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A narrative-interactionist approach to policy change analysis. Lessons from a case study of the cultural policy domain in Catalonia

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Abstract

The cultural policy domain can be considered a relevant object of study for analyzing policy change processes in which policy discourse and the ambiguity of language have a central role. However, there are few studies that analyze cultural policy and policy change. This article therefore develops an approach for analyzing policy change based on evidence from a case study of the development of cultural policy in Catalonia. In this narrative interactionist approach, policy change is taken to mean the result of the symbolic interaction among political actors, within a relatively restricted institutional framework. Policy change is conditioned by the variations in the process of symbolic legitimation of government intervention, in this case in the cultural arena. By adapting the concept of frame alignment to policy change analysis, this article shows that the alignment between policy frames and a master frame underpins this symbolic legitimation. The process of alignment is dynamic and leads to a modification of the actors' policy frames.

Keywords: policy change; policy discourse; policy frame; cultural policy; Catalonia.

Introduction

To govern is, to a great extent, to define situations in a context of ambivalence (Bauman 1991). Formulating and implementing public policies implies managing this ambiguity (Hajer and Laws 2006). As Aaron Wildavsky (1978) wrote some time ago, managing the irreconcilable is the standard fate of government. This can be seen in the cultural policy domain, a good example of how policies have come up against problems that are ever more complex, unclear, and risk-filled (Fischer and Gottweis 2012):

problems in the context of the information society (Castells 2000), marked by global economic development under the influence of a dominant financial sector, in which symbols and signs have a central place (Rifkin 2000), and by the consolidation of heterogeneous and individualized societies (Bauman 2000).

In order to gain a better understanding of the responses of cultural policies to this process, analyzing why policy changes becomes analytically and scientifically relevant. This paper understands the direction of policy change as being a primary element for analyzing its consequences. This article's object of study suggests the need to go beyond a rational choice-type approach and a conception of reality (and actors' preferences) as something stable and clearly defined.

Methodologically, the study of policy change has become split between those who emphasize changes in individual interests and preferences, in institutional rules, or most recently, changes in ideational frameworks and in institutionalized discursive practices (Schmidt and Radaelli 2004, p. 185). This article subscribes to the latter tradition, attempting to contribute to the development of concepts that allow us to overcome the individuals-versus- institutions dichotomy and thus forge links between actors and structures. One of these concepts is the frame (Goffman 1974) and more specifically, the policy frame: an organizational principle that transforms fragmented information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included (Verloo 2005, Fletcher 2009).

Despite the growing importance of policy frame analysis in the study of the policy process and policy trajectories (from Schön and Rein 1994 to Baumgartner *et al.* 2008, Lombardo *et al.* 2009 and Hurka and Nebel 2013), less attention has been given to when and how policy frames matter in policy change processes. This article therefore deals with the role of policy discourse (and political actors via policy frames) in policy change processes.

Firstly, therefore, this article presents a narrative-interactionist approach to analyzing policy change. On the one hand, the framework springs from the need to construct generic narrations that account for causality processes that are not strictly positivist (Abbot 1992). In such a narrative approach, events are the largest unit of analysis, giving shape to the complete experience which is the object of study (Abbott 2001, Barzelay and Cortazar 2004). And on the other hand, in this interactionist approach policy change is taken to mean the result of the symbolic interaction between political actors, within a relatively restricted institutional context.

Secondly, this approach is illustrated by means of an analysis of policy change in the cultural policy domain and, particularly, by means of a case study of the development of cultural policy in Catalonia. The particular characteristics of the cultural policy domain make it a scientifically relevant object of study for political science, especially as a way of illustrating policy change processes in policy domains in which policy discourse and the ambiguity of language play a central role. Cultural policy domain stresses particularly that problem definition is fundamentally a political exercise: a world shaping exercise which includes images and the assignment of values to objects, people and events, i.e. the elements that operationalize policy and politics (Stone 2002, Ingram *et al.* 2007). Moreover, culture may promote collective mobilization in order to overcome conflicts of political and economic interest, although its deep symbolic identifications may also enhance contestation and conflict (De Frantz, 2005p.51).

