

THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL POLICY MAKING

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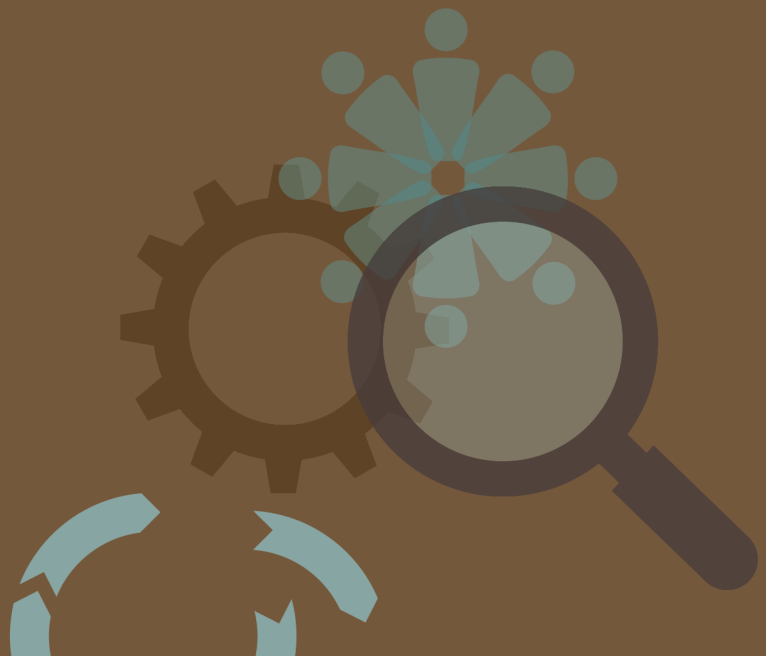
ABSTRACT

RECENT ATTEMPTS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENGAGE IN PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING HINT AT A WILLINGNESS FOR A MORE DEMOCRATICALLY INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO POLICY. HOWEVER, THERE IS OFTEN A GAP BETWEEN THE RHETORIC OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE POLICY-MAKING INITIATIVES. THERE IS CONCERN THAT, IN CERTAIN INSTANCES, THE TERMS 'CO-PRODUCTION' AND 'PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY' HAVE BEEN ADOPTED WHILST THE PARTICIPATORY NATURE OF POLICY-MAKING PROCEDURES HAS, IN REALITY, REMAINED VERY LIMITED. THIS ARTICLE AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THESE BROADER DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES AROUND THE DEMOCRATIC NATURE OF 'CO-PRODUCED' POLICY PRACTICES. THIS ARTICLE CONSIDERS CALGARY'S RECENT 'CO-PRODUCED' CULTURAL PLAN AS A POTENTIAL EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING. USING A FRAMEWORK BASED ON KEY CONCEPTS WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC THEORY, INCLUDING WORKS BY ARNSTEIN (1969), RAWLS (1971) AND PATEMAN (1970, 2012), WE CONSIDER HOW THE STRATEGY ADOPTS PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES, AND QUESTION HOW THE PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAS SUCCEEDED AND FAILED IN CREATING MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION.

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Participatory policy-making initiatives like participatory budgeting and citizen assemblies have long been heralded as a way of widening and deepening democratic engagement (Baiocchi, 2001; Coleman & Sampaio, 2017; Dryzek & Pickering, 2017). In the UK, this has been especially apparent within the social care and health sectors (Needham & Carr, 2009; Sorrentino, Sicilia, & Howlett, 2018), where projects like NHS Citizen have attempted a co-productive approach which aims for a system in which “the people delivering and planning services and those using them are equal partners in the design, delivery and review of services” (NHS, 2019). This drive for participatory policy-making comes at a time when public spaces, which have historically provided opportunities for political discourse and democratic engagement, such as youth centres, libraries and community centres, are depoliticised or so drastically underfunded that they are forced to close (Fenton, 2018). Furthermore, a neoliberal view of democracy, which essentially casts citizens as consumers (Brown, 2015, 2016), still rules the political imaginary. In this context, these participatory policy-making initiatives hint at a route to a more democratically inclusive approach to policy which should be embraced. However, there is often a gap between the rhetoric of democratic participation and the actual implementation of these policy-making initiatives. There is concern that, in certain instances, the terms ‘co-production’ and ‘participatory democracy’ have been adopted whilst the participatory nature of policy-making procedures has, in reality, remained very limited (Jancovich, 2017; Jancovich & Bianchini, 2013).

