tender. ICUB’s Board of Directors is chaired by the Councillor of Culture and vice-chaired by another member of the local government (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2005). The remaining members of the Board have tended to include senior ICUB officials, representatives from other political parties in the City Council as well as a few relevant individuals in the cultural sector (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2022).

The establishment of ICUB in the mid-1990s was a first step towards what aimed to be a more strategic repositioning of culture within Barcelona’s development. In 1999 and 2006, ICUB adopted two cultural strategies which, further to setting the City Council’s priorities in the field of culture, were symbolic of the positioning of Barcelona vis-à-vis global developments, as well as how cultural policy could be connected to particular understandings of sustainability, as the next pages will show. A close examination, as explained hereafter, also points to an evolution in the thinking about culture, local development and sustainability in the intervening period.

An awareness of emerging ‘globalisation’, and of the potential tension between local and universal aspects, was highlighted in Barcelona’s first Cultural Strategy, adopted in 1999 (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999b). The strategy emphasised the aim to strengthen local capacities to produce cultural content that would be visible internationally, while also maintaining a commitment to preserving local traditions. Two of the six thematic strategies identified addressed respectively the integration of Barcelona in digital culture flows, including at global level, and increasing the international reach and visibility of Barcelona as a stage for cultural events and activities.

Forum Barcelona 2004: A failed attempt to reconcile culture and sustainability

The 1999 Cultural Strategy’s last thematic strategy (‘To project Barcelona as a platform of international promotion’) emphasised that ‘[culture] is one of the elements that provides visibility to the city within a ... more global context’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999a: 132). It also contained one action that was to become quite illustrative of how the city aimed to use culture as an asset or *resource* for its global positioning. Presented as an opportunity ‘to foster the image of Barcelona as a city of culture’ (ibid.: 136), Forum Barcelona 2004 (initially known as the ‘Universal Forum of Cultures’) aimed both to gain global visibility and to provide a space for diverse cultures to meet, fostering tolerance, culture of peace, solidarity, and sustainable

development.¹⁰ When first conceived in 1996, the event was also presented as an opportunity to foster the urban regeneration of the Besòs area in the city's north-east corner, a traditionally disadvantaged area, and its accompanying coastline (Costa Pau 2001). This was inspired by similar developments in the past, as Barcelona has taken advantage of major international events, including the 1888 and 1929 Universal Expositions and the 1992 Olympic Games, to progressively redesign urban planning and develop specific neighbourhoods (Fòrum Universal de les Cultures - Barcelona 2004 2004). Combining local goals connected to urban planning with global messages related to sustainability, diversity and peace, which led to an official endorsement and partnership with UNESCO, Forum 2004 also aimed to be a major event drawing local and international audiences through a combination of exhibitions, arts events, conferences and debates, all of which would be held at the newly regenerated site.

The Forum's mission included 'to promote the study, reflection and innovation through intercultural dialogue, in order to make a substantial contribution to a "culture of peace" and an "ethic of globality", with the aim of helping the globalisation process develop in accordance with specific ethical values'. Its principles and values included devoting 'Particular attention to sustainable development in urban areas from an environmental, social, cultural and economic standpoint, taking the city to be the principal human habitat of the 21st century...' (Fòrum Universal de les Cultures - Barcelona 2004 2004: 36-37). In its discourse, therefore, Forum 2004 placed the connection between culture and sustainability at the centre and emphasised the role of cities as the nexus where such connection could be negotiated.

The project was marred with difficulties throughout the preparation period, including in terms of its financing, limited clarity of objectives and several changes in its leading staff (Buxeda i Aliu 2004, Montaner 2014). Held between May and September 2004, over 3.3 million people attended activities held at its main site, a figure significantly lower than the 5 million visitors originally planned (Botella 2014). Despite the claims made in the 1999 Cultural Strategy, the city's local culture was only partly visible, and overall the event presented a rather commodified, packaged notion of culture (Garcés 2018, Illas 2019). Forum 2004 contributed to renovating the Besòs area and its coastline, in the context of the broader development of a large part of the district of Sant Martí now known as 22@ (Pascual i Ruiz 2021), an 'innovation district' that is currently home to several multinational companies, including Facebook, Oracle and King (Simón Ruiz 2019).

The Forum's legacy has tended to be seen in a generally negative light. Just before its opening, Catalan-British cultural policy researcher Beatriz García remarked on the reticence the project had generated in Barcelona, partly because of its 'unclear definition and the lack of credibility of its mission statement' and the 'apparent conflict' between the intangible values the Forum aimed to pursue and 'the very tangible urban transformation surrounding them' (2004: 112). She also remarked that it seemed that '... international perspectives are given priority over local authorship, which may seem fit for an event with universal aspirations but leaves the question

¹⁰ In fairness, Forum 2004 had a relatively low profile in the 1999 Cultural Strategy, even though at the time the project had already been launched and was in its early planning stages. According to researcher and cultural manager Jordi Pascual, who was involved in the implementation of the Cultural Strategy at the time, this was due to the Strategy authoring team's perception of the Forum as primarily a branding exercise, rather than one which concerned learning, creativity or cultural production. (Pascual i Ruiz 2021)

of direct representation and local empowerment unanswered' (113), thus addressing the gap in terms of governance and showing how the tensions between local ownership and diversity and between territorial and multi-level aspects were not well resolved here. Argentinian anthropologist Néstor García Canclini identified Forum 2004 with the rise of a 'controversial articulation' between urban growth, events and the expansion of knowledge (2008: 18, my translation).

Several authors have also criticised that, by hosting a wide range of conferences and talks on topics related to peace, diversity and sustainability, Forum 2004 cynically co-opted or appropriated civil society's political energy and the aesthetics of social forums, such as the then famous World Social Forum (Grup de treball Desbordes de la cultura 2017, Illas 2019), for purposes that were primarily of city branding and urban regeneration. Catalan philosopher Marina Garcés has called Forum 2004 a 'theme park' of world cultures, which epitomised how in Barcelona, as in other cities across the world, 'what we call culture has become a festivalised product, connected to consumption and tourism' (2018: 247, my translation). In a similar vein, Spanish cultural studies researcher Mari Paz Balibrea has identified Forum 2004 with the emergence of the 'Barcelona brand', which 'sells a particular way of life; that is, a particular culture', which requires engaged residents so as to 'live up to the image, merging the psychological, the cultural, and the economic reasons for it. It is to favor the cultural image, to perpetuate and enhance it that the citizen is to improve him/herself, to offer (produce) him/herself as the object to be consumed by the visitor as part of the city experience' (2017: 33-34).

Both Balibrea and Catalan cultural studies researcher Edgar Illas argue that the 'Barcelona brand' may be contrasted with the 'Barcelona model', seen as an inspiration to other cities, which drove Barcelona's transformation from the 1970s until the mid-1990s, where more attention was paid to citizens' needs (Balibrea 2017, Illas 2019). In an interview for this thesis, researcher and cultural manager Jordi Pascual argued that, as opposed to the cultural policy conducted by Barcelona in previous decades, Forum 2004 was not the result of a pact between local authorities and local citizens, with a concern for improving citizens' lives, but had the event as an end in itself.¹¹ Therefore, governance approaches based on local ownership and transparency had vanished, and there was a disconnect between the effective policy goals being pursued and what García called 'direct representation and local empowerment'.

Illas adds that Forum 2004 made evident that the antagonisms that the 'Barcelona model' had managed to reconcile (e.g. between economic growth and citizen demands, between capitalist development and social cohesion) could no longer be tempered: 'The Forum's rhetoric was unable to seal the wounds open by housing inflation, touristification, labour precarity and the national conflict' (2019: 336, my translation). With regard to the latter, that is, the tension between Catalonia and Spain and the difficult dialogue between both cultures, he also emphasises how the local government's embrace of cosmopolitanism was partly aimed at diminishing the presence of Catalan culture in the Forum and in Barcelona more broadly. The City of Barcelona was then led by the PSC, the regional branch of PSOE. The limited presence of the Catalan language in the Forum's events was also a frequent source of criticism (Buxeda i Aliu 2004, Garcés 2018).

¹¹ Interview with Jordi Pascual, 22 January 2021.

In historical terms, however, Forum 2004 has been presented as a 'turning point' in the relation between Barcelona and major events (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006b, Balibrea 2017). Although the city regularly hosts international congresses and trade fairs, no other major event with global aspirations and significant urban regeneration purposes has been held since. PSC, which had ruled the city since the first local democratic elections in 1979, replaced mayor Joan Clos, who had managed the city during Forum 2004 and was seen as responsible for its failure, by former Deputy Mayor Jordi Hereu in 2006, and retained the city council in 2007 but went on to lose the 2011 local elections (Pascual i Ruiz 2021).

New Accents and the Agenda 21 for culture: A revised approach to culture and sustainability, including the governance of cultural policy

In 2006, two years after Forum 2004, the City Council and ICUB decided to revise the cultural strategy adopted in 1999. While seen as 'a review and update of the 1999 Plan' (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 4) rather than a completely new strategy, the resulting document, known as *New Accents*, emphasised, including in its title, the aim to foster change, thus reinforcing the aforementioned perception of 2004 as a 'turning point'. Its introduction argued that between 1996 and 2004 Barcelona had made a transition towards being a city of knowledge, and seen culture as 'an engine of development for the city', through, among others, the establishment of ICUB as an autonomous body within the municipal government, the adoption of the 1999 Cultural Strategy and other major initiatives (ibid.). Although, interestingly, no reference was made here to Forum 2004, the choice of 2004 as closing a historical period was quite significant, suggesting the aim to move away from the previous period.

New Accents argued that the 1999 Cultural Strategy 'had two basic features: a determination that culture should occupy a central place in the framework of the city strategy and recognition of the link between culture and economic and technological development', and that 'those two general goals have been accomplished' (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 8). Forum 2004 was one of several examples listed to demonstrate that the role of culture in the economic and technological development of Barcelona 'has been recognised and exploited' (ibid.). Yet changes were necessary, including in the position of culture within the city's future development: 'The foundations of this new plan, with no wish to slight the earlier ones, are different. Culture as a subject, culture as an end and not just as a means. Although the external benefits (economic, social, technological) are still true and valid, it is time to put culture as the purpose of cultural policies.' (ibid.) In the interview that I conducted with him in 2020, Carles Giner, who coordinated the elaboration of *New Accents*, argued that after 2004 ('which was a very significant date in Barcelona', my translation), there was a perception that the context of the city had changed ('... the Forum of Cultures was a turning point... None of that should happen again, that instrumentalization of culture, that forcing of a model beyond some limits...', my translation), and that the 1999 Cultural Strategy had become 'obsolete. Not its specific measures or programmes, but the way in which we understand cultural policy, its framework, and the role of the City Council and ICUB towards them'.¹²

¹² Interview with Carles Giner, 11 November 2020.

Therefore, the revised strategy emphasised its aim to move from a more ‘instrumental’ understanding of culture to one where culture was seen as a goal in itself. By doing so, ICUB seemed to be moving away from the then dominating narrative of culture and creativity as engines of cities’ economic development, as embodied in the ‘creative cities’ and ‘creative class’ paradigms (Landry and Bianchini 1995, Florida 2002, Landry 2008), which were to a large extent visible in the 1999 strategy. It also seemed to embrace those who favoured a broader understanding of the ‘public value’ of culture or its ‘intrinsic values’ (Delgado 2001b, Holden 2004), highlighting the autonomy of culture from other ways of understanding value (Delgado 2001b, Hawkes 2001). It is interesting to note that the revised approach was not necessarily due to political changes (PSC remained the main party in local government, and retained control of cultural policy in this area) nor changes in leading personnel: cultural manager and politician Jordi Martí, who had coordinated the 1999 Strategy and gone on to oversee its implementation as managing director of ICUB since 1999, was the director of the 2006 update.¹³

Further to the need to take distance from previous initiatives such as Forum 2004, several of the ideas presented in *New Accents* drew on a set of contributions that had emphasised culture as an *end* in itself. The *Agenda 21 for culture* had a central role in this respect. With the undertitle ‘An undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development’, this Agenda was adopted in May 2004, in an event held on the eve of the opening of Forum 2004, at the same venue where the Forum would take place. Jordi Pascual, who was one of the lead authors of the *Agenda 21 for culture* and has coordinated its global dissemination and fostered its implementation since, has referred to the adoption of the Agenda 21 for culture in the context of Forum 2004 as ‘bittersweet’, because of how that document’s goals contrasted with the context where it was adopted (2021: 28; my translation).

The *Agenda 21 for culture* resulted from the initiative of a group of local governments, mainly from Latin America and Europe, that first met in 2002 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in the context of the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion (known as FAL), a gathering that emerged as a complement to that city’s World Social Forum. Its title established a parallel with the ‘Agenda 21’, the UN’s action plan for sustainable development adopted in 1992. By involving local governments in an agreement similar to that which national governments had adopted a decade earlier, the Agenda was symbolic of the emerging role of cities and local governments as actors addressing global affairs (Barber 2013, Khanna 2016), an area in which Barcelona has been particularly active since the 1980s (Abdullah and Fernández de Losada 2022). On the other hand, and while not referring to it explicitly (Pascual i Ruiz 2021), the Agenda formulated ideas similar to Jon Hawkes’ understanding of culture as the ‘fourth pillar’ of sustainable development (Hawkes 2001), which I will further explore in chapter 3.

¹³ Jordi Martí was a leading figure in the Barcelona branch of PSC until 2014, when he left, following his defeat in the party’s local primary elections and in the context of increasing debates in Catalonia on the right to self-determination from Spain, to form a splinter party which defended Catalonia’s right to secession. After the 2015 election, he was invited to join local government, newly led by BeC, as general manager for the municipality, a post he held until the 2019 election. He was elected as councillor for BeC then and served as Deputy Mayor for Culture (in addition to responsibilities for economic and budgetary policy, among others) between 2021 and 2023, following the retirement, in July 2021, of Councillor Joan Subirats.

The fact that the *Agenda 21 for culture* was adopted in Barcelona was due, to a large extent, to the engagement of the City of Barcelona, and particularly ICUB, in its drafting. The Barcelona City Council formally adopted the *Agenda 21 for culture* in late May 2004, a couple of weeks after its approval by FAL, thus undertaking a commitment to its subsequent implementation in local cultural policy (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a). References to the *Agenda 21 for culture* have continued to be frequent in cultural policy documents adopted by ICUB and the City of Barcelona since 2004 (e.g. Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021b).

The ideas behind the *Agenda 21 for culture* were very visible in *New Accents*, which devoted one of its initial subsections to the Agenda and ‘the new framework for cultural policies’ which it epitomised. It also addressed, in ways similar to those outlined by the *Agenda 21 for culture* two years earlier, the increasing role of cities in the context of globalisation, the need to move towards more participatory and transversal approaches to cultural policy, and the interconnected nature of sustainable development:

‘The vision of the new Plan appeals to the cultural dimension of development. It is based on the realisation that the development of a territory is not only shaped by economic growth, a fair distribution of wealth and environmental sustainability; it is also underpinned by cultural development. The importance of that realisation lies in the consideration of culture not only as an instrument but as a dimension of development. From the right combination of these four dimensions – wealth, fairness, sustainability and culture –, the degree of development of a particular society is derived.... At the start of the 21st century, in a world that is mostly explained from cultural paradigms, the conception of development has to include the cultural dimension.’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 19).

Several of *New Accents’* 10 ‘structuring programmes’ could be connected to some of the *Agenda 21 for culture’s* undertakings, including the connection between cultural and educational policies, the adoption of an intercultural approach, and the establishment of a new ‘Council of Culture’, as a participatory, advisory body in the field contributing to the governance of cultural policy.

It is also important to note that, although *New Accents* suggested that the strategy should be updated in 2010 and 2015, no such revisions have taken place.¹⁴ Therefore, to a large extent it remains the main existing cultural policy framework at city level, complemented with a set of sectorial policy documents. Several of the programmes it established, including the Council of Culture, remain active to this day. Both Forum 2004 and the adoption of the *Agenda 21 for culture* can be seen as attempts to connect local cultural life with a particular perspective on cosmopolitanism, and to a certain extent the 1999 Cultural Strategy and its 2006 update, *New Accents*, may be seen as the policy instruments adopted by Barcelona to embody those attempts respectively. Forum 2004’s adoption of an international perspective and a global discourse, which were ‘given priority over local authorship ... [and left] the question of direct representation and local empowerment unanswered’ (García 2004: 113), and which somehow amounted to a ‘theme park’ of world cultures, where consumption prevailed (Garcés 2018), could be connected

¹⁴ While not presented as a Cultural Strategy, though, it is important to note that in 2021 the City of Barcelona adopted a Cultural Rights Plan, which sets the basis for rethinking local cultural policy from the perspective of cultural rights. I will further examine some of the implications of this Plan in later chapters. (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a)

to what US sociologist Richard Sennett has called the ‘disengaged cosmopolitan’, as ‘the global citizens and globalizing forces transforming cities now’, which transcend local customs and traditions (2019: 295-296). This was cosmopolitanism without any attempt to rethink local governance.

Meanwhile, some aspects in the *Agenda 21 for culture*, including its embrace of cultural diversity (‘Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. ... [It] is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality’ (UCLG 2004: para 1)), but also the assumption of a ‘sense of global belonging’ through principles that aim to be both universal and local, and which emphasise the sovereignty of local communities, may be in line with an understanding of cosmopolitanism closer to that of Anglo-Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah’s, according to which ‘... the cosmopolitan values cultural diversity because of what it makes possible for people. At the heart of modern cosmopolitanism is respect for diversity of culture not because cultures matter in themselves, but because people matter, and culture matters to people.’ (2008: 44) As exemplified by *New Accents* when establishing a new Council of Culture, the principles of the *Agenda 21 for culture* require the adoption of new governance mechanisms which allow communities to negotiate the tensions resulting from the interaction between the global and the local sphere, among other things.

While cultural policies defined by the *Agenda 21 for culture* retain a territorial dimension, there are also aspects which aim to address the ‘decreased congruence between nation and state’ (De Beukelaer 2019: 801) and to think of territories in a more complex, multi-level way, by stressing the centrality of cities and local communities and operating on the basis of a network of cities. This has continued to be central to the subsequent implementation of the *Agenda 21 for culture* (Pascual 2009, UCLG Culture Committee 2020). The exploration of interconnections between cultural, environmental, social and economic aspects made in the Agenda may also sit closer to the approaches to sustainability necessary in the New Climatic Regime. I will come back to some of the policies resulting from *New Accents* later, to further discuss these connections.

2.3. The Council of Culture: An attempt to integrate multi-actor governance in cultural policy

The introduction of a Council of Culture was one of the central propositions made by *New Accents*, which gave it the goal of ‘[promoting] strategic thinking among the cultural agents to face the challenges of a globalised economic and cultural environment, using the viewpoint of Agenda 21 for culture.’ Furthermore, ‘the Council must reflect the plurality of realities and sensibilities that make up the city through participative processes and mechanisms.’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 55) Therefore, both participation and dialogue among several, diverse agents—and the changes experienced by local cultures in the context of globalisation are elements inspiring the establishment of the Council of Culture, thus revising previous approaches to the governance of local cultural policy. This contrasted with the 1999 Cultural Strategy, which paid little attention to this area.¹⁵

¹⁵ The 1999 Strategy did however propose the establishment of a Metropolitan Council on the Arts and Culture, with a geographic scope encompassing the city of Barcelona and its broader metropolitan area and the mission of monitoring and supporting the implementation of the Strategy. The Metropolitan

Among the functions given to the Council of Culture was to take part in the design, evaluation and monitoring of local cultural programmes, fostering participative processes with civil society organisations around ongoing cultural policy debates, fostering coordination between cultural policy and other local policies, and providing advice on local regulations that may impact on culture (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). The latter point somehow embodies Hawkes' cultural framework, which should allow to identify and measure the mutual impacts between culture and other areas of local policy-making (2001). This serves to underline the connections between Hawkes' ideas and some of the policies that resulted from the *Agenda 21 for culture* and *New Accents*. Meanwhile, however, strategic thinking and participative processes in the Council of Culture were meant to involve primarily organisations in the cultural sector, rather than individual citizens, as a cultural rights perspective would suggest (Fribourg Group 2007), and as Hawkes would also argue: 'Communities have a right, as well as a responsibility, to engage with the values that determine the nature of the society of which they are a part... [Before] it is too late, ways must be found to re-engage the body politic. In a vital society, the meaning we make of our lives is something we do together, not an activity to be left to others...' (Hawkes 2001: 16)

The Council of Culture's bylaws, adopted by the City Council in 2008 (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008), distinguished three areas of work, including the provision of advice to the City Council, participation in some strategic projects (including a regular updating of the local cultural strategy), and a more active or 'executive' engagement in specific programmes. The latter area included the Council's involvement in the decision-making process leading to the allocation of annual grants to cultural organisations, in what would resemble a traditional role of Arts Councils elsewhere but remains relatively unique in Southern Europe.¹⁶ In legal terms, the establishment of the Council was described as resulting from local regulations in the field of citizen participation (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). However, by giving the Council competences in areas related to the allocation of funding it effectively went beyond what was typical of similar participatory or consultative bodies in other policy areas.¹⁷

The bylaws also established the structure of the Council of Culture. Chaired by the Mayor of Barcelona (or, failing this, a delegate of the Mayor, which has tended to be the Deputy Mayor in

Council was not established then and does not exist to this day. Only occasional meetings of local councillors, as well as a metropolitan dance festival established in 2018, should be noted as examples of cultural collaboration between local governments at metropolitan level. (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999b)

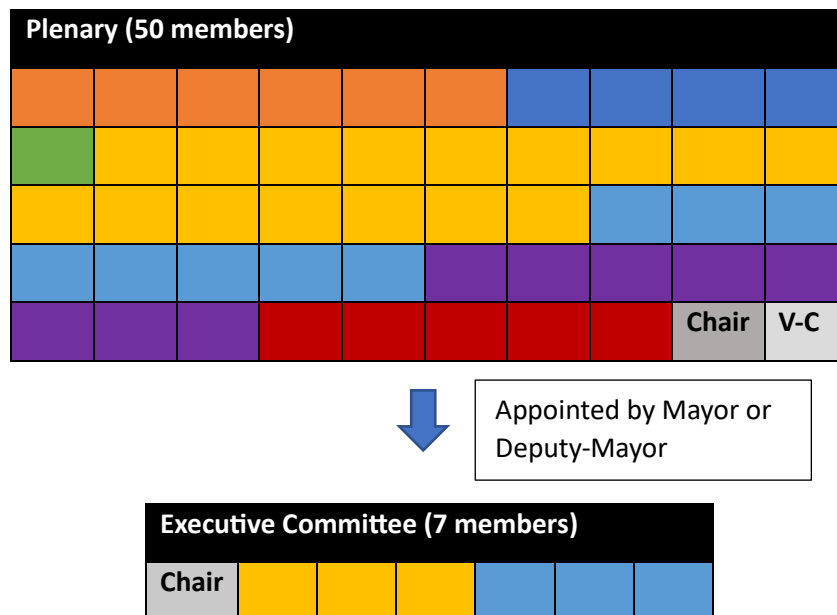
¹⁶ It is important to note, however, that, in parallel to the establishment of the Council of Culture in Barcelona, in 2008 the Catalan Parliament adopted a Law establishing Catalonia's National Council for Culture and Arts (CoNCA), which was also given a role in the allocation of public grants. CoNCA was established following several years of debate, including the establishment of a task force which undertook an inquiry into the issue as far back as 2004. Some of the interviewees in my research have stressed that the example of CoNCA informed some of the functions given to the Barcelona Council of Culture – and it seems likely that the long discussion process leading to the establishment of CoNCA somehow informed the decision to establish the Council of Culture. In 2011, Catalonia's Law on CoNCA was revised, effectively leading to its loss of competences in the allocation of grants and overall diminishing its relevance in policymaking. Meanwhile, no major changes have been made to the regulation on the Barcelona Council of Culture since its establishment in 2008 although, as shall be seen, its effective place in policymaking has evolved. For more on CoNCA and changes in its competences, see e.g. (Villarroya 2012); (Barbieri 2015); and (Rius Ulldemolins, Martínez Illa et al. 2018)

¹⁷ Interview with Carles Giner, Secretary of the Council of Culture, 11 November 2020.

charge of Culture), the Council comprises primarily two bodies, a Plenary and an Executive Committee, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. The Plenary is made up of up to 50 members, including representatives of each political party represented in the City Council; representatives from the city districts' sectorial councils on culture; representatives of non-profit cultural organisations; individuals recognised for their role in cultural life; and some local authority officers (who can take part in debates but are not entitled to vote) (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). Overall, approximately two-thirds of the members of the Plenary represent civil society organisations or individuals recognised for their role in cultural life (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2018), the rest belonging to political parties and the local government.

Meanwhile, the Council's Executive Committee includes a Chair, elected by the Chair of the Council of Culture (i.e. the Mayor or Deputy Mayor) at the proposal of the civil society organisations represented in the Plenary, as well as up to six individual members, elected among the 16 individuals recognised for their role in cultural life, and appointed by the Chair of the Council. The Chair of the Executive Committee acts as Vice-Chair of the Council of Culture and effectively becomes its more visible figure alongside the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor in charge of Culture) (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008).

Figure 1: Structure of the Barcelona Council of Culture



Source: own elaboration, based on Ajuntament de Barcelona (2008)

The establishment of the Council of Culture can be seen as an example of a move towards multi-actor governance in cultural policy, which acknowledges that public debates and decision-making in culture need to involve agents other than public authorities (Weber 2010a, Miralles 2014b, Baltà Portolés 2017). In particular, the ability for the Council, through its Executive Committee, to produce reports before the adoption of major policy documents and its

involvement in grant allocation are innovative aspects in the local context. Overall this amounted to establishing a new structure outside the sphere of the public sector, ‘halfway between’ public authorities and civil society.¹⁸ While some elements of the Council of Culture resemble the ‘arms-length’ models operating elsewhere (Matarasso and Landry 1999), in the local context the step exemplifies a move towards a more ‘ecosystemic’ understanding of the relevant agents in cultural life and the need for them to take part in related public debates. That is, the approach adopted by the Council of Culture can be related to those views which have emphasised the nature of culture as an ‘ecology’ or an ‘ecosystem’, emphasising that cultural life relies on the interdependencies between different stakeholders (public, private and non-profit, formal and informal, active in different areas of the arts and culture, as well as in other fields, etc.) and that acknowledging this interconnected, interdependent nature is essential for policy approaches to be effective (Holden 2015, Gross and Wilson 2019, de Bernard, Comunian et al. 2022). I will return to the ‘ecosystemic’ nature of culture, and what it implies for cultural policy and its governance, in later chapters.

The Council’s effective operations: A still partial transformation of governance

An observation of the Council’s 15-year record since the adoption of its by-laws and effective establishment demonstrates some limitations and relatively slow change in transforming the approach to the governance of cultural policy. One critical aspect concerns its effective role in decision-making processes. Several critiques have been voiced on the Council’s overall architecture, its internal logic and the relevance of its individual components. For some, including cultural manager and lawyer Esteve León, who has sat in the Plenary of the Council of Culture, there is confusion between the Council’s presumed independence and ability to influence policy, and the fact that the Mayor or its delegate effectively chair the Council and appoint the members of the Executive Committee – ultimately, this stifles independent thinking.¹⁹ The Executive Committee itself has recognised that the Council has effectively been reduced, particularly in the last few years, to the Executive Committee’s own work, as ‘neither the Plenary nor its so-called Committees [i.e. thematic or sector-based working groups] have worked’, with the sole exception of the Committee on Folk Culture (‘which effectively operates as a sectoral gathering’ for stakeholders in the field of intangible cultural heritage²⁰), and the Plenary meetings operating as an audience granted by the Mayor’s delegate to cultural sector representatives (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2021: 9; my translation).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Interview with Esteve León, cultural manager and member of the Plenary of the Council of Culture, 2 December 2020.

²⁰ The Council of Culture’s early years witnessed the establishment of approximately 11 committees, which mainly had a sectoral remit – e.g. visual arts, film, circus, folk culture, dance, etc. In the mid-2010s, the perception that most of them had become relatively inactive led to replacing them with a smaller number of cross-sectoral ‘thematic’ committees (e.g. culture and economy, culture and education, etc.), with only folk culture and museums and heritage remaining as ‘sectoral’ gatherings. Whereas the Committee on Folk Culture remained active, somehow operating as a networking space and lobby for organisations in this field, others did not go beyond the implementation of relatively short-lived projects. (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura 2011, Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2018, Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2021)

There is some consensus that more progress has been achieved as regards the Council's 'executive' functions (particularly the allocation of grants and the appointment of juries for the City's Culture Awards) than its 'advisory' role and ability to inform higher-level cultural policy (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2018). While the Council's involvement in grant allocation is significant, it is also important to note that grants only amount to approximately 4% of ICUB's annual budget.²¹ The rest is dedicated primarily to funding public cultural organisations (e.g. museums, theatres), ICUB's structural costs (e.g. salaries, running costs) and the organisation of major events and activities (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2020).

The fact that the more visible changes brought about by the Council of Culture concern the distribution of public funding for culture could be seen to relate to a relatively narrow interpretation of the role of cultural policy and how governance processes may transform it. Rather than operating as a 'cultural framework' towards other public policies as suggested by Hawkes (2001) or the Council's own bylaws (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008), adopting a more holistic understanding of the place of culture in local development as favoured by the *Agenda 21 for culture* (UCLG 2004) and connecting with sustainability as suggested by *New Accents* (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a), and addressing values and fostering a more ecosystemic view of cultural relations, the Council's practice has tended to privilege those aspects which have traditionally centred the relation between the cultural sector and public authorities.

While there has been an attempt to establish a multi-stakeholder governance framework, this remains led by cultural professionals and organisations, rather than a broader cross-section of citizens, as the rationale of 'citizen participation' would suggest and as would be more consistent with an approach based on cultural rights. Some current and former members of the Executive Committee I have interviewed have referred to the cultural sector as a 'captive audience' in the view of local authorities, and the Council of Culture, particularly through its Plenary meetings, as a space which reinforces the relations of dependency and 'clientelism' between public authorities and cultural organisations.²²

Related to this is the perception that the very existence of the Council of Culture, and membership in it, has a symbolic importance, both because of how it may be seen to reinforce attention to culture in the public agenda and how it raises the profile of its participants and enhances their social capital. While the symbolic dimension of governance can be acknowledged (e.g. when new spaces for discussion bringing together participants who had not interacted in the past are established), from a perspective of sustainability and adaptation to a changing society the transformation of governance models should have an impact beyond the symbolic, affecting the nature of debates and decision-making in more practical, effective ways.

At the same time, interviewees also observe that the Council has had a changing role over the years and have connected this to changes in the local government's political leadership. In

²¹ The 2014 annual report of the Council's Executive Committee observed that the relative weight of grants in ICUB's budget had diminished from 4.38% to 3.45% between 2006 and 2014. ((Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2015)) In 2019, the latest year for which full details are public, grants allocated to culture (EUR 4.16 million) and the joint 'culture and education' category (EUR 0.5 million) amounted to approximately 3.58% in ICUB's total budget (EUR 130 million).

²² Interviews with Antonio Monegal, former Chair of the Executive Committee of the Council of Culture (2009-2013), 17 December 2020; and Antonio Ramírez, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Council of Culture (since 2016), 20 February 2021.

particular, the Council was established in 2008, when the City Council had been led by PSC for almost 30 years. In a context where the local government was looking for a new approach to policymaking, following the 'crisis' generated by Forum 2004, *New Accents* and the establishment of the Council embodied a new model. This provided a context where the Executive Committee elaborated some own-initiative reports to influence cultural policy debates in Barcelona and more broadly in Catalonia (e.g. Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2011) and contributed to drafting the criteria and appointing jury members for the selection of directors in some public cultural venues.²³ Therefore, in this period the Council's scope of activity went beyond a focus on funding and on providing advice when requested to do so by the local government. By doing this, it was going beyond its functions as described in its bylaws, somehow benefitting from the local government's tacit understanding of the governance of cultural policy as a space in negotiation as well as because of the mutual trust existing between the parties.

Successive changes in the political majority since 2011 have tended to transform this balance. New governmental majorities have aimed to leave their imprint more markedly in the policy space, frequently being less willing to share duties in policy leadership and, according to some interviewees, granting the Council a less 'political' role.²⁴ Partly as a result of this, as well as the more limited political stability of the last decade (i.e. several changes in the political parties leading local government, and the councillors and teams in charge of cultural policy), there has been less trust between the local government and the Executive Committee than in the early years.

Overall, over the last decade the Executive Committee has had a limited ability to influence the policy agenda, which has largely remained in the hands of the City Council. This has not been helped by the non-binding, relatively loose set of competences granted by its bylaws, which have enabled new governments to give the Council a less prominent place when they have wished to do so. In response to this, the Executive Committee's 2021 report, the last in a four-year cycle for most of its members, called for making its functions clearer and more coherent, as well as for making membership in the Plenary more flexible, so as to involve more voices, and for revising the selection procedures for members of the Executive Committee, in order to preserve their independence and ensure their legitimacy (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2021).

Broader contextual factors, including economic crises and, according to some former members, the lack of consensus around the place of culture in the city's development (Monegal 2022), have also framed the Council of Culture's effective position over the years. What this suggests is that the ability to transform governance models depends on factors external to legal regulations and to participants' own will; the effective margin of manoeuvre may be the result of a combination of several factors, which can generate an environment more or less enabling for effective policy impact. All of this serves to indicate that both associations and informal relationships, and factors external to the political system (i.e. those elements which political scientist Peter John has identified, respectively, with the 'groups and network approaches' and

²³ Interview with Antonio Monegal, 17 December 2020.

²⁴ Interview with Antonio Monegal, 17 December 2020.

the 'exogenous approaches' to public policy research) can have bearing on policy decisions and outcomes (John 2012), something to which I will return in chapter 6.

The Council of Culture remains, in any case, an initial attempt to formalise multi-actor governance in local cultural policy. Meanwhile, the other dimensions in the governance of cultural policy (i.e. transversal and multi-level governance, as per Miralles (2014b)) have been less clearly integrated in its structure and activities. Despite the Council's emergence in the context of the *Agenda 21 for culture*, and its stated aim to inform policies beyond culture, there has generally been limited attention to themes outside a narrow scope of culture understood as the arts and heritage, thus lacking a more 'transversal' or 'horizontal' perspective.²⁵ As regards multi-level aspects, the Council's early years saw some engagement in cultural policy debates in Catalonia (and the Council's establishment may partly be connected to developments taking place at Catalan level, as explained earlier), but in general the focus has been on developments at the city and, occasionally, the broader local level (e.g. the metropolitan area). Similarly, aspects related to cultural life at neighbourhood or district level have generally been left outside the Council's scope. Indeed, while interesting developments have taken place at the neighbourhood and district level in terms of governance and sustainability, as the next section will show, these have generally been disconnected from broader discussions on cultural policy at city level.

2.4. Debates around community-led management: A more sustainable approach to governance?

Whereas the Council of Culture emerged as a move by public authorities towards more open deliberation and decision-making *within the formal policy-making processes*, other shifts in governance take place *at lower tiers of policy-making* and result from a negotiation between different stakeholders. Addressing the latter is also important if we take governance to refer to a broad set of processes which occur in formal and informal settings. Debates around the community-led management of publicly-owned facilities, visible particularly at neighbourhood and district level, emerge as a significant factor in the latter sense.

Defining the terms

Community-led management (*gestió comunitària*) has been defined by civil society organisations promoting it as the 'open, democratic governance structures established by some projects, which imply that their usage and management are guided by local rootedness, social impact and value, democracy and participation, as well as care for people, processes and the environment' (Xarxa d'Espais Comunitaris, quoted in La Hidra and Artibarri 2018: 20, my translation).²⁶ When

²⁵ A rare exception to this was a communique published by the Executive Committee in April 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown, which suggested the need to revise existing approaches to cultural practice, including the importance given to large-scale, short term events, because of its non-sustainable ecological impact and its negative effects on society. (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2020)

²⁶ This definition was elaborated by the Network of Community Spaces (*Xarxa d'Espais Comunitaris*, XEC), which gathers several organisations active in the field of community-led management, including Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris and L'Arnau Itinerant.

applied to culture, community-led management involves local communities' engagement in cultural practices based on democratic governance principles, which aim to create shared norms and place the values of community relations (self-government, use value, sustainability, and collective, transparent management) at the centre of cultural production (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018).

The aforementioned 'local rootedness' may be reflected in the involvement of neighbourhood groups and local artist collectives in the programming of cultural activities, as exemplified by community-led centres such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris (Ojeda and Urbano 2014), to which I will return later. The representation of local communities in these examples tends to be in the form of non-profit civil society organisations or informal alliances of citizens. While community-led management may be undertaken by local communities without a mediation by public authorities (in what could be connected to traditional ways of managing the commons (Ostrom 1990, Harvey 2013)), very often it involves a relationship with public bodies, 'either through collaboration, conflict or in combined processes, depending on the strategies designed by communities and by public or private agents' (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018: 20, my translation).

A context where such relationship between representatives of local communities and public authorities has been particularly relevant and affected cultural life, is the sub-contracting of civil society, not-for-profit organisations for the management of publicly-owned neighbourhood cultural facilities, in line with the aforementioned 'civic management' approach recognised by the Municipal Charter of Barcelona. It has been estimated that approximately 70 local-authority owned venues and services in Barcelona are currently managed by not-for-profit organisations under the 'civic management' (*gestió cívica* or *gestió ciutadana*)²⁷ model, including public spaces, urban gardens, sport, youth and cultural venues, etc (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018, Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021, Capdevila 2022).

However, advocates of community-led management have emphasised a set of differences between the broader notion of 'civic management' and the narrower 'community-led management'. While the former provides a legal framework, the latter places emphasis on the values that management should embody, including community participation in priority-setting and decision-making, as well as the willingness to foster social transformation and community empowerment (Font, Ojeda et al. 2015, Subirats and Barba 2022). According to these authors, a distinctive element in community-led management is the understanding that facilities and services are a common good owned by the community, rather than a resource owned by public authorities – and, therefore, 'when a facility owned by the municipality is managed by a locally-rooted organisation, public authorities' role should be to facilitate and support that process of management' (Font, Ojeda et al. 2015: ; my translation). Therefore, whereas from a strictly legal perspective this arrangement amounts to the sub-contracting of management duties, the engagement of community organisations for these purposes, and the values embodied by 'civic management' and 'community-led management', set these approaches aside from more classic approaches to sub-contracting, where an aim to save costs tends to prevail.

²⁷ While the 1998 Barcelona Charter and subsequent legal documents tend to refer to *gestió cívica* as the legal framework for the sub-contracting of public service management to non-profit organisations, the term *gestió ciutadana* has become more frequent in recent years.

Local policies around community-led management: A slow process towards horizontal governance

New developments in this area have been visible particularly since 2015, as the local government led by BeC adopted a range of tools to strengthen community engagement in the management of public services (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018). This led to the publication of several policy reports by local government departments in charge of citizen participation and public policy planning (e.g. Direcció de Democràcia Activa - Regidoria de Participació i Districtes [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2016, Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2018), the launching of formal dialogue with civil society organisations, consultations and advocacy across several departments in the municipality, the signature of new contracts with community organisations to promote community-led management, and new assessment tools such as ‘community balance’ (which I will further explore in chapter 5). Overall the local government described this as a policy or programme around the ‘urban commons’ or ‘citizen heritage’ (*patrimoni ciutadà*) (Direcció de Democràcia Activa - Regidoria de Participació i Districtes [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2016, Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). However, it did not adopt a formal norm nor high-level policy documents in the field of community-led management, partly because of its fear that placing this process in the limelight may generate social controversy, and a related preference for slow policy change.²⁸

Among the stated aims of this process, as described both by the local government and by civil society activists and researchers who have provided advice to it, is enabling community self-government around the urban commons (e.g. energy, water, culture, care). This builds on the understanding that cities are privileged spaces in which to transform representative democracy into direct democracy and that an alliance between progressive forces in local government and civil society activists is necessary to generate spaces of resistance to contemporary capitalism (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). A planning document elaborated by the City Council in this context, examining the advantages and disadvantages of different public management approaches, suggested that civic management was particularly well suited in the provision of ‘open’, vaguely-defined services which could benefit from self-management, participatory and community strengthening processes, involving a collective response to social challenges, and typically those in areas like culture, the social economy, informal education, sport or community health (Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2018). Meanwhile, services which are more clearly defined and based on individual use or consumption (e.g. information services, elderly care, training and sport courses) may be more suited to public sub-contracting, whereas core areas of the welfare state (education, health, social services) should be directly provided by local authorities, although involving some collaboration with community groups in individual projects (Ibid.).

Community-led management of public services and venues, presented as a public-civic, as opposed to public-private, partnership, is also justified on the observation that increasing citizen participation in public debates in Barcelona (e.g. the *Indignados* or 15-M movement that emerged in 2011 and led to the emergence of new political parties including Spanish left-wing party Podemos and Barcelona’s BeC, and the parallel strengthening of the Catalan independence movement) had not, at least until 2015, found its place into formal governance spaces – and

²⁸ Interview with Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

that, therefore, governance arrangements had to move beyond a focus on ‘participation’ (as exemplified by participatory councils such as the Council of Culture) and embrace ‘self-government’ (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). The process can also be connected to the engagement of former community leaders in local government duties in this period (i.e. since BeC won local elections and became the main party in the local government in 2015), and the resulting collaboration between activists ‘with one foot in government’, community activists, local authority officers with a background in social economy initiatives, and experts in administrative law (Ibid.: 28, my translation), again reflecting the importance of relations and informal connections in public policy and in governance (John 2012).