However, there are still few politological studies which analyze the cultural policy domain and policy change¹. For this reason, this article aims to create knowledge about policy change that can be generalized in a historically limited way (Ragin 1987) to other policy domains with similar characteristics.

The analytic approach

The analytic approach adopted in this paper includes an explanation of the role of policy discourse in policy change developed by discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2002, 2008, 2011; Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). However, it combines this approach with a symbolic interactionist perspective and specifically the concept of frame alignment (Snow *et al.* 1986) in policy change analysis. While this mixed approach is seen as being reasonable for the aims of the article, it certainly requires some reflection.

According to the discursive institutionalism, policy discourses are used as guides to action by defining the concepts and norms to be applied, identifying the problems to be solved,

developing the policy instruments to be used and framing the national policy discussion within a given policy arena. In turn, periods of policy stability can give way to ones of crisis, largely explained as a result of crises in the policy discourse and/or programme. In this context, actors can modify policy discourse and generate an interactive consensus for change: they can alter perceptions regarding interests, showing the way to new institutional parameters and new cultural norms (Schmidt 2002, 2008).

These are well-established ideas about policy change; however, the discursive institutionalism model pays less attention to the ambiguity present in policy discourses and also to the instability of actors' ideas and values. It is my view that frame analysis sheds light on the importance of both aspects when explaining policy change.

Regarding the issue of ambiguity, and according to frame analysis approach, each policy discourse can involve different policy frames, yet all political actors operate in the public arena where a *master frame* is generated. However, how can the master frame and the policy frame be defined? Even if Erving Goffman (1974) did not explicitly refer to the concept of the master frame, he identified a common understanding of the principal patterns, relations and agents present in a society. The master frame is understood here as a key structural element of a social group's culture. It is stable, changes very slowly and provides certainty and legitimacy. For Snow et al. (1986), a master frame signifies meaning on a broad scope and organizes sets of domain-specific frames².

How useful can the concept of a master frame be in policy change analysis? I understand a master frame as providing a principal and official focus of attention for actors in the policy process: an arena of policy legitimacy and continuity. Thus, the policy process is framed in a way that participants find, borrowing words of Goffman (1974), barriers to perception, frontiers for evidence. However, an alternative framing activity is developed at the same time and in the same arena, and this is when the concept of policy frame comes onto the scene.

A policy frame is an “organizing principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included” (Verloo 2005: 20). Policy frames are implied theories, capable of organizing not only public problems but also policy solutions and interaction patterns between the different agents called on to “solve” the problem³.

Making a decision is equivalent, in the end, to adopting a specific policy frame (Regonini 2001). Frames are not only present in individual actors, but also in collective organisations, whose actions are influenced by their interpretative work (Snow *et al.*

1986). The links that can be established between the respective actors' frames and the master frame explain (at least partly) actors' agency and its effects on the policy change process. Thus, if some actor's frames operate by building and specifying the core elements of the master frame, others can question its legitimacy and demand a reformulation. This process of (de)legitimizing the master frame can be analyzed as a key element of a policy change process.

In turn, and regarding the issue of the instability of actors' ideas and values, although the question of agency is connected with the subject of intentionality in framing processes⁴, this paper goes beyond the intentional versus unintentional actor's decisions dichotomy. I understand the process of frame alignment as being constituent and not mainly strategic instrumental, dynamic and not merely reflections of stable interests.

In this article therefore I recover the concept of *frame alignment* and apply it to policy change analysis. The process of frame alignment occurs when different frames become linked in congruency and complementariness, and it is considered a key element in explaining social mobilization (Snow and Benford 1988, Snow et al. 1986). Two of the main types of frame alignment defined by Snow and Benford are frame amplification and frame extension. By frame amplification, they refer to clarification and invigoration of a frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events. This can happen by means of the identification, idealization and elevation of values or beliefs that inspire collective action and mobilize support⁵. Yet sometimes, overcoming ambiguity or indifference may not be enough to activate participants. When the programmes of the social movement organizations have little bearing on the interests of potential adherents, they may have to extend the boundaries of their primary framework in order to encompass different points of view. This micro-mobilization process is called frame extension⁶ (Snow et al. 1986).