In this paper, we investigate how participatory policy-making has been extended to contemporary cultural policy. Using Calgary’s recent ‘co-produced’ cultural plan (2016) as our case study, we explore the extent to which meaningful participatory policy-making has been adopted to enable citizen engagement, as well as the ways it has been limited or has failed.

Our study presents a detailed theoretical framework which details four key elements necessary for meaningful participatory policy-making: inclusivity; listening; a focus on the common good & political efficacy. This framework has been constructed through an in-depth review of the literature surrounding the concepts of participatory and deliberative democracy (Arnstein, 1969; Bohman & Rehg, 1997; Cohen, 1989; Dobson, 2014; Dryzek & Pickering, 2017; Elster, 1998; Pateman, 2012; Young, 2000). By applying this to a discourse analysis of the city’s cultural strategy, alongside interviews with the stakeholders involved in its construction, we are able to evaluate the ways in which this project succeeds and fails in creating meaningful participatory policy-making. It is our hope that our research may contribute to broader discussions around the process of creating cultural policy, as well as the potential issues and opportunities of participatory policymaking and co-production more broadly.

We begin by briefly outlining Calgary’s contextual and historical position, which make the city an interesting case study of local policy practice, followed by a brief overview of each of the four key elements needed for meaningful participatory policy-making. The main body of the paper is dedicated to exploring the extent to which these elements are achieved in Calgary’s cultural plan.

Historically, Calgary’s market-driven culture has meant that it takes “rational approaches to inform policy choices”; that is, policy-making is geared towards ensuring the effective delivery of quality services and, thus, has had “little need for a truly inclusive decision-making model” (Reece & Rosenfeld, 2012, p. 173). That is not to say that Council is not concerned with public opinion and it has, since 1997, “asked people what they think about city services, a first in Canada at the time” (Brunet-Jailly, 2012, p. 312). The municipality’s reliance on citizen feedback has expanded over the years with the Council using the information for broad policy guidance. However, the findings ultimately underline what is positive in the city, leaving little room to address outside concerns or offer alternatives to existing practices, and therefore citizen input in policy practices is limited (Brunet-Jailly, 2012). Beyond tracking the population’s general sentiments towards the municipality, the City of Calgary has shown little interest in citizen participation and community engagement when it comes to its policy aims (Reece & Rosenfeld, 2012).

Population growth over the past decade has made Calgary the third most diverse city in Canada, with 36% of the population identifying as visible and/or mixed ethnicity and over 120 languages spoken (Calgary, 2017). The influx of new voices alongside increased concerns around environmental and social structures have begun to challenge the municipality’s traditional processes and have forced an increase in “participatory like” policy-making (Brunet-Jailly, 2012). The development of the cultural plan, which began in 2015 and was completed in 2016, represents one of the municipality’s first attempts at escalating the level of civic participation in its policy-making processes.

That said, Calgary’s civic culture remains market-oriented and socially and fiscally conservative, and continues to be dominated by business communities in terms of access to decision making. Within this political environment, social issues, including

the development and support of arts and culture, “are of secondary importance and are addressed primarily through economic development goals and strategies” (Brunet-Jailly, 2012, p. 166). This approach to social policy is evident in Calgary’s past cultural strategies which have typically been organised around the city’s wider pro-business and pro-development agendas (Authority, 2005, 2010, 2018; Calgary, 1996). As a consequence, policy practices have been narrowly focused around the role of the arts in “city building”, creative skills development, tourism and talent attraction, leaving little room for policy-makers to consider cultural value outside of the city’s economic agendas.