Therefore, a particular form of horizontal, multi-actor governance emerges, where collaboration between public authorities and civil society actors is essential, and which connects deliberation and decision-making with the effective delivery of services. ‘Community-led management’ involves self-government and relies on grassroots engagement in deliberation and decision-making. By being closer to communities, there is a potential to broaden the range of participants to encompass citizens, in addition to the ‘interested stakeholders’ (e.g. cultural professionals and organisations) that have traditionally populated participatory bodies such as the Council of Culture.

Of course, however, since this relates to the management of services which fall under the public sector, self-government here may need to be understood not as complete autonomy but rather as part of a process of dialogue and negotiation (the aforementioned collaboration, conflict or ‘combined’ forms of relation (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018)) with public bodies, most often through district-level decision-makers and staff. Indeed, as with other forms of governance, community-led management should be understood as an ideal form, which in practice requires constant negotiation and adjustment. Examples such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, probably the best established example of community-led management, to which I will return later, exemplify this constant negotiation.

2.5. Contextualising the case study within the thesis

This chapter has examined how cultural policy in Barcelona has, in the last two decades, introduced changes in its approaches to governance as a result, among other factors, of reflections around sustainability – as illustrated, for instance, in the establishment of the Council of Culture following the adoption of the *Agenda 21 for culture* and its related local cultural strategy, *New Accents*. As the changes introduced between the 1999 and 2006 cultural strategies show, the City Council’s view of culture and cultural policy was framed by the local experience of globalisation, and evolved as a result of the tensions resulting from a failed attempt at embracing the global at the expense of the local, Forum 2004, where a discourse on sustainability was not translated into an effective commitment towards sustainability nor mechanisms enabling local ownership.

The examination of the Council of Culture and of local debates around community-led management serve to illustrate how governance is made up of a myriad processes, occurring simultaneously at several levels (e.g. district, city level), and which encompass both formal, high-level policy processes and informal, grassroots developments. These examples also show that

the effectiveness of governance processes is dependent both on internal relations among its participants as well as by surrounding factors, including political changes, social debates and economic crises.

Reflections on sustainability are thus one of several factors shaping the understanding and practice of the governance of local cultural policy in Barcelona, leading it towards involving more actors, revising decision-making and implementation procedures, and trying to address a broader set of themes. Because these reflections take place simultaneously in many societies, they will also inform the understanding of governance in other places, while of course raising different interpretations and implications. The example of Barcelona serves, however, to observe the tensions raised and the ways in which governance processes may evolve as a result.

In this respect, the case study also serves to illustrate the four tensions in the conceptualisation and practice of governance which I raised in the first chapter. Firstly, the tension between an understanding of culture as a situated, rooted 'commons' and the existence of spaces for exchange and interaction with the outside is somehow illustrated by the disconnect between global goals and the lack of local ownership in Forum 2004. It can also be explored in the light of community-led management models which have used the notion of 'commons' as a basis to foster approaches to governance where a middle ground between civil society and public authorities emerges. In the coming chapters I will return to this theme, drawing also on how the relation between situatedness and diversity can be addressed from the perspective of reflections on culture and sustainability.

Secondly, the tension between a territorial approach to governance, the recognition of the multi-level framework in which culture operates and the related fostering of cosmopolitan mindsets also has echoes in Forum 2004, as well as in the difficulties experienced by the Council of Culture in exploring issues going beyond a relatively narrow, and very localised understanding of cultural policy. Neither developments at the district or metropolitan level, nor those that operate in the 'space of flows' (Castells 1989) and the global sphere can easily fit into city-bound governance spaces. In the coming chapters I will examine how spaces such as community-led management and the Council of Culture may enable discussions around cosmopolitanism, and how the interconnected, interdependent terrains that become visible in the light of sustainability (Latour 2017) can be translated into a more plural, interconnected understanding of governance.

Thirdly, the tension between more open, participatory governance and the distinctive role of public authorities, including in assessing needs and developing tailored approaches, is illustrated by the tensions surrounding community-led management, and the coexistence of multiple models in the management of community cultural centres across Barcelona. They also relate to the move from approaches to governance which emphasise participation towards those which call for an understanding of management as 'self-government'.

Fourthly, the tension regarding the effective scope of cultural policy is exemplified by the ways in which successive cultural strategies and policy documents have progressively aimed to connect cultural policy with other urban challenges – yet governance spaces such as the Council of Culture have struggled to go beyond a relatively narrow understanding of the remit of cultural policy, whereas community-led management faces opposition because of relatively rigid regulatory frameworks.

All those discussions call for an analysis of governance which is holistic and evolving, and which reflects in its processes the inevitable tensions that emerge in the relation between culture and sustainability. The next few chapters will examine these issues further, and what they should imply in terms of governance.

Chapter 3: Reviewing the relationship between culture and sustainability: A cultural policy perspective

This chapter examines the extent to which, and how, culture and cultural policy are relevant vehicles for the fostering of processes connected to sustainability, adaptation or regeneration. While in the previous chapter I introduced the context of Barcelona and some of the tensions observed in cultural policy and its governance, this chapter critically examines existing knowledge at the nexus between culture and sustainability, drawing primarily on an analysis of the literature and the implications of this literature for cultural policy.

I will first examine existing knowledge on the relation between culture and development, examining what the different approaches existing imply from the perspective of the understanding of development and potential implications for the governance of cultural policy. Later, I will consider some of the factors which have impeded a stronger integration of cultural aspects in mainstream approaches to sustainable development, and I will also analyse to what extent sustainable development remains a valid framework today, in the light of the planetary crisis. Finally, I will present six propositions for revising cultural policy in the light of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. This will lay the foundation for the subsequent discussion of how the governance of local cultural policy may need to evolve to be better aligned with sustainability processes.

3.1. The integration of culture in approaches to development

No approach to development is neutral nor universal, and therefore any attempt to consider general directions for the development of a particular society or group will be culturally determined. A set of factors, including historical contexts and political circumstances, lead to identifying some issues as a problem, to explanations or assumptions about causal relationships, and to establishing the images of improvement or desirable change which prevail in a given context (Nederveen Pieterse 2001). As a result, different historical periods have witnessed different definitions and understandings of development, whether under that or other names (e.g. modernisation, structural adjustment, human development (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, De Beukelaer 2015)).

Thinking about how policy approaches can be connected to an understanding of *development as sustainability, adaptation or regeneration* may be seen as a new phase in this evolution although, as I will discuss later, there also emerge tensions between the very notion of *development* and that of *sustainability*. In addition to placing contemporary reflections within a longer historical journey in the evolution of the notion of development, a second reason for examining this issue relates to examining how the relation between culture and development has been conceived in the past. This includes the rationales or arguments that have been used to integrate culture in reflections on development. While a comprehensive analysis of this lies out of the scope of this thesis, I will focus on those issues that hold more significance for my analysis.

The contemporary evolution of 'development' and where culture lies in it

After the 2nd World War, an understanding of development characterised by a 'modernisation' agenda, which saw industrialised societies as the model for others to follow and placed an increasing emphasis on economic growth, gained prominence. This came under increasing criticism from several corners since the last third of the 20th century (see e.g. Schumacher 1993, Arizpe 2004, Kovács 2010, De Beukelaer 2015). Central to some of the critiques was the acknowledgement that modern industrial production was done at the expense of nature, and had negative impacts on the environment (Schumacher 1993). This would open the door to subsequent reflections on 'sustainable development' (see e.g. World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), as well as what has been termed 'planetary boundaries', which can be understood as a 'safe operating space for human societies to develop and thrive', based on the functioning and resilience of the Earth system (Steffen, Richardson et al. 2015: 1). Rejecting development based exclusively on economic growth, in 1972 a report commissioned by the so-called 'Club of Rome' suggested that it was necessary to effect changes on 'the social and economic structures that have been deeply impressed into human culture by centuries of growth' (Meadows, Meadows et al. 1972: 153) – therefore, only by transforming culture could an alternative approach to development emerge. Exploring this at the level of individuals, one year later, German born British economist E.F. Schumacher argued that development required complex decisions, which should be guided by wisdom, values and ethics and place more emphasis on individual and collective satisfaction and quality of life than on consumption and constant growth (1993).

By suggesting that decisions on development should be guided by wisdom and ethics, as well as how development models were informed by culture, Schumacher and the Club of Rome pointed to some cultural aspects which could inform future development models. This was echoed in some institutional contexts. Debates held at UNESCO in the early 1970s referred to culture both as a 'higher collective good' which needed protection in a context of accelerated economic growth, and as a means to foster the adaptation of society to changing economic and technological demands (Girard 1972). Arguing that man was 'the means and the end of development' (Girard 1972: 142-143), some of these approaches anticipated the human development discourse that would gain prominence in the 1990s (ul Haq 1990, Sen 1999, Fukuda-Parr 2004, Nussbaum 2011).

In addition to the critiques of development which emphasised the need for more comprehensive approaches, other authors have stressed the ideological nature of the notion of development and the 'modernisation theory' that it endorsed (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, Lewellen 2003). Here, development is seen as a discourse which has been 'invented' (Escobar 2014) to ensure the continuity of colonial domination of so-called 'developing' countries while pretending to contribute to their modernisation (Lewellen 2003, Easterly 2006, De Beukelaer 2015). Development can thus be seen as a 'cultural construct', and, indeed, it has been argued that any consideration of development requires analysing the cultural context in which 'development' has been framed, for this is also in itself the expression of a culture (Rist 1994, Arizpe 2004) and that development is value-laden 'in ways that are specific to culture, context and history or time' (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 22).

Post-colonial and post-structuralist anthropology will suggest, in this regard, that development should be analysed as the result of specific relationships between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries and that the focus, rather than on the situation of specific ‘developing’ countries, should lie on the agencies of development and the representations they make of others (Lewellen 2003). One implication of this is that development policies and programmes, while officially aimed at improving the conditions of specific communities and groups, would effectively impose an external cultural model, depriving local communities of their specific forms of knowledge and distinctive cultural traits. However, even in these contexts the possibility of agency by local communities and individuals, who challenge the models being imposed from outside by using, among others, creative work, can be recognised (Arizpe 2004), thus opening paths for development informed by elements of culture. It is however necessary to keep the ‘constructed’, non-neutral nature of development in mind, and to consider what are the implications of an approach that connects development and sustainability, particularly in terms of those whose knowledge and agency may be at risk. Contemporary reflections on ‘climate justice’, namely the framing of the climate crisis as an ethical, social, environmental and political issue, closely connected to power structures and agency (Nwulu 2021, Julie's Bicycle 2023), may be seen as an expression of this, which I will need to consider in the following chapters.

Connecting development and culture: different approaches and what they provide

The exploration of the connections between culture and development has progressively gained some attention in academic circles as well as, to varying degree, in institutional contexts and policymaking at global, regional, national and local levels. In the following pages I will present an identification of six different ways of understanding the relationship between culture and development, examining what understanding of culture prevails in each case, how it relates to different notions of development, and what this could imply in terms of governance. This will also serve to distinguish the different rationales and approaches that coexist within what is frequently referred to as ‘culture and development’ (Gasper 2006, Marañón 2010, Martinell 2010, OECD 2018, OECD and ICOM 2019). Drawing on existing literature and policy approaches, I have termed them as follows:

- “Cultural adaptation”, which involves adapting approaches to development to local cultural contexts.
- “Culturally sustainable development”, which emphasises the need to preserve valuable cultural elements in the face of the accelerated transformations which are typical of capitalism and globalisation.
- “Culture as a means for development”, which emphasises how some cultural aspects may operate as resources to achieve economic or social development.
- “Culture as an end of development”, which highlights that culture should be a substantial component of development, rather than as a tool to achieve other ends.
- “Culture for sustainable development”, which emphasises the framing, contextualising and mediating role of culture in the search for sustainable development, by providing meaning and enabling the negotiation of tensions which are inherent to the search for sustainable development.

- “Culture as sustainable development”, which promotes the emergence of an ‘eco-cultural civilisation’ (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 31), with culture as the foundation of a completely transformed society.

Even while accepting that some of these approaches may be complementary to one another, it is also important to identify what is distinctive in each. In the course of this analysis, I will also highlight those aspects that are more relevant in the light of today’s sustainability challenges and my focus on the governance of cultural policy. In particular, each of the models analysed provides some elements which can be inspiring in terms of changes to the governance of cultural policy and, by combining them, we can extract a few significant elements to build approaches concerned with sustainability. This combination also serves to highlight, however, that not all elements that are grouped under ‘culture and development’ are particularly relevant today from the perspective of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. This observation is particularly significant given my interest in determining how local cultural policy, and particularly its governance, should be reoriented in this perspective.

The first approach, that we may call “cultural adaptation”, relates to the understanding that approaches to development need to be adapted to local cultural contexts. It could be seen as a ‘managerial’, results-oriented approach. In an influential book published in 2004, for instance, economist Vijayendra Rao and human development consultant Michael Walton suggested that a ‘cultural lens’ needed to be integrated, involving an acknowledgement of contexts, and the inequalities present therein, in order to design effective development interventions (Rao and Walton 2004, see also World Bank c. 1999). This approach is typical of international development policies and practices. Because its main focus lies on programme effectiveness, this approach does not engage very strongly with broader political considerations (Nederveen Pieterse 2001) or long-term governance processes. Consulting communities and engaging them in decision-making can be one way of making development programmes responsive to local contexts, and this is significant from the governance perspective. However, in this approach it frequently amounts to a relatively narrow, somewhat ‘tokenistic’ approach to participation (Arnstein 1969) – that is, there are opportunities for local community members to be heard, but they have little guarantee of to what extent this will have a real impact in forms of management and governance. This is to a large extent because neither community consultation nor the adoption of democratic or rights-based procedures are a central part of what is being sought here, but rather a tool to ensure that results of a different nature are achieved.

The second approach, which we may term “culturally sustainable development”, emphasises the need to preserve culture, or at least of those elements of culture which are valuable, in the face of the accelerated social, economic, and environmental transformations which are typical of capitalism and globalisation. Australian economist David Throsby has developed a checklist for ‘culturally sustainable development’ (2017), which includes the ‘precautionary principle’ of adopting a risk-averse position before decisions which may have irreversible consequences on culture, such as the destruction of cultural heritage or the extinction of valued cultural practices, are adopted.

Two arguments lie at the basis of this approach. One suggests that diverse cultural forms should be preserved as a ‘resource’ to face future challenges, understanding that, just as biological

diversity can contribute to preserving environmental sustainability, the diversity of cultural ways and expressions also provides a 'toolbox' for addressing future challenges. This view is visible in one of Throsby's principles for 'culturally sustainable development', which emphasises that cultural diversity is valuable for economic, social and cultural development (Throsby 2017), as well as in Australian commentator Jon Hawkes' argument that '[diverse] values should not be respected just because we are tolerant folk, but because we must have a pool of diverse perspectives in order to survive, to adapt to changing conditions, to embrace the future' (Hawkes 2001: 14). Similar ideas are present in international statements such as the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Agenda 21 for culture (UCLG 2004).

The other argument concerns the recognition that cultural heritage and expression are related to human dignity because they enable individuals and communities to express themselves, make sense of their lives, and remain in charge of their development paths (Shaheed 2014). There is an understanding here that globalisation threatens

... the freedom to decide what we have reason to value, and what lives we have reason to seek. One of the most basic needs is to be left free to define our own basic needs. This need is being threatened by a combination of global pressures and global neglect. (World Commission on Culture and Development 1996: 26).

Therefore, development can only be culturally sustainable if it allows individuals and communities to determine their own needs, in accordance with their values, and influence the direction of development policies. In line with Shaheed's observation above (2014), this ability is integral to human dignity. I would also argue that the right to determine what elements of culture need to be preserved, because they are significant to individuals and allow them to make sense of their lives, could be seen as part of human rights (UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights 2016). This also has significant implications in terms of governance, because it understands that the ability of a community to be in command of development priorities and to ensure that valuable cultural aspects are preserved, is a core component of sustainable development.

The approach towards "culturally sustainable development" is significant when considering the relation between sustainability and culture, because it aims to ensure the sustainability of some cultural forms within processes of accelerated development. It also has implications in terms of governance, both because of the aforementioned engagement in communities in determining what cultural elements should be preserved and what should be the priorities of development, and through the integration of cultural 'lenses' or 'filters' to assess and understand the impact of other policy decisions on the cultural realm, i.e. those measures that may result in development not being culturally sustainable (Hawkes 2001, Teixeira Coelho 2009). This could set a basis for a more holistic, integrated scope of culture in the policy realm.

A third approach, or set of approaches, concerns the identification of cultural aspects, and particularly its tangible expressions (e.g. heritage sites, museums, festivals), as resources or *means* to achieve development, and particularly some of its dimensions, which are privileged as the *ends* of development. In particular, contributions have highlighted the role of cultural activities and resources in fostering economic development (see e.g. Myerscough 1988, Florida 2002) or social inclusion and other social goals such as health, well-being and educational improvement (see e.g. Matarasso 1997, Taylor, Davies et al. 2015, Fancourt and Finn 2019). They

have strongly informed official policy documents in many countries and in international organisations (Department for Culture Media and Sport [UK] 1998, European Commission 2010, OMC Working Group 2014). Because they establish connections with other dimensions of sustainable development in its more mainstream meaning (i.e. the combination of economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equality or inclusion), these approaches are relevant from the perspective of policies and strategies on culture and sustainability, i.e. cultural policies seen under this light may be geared towards generating employment or fostering social development. They do not necessarily place emphasis on how governance processes should be organised, although they can lead to some degree of integration between different policy departments, and thus be the basis for transversal or 'joined-up' policymaking (Policy Action Team 10 1999, UCLG 2015).

Somehow reacting to this vision is an approach which emphasises that culture should be seen as a substantial component of development, that is, an *end* in itself rather than as a resource or a *means* to achieve economic or social goals. While originally meant to address the relation between 'culture and development' in short, this approach has been extended to be applied to 'culture and *sustainable* development' as well. This is to a large extent the understanding of Hawkes' view of culture as the 'fourth pillar' of sustainable development, where cultural vitality is a separate, distinct reference point in sustainability, alongside social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability, the four elements being closely intertwined (Hawkes 2001). Behind this understanding lies the idea that elements such as heritage, diversity, creativity and access to and participation in cultural life are essential components of development (Delgado 2001b, Sen 2004, Pascual 2007a, UCLG 2015).

The image of culture as the 'fourth pillar' of sustainable development has succeeded particularly in mobilising the advocates of culture as an area distinct to social and economic development, as exemplified by a range of policy documents adopted by the international network of local governments UCLG (see e.g. UCLG 2010, UCLG 2015), which have highlighted that sustainable development strategies should give culture a prominence similar to that accorded to social, economic and environmental goals. This view has occasionally been seen as isolating culture from other areas of development (see e.g. Dessein, Soini et al. 2015), although the views presented by Hawkes and others in this area (see e.g. Delgado 2001b, Pascual 2007a, UCLG 2015) are actually quite complex and recognise the interdependencies. Hawkes himself has acknowledged that the image of a 'pillar' may not adequately convey the dynamism, nor the interdependent nature of culture vis-à-vis other areas of sustainable development which was at the core of his original message (Hawkes and Pascual 2015).

In governance terms, this approach suggests that public policy should integrate some goals that are strictly cultural (i.e., those related to cultural vitality, to use Hawkes' expression, which could also involve paying attention to the preservation of heritage, the promotion of diversity and creativity, and the fostering of participation in cultural life), while also exploring relations with other areas transversally, on an equal footing. When connected to human rights, it also implies that citizens' active participation should be fostered in decision-making processes (Fribourg Group 2007).

The fifth approach suggests that culture can have a framing, contextualising and mediating role in the search for sustainable development— in what contributors to European research project

Investigating Cultural Sustainability called 'culture for sustainable development' (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015). This way, culture can contribute to balancing the economic, social and environmental aspects of development. Culture is seen here partly as a *resource* and, just as in the 'cultural adaptation' approach, also partly as an adaptive 'lens'. However, beyond the methodological applicability lies a more substantial understanding that culture, as 'the meaningful content of human societies and communities' (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 30), can provide a common language for ecological, environmental and social reactions to proposed development or imminent change, which has echoes of the view of culture as a distinctive component of development embodied in the approach of 'culture as an end of development'. Therefore, this approach is particularly comprehensive, integrating elements from others. It lends itself to interesting reflections in terms of cultural policy, since it enables culture to provide a terrain in which to negotiate tensions between different aspects in development. I will return to this topic on a few occasions throughout this chapter. In governance terms, this approach suggests that cultural knowledge and values should be central to the design of policies in several areas, something which may imply fostering closer relations between communities and decision-makers, and the engagement of mediators and similar stakeholders with specific cultural knowledge or abilities (e.g. artists) in order to facilitate the emergence and transfer of knowledge.

Finally, there can also be a normative approach, which Dessein et al. (2015) have described as 'culture as sustainable development', where culture becomes 'the necessary overall foundation and structure for achieving the aims of sustainable development' (2015: 29), including through the emergence of an 'eco-cultural civilisation' (ibid.: 31). This is based on the understanding that culture 'is at the root of all human decisions and actions and an overarching concern ... in sustainable development thinking', which leads to culture and sustainability becoming 'mutually intertwined' (ibid.: 29) and to the fading of distinctions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (ibid.). Authors admit this arises as a somehow 'ideal', utopian vision, where 'culture... offers an ideal of doing things well, of culture as cultivation and sustaining life ... Culture in this approach refers to a worldview, a cultural system guided by intentions, motivations, ethical and moral choices, rooted in values that drive our individual and collective actions' (ibid.: 32). While a concern with governance is not central to its proponents, I would argue that one of the implications of this understanding would be to enable small-scale deliberation, decision-making and implementation or management processes. Such that foster a close connection between communities and those who implement policy, while also respecting some shared, universal principles regarding nature, thus connecting the local with the global.

In Table 2 I summarise the six models identified, analysing in each case the cultural focus adopted, the problem being addressed, the policy applicability of each model, as well as its possible governance implications.

Table 2: Different approaches to the relation between culture and development, in a policy perspective

Description	Cultural focus	Problem being addressed	Direct policy applicability	Possible governance implications
Cultural adaptation	Customs, languages, values (anthropological aspects)	Effectiveness of international development programmes in diverse contexts	High	Community consultation
Culturally sustainable development	Related primarily to that which has been inherited, including heritage in all its dimensions (tangible, intangible, languages, worldviews)	Loss of cultural diversity in the face of accelerated development	Moderate (applicable in theory, but requiring political will and substantial resources)	Involving communities in determining what cultural elements should be preserved and establishing development priorities; Introducing a cultural lens or filter to measure the impacts on culture of other policy decisions
Culture as a means for development	Tangible cultural expressions, activities and resources (festivals, cultural goods and services, venues, heritage sites)	Achievement of social and economic goals	High	Some form of coordination or integration between different policy departments
Culture as an end of development	Broad (values, customs, creativity, heritage, diversity)	Neglect of culture in mainstream approaches to sustainability	Medium (requires political will and appropriate tools)	Ensuring that public policy includes some strictly cultural goals, and that balanced relations are established with other policy areas. Fostering active participation in decision-making

Framing, contextualising, mediating role of culture ('culture for sustainable development')	Primarily anthropological (values, ways of being and giving meaning), though with potential engagement of artists	Rebalancing approaches to sustainability, fostering appropriation of development processes	Moderate (because of its complexity and ill-adaptation of existing models)	Fostering dialogue and connection between communities and decision-makers; involving mediators and artists in the emergence and transfer of cultural knowledge
Eco-cultural civilisation ('culture as sustainable development')	Culture as the foundation of everything	Comprehensive transformation of society	Limited	Strengthening of local communities as spaces of negotiation, in the context of the adoption of some shared, universal principles

Source: my elaboration

In terms of governance, this initial analysis suggests that those approaches to culture and development which have engaged more directly with sustainability could lead to governance models that are based on community engagement, the involvement of cultural mediators and artists to interpret cultural knowledge and transfer it to decision-making processes, the affirmation of culture as a distinct policy area, coordination with other policy areas, and the integration of cultural lenses or filters . I will continue examining these elements, and further develop them, in the following sections.

3.2. Why is culture not fully integrated in sustainable development policies?

The previous section has examined a set of approaches to the relationship between culture and development. A closer examination of prevailing views around development, however, and particularly of 'sustainable development', the term which condenses most mainstream reflections around development in recent years, shows that cultural aspects play a relatively modest role there. This is despite the demonstrative or normative approach which often prevails in reflections around culture and development, which tend to explore causality and interdependence between the consideration of cultural factors in public policy and development strategies, on the one hand, and the achievements of goals and impacts of sustainable development agendas, on the other (see e.g. World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, Hawkes 2001, UCLG 2004, Abello Vives, Aleán Pico et al. 2010, Martinell Sempere 2010, UCLG 2015).

The notion of 'sustainable development', which had come into prominence since the early 1980s (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) 1980, Kangas, Duxbury et al. 2017), was made popular following the publication in 1987 of WCED's *Our Common Future* report, also known as the 'Brundtland Report'. This defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Its mainstream understanding and translation into policy has generally revolved around the combination of three dimensions – economic, environmental and social aspects (hence Hawkes' proposal for a 'fourth pillar'). This continues to be visible today, including in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides global guidance to policies concerned with sustainable development between 2015 and 2030 (UN General Assembly 2015), as illustrated in its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but devotes limited attention to cultural aspects (Vlassis 2015, Throsby 2017, UCLG 2018). Among the reasons that may explain why cultural aspects were given a limited place within the SDGs are the reluctance of national governments (which negotiated the Agenda) to acknowledge cultural diversity, due to its potential implications at domestic level, and the priority given to measurable, quantifiable targets and indicators, as opposed to the intangible, qualitative aspects that characterise culture (Vlassis 2015, Martinell Sempere 2020).

This is even though, when examined in detail, the aforementioned definition of sustainable development is sufficiently broad to integrate cultural aspects. Cultural policy researchers Anita Kangas, Nancy Duxbury and Christiaan De Beukelaer have suggested that the 'needs' (of both present and future generations) are 'socially and culturally determined' (2017: 1-2), in a way not dissimilar to Jon Hawkes' affirmation that '... the concept of sustainability embodies a desire that future generations inherit a world at least as bountiful as the one we inhabit. However, how to get there... will always be the subject of constant debate. This debate is about values; it is a cultural debate' (2001: 11). In similar terms, German cultural theorist Sacha Kagan has argued that '[s]ustainability is about reinventing worlds; it is a cultural project' (2015: 29). This understanding of culture as a set of values which determine ways of seeing the present and the future calls for going beyond the division between environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects, also in policy terms.

How the ambivalence of culture does not help, and why we need clearer language

Some of the obstacles to the integration of culture in sustainable development agendas may derive from the complexity of the arguments provided, the perceived vagueness of some of the terms used, and the coexistence of many, often confusing understandings of culture and sustainability. In this respect, cultural analyst, and former UNESCO senior official, Yudhishtir Raj Isar, has suggested that the multiple, increasingly diverse meanings of both 'sustainable development' and 'culture' have led to the frequent connection between 'culture and sustainable development' becoming 'a floating signifier' (2017: 21), which is often used without a clear explanation of its meaning, 'sometimes evoking culture as the arts and heritage, sometimes as entire ways of life or collective identities' (2017: 26). Facing this, he suggests narrowing down the understanding of the nexus between culture and sustainability, addressing culture primarily in an anthropological sense, focusing on ways of life, and particularly '... the

myriad attitudes, behaviours and practices that together generate unsustainable development’ (28). Isar’s reference to how cultural practices may generate unsustainable development has echoes of British anthropologist John Clammer’s warning that ‘[if]... our culture (... its consumerism and its disregard for our highly negative impact on the environment, ... and our unconcern with the multiple problems of poverty and inequality...) is at the root of our current... planetary crisis, then it is to culture that we must turn our attention’ (2016: 16-17).

The potentially negative effects of cultural practices, when placed alongside some of the positive contributions seen earlier serve to emphasise the ambivalent nature of culture (Ariño c. 2007), particularly when culture is understood, in anthropological terms, as a set of values, practices and behaviours which underpin all sorts of societal interactions. One illustrative example of this ambivalence, from the perspective of human rights and development, is the relation between culture and gender equality: along with the frequent view that, in many societies, culture operates as an impediment to women’s human rights, by reinforcing discriminatory practices and limiting women’s ability to take part in social, economic and political life, former UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed, has also argued that culture is the terrain where women’s transformative initiatives, including elements retrieved from cultural heritage that may have fallen into disuse, may emerge (UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights 2012: esp. para 3 and 76).

Beyond the anthropological dimension of culture, more tangible expressions of culture can also have harmful effects from the perspective of human rights and sustainability. This is illustrated, among others, by the ways in which the commodification of the cultural industries has become central to capitalism and led to the progressive loss of culture’s emancipatory potential (Adorno 2001, Eagleton 2018), the role of some large cultural facilities (e.g. museums) and events (e.g. festivals, biennials) in processes that accelerate gentrification and urban exclusion (Harvey 2013, Baltà 2019), the ways in which philanthropy of arts institutions has been used by major corporate companies, including oil companies involved in human rights abuses and the large-scale damage to natural resources, to improve their image and limits the ability of cultural organisations to provide a terrain for public debates around climate change (Evans 2015), and the carbon footprint of cultural practices and organisations, including that which results from streaming services and other digital activities (Maxwell and Miller 2017, Julie's Bicycle 2020, Valensi, Valembois et al. 2021). These harmful effects are however faced by initiatives that expose them and seek alternative models, and where the ‘creative imagination’ of artists and creative practices are driving forces – as UK-based artist and activist Mel Evans’ own account of the opposition to BP’s sponsorship of Tate galleries illustrates (2015). These also serve to show how in some ways the tangible expressions of culture and creativity may be connected to deeper, quasi-anthropological negotiations of the values and practices that underpin human relations with the planet. There is here a role of artists as ‘mediators’ in the light of sustainability challenges, in line with what I suggested earlier in connection with the culture *for* sustainable development approach.

The ambivalent, contradictory nature of culture at its root demands care and critical reflection when the term is used. Indeed, as the exploration so far has shown, both ‘culture’ and ‘sustainability’ are ‘complex, contested, multidisciplinary and normative concepts’ (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 14). Both their often vague, broad definitions and the understanding that these are politically-charged, value-laden, and context-dependent terms (see e.g. Katunaric 2014),

have led to multiple, frequently imprecise understandings of their connections. This will also mean that any explanation of the causal connections between culture and other phenomena, such as sustainable development, be specific about the meaning given to the terms, the values which underpin the connections being established, and the specific conditions and ways in which the connection may exist. As a result, we can understand that culture does not contribute 'intrinsically nor automatically ... to sustainable development, but may do so under certain circumstances and conditions' (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017: 222). That critical awareness, and the attention to the 'circumstances and conditions' where a positive connection may be established, should be central in reflexive research on the connections between culture and sustainable development. It is only then that the risk of this discourse becoming a 'floating signifier' (Isar 2017: 21) may be overcome. Recognising the ambivalent and complex connection between culture and sustainability also means that policy approaches will adopt specific understandings of these terms and of how they relate to one another, and this reinforces the political relevance of this debate.

What this implies in terms of governance

This critical reflection is particularly necessary given the urgency generated by the planetary crisis, and the questions it raises as per how humanity should address it. The structural, systemic nature of the planetary crisis (Latour 2015, Hage 2017) was present in the late German sociologist Ulrich Beck's reference to 'the metamorphosis of the world', as per a 'radical transformation in which the old certainties of modern society are falling away and something quite new is emerging' (2016: 3). Interestingly, his focus was not exclusively on the risks this context generated, but rather on the potentially 'positive side effects of bads. They produce normative horizons of common goods and propel us beyond the national frame towards a cosmopolitan outlook' (4). There is, therefore, a context of structural change which opens spaces for revising our understanding of development and sustainability and doing so in a way which integrates cultural aspects differently to how it has been done in the past. Beck's call to go 'beyond the national frame towards a cosmopolitan outlook' is significant from the perspective of the governance of cultural policy and how this could be a terrain where a cosmopolitan perspective, which is also connected to the exercise of rights and the awareness of the 'metamorphosis', is embedded – to address what I earlier called the 'territorial versus multi-level tension'.

Focusing more specifically on the transformations brought about by the climate emergency, Latour's definition of a 'New Climatic Regime' implies, rather than a mere *crisis*, a 'mutation in our relation to the world' (2015: 16, my translation). Partly drawing on British scientist James Lovelock's hypothesis of Gaia (2000), which stressed human responsibility towards the Earth because the latter should be understood as a living being, Latour's 'mutation' implies overcoming the clear demarcation of nature and culture which prevails in the West, and recognising the existence of a shared 'metamorphic zone' where transformation is continuous and mutual influence between human and natural phenomena inevitable (Latour 2015). In terms of cultural policy and its governance, this again demands broadening its scope of action, to avoid clear divides vis-à-vis nature.

What can we extract from this analysis? Primarily, that culture can only be significant in terms of sustainability under certain circumstances. These include being critical and recognising the potential negative effects, in terms of sustainability, of some cultural forms and interpretations, and integrating connections with nature more strongly in understandings of culture, as I suggested in the first chapter. These will also need to be reflected in governance processes, by integrating a multi-level perspective and broadening the scope of action. The next section will include further reflections on ‘sustainable development’ and how alternative terms may today provide further insight on current challenges and on the spaces where to integrate culture.

3.3. Critiques of sustainable development: How alternative views may provide light on addressing the planetary crisis and integrating cultural aspects

Both Beck and Latour’s reflections on the planetary crisis and other factors leading to the metamorphosis of the world integrate proposals for new approaches. I will later explore elements including the cosmopolitan outlook proposed by Beck, and Latour’s call for unravelling the interdependences that lie within our surroundings or *terrains de vie*. At the root of both also lies a discontent with mainstream approaches to addressing the planetary crisis. That is, to what extent the mainstream understanding of ‘sustainable development’ and the ways in which it has informed policies and action are sufficient to grasp the complexity of the crisis and propose suitable alternatives.

In the context of my research, it is interesting to delve further into the critiques of ‘sustainable development’, for at least two reasons. Firstly, to consider to what extent this remains a relevant paradigm when reflecting on the nature of the crisis and on any practical ways to address it – in line with the aforementioned moral responsibility of research, or its ethical imperative to consider alternatives (Smith and Deemer 2000, Seale 2002, Latour 2015, Hage 2017). Secondly, to examine the place that cultural aspects may have in broader reflections around the planetary crisis, including those that propose that, rather than sustainability, we need to aim for adaptation or regeneration. I will explore these questions through an analysis of some of the most prominent critical arguments around sustainable development. While, given limitations of space and the vast number of authors who have addressed these themes, this does not attempt to be a comprehensive analysis of reflections on sustainable development, I intend at least to consider a range of contributions which allow me to respond to the two questions outlined above. There are three lines of critique I will focus on: the consideration of the tensions between development and sustainability, which implies the need to address the economic superstructure; calls for a more modest position in nature, adopting approaches based on adaptation and regeneration; and the need to consider values, lifestyles and worldviews as closely connected to sustainable development.

Can development ever be sustainable? On the need to address the economic superstructure

One important line of critique towards ‘sustainable development’ may be summarised in Marina Garcés’ affirmation that, in the light of the Brundtland Report, sustainable development was proposed not as a contradiction that needed solving, but as a solution to be proposed (2017) – that is, there is an assumption that development can be sustainable, without challenging the

very notion of 'development'. Garcés argues that the adoption of sustainable development served to forestall any in-depth discussion around capitalism and around the sustainability of the economic system. The inherent, but often overlooked, tension between the sustainability of the planet and mainstream economic models has been at the centre of several contributions, echoing earlier arguments put forward by the Club of Rome (Meadows, Meadows et al. 1972) and Schumacher (1993).

While, as stressed by Garcés in her critique, concepts such as 'green growth', 'inclusive growth' and 'sustainable growth' have been proposed to address that tension in a 'resolvable' or 'win-win' way, British ecological economist Tim Jackson has referred to this as the 'myth of decoupling' (2017: 84) – that is, no convincing, large-scale models have been proposed that would be able to 'decouple' economic growth and environmental degradation. Jackson argues, however, that '[this] is not to suggest that decoupling itself is either unnecessary or impossible. On the contrary it's vital – with or without growth... A much more nuanced approach to decoupling is needed' (87). Key to this, in his view, is the need to challenge consumerism, and the society where we see the goods we consume as part of our 'extended self', serving to fill our 'empty self'. Jackson will see a set of 'powerful social forces and the specific institutions of modern society' (116) at the root of consumerism, and how our identities are built through it, in a way not dissimilar to Clammer's argument that capitalist society has promoted the perception that '... to consume is to be, that identity and status are the products of what and how much one consumes, and that happiness is to be pursued through expanding the range of consumption. The depth and pervasiveness of this model is so great that to a great extent we are not even aware of it' (2016: 30). This serves to underline the central position of the economic superstructure, which 'conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general' (Marx 1986 [1859]: 187), informing our perception of the world and therefore shaping a large part of our culture.

What this suggests is that approaches to the planetary crisis need to adopt a prism that reflects critically on the economic superstructure, and which takes a broader understanding of the problems to be addressed – as in Colombian-US anthropologist Arturo Escobar's view that '[contrary] to established discourses of sustainable development, what needs to be sustained is the entire network of relations that create life and community', placing emphasis on social connections and the preservation of a diversity of connections between human life and the natural environment (2019: 3-4). Furthermore, Jackson's warning that consumerism and related practices of what Isar earlier called 'unsustainable development' (Isar 2017: 28) are reinforced by powerful social forces and institutions should resonate in cultural policy, if the latter is to be significant in the search for sustainability – shouldn't cultural policy be reoriented towards the 'network of relations that create life and community', rather than to reinforcing the approaches to relations between humans and between humans and nature that have led us here?

A more modest position in nature: embracing adaptation and regeneration

This critical perspective is also visible in a second, complementary line of arguments which seeks alternative, often more comprehensive, terms that go beyond the standard, mainstream understanding of 'sustainable development'. One such alternative is 'sustainability', which, while often used indistinguishably from 'sustainable development', can also be understood as 'an

overarching paradigm within which to interpret biological and social interdependencies', which goes beyond the narrower application of this paradigm to processes of development which sustainable development generally entails (Throsby 2017: 5). Authors of the *Investigating Cultural Sustainability* report also suggested that whereas 'sustainable development' is preferred by governments because it places emphasis on development, 'sustainability' has 'a more reaching set of objectives and values, [which] can support de-growth and no growth agendas ... [and] might have social equity and justice not economic prosperity as its goal' (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015: 22-23). While 'sustainability' in this light seems to hold more depth and transformative potential, the fact that it is often used interchangeably with 'sustainable development' needs to be considered, and particular care and clarity about its meaning should be adopted when it is deployed.

Whereas 'sustainability' presumes that a balance (between environmental, economic, social, etc. aspects) exists and needs to be *sustained*, it is also necessary to consider whether a world that has gone beyond some of its planetary boundaries, including climate change and biosphere integrity (which includes the loss of biodiversity) (Steffen, Richardson et al. 2015), and which has entered a New Climatic Regime as described by Latour (2015), as well as a number of metamorphoses in the environmental, social, economic and political terrains, should be merely *sustained*, or rather calls for more determined action to recover planetary and system balance. This is where terms such as mitigation, adaptation, and regeneration, may come into play. While each of these could deserve an in-depth analysis, only a few observations based on their relevance to the present discussion will be presented here.

In the face of climate change, 'mitigation' involves trying to reduce the sources of trauma, whereas 'adaptation' seeks to work with that trauma, recognising and integrating the disruptions generated and thinking of our relationship with nature in more modest terms (Sennett 2019). Adaptation, in this respect, may also be seen as a way to regain the human species' self-esteem, as a way to allay the anxiety caused by feelings of being limited, fragile and finite (Albelda 2018). Meanwhile, 'regeneration' involves redressing the damage done and contributing to the restoration of a more balanced human and planetary ecosystem (Hawken 2021, Klinenberg 2021). In the fields of architecture and urban planning, an adaptive response is represented by 'green architecture', which builds *with* nature rather than *in* nature by deploying wetlands, dunes, forests and reefs to reduce threats (Klinenberg 2021). This goes beyond 'rewilding' strategies that aim to reintroduce flora and fauna in urban areas because, while this may make cities more resilient to climate change (Juvillà Ballester 2019), it does not take into account the damage that has already been caused (as suggested by landscape architect Kate Orff, interviewed in Klinenberg 2021).

What this suggests to me is the need for an approach that is both adaptive, recognising that, in the 'metamorphic zone' (*zone métamorphique* (Latour 2015: 79)) where transformation is continuous, human action should be aware of and circumscribed by its impact on nature, and regenerative, by taking into account how action can help to redress some of the damage caused. This has implications in all areas of human life, including culture – in terms of the values that underpin behaviour, how identities are negotiated not only with regard to other humans but to other species as well (Clammer 2016, Van Doreen, Kirksey et al. 2016), and how different forms of cultural practice may enable stronger connections within communities and towards nature,

building *with* it rather than *in* it. Given the strong implications that these aspects have in terms of revising cultural policy, I will get back to them later.

Where the cultural dimension lies: revising values and lifestyles

The third line of critique, which can be seen as complementary to some of the points presented above, underlines that addressing the planetary crisis requires all-encompassing changes that connect policies, technologies, behaviours, and values. It is particularly the latter levels that are of interest to me, as they emphasise that more adaptive and regenerative approaches should involve not only changing our tools (our forms of production and transportation, for instance) but also our understanding of the world and of the ways in which we relate to them, something which inevitably includes culture. This is present in Jackson and Clammer's critiques of consumerism (Clammer 2016, Jackson 2017), as well as in Clammer's argument that all the solutions to the challenges of sustainability are

‘profoundly socio-cultural in nature and require quite significant shifts in cultural attitudes and values to make them work. In short, there can be no sustainability without cultural transformation. In many ways the notion of sustainability is more of a moral principle, a question of values, than it is a precise program or definition’ (Clammer 2016: 5-6).

