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Book review: Merkel, Janet (2014): The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy. Hrsg. von Daniel Silver and Grodach (2013). International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 38(3), S. 1124–1125.

Daniel Silver and Grodach, Carl 2013 (eds): *The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy. Global Perspectives.* London and New York: Routledge.

For more than two decades now, there's a growing political awareness of culture(s) importance for urban re-development and economic vitality in post-industrial transformation processes. Ever since, culture has been mobilized and instrumentalized to achieve various objectives such as competitiveness, growth, quality of life and social cohesion in cities. Yet, we know only little about the politics, governance and policy processes behind these objectives and thus, the political dimension of culture in contemporary urban development processes. Many cities have seen the rise of specifically urban cultural policies that differ substantively from national or regional policy agendas. Unfortunately, cultural policy research represents a marginal academic field whether in cultural studies, political science or urban politics. While political science has almost neglected cultural policy as a field of inquiry, cultural studies is deeply divided between the critical analytical cultural studies and the mostly descriptive policy-oriented advocacy branch, and urban politics focused on economic development as the main empirical field to build knowledge and theories of urban politics. However, several scholars from social science backgrounds currently started carving out the relationship of cities, cultural policy and governance and explained the need for comparative urban cultural policy studies (see Anheier/Isar 2012, Navarro/Clark 2012).

Thus, the edited volume by Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver is a timely contribution to a newly emerging research field of urban cultural policy studies. The volume assembles well-known authors from the field of urban cultural economy with many young scholars. Its 18 chapters with individual in-depth case studies are organized around four main issues in contemporary urban cultural policy: (1) urban cultural policy as an object of governance, (2) rewriting the creative city script, (3) implications of urban cultural policy agendas for creative production and (4) coalition networks, alliances, and identity framing.

The first part of the volume explores shifting governance arrangements in and through cultural policy's evolving role. Kate Oakley (Chapter 1) discusses London's cultural policy turn from cultural production towards consumption in the last two decades. She points out the strong connection of party agendas with cultural policy objectives, particularly New Labour's concern with creative industries and the fusion of social and economic ends in urban cultural policies. Terry Nichols Clark

and Daniel Silver (Chapter 2) depict how Chicago's mayors introduced cultural policy to transform a city with weak cultural traditions to provide 'more public goods, more managed growth, and more amenities' (p. 39). In Chapter 3, Eleonora Pasotti describes how the introduction of direct mayoral elections and a constitutional reform in Columbia led to the emergence of new independent political leaders and innovative mayors on the municipal level who promoted civicness through cultural policy in Bogotá. By analyzing Rotterdam's cultural policy, Arie Romein and Jan Jacob Trip (Chapter 4) remind us on a core insight in urban politics research, namely that urban cultural policy is embedded in forms of multi-level-governance that can deeply affect the cultural economy of cities. In the fifth chapter, Jong Youl Lee and Chad Anderson discuss the culture-driven economic development models that were introduced by two consecutive conservative mayors to transform Seoul's quality of live and competitiveness through culture and design.

The second section focuses on contestations around creative city agendas, how different actors reacted and even started rewriting it in local terms. Discussing Toronto, Deborah Leslie and Norma Rantisi (Chapter 6) analyse the implementation of La Tohu circus arts district in Montréal and how it is accompanied with a collaborative and participatory model of governance in the neighbourhood. Carl Grodach (Chapter 7) examines how Austin's focus on music clashed with creative city ideas and calls attention to the fact that with creative industries agendas cultural policy funding shifted away from nonprofits arts activities and increased internal competition for limited funding and support. Doreen Jakob (Chapter 8) discusses how and why the Berlin Mayor's plan for a 'Kunsthalle' and a temporary art show provoked collective protest from the artistic and cultural scene. To round off the section, Chris Gibson and Gordon Waitt (Chapter 9) present a relational perspective on urban cultural policymaking in analyzing how the city of Wollongong is enabled but also limited by 'borrowing' from nearby Sydney.

The third section examines how cultural planning attempts often fail to account for or even work against local creative production. Tom Hutton and Catherine Murray (Chapter 10) analyze Vancouver's complex cultural governance structure. Lily Kong (Chapter 11) contrasts two heritage districts and artist-led redevelopment initiatives in Singapore with different policy approaches. Graeme Evans (Chapter 12) discusses the ambitious framework 'Via 2018', a transnational cultural planning

approach to foster regional identity in a network of towns and cities in the Euregion Meuse Rhine spanning three different countries (Netherland, Belgium, Germany). For Los Angeles, Elizabeth Currid-Halkett and Vivian Wang (Chapter 13) scrutinize the relation between urban arts policy and the needs of the city's cultural occupations and industrial sectors. With a strong focus on supporting creative industries, Los Angeles fails to recognize the potential of the diverse artistic communities in the city, their innovative role and the co-dependency of the different cultural sectors.

The last section elaborates on emerging coalitions and networks that shape cultural policy from a 'bottom up' perspective. For New York, Michael Indergaard (Chapter 14) analyzes political opportunities for cultural and creative industries growth coalitions in influencing economic development policy. Stephen W. Sawyer (Chapter 15) explores the political mobilization of an artist space in Paris through the notion of counter-democracy. Clemente J.Navarro (Chapter 16) compares 'entertainment machine' agendas and socially oriented planning approaches in Spanish municipalities by using factor analysis and policy network analysis. Samuel Shaw (Chapter 17) demonstrates how the arts scenes benefit from arts policymaking in positioning Portland as a legitimate site of arts production in the global arts field. In the last chapter, Daniel Silver discusses two grassroots cultural policy initiatives as emerging political coalitions in Toronto and their different tactics in reframing artist's contribution to neighbourhood development.

While the rich diversity of the empirical content is the strength of the volume, it ultimately contains single case studies that do not follow an overall comparative research framework, suggest very different influencing variables in cultural policymaking and ultimately, yield the reader to apply a comparative perspective. Thus, I missed a concluding chapter that discusses the contributions of individual chapters in order to sketch out a future research agenda for urban cultural policy studies and to reconnect with the editor's passionate call for 'urbanizing cultural policy' (p.1) and comparative research. Furthermore, the case studies reveal only little theoretical applications from existing literatures in urban politics, cultural policy research, cultural studies, policy analysis or urban cultural theory. The case studies are descriptive than explanatory, nor do they explain what the field of urban cultural policy can contribute to our understanding of urban politics and governance. Nevertheless, the volume provides a good introduction to the variety

and scope of urban cultural policies, its highly contextual and often contingent nature and its deeply political character. Hopefully, it provides a much-needed empirical foundation for more comparative analysis on the political dimension of culture in urban development.

Janet Merkel, Center for Cultural Policy, Hertie School of Governance Berlin

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