The plan’s participatory policy-making process suggests a level of democratic accountability and indicates the municipality’s commitment to enhancing public engagement in policy practice. However, given Calgary’s existing political structures, its traditionally low engagement with citizen participation and approach to social policies, it is worth questioning how much actual power and agency the city’s residents have in this policy-making process. Specifically, does the cultural plan’s co-produced process provide citizens with the opportunity to enact substantive policy change, or is it merely paying lip-service to ideals of participatory policy-making?

Key Elements of Participatory Policy Making

Underpinning the literature on participatory policy-making is the normative assertion that a healthy democracy requires effective channels of communication between citizens and the state. There is a range of terminology used to explore the process of direct citizen engagement in policy-making. It is important to note that democracy and participation are contested concepts (Gallie, 1956). Therefore, it is important to articulate our specific use of these terms. For the purposes of this study, we draw on literature relating to deliberative democracy, Arendt’s ‘public realm’, participatory governance and co-production, and highlight four key elements central to enacting meaningful participatory policy-making. In this paper, we argue that for a policy-making process to count as meaningfully participatory, these elements must be (to some extent) present.

The first element required for meaningful participatory policy-making is inclusivity (*who is in the space*). Arendt argues that the value of the ‘public realm’, as opposed to the ‘private realm’, is that it allows for the “simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects...for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised” (Arendt, 1959, p. 57). A primary concern for Arendt is the plurality and diversity of voices within a democratic space: “the end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective” (1959, p. 58). Therefore, a consistent concern within all the literature pertaining to democratic engagement is the inclusion of a broad and diverse range of citizens. This is paramount to the legitimacy of the policy decisions emerging from the space, and, as various theorists have argued (Cornwall, 2004; Pateman, 2012), the quality of the policy created.

Our second key element is listening and exchange (*the nature of the space*). This refers to exchanges between citizens, but also an equitable exchange between policy-makers and citizens. Particularly in cases like Calgary’s Cultural Plan, where the state is instigating participation, this element requires a levelling of policy-making power.

Dialogue, as the encounter of those who addressed the common task of learning and acting, cannot exist if parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I communicate if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? (Freire, 1996, p. 71)

The quality of deliberation within these co-productive policy-making spaces is crucial. A considered approach to facilitation and ways of encouraging meaningful exchange within the space is key to participatory policy-making.

The third element relates to the content of these exchanges: that the discourse is oriented toward the ‘common good’ (*the focus of the space*). The notion of the ‘common good’ here draws on John Rawls’ ‘overlapping consensus’ ([1971] 1999). To simplify, we define these values in relation to John Rawls’ highly influential work on justice. His two principles of justice being: 1) equal basic rights and liberties for all in society; and 2) that economic and social inequalities must satisfy two conditions: firstly, all opportunities must be made equally accessible for all, and secondly, that any inequalities must be of the greatest benefit to the least advantaged in society (1985, p. 227). Within policy-specific forums (such as the project discussed in this paper), the

subject of discourse will be focused upon contained policy objectives – however, the ‘common good’ and principles of justice remain as underpinning values to guide decisions and discourse.

Finally, meaningful participatory policy-making requires a degree of political efficacy (*the impact of the space*). Opportunities for participatory policy-making mean little if no policy changes as a result of the process. This is a complex element, not least because within different strands of literature the term ‘political efficacy’ has significantly divergent usage. In Political Science, this term has often been taken as short hand for citizens’ feelings and perception of their own political role. The term is often used, particularly by American scholars, to describe citizens’ trust in formal politics (sometimes referred to as ‘external political efficacy’) and their sense of possible personal political influence (sometimes referred to as ‘internal political efficacy’) (Morrell, 2005; Pollock, 1983; Wolak, 2018). However, in this paper, this element is concerned with the political efficacy of the policy-making process in terms of the substantive changes to policy and its implementation that resulted from the co-productive process. In other words, did the participatory policy-making process adopted in Calgary have an impact upon the policy and practice of cultural policy in the city?