Among the cultural aspects that could underpin this change, in his view, are a notion of ‘holism’, an understanding that a good society ‘is one with a strong ethical core (and not... simply a legal one, as is largely the case today)’ (ibid.: 173-174). He will also argue that

‘[sustainability] is actually an emotional project, not a political one. It implies the pursuit of justice (social, economic, ecological and visual), of cultural and biological diversity, of care in our relationship to the world of nature and to each other, and the willingness, energy and creativity to found institutions... that embody those ideals... and which practice them not just teach them.’ (174)

Despite Clammer's assertion to the contrary, I would argue that this understanding of sustainability is profoundly *political*, both in its vision of the world and in how to transform it – through the pursuit of justice, cultural and biological diversity, care, and the establishment of institutions in accordance with this.

Clammer connects this with a range of contributions that may be seen to illustrate the cultural dimension of sustainability, including British futurist and evolutionary economist Hazel Henderson's exploration of ‘soft technology societies’, which appreciate nature, emphasise local cultures, crafts, languages and regional production, encourage community, and their whole way of life is predicated on sustainability (Henderson 1996, Clammer 2016). Meanwhile, Canadian researcher in culture, media and social justice Max Haiven's work around the notion of ‘imagination’ serves to stress culture as deeply ingrained in how economics provides the superstructure in today's society, but also as a critical space in which to look for alternatives to capitalism (Haiven 2014), by resisting the commodification of social values, recognising social interdependency rather than individualism (Clammer 2016) and suggesting that ‘[real] creativity is the ability to change the world together’ (Haiven 2014: 211). This underlies again the ambivalent nature of culture (Ariño c. 2007) and its interconnectedness with the crises of sustainability and potential solutions to it, as well as its potential role in accelerating the all-encompassing responses to sustainability challenges.

Of course, the holistic approaches defended by Clammer and others and the ‘metamorphic zone’ which embodies the interaction between nature and human action, all have resonances in Indigenous worldviews and postcolonial thinking (see e.g. Rivera Cusicanqui 2010, Pascoe 2014, Sarr 2016, wa Thiong’o 2017, Wright 2019, Yunkaporta 2019) – that is, those ‘ontologies or worldviews that acknowledge the radical interdependence of everything that exists’, as opposed to the ‘ontology of separation [that is] predominant in the West’ (Escobar 2019: 4). Recognising the value of non-Western ways of thinking becomes therefore relevant within sustainability thinking, as the approach to culturally-sustainable development suggested (Hawkes 2001, Throsby 2017), not only because of the need to respect diversity, but also in an instrumental light, because of the risk of losing particular ways of inhabiting the world which may be more sustainable, and the knowledge that derives from them. Overall, this can also be seen as a way to go beyond the ‘mechanistic’ responses to the planetary crisis and highlight the need for all-encompassing approaches which integrate values, forms of knowledge and behaviour, in addition to technologies and policies.

What we can learn from these critiques

What does the exploration of these three critiques tell us in the light of the two questions suggested earlier? Namely, whether ‘sustainable development’ remains a valid paradigm, and where cultural aspects lie in reflections on the planetary crisis. On the one hand, while the paradigm of ‘sustainable development’ seems insufficient to reflect on the nature of the planetary crisis and imagine ways to address it, it may be difficult to find one alternative term that encapsulates the critical urgency of reflection and action in all its dimensions, and which acknowledges the inherent tensions -between the economic and the environmental, etc.- that the current context makes evident. Elements like sustainability, adaptation and regeneration, modesty, holism, and interdependence, all provide valuable elements. It is necessary to be very concrete about the meaning we give to terms in each specific context.

On the other hand, a number of aspects, including the emphasis on how values and visions of the world underpin behaviour and determine our relationship with others and with the planet, the potential of the imagination and of creativity as a way to transform the world, and the ways in which traditional knowledge and non-Western ways of thinking can enrich approaches to sustainability, point to the important place of cultural aspects in this light. As we shall see, however, this also entails revising ways of doing within cultural policy and practice, in the light of the implications of sustainability and adaptation – and in keeping with the understanding that culture may only contribute to sustainability ‘under certain circumstances and conditions’ (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017: 222).

Thus, if I adopt an understanding of sustainability which acknowledges the inherent tensions between the economic superstructure and the ‘entire network of relations that create life and community’ (Escobar 2019: 3-4), and the need to address them; is adaptive, in the sense that it recognises interdependences, deals with nature modestly and tries to work *with* it; seeks to be regenerative, by considering how action can help to redress some of the damage caused; understands that cultural aspects are part of the equation of sustainability, but only when certain conditions are met; and tries to strike a balance between local and global developments, what does this imply for cultural policy? In line with my understanding that reflecting on the planetary

crisis may call for considering specific action to address it, cultural policy should be one area of action where this understanding of sustainability is applied. In the next section I will devote my attention to this.

3.4. Implications for cultural policy: six propositions

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, my understanding of cultural policy concerns the set of policies and measures, as well as informal processes, which have bearing on the ability of individuals and groups to develop their identities, express themselves creatively, access diverse cultural contents and expressions, and retain connections with the tangible and intangible heritage from the past.

Critical cultural policy studies have suggested that different ways of interpreting society can lead to different ways of making cultural policy, including in terms of how citizens are conceived and allowed to take part, as well as how cultural policy is positioned vis-à-vis the vision of society that is seen as politically desirable. Thus, whereas some cultural policy models would aim to operate as ‘a site for the production of cultural citizens’, assuming the ‘insufficiency of the individual’ and the potential for culture to make them more complete (Lewis and Miller 2003: 1), or would focus on ‘policing culture’, controlling what may be seen as a threatening terrain (McGuigan 2003: 34), others can imagine alternatives and be primarily concerned with generating the conditions for culture to develop (McGuigan 2003). It is by adopting such critical approaches, then, that we can examine how cultural policy is connected to specific forms of organising society, and envisage forms of cultural policy which relate to sustainability, adaptation and regeneration in the light of today’s crises.

In terms of governance, McGuigan’s emphasis (2003), influenced by Habermas, on how ‘the public will’ should influence the conditions of culture, their persistence and their potential for change, and that a public sphere which allows for public conversation and debate should be preserved, is important. Approaches to the governance of cultural policy should consider, for instance, who is entitled to determine that public will, and how, as I will examine later. There is also a potential for cultural policy research to help overcome the polarity between a ‘bottom-up’ concern with communities (typical of cultural studies) and ‘top-down’ policy implementation, contributing to make governance more open and inclusive (Bennett 2004).

In this respect, I adhere to an understanding of cultural policy that is concerned with ‘generating the conditions’ for culture, or cultural activities and processes, to develop (McGuigan 2003), within a framework that also considers the sustainability of balanced human and human-nature relationships, and the need to critically review existing economic models to foster sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. If culture gains centrality when we adopt an all-encompassing, holistic understanding of sustainability, as the previous section has aimed to show, and if reflecting on the planetary crisis also opens possibilities for new normative horizons and for revising values and behaviour and requires considering effective ways to address it, then cultural policy is one of the arenas that needs to be mobilised.

What are the main components of this understanding? I will examine six defining traits in the next few pages – showing how cultural policy needs to be better at engaging with conflicts and

tensions, explore interdependences between culture and other areas of society, focus on people by stressing rights and capabilities, addressing the tension between permanence and change, fostering the emergence of a multiplicity of narratives, and revising the traditional scope of cultural policy. These six factors are interrelated and reinforce one another.

Engaging with conflicts and tensions

Firstly, cultural policy may need to engage more openly with conflicts and tensions, which serve to underline its political nature. The fact that cultural policy addresses underlying tensions, and that it may be seen as a process of conflict insofar as it aims to transform society, has been highlighted by some researchers. One of them is Mexican anthropologist Eduardo Nivón Bolán (2006), who, drawing on Arturo Escobar, has highlighted that cultural policy is a process in which several social agents, each embodying different cultural meanings and practices, enter into conflict, and this reinforces the political nature of those cultural meanings and practices. While Nivón Bolán himself admits that a narrower understanding of cultural policy, focusing primarily on the administration and management of culture, is frequently prevailing, he stresses that the relevance of cultural policy is impoverished if the focus lies only on its administrative dimension, at the expense of its utopian meaning, which involves an engagement with the building of a shared vision of society.

This is a perspective with which I would concur, and which includes considering how cultural policy can contribute to the negotiation of the conflicts and tensions that are inherent in the context of the planetary crisis, as well as the fact that culture is itself an '*arena of struggle*' (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 60; emphasis in the original). In line with the 'interconnected', interdependent nature of contemporary processes, policies and measures dealing with culture and sustainability should not ignore the broader framework within which they operate, including its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and the hegemonies that may be reinforced when critical thinking is not applied (Hage 2011). In this respect, Peruvian cultural studies scholar Victor Vich has called for cultural policies to help to 'unmask' or 'deconstruct' existing social realities, and particularly to deconstruct those aspects that are taken for granted and invisibly contribute to reinforcing inequalities (2014). Policies around heritage can also be seen as part of an active process of permanent negotiation and reinterpretation (Carbonell 2014), as heritage has a significant, though frequently neglected, political nature (Smith 2006, Kisić 2016). Similarly, drawing on Jacques Rancière's notion of 'disagreement', Brazilian cultural policy scholar Alexandre Barbalho (2021) has suggested that cultural policy should move away from an idyllic vision of a consensus-based society and embrace culture as a problematic terrain. In his view, cultural policy should ultimately aim to change the patterns of the sensible, rendering visible a set of cultural expressions and movements that were previously invisible, and enabling their discourses, which invent questions that did not exist beforehand. It is only then, he argues, that cultural policy is truly *political*, and that conditions may exist for a renegotiation of the common in society.

It is also important to stress that assuming that conflict is inevitable and should be part of the remit of cultural policy does not necessarily imply that tensions need to be maximised or taken to the extreme. In line with Barbalho's call to render diversity visible and look for that which exists in common, it may be necessary to overcome the tendency to turn differences into

polarities which Ghassan Hage (2017) has argued is intrinsic to capitalism and colonialism (e.g. emphasising the divide that separates Western societies from elements in nature, as well as from colonised groups, ethnic or religious minorities), and to embrace principles of mutuality and reciprocity instead. Hage alludes to Marshall Sahlins' logic of 'mutuality' in kinship relations (an order of existence in which people, animals, plants, objects, etc. exist in each other, 'where the life-force of the humans and the nonhumans that surround us is felt to be contributing to our own life-force' (Hage 2017: 55)) and Marcel Mauss' 'reciprocal modes of existence' ('a dimension in which otherness exists "with me"' (56)). Anthropological research elsewhere has also emphasised the situated nature of our ways of existing and of learning, which develop through particular relations with others and with specific environments (see e.g. Pálsson 1994). While Western cultures have historically tended to set themselves aside from nature (Pálsson 1996), other modes of life have acknowledged the need for mutuality (Hage 2017).

By exploring values connected to mutuality and reciprocity and reflecting these in institutions' own practices as well as those that they support, there could be a potential for cultural policy to help negotiate social and political differences, including how we relate to the planet, seeing in culture a terrain where a different basis for coexistence may exist. This could be connected to the aforementioned approach of 'culture *for* sustainable development', in which culture provides a space for mediation, even when acknowledging that tensions and conflicts are inevitable and that they need to be made visible.

Exploring interdependences

A second significant aspect concerns the ability of cultural policy to contribute to the critical exploration of interdependences between the cultural realm and other spheres in life. Bruno Latour has called for a politics that helps to visualise the *terrains de vie*²⁹ and related interdependences and attachments between humans, including across international borders and generations, which have generally been concealed (2017). The late Brazilian cultural policy scholar Teixeira Coelho suggested that culture is, above all, 'a long conversation', which involves exchange between individuals and societies (2009: 351, my translation). In this context, in his view, cultural policy should place emphasis on connectedness, including between cultural phenomena and between them and phenomena in other spheres of society. I would suggest that this could have implications in areas such as the acknowledgement in the public sphere of cultural connections and knowledge transfers across places, generations and social groups, how social, economic and political hierarchies are reinforced in the cultural realm and may be challenged there (Haiven 2014, Clammer 2016), as well as how culture operates in relation to the economic, environmental, social and political spheres.

More concretely, it may be necessary for cultural policy to engage more openly in discussions around sustainability and adaptation to the New Climatic Regime – e.g. by connecting

²⁹ Latour refers to 'terrains de vie' as the result of acknowledging the multiple dependences, across time and place, on which our survival depends. He opposes this to the narrower notion of 'territoire', which he argues tends to be associated with an administrative approach to geography and therefore fails to acknowledge economic, social and political aspects. While 'terrains de vie' has been translated as 'dwelling places' in the English translation of *Où atterrir [Down to Earth]*, I would argue that the original French term holds stronger power, hence my preference for using it.

biodiversity and cultural heritage as part of integrated landscapes, supporting creative explorations around sustainable ways of life, or fostering participatory learning initiatives around citizen science (Baltà Portolés and Bashiron Mendolicchio 2021). It is also necessary to consider how other policy areas are influenced by, and in turn affect, cultural aspects, including values, expressions, and diversity.

This entails, on the one hand, adopting a more ecosystemic view of culture, which goes beyond a narrow concern with the arts and heritage and engages more openly with a wide range of complementary areas of societal concern which relate to the expressive and the symbolic, including e.g. communication, mobility, urban planning, safety, education, the environment or health (Hawkes 2001, Holden 2015, Martinell Sempere 2021). On the other hand, this involves fostering a more explicit recognition of how culture is influenced by policies and measures adopted elsewhere. Reflecting on this, both Jon Hawkes (2001) and Teixeira Coelho (2009) have suggested that a 'cultural framework' or 'filter' should be integrated across other public policies, enabling to identify how cultural aspects influence the perspectives and policies adopted in other policy fields, as well as what the impact of those measures in the cultural realm could be.

Two other aspects in Hawkes' approach are worth underlining. Firstly, the understanding that policies mediated by culture, at least in his view, should give a more central role to people, something that I will further discuss below. Secondly, his argument that '... rather than the creation of a discrete Cultural Policy, the most effective way forward is the development of a Cultural Framework that can be applied to all policy' (Hawkes 2001: 32). This could take the shape, among others, of a cultural impact analysis questionnaire enabling a preliminary evaluation of the potential impact on culture of public policies in other areas, similarly to the preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts that could be caused by, for instance, the building of a tunnel. This is an ambitious, transformative proposal, consistent with an understanding that culture runs through all areas of public concern and requires suitably *holistic* policy tools, overcoming the tendency of government departments to work in silos and thus informing the definition of the scope of cultural policy. The governance of cultural policy inevitably needs to address these aspects, by ensuring that more transversal forms of decision-making exist, through appropriate frameworks or filters, in line with the approach to culturally-sustainable development, as well as stronger coordination, as I earlier suggested on the basis of the approaches to culture as an ends and as a means of development.

An increasing focus on people and their effective capabilities

As forewarned in the previous paragraph, when referring to Hawkes (2001), a third implication of considering planetary sustainability and adaptation in cultural policy concerns an increasing focus on people. Starting with Schumacher's call to revise economics 'as if people mattered' (as suggested in the subtitle of his book, 1993), several contemporary reflections have argued that the emphasis of development, and particularly sustainable and human development, should shift towards people rather than larger-scale, macro-level goals such as GDP growth.

Of course, a 'focus on people' may be interpreted in very different ways. For the purposes of my research, contributions made within human development studies and the so-called 'capability approach', which identifies a core set of capabilities which every person should be able to develop (see e.g. Sen 1999, Nussbaum 2011), are particularly valuable. Human development

places emphasis on enlarging people's choices, affirming that '[people] are the real wealth of a nation' (as opposed to privileging macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth) and that '[the] basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives' (ul Haq 1990: 9). Core capabilities, according to US philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2011), include, as far as the most direct connections with culture are concerned, being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing creative works; being able to have attachment to things and people outside ourselves; and the ability to be respected and not discriminated regardless of one's race, ethnicity or other personal characteristics. The focus on expanding individual freedoms and developing individual capabilities explains why some have argued that human development is a 'liberal and methodologically individualist political philosophy' (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017: 88).

Of particular interest to my exploration is the increasing confluence of human development studies with reflections on the planetary crisis – which in turn may allow for a less individualist, more societal focus. Published in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 edition of the United Nations Development Programme's regular *Human Development Report* argued that, today, human development involves not only expanding people's capabilities but also their agency (participation in decision-making, etc.) and a focus on values, 'with special attention to our interactions with nature, to our stewardship of the planet' (Conceição 2020: 6). The report also called to overcome the divide between people and planet, stressed how '... language and culture have coevolved with biological diversity, so biological impoverishment parallels the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity' (2020: 23), and emphasised that lands managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities, where a more integrated perspective on nature and culture has often prevailed, had generally enabled the preservation of healthier ecosystems.

Similar reflections fostering a balance between human and planetary aspects have emerged in other areas of study, including Tim Jackson's definition of prosperity as 'our ability to flourish as human beings – within the ecological limits of a finite planet' (2017: 22). This entails a societal, political responsibility towards creating the conditions for such balance to exist and somehow, although he does not term it as such, a personal ethics of balancing personal interest and environmental responsibility. In a similar vein, British economist Kate Raworth's 'doughnut economy' (2012) suggests that society should aim to guarantee basic social foundations for everyone while keeping growth within the limits of the 'planetary boundaries'. This is a more policy-oriented paper which has inspired some governments, particularly at the local level, to translate it into policies. Whereas Raworth's original proposals do not particularly emphasise cultural aspects, cities like Amsterdam have included children's ability to access art and culture as part of their social foundations (Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL) 2020). This model was developed in collaboration with the C40 global network of cities committed to fostering action on climate change, which has disseminated it to inspire other cities (Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL), Biomimicry 3.8 et al. 2020). The Regen Melbourne network, which includes the City of Melbourne among several other stakeholders, has also identified art and culture as part of the city's social foundations, following a process of consultation which was seen as the first step towards a 'regenerative Melbourne' (Regen Melbourne 2021). This evidence suggests, on the one hand, that a focus on people does not need to involve neglecting a connection with the planet, but rather a balanced search for personal development alongside responsibility and care. On the other hand, evidence from Amsterdam, Melbourne and the C40 network of cities

highlights how the search for such balanced alternatives, and the consideration of culture as a critical component of the search for sustainability, often emerges at the local level, something that I will further examine in the next chapter.

The implications of the capabilities approach in cultural policy have been considered by British cultural policy researchers Jonathan Gross and Nick Wilson, who have argued that a focus on the expansion of cultural capabilities can provide the basis for 'a new account of cultural democracy' (2018: 329). Gross and Wilson emphasise a particular understanding of 'cultural opportunity' ('the freedom that people have, or lack, to (co-)create culture' (332)) as key to a cultural policy that can truly be emancipatory, thus adopting a critical approach to 'mainstream' cultural policy. This notion of cultural opportunity results from a reflection on cultural capabilities which sees them as being interconnected with other capabilities: cultural capabilities are 'the substantive freedoms to give form and value to our experiences' which, in turn, hold the potential to nurture and nourish other capabilities (337), in a way not dissimilar to Sen's interconnection of freedoms (1999). There is again, here, the acknowledgement of interdependences, which cultural policy should feel more comfortable addressing than has generally been the case.

Gross and Wilson also stress the need to understand cultural democracy as a system, rather than as a set of isolated cultural activities, and suggest that the capabilities approach provides for a systemic assessment of cultural opportunity, rather than one focused on the analysis of individual organisations. They also argue that, although the capabilities approach has been criticised for being excessively individualistic, it combines an 'ethical individualism' with aspects that are 'ontologically and methodologically highly relational' (2018: 335). Indeed, Sen has also described individual freedom as 'quintessentially a social product' (1999: 31), because, among other things, social arrangements are essential to expanding individual freedoms, and individual freedoms can contribute to improving social arrangements. I find this an interesting perspective, which may be aligned with those cultural policies that are concerned with the 'conditions of culture' rather than on 'policing culture' (McGuigan 2003). It also recognises how systemic factors condition individual cultural capabilities and how the latter develop through social interaction and are also connected to other capabilities, reinforcing the interdependence between cultural factors and other social phenomena to which I have referred in the previous section.

It is particularly at the local level where cultural opportunity may open up and, therefore, there is a particular responsibility of local cultural policy in enabling cultural opportunities to flourish. This reinforces the focus of this thesis on the governance of local cultural policy and how this should be particularly prioritised in the light of today's challenges. The specific implications of a cultural capabilities approach in local cultural policy were analysed in the 2020 Rome Charter (Roma Capitale and UCLG - Culture Committee 2020), an international set of guidelines adopted in 2020 at the initiative of the City of Rome and UCLG, the same organisation that has, since 2004, promoted the Agenda 21 for culture, to which I referred in the previous chapter. Drawing on cultural rights, and particularly the right to take part in cultural life, the 2020 Rome Charter identified five core capabilities (discover cultural roots; create cultural expressions; share cultures and creativity; enjoy the city's cultural resources and spaces; and protect the city's common cultural resources) as a basis for a city working towards a cultural democracy (Roma Capitale and UCLG - Culture Committee 2020).

Both Gross and Wilson's focus on cultural opportunity and the Rome Charter's focus on cultural capabilities inspired by the right to take part in cultural life can provide benchmarks to identify cultural policies which are truly concerned with the conditions for culture *to be made and re-made or transformed by people*, while also being concerned with the 'equality of agency', which involves moving 'from a focus on individuals to a recognition that relational and group-based phenomena shape and influence individual aspirations, capabilities, and the distribution of power and agency' (Rao and Walton 2004: 359). In this respect, Gross and Wilson underline the need to consider systemic conditions conducive to cultural capability and the structural inequalities that underlie these conditions, as well as the role that cultural institutions may have in either reproducing or addressing them (2018). Also concerned with increasing equality, British cultural policy researcher Jonathan Vickery has emphasised that a rights-based approach to culture and development involves giving priority to the 'individuals who bear the cost of development' and awarding attention 'to social exclusion, disparities and injustice' (2018: 7).

An approach of this kind, by focusing on people's effective capabilities to take part in cultural life, holds the potential for cultural policies to support cultural processes that 'move beyond the known measurable world' rather than reinforce it (Vickery and Dragičević Šešić 2018: 10), something which is essential in times of adaptation and regeneration in the face of the New Climatic Regime. I think that this approach, by focusing on universal rights and opportunities, aiming to expand people's cultural capabilities and fostering cultural democracy, may successfully address one of the critiques that has often been made of arguments based on the 'intrinsic' values of culture, namely that they generally amount to a defence of cultural actors' own interests (see e.g. Hadley and Gray 2017). This is also in line with what others have called a return to 'culture as a public good', which is affordable, accessible and participatory, which sees participation and diversity as part of a foundation for the public provision of culture and which at the same time explores how art and culture can be part of a more inclusive democracy, and of the 'systemic transformation needed to sustain life on this planet' (Barnett, Meyrick et al. 2021, see also Baltà Portolés 2022a, Ottone R. 2022).

What all of this suggests is that a people-based approach to cultural policy should be concerned not only with isolated, static access to culture at the individual level but should adopt a relational, systemic perspective that considers a set of basic conditions. They include, firstly, an attention to people's effective ability to fulfil their cultural opportunities and exercise their cultural rights, by observing the terrain of cultural life in a systemic way.

Secondly, an important factor concerns the balance between individual capabilities and an ethics of responsibility towards others and towards the planet, akin to Raworth's doughnut, which balances basic social foundations and a set of planetary boundaries. In this context, cultural policy should be concerned both with enabling the exercise of rights and the development of capabilities and with fostering an acknowledgement of the broader environment where rights are exercised, and what responsibilities this entails. Key to this may be to foster a reflection on how identities are defined, adopting a more 'relational' understanding of what constitutes us – recognising not only how identities are shaped through interaction with other humans (Alake 2005, Jullien 2017) but also fostering more eco-centric views, in line with what Clammer has termed the 'ecological self' – that is, 'a recognition of common embeddedness in nature that is the ground of being for all humans' (2016: 129).

Thirdly, both the attention paid to capabilities and agency and the need to negotiate tensions between the individual and societal level call for effective opportunities to engage in decision-making (see e.g. Sen 1999) and, again, to revise governance processes, in order to ‘... chart a path between rival dystopias and find a sustainable balance between aspiration and constraint’ (Jackson 2017: 185). This is an issue that I will continue exploring in the coming chapters.

Addressing the tension between permanence and change

The fourth aspect that I think cultural policy should deal with when reflecting on sustainability and adaptation concerns the tension between permanence and change. Contemporary reflections on sustainability often integrate a concern with ‘permanence’, with a range of implications. Schumacher’s *Small is Beautiful*, first published in 1973, referred to an ‘economics of permanence’ (‘Nothing makes economic sense unless its continuance for a long time can be projected without running into absurdities’ (20)), which somehow predated today’s ‘circular economy’. He also called for a ‘life-style designed for permanence’, where production and consumption patterns did not involve a progressive destruction of the environment (Schumacher 1993: 9-20).

While Schumacher’s focus was particularly on the use of material resources and their economic dimension as capital, other reflections on permanence have broader implications. The notion of ‘permanent cultures’, derived from Bill Mollison and David Holmgren’s ‘permaculture’ (short for ‘permanent agriculture’), and which informs the approach of ecovillages and ‘Transition initiatives’ among others, has been defined as ‘place-based initiatives that seek to create the conditions, cultural and otherwise, for their own persistence into the indefinite future’ (Henfrey and Ford 2018: 105, see also Richard and Anselme 2019). While very interesting from an environmental perspective, this raises issues when faced with an understanding of culture as something dynamic – as in Teixeira Coelho’s view of culture as a ‘long conversation’ (2009) and Hawkes’ focus on cultural vitality and change (2001). Catalan cultural policy scholar Alfons Martinell (2019) has pointed to the tension between sustainability, when understood as preservation, and culture, for culture often aims to explore the frontiers and alter systems, rather than sustain them.

This tension is made explicit in the work of the late British philosopher Roger Scruton who, in *How to Think Seriously About the Planet: The Case for an Environmental Conservatism*, made the case for connecting environmental conservation and social conservatism, arguing that ‘[the] goal is to pass on to future generations, and meanwhile to maintain and enhance, the order of which we are the temporary trustees’ (2012: 10-11). While emphasising the importance of focusing on local, community-based initiatives, Scruton suggested that nation states, and nationality, were the most suitable political vehicles for this task. In his view, the ‘common cause’ that can bring together conservatives and environmentalists is ‘territory – the object of a love that has found its strongest political expression through the nation state’ (14). This contrasts with Latour’s and Hage’s connection of environmental awareness with social emancipation, as well as with the focus of Latour, Beck, and others on connecting the local with the global and embracing a sort of ‘cosmopolitan ethics’, to which I will return later. As I explained in the introductory chapter, one important challenge I observe in terms of governance concerns the tension between local territories and global, cosmopolitan mindsets, for both are important in terms of sustainability.

In this context, it also seems inevitable to understand sustainability as a space of tension between permanence and change, where, although some aspects may be preserved, some degree of dynamism is inevitable. This tension can be connected to the antagonism between openness to change and conservation, which US social psychologist and cross-cultural researcher Shalom H. Schwartz has identified as a central motivational opposition of values that exists within individuals and societies around the world (2007). Reflecting on this and drawing on the work of US political scientist and game theorist Robert Axelrod, Tim Jackson has argued that ‘the balance of behaviours in a society depends on how that society is structured’ (2017: 137), which suggests that there is a space for social structures and operations, including policies, to inform how a society manages the relation between permanence and change. If we understand sustainability as an open-ended, never-ending process, which involves navigating in constantly changing seas, in line with John Clammer (sustainability is ‘not an end point or even a steady state ... [but] a process, a goal that we seek but which is always receding ... It is essentially a “utopian” concept’ (2016: 9)), it seems that policy, including cultural policy, could have a role in enabling contexts that foster a balance, or a negotiation of the tensions, between those two sets of values.

An always changing context will mean that permanence and change will need to be embraced alternatively at different points in time, and that cultural policy should provide spaces where the uncertainty that is inherent to change when it affects individuals and groups structurally can be negotiated. In keeping with the previous reflections, navigating the tension between permanence and change should also take into account the interdependence with other dimensions of sustainability (e.g. in terms of social equality and environmental preservation) as well as an attention to people’s effective ability to take part in relevant decisions around how that tension is negotiated (Sen 1999), thus reinforcing the centrality of governance processes.

Providing spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity

The fifth factor which is necessary in cultural policy in the light of sustainability and adaptation is the ability to provide spaces for multiple narratives to emerge, coexist and interact. Ghassan Hage has warned that capitalist modernity has fostered a ‘mono-realism’, denying the ability to think of solutions, ask questions, and to acknowledge the multiple existing ‘forms of inhabitation and relationality’ towards nature and towards other communities, that embrace reciprocity and mutualism as well as care for the environment – that is, ways of living that are not based on exploitation and instrumental interest, as opposed to what capitalism would typically promote (2017: 58ff).

There are parallels to this ‘mono-realist’ view in cultural life. In his account of the importance of social infrastructure in fostering cohesive local communities, US sociologist Eric Klinenberg has argued that the value of public libraries has been underappreciated because its founding principle of providing ‘free, open access to our shared culture and heritage... is out of sync with the market logic that dominates our time’ (2018: 37, see also 14). Similar stories could be told about libraries and community and cultural centres, as well as grassroots cultural initiatives, in many cities, including Barcelona. Meanwhile, Argentinian anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (in Greeley 2018) has argued that discourses on the ‘creative cities’ (e.g. Florida 2002, Landry 2008) often presuppose that a single path of entrepreneurship is available to young people,

failing to recognise that this is only accessible to a few, and that young people's agency goes beyond entrepreneurship and involves, among others, informal networking practices as well as the questioning and subverting of mainstream approaches (Greeley 2018). There is indeed extensive evidence that many cultural practices (e.g. emerging artists, socio-political movements involving artistic elements, amateur practices, what Holden has called 'homemade culture' and what in some contexts may be termed 'independent culture') remain either undetected by public authorities and other formal spaces, or are merely ignored or neglected by them (Hannon, Bradwell et al. 2008, Holden 2015, ITD 2015).

In this context, I would argue that there is a potential for cultural policy to help uncover the multiple 'minor realities in which we are... enmeshed' (Hage 2011: 7), because once we acknowledge that we live in a 'multiplicity of realities' it is also easier to assume that we can be 'other than what we are' (11). Marina Garcés has suggested that culture provides a space of visibility, recognising some groups and expressions while neglecting others, and has argued that more attention should be paid to that which happens at the margins, and to those forms which, by showing that we cannot be certain of everything and that not everything can be seen, may help us to 'open spaces of possibility' (2013: 82-83; my translation). Cultural policies could be particularly concerned with enabling the emergence of projects that help to think of reality differently by, among others, enabling 'affective' encounters between participants, that is, forms of mutual recognition and solidarity, and by fostering different ways of appreciating the environment (Baltà Portolés 2020b). They can also embrace diversity as a central principle, relying on the idea that '... there is unlikely to be a single "sustainable culture"', but rather the coexistence of many, locally adapted ways of existing sustainably which share some general principles and values (e.g. the rights of nature, social justice, cultivation of spaces of freedom for expressive capacity) (Clammer 2016: 13-14).

All of this implies, as I suggested earlier, breaking with the tendency for cultural policy to foster societal consensus (Nivón Bolán 2006, Barbalho 2021), and acknowledging that tensions of many kinds are inevitable in the New Climatic Regime and its metamorphic zone. At the same time, any reflection on cultural diversity needs to acknowledge the likelihood that pre-existing frames and inequalities (e.g. colonial perspectives, social inequalities, aesthetic and artistic canons) will be difficult to challenge and will bias decision-making and, ultimately, the spaces of visibility afforded by the public realm of culture, in line with Garcés' earlier observation (2013). To face this, Teixeira Coelho has suggested, recalling Lévi-Strauss' *Race et histoire* (Lévi-Strauss 2021 [1952]), that the focus of policies concerned with diversity should be not to preserve *the contents of difference* in the same guise they had in the past, but rather the conditions that gave rise to and may continue to engender difference, thus enabling culture to remain dynamic (Teixeira Coelho 2009: 345). This can be connected to Teixeira Coelho's preference for what he calls 'formalist' cultural policy – that is, a policy defined by a set of formal values but which does not predetermine its contents (352).

From the perspective of diversity, Teixeira's underlining of cultural rights as comprising both everyone's right to take part in cultural life and the right to take part in the cultural life *of others*, as a form of mutual recognition and an embodiment of his view of culture as 'a long conversation, an exchange of ideas', is particularly telling (2009: 346-347; my translation). The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also identified the right to have access to one's own cultural and linguistic heritage and to that of others, which includes the right to be taught about

one's own culture and those of others, as one of the specific implications of the right to take part in cultural life (UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 2009: para 49(d)).

While Teixeira's commitment to cultural rights is consistent with the need for cultural policies to be people-centred, I also believe that a purely 'formalist' approach, which may fail to acknowledge the prevalence of mono-realism and how culture's space of visibility *systematically, structurally* leaves many expressions at the margins, risks reinforcing preexisting inequalities. That is, a concern with the multiplicity of narratives which is necessary to foster sustainability and adaptation entails combining a commitment to cultural rights with one of addressing the unequal distribution of cultural opportunities (Gross and Wilson 2018, Vickery 2018), in line with the systemic analysis of cultural opportunity I discussed earlier. Overall, this calls for combining the 'hands-off' approach of formalist cultural policy with a more active engagement to supporting those individuals and communities at the margins of cultural visibility, as well as the multiplicity of narratives that could enable the exploration of locally adapted ways of existing sustainably, through values, ways of living and imagination, in an adaptive and regenerative approach (Baltà Portolés 2022c). It also calls for strengthening capacities to critically interpret local contexts, including how social, economic and cultural inequalities intersect and how cultural policy can work to address them. Of course, doing this in practice remains a challenge, and this is an issue to which I will come back, particularly in chapter 7.

Revising the scope of cultural policy

The sixth, and final, aspect that I would like to address is the need to revise the scope of cultural policy in the light of reflections on sustainability. This can be connected to some of the elements I have addressed earlier, and particularly the need to explore interdependences and to adopt a more systemic view of culture. As also discussed in earlier chapters, several authors have pointed to the mismatch or 'unresolved tension' (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017: 93-94) regarding the scope of cultural policy, between the frequent use of anthropological definitions of culture, with very ambitious discourses on the potential of cultural policy towards societal development, and the much narrower scope of actual policies and measures, which in most cases, particularly in Western countries, tend to focus primarily on the arts and heritage (see also Mercer 1993, rev., World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, Hawkes 2001, Nivón Bolán 2006, Isar 2017). While this mismatch may partly be explained by the practical difficulties in making an anthropological vision effective as a policy approach (McGuigan 2003, Teixeira Coelho 2009), it could also be connected, more broadly, to what Garcés has defined as the 'de-institutionalisation' of humanistic activities under capitalism (2017: 60ff). She exemplifies this, among others, with the tendency for cultural policy to be increasingly guided by private sector concerns. In her view, this leads to a divide between humanistic thinking (i.e., those spaces that enable a consideration of the meaning of individual and collective existence) and the search for political alternatives, as well as to ignoring how knowledge may relate to emancipation.

Whereas the operational difficulties in making a broad scope effective, as identified by McGuigan and Teixeira Coelho, remain valid, the need for a more ecosystemic approach to the cultural system (Holden 2015, Barker 2019, Martinell Sempere 2021, de Bernard, Comunian et al. 2022) and for cultural spaces which make the boundaries with natural aspects 'softer and weaker' (Clammer 2016: 132) seem important in rethinking cultural policy towards a more complex,

deeper ontology. That is, both the ecosystemic nature of the cultural realm and how it is interdependent with other spheres of life which enable and contribute to identities, meanings and expressions need to be better acknowledged in cultural policy discourses and measures. In line with Clammer's proposal for an 'ecological self' (2016), which involves moving from an anthropocentric to a more eco-centric understanding of human presence, cultural policy needs to be more at ease in addressing culture holistically, including how it draws and impacts on elements of nature and on the New Climatic Regime.

One example of this could be the 'nature for culture' dimension defined by a group of academics and practitioners who examined how cities could contribute to biodiversity conservation (Oke, Bekessy et al. 2021). Among the measures that this could include, in their view, are co-producing knowledge with Indigenous peoples for bringing nature in cities, using place-based nature to foster inclusivity in multicultural cities (by representing diverse cultural meanings of nature), and reconnecting people with nature in cities through citizen science and engagement programmes (ibid.). As I will explore later, adopting this broader scope and an ecosystemic approach inevitably require more sophisticated approaches to policy design and implementation, which combine different modalities of delivery, make better use of diverse sources and forms of knowledge, and are able to work together with other public and civil society agents. It could also involve giving more centrality to policy models existing at the margins (e.g. in rural communities, peripheral neighbourhoods, communities with a significant presence of Indigenous worldviews, etc.) rather than only major countries and cities.

Revising the scope of cultural policy is also one of the underlying tensions I identified in the first chapter as regards the governance of local cultural policy in the light of sustainability. Indeed, broadening the area of intervention, and the related deliberation, decision-making and implementation models emerges as key to make governance relevant in this context.

In summary: six propositions for revising cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability

The reflections presented in this section have explored how cultural policy should evolve in the light of the planetary crisis, including the need to consider sustainability and adaptation to the New Climatic Regime. In particular, I have presented six propositions for revising cultural policy in this perspective:

- Cultural policy should more overtly engage with the tensions and conflicts that are inherent to the contemporary world, recognising that culture is itself an '*arena of struggle*' (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 60; emphasis in the original) and that it provides a space where to understand complex, interdependent conflicts, as well as to negotiate terrains for coexistence.
- Cultural policy should be better at acknowledging the interdependences between culture and other spheres in life, helping to visualise the *terrains de vie* (Latour 2017) in which our lives unfold, and what this means as per the connectedness across places, generations and social groups, as well as how culture operates in relation to the economic, environmental, social and political spheres. This involves better acknowledging and connecting cultural policy and other policy fields, and has very specific implications in terms of transversal governance, as I will explore particularly in chapters 5 and 7.

- Cultural policy should be concerned with the broadening of people’s cultural capabilities and their effective opportunity to take part in cultural life, in line with cultural rights and human development approaches. This involves being aware of, and addressing, inequalities that prevent effective cultural participation. At the same time, acknowledging the planetary crisis should entail an ethics of responsibility towards nature, based on a more relational understanding of how our identities develop in connection with the planet and with other species. Human capabilities include the ability to engage in collective deliberation, and both this and the need to negotiate tensions between rights and responsibilities mean that this proposition has clear implications in terms of governance, as I will explore later.
- Cultural policy should enable a negotiation between forces of permanence and change, by allowing cultural dynamism while ensuring that planetary boundaries are not threatened. This may involve providing spaces where the uncertainty that is inherent to change when it affects individuals and groups can be negotiated, again stressing the importance of governance, and allowing permanence and change to be embraced alternatively at different points.
- Cultural policy should provide spaces for multiple narratives to emerge, coexist and interact, illustrating the multiplicity of ‘forms of inhabitation and relationality’ existing (Hage 2017: 58), for this can be a way to acknowledge ways of life that are better aligned with sustainability, adaptation and regeneration. This implies, in particular, giving visibility to approaches that have frequently been at the margins, and addressing the inequalities that explain this invisibility.
- In line with several of the points above, cultural policy should broaden its scope, from one that primarily focuses on the arts and heritage, to one that is more ecosystemic, recognising interdependences at multiple levels (i.e., with a more eco-centric understanding of human presence on Earth, as well as better acknowledging connections with economic, social, environmental and political aspects).

This set of observations result from adopting a critical approach to cultural policy, and demonstrate that such a critical view is necessary in the context of current sustainability challenges. They also point to the centrality of governance in order to revise approaches to cultural policy, providing directions for the issues I will explore in chapters 5, 6 and 7 in particular. For the time being, in the next chapter I will explore what the consideration of the relationship between cultural policy and sustainability implies at the local level.

3.5. Closing observations

This chapter has explored the multiple ways in which the notions of culture and development have been related, what they mean in the light of contemporary challenges posed by sustainability and adaptation to the New Climatic Regime, and what this implies in cultural policy terms. From this emerge a set of critical reflections which will need to inform governance approaches. It is generally those views which adopt a more interconnected perspective, and which identify the specific value of culture but put it in a dynamic relation with sustainability, that seem to hold more potential – as in the approach to culture *for* sustainable development.

The fact that these perspectives are difficult to translate into policy, despite the urgency to revise existing models in the all-encompassing climate crisis, demonstrates the need to adopt critical approaches to cultural policy. These should ultimately lead to revising the scope of cultural policy by, among others, dealing more directly with tensions and conflicts, exploring interdependences with other areas of society, stressing rights and capabilities but also being aware of limits and responsibilities, and fostering the emergence of a multiplicity of narratives.

These aspects will need to inform governance models, which I will continue to explore in the coming chapters. In particular, some of the evidence presented in this chapter provides elements to consider in the light of the four tensions I laid out in the first chapter. The tension between local ownership and diversity is illustrated by the need to develop policies focusing on people and which enable their agency, while also considering interactive pluralism and the visualisation of diversity. The 'territorial versus multi-level tension' is illustrated by how exploring interdependences across time and space involves going beyond narrow territories, while recognising that paths to sustainability may be multiple and locally contextualised. The tension between citizen participation and public responsibility has some echoes in the need to foster citizens' agency while acknowledging the responsibility for public authorities to intervene and address existing imbalances. Finally, in the broad versus narrow scope tension, I have presented arguments to suggest that the scope of cultural policy should become broader, and this should have implications for the governance of cultural policy, including in terms of more transversal policymaking and the integration of lenses, filters or other mechanisms that enable an understanding of how cultural policy and other public policies are closely connected.