Why then is the process of frame alignment (developed originally for explaining the behavior of social movement organizations) relevant for policy change analysis? It is my view that alignment has an effect on policy change because it is about the way in which the frames of actors who play a role in the policy process (from governments to political parties, from interest groups to certain experts) align with the master frame and lead to mobilization. Thus, frame alignment is also relevant for analyzing the (relative) margin of actors' agency in policy change processes. It reveals actors' decisions that explain two contingent processes: the clarification and reinvigoration of a policy frame and the increasing support and participation in activities that lead to policy change.

This analytical relevance of the frame alignment process is the reason why I decided to use mainly this specific aspect of the symbolic-interactionist approach and the frame analysis method. However, it does not mean we should not take into account other features related to policy frame analysis, such as the identification of diagnoses, prognoses and role attribution given to different actors. Policy frames can influence the formulation of a public problem because they imply a diagnosis: some social condition is considered problematic and demands a change. However, policy frames can also condition public solutions because they include a prognosis, an idea about what should be done and what could happen in each possible alternative. Lastly, policy frames entail a definition about who should solve the public problem and the viability of the policy alternative depending on its main responsible actors. Having said that, the alignment process is the key concept for explaining (at least) cultural policy change: a process in which the actors reappraise their own views on culture and reconstruct diagnoses, prognoses and motivations to act in the cultural arena.

In summary, this paper does not claim to develop an entirely new approach to the analysis of public policy change, but rather develops two contributions. On the one hand, this article confirms (in a different empirical context and policy domain) some of the main ideas of discursive institutionalism about policy change. On the other hand, it is necessary to ask what we gain by combining discursive institutionalism and a symbolic interactionist perspective, particularly the concept of policy frame alignment. Combining these two perspectives contributes to a better understanding of when and how policy discourse and policy frames matter when explaining policy change. Developing and applying the concept of policy frame alignment will contribute to filling a gap in the well established policy change explanation developed by discursive institutionalism. If discursive institutionalism, following the communicative action theories, pays little attention to the ambiguity and instability of actors' ideas and values (analyzing contradictions as manipulations), policy frame analysis sheds light on the importance of both aspects when explaining policy change. The process of policy frame alignment is dynamic and leads to a modification of the actors' and organizations' policy frames. Furthermore, a policy frame analysis helps operationalize the role of policy discourse, explaining the agency in policy change by means of a policy frame alignment processes: alignment between the policy frames of the different actors and the master frame.

Methodological strategy

The research reported in this paper is based on the convergence between the case study method and the narrative approach. This strategy allows me, on the one hand, to focus on the actors (their capacity for agency), without overlooking their structural restrictions, and on the other, to include certain concepts used in policy analysis (in this case, policy discourse and policy frame) that describe factors linked to the actions of those actors.

The research (undertaken between 2010 and 2012) therefore combined frame analysis (Goffman 1974, Lombardo et al. 2009, Verloo and the QUING Consortium 2011) of debates in the Parliament of Catalonia with content analysis (Weber 1990) of: a) historical documents and b) semi-structured interviews. Firstly, regarding the frame analysis method, the texts analyzed were debates in the Parliament of Catalonia: those of the president's investiture and those of the commission on cultural policy⁷. How and why were these documents selected? After general research in the National Archives of Catalonia and the Library of the Parliament of Catalonia, I selected the aforementioned parliamentary debates for several reasons. Their contentious nature lent itself to an analysis of the interaction between different political actors, while their regularity allowed a systematic study of how policy discourse on culture evolved over a period of almost 30 years. Other types of documents more frequently used for analysis (such as reports or plans) were not regularly produced in Catalonia (and its cultural policies) until the 2000s. Lastly, in particular I have considered that the parliamentary arena has received little attention in cultural policy analysis (and even less in Spain) as a specific object of study.

The analytical process focused on identifying the different policy frames and codifying three aspects of each one: the construction of the public problems of cultural situation in Catalonia (diagnosis), the problem-solving measures to be taken (prognosis) and the interaction patterns between the different agents (motivation⁸).