It is important to acknowledge that the four elements laid out here, when taken together, present an ideal type of participatory policy-making. It is unrealistic to expect that any participatory policy-making initiative may be able to perfectly achieve all four: indeed, there are challenging conflicts between certain elements. For example, there is an established body of literature within democratic theory pertaining to the conflicts between inclusivity, listening and a focus on the common good – which particularly relates to notions of freedom of speech (Fiss, 1996; Fox & Saunders, 2019). It is beyond the scope of this paper to delve deeply into these debates. In using this framework we acknowledge the concern that we are assessing Calgary’s policy-making initiative against unrealistic goals and, arguably, condemning it to failure. However, this assumes a binary and simplistic notion of success and failure. The purpose of this research is to explore participatory policy-making practices, and the ways in which they may achieve certain elements of meaningful participation in policy-making, and what the limits to their approach may be. There are likely to be multiple successes and failures contained within each project and, with this framework, this paper aims at recognising where these successes and failures may lie to better understand and learn from this participatory policy-making process.

Using the four elements of meaningful participation as the basis for our normative critique, we have employed Fairclough and Fairclough’s (2012) argumentation framework to conduct an analysis of key policy and planning documents, as well as interviews with policy-makers and stakeholders. The analysis allows us to identify and assess the claims, goals, circumstances and values that both policy-makers and policy documents draw on to justify the use of participatory policy-making practices in the cultural plan. In short, it provides greater insights into the processes of reasoning, the motivation and the aims driving participatory policy-making in Calgary. This framework guided a textual analysis of 20 interviews with policy-makers, members of Calgary Arts Development and Calgary Economic Development and leaders from the city’s cultural sector involved in or associated with the planning process, as well as relevant policy documents and broader city strategies (Authority, 2018; Calgary, 2016, 2017, 2018; MDB Insight, 2016). Additionally, we performed a genealogy of cultural policy practices in Calgary in order to situate the development of the co-produced plan within its broader historical context.

Our aim here is twofold: first, we want to evaluate what claims, goals and values are evident in the discourse and how they speak to issues of meaningful participation; second, we want to uncover tensions between these claims, goals and values and the reality of the plan’s development and outcome. The remainder of the paper considers what these discourses and tensions reveal about the plan’s success (and failure) in achieving meaningful participatory policy-making.

The framework applied

A diversity of perspectives and life experiences are crucial for meaningful participatory policy-making. Iris Marion Young (2000, p. 6) argues that democracy depends on the “wisdom of the expression and criticism of the diverse options of all the members of the society.” Furthermore, Young (2000) argues that “political inclusion requires openness to a plurality of modes of communication” (p. 13). Alongside finding more ways of including those who are disengaged, excluded or marginalised from democratic engagement, we must explore alternative approaches to discourse, so that all within the space are able to

contribute. One of the key normative claims which underpin democracy is that each citizen should have an equal opportunity to engage within the political discourse which governs the society in which they live – this makes inclusivity a fundamental element to any democratic project.

Policy-makers in Calgary frequently spoke of the need for multiple voices to be included in guiding policy, arts programming, future cultural development and grant strategies. One senior policy-maker emphasised a desire for an inclusive design moving forward that would embrace principles like “one size fits one; not about us without us; perpetuating a virtuous cycle, not a vicious cycle” (Interview, 2018). Others acknowledged that the city’s understanding of diversity was often too narrow in its focus on visible minorities and needed to be expanded to include “gender, sexual orientation, or other kinds of invisible minorities, like mental wellness”. The aspiration for Calgary’s cultural plan to include many voices through a variety of different forms of participation is also evident in the plan’s development process. The various platforms for participation included 75 individual interviews, 6 community soundings, 7 topic-driven focus groups, 2 online engagement platforms, 2 cross-department workshops, 1 cultural forum and 600 telephone surveys.