In the context of our exploration of the relations between culture and sustainability, and what they imply from the perspective of the governance of local cultural policy, the next chapter will further delve on how the local level can be a privileged space in which to examine the connections between culture and sustainability.

Chapter 4: The local level: Culture in a situated understanding of sustainability

In previous chapters I have examined the conditions under which cultural aspects can be relevant in terms of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, and discussed how cultural policy should evolve in this light. I have also introduced the context of Barcelona, as the site of the case study addressed in this thesis. Building on this, in this chapter I will consider the distinctive ways in which culture and sustainability interact in cities, towns, and other local spaces, and what this implies in terms of cultural policy and governance. I will do so by combining elements of the literature review and evidence from the case study. The chapter suggests that, while reflections on sustainability have an inevitable global dimension, it is at the local level where the tensions become more evident, and where conditions exist for sustainable pathways, adapted to and drawing on cultural aspects, to emerge.

Several authors have suggested that cities, towns and villages, or what we may call 'the local level', are particularly apt for putting into practice moves towards sustainability (see e.g. Martinell 2014, Clammer 2016). It is important to put this into a broader perspective, recognising that the planetary crisis and the related New Climatic Regime heighten connectedness across territories and an awareness of the global. As a result, what happens locally is inevitably affected by and relates to the global, and an 'integrated' or multilevel approach to connect these layers will always be necessary. As I discussed earlier, while individuals may exercise their cultural rights and develop their cultural capabilities at the local level, culture evolves through exchange (e.g. Teixeira Coelho's 'long conversation' (2009: 351; my translation)) which connects places and sets the local in a more or less continuous exchange with other levels. The very notions of cultural rights and cultural capabilities arise from reflections that aim to be 'universal' and have developed through discussions and initiatives at the international level.

The analysis of Barcelona as a case study in this thesis can be placed in the framework of the attention that local governments in many countries have increasingly devoted to cultural policy in recent decades. The trend has been particularly visible in some world regions, including Europe and both North and South America, although examples can be found elsewhere too (Anheier and Isar 2012, Mangano and Sekhar 2015, Duxbury, Hosagrahar et al. 2016, UNESCO 2016, Gilmore, Jancovich et al. 2019, Minty and Nkula-Wenz 2019, Baltà Portolés and Guibert 2021a, Baltà Portolés and Guibert 2021b). This cannot be disconnected from the emergence of discourses on the relation between culture and development, such as those I examined in the previous chapter, including in particular the understanding that cultural activities and resources can contribute to local economic and social development and to the enhancement of a city's image (European Task Force on Culture and Development 1997, Landry 2008, Heid, Arfaoui et al. 2016), as well as those that are connected to the exercise of cultural rights and the understanding of culture as an ends of development (UCLG 2004, Pascual 2007a, Pascual 2007b, Martinell 2014). The observation of cultural policy in Barcelona in recent decades exemplifies the combination of these goals and how local cultural policy is framed by global references, as expressed in successive cultural strategies as well as in the embrace of initiatives ranging from

Forum Barcelona 2004 to Agenda 21 for culture and the recently-adopted Cultural Rights Plan (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a).

More broadly, the development of local cultural policies takes place in the context of global trends towards 'urbanisation' (Khanna 2016), which have led to this being termed the 'urban century' (Annez, Huet et al. 2008), thus making cities and local spaces the sites where sustainability challenges become more pressing (UCLG 2016, UNESCO 2016). From the perspective of international relations, the emergence of cities as global actors (Fernández de Losada and Galceran-Vercher 2021) reinforces the increasing 'multi-actor' nature of the international system (McGrew 2020), whereas from a sociological and public policy perspective cities gain relevance as more effective service providers and in responding to citizens' demands (Barber 2013, Khanna 2016) and they have the potential to allow more 'civic' conflict resolution (Schouten 2011, Dharssi 2014).

Further to the aforementioned development of cultural policies in many cities, all this also results in the increasing development of city diplomacy strategies combining 'city branding', bilateral collaboration and multilateral networking, which frequently include a cultural component. Barcelona's engagement in global events such as Forum Barcelona 2004 and its hosting of fairs such as Mobile World Congress (an annual trade fair for the mobile communications industry, each edition of which gathers approximately 100,000 participants), as well as its participation in global networks such as UCLG, exemplifies this.

4.1. The mediating role of culture at the local level

Writing much before the planetary crisis became as evident as it is today, but already regretting the limitations of discourses around sustainable development and calling for a new political ecology, Arturo Escobar argued that:

'we need new narratives of life and culture. These narratives are likely to be hybrids of sorts; they will arise out of the mediations that local cultures are able to effect on the discourses and practices of nature, capital and modernity ... The task entails the construction of collective identities, as well as struggles over the redefinition of the boundaries between nature and culture.' (1996: 341)

By referring to the *mediations* that local cultures may effect, Escobar suggests how the local can be the space where new configurations and relationalities between different aspects of life can be negotiated and emerge. While generally agreeing with this view, I would suggest that local cultures are *already* negotiating the tensions between nature, capital and modernity, and constantly facing new challenges in what is a never ending process, yet this is often unseen in our 'mono-realist' context, to use Hage's term (2011). Bruno Latour has argued that we have not completely absorbed what the diverse forms of inhabiting the world may provide us (Latour 2015: 237). This, again, reinforces the need to pay attention to developments at the local level, for it is here where the diverse range of ways of inhabiting the world can be found. John Clammer (2016) also posits that there are many examples of small-scale practices, including community art projects, gardening, social theatre or sustainable design, that demonstrate how cultural aspects contribute to sustainable lives.

Understanding that new narratives, including those that embody sustainability and adaptation, should emerge from local processes of mediation implies that multiple locally-relevant pathways towards sustainability are likely to emerge. And, to a certain extent, that the existence of many pathways to sustainability is desirable: arguing that sustainability is ‘complex and slippery’, Clammer has indicated that planetary sustainability may be a universal concern, ‘... but the ways in which sustainability is conceived, or indeed already practiced, may well vary *with* culture’ (2016: 137, emphasis in the original). This perspective reinforces the centrality of the local level, as the space where specific cultural configurations often crystallise, in the search for more sustainable ways of living, while also seeing in culture one of the terrains in which the negotiation of pathways towards sustainability takes place – in a way similar to its mediating role in the ‘culture *for* sustainable development’ approach proposed by Dessein et al. (2015). It is also in cities and other urban spaces where forms of resistance and subversion to neoliberal capitalism and its policy implications (e.g. the ‘Creative City’) may emerge, through aesthetic forms and subcultures which challenge mainstream expressions and contribute to preserving diversity and pluralism (Mould 2015).

From the perspective of cultural policy, recognising the importance of local spaces and the mediating position of local cultures could imply recognising that only some aspects in approaches to cultural policy may be transferable from a city to another one (something akin to Teixeira Coelho’s preference for a ‘formalist’ cultural policy, where only the general framework and procedures are predetermined while the choice of contents is left to those effectively implementing programmes and projects on the ground (2009)). More specific contents and ways of doing may need to result from local participation and dialogue, ‘preserving autonomies within a general framework of interdependence, while ensuring equal participation’ (Barbieri 2017: 190, my translation), thus reinforcing the centrality of local negotiation and governance processes.

The importance of local cultural processes as ‘mediators’ can be observed both in the emergence of local cultural policies in cities like Barcelona, as well as in how districts and neighbourhoods arise as important participatory spaces (e.g. district councils, community-led management initiatives, etc.). Local activists have argued that the existence of small-scale participatory spaces, particularly when connected to opportunities for the effective management of citizen initiatives or public services, allows to take advantage of local knowledge and adapt processes to local contexts, *situating* them: ‘Cultural, education and community practices are radically situated: they cannot be copied or imported, they need to develop in the long term and in connection with specific knowledges and ecosystems.’ (L’Ordit 2020: 6, my translation) In this view, community cultural practices have the potential advantage of enabling a more active role of community groups in local decision-making, leading to the emergence of ‘situated communities of practice which negotiate and transform their identity’ (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018: 53, my translation).

This is also in keeping with the observations that I presented in chapter 3, on how some of the approaches to the relation between culture and development (such as those I termed ‘cultural adaptation’, ‘culturally-sustainable development’, ‘culture as an end of development’, and ‘culture *as* sustainable development’) implied, from the perspective of governance, a move towards exercises of community consultation and participation. There are here a range of different forms of engagement, as I will explore later. In this spectrum, a particularly active form

of participation may be illustrated by the examples of community groups who are given a role by public authorities in the management of publicly owned or co-owned facilities, since, as identities are transformed ‘... so are the uses that will be given to that space. The impacts, frameworks, and narratives that spaces make about themselves change and adapt to the community.’ (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018: 53, my translation). This is a view of public facilities as ‘situated’, relational spaces, the mission, and operations of which are contingent on those who use and govern them.

An illustrative example: Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris

An illustrative example of this is the story of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, a community-led cultural venue in the Nou Barris district of Barcelona, in the Northern periphery of the city. The area had grown from 100,000 to 220,000 inhabitants in slightly over a decade (1950-1963), due mainly to migration from other regions in Spain, and witnessed increasing neighbour mobilisation since the early 1970s, demanding more, better facilities and services. In late 1976, one year after the death of dictator Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain since the end of the Civil War (1936-1939) until 1975, and in a context of political uncertainty and social tension, with increasing calls for democratisation,³⁰ an asphalt mixing plant was established in one of the industrial neighbourhoods that make up Nou Barris.

The new asphalt plant provoked protests because of the pollution it generated. Following an assembly, neighbours decided to dismantle the plant and occupied the annex storage building, which they required be turned into an *ateneu popular*, an institution of working-class education and part of the anarchist tradition, with roots in the mid-19th century and which had been repressed by the dictatorship (Solà 1978, Aisa 2006). Access to cultural facilities in the area was one of the central demands of protesters in Nou Barris in December 1976. A few days after the initial mobilisation, the City Council announced that the asphalt plant would be permanently dismantled and that two working spaces would be provided to local community groups. Progressively, the space became a regular site of cultural activities organised by neighbours, frequently in connection with social and political campaigns (worker strikes, international solidarity, anti-militarism, etc.), and a weekly community meeting to discuss on project planning and management (Ojeda and Urbano 2014, Tudela Vázquez 2017).

Following the first democratic local elections in 1979, in 1982 the Barcelona City Council established a public network of neighbourhood community and cultural venues known as *centres cívics*. The initiative clashed with the expectations of grassroots initiatives such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, which saw it as a government drive to co-opt and control autonomous groups, taking advantage of the fact that, with several former community leaders now working for the new city council and amidst a less politicised context, community initiatives had become weaker (Tudela Vázquez 2017, Roig i Badia 2021). Constant community mobilisation led to an agreement, in the late 1980s, for the City Council to purchase the site and to sign an agreement with the newly-established non-profit organisation representing the local community, Associació Bidó de 9 Barris, which would be entrusted with the management of the venue. Ateneu Popular

³⁰ The first democratic elections in Spain would only be held in June 1977, and several political parties could only be legally registered in the early months of that year.

de Nou Barris would remain outside the network of *centres cívics*, and has retained a model of grassroots-led management, in what is now known as community-led management, with permanent spaces of neighbour decision-making to establish the centre's policy (Ojeda and Urbano 2014). Years later, however, Ateneu was integrated in another network initiated by the City Council, bringing together so-called 'art factories' (*fàbriques de creació*). This was, and remains, a more diverse, loose set of venues, some initiated by public authorities, others by professional associations and community groups, frequently established in former industrial sites, and providing spaces for arts training and production (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2023).

Over the years, the centre has developed a distinctive set of activities comprising arts education, cultural events with a social and political orientation, and a meeting space for many community groups. It has also become possibly the best-known hub in circus education and 'social circus' (i.e. the development of circus with social and educational goals) in Catalonia and Spain. Many agents across the district of Nou Barris, including families, schools, and social centres, are actively involved in the Ateneu's activities, as well as its working groups and participatory committees, with decision-making seen as central to the centre's philosophy. Several decades of negotiation among civil society actors and with public authorities have led to a tailored policy approach, which integrates the local community's needs and interests within the local authority's policy towards the venue (EDUCULT (coord.) 2013). It has also inspired the adoption of similar models for the civic management of publicly-owned facilities across its area of influence in Nou Barris, a trend which is less visible in other districts (Ojeda and Urbano 2014), though, as we shall see, a number of other exceptions also exist.

Richard Sennett has emphasised how local processes involving co-production and demanding the public to play an active role, as opposed to top-down consultations aimed to 'passify' it, are distinctive of what he calls an 'open city' – that is, one which tolerates differences and promotes equality, and which '[frees] people from the straitjacket of the fixed and familiar, creating a terrain in which they could experiment and expand their experience' (2019: 9, 298). This is also based on the idea that '[when] you bring people together in different situations, you create life, but when you separate them, you are effectively sentencing the city to a slow death' (Sennett 2015: 126). Sennett connects the 'open city' to the Kantian ideal of a society that is capable of acknowledging its internal diversity and tensions and living with complexity.

In this respect, examples like Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris may embody what Sennett has called the 'coordinative smart city', one which demands much from its inhabitants in terms of civic participation but which, by engaging their knowledge and enabling them to be in control of processes, is inherently democratic and generates satisfaction among citizens. This is in contrast with the 'prescriptive smart city', one which aims to foresee how the city will function, fearing chance and demanding little from its inhabitants, but which may also become obsolete as people do things differently – this, Sennett argues, is inherently authoritarian (2019). Participatory mechanisms open to co-production may also be better aligned with an understanding of sustainability as a long-term process which requires a cultural transformation (Clammer 2016), including in the demand for citizens to be active participants and the acknowledgement that cities can make mistakes (Sennett 2019). They may also be necessary for negotiating a process of transition to an open, uncertain future, which requires experimentation, training and individuals' capacity for reflection, as has been suggested in the case of 'transition towns', a set

of local and citizen-led initiatives and experiments that aim to go beyond the standard approach to sustainable development, fostering lifestyles that are less oil-dependent (Krauz 2015).

From the perspective of cultural policy, this reinforces the need for models which acknowledge change rather than permanence, as I highlighted in the previous chapter, and which, therefore, admit that

‘[cultural] democracy will always be in the making – not least, in respect of the need to co-produce knowledge of cultural ecosystems perpetually. Cultural democracy is in this sense characterized, in part, by arrangements of co-produced knowledge, pluralist processes of valuation and shared decision-making. This is what cultural democracy looks like: *a sustained but evolving system of governance for substantive cultural freedom.*’ (Gross and Wilson 2018: 339, emphasis in the original).

By engaging a plurality of agents in processes of constant negotiation and aiming to broaden opportunities for cultural participation for everyone, examples like Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris provide illustrative evidence of cultural democracy as a process in the making.

How local cultural initiatives can mediate towards broader sustainability

Of course, it is also necessary to explore how small-scale projects like this may contribute to larger-scale sustainability, and to what extent and how the evolving nature of cultural democracy can be combined with the adaptive and regenerative approach which is necessary in the current context. Part of the answer to this may lie in exploring the interdependences between cultural initiatives such as these and other spheres of social life, including economic structures and social initiatives. With examples such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, left-wing activists in Barcelona have suggested that cooperative practices and values, where shared needs can be addressed collectively by means other than market-based mechanisms, are particularly suited to the neighbourhood level (Grup de treball Desbordes de la cultura 2017).

In some cases, neighbourhood cultural practices are also seen to depict more diverse narratives of culture, involving participatory aspects, than the one that exists at city level, where only the more commercial elements linked to the ‘cultural industry’ become visible – this being seen as a central tension in the city’s cultural life.³¹ In the words of Catalan sociologist and urban activist Ivan Miró, local spaces such as neighbourhoods have the potential to retain a relative social autonomy vis-à-vis the dynamics of capitalism, as illustrated by civil society and cultural initiatives, social connections, everyday forms of mutual support, and grassroots political organisation, which contribute to identities and relations of resistance in the face of capitalist dispossession (Miró i Acedo 2018). I would suggest that this exemplifies, more broadly, the ability of local cultures to acknowledge the tensions that are inherent to sustainability and mediate among them.

In line with the need to explore and unravel the interdependences that make up our *terrains de vie*, as I explained in the previous chapter, Miró adds that local cultural and social initiatives in pursuit of autonomy need to be complemented with alternative economic models, such as those represented by the so-called ‘social economy’ (2018) – that is, the practices of cooperatives, social enterprises and other forms of not-for-profit economic organisation based on the primacy

³¹ Interview with Xavier Urbano, 3 November 2020.

of the individual and social objectives over capital, as well as principles of democratic governance and self-management. In this view, the networked nature that is typical of the social economy could be the basis to scale up economic alternatives, thus being able to challenge the primacy of capitalist values that tend to inform cities' positioning in the global economy. The development of the social economy in Barcelona in recent years has included a significant number of cultural cooperatives and similar not-for-profit cultural initiatives (Coòpolis 2018), which are frequently articulated with community-led management initiatives.

In any case, because the dilemmas posed by sustainability are indeed global, approaches conceived locally are part of a larger conversation. Contemporary cities like Barcelona may be seen as the product of the successive layers through which they have developed historically, to which a component of networking and connectedness outwards is added in the context of globalisation, as García Canclini has suggested (in Greeley 2018). Recognising that the reality of cities today is interdependent with developments elsewhere implies integrating a horizon related to global issues even when acting at the local level. This may also be seen as a logical consequence of Latour's call for a politics that helps to render visible those *terrains de vie* on which we depend, but which have become invisible to the eye. To which he also adds that '[it] is unlikely that this territory will coincide with a classic legal, spatial, administrative, or geographic entity. On the contrary, the configurations will traverse all scales of space and time.' (2018: 63). This suggests that any analysis of the mediating position of local cultures requires a multi-scalar, multi-level approach, which explores the local in the perspective of the global, and vice versa, as I stressed in my initial reflections on the tensions observed in governance models (i.e. the territorial versus multi-level tension). This is present in Miró's view of local practices as providing a space of autonomy vis-à-vis the dynamics of capitalism, and I will explore this further in the next section.

4.2. The need for a multi-level approach and an engaged cosmopolitanism

The inevitable interdependence of the local and the global today is not free from tension – they rather serve to exemplify 'the tension between the abstract and the concrete', for '[the] global and the local create friction as ... universal aspirations encounter their practical achievement' (De Beukelaer 2021: 40). If we acknowledge these tensions, the complexity of urban developments and the interdependence of local and global spaces, we may assume that complex thinking, rather than siloed, sectoral approaches, is needed in this area (Edgar Morin, interviewed in Moreno 2020). Latour has argued that, in the New Climatic Regime, sovereignties are increasingly shared and that the scalar, concentric separation of territorial levels (local, regional, national, global) oversimplifies a more complex reality (2015). How can local cultural policies acknowledge and help to navigate this friction and alleviate the tensions that derive from them? Can more adequate ways of appreciating complex entanglements and sovereignties emerge as a result?

One possible answer to this lies in the assumption of a 'global frame of action', which connects local and global awareness and which, in the words of Ulrich Beck, involves taking actions that 'build bridges to the world, to the world of the 'others'' (2016: 10). The global frame of action may be facilitated by the perception of metamorphoses which are global such as climate change. As I mentioned earlier, Beck sees potential positive side effects of this, by arguing that such global

metamorphoses ‘produce normative horizons of common goods and propel us beyond the national frame towards a cosmopolitan outlook’ (4). In political terms, this should involve moving from ‘methodological nationalism’, where the world turns around the nation, to ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’, where the nation turns around ‘the world at risk’ (38).

The potential of some cultural policies concerned with sustainability to offer a universal, cosmopolitan horizon can be found in the last of the four ‘strategic lines’ of cultural policy for sustainable development proposed by Nancy Duxbury, Anita Kangas and Christiaan De Beukelaer (2017), the primary objective of which is to foster global ecological citizenship to help identify and tackle sustainability as a global issue. This is a suggestive approach, concerned with the emergence of ethical values to sustain a cosmopolitan, ecological citizenship, which, while concerned with climate change, involves more broadly a new relation with the natural and cultural world. These authors suggest that one of the main challenges here lies in the need to move cultural policy from a territorial focus, which has privileged identity and tended to accentuate difference, to ‘a sense of global belonging’ (ibid.: 96-97). While describing the sustainability concept here as one where the social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions are integrated, they suggest that some primacy may be given to environmental aspects:

‘As our natural environment is arguably the realm that is most cogently contextualising our sense of global belonging and survival today, it can form the bedrock for this renewed sense of belonging, shared human responsibility, and citizenship...’ (ibid.: 96-97).

Several interesting concepts, including the sense of global belonging, responsibility, and citizenship, are presented here, which should have bearing on the pursuit of new cultural policy models. Christiaan De Beukelaer has further argued that a cosmopolitan approach in cultural policy involves ‘a commitment to [accommodating] a variety of both *standpoints* and *worldviews*’, recognising that disagreement exists and that it is necessary to find ways to ‘discuss *how* and *why* we disagree beyond framing the debate as an issue between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (2019: 800, emphasis in the original), as has often been the case in multicultural, globalised societies. He draws on the work of Kwame Anthony Appiah to suggest that cosmopolitanism, in this light, involves combining an ‘abstract’ interest in the others with a concern with particular human lives (De Beukelaer 2019). This is an understanding of cosmopolitanism as ‘a political philosophy of social justice’ (2019: 801), which serves to highlight the distance with a different understanding of cosmopolitanism – that of the ‘disengaged cosmopolitan’ which transcends local customs and traditions but is not rooted anywhere nor cares for specific conditions, in one of the possible implications of Kant’s original reflections on cosmopolitanism and the ‘universal citizen’ (Sennett 2019: 295). It is also a ‘grounded cosmopolitanism’, which acknowledges that cosmopolitanism ‘needs political units smaller than the world as a whole’ and which aims to explore ways of living together (De Beukelaer 2019: 802).

I would argue that cities and local spaces are more suitable for exploring ways of living together and integrating a cosmopolitan approach which combines abstract reflections with caring for the other, and which could therefore serve to resolve the ‘local ownership versus diversity tension’ which I outlined in the first chapter. Cultural projects such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, and the related social negotiation processes and search for alternative economic models promoted by advocates of community-led management (e.g. ‘social economy’), illustrate the combination of a concern with particular human lives with a reflection on some global challenges.

The friction generated when universal aspirations encounter specific distributions of resources may also be a source of pragmatic negotiation and positive adaptation. As the late Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman suggested,

‘It is in the city that the strangers who in the global space confront each other as hostile states, inimical civilisations or military adversaries, meet as individual human beings, ... learn each other’s ways, negotiate the rules of life in common, cooperate and, sooner or later, get used to each other’s presence’ (2003: 38).

There is an ‘ethics which civilizes’ when we encounter and address others that are unlike ourselves (Sennett 2019: 126), and cities and towns are privileged scenarios for those encounters to happen. Several authors have also highlighted the ability of cities to feel comfortable with an approach to culture which is open and fluid, rather than fixed and essentialised. This is opposed to nation-states, which tend to privilege static, homogeneous identities (Pascual 2007b), and highlights the cities as ‘the foremost experiment in remapping identity and loyalty beyond traditional nationhood toward post-national urban hubs’ (Khanna 2016: 269).

In this respect, cities may somehow embody the ‘grounded cosmopolitanism’ alluded to by De Beukelaer. At the same time, as my earlier discussion on the case of Forum Barcelona 2004 has shown, cities are also sites where a ‘disengaged cosmopolitanism’ can settle. Furthermore, local spaces are not devoid of ‘hierarchical or exclusionary politics’, nor ‘local ethnocentrism or... ethnic fundamentalism’ (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 65). I would argue that the existence of forms of governance which mediate between global and local interests, and which give room to the multiple diversities existing locally and their opportunities to build a shared space, while also addressing the interdependences of cultural, social, economic and environmental aspects, is essential here.

One of the implications of these observations concerns the need to ‘qualify’ notions of cosmopolitanism – that is, to better distinguish those cosmopolitan views which can effectively connect global reflections in the abstract with a concern about specific individuals and communities and places (as in De Beukelaer’s ‘grounded cosmopolitanism’), and those that are disengaged and unconcerned about the local (as in Sennett’s ‘disengaged cosmopolitanism’). Behind the many reflections on global issues and values may lie very different approaches as regards the attention paid to local conditions and communities, and how these may act as *subjects* and have equality of agency in the negotiation of global changes and adaptation to them. Another significant observation relates to the coexistence of multiple discourses, within a city and its local government, on the place of cultural aspects vis-à-vis sustainability. Just as García Canclini’s layers build a city historically (Greeley 2018), so do different discourses and policy documents overlap and coexist, leaving a legacy or ‘path dependence’ in the form of particular institutions, policies and ways of looking. Some of the examples presented in the coming sections may serve to illustrate this.

What does this mean in terms of local cultural policies? Are they able to integrate a ‘global frame of action’ and a cosmopolitan perspective? The potential to see cities as ‘testing grounds’ for global challenges, and for successful local practices to be ‘scaled up’, has been raised by several authors (Bauman 2003, Barber 2013, Landry 2014, Khanna 2016). Yet some interesting nuances have been proposed by Clammer, who suggests that, if ‘autonomous development with full participation’ is the suitable political order for a sustainable society, ‘debates about “scaling up”

smaller experiments ... are actually in many cases beside the point', for the key issue is not one of scale but of the leverage to transform the larger system (Clammer 2016: 75-76). In this respect, I would argue that, rather than a 'mechanistic' notion of 'scaling up' processes, forms of networking which connect diverse local processes may be a more suitable analogy. The work of organisations such as UCLG, based on the generation of peer-learning spaces which recognise local autonomy (Pascual i Ruiz 2021), could serve as a good example of this.

While this reinforces the need for 'situated' or 'grounded' approaches and active, democratic participation from local communities, and a certain social autonomy as highlighted earlier by Miró, it also points to the importance of retaining a global perspective and, potentially, a 'global frame of action', particularly if we assume that sovereignties are shared and overlapping. Schumacher's emphasis on the importance of finding the suitable scale to each matter, combining small and large structures, some exclusive and some comprehensive, and complementing small-scale action with some universal principles in the field of ideas, principles or ethics (1993), is interesting in this respect, pointing the way to 'multi-level approaches', i.e. those that assume that contemporary problems require simultaneous action at several levels, and that negotiation between local, national, regional and global spaces and actors is necessary and can lead to instances of conflict as well as to forms of collaboration.

In terms of the content of cultural policy, De Beukelaer's closing suggestion that 'a cosmopolitan cultural policy does not have the purpose to create a homogenous cultural practice, but is meant to create a context in which we can get mutually acquainted' (2019: 802-803) has some resemblance with the aforementioned view of cultural policy as being concerned primarily with the 'conditions of culture' (McGuigan 2003) and aiming to generate an enabling environment for cultural diversity (Baltà Portolés and Roig Madorran 2011). That is, understanding that cultural policy should allow citizens to 'develop' their cultural identities and activities, adopting a 'formalist' approach (Teixeira Coelho 2009) to a certain extent, but that this must be based on a certain agreement on principles, such as the recognition of cultural diversity or the promotion of cultural rights, as both Barcelona's *New Accents* cultural strategy (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a) and the recently adopted Cultural Rights Plan (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a) aim to do.

4.3. The appropriation of the city and its spaces

The right to the city and its cultural dimension

In 1968, French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre proposed the term 'the right to the city'. Decrying the progressive loss of spaces for collective action, increasing social segregation and the privatisation of public spaces, while emphasising the potential of the 'urban' to address complexity, he referred to the right to the city as 'a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*' (1996: 158, emphasis in the original) and went on to stress that the right to the city involved rejecting discrimination and segregation, while affirming that

'it stipulates the right to meetings and gathering; places and objects must answer to certain 'needs' generally misunderstood...: the 'need' for social life and a centre, the need and the function of play, the symbolic function of space ... The right to the city therefore signifies the constitution or reconstitution of a spatial-temporal unit, of a gathering together instead of a fragmentation.' (195).

More recently, British economic geographer David Harvey has argued that

‘... the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire. It is moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization.’ (2013: 4)

Although there are differences in Lefebvre’s and Harvey’s views on the right to the city (including in Harvey’s aim to foster a ‘global movement opposing the financial capital that controls urban development’, as opposed to Lefebvre’s primary focus on the urban scale (Petcou and Petrescu 2015: 154)), both their perspectives highlight the central position of cities and of participatory, collective approaches to city-building, with a view to designing cities where citizens’ aspirations can be represented. Some of these arguments can be connected to the position of cultural aspects in revising approaches to urban life. Indeed, when Harvey argues that the right to the city is ‘a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire’ (2013: 4), he is in a territory similar to Hawkes’ affirmation that ‘[our] culture embodies the sense we make of our lives; it is built on the values we share and the ways we come to terms with our differences’ (2006: 240). Here culture, understood as a set of human visions and aspirations embodied as values and ways of living, operates as a mediating space which aims to inform and transform local spaces (Baltà 2019). From the perspective of sustainability, cities can therefore be the places where culture operates as a framing, contextualising, mediating element *for* sustainable development, to use Dessein et al’s (2015) approach, which also relates to Escobar’s call for local cultures to mediate in a context of global tensions (1996).

Similarly, Lefebvre’s emphasis on ‘the key role of urban imaginaries in understanding, challenging and transforming urbanity and opening the way to a multiplicity of representations and interventions’ (Petcou and Petrescu 2015: 155) could be connected to an understanding of local cultural policy which helps to shape open, plural imaginaries in which citizens are able to co-design their city, something that needs to be reflected in governance spaces such as community-led management initiatives. Lefebvre also addressed the ‘right to difference’, which involves a rejection of the trends towards homogenisation and domination embodied by capitalism, as well as the social fragmentation that comes with them, and underlined the important role of culture as a space where the right to difference could be made effective (Martin 2006, Baltà Portolés 2021). There are connections here with my argument, presented in chapter 3, as per the need for cultural policy, in the context of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration, to provide spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity.

In both Lefebvre and Harvey’s definitions of the right to the city lie elements that relate to the symbolic dimension of cities, and how they embody our relation to one another and to the world. They also address aspects related to space (e.g. Lefebvre’s reference to places and objects, to the symbolic function of space, to the gathering of people, and Harvey’s references to urbanisation). What does this mean for cultural policy, and how can it be implemented in practice?

The place of proximity in local cultural policy

I would like to focus on the spatial dimension of cities, and how local cultural policies may enable a revision of people's relations with space, in ways that are meaningful in a perspective of sustainability and adaptation. One relevant aspect addressed by contemporary urban studies concerns 'proximity', that is the closeness that exists between the different places where activities in an urban area are conducted. Proximity is a defining characteristic of a 'compact city', i.e. a city with dense and proximate development patterns and which facilitates accessibility to local services and jobs, including through good public transport systems. Compact city approaches have often been presented as significant from the perspective of environmental sustainability, because of the reduction in automobile dependency and the ability to conserve farmland and natural biodiversity around urban areas (OECD 2012, Artmann, Kohler et al. 2019). Yet compact cities may have other benefits as well, by generating continued street life which contributes to safety and 'street self-government' and by offering a diverse range of jobs within close distance, which reduces the need to migrate (Jacobs 1961: 121ff). Other authors have suggested, however, that compact cities may be overcrowded and experience a loss of urban quality, including in terms of congestion and pollution, and have emphasised the need to understand compactness and proximity as complex terms, which call for a sophisticated exploration (Jenks, Burton et al. 1996).

One contribution that has recently gained attention in this field is the '15-minute city' concept developed by French-Colombian complex systems specialist Carlos Moreno (2020), which has been adopted by the City of Paris and informed planning in other cities, including Barcelona (Ortega 2021). Moreno's 15-minute city is a polycentric, multi-functional urban area, which reduces the need to commute and embraces 'chrono-urbanism', that is an approach to urban management that aims to synchronise space, mobility, and time. Here, a city's shape should be modelled based on its uses. Moreno identifies organic density, proximity and diversity (in terms of activities, social groups, age, gender, and cultural activities) as some of the defining traits of the 15-minute city, which should guarantee close access to housing, employment, retail, sports, educational and leisure activities (Moreno 2020). Some critics have warned, however, that the vitality of urban areas relies on their ability to host some specialised, sophisticated economic activities (e.g. financial intermediation, pediatric oncology), which are unlikely to be accessible to every employee within a 15-minute radius (Puig 2022). This again suggests that a sophisticated exploration of the implications of a compact city are necessary.

While Moreno's initial identification of the key functions of a city does not stress citizen participation in decision-making, he does later emphasise that urban governance should be increasingly citizen-oriented, and that proximity should rely on active citizen participation. There are echoes of the right to the city in some of his ideas, including his emphasis on the need to reconcile space, mobility and time, which resembles Lefebvre's call to reconstitute 'a spatial-temporal unit, of a gathering together instead of a fragmentation' (Lefebvre 1996: 195), as well as in his call to redesign cities on the basis of citizens' needs. Indeed, Moreno will argue, paraphrasing Lefebvre, that rather than the 'right to the city', the contemporary challenge lies on 'the right to *life* in the city' (Moreno 2020: 91, my translation; emphasis in the original). In any case, this may already be included in Lefebvre's original formulation of the right to the city as 'a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*' (1996: 158, emphasis in the original).

Besides emphasising that a 15-minute city should guarantee access to a diverse range of cultural activities, another aspect of Moreno's formulation that could be interesting from the perspective of cultural policy is his emphasis on the need to maximise the usage of public spaces, including schools and community centres, to ensure their premises are used most of the time. This is meant to enable further access to basic services, e.g. by turning schools into sites of social and cultural activities, as well as to facilitate encounters among members of the community (Moreno 2020).

Of course, the ability for such venues to enable multiple activities will partly depend on their design. Richard Sennett has defined 'synchronic spaces' as those which allow multiple uses to happen simultaneously. By inviting people to mix, synchronic spaces can be significant in the development of an 'open city', but they are difficult to design because they need to allow people to orient themselves in a context which may at first seem disorienting (for synchronic spaces are not allocated one clearly-designed function, but can serve many, and therefore they do not fit into previously-held notions of how a school, a theatre or a post office should look like). In order to be attractive propositions, therefore, they need to be able to offer something that cannot easily be accessed elsewhere (Sennett 2019), i.e. making the coexistence of different uses seem logical and accessible, rather than complex.

Further to the short-term *instrumental* function that is often intrinsic to using a particular space or service (e.g. attending a course in a community venue to learn or to develop skills), the usage of public spaces and venues can embody other functions, including the collective appropriation of that place, by attributing symbolic meanings to them or establishing interpersonal relations. That idea is central to the notion of the right to the city. Drawing on Lefebvre and Harvey, Ivan Miró i Acedo has argued that cities may be privileged spaces for an equitable and emancipatory resolution of collective needs and for social appropriation, if collective uses of public space are fostered, at the expense of the private appropriation of the value generated by cities (2018). This also echoes British human geographer Oli Mould's observation (2015) that there exist many forms of creativity other than those privileged by mainstream 'Creative City' approaches, and that it is precisely those forms of creativity which hold the potential to challenge the dominance of economic interest over other values that matter in public life. From the perspective of cultural policy, this again emphasises the need to recognise and foster diversity in the public space of culture, including by favouring forms which challenge the mainstream. In this respect, as cultural policy researchers Victoria Sánchez Belando and Matías I. Zarlenga have argued (2022), governance processes enabling active engagement from communities may embody an understanding of creativity different to that of 'Creative Cities'.

In a different perspective, placing less emphasis on the politically transformative potential but also stressing the social relevance of public facilities, Eric Klinenberg has argued that social infrastructures such as libraries, schools, playgrounds and parks are essential to 'repair the fractured societies we live in today' (2018: 11), by enabling people to gather, meet and connect with strangers, as well as to feel cared for. The ability of social infrastructures to allow such encounters may partly depend on how *synchronic* they are. Furthermore, the social networks that emerge as a result have been seen to help communities cope better with major disasters, including hurricanes and other climate-related phenomena, thus contributing to adaptation (Klinenberg 2013, Klinenberg 2018). I would suggest that places such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, which combine family gatherings (e.g. parents leaving and collecting their children in

circus education activities), informal conversations (e.g. the same parents having a drink while waiting for their kids), arts events, deliberation spaces, political campaigns and other activities respond to this synchronic nature, which has been modelled and shaped through ongoing citizen participation.

Reflections on proximity have received significant attention in cultural policy debates in Barcelona. The term became particularly central in *New Accents*, the 2006 revised cultural strategy, which identified proximity as one of its central themes. Proximity was defined there as

‘the stratum of citizens’ cultural interrelations, where cultural practices and uses are found, where active participation in the cultural life of the city is located. This is the sphere of the citizens and their countless cultural relations and negotiations.’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 20).

Proximity was identified as one of the three ‘strata’ in the urban cultural system, along with the cultural production system (namely, the ecosystem of cultural professionals and organisations), and ‘excellence’ (that is, those initiatives ‘that excel, that stand out indisputably for their quality and symbolic capacity. Any cultural system aspires to expand this level.’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 20)). Proximity and excellence were the central themes of the 2006 revised strategy and were somehow presented as opposed to one another, the former focusing on broadening the opportunities for every citizen to access culture, the latter on enabling a few professional initiatives to ‘excel’. References to ‘excellence’ were relatively frequent at the time, both in Catalonia and in other European countries, although debates elsewhere often referred to it in more politically-charged, critical ways than was the case in Barcelona (for a concurrent debate in the UK, see e.g. Mirza 2006). Incidentally, the two major cultural policy documents adopted by the City of Barcelona in 2021 (the Cultural Rights Plan and a Culture Pact involving political parties in the local government and in the local opposition) continue to have proximity as a central topic, but do no longer refer to excellence (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021b, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021c), as the term, because of its elitist connotations, seems to have fallen out of fashion nowadays.

That *New Accents* placed emphasis on proximity amounted to a significant shift, as the 1999 Cultural Strategy had given it a much less significant position: the few references to proximity found in that document primarily related to the role of public libraries as serving their neighbourhood (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999a). This could be seen as representative of *New Accents’* move to a cultural policy that was less concerned with Barcelona’s international visibility (and took some distance from the ‘disengaged cosmopolitanism’ of its preceding period) and which aimed to regain citizens’ trust after the 2004 events. It may also result from the fact that *New Accents* was presented as ‘a strategic plan for *culture*’ rather than ‘a strategic plan for the *cultural sector*’, as the 1999 Strategy had been described (my emphases). This implied moving from a central focus on cultural professionals and organisations to a broader understanding of the ‘urban cultural system’ which cultural policy addressed. There was therefore, at least in the discourse, an aim to develop a more people-based cultural policy. That proximity, which in 1999 applied primarily to libraries (i.e. to venues where citizens’ activities are largely individualised), was now equated with processes of ‘active participation in the cultural life of the city’ and of ‘countless cultural relations and negotiations’ (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 20) may be connected to the rising position of active participation in culture as a goal in cultural policy (Bonet and Négrier 2018), as well as to how documents such as the Agenda 21 for culture had placed emphasis on cultural rights (UCLG 2004).

At the same time, while ‘proximity’ may have been less frequently used in the past, its roots can be traced back to the cultural democracy paradigm which had guided the PSC-led City Council’s social-democratic policies since the 1980s (Sánchez Belando 2015). Public libraries and *centres cívics* are generally identified as the two major elements in Barcelona’s proximity-oriented cultural policy, which therefore relies primarily on buildings, rather than an organisational culture or more relational approaches to citizens. The Cultural Rights Plan adopted in 2021 and the set of specific measures initiated as a result, however, do refer to the aim to strengthen proximity-based community cultural projects, particularly around libraries, in what may be a more significant change. They also apply the term ‘proximity’ to a wider range of agents and venues, including neighbourhood bookshops, music clubs, cinemas and social economy cooperatives (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021b), adopting a more ‘interconnected’ approach in which private businesses, when not in the hands of large corporations, are integrated in what previously had been the precinct of public facilities.

From the perspective of citizen appropriation and the exercise of the right to the city, a few elements in these approaches to proximity should be considered. Firstly, libraries and *centres cívics* have become well-appreciated cultural facilities for a significant part of the local population in Barcelona. A large-scale survey conducted by ICUB in 2019 found that *centres cívics* (45.3%) and libraries (45.1%) were the two most frequent replies to the question ‘What are the three most important spaces or places in the cultural life of a neighbourhood for you?’ (ICUB and Barbieri 2020). Appreciation was particularly significant in low-income neighbourhoods (55% for *centres cívics* and 49% for libraries) (ibid.). This could be explained, at least in some cases, by the absence of other cultural venues in these areas, as other types of cultural facilities (e.g. theatres, museums) are frequently concentrated on a small number of neighbourhoods (300.000km/s 2020).

Furthermore, just a few months before Covid-19 effectively led to their temporary closure, 52% of respondents said that if their neighbourhood library closed it would affect them ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’ (however, 31% said it would not affect them at all), and 65% thought that it would affect people in the neighbourhood ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’. Similar figures were found for *centres cívics*, where 49% of respondents said a closure would affect them (29% replied that it would not affect them at all) and 73% thought it would significantly affect people in the neighbourhood. In this case, respondents in low-income neighbourhoods declared that a closure would affect them personally in figures significantly higher than the city average (ibid.). Beyond the (non-) availability of other cultural spaces in the neighbourhood, this may also be connected to Klinenberg’s view on how social infrastructure helps to connect disadvantaged communities (2018).

Secondly, it is important to discuss the presumed tension between ‘proximity’ and ‘excellence’, and what this implies in practice. *New Accents’* rationale to strengthen proximity in cultural policy related mainly to broadening opportunities to access and participate in culture for everyone, as well as encouraging interaction between citizens to foster a sense of cohesion (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a). Meanwhile, excellence involved improving opportunities for professional artists and strengthening Barcelona’s mainstream cultural facilities. Considering this, the late Catalan cultural manager Eduard Miralles posited that the challenge remained in reconciling both terms. In his view, the assumption behind *New Accents* and the policies resulting from it was that work done in the name of proximity would be low-

quality and remain invisible in the cultural scene. To redress the potential disconnect between proximity and excellence, Miralles argued that mainstream cultural institutions should be expected to decentralise, with activities conducted at neighbourhood level (2016a, 2016b).