Secondly, in order to structure the narrative stages and propose (non-positivist) causality patterns, the results of the policy frame analysis were supplemented with content analysis of government budgets, laws, plans and publications of the political parties and their leading elite⁹. Lastly, the empirical data included semi-structured interviews with over 36 key informants who were either directly involved in the development of the cultural policies of the Catalan government or had privileged knowledge about it. Five different key informant profiles were identified: senior politicians from the Catalan government and Barcelona City Council, civil servants, private for-profit sector agents, community sector agents and cultural policy experts¹⁰. The results of the interviews were analyzed using the content analysis method, and the analysis provided insights into the roles of the actors in the

narrated events and into their institutional restrictions, i.e. the development and characteristics of the policy domain and the policy subsystem.

The case study: justification and context

This paper is based on a case study of the evolution of the cultural policies of the autonomous government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) (1980–2008). On the one hand, in 1980, with the definitive reinstatement of the Generalitat de Catalunya after the Franco dictatorship, the Department of Culture (*Departament de Cultura*) was created. On the other hand, in 2008 the Parliament of Catalonia passed a law setting up the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONCA), and created the first mixed cultural policy system in southern Europe, bringing together both a department of culture and an arm's length administrative body. Even though this system was to last for only three years (in 2011 the government revoked CONCA's competences in the management of support for cultural promotion), the CONCA Law brought an end to almost a decade of changes in the Catalan government's cultural policy.

In terms of specifying the object of study, I have decided to focus on the Catalan government's Department of Culture, since Spain is considered a 'quasi-federal state' (Agranoff 1993, Grau Creus 2000) and it is the Autonomous Communities which have the majority of formal powers in the field of culture. It is a relevant case for understanding and illustrating the analytical perspective. In an accelerated way, over a period of less than 30 years, both the cultural policies of Catalonia and those of Spain have attempted to achieve a similar level of institutionalization as that achieved by many European countries after the Second World War in under 60 years (Bonet 2001, Rodríguez Morató 2005). Thus, even though the case of Catalonia may echo similar trends in cultural policy in Europe since the middle of the twentieth century, it would be difficult to identify a clear path between identified paradigms in cultural policy (democratization of culture, cultural democracy, etc.) (Barbieri 2012a). This is why the case of Catalonia allows me to go beyond the historical-institutionalist approach¹¹ and analyze not only what cultural policy change process is implemented, but also how and why this is done.

From 1980 onwards, for almost two decades, the main contents and forms of cultural policies of the Catalan government remained largely unchanged. After forty years of dictatorship (with devastating effects, among other things, on the institutionalization of culture), continuity was manifested by the emphasis on institutionalization of cultural policies and policies of direct intervention for promoting the production, rather than the