However, beyond ensuring those who are traditionally ‘excluded or marginalised’ from policy-making are present, Young (2000, p. 13) argues that “political inclusion requires openness to a plurality of modes of communication”. She suggests that we must explore the “transformation of the style and terms of public debate” (Young, 2000, p. 13) – creating spaces in which there are multiple ways to engage in political discourse which acknowledge and value the various requirements and expertise in the space. Techniques may include hosting discussion events in local spaces where citizens already feel safe and able to voice opinions, or ensuring there are translators present where there may be language barriers. A common criticism of deliberative democracy is that it limits political communication to formal debate and places too great an emphasis on rationality over emotive or narrative based political expression (Gambetta, 1998; Nussbaum, 2013; Pateman, 2012). More radical participatory policy-making initiatives have included theatre and storytelling techniques to alter traditional power dynamics and improve inclusivity in discourse (Boal, 1998). Overall, meaningful participatory policy-making ought not only to ensure a diverse range of participants are present, but also seek alternative approaches to the conversation to ensure everyone is able to speak.

Calgary’s cultural strategy attempted to engage with many voices through the various forms of participation listed above. However, the spaces it provided for public deliberation did not go far enough in trying to create inclusive spaces for alternative approaches to dialogue and remained relatively closed in terms of the diversity of participants and effective engagement. For example, the list of the 75 one-on-one interviews is narrowly focused on Council members, senior staff of arts organisations, educational institutions, design firms, artists, economic development agencies and ‘social innovation practitioners’. The community soundings largely took place in affluent neighbourhoods, and as one policy-maker notes, “were not broadly attended”. These soundings were facilitated as a presentation of the Cultural Plan by leaders from the City Council followed by an opportunity for feedback. This feedback has not been publicly documented, and it is difficult to determine whether these events had any impact on final policy decisions.

The plan’s 600 randomised phone surveys were done across the city using a Computer-Assisted-Telephone- Interview (CATI) system. There is no indication whether or not these surveys were conducted in any other language than English. The Cultural Forum was largely members from the city’s civic partnerships and invitees from previous engagement platforms. This suggests that it was primarily attended by those who were already heavily involved in the strategies planning process.

Despite claims by policy-makers that the definition of diversity needs to be broadened in policy development, there were some exclusions; notably Calgary’s disabled arts community. An employee at one of the city’s largest disability arts organisations commented that policy-makers focused on “Diversity relating to everything except people with disabilities.... it’s obvious in my mind their definition of diversity was not taken to the fullest extent of what diversity should be” (Interview, 2018). There is no evidence to suggest that accommodations were made to make events accessible for those with physical disabilities or extra learning needs.

Generally, there were clear attempts to include a broad range of perspectives in the Cultural Plan, including implementing a number of engagement techniques from phone calls to live focus groups. However, the diversity of the participants involved was limited to people already engaged in the city’s cultural sector. It is important to note that within a city of 1.2 million inhabitants, ensuring an entirely representative process faces significant challenges, however, from our research, we have found limited consideration for approaches to engage with a broad and diverse range of citizens. For example, alternative locations or

approaches to discourse, beyond traditional debate, formal presentations, or question/answer formats were not explored. In many ways, participation in the development process was simply a more robust version of the city's earlier satisfaction surveys, but failed to demonstrate more meaningful participatory policy-making.

We now turn our attention to the quality of listening and exchange within participatory policy-making initiatives. Whilst the notion of enabling political voice is often emphasised in the literature, 'political listening' is often overlooked. Political voice means little if no one is prepared to listen (Gambetta, 1998). Cornwall & Coelho (2007, p. 16) argue that good facilitation is key in challenging "the reproduction of old hierarchies and exclusions, and enabling a greater diversity of voices to be heard." This echoes work done by Andrew Dobson (2014), who argues that "we should endeavour to highlight the spectacle and skill of listening as a highly political act." This does not mean the immediate sacrifice of one's own views to the views of another, but encourages citizens to engage with and attempt to understand alternate views, as well as maintaining an openness to having views change (Fishkin, 1991). In this way, listening within policy-making requires the relinquishment of power: both parties within the discourse must have an equitable degree of power for meaningful exchange to occur.