In recent years, some progress in this respect has been observed, including in large public organisations such as the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB), a venue presenting exhibitions, talks, festivals, and other arts events, which has established a department in charge of cultural mediation and developed a set of outreach activities in its surrounding neighbourhood (Frisach 2022). However, this is not a mainstream trend, and generally there are few connections between mainstream cultural organisations and those active in proximity, including libraries and *centres cívics* (Roig i Badia 2021). There are good examples of how other European cities have fostered such collaboration, like Lyon, which through the Charter on Cultural Cooperation has promoted partnerships between large- and small-scale cultural initiatives and contributed to broadening cultural engagement across the city, as well as a more diverse set of cultural activities in public space (Villarubias 2018).

One likely effect of the absence of such approaches in Barcelona is the lack of spaces where different narratives about the city are confronted. It may also reinforce the divide between the forms of culture which are considered 'legitimate', which take place in the city's main venues, and those which are seen as less 'legitimate' or culturally relevant, including those activities held in *centres cívics* (Delgado 2001a, ICUB and Barbieri 2020). As a result, and to formulate it in the terms of the 'right to the city' proponents, 'plural imaginaries' persist, but so does social fragmentation, as well as a hierarchy between those imaginaries with which the city primarily identifies itself and those which represent developments at neighbourhood level, which are less visible. The right to the city should involve more opportunities for grassroots initiatives to inform the city's identity and vision. One way in which this can be done is through the fostering of processes which allow communities' self-government in cultural life, and which can be connected through networks to gain a form of visibility. This can also be a way to challenge more limited views of what is 'excellent', by privileging the participatory nature of processes and the emergence of a diverse set of expressions, rather than the fitting into previously sanctioned, top-down aesthetic canons.

Thirdly, whereas proponents of the right to the city have tended to emphasise the need for spaces which allow public deliberation and access to decision-making, public-sector proximity venues in Barcelona (e.g. *centres cívics*, libraries) have generally left the politically-transformative potential aside. The case of *centres cívics* has been particularly significant, with several authors stressing how they were designed mainly as spaces for the delivery of services, rather than with a view to enabling public deliberation and participation in decision-making. As explained earlier in the case of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, when first established in the early 1980s the *centre cívic* model went against the demands of some community groups, which called for a stronger level of engagement from neighbourhood initiatives in the running of venues (Delgado i Clavera 1983, Sánchez Belando 2015, Tudela Vázquez 2017). Argentinian-Catalan cultural sociologist María Victoria Sánchez Belando (2015) has argued that the step was the result of the prevalence of an 'elitist' vision of politics within local government, and the related mistrust among civil servants about citizens' engagement in political discussions, which were often perceived to slow down decision-making and run counter to the local authority's efficiency. Similar doubts continue to emerge occasionally, as in recent debates around the adoption of a city policy on

community-led management or 'citizen heritage', as discussed in chapter 2, and can be seen as an obstacle to the revisions of governance models, something that I will explore in the next chapters.

Local government has increasingly tended to subcontract private companies for the management of *centres cívics*, with contracts being renewed through public calls for tender every few years, something which can also be interpreted as reducing the space for community engagement in political debate (Sánchez Belando 2015). Although in recent years the local government has adopted several initiatives to promote public deliberation and foster citizen engagement in decision-making, such as the Decidim online platform, this has not had very visible effects on cultural proximity facilities, with only a few exceptions. The latter include venues governed through public-civic partnerships in 'community-led management', similarly to the case of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris. Some authors have argued that this model, where management is entrusted to non-profit organisations committed to community participation and engagement in decision-making, could be seen as an expression of the right to the city, as well as a form of 'commons', which builds on inherited forms of ownership and local knowledge (Ojeda 2020). However, several interviewees have emphasised that there is still often, at least in some districts, some mistrust of involving communities in decision-making, and this often operates as an obstacle to changing approaches at neighbourhood level.

4.4. Closing observations

This chapter has argued that the local level arises as particularly suitable for the negotiation of tensions resulting from sustainability through cultural policy. This is because of the ability of local contexts, and local cultures, to mediate in the frictions that arise between the local and the global. Ultimately, there is an interaction between the local and the global which is inevitable, and local cultural policy should adopt a 'global frame of action', as suggested by Beck (2016), if it is to have relevant responses in the context of sustainability. Cosmopolitan approaches which are grounded, recognise local conditions, and enable participation and negotiation are needed in this context.

Further to this, evidence collected in Barcelona also shows that the existence of a certain degree of autonomy in local communities' ability to develop cultural policies and projects, through which to negotiate the tensions resulting from sustainability and adaptation, is important. While policies and projects here are inevitably framed by broader issues and conditions, local contexts, and particularly those that are less visible in the limelight, may allow semi-autonomous processes which contribute to enriching the public space of culture. This also suggests that local processes may have room to escape broader generalisations around cultural policy, including those that assume that most cultural policy has tended towards hyperinstrumentalisation (Hadley and Gray 2017). Examples such as the adoption of the Agenda 21 for culture by the City of Barcelona, or the citizen-led process of Ateneu Popular Nou Barris, both of which have placed emphasis on cultural aspects as inputs, outputs and intentions, rather than focusing exclusively on non-cultural policy outcomes, could support this.

At the same time, the complexity of urban spaces also means that different narratives and ways of understanding the meaning of culture within a city coexist, just as the successive layers

through which a city has been built coexist as well. How different understandings of cosmopolitan approaches have informed cultural policies in Barcelona at different points in time, each leaving a legacy of their own, serves to attest this. That is, the same city encompasses the legacy of Forum 2004, in the form of a regenerated neighbourhood that is home to major global companies and which has largely operated beyond any concern with cultural rights, and grassroots initiatives such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, which have developed for 45 years on the basis of self-government in negotiation with public authorities. Recognising this multiplicity of narratives should be part of the scope of cultural policy, which should also engage in facilitating the negotiation of the resulting tensions, but also give priority to those which broaden cultural opportunities for everyone and enable the emergence of plural imaginaries.

Again, the negotiation of these tensions calls for more suitable spaces for deliberation, decision-making and self-government, and which can contribute to culture's mediating role vis-à-vis the questions raised by sustainability and adaptation. I will devote the next chapter to exploring what this means in terms of the governance of cultural policy.

Chapter 5: Why we need to rethink approaches to governance today

The previous chapters have argued that, in the light of the challenges posed by sustainability, adaptation and regeneration today, it is necessary to revise approaches to cultural policy by, among others, exploring the interdependences between culture and other areas that compose our *terrains de vie*, focusing more on people, and broadening the scope of cultural policy with a more ecosystemic approach. They have also suggested that cities and other local spaces are particularly suited to negotiating the tensions generated by sustainability, even if they are also sites of conflict, and that this should inform the understanding of local cultural policies.

Considering existing approaches to the relation between culture and development, including sustainable development, in chapter 3 I identified some initial implications for the governance of cultural policy. These included the importance of consulting with and involving communities, introducing cultural lenses or filters to understand and measure the cultural impact of decisions adopted in other policy areas, the fostering of dialogue between different policy departments, the involvement of artists and mediators to enable the emergence and transfer of cultural knowledge, and the strengthening of local communities as spaces of negotiation in the light of sustainability challenges. I reinforced the latter point in chapter 4, which discussed the mediating role of local contexts and local cultures in the framework of tensions resulting from sustainability, and how cultural policies could provide useful pathways in this respect.

The introduction to the thesis also presented some of the tensions that can be observed when considering the governance of cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability, including the relationship between a 'situated' approach and openness to diversity and change, the balance between a territorial focus and multilevel approaches, and the tension between participatory governance mechanisms and the specific responsibility held by public authorities.

In the light of these observations, this chapter will explore the different dimensions and implications of the governance of local cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration, and how they are reflected in approaches to governance in Barcelona. The chapter will start by discussing the notion of governance and will then examine to what extent existing governance models are appropriate, and what directions they should adopt to be more sustainable. The three dimensions of the governance of cultural policy identified by Miralles (2014b) – namely, multi-actor, transversal, and multi-level governance – operate as a general framework to this end, which is complemented with contributions emerging from the understanding of culture as a 'commons' and the observation of the 'community balance' model in Barcelona as a process and a tool to revise approaches to governance. I will also examine some of the tensions and critiques that can be observed in the process, including the multilevel nature of governance, the ability to foster mutuality through a 'politics of listening', and the need for participation to be inclusive and effective.

5.1. Defining governance

The term 'governance' has been used in multiple ways, because of its attractiveness as well as the perceived need to transform traditional approaches to public administration. This has effectively led to the coexistence of multiple understandings of governance and the resulting confusion around the term (Lynn, Heinrich et al. 2001, Frederickson 2005). In the field of public administration, 'governance' was first used by US diplomat and academic Harlan Cleveland in the early 1970s, to suggest the need for more systemic approaches to decision-making, based on multilateral brokerage (quoted in Frederickson 2005). Cleveland's understanding suggested that the distinctions between public and private organisations were increasingly being blurred. This has led to some understandings of governance being applied indistinguishably to either type of organisation. However, in the benefit of clarifying terms, some authors have also specified that which may be particular to *public* governance, understood as the 'regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions, and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable the provision of publicly supported goods and services' (Lynn, Heinrich et al. 2001: 7) - something which fits well the revised understanding of cultural policy as proposed earlier.

Indeed, the understanding that governance emerges from the recognition of *systemic* realities which require multilateral brokerage, and that they refer to a diverse range of tools and procedures used to manage and provide goods and services in the public interest, are significant to me. This is because, as observed in previous chapters, cultural policy should be better prepared to engage with interdependences and systemic relations. Further, the ability of local cultures to mediate in the tensions observed under the light of sustainability relates to the involvement of multiple actors, which see culture as a shared, if negotiable, terrain. Likewise, the affirmation that one of the components of governance is *inter-jurisdictional governance*, namely the formalised or voluntary patterns of interorganisational or interjurisdictional cooperation, thus involving public, private and non-profit organisations, established in specific policy areas (Frederickson 2005), such as cultural policy, is also significant. In line with this, governance has also been defined as 'the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken' (Commission on Global Governance 1995: 2).

Particularly relevant here are the references to the existence of 'common affairs' which bring together different actors in relations which may range from conflict to cooperation. In Barcelona, both the establishment of the Council of Culture (as a multi-actor space to inform and support public cultural policy) and the debates around community-led management (as a public-civic process) can be seen as illustrations of the recognition of such 'common affairs' and the search for spaces of cooperation. Related to this is the understanding of how governance implies moving towards horizontal relationships between public authorities and other stakeholders, 'away from the old vertical hierarchy that ensured the privilege of the sovereign state', in what may be interpreted alternatively as the result of neoliberalism or the opening of opportunities for more participatory and inclusive democracy (Weber 2010b: 135).

While some broader factors shape policy in all sectors similarly (e.g. basic legislation, prevailing political culture, economic crises), it is also true that the practice of decision making, the balance of power and other factors that serve to define governance often vary in each specific policy

sector, such as cultural policy, education policy, or economic policy (John 2012). For instance, when examining the governance of cultural policy, a set of factors including decentralisation, privatisation, partnership and the coexistence of governments and arm's-length bodies (e.g. Arts Councils) serve to explain the specific ecosystem of actors and their relations (Čopič and Srakar 2012). Of course, the number and diversity of actors who intervene in the governance of cultural policy will also be determined by how the scope of cultural policy is defined in each particular territory and governmental approach – there is a close, two-way relationship between a narrow understanding of cultural policy as focusing on the arts and heritage and the prevailing role of arts and heritage stakeholders in governance processes related to it, whereas a broader scope of cultural policy (e.g. one that integrates aspects related to values or lifestyles, as well as interactions with education, health, social affairs or the economy) will go hand-in-hand with the engagement of a broader set of actors. Furthermore, the extent to which the realm of cultural policy is particularly open to recognising opportunities for a range of agents to take part is relevant. I will return to this issue later.

One final element that I would like to address to better define the understanding of governance concerns the multiplicity of settings where reflections on governance may be applied. In particular, governance may alternatively refer to decision-making processes within individual organisations (e.g. the role and membership of boards, and to what extent transparency is guaranteed) or to decision-making related to broader cultural ecosystems and the policies related to them (see e.g. Weber 2010b, Čopič and Srakar 2012). It is to the latter that I will devote my attention, hence my preference for referring to the 'governance of cultural policy' rather than other terms, such as 'cultural governance' or 'the governance of culture', which may lend themselves to confusion.

Drawing on Dessein et al.'s understanding of governance as a set of 'processes of social interaction involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes, based on values and principles such as local democracy, transparency, citizens' participation, cooperation and exchange' (2015: 38), I understand that governance here encompasses the values and principles that inform policy-making, the mechanisms that determine who takes part and who does not and under which conditions, as well as the nature and effectiveness of the procedures for deliberation, decision-making, implementation, evaluation and accountability.

Building on the ecosystemic perspective of culture and its interdependences with other areas of life examined in previous chapters, I understand that the spaces in which the governance of cultural policy takes place include both formal, institutional spaces and other deliberative and negotiation spaces which contribute, directly or indirectly, to decision-making in cultural policy. This could include, for instance, deliberative processes within organisations such as *Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris*, which through their action contribute to the shaping of the public sphere of culture in Barcelona and become actors in the system of decision-making and management. Finally, the governance of cultural policy is shaped by broader factors, including the position of culture as a policy object within the public sphere, as well as the wider position of the public sector with regard to societal concerns and the existence of democratic institutions (i.e. the 'macro-level' of governance, as per Weber (2010b)).

I would argue that this understanding of governance is profoundly political, in that it refers to fundamental aspects of social coexistence (as well as, ideally, also those that connect human

society with the planet) and interdependence, recognising the tensions, providing spaces for them to be discussed, and lead to effective decisions. It also has the potential to contribute to the preservation of a 'public sphere' which allows for public conversation and debate, as suggested by McGuigan (2003). This serves to address some of the critiques waged on the notion of governance, including Latour's perception of governance as a non-political, 'managerial' discourse which serves to evade fundamental political questions (2015).

The urgency of revising approaches to governance in cultural policy

That governance models need to be deeply reformed in the light of the planetary crisis is a common argument in a large part of the literature addressing climate issues, sustainability, and its myriad implications in many areas of life. This serves to highlight how only through negotiation and an in-depth transformation of relationships between actors can the tensions emerging in the New Climatic Regime be addressed. Discussing how to achieve prosperity that enables people to flourish within the limits of a finite planet, Tim Jackson has argued that '[governance] is needed if we are to chart a path between rival dystopias and find a sustainable balance between aspiration and constraint' (2017: 185). His reference to a balance 'between aspiration and constraint' seems close to the equilibrium sought, for instance, by Kate Raworth's 'doughnut economics' (2012) and the UNDP's latest reading of human development as comprising a combination of capabilities, effective agency to engage in decision-making and underpinning values related to the stewardship of the planet (Conceição 2020).

Yet what does this exactly mean in terms of governance? Carlos Moreno (2020) has called to revise governance paradigms, including by increasing the autonomy of cities and metropolitan areas vis-à-vis national governments, thus emphasising the centrality of urban spaces as well as the need for new multi-level arrangements. In a slightly similar, if broader, vein, Dutch policy and governance advisor Louis Meuleman has argued that current governance models fail to take advantage of the potential offered by cultural diversity, tend to be based on central top-down political solutions which are ill-adapted to the nature of sustainability challenges, and do not understand their complexity or 'wickedness'. To face this, he has suggested the need for a 'culturally sensitive metagovernance for sustainability', where 'metagovernance' refers to the coordination or combination of different forms of governance based around principles of locality, polycentricity, problem-orientedness and 'culturality', or the understanding of the values that shape sustainability and policy issues in a particular context (Meuleman 2013, see also De Beukelaer and Freitas 2015).

How can this be turned into specific approaches to governance? As I briefly mentioned in chapter 2, Eduard Miralles (2014b) described the governance of cultural policy as a composite of three dimensions, including 'multi-actor governance', referring to the relations between public, private and non-profit stakeholders and their collaboration; 'transversal', 'horizontal' or 'joined-up' governance, involving stronger relation between public bodies in charge of different policy fields (e.g. culture, education, economic development); and 'multi-level' or 'vertical' governance, which connects local, regional, national, and supranational levels of government, where they exist (see also UCLG 2015, Baltà Portolés 2017). These aspects can be connected to earlier discussions on the relation between culture and development (as seen in chapter 3), which allowed us to identify their implications in terms of governance and which gain further

importance in the context of adaptation and regeneration, although it also seems necessary to reconsider their meaning in this context. I will examine these different aspects further in detail in the next few pages.

5.2. Multi-actor governance: towards participatory governance and ‘self-government’

In line with a people-centred approach to cultural policy, ‘multi-actor governance’ may need to be understood as ‘participatory governance’, which, further to the interaction between actors, ‘enables citizens to enter decision making processes by building their capacities for the use of democratic instruments in order to transform institutions’ (Vidović and Žuvela 2018: 22). This also relates to Arnstein’s classic ladder of citizen participation (1969), which, moving from ‘non-participation’ to ‘citizen power’, identified three levels as being particularly significant from the perspective of rebalancing power between citizens and traditional powerholders. These include ‘partnership’, ‘delegated power’ (i.e. where citizens obtain dominant decision-making authority over a particular initiative) and ‘citizen control’.

In the cultural policy field, participatory governance amounts to ensuring that participation in cultural life is not limited to attending cultural activities, but also includes effective access to decision-making (Fribourg Group 2007, Baltà Portolés and Dragičević Šešić 2017, Jancovich 2017, Vidović and Žuvela 2018). Both Sen and Clammer have emphasised the importance of citizens’ effective participation in decision-making, particularly in contexts of societal transformation in which cultural practices may be threatened or evolve due to changing values and aspirations, and communities should have the ability to determine whether or not they want to maintain them (Sen 1999), as well as in order to design sustainable alternatives which connect the local with a ‘cosmopolitan spirit’ (Clammer 2016).

From a legal perspective, this approach is consistent with an understanding of cultural rights, which entails, among other things, taking part in the cultural development of the communities of which one is a member (Fribourg Group 2007, UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 2009). Key in this respect are both a consideration of the obstacles which may prevent some people from active participation, including socio-economic aspects as well as distance, disability and others (Baltà Portolés and Dragičević Šešić 2017), and the ability of institutions to be ‘enabling’, that is ‘sufficiently user-friendly that most citizens would think it worth the effort and reward in terms of impact’ (Fishkin 2018: 209).

Given that participatory spaces have frequently had a consultative status and been perceived as not being very effective in translating the results of debates into actual policies (in what would sit at the middle stages of Arnstein’s participation ladder (1969)), community activists in Barcelona have suggested that the focus on participation should move towards one of ‘self-government’ (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). This would sit between Arnstein’s ‘delegated power’ (where citizens achieve dominant decision-making authority over a plan or programme, while still sharing seats and responsibility with public officials) and ‘citizen control’ (where participants or residents can govern a programme or an institution, and be fully in charge of policy and managerial aspects) (Arnstein 1969). While Arnstein’s ‘citizen control’ assumes very limited involvement of public authorities, debates in Barcelona take place in a context in which the prevalence of a public policy framework is assumed. Therefore, even if civil society

organisations, participants or residents may be in charge of some policy and most managerial aspects here, broader responsibilities are shared, with local authorities being particularly significant in terms of funding and the provision of a legal framework.

Participation of this kind may be exercised through civil society organisations, which have often been seen as key to the quality of democracy (see e.g. Tocqueville 1840, Putnam 2000). Yet it has also been argued that participation is no panacea, as illustrated by the existence of civil society groups whose practices infringe human rights (Chambers and Kopstein 2001). Therefore some prerequisites are necessary, including respect for the ‘value of reciprocity’ – that is, the recognition of other citizens, whether or not we agree with them, as ‘moral agents deserving civility’ (ibid.: 839). The emphasis on reciprocity as key to effective, democratic participation is interestingly close to that which is necessary to move towards a more interdependent understanding of our place on the planet (Hage 2017).

In this respect, small-scale governance structures, such as those represented by community-led management, could operate as microcosm of the kind of reciprocal relations which are necessary at a larger scale, something which reinforces the importance of local developments in terms of negotiating the tensions of sustainability. It also serves to stress the need for some shared values, such as those of grounded cosmopolitanism (De Beukelaer 2019), in the terms I discussed in the previous chapter. One important question here, to which I will return in the next chapter, is to what extent participatory forms of governance in cultural policy may progressively contribute to strengthening values of reciprocity and mutuality, in what public policy studies have termed a ‘policy feedback’ effect (Mettler and SoRelle 2014).

While multi-actor governance frequently rests on the assumption that public, private and non-profit actors have aims and roles that are different, but which can complement one another, participatory processes may allow the fostering of shared values and principles and ultimately make the legal status of agents a less determining aspect. This should be reflected in governance approaches. In Barcelona, for instance, the City Council has expressed an interest in making different management models (i.e. direct public management, subcontracted management, community-led management of public-owned facilities such as *centres cívics*) converge at least in the objectives, values and results that they aim to achieve (Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2018). This could involve, for instance, setting common aims around communities’ engagement among Barcelona’s current network of 52 *centres cívics*, regardless of their management model: as of 2014, 22% of them were managed directly by the local government, 63% by private companies under public contracts, and 16% through civic management and similar models; overall this amounted to a significant increase in the management by private companies since the late 1990s (Sánchez Belando 2015).

Some of the people connected to the City Council whom I interviewed while preparing this thesis argued that, if priority is given to the quality of processes (e.g. in terms of consulting with communities and involving them in decision-making and priority-setting), some processes managed by the local authority, or indeed by private subcontractors, could qualify as community-led management, whereas some processes managed by non-profit organisations, when not espousing such values and fulfilling those functions, may not qualify as such.³² There remains, however, a tension between the local government’s aim to homogenise approaches to

³² Based on the interviews with Albert Martín, 19 March 2021; and Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

management, regardless of the nature of the agents entrusted with this task, and community activists' emphasis on that which makes community-led management distinctive, including the aim to strengthen communities' role as a political subject (engaging them in 'self-government', as outlined earlier), and the fostering of culture as a common good, which is less of a priority when public or private stakeholders are in charge of management (Ojeda and Urbano 2014, Grup de treball Desbordes de la cultura 2017).

5.3. Transversal governance: towards a more systemic approach

Considering now the second of Miralles' three dimensions of governance, I would argue that 'transversal' or 'joined-up' governance needs to move towards a more 'systemic' approach, which is better suited to exploring interdependences and recognises the need to combine and connect different areas of knowledge and policy response. Hawkes' proposal of a 'cultural framework' that defines the values and aspirations to be adhered to by public policies other than culture (2001), and similar proposals made by Teixeira Coelho (2009), to which I referred in chapter 3, may be a good example of one such 'systemic' vision. Ultimately, aspects related to the interdependence between different areas of social life, care for one another and the planet, and a global frame of action, should inform approaches to public policy holistically and form the basis through which collaboration across governmental departments could evolve. Again, progress in this respect rests not only on changing policies and strategies or organisational arrangements, but also on addressing values and ways of working, which serves to highlight the comprehensive nature of governance processes.

An interesting example in this respect is the progressive collaboration between the departments in charge of culture and education in the Barcelona City Council. The 2006 cultural strategy, *New Accents*, devoted one of its ten 'structuring programmes' to the relation between culture, education and proximity, with the aim of '[broadening] citizens' opportunities for initiation into cultural practices of all kinds... as a means of individual and collective expression.' (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 31), reflecting elements drawn from cultural rights as well as from the Agenda 21 for culture. Among the specific projects foreseen in this area was increased coordination between educational and cultural facilities. Work in this area has developed slowly but steadily, as illustrated by the 'Creators in residence' scheme which fosters artist-facilitated workshops in high schools. First launched as a pilot project in 2009, it has become a permanent programme, progressively involving more schools, students and artists (Giner i Camprubí 2014).

The resulting collaboration between the local government departments in charge of culture and education (Giner i Camprubí 2019) led to the adoption of a policy document setting the basis of a joint local policy on culture and education in 2018, a relatively rare case in which shared policy goals were established, including in terms of reducing inequalities in the right to take part in cultural life (hence with a significant rights-based approach), promoting equal opportunities in access to cultural education and progressively developing an integrated notion of education and culture (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018). Among the steps in this respect is the understanding of schools as venues where cultural expressions are created and of cultural facilities as learning venues, in what may be seen as an example of Moreno's call for public spaces whose uses can be maximised by diversifying their functions (2020), as well as Sennett's focus on synchronic spaces (2019). There is also here a broader, more systemic understanding of the context in which

access to culture takes place, somehow related to the systemic understanding of cultural opportunity proposed by Gross and Wilson (2018).

More recently, a joint directorate for culture and education in neighbourhoods, which connects ICUB and the City Council's educational department, has been established with the aim of advancing the joint local policy in these areas designed in 2018. Ultimately, there is an aim to merge ICUB and the local government's educational department.³³ The long-term development of the initiative is quite significant as regards the ability to connect policy goals, specific schemes, structures and staff, leading to the emergence of a shared and systemic internal culture.

5.4. Multi-level governance: connecting with the global

The third dimension in Miralles' governance framework (2014b), multi-level governance, which refers to the relations between different levels or tiers of government, should involve a more integrated perspective on how the local, national and global relate to one another. As I have outlined in previous chapters, this multi-level perspective involves acknowledging the frictions, but also the mutual dependence between different geographical and political levels: how deliberation and decision-making at the local level need to integrate a global frame of action, and how global issues are experienced and may lead to mediation processes at the local level, with each level somehow being incomplete and closely intertwined with developments at other levels. Ultimately, this responds to the understanding of 'multi-level' or 'multilayered' governance as engaging 'a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors ... at different levels of territorial aggregation' (Schmitter 2003: 72). Multi-level governance has often been referred to as an 'ideal' arrangement (Scholten 2016), the result of always-changing conditions but also an evidence of the need for forms of mutual recognition and dialogue between levels of government. The 'ideal' nature could apply to the other two dimensions of governance as well, as both changing conditions and evolving tensions and potentials for collaboration raise new challenges and make continued negotiation necessary.

As discussed in the previous chapter, adopting a multi-level lens is necessary in a context in which the encounter between the global and the local generates friction. From a public policy perspective, adopting a multi-level approach to governance also involves recognising the limits of sovereignty and territoriality as traditionally understood, something which is valid both for nation-states (Sassen 1996, Steger 2017, McGrew 2020) and, if perhaps less visibly, for cities and other local communities. Indeed, while these are the places where direct participation in decision-making is easier and where decision-makers can more directly listen to citizens' demands and provide pragmatic responses (Bauman 2003, Barber 2013), their boundaries are frequently blurred. The latter point is illustrated by metropolitan areas and megalopolises which raise more complex policy issues and question the ability of individual local governments to address them comprehensively (Moreno 2020) – as the case of Barcelona and its two-tier metropolitan agglomeration devoid of adequate governance spaces shows.

In the cultural sphere, 'transcultural flows', that is the multiplicity of physical and virtual exchanges and influences which shape cultural life in any given context (Robins 2006), 'transterritorialisation', in which forms of local rootedness are combined with global cultural

³³ Interview with Daniel Granados, Cultural Rights Delegate, City of Barcelona, 10 May 2022.

interdependence (Néstor García Cancilini, interviewed in Greeley 2018), and ‘hyperculture’, that is the emergence of cultural spaces which transcend physical location and which embody the overlapping between local and global processes (Han 2018), mean that governing cultural policy needs to integrate an awareness of, and somehow an engagement with, multilevel influences and the tensions and limitations that derive from them. The challenge is how to make this multilevel set of cultural influences reflected in governance spaces.

Neighbourhoods as laboratories

One partial response to this emerges in the exploration of neighbourhoods as laboratories in which to test alternative approaches (Landry 2014, Grup de treball Desbordes de la cultura 2017), which exemplifies the relative ‘autonomy’ of local spaces (Miró i Acedo 2018) to which I referred in the previous chapter.³⁴ The strength of small-scale developments, including in terms of generating trust among participants, easily settling issues requiring attention and increasing accountability, has been emphasised by Eric Klinenberg (2018). In cultural terms, cultural managers and activists Helena Ojeda and Xavier Urbano have contrasted the ability of community-led management to enable locally-rooted processes of cultural expression in Barcelona with the artificial, ‘transgenic culture’ which may be typical of top-down cultural processes initiated by centralised governments or private concerns (2014: 295). There are some resonances here of Jon Hawkes’ reference to cultural authenticity, as that which exists when ‘the cultural manifestations *in* a community have a direct relationship with the culture *of* that community’ (2001: 15, emphasis in the original). Advocates of community-led management may argue that it is through small-scale governance mechanisms such as engagement in managing community facilities that cultural authenticity can be preserved, while acknowledging that this is a space of tension, where neither the risk of increasing homogenisation which Hawkes opposes to authenticity nor the imposition of ‘transgenic’ cultures can easily be overcome.

A precondition for this could be the affirmation of neighbourhoods as ‘significant and specific social settings’, where collective processes are built, articulated through their own social relations and the self-consciousness of community life, with a specific identity and memory, as well as its own dreams of transformation – akin to the late urban sociologist Robert E. Park’s equation of neighbourhoods as communities (Miró i Acedo 2018: 61; my translation). Providing such communities with formal opportunities to engage in deliberation and decision-making seems consistent with the late US political economist Elinor Ostrom’s argument that communities are savvy as per their social ecologies, and the related attention to ‘situated’ or ‘local’ knowledge, which can enrich governance and management processes (Klinenberg 2018, La Hidra and Artibarri 2018, Rodrigo 2020). It is also in line with Moreno’s identification (2020) of active citizen participation as important to the development of decentralised, 15-minute cities.

³⁴ Of course, the local scale (cities, districts, neighbourhoods) can also be a laboratory to test processes that are adverse to sustainability and adaptation, such as gentrification, cf. (Ojeda and Urbano 2014)

Yet frameworks that connect neighbourhoods with other levels remain necessary

However, given the recognition of how deeply embedded multi-level issues are in addressing questions related to sustainability, adaptation and regeneration, the question of how developments at the neighbourhood, district or small-community level can be connected with broader, city-level governance processes (and beyond) remains central and is not easy to answer. For, as suggested by Richard Sennett (2019) by way of Kant, cities are inevitably ‘crooked’ – that is, diverse, unequal, asymmetric, complex, contradictory. That tension becomes apparent in the negotiations around community-led management models in Barcelona – by bringing together a set of processes emerging in individual neighbourhoods and districts (particularly Nou Barris, Sant Andreu, Sants and Sarrià) which aim both to retain autonomy and to generalise a city-level approach, yet resent the city government’s alleged efforts to ‘appropriate’ tools developed together, as well as the risk of city-wide policies being imposed which limit communities’ ability to develop in their own terms.

In keeping with the frictions that emerge in multi-level settings, other tensions between neighbourhoods and city-level developments are visible in Barcelona. They include the perception that political discourses around the city’s development in recent decades have tended to obscure the important role of grassroots, citizen-led movements, particularly in the early years of democracy (Muñoz 2021), as well as the perception, among some community activists, that the local government’s understanding of culture focuses on the large-scale ‘cultural industries’, this being seen as contrary to the prevalence of more community-oriented cultural practices at neighbourhood level, which are very significant in terms of their social impact but are seldom made visible at city level (Monclús 2020).³⁵ Of course, along with the inherent tensions to multi-level relations, multi-level governance also relies on the understanding that there are potential complementarities between the different levels, that need to mutually connect.

It is also important to note that grassroots demands for increased community-led management are only visible in a few neighbourhoods, somehow illustrating Tim Jackson’s observation that, although participants in ‘intentional communities’ aimed at ‘living simpler, more sustainable lives’, such as transition towns and ‘slow movement’ initiatives, report better wellbeing, these remain marginal initiatives, whereas most of the population adheres to mainstream lifestyles (2017: 127-129). It seems, therefore, that a form of reconciliation between grassroots demands and city-level planning, which recognises internal diversity and aims to generate an enabling environment for communities to engage in decision-making where this is not happening, is necessary – something that is embodied in tension between citizen participation and public responsibility that I presented in the first chapter. In the interview I conducted with urban sociologist and former advisor for Citizen Participation at Barcelona City Council, Laia Forné Aguirre, she admitted that some neighbourhoods have stronger social and cultural capital and a tradition of citizen engagement which is less visible in others, while arguing that public policymaking involves acknowledging this diversity and actively working towards change where this is most needed, particularly once a political commitment towards fostering community-led management across the city has been adopted.³⁶

³⁵ Interview with Xavier Urbano, 3 November 2020.

³⁶ Interview with Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

This also suggests, firstly, that, in line with the understanding of governance as an 'ideal' process, always under negotiation, forms of community engagement can be placed across a spectrum of participation, and that it could be public authorities' duty to be aware of this and facilitate stronger engagement where necessary, with a view to more people-centred policies, and ultimately the opportunity to foster communities' 'self-government'. Secondly, it involves recognising that city-level governance processes should be able to recognise territorial diversity within the city – while retaining a focus on developments at the city level and facilitating openness in mindsets and engagement in cosmopolitan reflections, it could be necessary to take advantage of knowledge and experiences existing at the neighbourhood level (i.e. communities' knowledge of their social ecology as raised by Ostrom (1990)), something which spaces such as the Council of Culture, which has generally addressed developments at the city level only, may need to take into account. In this respect, the ability of artists and cultural operators to contribute as mediators across levels should also be considered. Thirdly, and more specifically from a cultural policy point of view, recognising difference as a valuable element in cultural life also involves engaging with the structural conditions that generate imbalances, questioning them and adopting measures to redress them (Vich 2014).

At the same time, 'multi-level' approaches should be combined with 'multi-actor', participatory approaches, and establish cooperative spaces where a 'cosmopolitan spirit', in the ways suggested by Appiah (2008), Beck (2016), or Clammer (2016), results from negotiation processes involving several stakeholders – where acknowledgement of the other and effective interaction lead to a more fluid and plural understanding of belonging. These interactions also imply that a multi-level approach should extend to levels below that of a local authority, including lower administrative tiers where these exist (e.g. neighbourhoods or districts) and fostering dialogue and collaboration between public authorities and other agents intervening at community level. This could be seen to embody the so-called 'principle of subsidiarity', which involves simultaneously the importance of encouraging individual participation and the cooperation of all citizens in the achievement of the common good, and encouraging decision-making closer to the region or problem at hand, while also recognising that higher-level authorities need to engage in those affairs that cannot be adequately handled locally (Evans and Zimmermann 2014). From the perspective of sustainability and adaptation, both the aforementioned mediating role of culture at the local level and the move towards people-centred approaches in cultural policy suggest the importance of local decision-making, while addressing global issues and adopting a global frame of action serves to recall that this needs to be combined with higher-level institutional spaces.

The three moves described above (towards governance models which are more participatory and involve self-government, address issues systemically and connect the local and the global) should reinforce one another, as observed in the case of how multi-level governance should involve more actors.

5.5. How the perspective of the commons provides inspiration on revising governance

An additional perspective on the need to revise approaches to governance in cultural policy in the light of sustainability and adaptation is provided by reflections on the 'commons', to which I

briefly referred in chapter 2. Elinor Ostrom defined 'common-pool resources' as 'a natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large as to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use.' (1990: 30) While the original formulation of these 'commons' was applied primarily to natural resources, a broader understanding of the 'commons' as 'a general term for shared resources in which each stakeholder has an equal interest' has gained precedence (Hess 2006). In this respect, the commons may be understood as an unstable, malleable social relation, rather than a specific set of things or assets (Harvey 2013, Miró i Acedo 2018), and this has been understood to include public spaces, particularly when they are appropriated by citizens in order to engage in collective, political action, as well as cultural assets, such as some cultural heritage items (Harvey 2013). A critique of Ostrom's definition of the commons also holds that, in addition to her view of the commons 'as a pool of resources to be managed', they could also be interpreted 'as an alternative to treating the world as if it is made up of resources' (Hine 2015: 32), thus challenging the prevalence of instrumental rationality. This critique is in line with an understanding of culture as a common good and of participation in cultural life as a human right, which should not be privileged primarily for its contribution to economic development.

Since the commons are dynamic, they are also under threat from a range of factors, including the privatisation of public space and the prevalence of an economic rationality which leads to neglecting the need for and value of diversity (Tims 2015). Yet seeing the commons as dynamic also means that they can be influenced by policy, as well as by citizen engagement and interaction. In this respect, given that I have earlier argued that the emergence of diverse narratives is a pre-condition for revising cultural policy in the light of sustainability, I would argue that cultural policy should actively strive to preserve public spaces which allow to visualise and to negotiate cultural differences, but also to identify that which exists in common.

Of particular importance here is the fact that finding suitable, locally-adapted governance frameworks is a fundamental question to discussions around the commons (Ostrom 1990, Ostrom, Cox et al. 2014), as well as the fact that particular forms of governance are inherent to the notion of the commons. At a very basic level, British researcher on the commons Charlie Tims has argued that 'a resource cannot be considered to be held in common unless there is a statute, a license or an agreement establishing it as part of the commons' (2015: 19). Further to this legal or custom-based arrangement, the existence of the commons is closely connected to the existence of institutions which enable self-government and 'commoning' (Miró i Acedo 2018) and which are 'systems of *production in community and at the same time they produce community*' (Helfrich in Soto Santiesteban and Helfrich 2015: 41; emphasis in the original).

There may be, therefore, a *feedback* effect through which some types of formal or informal governance contribute to strengthening forms of relation in the community, something which may be illustrated by examples of community-led management such as that of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris. Involving communities in decision-making and management is supported by Ostrom's finding that local communities often have a better knowledge of their social ecology than public civil servants, and long-term sustainability matters more to them than short-term benefit (Ostrom 1990, La Hidra and Artibarri 2018). A defining element here is the establishment of more balanced relations between public authorities and citizens, assuming a more ecosystem-like model which, by 'rejecting the idea of hierarchy... prevents the concentration of power in one party or entity, and puts community interests at the centre' (Mattei 2015: 46-47). This, as

exemplified by involving users of a cultural venue or service in its management, responds to the aforementioned trend towards participatory governance and ‘self-government’. It has also been interpreted as enabling forms of public management based on community participation rather than public-sector dependency (Ojeda and Urbano 2014, Miró i Acedo 2018).

‘Community balance’: an attempt to develop shared criteria based on the commons to foster community-led management

One illustrative example of the potential to establish common frameworks around community-led management, but also the tensions this entails, is the adoption of a model of ‘community balance’ (*balanç comunitari*), enabling groups involved in community and local management initiatives to self-assess their performance on the basis of the achievement of goals related to community participation and social benefit. This assessment framework, developed jointly by organisations engaged in community-led management³⁷ and the Barcelona City Council, builds on a previous model developed by the local Social Economy Network (*Xarxa d’Economia Social*, XES) to assess compliance with the social economy’s ethical standards, adding aspects related to community engagement and impact. A summarised version of the ‘community balance’ framework is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The ‘community balance’ self-assessment framework

A summary of topics and items.

Level	Topic	Items
Organisation	Membership	Total membership, board members, employed staff, volunteers, etc.
	Economy	Total salary costs, total budget, destination of benefits, etc.
	Equality and democracy	Members’ and staff participation in the drafting and approval of annual action plans and budget, gender balance in leadership roles, salary equality, transparency of data, staff diversity, adoption of measures to foster equality and non-discrimination, etc.
	Environmental sustainability	Availability of an environmental policy and related measures in energy and water consumption, paper consumption, waste prevention and collection, mobility, etc.
	Social engagement and cooperation	Collaboration with other networks and projects engaged in social transformation, use of ethical banking, procurement of goods and services from social economy or non-profit organisations, etc.
	Quality of employment	Adoption of measures to ensure health and wellbeing in the workplace, contribute to workers’ training and professional development, attention to work-life balance, etc.

³⁷ A set of organisations including Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, Casa Orlandai, Ateneu L’Harmonia, L’Arnau Itinerant and others in Barcelona and its surrounding areas established the Network of Community Spaces (*Xarxa d’Espais Comunitaris*, XEC) in 2016. This became later a loosely affiliated group to XES, the Social Economy Network. Community balance was developed mainly by XEC activists, under the aegis of XES, and the Barcelona City Council, and its development and implementation have received advice from XES.

Project	General description	Self-assessment of project implemented, its achievements and outstanding challenges
	Local rootedness	Collaboration with other organisations and networks in the surrounding area, participation in formal and non-formal representative bodies (e.g. district councils, working groups, etc.), participation in major neighbourhood activities (e.g. local campaigns, traditional festivities, etc.), mechanisms existing to identify local needs (e.g. meetings, surveys, public debates, etc.), etc.
	Social impact	Number of users, voluntary work, contribution to local networking (e.g. establishment of networks, promotion of campaigns, training activities, support to other organisations, etc.), contribution to community-oriented behaviour (e.g. timebanking, consumption cooperatives, etc.), etc.
	Internal democracy and participation	Decision-making mechanisms (types of deliberation and decision-making forums, frequency of meetings, participants, etc.), diversity (e.g. members' representativeness vis-à-vis intersectional diversity, measures adopted to foster diversity in decision-making spaces, etc.), transparency (e.g. public dissemination of relevant information), participation (e.g. mechanisms to enable beneficiary groups to engage in deliberation and decision-making), etc.
	Care for people, processes and the environment	Availability of mechanisms to foster collective sustainability (e.g. training, care spaces, play spaces, measures to prevent gender violence, etc.), measures to enable access for people with disabilities, measures to manage environmental impacts (e.g. energy efficiency, circular economy, green roofs, etc.), economic sustainability, etc.)
	Responses to COVID-19	Types of measures adopted in the context of COVID-19, who's been involved in taking them, compensation mechanisms for non-permanent staff and contractors, new needs identified in the surrounding area, etc.
External assessment		Further to the self-assessment items outlined above, external collaborators, partner organisations and individual participants are also invited to assess aspects related to local rootedness, social impact, internal democracy and participation, and care for people, processes and the environment.