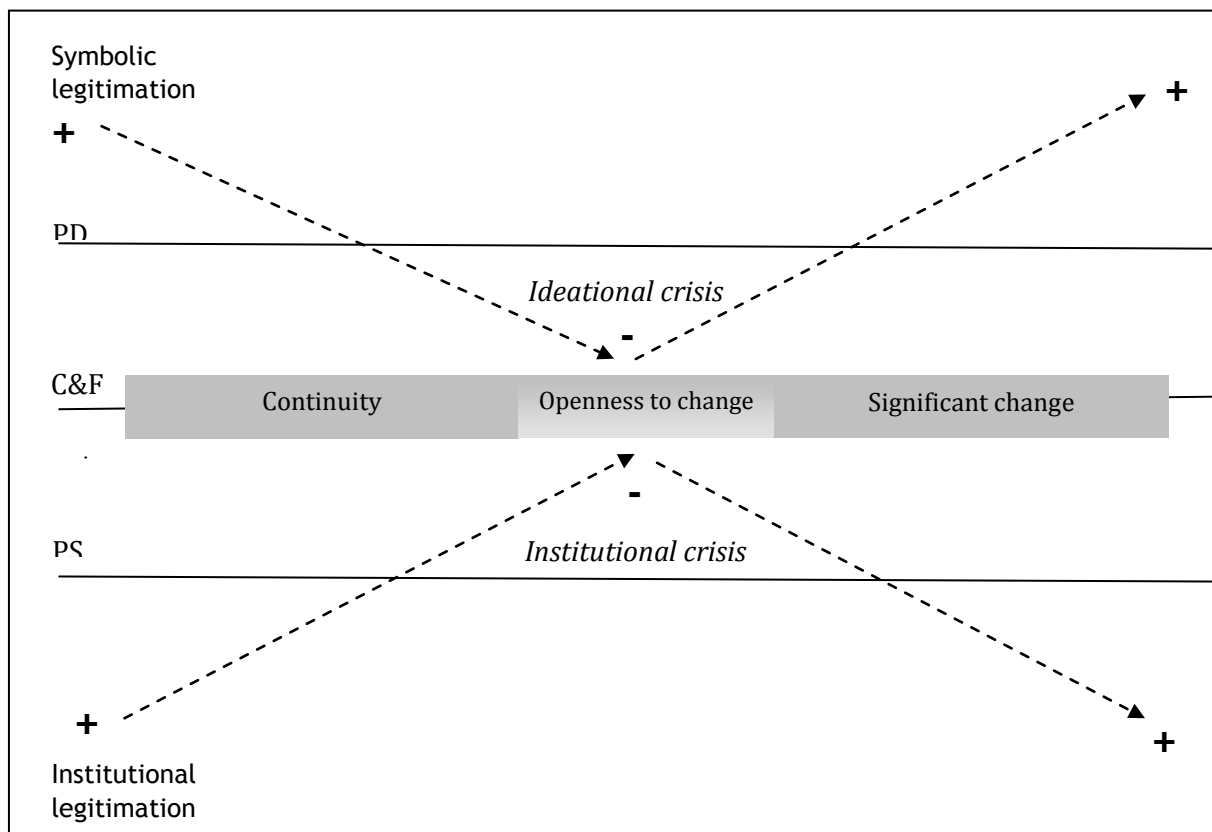
distribution, access to or consumption of culture. Facilities were built or developed based on a double logic: infrastructure for production (over and above stimulation) and national infrastructures, for instance the National Theatre of Catalonia or The Auditori (music auditorium). Legislation on cultural matters focused on the Catalan language and on heritage. Furthermore, the principal institutional arrangements remained stable. By way of an example, it is worth noting that within the organizational structure of the Department of Culture, the Directorate General of Language Policy would remain without structural changes for over 20 years (Barbieri, 2012b)¹².

How can this process of policy continuity be explained? What happened then to open the way to a period of significant changes in Catalan cultural policies? How can the policy change process be better explained when examined from the angle of policy framing?

Policy discourse and symbolic legitimacy: from continuity to an openness to policy change

Having then identified the theoretical and methodological stance of this article and the context of the case study, Figure 1 presents a narrative-interactionist approach. This approach places the various events on a single plane, shows the effects of the relationships between them, puts the stages of the narrative in order and offers (non-positivist) patterns of causality.

Figure 1. *Generic narrative of the development of periods of policy continuity and policy change*



PD: development of the policy discourse
C&F: contents and forms of public policies
PS: development of the policy subsystem

In previous studies (Barbieri 2014) I have analyzed the usefulness of the punctuated equilibrium model (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, True *et al.* 2007) in the analysis of cultural policy change, looking especially at how the development of policy subsystems conditions the process of institutional legitimation of cultural policies, and accordingly, the policy change process (shown in the lower section of Figure 1). Although the generic narrative that emerges from this model highlights the importance of ideational aspects (such as policy images), the actors' agency can be explained by limited rationality. As for the ideas and values of the actors, these tend to be regarded as subsidiary to their interests.

Therefore, this article focuses on explaining the effects of policy discourse and policy frames on the symbolic legitimization of cultural policies, or in other words, on recognizing the government's competence to intervene in the cultural arena, or the degree to which cultural policies are accepted as a legitimate arena for public policies. As Figure 1 makes apparent, this article makes the claim that the policy change process is conditioned by the variations in the process of symbolic legitimization of government intervention. The

development of a policy discourse and the effective alignment between a policy frame and the master frame are key factors in explaining this process of symbolic legitimation.