In developing Calgary's Cultural Plan, policy-makers created many opportunities for exchange, but did these events engage in active listening? Two documents, in particular, provide insight into how the development process listened to those citizens who provided feedback: *Calgary Culture Plan Report Back: What we Heard, What We Did* (City of Calgary, 2016) and *Cultural Plan for the City of Calgary: What We Heard Report* (MDB Insight, 2016). The first report, drawn up by the City of Calgary, reflects on the aforementioned Cultural Forum. At this event, participants were asked to respond to four pre-established themes around the role of arts and culture in the city. This report is a compilation of the main responses to each of the themes. Respondents indicated a desire for increased spaces for diverse expression that also provides equitable and affordable access to participate on all levels (creation and audience); the need to focus on reaching, connecting and including others; and criticism of traditional forms of cultural programming that can be seen as exclusionary in governance and programming.

The latter document, *Cultural Plan for the City of Calgary: What We Heard Report* (2016), was generated by MDB Insight (a private consultancy firm employed by the Council) and was meant to recap the range of engagement activities used in the plan's development process and reflect on participants' comments and ideas. We found a marked shift in how claims, goals and values were represented from one document to the next. For example, claims around diversity in the first document centred on issues of equality in practice, expression and participation. However, these same claims were presented in the MDB Insight report as a desire to promote Calgary's 'diversity advantage', by pointing to the diverse voices present in the city's cultural sector as a way of enhancing outward perceptions of Calgary; attracting and retaining talent; and encouraging economic growth through the mixing of diverse voices and ideas. How the MDB report interprets participants' feedback from the Cultural Forum transforms concerns around diversity and equality into concerns for the importance of culture and diversity for city building and branding. It should be noted that an analysis of both this document and the final cultural plan confirms that the priorities and discourses used in the strategy align more heavily with the MDB report.

Our analysis demonstrates a poor quality of listening in this policy-making process. The City Council failed to create an adequate opportunity for alternative opinions or challenges to their views and did not relinquish any policy-making power to the citizens who participated. That the themes of the 'Cultural Forum' were pre-determined was the first indicator of a relatively closed process. Additionally, there is clear evidence of cherry-picking and appropriation of the contributions made by Forum participants to better suit the City's pre-existing priorities around economic growth and city branding. Rather than encouraging the opportunity to shape policy in new directions, the municipality's approach to cultural policy remains heavily influenced by its market driven culture which restricts, and as demonstrated above, even fails to achieve the possibility of considering alternative forms of cultural value.

According to our framework, a key element of a meaningful participatory policy-making process requires that the discourse within the space be oriented towards the 'common good' rather than solely individualistic or monetary considerations. To be clear, this does not mean that we categorise all economic discourse as detrimental to the goals of participatory policy-making. On the contrary, we acknowledge that there are various purposes around economic imperatives that are geared towards an ideal common good. However, these considerations ought to be treated as a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves. As aforementioned, our conception of the common good draws on John Rawls' principles of justice as a collective sense of the values which govern society.

The desire to ‘maximise Calgary’s diversity advantage’ was regularly referenced by both policy-makers and planning documents and is one of the plan’s five main strategies (Calgary, 2017; MDB Insight, 2016). This previously mentioned concept focuses on promoting a diverse range of people and talent present in the city, as well as encouraging diverse groups to work together to maximise chances of innovation. The goal, according to the strategy documents, is to foster intercultural exchange, as well as shifting local, national and international perceptions of the city by showing how Calgary has “evolved to be more cosmopolitan, diverse, and open to all” (Calgary, 2017). This idea of maximising a ‘diversity advantage’ is born from neo-liberal and meritocratic ideals of city branding and economic growth linked to entrepreneurialism, creative ingenuity and the inevitable success of talent and hard work (Mould, 2018; Peck, 2010). Here diversity and the common good are (re)positioned around a narrow and unequal ideal of a ‘prosperous city’. Rather than the notion of a collective coming together to promote the equal distribution of wealth and opportunities across ethnicities, abilities and genders (to answer Rawls’ second principle of justice), Calgary characterises the collaboration of the collective as a tool for market growth.