Source: own elaboration, on the basis of (Xarxa d'Economia Social 2020, Xarxa d'Economia Social and Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020)

From the perspective of community activists, the community balance framework serves to assess intangible aspects such as local rootedness, social impact, internal and democratic participation, care for people and the environment, etc. that matter to organisations and to the broader community but which have frequently been neglected particularly in assessment and accountability frameworks, where quantitative assessment and economic efficiency have tended to prevail (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018, Xarxa d'Economia Social and Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018, Xarxa d'Economia Social and Ajuntament de Barcelona 2020). From the City Council's perspective (or at least some sections in the City Council), this can enable to move from a focus

on *economic* efficiency (embodied in the subcontracting of private companies to provide public services) to one of *social* efficiency, recognising the public value and social impact of entrusting public management to community groups, because of its contribution in terms of democratic quality and self-government (Direcció de Democràcia Activa - Regidoria de Participació i Districtes [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2016).

In a similar vein, tools such as community balance may allow the local government to assess community-based processes on the basis of, to use Marxist terms, their 'use value' rather than the 'exchange value' which is typical of relations with the private sector and which, by default, has been transferred to public authorities' relations with all other agents, including community groups (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). This is in line with the commons' understanding of the world as more than a set of resources (Hine 2015), and that aspects such as care for others and for the planet should be valuable as well, thus avoiding being trapped into the 'economic reductionism' which is typical of many contemporary relations, including cultural policies driven by a focus on the 'creative industries' (O'Connor 2022).

The broad set of topics addressed interestingly adopts an interconnected view of aspects related to sustainability (including e.g. care for the environment, inclusion of disadvantaged groups and a focus on people's effective participation, use of alternative economic mechanisms, etc.), while leaving aside cultural aspects such as diversity in the contents of activities and the balance between traditional and contemporary culture. In particular, a more 'cosmopolitan' vision could be necessary. In this respect, I would suggest that it fails to resolve the 'local ownership vs. diversity tension', by placing more emphasis on ownership than on recognising the need for exchange with the outside and acknowledging the cultural diversity that is inherent to most local communities today. Promoters have suggested, however, that specific items could be added to enable more precise assessment in some areas, such as cultural facilities (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021), and this could provide space to examine implications in terms of cultural diversity.

The community balance framework has been tested since 2019, with amendments introduced thereafter, and its inclusion in evaluation reports by community-oriented organisations receiving public funding, such as facilities implementing community-led management, is being considered.³⁸ It is expected to be formally adopted by the City Council and integrated in reporting and accountability mechanisms soon. One of the aspects that may need to be addressed in this context is the workload involved in fully answering all items, which is challenging to small organisations, although shorter versions of the framework have also been made available.³⁹ Other challenges include the fact that it seems more suited to organisations managing venues than other types of community-based projects.⁴⁰

From the city-level governance perspective, the community balance framework, which has developed through collaboration between public authorities and community groups, is expected to be overseen also through a public-civic partnership, involving the City Council and members of XEC and XES. This is significant in that the evaluation requirements established by public authorities have been co-designed with community groups, in a 'horizontal' manner (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). They also serve to broaden the perspective on the set of goals

³⁸ Interviews with Javier Rodrigo, founder of Transductores and member of L'Arnau Itinerant, 25 November 2020; and Mariona Soler, member of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris and XEC, 25 January 2021.

³⁹ Interview with Mariona Soler, 25 January 2021.

⁴⁰ Interview with Albert Martín, 19 March 2021.

of publicly-funded organisations, towards aspects that concern social and environmental sustainability as well as democratic and diverse participation, and which are closer to the type of approaches informed by sustainability, adaptation and regeneration that are necessary today. There is, however, still limited integration of cultural aspects when devising these tools.

Overall, moves towards strengthening community-led management exemplify progress towards more balanced multi-actor governance and, through tools such as the community balance framework, also embody, to some extent, governance informed by holistic, interconnected thinking, which can lead to a recognition and appreciation of the commons. What is interesting here is that there is some form of transformation both in the nature of the process leading to the adoption of the framework, which involves collaboration and the merging of languages and expectations between public and civil society actors, and in the establishment of a tool based on a set of 'situated' practices which can then be generalised through local government action.

This remains, however, lower-level governance, which has not yet entered the more formal governance spaces nor become very visible at the higher-level decision-making stage. The failure to integrate this in formal policies, as well as to make community-led management a core component of local strategies is due partly to the doubts held by the City Council's legal advisory teams there, as well as the fears that the move could generate public criticism, including in the media, if adopted at a more formal level.⁴¹ This raises issues about the potential to effectively insert change in governance models and how everyday practices may come into collision with legal frameworks, something which I will explore in the next chapter.

The multi-level dimension is somehow visible in the combination of negotiations at district and at city level, as well as the implicit set of reflections on how community developments relate to global issues including environmental sustainability and capitalism, but this remains largely a neighbourhood-based tool. Addressing multi-level realities may require processes of articulation involving the city government, other metropolitan authorities, and well-structured civil society organisations.

This serves to highlight the governance of cultural policy as a site reflecting the multiple agents and tensions that come to the fore in a context of sustainability and adaptation. This is far from a simple process – some of the frictions emerging will be analysed in the next sections.

5.6. The 'politics of listening': to what extent can governance spaces foster relations of mutuality?

In her 2017 book *The Politics of Listening: Possibilities and Challenges for Democratic Life*, sociologist Leah Bassel explores the 'micropolitics of listening' as a social and political process, that can create a responsibility to 'change roles of speakers and listeners and thereby disrupt power and privilege' (Bassel 2017: 3-4). In her view, the politics of listening has an intrinsic value, by recognising the other and countering exclusion. Methodologically, listening involves assuming the interdependence of speakers and listeners, who are incomplete without one another; establishing horizontal relations that enable mutual recognition; and exploring everyday politics, or 'micropolitics' 'through which new spaces of narrative exchange can be created, to make areas

⁴¹ Interviews with Albert Martín, 19 March 2021; and Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

of life politically relevant rather than part of market functioning' (9), something that resonates with initiatives such as 'community balance' and its aim to foster an understanding of community and public value that go beyond economic efficiency and integrate more holistic perspectives. Bassel's analysis focuses on a set of areas where new narratives are created and can enter public space (e.g. citizen journalism, relations between different civil society movements), in what in my view constitutes a broadening of the spaces of governance towards the informal and grassroots sphere where deliberation around themes of public interest takes place.

Indeed, a politics of listening is visible in spaces such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, a 'microspace' where new narratives are generated that make peripheral spaces politically relevant. This and other community-led management initiatives enable a certain 'political equality' by allowing 'the unheard [to] seize the speaking role and place the injunction to listen on different terms on the powerful' (Bassel 2017: 54). In so doing, 'the nature of conflict and of power relations can be clarified identifying more sharply what is at stake' and '[equality] is enacted through speaking on one's own terms with the possibility of being heard in a less distorted way' (63-64). The fact that these microspaces may later inspire city-level policies, through the recognition of community-led management and the adoption of community balance, for instance, suggest that this is not merely tokenistic participation, to use one of Arnstein's terms (1969).

Further to the *repoliticisation* of certain spaces, Bassel's analysis also emphasises the potential of processes of listening to strengthen relations of mutuality, '[recasting] the mutual 'Us' that is to be created, away from the recognition of state and 'citizens' as separate entities (p. 72). At a micro level, such relations of mutuality have emerged in the context of community-led management processes such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, through the establishment of committees and working groups which report to one another in transparent processes and where, while recognising the autonomy of each group, the ability of members to transition from one group to another is recognised.⁴² A different recognition of mutuality is also visible in some district authorities (e.g. Nou Barris, Sants-Montjuïc, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi), by acknowledging the potential of community-led initiatives to engage in the management of public venues and projects, despite the relative lack of confidence existing among quarters of the City Council's legal services as well as some district staff.

A *deep* politics of listening has generally been less visible at the city level, as the Council of Culture, despite its initial promise, has generally failed to generate a 'mutual Us' or a 'shared culture' bringing together the local government and its civil society participants. This somehow shows that generating a shared governance goes beyond the establishment of individual structures, even where these operate as spaces 'in between', which are neither completely part of the government structure nor completely autonomous from it, as in the case of the Council of Culture in Barcelona. Intangible aspects such as trust are necessary, and these may only emerge through explicit processes of negotiation, where, as suggested by Bassel, 'the nature of conflict and of power relations can be clarified identifying more sharply what is at stake' (2017: 63). The elaboration of the 'community balance' framework can be seen as one such example, in which both tangible tools and structures and a common language are progressively emerging. Incidentally, the community balance also aims to open ways of looking at the reality which, to

⁴² Interview with Xavier Urbano, 3 November 2020.

again use one of Bassel's phrases, operate far from 'market functioning' (2017: 9) and recognise other forms of public value.

The importance of 'open-ended' negotiation processes

What is interesting in processes of negotiation is that they are more likely to recognise the temporary nature of solutions and generate 'liminal', transition spaces. An interesting example is L'Arnau Itinerant, a process initiated by a group of cultural workers, historians, and neighbours in the area of Raval (Ciutat Vella) and Poble Sec (Sants-Montjuïc) to reclaim Teatre Arnau, an old, decayed theatre acquired by the City Council in 2010 with a view to establishing a community centre. Bringing together artists, migrants, young people and other agents in several participatory decision-making processes and arts events that connect local history and contemporary work, L'Arnau Itinerant is, as its name suggests, an 'itinerant' project, organising events in a variety of locations and testing different methodologies while the old theatre awaits refurbishment (La Hidra and Artibarrí 2018). It also stands out for its ability to gain support from several departments in the City Council, at both district and city level (including ICUB and the City Council's citizen participation department).⁴³ By operating as temporary projects, without a clear venue, and bringing together a range of diverse stakeholders in a process of discussion and negotiation, initiatives like this illustrate the ability of liminal spaces to enable encounters among those who would often not have met one another otherwise and to allow them to recognise that which they have in common (Klinenberg 2018: 167). At the same time, some form of effectiveness should be expected from participation, as there is a risk of decreasing motivation otherwise. In the case of L'Arnau Itinerant, this has taken the form of annual sets of activities which are held in a variety of venues, while the development of the theatre itself is still underway.

While it would be easy to argue that a lot of the energy that drives change in community-led management comes from civil society actors, Klinenberg (2018) has also emphasised, looking particularly at the US, that most of the social infrastructure that enables social capital and cohesion is either administered or supported by the public sector. This is also valid in Barcelona, as proven by *centres cívics* and other public facilities which are accessible and within close reach of citizens (as per Moreno's 15-minute city) involving community-led management. The example of L'Arnau Itinerant is also one in which civil society activists and local authorities have worked together and found a common purpose, despite their differences.⁴⁴ In this respect, public-civic partnerships are necessary, and they should translate into both specific structures and specific processes and ways of doing.

Cultural policies concerned with sustainability and adaptation should recognise the value of open-ended negotiation processes involving citizens and public agents and translate this into formal governance spaces where a true politics of listening can take place. Yet a governance based on listening involves more than the legal, formal establishment of deliberation or decision-making bodies. It also encompasses the nature of the dialogues that are established between participants, which should enable the emergence of an 'Us' based on recognition and mutuality. I would also argue, however, that such an 'Us' can be enriched and deepened particularly when

⁴³ Interview with Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

⁴⁴ Interviews with Javier Rodrigo, 25 November 2020; and Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

formal participation is complemented with opportunities for more affective exchange between participants (Terradas Saborit 2002, Baltà Portolés 2020b). In this respect, the ability of small-scale, grassroots arts and cultural projects to generate shared emotions among participants should not be underestimated, and serves to highlight the potential of connecting negotiation and decision-making with other forms of human interaction, as part of a more systemic approach to the governance of cultural policy (Kisić and Tomka 2020, Naeff, van Ree et al. 2020). Examples such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris and L'Arnau Itinerant, by combining participatory spaces and opportunities for community gathering around cultural activities, are good examples of this.

In Barcelona, it seems necessary to strengthen governance based on active listening at neighbourhood and district level, where the negotiation of differences and the integration of governance in local micropolitics seems more relevant, generating a form of 'collaborative or polycentric governance' (Bauwens and Iacone 2015: 140) and enabling situated mediation spaces. This should go hand-in-hand with the recognition, at the city level, that lower-scale, open-ended negotiation processes are necessary and are integral to the ways in which culture is governed across the city, recognising that cities speak in the plural (Sennett 2019). The specific shapes of multi-level approaches, and the ways in which the external recognition of governance processes based on active listening materialise, may however differ in other cities, as the ways in which micropolitics operate are highly contextual and situated, yet the essential nature of listening as a basis for governance seems important in all cases.

5.7. Who participates? What for? The critiques of participation and what we can learn from them

Long-term community engagement in the governance of initiatives such as Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris confirms the potential of participatory approaches connecting civil society and public authorities to develop more holistic forms of cultural policy, where aspects related to the sustainability of the local environment and of community relations (or 'the entire network of relations that create life and community', to use Escobar's phrase (2019: 3-4)) are integrated alongside cultural elements. At the same time, debates around citizen participation in deliberation and decision-making point to a set of critical aspects which need to be considered and which suggest that only some forms of participation, when certain conditions are met, may be conducive to cultural policies that are well aligned with sustainability and adaptation.

One of the significant critiques of participation concerns the representativeness of the bodies and spaces established to foster citizen participation, including district councils as well as the online and offline processes established since 2015 by the local government led by BeC. Some of my interviewees warned about the existence of a group of 'professionals of participation' who, because they had enough time and the knowledge required, would regularly take part in all sorts of participatory processes.⁴⁵ The implication here is that the existence of participatory processes does not necessarily increase the diversity or representativeness of voices. Indeed, in some cases it may contribute to establishing or reinforcing 'invisible clubs' (Rodríguez Morató 2018), particularly when effective opportunities for participation are primarily held by interested parties rather than a broader circle of 'lay' citizens, something that has been identified as a

⁴⁵ Interview with Carles Giner, 11 November 2020.

potential weakness of the participatory turn in Barcelona's cultural policy (Martín Zamorano 2018).

Another critique concerns the ultimate effectiveness of participation exercises. Studies both in Spain and elsewhere have argued that, often, discourses around participation have not effectively altered the balance of power in cultural policy, neither in terms of the contents of policies (Rowan 2020) nor in how public funding is distributed (Jancovich 2017), suggesting that participation may be 'illusory' (Guardiola 2020: ; my translation) or a 'performative exercise' (Rowan 2020: 365; my translation). Among the factors that may serve to explain this are some which relate to the nature of participants (with some having more influence than others, due to their power within the cultural scene (Jancovich 2017)), as well as others that relate to the legal framework and the policy approaches, including the use of administrative and legal arguments to prevent policy change (Rowan 2020) as well as the limited adoption in cultural policy of participatory approaches that have been used in other areas of public policy (Jancovich 2017). The latter element is also visible in Barcelona, as areas like urban planning have been more open to involve citizens than ICUB; where participation is primarily restricted to the Council of Culture, dominated by cultural organisations rather than citizens. Limited understanding of the internal functioning of public authority, and how the results of deliberation could be transferred to effective decision-making, has been identified as one of the factors that initially prevented BeC from translating its policy goals into specific measures.⁴⁶

These arguments can be related to some of the critiques traditionally waged on deliberative democracy, including the risk of processes being dominated by the 'more advantaged', there being a gap between the 'mini-publics' involved in deliberation and broader society, and lack of citizen competence in the issues being discussed (Fishkin 2018). US political scientist James Fishkin, on the basis of a set of studies and experiments conducted in several countries around the world, has argued that the key to broadening participation lies in making institutions more enabling, innovating them so that '... individuals have incentives not for rational ignorance and inattention, but rather to express their views, listen to others, become informed because they think their voice matters' (2018: 209). In this respect, increasing effectiveness and representativeness may reinforce one another.

Increasing attention to community-led management, where active listening in the sense proposed by Bassel (2017) takes place, a more diverse group of agents are represented, there are opportunities for affective relations alongside formal deliberation, and there is a direct connection between deliberative spaces and the effective implementation of activities, may be a positive step in this direction. Indeed, the ability for 'communities of practice' (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015, Sacco 2021) to connect work on the ground with decision-making at the policy level seems important. Such representativeness seems to be enhanced when liminal spaces or interfaces enabling an interaction between citizens, cultural professionals, bureaucrats and policymakers exist, something which seems easier in situated, small-scale processes at the neighbourhood level, as illustrated by some historic examples in Gràcia such as the Anella project in the early 1980s,⁴⁷ current developments around L'Arnau Itinerant, and elsewhere (Martín Zamorano 2018). These approaches have emphasised the need for permeable management and

⁴⁶ Interview with Javier Rodrigo, 25 November 2020.

⁴⁷ Interview with Esteve León, 2 December 2020.

decision-making spaces, where all members of the community may take part, and the need for a balanced relation between professional staff and other community members in decision-making processes (Ojeda and Urbano 2014). In practical terms, that interaction seems to work particularly well when some agents operate as facilitators or mediators, enabling an understanding of the processes being discussed and their importance.⁴⁸ At the city level, the Council of Culture is an example of where further innovation to make deliberative democracy representative and effective is still required.

5.8. Closing observations

This chapter has argued that the governance of local cultural policy should be revised by increasing effective opportunities for participation which involve a degree of 'self-government', combining a cultural rights approach, more enabling institutions, and the fostering of relations of reciprocity. It also seems necessary to move towards a more systemic approach to governance, which involves exploring areas of common interest between different policy areas and adapting structures and resources accordingly. Multi-level frameworks which connect locally situated approaches with reflections on the global, and which are able to recognise territorial diversity, are also necessary. The perspective of the commons, as illustrated by the process leading to the adoption of the community balance framework in Barcelona, can be an illustrative example of movements in this direction, but also of the limitations and difficulties emerging. Existing critiques on participation need to be taken into account, in order to establish mechanisms of governance which involve active listening, and which generate liminal spaces where communities feel that they are represented and able to effectively take part.

Governance emerges as an ongoing process, an ideal which is always under negotiation and 'in the making', crystallising in specific frameworks which are illustrative of the agents who hold the balance of power and how they relate to one another, and which can be renegotiated later. This process of constant negotiation also helps to observe underpinning inequalities and tensions. By observing them over time, we may be able to determine to what extent effective change can be introduced in processes of governance and decision-making, and what factors may enable this. It is to this question that we will turn our attention in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ Interview with Javier Rodrigo, 25 November 2020.

Chapter 6: The space for policy change in the governance of local cultural policy

6.1. Introduction

In previous chapters I have suggested that the understanding and effective design and implementation of cultural policy should evolve in the light of contemporary reflections on sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. One of the areas where this should be visible is the governance of cultural policy, including at the local level. Governance mechanisms should increasingly involve active listening and enable forms of community self-government, while encompassing reciprocity and collaboration. They should also integrate a more systemic understanding of how culture is interdependent with other spheres in life, and adopt a multilevel approach, whereby the local is placed in connection with the global.

In keeping with the understanding that governance is a process always under negotiation, as the last chapter suggested, a degree of change and malleability is necessary also to better adapt it to new challenges, such as those posed by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. However, this comes into tension with the fact that formal governance structures are frequently bound by rules which are defined by permanence. Because of this, this chapter aims to consider to what extent governance mechanisms can effectively evolve in line with these requirements. To this end, I will engage with literature, particularly from the field of public policy studies, that has considered the space for policy change, and will contrast this with evidence collected in Barcelona.

My approach to policy analysis here assumes the interrelation between administration, politics and policy, each involving several stakeholders, into what can be termed 'the policy process' (Shipman 1959: 544ff). It also understands, in line with most contemporary policy theory, that traditional approaches to the 'policy cycle' as a chain or 'round of events and phenomena' (Jones 1970: 120), moving from the identification of a problem, through a consideration of alternative solutions, to the choice of one particular approach which will then be implemented (i.e. a linear succession of policy design-implementation-evaluation), are not matched by reality.⁴⁹ Indeed, as suggested by Charles E. Lindblom (1959) and many others, limited information and the complexity of political problems prevent rational and comprehensive problem-solving in policy-making. Furthermore, the policy process tends to be continuous rather than follow a pattern of successive stages, with its different inputs and outputs overlapping (Weible 2014). At the same time, Lindblom's assertion that '[policy] is not made once and for all; it is made and re-made endlessly' (1959: 86), because new problems arise and contexts change, implies that there is

⁴⁹ However, seeing policy as a cycle remains a useful proxy for practical purposes, e.g. in policy advice and consultancy, as well as for clarity purposes elsewhere. This is present, for instance, in the definition of governance I am using throughout this thesis, which refers to the processes of 'deliberation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation' in cultural policy (see chapter 1). It is important to understand that these are interconnected and mutually dependent, rather than consecutive and clear-cut, parts of the policymaking process. For more on why the policy cycle has been criticised but remains useful in some contexts, see Weible (2014), especially pp. 8-9.

some room for policy change, even if change is often incremental, rather than radically departing from what existed before.

Whether and how public policy changes is a central theme in policy studies (see e.g. Cairney and Heikkila 2014, Weible and Cairney 2020). While a comprehensive analysis of how different schools have approached this question lies outside the scope of this thesis, I will draw on a range of contributions, including particularly ‘policy feedback theory’ (Mettler and SoRelle 2014), as well as the ‘advocacy coalition framework’ (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al. 2014), which I find particularly suited to my area of analysis in order to discuss the feasibility of change in the governance of local cultural policy. Combining different frameworks and approaches is consistent with recognising the ‘variety and complexity of the practice of policy making and implementation’, which calls for ‘an integrated framework’ where approaches ‘can complement each other and be part of the explanation’ (John 2012: 13-14). That variety and complexity is represented, among other things, by the diverse range of policy areas examined by policy studies (John 2012), each featuring specific problems as well as subsystems or ‘issue-specific networks’ (Cairney 2015), as would be the case with cultural policy.

In this respect, while public policy theories are useful, they will need to be combined with more specific insights focusing on cultural policy. In particular, and drawing on the distinction made by political scientist Paul Cairney (2015) on the basis of Paul A. Sabatier’s work on the advocacy coalition framework, I would suggest that cultural policy lies in between those policymaking environments which involve intensely politicised disputes and those that are treated as technical and involve mainly policy specialists, out of the public spotlight. While cultural policy is rarely in the media spotlight (except when major events or infrastructures are concerned, as would be the case of Forum 2004 in Barcelona, which I described in chapter 2), it involves a relatively complex subsystem of actors, including policymakers, bureaucrats, artists and cultural organisations, NGOs, some informal groups, and academics, each with their own, frequently competing, interests, as observations made in Barcelona illustrate. Furthermore, because cultural policy deals with ‘images and the assignment of values to objects, people and events’, problem-definition here is ‘fundamentally a political exercise’ (Barbieri 2015: 435), rather than a primarily technical one.

6.2. Applying the policy feedback theory to the governance of local cultural policy

What does policy feedback hold, and why is it relevant to me?

The policy feedback theory suggests that existing policies contribute to reshaping politics and, in this way, influence subsequent policymaking. This is an approach developed by some policy studies academics since the late 1980s, but which has similarities with arguments presented earlier by other authors. This includes sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s argument (1989), on the basis of the analysis of welfare states, that political behaviour is shaped by the content and structure of policies (Mettler and SoRelle 2014). Policy feedback theory involves seeing public policy not exclusively as the *outcome* of political processes but as an *input* into the policymaking process (Campbell 2019). It understands that policies, through their design, resources, and implementation, can shape the attitudes and behaviours of political elites and mass publics, as

well as inform the evolution of policymaking institutions and interest groups, thus potentially affecting subsequent policymaking (Mettler and SoRelle 2014). This is because, through particular distributions of resources (payments, goods, services) as well as the interpretive effects of policies (e.g. how policy decisions contribute to shaping norms and affect values and attitudes), policies may have bearing on the attitudes and behaviours of political elites and the civic capacity, predisposition and engagement of citizens (Mettler and SoRelle 2014, Campbell 2019). Examples of the latter would be how some educational policies contribute to building civic capacity by providing skills, resources and social networks to engender participation, whereas some welfare and incarceration policies may actually depress civic engagement (Mettler and SoRelle 2014). Therefore, from a perspective of civic engagement, the feedback effects of specific policies can be either positive or negative.

Some elements in this theory are relevant to my thesis from an epistemological perspective, and serve to explain why I devote particular attention to it. Firstly, at a very general level, policy feedback lies at the intersection of the field of policy analysis, which places emphasis on policy effectiveness, efficiency and impact, and studies of the policy process, which analyse the quality and nature of policy development in itself (Mettler and SoRelle 2014). In this respect, it combines potential policy application of its results with a consideration of the underpinning processes and values, and is therefore significant in considering how governance processes can be revised by integrating a more central concern with cultural rights as well as sustainability, and what can be the results of this.

Secondly, the policy feedback theory is interesting because it adopts a long-term perspective to how values, attitudes, procedures, and explicit policy mechanisms are interconnected. It is relevant in terms of analysing cultural policy because, further to seeing culture as the object of the specific policy field under study, it can also integrate an understanding that cultural aspects and particular 'political cultures' (i.e. the particular political orientations and attitudes in which a political system is embedded (Almond and Verba 1992 [1963])) can be conducive to specific forms of policy. In this respect, it is consistent with an understanding that cultural aspects can operate as mediating factors regarding the tensions brought about by sustainability, including by progressively adapting political mechanisms and policymaking processes. Ostrom's observation (1990) that the ability of some communities to develop effective governance frameworks around common-pool resources (e.g. rivers, forests) depends, among other things, on their ability to develop trust and the awareness of a common future may be seen as an example of how particular cultural aspects can be conducive to governance mechanisms that are better suited to an age of metamorphosis. In this respect, governance spaces could be seen both as an illustration of how a society assumes plurality and reflects it in deliberation, and as a framework where a culture of mutuality and reciprocity is further strengthened.

How this can be connected to cultural policy and governance

Policy feedback scholars particularly analyse four areas affected by policy and which can in turn affect politics and subsequent policymaking. These include the meaning of citizenship (i.e. who is a member of a given political community, and what this implies in practice), the forms of governance (understood here, as per Mettler and SoRelle (2014), as the type of administrative arrangements assigned to new policies, and the perceived legitimate domain of government,

among other elements), the power of groups (e.g. how public policies may provide incentives for some interest groups to be established, or fail to coalesce, and what effective capacities they will have), and the policy agendas and definition of policy problems (Mettler and SoRelle 2014).

I would argue that local cultural policies and projects can have effects on each of these four areas and, if they fulfil some conditions, can in turn influence subsequent policies that are better aligned with sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. I will explore each of them separately, examining some relevant evidence in each case:

- **Citizenship:** Eric Klinenberg (2018) has highlighted how libraries and other places and initiatives that enable human interaction and joint cultural and civic participation can contribute to fostering trust and civic engagement. These are important components of citizenship, particularly if we take citizenship to be a process that is shaped socially and culturally, and which is closely connected to public space and the work of civil society (Stevenson 2003). Community-led management processes in Barcelona, which have been seen to contribute to community empowerment through active engagement in deliberation and management (Font, Ojeda et al. 2015), could be illustrative of this. Several studies have also addressed the connections between participation in arts and cultural activities and the strengthening of social capital, through the ability to bring together people of different backgrounds and the fostering of trust, reciprocity and a community spirit (see e.g. Matarasso 1997, Taylor, Davies et al. 2015). There is further evidence that cultural participation, including that which is enabled by public policies, can contribute to enhancing aspects of citizenship which are particularly relevant from the perspective of sustainability. Examples of this include the understanding that human creativity reflects a practice of care, that is, of aiming to maintain, continue and repair 'our world', through the development of attentiveness to, and responsibility for, something (Wilson 2018), and that participation in cultural activities can enhance awareness of collective duties and foster more environmentally-sustainable behaviour, as evidenced by recycling practices (Crociata, Agovino et al. 2015). These approaches can be connected to some of the conditions which I previously identified as being necessary for cultural policies that are better aligned with sustainability, including by exploring interdependences with the social and environmental realms, focusing on people and their effective capabilities, and providing spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity.
- **Governance:** in Barcelona, examples like Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, which I presented in chapter 4, illustrate how continuous citizen engagement and negotiation with public authorities have led to developing specific arrangements which demarcate the role of the local government and of civil society. These developments have also subsequently informed policymaking at district and city level and served to acknowledge forms of community-led management. Progress towards the adoption of the 'community balance' framework, which I described in chapter 5, for instance, is the result of long-term negotiation between the local government and civil society representatives. Similarly, the establishment of the Council of Culture and the subsequent involvement of members of its Executive Committee in the allocation of

grants to cultural organisations has contributed to revising the boundaries of ICUB's action.⁵⁰ These can be seen as ways in which cultural policies, through the adoption of new forms of governance, engage more directly with conflicts and tensions and provide space for interactive pluralism and diversity, some of the conditions which I earlier identified as necessary in terms of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration.

- **Power of groups:** cultural policy, as other public policies, can contribute to formally acknowledging the role and status of specific groups, for instance by involving them in consultations or by allocating a particular function to them, just as it can deny or reduce the importance of other groups. Examples of this could include the reframing of cultural policy to include representatives of the cultural industries (Barbieri 2015), and the development of a local policy around the 'urban commons' or 'citizen heritage', which includes the community balance framework, through 'synergy and collaboration between activists with a foot in the local authority, community activists, local authority staff with a background in cooperatives and legal experts.' (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021: 28, my translation). The recognition of specific groups and actors resulting from these processes can serve to visualise what the advocacy coalition framework has termed a coalition, namely 'an alliance of bodies holding the same ideas and interests for the purpose of arguing against other coalitions within the same policy sector' (John 2012: 156). In the case of the 'citizen heritage' policy, 'other coalitions' could include those voices within local government that are reluctant to engaging community groups in decision-making and community-led management. In her account of BeC's first term in government (2015-2019), former Barcelona councillor Gala Pin (2022) describes the local government's efforts to reduce the policy leverage of established lobbies (particularly in sectors like housing and hospitality) while recognising other voices in the policy process. In cultural policy in particular, actors such as XEC and its constituent members have gained recognition in the process. Community-led initiatives such as L'Arnau Itinerant have also benefitted from the understanding and sensitiveness deployed by policymakers who had a background in civil activism.⁵¹ From the perspective of sustainability, these processes can be particularly relevant when they contribute to engaging with conflicts and tensions (e.g. by enabling cultural policy debates which involve divergent positions and actively engage with them), exploring interdependences (e.g. by involving groups which allow to explore the mutual connections between the cultural terrain and other spheres of life), focusing on policies and their effective capabilities (e.g. by granting new responsibilities to representative groups), and providing spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity.
- **Policy agendas and problems:** in Barcelona, the adoption of the Agenda 21 for culture in 2004, which embraces the connections between culture and sustainable development and a commitment towards cultural rights (UCLG 2004, UCLG 2015), has informed subsequent policy documents and initiatives. This was visible, firstly, in the way in which both cultural rights and the connection between culture and sustainable development were present in the 2006 cultural strategy, *New Accents*, and went on to inform subsequent initiatives in areas like the establishment of the Council of Culture and the

⁵⁰ Interview with Carles Giner, 11 November 2020.

⁵¹ Interview with Javier Rodrigo, 25 November 2020.

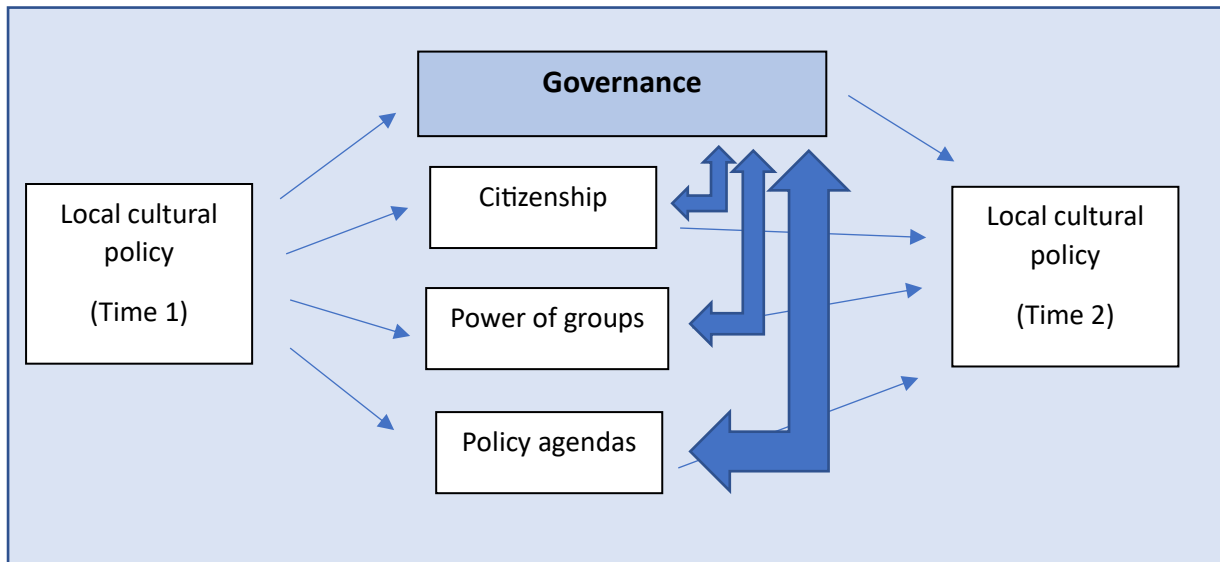
fostering of closer connections between cultural and educational policies. Secondly, references to cultural rights have remained central to cultural policy debates in Barcelona, as proven by the adoption of the Cultural Rights Plan in 2021 (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a) and the parallel adoption of a multi-party Cultural Pact which identified a 'cultural rights approach' as one of the key components in Barcelona's cultural policy (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021c). Both policy documents call for reinforcing the position of culture in local policymaking and placing particular emphasis on social inequalities which deprive some segments of the population from actively taking part in cultural life. Research conducted recently has also pointed to local cultural policies in Barcelona, such as the adoption of principles related to cultural rights, as one of the factors that have led to an increasing engagement of public and non-profit cultural organisations in projects that aim to foster social change (Bonet, Calvano et al. 2023). These examples illustrate well how a policy feedback can result from particular changes in policy agendas, that is how '[policies] created at earlier points affect, going forward, how social problems are understood, whether they are defined as matters worthy of public attention and government action, and whether they find a place on the political agenda.' (Mettler and SoRelle 2014: 163). It is important to stress that, even if some feedback effects such as those named above can be observed, particularly in how subsequent policy documents have been framed (i.e. what policy problems are identified, such as the affirmation of cultural rights as key to cultural policy), this does not necessarily imply that subsequent policies and measures have successfully addressed the problems (i.e. whether or not policy problems have been resolved, such as making cultural rights effective for citizens) – by providing a long-term perspective, the policy feedback lens allows to identify connections between policies at different points in time as well as to analyse policy effectiveness. This is a critical distinction when aiming to assess effective policy change. For instance, as outlined earlier in chapter 2, I would argue that, despite the discourse, the establishment of the Council of Culture has had limited effectiveness in providing a more interconnected approach to cultural policy and sustainability in line with the tenets of the Agenda 21 for culture. Similarly, by placing emphasis on the need to address inequalities, recent policy documents such as those mentioned above admit that, even if cultural rights have been part of the policy discourse for many years, its effective achievements remain modest. From the perspective of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, changes in cultural policy agendas can be relevant particularly when they involve broadening the scope of cultural policy and exploring interdependences with other social spheres, as well as by engaging with conflicts and tensions, and when this effectively transforms practices in these areas.

Although these four areas of policy feedback can be explored separately, they are also closely connected. In particular, policies which concern governance (e.g. the setting up of the Council of Culture and the adoption of measures enabling community-led management in Barcelona) are also determining to, and influenced by, the meaning of citizenship (e.g. who will effectively take part in governance spaces, how plural and permeable these are, and how trust and civic engagement are reinforced subsequently), the power of groups (e.g. how governance spaces and processes may provide opportunities for groups to be established and interact between

them, and in which way), and the policy agendas and problems (e.g. what remit is accorded to governance spaces, and to what extent they can intervene in defining policy agendas and policy problems). **Figure 2** aims to illustrate this set of relationships.

Figure 2: Relationship between governance and other elements of policy feedback inquiry

How governance relates to local cultural policy



Source: own elaboration, partly inspired by Figure 5.1 in Mettler and SoRelle (2014).

In terms of my research, the key question here is to what extent the integration of aspects related to sustainability, adaptation and regeneration in cultural policy, such as the ones that I proposed in chapter 3, can inform new forms of governance and, in turn, lead to a stronger realignment of local cultural policy with a context of sustainability. My approach implies a central position of governance, insofar as it is closely related to values and processes. In this respect, transforming governance approaches is critical to achieve change elsewhere, yet at the same time changes in governance cannot operate in isolation from other developments. The policy feedback approach can be useful to this end, not only by observing *formal* change in governance and policy but also by being able to assess *effective* change in the policies and measures adopted because of governance processes, something which the next section aims to examine.

6.3. To what extent can approaches to governance effectively change?

In chapter 5, I argued that, for cultural policy to be better aligned with sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, governance models should enable participation and ‘self-government’, move towards more systemic, holistic approaches, connect the local and global levels by operating as laboratories which address cosmopolitanism, and generate liminal spaces where communities feel that they are represented and able to effectively take part. The previous section has also

shown that cultural policy can have a 'feedback' effect which, by affecting citizenship, governance, the power of groups, and the definition of policy agendas and problems, transforms subsequent policymaking and aligns it better with sustainability requirements, and that governance mechanisms have the potential to be central vehicles for such transformation to take place.

However, this can only happen if the basic conditions for cultural policy aligned with sustainability are met – that is, if, in a process of feedback, governance enables, and is enabled by, cultural policies that engage with conflicts and tensions, explore interdependences, focus on people and their effective capabilities, address the tension between permanence and change, provide spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity and revise the scope of cultural policy. Furthermore, this needs to occur not only at the discursive level but also in effective practice, thus avoiding risks of moves towards participation which are primarily 'performative' or 'illusory' and which do not have tangible effects in policy terms (Jancovich 2017, Guardiola 2020, Rowan 2020). To what extent can we observe this in practice?

Governance mechanisms in Barcelona have changed, but only partly

In Barcelona, both the Council of Culture and the adoption of community-led management can be seen as attempts to revise approaches to governance by making them more participatory and representative. Each in their own terms, they recognise the ecosystemic nature of culture, involving more stakeholders in deliberation and decision-making than the frameworks that preceded them at city and at neighbourhood / district level. Both aim to be vehicles for making cultural policies evolve, seeing policy as a realm that should enable and react to changes in the broader cultural ecosystem, and thus recognising a potential feedback effect within governance.

The Council of Culture was established in the context of the City Council and ICUB's willingness to transform local cultural policy, following the perceived loss of policy direction epitomised by Forum 2004 (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a). The resulting Council embraced an ecosystemic understanding of culture by gathering multiple actors, though in a 'narrow' understanding of culture, equivalent primarily to the arts and heritage, rather than one that 'opens up' to other areas of knowledge and policy fields. Therefore, it does not particularly portray a systemic, holistic approach, despite the aim to address interdependences which was present in its by-laws (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). As a result, while it has contributed to enriching policy debates and, particularly in its early years, broadened the understanding of the governance of culture (e.g. by allowing civil society members of the Council to engage in major policy debates), its long-term effect in transforming policy is circumscribed to a few elements only, including the allocation of grants – which, though important, remain a relatively small part in the set of cultural policies implemented by the local government.

Steps towards community-led management, particularly in tools such as the community balance framework as well as the engagement of civil society organisations in the participatory running of public venues, draw on contributions from the social economy sector and explore interdependences, including by developing a framework of social value that considers social, political, economic, and environmental aspects. In so doing, they help to broaden the scope of cultural policy and involve stakeholders that have traditionally operated outside its remit, including neighbourhood associations, young people, families, and migrants, as cases such as

Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris and L'Arnau Itinerant demonstrate. The former example, developed over several decades, stands as a good example of how a 'political culture' of inclusive, active engagement and self-government can progressively be strengthened and influence policymaking at district and city level, as I described in chapter 4. For the time being, however, these remain small-scale developments, visible in some neighbourhoods but with limited effects elsewhere in the city, potentially pointing to a gap in higher-level policy to recognise and engage with diverse cultures of participation within the city and to help make civic engagement more structural.

These examples show that governance structures in cultural policy can evolve, in line with broader policy changes, and they can affect subsequent policymaking, including in areas that are relevant to sustainability. These changes provide evidence as to how some degree of transformation in governance can take place. At the same time, they also demonstrate that such changes are rarely comprehensive nor all-embracing of the conditions that would enable cultural policy to be better connected to sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. We can however identify some of the factors that may enable change, as well as the underpinning challenges to further change, as the next subsection aims to do.

What enables change, and what makes it difficult? An examination of how change happens

As I observed in the introduction to this chapter, policy 'is made and re-made endlessly' (Lindblom 1959: 86), partly because of the complexity of real-life phenomena. In this context, change is frequently incremental, introducing minor modifications in a context of relative continuity, because of the interactions between multiple agents and interests. Within this general context, drawing on the evidence analysed in earlier chapters, I will identify some factors that allow policy change to happen and examine their interactions with other factors that render change difficult.⁵²

Firstly, the interaction between the realm of politics, interests and networks that aim to influence policymaking and broader social, economic and environmental factors generates some 'windows' in which policy change takes place, followed by long periods of stability, as the 'punctuated equilibrium theory' has argued (Cairney 2011, John 2012). The set of changes that occurred in Barcelona's cultural policy following Forum 2004 may be an illustration of this. In a context which was perceived as critical, because of the perceived failure of Forum 2004 and its media visibility, which affected the broader image of local government (as exemplified by PSC's decision to replace the Mayor of Barcelona in 2006, a year before the next election), the existing

⁵² There is a preliminary, important factor that hinders policy change at local level, namely the fact that competences held by local authorities tend to be more limited than those of central governments as well as, at least in some countries, those of regional authorities. This can effectively limit the ability of local governments to design and implement policies that address the policy problems identified – for instance, in terms of regulating rental prices which would allow cultural organisations to remain active in several neighbourhoods in Barcelona, or adopting policies to foster gender equality. These examples were mentioned by Daniel Granados, the then Cultural Rights Delegate at ICUB, in the interview I conducted with him on 10 May 2022. He alluded to the tension between 'incumbencies' (i.e. the duties or obligations resulting from perceived policy challenges) and 'competences' (i.e. the actual ability to act on them), a combination of terms which has frequently been used by former Councillor and academic Joan Subirats – see e.g. Subirats (2015). The sound of both terms is relatively similar in Catalan (*incumbències, competències*). Cultural policy researcher Mariano Martín Zamorano (2018) has also stressed the issue of limited local government competences to address relevant policy issues and achieve related goals.

cultural strategy was revised and a ‘new framework for cultural policies’, based on the Agenda 21 for culture, informed the new strategy, *New Accents* (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a).

There was here a coincidence of political interests, new ideas (‘the building blocks of agendas’ (John 2012: 163)) and a coalition of agents who embraced the opportunity to introduce new policies. This reflected a ‘policy window’, as the moment in which the interplay between problems which require attention, policies as proposals for change, and political processes (‘such as election results and swings in the popular mood, [which] influence how the media and other opinion formers define public problems...’ (John 2012: 158) – something which the post-2004 context in Barcelona exemplifies well) give an impulse to the adoption of new policies (Zahariadis 2014). Central to the notion of ‘policy windows’ is the role of ‘policy entrepreneurs’, who propose solutions to the policy problems identified (John 2012). While the process that led to the adoption of *New Accents* and the subsequent establishment of the Council of Culture was more collective than individual, informed by a set of international dialogues that led to the adoption of the Agenda 21 for culture and operated as a background to the new strategy, thus nuancing the individual connotations of an ‘entrepreneur’, the political will of some key agents, including ICUB’s then managing director Jordi Martí, was essential here.⁵³

As the punctuated equilibrium theory holds, policy change is frequently followed by long periods of stability, as the relative continuity following the adoption of *New Accents* and the establishment of the Council of Culture would suggest. No cultural strategy as such has been adopted by the City of Barcelona thereafter, and only the Cultural Rights Plan adopted in 2021 (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021a) comes close to it. The Council of Culture has also remained largely intact, at least in its organisation, despite initial promises by BeC to broaden its membership and strengthen its decision-making capacity (Rius Ulldemolins and Roig-Badia 2023). This stability could be related to the fact that, as opposed to the post-2004 context, there has not been a perception of major ‘policy problems’ or crises in the cultural policy realm that required policy action thereafter.

Secondly, I would argue that, even in contexts of relative stability as those that followed the adoption of *New Accents* and the establishment of the Council of Culture (that is, following high-level policy decisions requiring formal decision-making), there is room for policy change in less visible, less formal levels. Indeed, cultural policy rarely achieves significant media visibility, something which, on the one hand, may limit the number of ‘windows’ in which major problems require attention, but, on the other hand, provides room to develop new approaches requiring less formalised procedures.

This distinction somehow reflects the distinction between ‘major’ and ‘minor’ policy change that some approaches to public policy, including the advocacy coalition framework, have used. Major change, involving a transformation of the directions or goals of a given subsystem (e.g. cultural policy), is generally provoked by external factors (e.g. crises or disasters, or an external shock). Meanwhile, minor change, which involves change in secondary aspects such as the means to achieve goals or the specific tools or procedures used, can be the result of different factors, including learning and negotiated agreement between different agents or coalitions (Capano 2009, Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al. 2014).

⁵³ Interview with Antonio Monegal, 17 December 2020.

In Barcelona, minor changes could be illustrated by the way in which the early years of the Council of Culture witnessed its Executive Committee broaden its sphere of influence, including by giving opinions on cultural policy developments at Catalan level and establishing selection criteria for the appointment of directors in public cultural venues, going beyond its functions as originally described in the Council's by-laws (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2008). This was also facilitated by the stability in external factors (e.g. continuity in political leadership at the City Council, and a certain consensus around public policy priorities), which was to disappear subsequently (the 2011 elections led to a change of majority in local government, whereas the impact of the financial crisis also implied a loss of consensus around cultural policy priorities⁵⁴).

Similarly, the development of approaches to community-led management and the adoption of the community balance framework have so far been implemented as a 'minor change', which draws on existing legislation (the 'civic management' model recognised in the Municipal Charter of Barcelona, as I explained in chapter 2) and existing tools (e.g. subcontracting the management of public facilities such as *centres cívics*). New approaches have been introduced through low-level policy documents and operational tools (e.g. self-assessment mechanisms) only, without recurring to new regulations. Both these examples illustrate the existence of 'coalitions of interest' involving politicians and non-politicians, with shared or compatible interests, who 'learn from policy implementation', understanding that '[learning] is a political process – coalitions selectively interpret information and use it to exercise power.' (Cairney 2013).

Major policies and programmes, such as the adoption of *New Accents* and the establishment and working of the Council of Culture, particularly in its early years, and the development of community-led management in the last few years, may be interpreted as reflecting the theories and beliefs of the coalitions promoting them (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al. 2014), including political parties, cultural organisations and professionals, and community groups.⁵⁵ As suggested by Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al., belief systems 'encapsulate the perceived causal patterns and relationships that shape the empirical world' and can be supported by scientific and technical information and explanations (2014: 192). This may be illustrated by documents such as the Agenda 21 for culture, in its connections between culture, sustainable development and cultural rights and its related calls for revising governance approaches (UCLG 2004), as well as the research reports and policy documents which have emphasised the value of community-led management approaches (Ojeda and Urbano 2014, Font, Ojeda et al. 2015, Direcció de Democràcia Activa - Regidoria de Participació i Districtes [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2016, La Hidra and Artibarri 2018, Xarxa d'Economia Social and Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018, Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021). Therefore, some form of policy change may take place even where this is not particularly visible.

Thirdly, what the observations above suggest is that, even though major policy change can take place at moments of high visibility, a long-term perspective is frequently needed to observe and assess policy change in further detail. This is due, drawing again on what the proponents of the

⁵⁴ Interview with Antonio Monegal, 17 December 2020.

⁵⁵ However, one of the difficulties in applying the notion of 'coalitions of interest' in Barcelona's cultural policy (and, I would argue, in many other cultural policy contexts) is that alternative coalitions to those which are implementing policy at one particular time are not very visible. This is to a large extent the result of limited public debate around cultural policy. Alternative coalitions, however, may become visible when changes in government or 'external shocks' generate windows for major or minor policy change.

advocacy coalition framework have suggested, to the centrality of knowledge and learning in policy change (John 2012, Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al. 2014), which requires long processes of adaptation.

A good example of this is the way in which cultural and educational policies in Barcelona have progressively been connected to one another, starting with the adoption of *New Accents* in 2006, which argued that '[connecting] culture and education is the main strategy for achieving integral development' (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a: 31), and leading to the establishment of a joint directorate on culture and education in neighbourhoods (2021), which is seen as the basis for the future merger of ICUB and the City's educational department.⁵⁶ A set of joint programmes, including 'Creators in residence', which involves projects facilitated by professional artists in secondary schools (Giner i Camprubí 2014, Giner i Camprubí 2019), policy documents to align goals in culture and education (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018), and research studies which have explored the linkages between educational levels and levels of access, participation and interest in cultural activities, connecting this to a cultural rights perspective (ICUB and Barbieri 2020), are some of the minor changes, generating feedback through learning and knowledge transfer, that are leading to a more systemic, transversal form of governance.

This example serves to suggest that long-term change results from a combination of changes affecting different components in the policy process (John 2012), including institutions (e.g. policy documents adopted, changes in institutional structures), networks (e.g. informal relationships between actors), external aspects (e.g. external crises that lead to reorient policy approaches) and ideas (e.g. discourses connecting different concepts), as well as their interactions. It could also illustrate how minor change may, at least in some instances, operate independently of changes in political leadership, as steps towards connecting cultural and educational policies have advanced, albeit at different speeds, throughout a succession of governmental terms involving different parties in office.

Fourthly, and partly related to the slow pace of change outlined above, as well as the understanding of governance as a set of processes which connect values, principles, and procedures, is the fact that transforming governance requires aligning change at both political and administrative levels. This includes the internal adaptation of 'administrative cultures', which often advance slowly, as opposed to the short-term nature of 'policy windows'. It is in keeping with my previous observation that policy feedback provides insight into the long-term nature of change, by understanding the connections between values, attitudes, procedures and explicit policy mechanisms and how cultural aspects and 'political cultures' are important here.

Analysing the development of a local regulation on the 'urban commons' in the Italian city of Bologna, a process which has some parallels with Barcelona's work around citizen heritage and the urban commons, researchers Michael Bauwens and Christian Iaione have emphasised that the transformation of governance models is 'quiet, not necessarily slow, but difficult and involves a continuous negotiation process'. This is partly because fostering comprehensive change in governance models is 'a cultural shift... a new way for us to relate to almost everything, from economy to society as a whole and to other people' (2015: 143-144). They have also emphasised

⁵⁶ Interview with Daniel Granados, 10 May 2022.

the importance of embedding change within the local government's civil servants, rather than focusing on decision-makers alone.

The difficulties encountered by proponents of community-led management in Barcelona, particularly in the face of objections put forward by the City Council's legal teams as well as civil servants in some districts, are a good example of this. As a document proposing the development of an 'urban commons' policy admitted '[there] is a certain tension between the community-oriented drive that the City Council aims to foster and which citizens demand, and the public administration's controlling / monopolist drive vis-à-vis the 'handover' of the management and use of public resources' (Direcció de Democràcia Activa i Descentralització [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2017: 83; my translation).⁵⁷ Its authors attributed this to the fact that the local government's administrative structure was not sufficiently flexible, and suggested that a change was necessary which acknowledged community-led management not as a 'handover' of public resources but rather as 'communities' inherent right to manage public resources through community-based processes' (Ibidem: 83; my translation). In some of the interviews I conducted, the tension between what could be termed a 'culture of control', illustrative of more vertical relations between public authorities and civil society organisations, and a 'culture of trust', involving more horizontal relations between them (with regard both to the fostering of community-led management practices and to the recognition of self-assessment based on the community balance framework), was also raised.⁵⁸ The progressive development of joint approaches to cultural and educational policies since the adoption of the *New Accents* cultural strategy in 2006 could be seen as an example of how long-term progress is being achieved in developing a 'shared culture' between different policy bodies and the staff involved.

Fifthly, change is possible when governance mechanisms recognise the open-ended nature of governance, as a process always in the making, as per the reflections on governance which I presented in chapter 5. In practice, this involves having relatively flexible rules, which can be adapted as circumstances change, enabling new participants to be involved and illustrating the ability of governance mechanisms to be 'enabling' and to integrate active listening, which mediate in contexts of friction. This echoes Gross and Wilson's suggestion (2019) that an ecological perspective on culture calls for governance mechanisms that keep participation and relationships open and critically revise procedures when there is evidence of closure.

In Barcelona, this has proven easier at neighbourhood than at city level. As explained earlier, both the Council of Culture and neighbourhood-based, community-led management processes can be seen as processes that recognise the ecosystemic nature of culture and operate as vehicles to make cultural policies evolve dynamically. Yet the Council of Culture appears to have lost some of its ability to represent the cultural ecosystem, as a focus on a narrow set of procedures (e.g. allocation of grants) has become increasingly disconnected from deliberation

⁵⁷ In this fragment, the 'City Council' refers to political representatives (i.e. mainly BeC, which had assumed political leadership in 2015) rather than the local government's bureaucracy (which is identified as 'the public administration'). Of course, the argument according to which 'citizens demand' a community-oriented drive could be attributed to the particular 'belief systems' of the coalitions promoting community-led management, as per Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt et al.'s (2014) aforementioned analysis.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Mariona Soler, Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, 25 January 2021; Albert Martín, 19 March 2021; and Laia Forné Aguirre, 16 July 2021.

spaces and the ability to effectively influence higher-level policy, to the extent that the Council's Executive Committee has called for a revision of its mechanisms and ways of working (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2021).

As I suggested in chapter 5, the ability to understand governance mechanisms as interfaces enabling an interaction between citizens, cultural professionals, bureaucrats, and policymakers, and connecting work on the ground with the policy level, in the form of 'communities of practice', emerges as a possible solution here, something to which I will come back in the next chapter. The development of the community balance framework, understood as a prototype undergoing successive tests, requiring the engagement of multiple agents (project managers and facilitators, citizens, external partners) and being developed in partnership with local authority representatives but somehow 'under the radar', as a 'minor policy change' free from a clearly defined legal and policy framework, may illustrate this. Again, this has been far from an easy process, as attested by the complex process of self-assessment it entails, the aforementioned tensions with legal experts within the local authority, as well as community activists' suspicion that the City Council may want to appropriate their tools and tailor them to its needs, somehow 'domesticating' processes that had relied on independence and autonomy in the past (Font, Ojeda et al. 2015).⁵⁹

Of course, the ability to influence governance spaces requires leaving aside some autonomy and engaging in compromise, given the interdependence which is inevitable today. To a certain extent, this also exemplifies the tension that is intrinsic to society, and one which cultural policy should feel more comfortable addressing. At the institutional level, it also seems to call for more flexible norms, in areas including who participates, under which conditions and how this can ultimately inform decision-making, thus recognising the open-ended nature of governance to which I referred earlier.

Overall, the five elements which we have examined point to the continued interactions between opportunities that enable policy change and factors which slow it down or render it difficult, because of the multiplicity of elements at stake and the endless nature of policymaking. They also prove, however, that policy change is possible, and that approaches to governance that aim to enable change need to operate at multiple levels and allow for the interaction between multiple agents.

6.4. Closing observations

This chapter has examined the feasibility of revising approaches to the governance of local cultural policy, to align them with the conditions that may enable cultural policy to remain relevant in the light of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. The policy feedback theory provides a framework to connect changes in governance frameworks with subsequent developments in politics and policy, with effects which, if the basic conditions for aligning cultural policy with sustainability are met, could be conducive to fostering sustainability. Because it considers both policy effectiveness and the quality of policy processes, it sheds light on the conditions under which governance processes based on cultural policy and sustainability can

⁵⁹ Interviews with Mariona Soler, 25 January 2021; and Albert Martín, 19 March 2021.

influence values and, in turn, generate behaviours and policies that are more adapted to sustainability.

This approach also allows to place governance frameworks as one element within a broad palette of policy tools, which have interconnected effects on one another. In this context, governance has a central position, because it helps to visualise the nature of the policy process, including its stakeholders and their relationships, thus having a symbolic importance, and because it can enable effective change in policymaking. However, it cannot operate on its own – it rather needs to interact with, and be supported by, other policies, including those that will allow to explore interconnectedness between cultural policy and other areas of life, as well as those that will help to address inequalities in access to and participation in culture.

Drawing on a combination of different public policy theories, to gain richness and depth in the analysis, the chapter has observed that change in governance occurs, but it is frequently a long-term process, combining visible, major policy changes requiring formalised adoption and less visible, minor and internal changes, resulting from learning and adaptation. There is friction between the factors that enable change and those that may hinder it, which results in a frequently complicated process. This also calls for establishing governance frameworks which are open and flexible, operate as prototypes and embed the assumption of interdependence between different stakeholders involved, to foster deliberation and decision-making processes based on mutuality and reciprocity.

Based on this, as well as the findings presented in earlier chapters, the next chapter will present proposals for revising governance approaches in local cultural policy, in the light of contemporary reflections on sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration.

Chapter 7: A framework for the governance of local cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has shown that policies can change at different paces, ranging from occasional 'major' policy change to more regular 'minor' policy changes, because of the combination of internal and external factors operating at different speeds and levels. It has also examined the interconnection between governance and policymaking, given the role of governance both in visualising and connecting a particular ecosystem of agents and its potential in terms of generating new policies. Based on the policy feedback theory, we have also observed how both governance processes and policy design can have bearing on subsequent political frameworks and policymaking.

Therefore, firstly, there is a potential for policy and governance models to evolve in the light of external factors such as sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration challenges, which are central to the issues addressed by this thesis. Indeed, these could be seen as the type of external factors capable of generating major policy change, although admittedly they have frequently been seen as relatively 'invisible' threats, and they have frequently been held aside from considerations in the field of cultural policy.

In any case, and secondly, the increasing number of crises resulting from the 'metamorphosis of the world' (Beck 2016) and the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, social, cultural and political phenomena in this context mean that the effects of the planetary crisis cannot be restricted any longer to the environmental domain and sectorial policies concerned with the visible effects of the planetary crisis only. They rather call for structural, systemic, all-encompassing policy responses, which affect cultural policy as well.

And thirdly, there is a potential for changes in the governance of local cultural policy to affect values, political cultures and ways of inhabiting the Earth, if cultural policy is realigned with the set of conditions that we identified in chapter 3 – namely, engaging with conflicts and tensions, exploring interdependences, an increasing focus on people and their effective capabilities, addressing the tension between permanence and change, providing spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity, and revising the scope of cultural policy. This should be understood as a process of feedback, in which changes in local governance models are informed by, and in turn influence, the revision of approaches to cultural policy, thus reflecting the aforementioned interconnection between governance and policymaking.

What this suggests is that, while changes in governance are complex and slow, policy windows for major change will open at different moments in each city or town, due to specific local circumstances and to the ways in which sustainability challenges enter local policymaking, reflecting the 'situatedness' of sustainability processes. Furthermore, minor change can also occur more frequently, often inadvertently, particularly if policy entrepreneurs (John 2012) are willing to foster it. In the light of these observations, and the evidence discussed in previous

chapters, this chapter aims to explore directions for a new framework for the governance of local cultural policy.

The propositions that I will present here do not aim to present a universal model, since adaptation to local circumstances will be necessary. However, the global nature of the challenges observed today also means that a certain level of commonality can exist, as the next section will argue. It will of course be down to specific governance processes to determine how these general orientations may be adapted to local contexts.

7.2. What the case of Barcelona tells us: analysing the tensions

In their article “Generalization in qualitative research”, social researchers Geoff Payne and Malcolm Williams (2005) argued that the findings of qualitative research studies could be moderately generalised, that is, they could generate knowledge applicable beyond the specific context where they had been obtained, insofar as the conditions for such generalisation were made explicit and integrated in the research design. Such moderate or ‘*moderatum* generalisation’ also involves acknowledging the contexts in which generalisation may not be valid.

The analysis of governance models in Barcelona has some particularities which are not easily transferrable to other contexts. In particular, legal and administrative arrangements in Barcelona, as in most other societies, are heir to specific national (or colonial) traditions, and may evolve only slowly. Similarly, political culture (e.g. in terms of citizen participation, transparency and trust) shows significant differences across societies (see e.g. Inglehart 1991, Almond and Verba 1992 [1963]), although, as observed earlier when considering policy feedback, it can evolve through a range of factors, including policy decisions that contribute to reshaping attitudes, behaviours, politics and policies. In this respect, it is not the specific institutional arrangements of governance in Barcelona that may be transferrable.

Nevertheless, the evidence presented in previous chapters has aimed to establish connections between developments in Barcelona and key themes in cultural policy and sustainability studies observed elsewhere. These include the reflections on how cultural policy should evolve in the light of sustainability, which I examined in chapter 3, the importance of revising governance models in cultural policy, which I addressed in chapter 5, and the interconnectedness of governance with broader policy change, as discussed in chapter 6. Furthermore, chapter 4 discussed the centrality of cities and other local contexts when negotiating the tensions generated by sustainability and emphasised the relatively similar challenges and conditions experienced by cities irrespective of their national contexts, something which serves to highlight the potential moderate generalisation of findings. Taking this into account, this chapter aims to focus on some general concepts guiding approaches to the governance of local cultural policy, which would later need to be integrated into the specific legal and administrative arrangements existing in individual cities.

Before proceeding to a presentation of these concepts and approaches, I will further examine what the case of Barcelona tells us in terms of the themes raised by the thesis. To do so, I will go back to the four tensions around the governance of local cultural policy that I identified in the first chapter and consider them on the basis of the evidence analysed in Barcelona.

Local ownership versus diversity tension

The first tension I observed at the outset of the thesis refers to the relationship between relying primarily on participation by local communities to preserve local culture as a more or less stable 'commons', and the understanding that culture needs exchange and interaction. Should one of these elements prevail, or can they be reconciled?

In previous chapters, I examined how Forum 2004, by stressing universal cultural diversity in rather abstract terms but neglecting local participation and disregarding governance processes, failed to generate sufficient local ownership. Later, we saw how the 'community balance' framework developed in the context of local policies around community-led management relies on strong local ownership but, while emphasising social participation, political transformation, and environmental responsibility, it hardly pays attention to cultural renewal. Similarly, the Council of Culture has tended to operate as a meeting space for cultural agents and has concerned itself with the running of the local cultural ecosystem and policies related to it, without devoting much attention to cultural exchange with the outside. Therefore, evidence indicates that this tension remains largely unresolved in local governance processes in Barcelona.

I think that both local ownership and openness to diversity are essential features in governance frameworks in the light of sustainability. Each of these elements relates to at least one of the propositions which I suggested cultural policy concerned with sustainability should integrate. In particular, if cultural policy is to focus on people and their effective capabilities and agency, as well as the fostering of an ethics of responsibility towards others and the planet, it should integrate governance processes based on active citizen participation and which enable local ownership. Meanwhile, the search for cultural policies that provide spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity also involves an openness to those individuals and communities at the margins of cultural visibility and exploring the potential for governance processes to represent that diversity.

Reconciling these elements requires understanding local ownership as a process always in the making and dissociating it from the preservation of particular cultural forms which unify the collective. The 'commons' here should relate to the continuity and renegotiation of relationships around local ways of living together, enabling the emergence of new forms of expression and identification which embody relationality towards others and the planet. Balancing ownership and diversity also requires giving further space to the diversities that exist within each community, something which is present in cities and not always sufficiently visible in its cultural realm and governance processes (see e.g. Ilczuk and Isar 2006, Baltà Portolés 2016b). Intersectional approaches which explore the overlapping of forms of exclusion and vulnerability should be important contributions to the building of more inclusive and diverse governance spaces (Rodó-Zárate 2021, Baltà Portolés, Guizzo et al. 2022). I would also argue that this requires seeing governance spaces as always 'open', exploring opportunities for new agents to join deliberation, decision-making and implementation processes, something to which I will return later.

Of course, while I would argue that an evolution around these terms is necessary in order to adapt governance, and cultural policy more broadly, to the implications of sustainability, adaptation and regeneration, there will be voices opposing this. In particular, some sectors will

see a risk in the loss of continuity in some cultural forms. As I will argue later, this requires establishing forms of management of governance processes that acknowledge internal diversity and foster adaptive processes of learning.

Territorial vs. multi-level tension

This tension concerns the relationship between the governance of policies related to specific physical places or territories and the acknowledgement that both culture and sustainability develop in multi-level settings. Observing the multi-scalar interdependence of the *terrains de vie* in which our lives unfold, traditional territorial approaches oversimplify reality and become inappropriate, powerless (Latour 2015, Latour 2018), suggesting the need for more complex forms of governance.

The observations made in Barcelona show that formal mechanisms for the governance of culture have generally failed to resolve this tension – however, they also point to some potential to address it. The Council of Culture was established, in the context of the *New Accents* strategy, partly as a response to the aim for cultural policy to engage in global debates. This ‘global framing’, derived from the Agenda 21 for culture, has however had limited impact in terms of generating a ‘global awareness’ in local cultural policy, with few exceptions such as the Council Executive Committee’s communique in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Despite revolving primarily around the impact of the crisis on local cultural professionals, the communique also highlighted some connections with the planetary crisis and the need for changes in global priorities, including by placing ‘sustainability and balance, ... the common good, and the universal value of art and culture, above growth for growth’s sake’ (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2020: 1; my translation). In this respect, global crises heighten awareness of territorial interdependences and may enable what Beck termed a ‘global frame of action’ (2016: 10). At the same time, cities’ limited competences to engage globally and the prevailing, and somehow logical, focus of local governance mechanisms on local affairs leaves a gap between the awareness of global issues and the effective radius of action available to local governance.

This is partly addressed by developments at community level, particularly those that can engage in governance processes that connect the cultural, social, environmental, economic, and political dimensions of sustainability, as the story of Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris encapsulates. This is in line with the understanding that local spaces may enjoy a certain degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the dynamics of capitalism (Miró i Acedo 2018), which is less available to national governance, as well as the acknowledgement that there are diverse forms of inhabiting the world (Latour 2015) and small-scale practices, existing at the local level (Clammer 2016), which serve to negotiate the frictions that inevitably emerge as ‘the abstract and the concrete’, or ‘[the] global and the local’ (De Beukelaer 2021: 40), encounter one another.

In this respect, paraphrasing Beck (2016), methodological cosmopolitanism may arise when *the city*, rather than *the nation*, turns around the world at risk – for it is cities that may feel more at ease with the understanding that they are crooked (Sennett 2019), incomplete, diverse and part of a world of networks (Khanna 2016) which inevitably infiltrates their room for governance. It is here that the ‘sense of global belonging’ demanded by Duxbury et al. (2017: 96-97) may emerge, but this seems to require an active effort in making the interdependences of our *terrains de vie*

evident. That is, governance processes, and those involved in them, should actively seek to embed principles of grounded cosmopolitanism (Appiah 2008, De Beukelaer 2019), connecting particular communities with a reflection about humanity at large, as well as reflections around the New Climatic Regime and the metamorphosis of the world. This is unlikely to emerge spontaneously, and therefore calls for an active commitment by those that facilitate or accompany governance processes.

The ‘incompleteness’ of cities vis-à-vis global challenges also calls for enhanced networking, something which can operate at multiple levels – from neighbourhood or district practices feeding into, and being fed by, local and metropolitan governance processes, to short-term collaboration and longer-term networking between cities and other local realities encountering similar challenges (UCLG Learning 2017, Fernández de Losada and Galceran-Vercher 2021).

In summary, the multi-level nature of contemporary challenges around sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration should be embedded in governance processes, while at the same time taking advantage of the ability of local spaces to operate as nodes in which the tensions may be negotiated and more adapted forms of governance may emerge.

Citizen participation versus public responsibility

This tension concerns the opposition between the fostering of open, participatory governance mechanisms, including what we have earlier referred to as ‘self-government’ by citizens and civil society organisations (Castro Coma and Forné Aguirre 2021), and the acknowledgement that public authorities, when democratically elected, have particular legitimacy and responsibility to govern cultural policy. It also involves the recognition that, because civil society organisations and other forms of ‘independent’, citizen-based initiatives show varying degrees of maturity (e.g. across different neighbourhoods or districts in a city, as the case of Barcelona exemplifies), the balance between public authorities and them, and the specific role adopted by the former, may need to differ in each context.

At the core of this tension is the understanding that, if governance today involves integrating interdependence in multiple ways (territorial, multi-actor, multidimensional / holistic) and recognising shared responsibility, multi-actor governance based on active engagement is necessary. And, because conflict and tensions are inevitable in a world marked by sustainability challenges, some level of conflict will underpin relations between public authorities, civil society actors, and other stakeholders engaged in the governance of cultural policy.

The example of Barcelona shows that multi-actor coexistence and shared engagement has been a central theme in efforts aimed at revising governance, both at the more formal, city-level end (Council of Culture) and at the less visible, less formalised end (community-led management). While policy debates acknowledge that multiple actors need to be engaged in governance, there are many ways of turning this into practice. Indeed, a diverse range of approaches to sharing responsibilities exist (from representation in consultative councils to the direct management of publicly-owned venues by civil groups, the allocation of public funds by independent experts, and the joint establishment of criteria for evaluating the results of public programmes), reflecting the multiplicity of forms and levels of citizen participation in public affairs (Arnstein 1969). It is also necessary to acknowledge that civil society initiatives do not automatically contribute to the

democratic quality of policymaking (Chambers and Kopstein 2001) and that the capacity levels and resources available to civil society organisations varies widely (Delfín 2022). Limited capacity levels challenge civil society's ability to engage in policymaking in the constructive, active role that advocates of self-government and multi-actor governance would suggest. All of this is also representative of how broader contextual factors, political aspects, administrative processes, and major and minor policy changes may interact differently, at different moments and contexts, to determine the specific shape to be adopted by multi-actor governance.

This tension embodies the need for governance processes to be open-ended and adaptive. In line with the understanding that cultural policy concerned with sustainability should foster people's capabilities and equality of agency and provide spaces for interactive pluralism and diversity, governance processes should strive to actively integrate a diverse range of stakeholders and adapt their roles to different circumstances. This includes enabling civil society organisations to manage or self-govern venues and initiatives in the public interest, as illustrated by community-led management models. However, this should not be seen as a universal solution, or as an end in itself, for, rather, the ability of multiple stakeholders to actively engage in deliberation and in the shaping of suitable solutions to each specific context, on the basis of inclusive, transparent decision-making processes, should prevail. This adaptive approach should also inform how public authorities engage in areas or neighbourhoods where less active participation is visible – this may require working with a smaller amount of stakeholders initially yet aiming to enable the emergence of multi-actor governance processes which will ultimately be able to determine suitable solutions to local challenges. Therefore, public authorities will need to enable 'situated' approaches to governance, responding to varying circumstances across the geographical area for which they are responsible, and define their own role accordingly.

Broad versus narrow scope tension

This final tension, which underpins many of the discussions on the relationships between cultural policy and sustainability, including in terms of governance, relates to the effective scope of cultural policy, and how to balance the need to explore interdependences with other areas of sustainability, in what would involve broadening the scope, and the more pragmatic push towards immediate policy effectiveness, which may call for a narrower scope of cultural policy.

The case of Barcelona shows that successive cultural strategies and policy documents have aimed to connect cultural policy with broader debates related to sustainability (Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 1999b, Institut de Cultura de Barcelona 2006a, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021b, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2021c). However, governance processes have struggled to integrate this in their debates and action, partly because the narrower interests of cultural professionals and organisations have dominated discussions, and partly because of the prevailing 'sectorial', siloed approach to most policy processes, which tends to clearly demarcate the space of cultural policy away from that of other policy areas, and vice versa. Moves towards an integrated approach to cultural and educational policy, to which I referred in chapters 5 and 6, arise as an emerging exception to this, although they have unfolded primarily within the public authority, rather than in a multi-actor governance setting.

Broadening the scope of cultural policy, with a more ecosystemic approach to culture and its interdependences with social, economic, and environmental aspects, is a critical factor in order

for cultural policy to be relevant in the light of sustainability challenges. In keeping with my observation that governance and other policy processes feed into one another, the governance of cultural policy should be reflective of this broader scope, in terms of the agents it involves, the themes it addresses, and the policies and actions it enables. While the specific ways to do this will, again, vary strongly depending on each context, preconditions here include the ability for governance processes in cultural policy to engage with and inform policymaking in areas other than the arts and heritage but which relate to cultural aspects (education, economy, environment, urban planning, social affairs, etc.); and to similarly recognise that policies and processes in the cultural field need to be responsive to conditions related to sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration (Hawkes 2001, Martinell Sempere 2021). The latter involves accepting that governance processes and measures adopted in other policy areas may also have a say on the development of cultural policies and processes.

Learning from the tensions

What the observation of these four tensions suggests is that there are rarely 'neat', clear-cut responses to how governance models should be established in the face of challenges and tensions generated by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. To a certain extent, each specific governance model will need to find its own balance between the issues at stake. Yet this analysis also provides some general guidance on basic preconditions and aspects to consider when designing governance processes.

The first tension, for instance, shows that citizens' active participation in decision-making matters and should enable to negotiate ownership within a context which is inevitably ridden with tensions. Yet ownership here should be dynamic, rather than static, and open to diversity, both that which exists within communities and that which allows them to connect with the outside, thus retaining the ability for culture to evolve as a 'a long conversation' (Teixeira Coelho 2009).

The second tension leads to emphasising the importance of local processes of governance, while ensuring that reflections on the global are embedded in them, thus breaking with a clear separation between territorial levels, which is not well-adapted to the context of the New Climatic Regime and the metamorphosis of the world (Latour 2015, Beck 2016).

The third tension suggests that multi-actor governance is critical and should lead to considering sophisticated models of deliberation, participation, and self-government, adapted to each specific context. It also recognises that public authorities have a distinctive role in overseeing the functioning of the overall governance system, and in adopting specific measures which enable the emergence of more plural governance models where these are missing.

The fourth and last tension serves to stress the need for cultural policy to engage with broader sustainability issues and be informed by decisions and reflections adopted in other policy areas connected to sustainability. This is a particularly complex process and one which is critical to maintaining the relevance of cultural policy in the light of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration processes.

Governance processes are the site where these tensions should be negotiated and particular, locally relevant responses identified. It is this process of negotiation that should allow to adapt

the aforementioned conditions to the specific legal and administrative frameworks existing in each location. This serves to reemphasise that findings from the analysis conducted in Barcelona may be moderately generalised, insofar as, when they are transferred to other contexts, only the broad orientations are considered. Specific legal and administrative aspects will vary according to local circumstances, and subsequent processes of local deliberation, negotiation and decision-making based on the general principles proposed here will be best suited to determine specific local policies. It is with this in mind that the next section will propose directions for a new framework for the governance of local cultural policy.

7.3. A framework for the governance of local cultural policy in the light of sustainability: basic directions

This section embodies the aim of this chapter, and of this thesis, of presenting the basic directions for a framework of local cultural policy that responds to the challenges of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. It builds on the definitions and findings presented in earlier chapters. These include the understanding that governance involves values, principles and processes, which should therefore all be considered when proposing changes; that governance operates as a broad system, encompassing a myriad processes occurring at several levels (e.g. district, city level) as well as formal, major policy processes and informal, grassroots and minor developments; that the *substance* of cultural policy, i.e. its scope and the range of issues which it addresses, is interconnected with the *methods* through which deliberation and decision-making take place, i.e. the governance models, and that they may evolve together in a process of feedback; that governance is an ongoing process, emerging somehow as an ideal, always under negotiation and 'in the making'; and that there is room for policy and governance models to evolve, in consideration of external factors, such as crises, as well as 'internal' negotiation processes among the stakeholders involved, including policymakers, bureaucrats, lobbies, and citizen groups.

I will further explore these elements, and what they imply, in the following pages. In particular, I will present eight basic, complementary directions which should guide the reorientation of the governance of local cultural policy in the light of the challenges observed. Acknowledging the interconnection between the substance of cultural policy and its governance, and the feedback effects that can connect them, these eight conditions are intimately bound with the revision of cultural policy in the perspective of sustainability which I had discussed in chapter 3. In line with this, I will start by discussing, firstly, the notion of governance that should prevail in this context and, secondly, its scope, and will later address the procedures that governance should adopt in this context, as well as some of the values underpinning the future development of governance.

Understanding governance as a terrain made of multiple processes

The governance of cultural policy is, above all, the terrain where multiple actors, forming an ecosystem, interact and determine the general directions, and the specific policies and measures, that will guide cultural policy in a particular setting or territory. This broad, system-based understanding serves to distinguish governance from a narrower focus on the spaces or mechanisms where formal decision-making takes place, such as specific public authorities (e.g.

the City Council or the Deputy Mayor for Culture, where such a figure exists) or consultative bodies (e.g. the Council of Culture, in the case of Barcelona). Of course, the latter are part of governance, but less formal processes of dialogue, negotiation, tension, and other forms of relationship between stakeholders, ranging from lobbying to funding, matter as well. As a result, governance is best understood as a broad set of formal and non-formal processes, rather than formal deliberation procedures leading to explicit decision-making.

By encompassing informal, less visible processes, governance also includes a broader set of agents and stakeholders, which overall comprise what we may term an 'ecosystem'. Defining the set of actors that intervene in governance as an ecosystem does not imply that they all occupy equal positions nor that their relationships are balanced and fluid. Indeed, several factors, based on legal arrangements, economic, technical, and human resources, or political culture, mean that the place of different actors will inevitably be unequal.

In this respect, public authorities have a particularly important role, because of competences legally allocated to them, to observe and understand the overall functioning of the ecosystem and its associated governance processes, including the connectedness between formal and informal procedures. They should strive to increase the transparency of processes, rendering the overall functioning of deliberation and decision-making clearer to the outside.

While recognising that bringing together multiple agents will inevitably make tensions visible, public authorities should aim to generate a terrain in which multiple perspectives can be discussed and negotiated. In this respect, they should also consider the ability of individual agents to take part in governance in conditions which are appropriate to their relevance within the cultural ecosystem as well as to their social and political legitimacy, and take decisions accordingly – e.g., when bureaucratic cultures or administrative procedures limit the ability of civil society organisations to intervene in decision-making and related governance processes.

Finally, public authorities should also be concerned with ensuring that the ecosystem intervening in the governance of cultural policy is open, particularly to actors that may help to broaden the radius of cultural policy towards relevant areas in the light of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, e.g. organisations that connect the fields of culture and the environment, urban planning or education, as well as grassroots initiatives connecting the cultural, social, environmental, economic and political dimensions of sustainability.

The aforementioned 'feedback' approach, which emphasises the interconnectedness between governance and policy, and how these inform subsequent policymaking, implies that the boundaries between deliberation, negotiation, decision-making and implementation will frequently be blurry, as also proposed by public policy scholars who suggest that inputs and outputs in the policy process overlap rather than being clearly distinguished (Lindblom 1959, Weible 2014).

However, and while understanding that some policy implementation processes serve to renegotiate the positions of individual actors in governance and can inform subsequent deliberation and decision-making processes (e.g. the involvement of civil society organisations in community-led management processes in Barcelona, that is in *implementing* a particular policy, informs broader governance and transforms positions within the ecosystem), I would suggest that governance is particularly a process of deliberation, negotiation and decision-making, and which is also concerned with the mobilisation, generation and integration of

knowledge relevant for this purpose, as I will argue later. This allows to maintain a conceptual separation between governance (which focuses on the general directions of policy, how these are determined, and by whom) and cultural policy (which focuses primarily on policies, measures and processes that have bearing on the ability of individuals and groups to take part in cultural life). At the same time, as I will argue later, governance should be informed by practices on the ground and can be enriched through the establishment of 'communities of practice', in which learning occurs through the combination of 'thinking' and 'doing' processes.

Redefining the scope of governance, and of cultural policy, to address the human dimension of sustainability

If the scope of cultural policy needs to broaden to encompass the interdependences between the space where individuals and groups define their identities, meanings and expressions and the environmental, social, economic, and political aspects which are also determining to sustainability, the governance of cultural policy should also evolve accordingly. Indeed, in keeping with the process of feedback between governance and policy, decisions taken in the former can enable a progressive opening of cultural policy towards the space in which communities can negotiate the tensions generated by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, or what we could term the 'human dimension' of sustainability.

In this respect, the governance of cultural policy should not shy away from fostering critical thinking about human action vis-à-vis the planet and considering what this effectively implies in terms of defining political alternatives. The latter may involve favouring, within cultural policy, a set of values, behaviour and action which are adaptive, recognising the disruptions generated by human action and fostering a relationship with nature in more modest terms, and regenerative, aiming to redress some of the damage caused. As I suggested in chapter 3, among the basic preconditions for cultural policy to evolve in this direction are an analysis of cultural life in a systemic way, which considers people's effective ability to fulfil their cultural opportunities and exercise their cultural rights, and a balance between individual capabilities and an ethics of responsibility towards others and towards the planet. Governance processes may provide a space where to enable such critical thinking and the fostering of policies and programmes that advance in this direction.

This could also involve reflecting on elements in the cultural realm which are conducive to non-sustainable behaviour and practice vis-à-vis other humans and in relations between humans and nature, and how cultural policy could contribute to rebuilding the 'entire network of relations that create life and community' (Escobar 2019: 3-4). Governance could provide a setting where ethical codes for sustainable, adaptive, and regenerative practice in cultural policy and cultural action more broadly may be defined, e.g., by taking into account the planetary boundaries, social equality, human rights, appropriate working and remuneration conditions among cultural professionals and other economic implications of cultural work, and how these aspects should inform cultural action. Negotiating such ethical codes should involve a wide cross-section of cultural agents and experts in ethics, ultimately aiming to overcome the specific interests of some. In a similar vein, governance processes could provide a setting in which to define forms of cultural valuation that escape purely quantitative models (Meyrick, Phiddian et al. 2018) and which connect cultural value with environmental, social and economic aspects, in a line similar

to what the community balance framework in Barcelona has attempted to do (La Hidra and Artibarri 2018, Xarxa d'Economia Social and Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018, Xarxa d'Economia Social 2020).

Adopting such an approach serves to highlight that the governance of local cultural policy should aim to provide a site for negotiating the tensions that sustainability generates locally, and how culture relates to this. Inevitably, this involves overcoming silo thinking and integrating knowledge from different disciplines and fields, as the engagement of experts in ethics proposed above exemplifies. Similarly, reflecting on sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration should involve integrating knowledge from environmental, social, and economic studies which have often been left aside from cultural policy debates. Governance processes, and particularly deliberation and negotiation processes informing decision-making, should increasingly integrate knowledge of this type. I will return to the centrality of knowledge as a basis for decision-making in the following sub-sections.