As hinted at earlier, Calgary’s cultural policies have a long history of narrow instrumentalism which, since the 1990s, have linked arts and culture to broader ‘city-building’ aims (Calgary, 1996). To be clear, we are not positioning the city’s framing of arts in economic terms as unusual; culture has been used in urban and economic regeneration strategies around the world for decades (Gray, 2017; O’Brien, 2014; Parkinson, 1993). However, what is noteworthy is the persistent lack of attention that Calgary’s cultural policies pay towards issues of democratic inclusion and access. That is, historically, the city’s policies make no arguments for the democratisation of culture. There is no mention of broadening access to culture, making culture available to the many, not the few, nor is attention paid to people’s ability to access participation and who are excluded from participation altogether (Hesmondhalgh, Oakley, Lee & Nisbett 2015). Instead, Calgary’s policy-makers consistently address the social benefits of the arts in terms of participation outcomes, such as the ability of artistic expression and practice to develop a civic identity, develop job skills, revitalise communities through cultural regeneration projects and enhance social skills in children (Authority, 2005, 2015; Calgary, 1996). The lack of consideration towards access and the framing of social benefits of arts and culture in terms of developing human capital and creating vibrant, economically successful communities reflects the city’s market-led approach to social development. Therefore, the plan’s framing of diversity and inclusion as city building tools reflects the city’s established policy practice of addressing social issues through an economic lens rather than through the equitable distribution of social goods. In this version of the ‘common good’, the ‘common’ is not an equal society and the ‘good’ does not concern itself with basic rights and opportunities. Rather, the discourses used by policy-makers within the city’s Cultural Plan are reinforcing a notion of the common good that is decidedly not concerned with notions of economic and social equality. In this respect, the City of Calgary is failing to adequately address the element of common good necessary for meaningful participation.

It is also important to note another critical aspect of the common good, which is somewhat lacking in Rawls’ principles, namely that our responsibility is not only toward our contemporary fellow citizens, but also future/past generations. Arendt (1959) writes, “what we have in common is not only with those who live with us, but also with those who were here before and those who will come after us” (p. 55).

Although there is little consideration of the future of the city and its citizens outside of economic growth imperatives, there is a renewed focus by Calgary policy-makers on the past with regard to the city’s indigenous community. As part of a nationwide focus on recognition and reconciliation, Calgary Arts Development is “currently undertaking some work with an indigenous artist’s advisory circle to guide in designing programs specifically for indigenous art” (Interview, 2018). Furthermore, the cultural plan points to an Indigenous Policy Framework (currently under development) “that will ... focus on reducing barriers to public participation and support economic, social and political advancement of indigenous people” (Calgary, 2017). This emphasis on the city’s indigenous past is a positive contribution to the Cultural Plan in terms of a focus on the common good. However, as it is part of a broader national campaign, its inclusion cannot be solely attributed to the policy-makers who led this process.

The primary function of any participatory policy-making process is to create or change policy in the hope that ‘on the ground’ change occurs. In this policy-making process, citizens participated with the expectation that the cultural policies of Calgary would change (to some extent) according to their input. However, as is the case in many participatory policy-making initiatives, the legitimate legal power to alter policy continuously remained with the policy-makers. The dependence on the state for legitimacy is a trait regularly criticised in various forms of participatory and deliberative democracy. Florida (2013) argues

that deliberative democracy offers only a tokenistic form of citizen empowerment, and uses Habermas' 'twofold source of legitimacy' for illustration: "a democratic decision may be founded: first, a discursive and deliberative legitimacy, produced in the public sphere; second, the institutional legitimacy deriving from the rule of law within a democratic State and its constitutional foundations" (p. 7). Although citizens are brought into the decision-making process in the majority of deliberative democratic forums, the final decision rests with policy-makers. This failure to shift power can be extended to participatory policy-making processes, and to our case study in particular.

It is in relation to political efficacy where the issues with hollow participatory policy-making processes are underlined. Our analysis reveals this process as consultative, rather than meaningfully 'co-productive' (Arnstein, 1969). Within this policy-making process, Calgary did not relinquish policy-making power from the Local Authority to the citizens involved. Whilst a number of citizens were consulted, the policy-makers continuously set the agenda and carefully selected which of the public responses they wished to emphasise – on occasion even subverting the views collected to better fit their pre-existing priorities (as outlined above).

This concern is separate from whether the Cultural Plan actually impacted upon cultural policy and delivery of culture in Calgary. Whilst policy-makers may have failed to relinquish decision-making power, they may have been effective in terms of enacting change. However, evidence of the impact of the cultural plan released in 2017 is minimal.

While policy-makers noted that "celebrating Calgary's diversity advantage [is] going to be something that's more explicit and more intentional in our granting process" (Interview, 2018), there is no evidence of any changes to funding practices. Calgary's arms-length funding agency Calgary Arts Development is researching equity and diversity. However, they have yet to release an official diversity statement and as a result, inclusion and diversity remain a low priority in granting processes. Furthermore, it is unclear if the research process will help address issues around diversity and inclusion in ways that will align it more directly with social equality or if it will continue to frame it in economic terms. Considering the city's market-led culture, its history with ignoring democratic social issues and the limited space with which to alter existing policy aims, it will likely be the latter.

When it comes to how the plan has effected arts institutions and arts practices in the city, we found that organisations and artists alike were either unaware of the plan or had read it, but could not remember specifics. The plan has yet to effect granting practices, despite 3 years having passed since its publication. With this in mind, it is reasonable to assume that a disconnect between the Cultural Plan and the sector will continue.

Conclusion

We argue that the development of Calgary's 2016 Cultural Plan failed to create a meaningful participatory policy-making process. Whilst some of the key elements we identified as necessary for meaningful participatory policy-making were addressed in part, others were entirely absent.

The City Council did make efforts to speak to a wide range of participants and utilised a number of techniques to reach people. However, the accessibility of these conversations was undermined by a narrow approach to different types of discourse, limited invitation, as well as a focus on English speaking and able-bodied participants.

The discourse around the notion of inclusion and its value within the Cultural Plan is reductive and predominantly neoliberal, referring to Calgary's 'diversity advantage' as a tool for growth. The citizens who participated in the plan's development process had their views recorded in a report titled 'What We Heard: What We Did'. This was then refined into a second report by MDB Insight entitled 'What We Heard'. There was a significant disparity between the two reports, and clear appropriation of the ideals spoken of within the first report by neoliberal market-based agendas suggesting a poor quality of listening. The focus of the Cultural Plan fundamentally remains on diversity as a tool for economic growth with little discussion of the distribution of this growth or its purpose in relation to the common good.

We conclude that the policy-making process could be considered a consultancy, in that citizens were consulted on their views. However, this was not an example of co-production or meaningful participatory policy-making, but instead a continuation of existing policy practices. Calgary's process largely failed to listen to the political voice of its citizens, continuously attempting to fit participants' views into pre-determined agendas around city building and branding. Whilst there was clearly a desire and

intention to involve citizens in the process, overall they failed to create meaningful opportunities for citizens to shape policy. Calgary's market-driven culture and history of low democratic participation may have reinforced limiting notions of the role of the citizen in policy-making, but by highlighting some of the barriers to meaningful participation we hope to contribute to discussions around democratic engagement in policy development.

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