Exploring and overcoming traditional boundaries and building bridges

I have earlier emphasised the importance that governance processes assume the dynamic nature of culture and remain open to diversity. What this implies in practice is seeing governance not merely as a representation of the ecosystem of culture at a particular point in time, but also as a connective, open space, which regularly invites voices external to it. That is, further to involving elected representatives and civil servants on behalf of local authorities, as well as public, private and not-for-profit cultural organisations, individual citizens, artists or cultural professionals, and any other actors that are associated with the local cultural ecosystem, particular attention should be taken to involving other agents, including those that can provide reflections on environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability and allow to connect them with cultural policy debates. This could include environmental experts and organisations, experts in urban planning, mobility, education, health, technology, and other areas that connect cultural aspects with local sustainability challenges, citizen platforms, business organisations, trade unions, etc., with a view to exploring the connections between cultural aspects and broader sustainability.

By diversifying voices and themes, governance should aim to explore the boundaries of the cultural realm, including the perspectives of minority groups and segments of the population that are less frequently associated with cultural policy debates, such as children and young people, elderly people, people with disabilities, migrant groups, etc. This could progressively enable the emergence of a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of cultural life, which is less associated with specific organisations and professional sectors and more with everyday practices. Similarly to how making cities accessible to people with disabilities frequently increases inclusion and wellbeing for broader segments of the population (Baltà Portolés 2016a), involving seldom-heard voices could enrich accessibility and diversity in cultural life.

The exploration of boundaries could also involve, when circumstances allow, reflections on human relations with other species, through the involvement of researchers, experts and organisations in biology, natural heritage, and related areas. This exploration could help to acknowledge and reflect upon how our identities and ways of inhabiting the world have evolved

in interaction with the natural world, generally through the subjugation of the latter, and how this should be replaced by a more balanced notion of embeddedness in, attentiveness towards and respect for nature (Clammer 2016, Van Doreen, Kirksey et al. 2016). While it is likely that these discussions will seem distant from cultural policy debates at first, governance processes should identify opportunities and themes which allow for such connections to be progressively integrated.

The latter point leads me to stressing three important aspects from a methodological perspective. Firstly, the aim to diversify voices and perspectives, and the need to examine when circumstances allow to integrate more complex themes, implies that governance processes require some form of *management*, or an analytical perspective that helps to oversee what perspectives are included and which ones are missing, and to invite new agents. This can be addressed by establishing a form of board or a piloting and facilitating team, comprising a diversity of stakeholders, to identify gaps and provide an overall direction, while integrating views from the broader constituency of agents taking part in governance processes. Admittedly, such function will be able to assess and intervene in the more formal and visible layers of governance (e.g. its formal procedures and meeting or deliberation spaces) than with regard to its more informal components (e.g. negotiations between cultural stakeholders related to the management of specific projects or venues), as the latter are frequently less visible. However, those involved in piloting or overseeing the functioning of governance should be aware of the interconnectedness of formal and informal aspects, and act accordingly.

Secondly, there is a risk that traditional stakeholders in cultural policy, including major cultural organisations and professionals, will perceive a threat in a process which involves opening debates to other agents, and which may therefore reduce their influence and enable the inclusion of new issues in the policy agenda. While the resulting tension is to a certain extent inevitable, and even desirable, care will be needed in the process. In this respect, both the aforementioned piloting team, which could involve some traditional cultural stakeholders, and the combination of a process of opening to new themes with an exploration of more classic themes in cultural policy (such as funding, access or participation in cultural life), could contribute to guaranteeing some stability in the process.

Thirdly, the process could involve developing a language around cultural policy that is less exclusive and which integrates knowledge and terminology from everyday life and from other areas of activity. This is a long-term effort, but one which could also contribute to building bridges between the realm of cultural policy and that which exists outside.

Fostering a cosmopolitan outlook in cultural policy

The openness to new themes and voices that I suggested in the previous sub-section should also encompass an exploration of how developments within a particular neighbourhood, town or city relate to broader global themes, thus enabling the emergence of a cosmopolitan outlook and of a 'porous' understanding of identity and belonging, or a 'sense of global belonging' (Duxbury, Kangas et al. 2017: 96-97) which connects the local and the global. This is, again, a space in which the piloting, facilitating, or overseeing role within the process of governance gains importance, in order to ensure that deliberation and decision-making processes at local level are informed by connections with global developments.

And, also as in the previous case, this should be seen as a long-term effort, which progressively contributes to fostering the emergence of a 'grounded cosmopolitanism', in which care for and engagement in local developments is connected to an acknowledgement of being part of the global (De Beukelaer 2019, Sennett 2019). I would also like to emphasise that, as in other basic directions for governance presented throughout this section, moves towards cosmopolitanism in the field of governance should be complemented with a cosmopolitan opening of cultural policies and practice, in a process of mutual strengthening and feedback.

In practice, this involves integrating reflections that connect conditions for local sustainability with global sustainability issues, such as migration and climate change. It also calls for the integration of voices from abroad, e.g. through exchanges with professionals and organisations involved in culture and other fields from abroad, providing 'a context in which we can get mutually acquainted' (De Beukelaer 2019: 802-803), allowing to discuss similarities and providing inspiration for the evolution of local cultural policy. These exchanges will frequently require an effort of facilitation and interpretation by local stakeholders with a knowledge of other contexts and themes (as well as forms of linguistic interpretation, whenever necessary), although this should become less necessary as governance debates gain familiarity with global spaces.

Understanding governance as a space that connects thinking, learning and doing

While governance is particularly concerned with deliberation, negotiation, and decision-making, the urgency of challenges generated by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, the aim to make governance an inclusive, open space, and the acknowledgement of the feedback that connects decision-making and implementation processes calls for seeing this as an open process, that is informed by practice on the ground. Governance should not be seen as an autonomous, abstract layer, existing above the friction between culture and sustainability in local neighbourhoods, but rather as a space which enters into dialogue with, and is enriched by, work on the ground.

The notion of 'communities of practice', which refers to processes of collective learning through practice in a particular domain of interest, involving joint activities, discussions and the sharing of information (Wenger 1998, Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015), seems relevant to describe this approach. When applied to governments and policy, communities of practice have been seen to enable connections and learning among people across different organisations (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015), something which is particularly relevant in the context of developing a governance of cultural policy that responds to the challenges of sustainability.

Swiss educational theorist Etienne Wenger, who co-defined the notion of 'communities of practice', has emphasised the ability of these processes to guarantee horizontal accountability among group members, through a mutual commitment to collective learning (2009). As a result, accountability within communities of practice can be as significant as that existing in more traditional 'vertical accountability' models (i.e. hierarchy-based organisations in which audits, reporting and accounting enable higher structures to control what happens at lower levels) and has added advantages in terms of 'learning capability' (ibid: 14). However, Wenger has also argued that complex systems require a combination of forms of governance and accountability

(ibid), something that justifies the combination of horizontal communities of practice with overseeing, piloting spaces such as those which I proposed earlier, as well as the need for public authorities to retain a distinctive role in analysing and addressing social inequalities, as I will argue later. Similarly, while specific communities of practice meant to address critical themes or learning challenges in the context of cultural policy development could emerge ‘organically’, because of broader governance debates, there could also be a role for overseeing, piloting bodies to help identify issues that deserve one such learning space. Overseeing or piloting bodies could also work to ensure that communities of practice established within the broader system of governance are internally diverse and their membership is sufficiently relevant to the nature of the themes under discussion.

The central place of learning within communities of practice is consistent with the understanding of governance as a process, which feeds into and is enriched by policy and practice. It is also in accordance with the processes of ‘co-production’ which Richard Sennett has argued are central to ‘open cities’, where people can ‘experiment and expand their experience’ (2019: 9). In this respect, communities of practice based on learning and horizontal accountability can also embody the liminal spaces or interfaces enabling active listening in the sense proposed by Bassel (2017), to which I also referred earlier, where relations of mutuality between policymakers and citizens can be strengthened and everyday spaces can be made politically relevant.

As I described in chapters 5 and 6, the development of the community balance framework in Barcelona could be seen as one such example of a community of practice, connecting civil society groups, experts, and local authority representatives – a process which makes tensions evident, yet which can lead to transforming approaches to policy through the emergence of an alternative model for the valuation of public programmes which is not mainly concerned with economic efficiency. Communities of practice that enable learning across different cities can also be established, responding to the aim of enhancing cosmopolitanism and a reflection on the global, as well as acknowledging that challenges faced by cities are frequently shared (Pascual 2007b, Sacco 2021).

One distinctive aspect in communities of practice contributing to the governance of cultural policy could be the involvement of artists and other cultural professionals as mediators, facilitating dialogue within a particular group as well as the transfer of knowledge towards other constituencies. This is in keeping with the framing, contextualising and mediating role proposed in the ‘culture *for* sustainable development’ approach (Dessein, Soini et al. 2015) to which I alluded in chapter 3, as well as with the ability of local cultures to negotiate the tensions between nature, capital and modernity (Escobar 1996) and the recognition that there may exist multiple diverse forms of inhabiting the world, as suggested by Latour (2015). In this respect, further to acknowledging that diverse forms of inhabiting the world can exist, it should be the aim of governance processes to enable new such experiments to emerge and inform broader policymaking.

The notion of communities of practice has only occasionally been applied to specific areas of cultural management, such as cultural heritage or arts festivals (see e.g. Adell, Bendix et al. 2015, Comunian 2017, Kockel, Nic Craith et al. 2020), and to cultural policy in relatively abstract terms (see e.g. Sacco 2011, Sacco 2021). While it has some similarities with ‘working groups’ or ‘committees’, which are relatively common in consultative bodies such as Barcelona’s Council of

Culture, the latter tend to focus on deliberation rather than practice and learning, and they have increasingly been seen to have limited policy impact (Comitè Executiu del Consell de la Cultura de Barcelona 2021), as I explained in chapter 2.

In this respect, an exploration of how communities of practice operate in fields that have similarities with cultural policy could be illustrative. One such area is citizen science, where the use of communities of practice is more common (Göbel, Cappadonna et al. 2016, Manzoni, Vohland et al. 2021). Furthermore, this is an area with some emerging synergies with cultural policy, as exemplified by local libraries and cultural centres that foster community-based projects on themes such as sustainable mobility, biodiversity and air quality (Perelló, Bonhoure et al. 2019, Baltà Portolés and Bashiron Mendolicchio 2021). Some studies suggest that citizen science projects have particular policy applicability at local level, even if they also address global issues such as climate change and food security (Hecker, Wicke et al. 2019), something that is significant from the perspective of cosmopolitanism. Citizen science can achieve policy impact by using techniques such as storytelling (Wehn, Ajates et al. 2021), which could suggest that an involvement of artists and cultural professionals in communities of practice could hold particular potential. Other effects of citizen science include favouring democratic approaches to public policy and enhancing citizens' interest in policy, transparency and public trust (Hecker, Wicke et al. 2019). However, more systematic take-up of the results of citizen science projects in policy terms frequently remains a challenge (Göbel, Cappadonna et al. 2016), and the need for a 'bridging' function that allows communities of practice to transfer knowledge to other areas, including policy, has been noted (Sbrocchi, Pecl et al. 2022).

These findings suggest that there is potential to increase the use of communities of practice in the governance of cultural policy, enabling learning, collaboration between different local stakeholders in a 'horizontal' setting, connections between local experiences and global developments, and some degree of policy impact. However, I would also admit that the effective transfer of these approaches should involve a process of adaptation, as well as the regular testing of methodologies. Ultimately, and in line with our findings in chapter 6, communities of practice could be more suited to informing minor policy change, should involve both political decision-makers and civil servants in order to increase the likelihood of change, and should go hand-in-hand with an acknowledgement of the open nature of governance, where rules and procedures can regularly be adapted.

Fostering proximity and connecting with the city and beyond, in a multi-level approach

As I have argued earlier, the governance of local cultural policy in the light of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration should be based on active participation and interaction among diverse stakeholders, recognising the centrality of people, the need to acknowledge tensions, and the awareness of responsibilities and limits which sustainability poses today. It should also enable mediation based on the specific experience of culture and sustainability at the local level. This, along with the understanding that local spaces such as neighbourhoods may hold a certain autonomy vis-à-vis the dynamics of capitalism (Miró i Acedo 2018) and can enable the negotiation and emergence of specific, situated forms of sustainability (Escobar 1996, Clammer 2016), serves to stress the importance of generating governance spaces at the smallest scale possible. In cities like Barcelona, this implies acting at neighbourhood level. Proximity is,

however, a highly variable concept, reliant on factors such as mobility patterns and identity building, so other cities and urban agglomerations or metropolitan areas may opt for different types of unit which are better suited to their own experience of proximity.

Developing governance models at the neighbourhood or other sub-city levels means that multiple approaches to negotiating the relation between culture and sustainability may coexist within a city. This is consistent with Moreno's proposal for a 15-minute city, which integrates opportunities for citizen participation alongside access to basic services (2020). It also resembles US community-led systems change expert Kiley Arroyo's observation that 'in Nature, change never happens due to top-down interventions; instead, it begins as local actions spring up simultaneously' (2021: 19), something that she suggests should lead us to rethink our understanding of the transformational change required to address today's challenges. Small-scale spaces may indeed be particularly suited to enable collective learning through communities of practice, as well as to explore the human dimension of sustainability challenges and how contemporary challenges impact on specific lives.

At the same time, the need for governance processes to be open to diversity and the fact that cities tend to be more 'crooked' and complex (Sennett 2019), and therefore they resemble more the type of complexity that is inherent to an exploration of sustainability, means that the city level remains relevant when devising approaches to governance. This is also, in many cases, the level at which political elections take place, and therefore the one that is imbued with democratic legitimacy. In this respect, I would suggest that an architecture for the governance of cultural policy at the local level should combine developments at the neighbourhood (or district, or suburb, or other sub-city level) and at the city level. Designing the specific roles of each of these levels should be determined at city level, on the basis of aspects like population size, administrative structures, available resources, and forms of aggregation of citizen and other civil society initiatives. Also relevant is the nature of the themes which are to be addressed through governance, some of which may be particularly connected to the experience of proximity (such as opportunities for citizen participation in community venues and other 'synchronic' spaces), while others may particularly operate at the city level or beyond (such as how major city-wide cultural organisations adapt their operations to challenges of adaptation and regeneration). Finding the right scale for each process should be a matter of testing and learning, since, rather than being a simple question to address, scalability depends on the nature of each particular problem (Schumacher 1993, Sennett 2019). In any case, there should exist forms of communication and learning between participants in sub-city and city-level governance processes, seeing this as an integrated governance system, rather than a set of segmented initiatives.

In this respect, the system should combine autonomy and interdependence, reflecting the need for a sophisticated, multi-level awareness of how culture and sustainability interact. This is also valid for relations beyond the city itself. Whether at the metropolitan level, where this is relevant and feasible in political and social terms, or by establishing forms of learning that help to place local governance in a multi-level setting (e.g. through networking with other cities or in other forms of cross-border articulation), governance processes should integrate connections with developments beyond the city.

Combining governance with equalising policies

An approach to cultural policy focused on people and their effective capabilities, as the one I suggested in chapter 3 was necessary to realign cultural policy with sustainability, involves considering the effective cultural opportunities (Gross and Wilson 2018) available to different members of the community. This should also entail assessing the effective opportunities to engage in processes of deliberation, negotiation and decision-making that sit at the core of governance.

As the example of Barcelona shows, levels of citizen participation in both not-for-profit initiatives and in consultative spaces established by local authorities are highly variable across neighbourhoods. Surveys show that the percentage of citizens who actively take part in the activities of not-for-profit organisations ranges between 23% and 47% across the city's 10 districts, whereas the percentage of those who have attended formal meetings of the city's Neighbourhood Councils ranges from 14% to 30% (Gabinet Tècnic de Programació [Ajuntament de Barcelona] 2017). Another analysis found that 45% of inhabitants in low-income neighbourhoods did not engage in any social or cultural organisation or collective activity, whereas the figure was 34% in mid-income neighbourhoods and 36% in high-income neighbourhoods (ICUB and Barbieri 2020). The study also found significant differences in rates of engagement related to educational level (50% of respondents with only primary studies did not engage in any activity, as opposed to 29% of respondents with higher education) and to the level of cultural engagement of respondents' mothers (ibid.). This reinforces the idea, already presented in chapter 5, that neighbourhoods have different levels of social and cultural capital and variable traditions in citizen engagement.

In this respect, the establishment of governance models concerned with sustainability should be accompanied by measures that address inequalities in forms of access and participation in cultural life, including in terms of participation in deliberation and decision-making activities. This also involves considering that different neighbourhoods or sub-city units may require different approaches in terms of governance or develop 'at different speeds' while sharing a common framework, based on proximity, participation and the reflection on how cultural policy should evolve in the light of sustainability challenges. As suggested by Ostrom, '[instead] of there being a single solution to a single problem, ... many solutions exist to cope with many different problems'. In this light, "getting the institutions right"... is a process that requires reliable information about time and place variables as well as a broad repertoire of culturally acceptable rules.' (1990: 14). This is as valid at city level, reiterating the need for governance models to be adapted to the specific circumstance of each city, as it is in different neighbourhoods within a city.

The task of adapting governance approaches to specific circumstances to facilitate equality of opportunity lies primarily on public authorities, who should however work with other local stakeholders and consult communities when designing the model. There is also a responsibility of public authorities in being aware of and addressing the underlying inequalities which affect patterns of participation in culture broadly as well as in governance processes more specifically.

Integrating knowledge better in deliberation and decision-making

In several of the sub-sections above I have emphasised the centrality of knowledge when drawing a new framework for the governance of cultural policy. It is there when arguing that an approach to cultural policy aligned with sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration involves making better use of knowledge from disciplines other than culture and cultural policy and developing a language that is more accessible and inclusive of different areas of knowledge. It is also relevant when suggesting that a function of facilitation and interpretation by local stakeholders with a knowledge of other contexts and themes is necessary when integrating external voices that connect the local and the global in deliberation processes, and when transferring the learning generated in communities of practice to other spaces, including policy-making processes.

These examples show how the mobilisation, generation, and interpretation of knowledge is a central component in governance processes. I am using knowledge here in a broad sense, going beyond the narrow focus on quantitative data which frequently prevails in policymaking (Meyrick, Phiddian et al. 2018) and recognising the centrality of processes through which communities interpret information of diverse nature, both quantitative and qualitative, and make sense, or generate understanding through, it. This is critical in governance and, more broadly, in the consideration of political alternatives (Garcés 2017) such as those that are necessary to revise cultural policy in the light of sustainability. I refer to the *mobilisation* of knowledge because valid knowledge already exists, often informally, within communities of different kinds and can be integrated in informal and formal governance processes (Ostrom 1990, Sennett 2019). I also emphasise that, through governance processes, knowledge may be *generated* collectively (or ‘co-produced’, one of the conditions that Gross and Wilson see as essential to cultural democracy (2018: 339)), including by combining information from different disciplines and sources, and *interpreted* with regard to the specific debates and challenges being addressed.

The centrality of knowledge in governance should be considered by local authorities, by exploring how better systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information may be established. In addition to the more frequent use of quantitative information, mapping exercises, the collection of oral stories and different forms of creative works should be considered valid forms of cultural information and integrated in public databases. Knowledge should also be taken into consideration by the boards or teams in charge of overseeing, piloting, and facilitating governance processes, ensuring that at the heart of deliberation exercises, as well as in the work of communities of practice, is the acknowledgement and accessibility of diverse types of information and knowledge. As I noted above, since, given the complexity of issues being addressed, knowledge emerging from different disciplines and sources needs to be considered, suitable processes of interpretation and facilitation will be necessary.

Synthesising the framework

This section has presented the basic components of a new framework for the governance of local cultural policy in the light of sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. The framework involves

a broad set of guidelines or ‘basic directions’, which should ideally be adapted to specific local contexts, including by referring to the relevant legal and administrative arrangements. They can be summarised as follows:

- Governance is a terrain made of multiple processes concerned primarily with deliberation, negotiation and decision-making, combining formal and informal processes in which a wide range of stakeholders, with varying degrees of agency, coexist.
- In the context of current challenges, the governance of local cultural policy should be redefined to focus particularly on the human dimension of sustainability.
- Governance needs to operate as a connective, open space, which invites contributions from agents from other sectors and fields, exploring the boundaries of the cultural realm and broadening them.
- Debates should integrate issues which connect the local and the global, fostering a cosmopolitan outlook in cultural policy.
- Governance should increasingly operate as a space connecting thinking, learning and doing, adopting forms similar to the communities of practice.
- There is potential in fostering governance spaces at the smaller territorial level possible (e.g. neighbourhood), yet this should be combined with other governance spaces at city level, as well as at metropolitan level where applicable, and across cities.
- Because engagement in governance, as in cultural life in general, is unequal, the strengthening of governance should go hand-in-hand with the adoption of measures to address inequalities in cultural life.
- Governance needs to be enhanced by mechanisms allowing the mobilisation, generation and interpretation of knowledge, including diverse forms of knowledge.

Because the framework is particularly conceived for large urban areas (e.g., those that comprise several neighbourhoods, districts, suburbs or other sub-city units), some of its proposals may need to be modified when applied to smaller cities or towns. In this respect, rather than proposing specific structures or bodies, the framework should be understood as an architecture of guiding orientations and functions (e.g., when referring to the need for an overseeing, facilitating, or piloting role that should guarantee balance and general orientation to the governance system). Basic directions include, however, the need to involve a wide cross-section of stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the central role of public authorities and civil society actors (e.g., not-for-profit organisations) but also understanding that citizens should be part of the process. Furthermore, in keeping with the aim to connect to broader sustainability issues, the governance of cultural policy today requires involving voices from fields beyond the arts and heritage, as well as from outside the specific territories where governance takes place.

The basic directions proposed involve going beyond an understanding of governance as a narrow set of formal procedures bound to specific decision-making spaces, and seeing this as a continuous process, occurring at city and sub-city level in both formal and non-formal contexts. The ability to engage in governance processes is affected by social inequalities as well as by different patterns of participation and social engagement, and the methodologies which are established to enable engagement in deliberation and decision-making. This should be considered by public policies, which interact with and should facilitate the emergence of inclusive, open governance terrains. In keeping with the need for cultural policy to broaden its

scope to better engage with sustainability challenges, and with the understanding that governance processes can *feed into* this process of broadening, particular care should be taken into integrating reflections on the human dimension of sustainability (i.e., how sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration are experienced by local communities, and how the latter can engage in transformative processes towards adaptation). This also involves overcoming boundaries between disciplines of knowledge and between territorial levels, enabling local governance processes to be connected to global themes and other local experiences. The aim to overcome traditional boundaries and build bridges is also expressed in the understanding that, while governance is particularly concerned with the mobilisation, generation, and interpretation of knowledge for deliberation, negotiation and decision-making, it should also be connected to practice. This is exemplified using communities of practice which connect doing, thinking, and learning, and which break traditional barriers between citizens, practitioners, experts and decision-makers.

There are two further observations that I would like to make before closing the description of the governance framework proposed, since I am aware that other elements could have been added as well. Firstly, I have not been very specific as to *who* should ultimately take decisions in the context of the proposed governance framework, something which may be seen as a weakness. I would argue that this is one of the elements that will need to be determined locally, in the context of the relevant local frameworks. This also serves to recognise the wealth of alternative pathways to sustainability that is embodied by the coexistence of multiple forms of inhabiting the world (Latour 2015, Clammer 2016) as well as the potential for creative thinking and imagining diverse futures when local pathways can develop freely (Sánchez-León 2018). At the same time, my earlier reflections on the need to balance citizen participation involving effective agency while recognising the democratic legitimacy of public authorities provide some guidance in this respect. This should also build on the acknowledgement that a governance system involves adopting many decisions at different levels, and that different actors will need to be responsible for them. While I would not expect that all decisions may be adopted through consensus, as this would be at odds with the assumption that cultural policy needs to engage with conflicts and tensions, a basic consensus on the desirability of different stakeholders being simultaneously responsible for decisions adopted at different levels may progressively emerge. Related to this is the assumption that governance processes are open-ended and adaptive, which implies that responsibilities for emerging issues may need to be reallocated regularly.

Secondly, I am aware that governance processes may be aided by technology, ranging from the use of open data (Delfín 2022), digital apps to blockchain technologies (Catlow and Rafferty 2022), an issue that I have not engaged with directly. This is partly because examining it in depth lies out of the scope of this thesis, and of my ability to fully examine the issues raised, and partly because the proposals made do not impede that technologies contribute to enriching governance processes. In doing so, however, care will need to be taken in fulfilling the other guidelines presented in the governance framework. In particular, the aim to guarantee equality of agency among citizens, and the centrality of knowledge, imply assessing, and supporting, citizens' effective ability to use technologies, adopting measures to enhance digital literacy.

7.4. Closing observations

This chapter has presented the basic directions for revising the governance of local cultural policy in the light of challenges generated by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. It started by examining how the four basic tensions surrounding governance in the light of sustainability have played out in Barcelona. While acknowledging that this remains a specific example, I have argued, drawing on Payne and Williams (2005), that findings can be moderately generalised by considering whether local components may or may not be replicated elsewhere, and making this explicit in research. Given that aspects such as legal and administrative arrangements tend to be context-specific, proposals subsequently presented in the chapter do not address these arrangements, and focus primarily on providing basic orientations and functions, which will need to be adapted to specific contexts through suitable negotiation processes.

The case study conducted in Barcelona shows that addressing the tensions between local ownership and diversity, between a territorial focus and a multi-level approach, or between citizen participation and public responsibility will rarely result in neat, clear-cut responses to how governance models should be established. All these aspects matter, and local governance processes will need to find a particular balance across each. The fourth tension identified, regarding the scope of cultural policy, is probably the one that has a clearer response: as with the understanding of cultural policy more generally, governance processes should increasingly aim to broaden their scope of action to engage better with, and remain relevant in the face of, sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. This should be seen as a long-term exercise, which will need to involve a learning process, enabling the more traditional stakeholders in cultural policy to remain engaged while adapting to a changed context.

The framework for the governance of local cultural policy presented in section 7.3 comprises eight general, complementary directions, resulting from the findings of previous chapters. They emphasise the continuous, open nature of governance, the need for broadening reflections in terms of disciplines, participants, themes and territories, making cultural policy a more inclusive, diverse, porous and connected terrain, the importance of active participation in contexts of proximity, the centrality of knowledge and learning, which should connect effective practice with deliberation and decision-making, and the need for governance to be reinforced by, and contribute to, more complex cultural policy, that acknowledges, among others, prevailing inequalities and diversity within a city.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1. Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has considered how the transformation brought about by the climate crisis and other sustainability challenges calls for a revision in the conception of cultural policy, and more particularly how approaches to the governance of local cultural policy need to evolve in this light. I have drawn on a diverse range of sources and disciplines, which have served to emphasise how sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration need to be considered in all areas of life. Cultural policy should not be an exception to it.

In the introduction, I explained how the ‘intellectual problem’ or ‘paradox’ which I set out to address (Dunleavy 2003: 23) was based on my own practice as a researcher, consultant and trainer, and how at the same time this was relevant for cultural policy research and practice more broadly. On a personal level, the writing of this thesis has allowed me to challenge my previous knowledge and assumptions, and to develop more critical insights as well as orientations for future research and applied work.

More broadly, the thesis also contributes to knowledge on the research and practice of cultural policy. Indeed, while I have drawn on several disciplines, my aim is primarily to contribute to the study and practice of cultural policy and to shed light on how cultural policy should evolve. Although, as I have shown in previous chapters, there have been several earlier explorations of the relation between cultural policy and sustainability, both the increasing assumption of sustainability as an all-encompassing theme and the relatively limited exploration of governance as a central theme called for new reflections. How exactly has the thesis contributed to advancing knowledge in cultural policy? In several ways, as I will describe hereafter:

Firstly, as regards the understanding of cultural policy, I have suggested that, in a context of systemic transformation, it can only remain relevant if it broadens its scope, and engages more actively with the environmental and societal issues that are determining to sustainability, adaptation and regeneration today. In my view, it is particularly important to make this change effective in the practice of local cultural policy, aligning it with knowledge on the relation between culture, cultural policy and sustainability at the local level which has developed in academia and in policy practice over the past decade. This is also valid for approaches to governance, which should further acknowledge the multiplicity of agents that are significant from the perspective of culture and sustainability, recognise that knowledge around sustainability and communities’ own experiences should infiltrate deliberation and decision-making, and develop more sophisticated, interconnected approaches as a result. In addition to providing guidance for governance practices, these reflections can also inform future research in this field.

Secondly, I have emphasised the need for more critical, reflexive approaches to the conditions in which cultural aspects can enable sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration. The thesis highlights the mediating role that culture can have vis-à-vis sustainability challenges, complementing existing approaches in this area, including those that, with a quasi-missionary

style, have emphasised the importance of culture but have done so with limited critical perspectives. In this respect, I have stressed that cultural aspects may have either positive or negative effects in terms of sustainability. This has also been a learning path for me, as writing this thesis has provided me with the opportunity to engage more critically with some of the assumptions around the relationship between culture and sustainability, identifying those elements in culture that may become obstacles to sustainable development, and developing a more nuanced approach accordingly. The set of propositions for revising cultural policy that I presented in chapter 3, and the establishment of spaces for deliberation and negotiation I proposed in chapter 7, should allow to better understand and address the ambivalence of culture, and enable the practice of cultural policy to evolve accordingly.

Thirdly, I have argued the centrality of governance, particularly when understood not as a narrow series of deliberation and decision-making processes but rather as a broader terrain made of multiple processes that involve knowledge, negotiation, deliberation, and decision-making. This has been an underexplored area in cultural policy research, and I would argue that this thesis has made a significant contribution to its renewed understanding. More specifically, in chapter 7 I presented a new framework for the governance of local cultural policy from the perspective of sustainability. I argued that the general directions presented in this framework, resulting from a comprehensive analysis of the interactions between cultural policy and sustainability, their general implications at the local level, and the ability of governance to address them, should be adapted to specific local circumstances.

By exploring the interconnectedness between governance change and policy change, and emphasising governance frameworks as one element in a broader palette of policy tools, as explored in chapter 6, I have also highlighted that governance is significant not only because it may illustrate a particular ecosystem of agents but also because it can provide the setting in which cultural policy evolves. Such evolution can be informed by external factors such as the challenges raised by sustainability. I have also shown how, as a result, governance becomes a setting in which the place of cultural aspects vis-à-vis such broader challenges is negotiated, and where the scope and understanding of cultural policy can evolve as a result. This also serves to reinforce the profoundly political nature of governance processes and, again, stresses the need to deploy critical approaches when researching governance. These are issues with which cultural policy research should engage more frequently. When analysing governance, I have integrated public policy theories, including in particular policy feedback theory and the advocacy coalition framework. This is merely an initial exploration, yet I think that there is potential to make better use of existing policy theories when researching cultural policy. More broadly, the thesis has modestly aimed to combine knowledge from different disciplines, in what remains an approach deserving further exploration in multiple directions.

Fourthly, this thesis serves to emphasise the importance of the local, as represented by neighbourhoods, cities and towns, as the locus of significant negotiations in the context of the frictions between culture and sustainability. This suggests the need to devote more attention to analysing local cultural policy within cultural policy research than has generally been the case. Attention to cities in cultural policy research has frequently tended to focus on aspects like 'placemaking' and urban regeneration through culture, on the one hand, and on how the nexus of economic development and external visibility could be facilitated through 'creative cities' and similar brands. Adding to this, it is necessary to examine how local cultural policy may be

affected, and address the tensions generated, by sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration, and to what extent, in specific cities and towns, it generates some spaces of autonomy to navigate those tensions. I have exemplified this in the case of Barcelona, with examples such as community-led management, the 'community balance' framework and the evolution in the city's culture strategies, but certainly there are examples of 'minor realities' (Hage 2011: 8) elsewhere that deserve consideration.

Resulting from the previous point, an increasing focus on the local does not imply neglecting the importance of other levels. Indeed, the thesis has demonstrated the need to better integrate a multilevel lens in cultural policy research, as well as, in the applied domain of cultural policy, to develop governance frameworks that acknowledge territorial interdependences. Both this and the elements I highlighted in the previous paragraph serve to emphasise the need to overcome nation-based perspectives as the central location of cultural policy research as well as, more generally, the need to rethink how territoriality is addressed in cultural policy. In this respect, it seems necessary to move towards approaches that are less based on territorial sovereignty and more on the interconnectedness of cultural flows – that is, recognising that the reality of culture is one that vastly transcends territorial structures and that, therefore, any policy that is strictly bound to a territory will be inevitably incomplete. While developing cultural policy with a focus on people requires exploring specific cultural opportunities at local or national level, the analysis inevitably calls for acknowledging that local developments interact with global processes and, similarly, policy responses should ideally involve better connecting the action of local, national, and other tiers of government. I would argue that local cultural policy has generally found it easier to acknowledge this territorial interdependence than national cultural policy, and therefore it provides a suitable setting where to develop future explorations.

8.2. Implications

As I stated in the first chapter, this thesis has aimed both to contribute to academic research and to effectively inform approaches to cultural policymaking, thus adopting a more applied perspective. While I recognise that research and policymaking may develop separately and would not claim that all research needs to engage in applied policy, areas like the governance of cultural policy can benefit from a combination of the critical insight that research may be able to provide and the effective testing of suitable, locally-relevant processes. Furthermore, in a context in which, as I suggested earlier, cultural policy needs to evolve in line with the challenges and questions raised by sustainability, there is much to gain by strengthening dialogue between research and policymaking. This is valid at all levels, including local cultural policy. Research collaborations in this respect could benefit from a combination of academic disciplines, including sustainability studies and other areas of public policy research, which may contribute to an evolution in thinking and in the language or terminology used in cultural policy, as well as the introduction of policy approaches from other policy fields. I have emphasised the need for the governance of cultural policy to make better use of knowledge, of diverse nature, and this opens opportunities for stronger synergies between research and governance processes.

Because the findings of the thesis suggest revising the practical implementation of cultural policy and governance models in this area, they could have implications in the training of future cultural policymakers and cultural managers engaged in policy design and implementation. Broadening

the scope of reflections and becoming familiar with language used in other disciplines, in order to engage more comfortably with issues beyond the arts and heritage and address broader societal challenges such as those related to sustainability, should gain centrality.

This is in keeping with the understanding that skills related to the interpretation of specific, changing contexts and the ability to combine information and knowledge from different fields are central to the practice of arts and cultural management (Martinell Sempere 2001). In the specific areas addressed by this thesis, I would suggest that the need to adopt a more 'systemic' approach, as described in chapter 5, which acknowledges and interprets interdependences between culture and other areas of social life as well as the planetary crisis, becomes inescapable. Related to this is the ability to mediate between cultural processes and the issues that sustainability raises locally. Cultural managers should also be particularly sensitive to how social inequalities and obstacles to participation may have bearing on governance processes, including the ability to develop inclusive communities of practice. For both managers and policymakers, interpreting governance as an always open process, which requires testing and adaptation, becomes important, and calls for suitable evaluation and experimentation skills. Of course, in practice, the open, changing nature of governance needs to be balanced with the need for some degree of continuity, which is required in policy contexts, including governance frameworks, to guarantee transparency, generate trust and enable complex processes of deliberation, negotiation, and decision-making to bear fruit.

Finally, this thesis has made the case for combining elements of cultural policy research from different linguistic areas, including in particular some contributions made originally in Spanish alongside the more predominant English-speaking texts. Reflections around culture and sustainability as well as cultural rights made in Latin America and Spain, as well as studies on local cultural policy in Spain, help to enrich cultural policy studies elsewhere – among other things, because there has frequently been a stronger focus on developments at the local level (particularly in research conducted in Catalonia and Spain (Pascual 2007b, Escudero Méndez and Miralles i Ventimilla 2009, Martinell 2014, Miralles 2014a, Pascual i Ruiz 2021)), and because of how anthropological aspects of culture have been integrated in reflections around cultural rights and cultural policy, particularly in some Latin American thinking (García Canclini 2008, Teixeira Coelho 2009, Vich 2014, Barbalho 2021). There are certainly other spaces that enable this type of cross-linguistic exchange, including academic journals such as the *International Journal on Cultural Policy* and *Cultural Trends*, which, although published in English, provide opportunities for researchers around the world to make results of their research known. Similarly, the biennial International Conference on Cultural Policy Research (ICCP) provides a global encounter for researchers, with a predominance of English-speaking as well as European and Asian participants. This remains, however, an underdeveloped space when compared to other areas of knowledge and, while global exchanges across linguistic areas will never be easy, there is much to gain by enabling an exchange of knowledge and insights around issues which have a global nature, such as cultural policy and sustainability.

8.3. Issues for further research

As I mentioned in the first chapter, this thesis has drawn on the idea that there are always 'minor realities' which we rarely acknowledge (Hage 2011: 8) but which, when explored in detail, can

provide knowledge and inspiration. In this respect, any new contribution should still acknowledge that gaps remain and that other perspectives will continue to be necessary. Consequently, further to the contribution to knowledge that I have outlined above, I also identify a set of questions which would require further exploration.

Firstly, one area that could deserve further research is the examination of the specific feedback effects generated by cultural policy, including its governance, in terms of adaptation to a context of sustainability. What I presented in chapter 6 is primarily a model, which suggests, based on findings of previous research as well as the observation of governance processes in Barcelona, that connections can be established between policy change, including change in governance frameworks, and subsequent cultural policymaking, with effects that could be conducive to fostering sustainability. This serves to stress the centrality of governance and provides some general directions to contribute to the evolution of governance in the light of current challenges. However, some questions remain open, concerning how change in cultural policy in general, and in governance more specifically, could be measured, as well as a more precise exploration of specific types of policy change which may be conducive to specific dispositions in the light of sustainability challenges. The analysis of change in cultural policy could be enriched through the use of public policy theories, which have made this a central theme (see e.g. John 2012). A more detailed analysis of specific governance arrangements, which could include comparative analysis and possibly a typology of governance models, could also help to better appraise how different approaches may have different effects in terms of sustainability.

Secondly, a relatively abstract, but important, question that the thesis raises concerns the need to revise how cultural policy deals with time. In chapter 3 I argued, in one of the propositions for better connecting cultural policy with sustainability, that cultural policy should reconsider the tension between permanence and change, moving towards a more nuanced approach, that alternatively recognises the value of preserving and of changing forms of culture and of relationships with one another and with the planet. Adopting a more nuanced, complex approach involves breaking with the frequent prevalence of creativity as change in cultural policy discourses, and the related constant production of new projects and activities. The latter can be connected to the centrality of novelty in the economic system, which infiltrates human mindsets and all forms of organisation (Jackson 2017), ultimately limiting our ability to enable sustainability, adaptation, and regeneration.

While change and evolution are essential to an understanding of culture as dynamic, as I argued in chapter 3, it may also be necessary to reflect on how cultural policy can integrate understandings of time that are less linear and more comprehensive or complex, in which knowledge and other inherited elements gain relevance. At very operational levels, this involves, among many other things, focusing less on new productions in the arts and cultural expressions, and allowing more time for learning processes and community engagement (Baltà Portolés 2022b). More broadly, it requires considering existing notions of creativity, drawing on the understanding that they can also embody a practice of care and of maintaining and repairing 'our world' (Wilson 2018). This lies away from most mainstream approaches to creativity in cultural policy, which tend to privilege change and disruption. It also calls for renegotiating the place of heritage, including acquired knowledge and intangible heritage, in contemporary culture. In all of these areas, much could be learnt by better integrating non-Western knowledge, particularly in its non-linear understanding of time (see e.g. Yunkaporta 2019), in our notions of

culture and in the ways cultural policy is conceived. This is an area to which I would personally like to devote attention in the future.

Thirdly, at the end of chapter 7 I briefly addressed the potential role of technologies in aiding the emergence of new, more participatory forms of governance, and recognised that this was an issue to which I had not been able to devote sufficient attention. As mentioned then, the use of open data (Delfin 2022), digital apps and blockchain technologies (Catlow and Rafferty 2022) open new opportunities for more inclusive forms of participation and more horizontal multi-actor relationships. At the same time, this also raises challenges from the perspective of equality of agency among citizens and other stakeholders, as well as a range of threats ranging from privacy to the autonomy of local spaces vis-à-vis technology platforms, through the impact of Artificial Intelligence on ethics and on the understanding of cultural practice (Kulesz 2018, Crane 2019, McKelvey and Hunt 2019, Kulesz and Dutoit 2020, UNESCO 2021). This is an area that deserves further exploration, in both research and practice. Given the complexity of the issues raised, future research in this area should be of a cross-disciplinary nature, addressing the opportunities raised by technology and how to take advantage of them in learning, deliberation, and decision-making, but also the resulting implications in social, technological and political terms.

Fourthly, future research on the governance of local cultural policy could take advantage of governance approaches existing in other areas of local policymaking. When examining evidence from Barcelona in chapter 4 I briefly referred to the perception that the governance of local cultural policy has not integrated some tools enabling citizen engagement which have been tested in other areas of local policy. I have also highlighted how, very often, formal spaces for the governance of cultural policy remain more restrictive in terms of the stakeholders involved than is the case elsewhere – i.e. they tend to focus on professionals and organisations with an explicit mission around the arts and heritage, rather than involving a broader cross-section of citizens and organisations. There are, of course, specificities to cultural policy, such as those I outlined in chapter 3, which mean that designing any governance framework will require specific tailoring. At the same time, there is potential to examine how governance approaches and tools in other policy areas, and particularly those which have integrated reflections on sustainability and adaptation, could provide some inspiration. In the particular case of Barcelona, this could involve analysing the governance of environmental policy, which has over the years broadened to include a broad cross-section of stakeholders. This is an area to which I would have liked to devote more attention during the thesis but which, mainly due to time constraints, has been difficult to sufficiently explore in practice.

Therefore, while the thesis has presented many arguments for revising the ways in which the governance of cultural policy is conceived, it has also opened doors towards new questions. I hope that others will find inspiration in them. I also understand this thesis as part of a long-term process of learning and inquiry for myself and look forward to new opportunities where to further research these new questions.

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