Does a narrative-interactionist approach help provide a better understanding of why and how the contents and forms the Catalan government's cultural policies remained largely unchanged for almost two decades? This period of continuity corresponded to a process of significantly high symbolic legitimization of cultural policies (see the left part of Figure 1). How was this legitimacy built? Which was the main policy frame developed by the Catalan government? During this process, the 'cultural standardization' (*normalització*) was the cornerstone of the policy discourse of Catalan nationalism in matters of cultural policy. As the Catalan Minister of Culture Joan Guitart (1990) pointed out, to standardize Catalan culture was to define it as a market (where goods are produced) and at the same time as an expression of national identity. This process has been described as an attempt to complete an unfinished project of Catalan modernity and cultural 'autonomisation' (Fernández 2008 p. 34). Catalan culture had to be as 'normal' as any other national culture. Lastly, in line with the political transition after the dictatorship, this entailed the need to adopt pragmatic and apparently politically 'neutral' positions.

Standardization established itself as a master frame, but this did not imply a strict conditioning at the institutional level or of the discursive context (Schmidt 2002). On the contrary, it was Catalan government officials who had a (relative) margin of agency to construct this principal and official focus of attention for actors in the policy process. Defending, rescuing and standardizing culture (and the values associated with it) was considered to be a task of such magnitude and importance that apparently only the Department of Culture had the capacity and status to take it on. This process illustrates how the actors' policy frames influence the formulation of a public problem (diagnosis) and the specification of a public solution (prognosis). Also, it shows who takes part in the definition of the problem, who has a voice on it, and who, apparently, should solve the problem and how (role attribution). It also illustrates how policy frames operate by building and specifying the core elements of a master frame.

Policy frame analysis contributes to specifying the explanation provided by discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2008). The policy discourse on cultural standardization contained ideas that were convincing (in cognitive terms) and persuasive (in normative terms) by resonating with long-standing and newly-emerging knowledge and values. However, as Schmidt points out (2008, p. 14), the ideas in the discourse must not only 'make sense'

within a particular 'meaning context', but also agents can change (or maintain) this meaning context.

Furthermore, the case of Catalonia is also useful for illustrating that maintaining the diagnosis and prognosis, as well as the viability of the policy options associated with the same protagonists for almost two decades, carries with it the risk that the policy discourse will become out of touch. Thus, the degree of symbolic legitimacy of the Catalan government's cultural policies diminished considerably in the nineties to the point of bringing about an ideational crisis (see the centre of Figure 1). This process can be explained in two ways.

Firstly, rather than concentrating on the effects of external factors (Schmidt 2002), this paper sheds light on the importance of analyzing the incompatibility between policy discourses, policy contents, institutions and socio-demographic characteristics and cultural production dynamics. This is not exactly a mismatch between diagnosis and prognosis in a policy frame, but an indicator of actors' difficulties in managing old and emerging conflicts and inequalities. The ideas and values regarding culture that had been useful with the return of democracy were seen to be completely outdated by the end of the 1990s. An example of the above is the conditioned attitude to cultural diversity that the Department of Culture's policy discourse (developing the frame of cultural standardization) presents. Culture was understood as something which forms the backbone of an integrated society, in spite of diversity (and not as a result of it). This idea of cultural diversity contrasted with the intensity and the origin of the immigration phenomenon that Catalonia was undergoing. Since the end of the 1990s, the 'new' immigrant influxes (different from those experienced during the dictatorship) have not corresponded to the territorial inequalities within Spain (Solé and Parella 2008, p. 88), but in the words of Castles (2004), form part of globalization and of the worldwide inequalities deriving from it.

Secondly, the difficulty of a policy discourse in legitimizing government action on culture is conditioned by interaction (and conflict) with alternative discourses. This interaction has effects on the stability offered by the master frame. The construction of alternative policy frames can be interpreted as a call for policy change. This was the scenario faced by the cultural policies of the Catalan government (and the CiU government, the nationalist conservative coalition party) at the end of the 1990s. The socialists' policy discourse on culture, voiced by many provincial and local governments (mainly in Barcelona) ruled by the Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC) implied a policy frame with an alternative diagnosis in tune with the times: cultural policies must meet the challenges posed by a city that

functions as an international hub for knowledge and services, a process presented as apparently irreversible. In this policy frame, culture was metropolitan culture: civic and material, the expression of a particular social class and an instrument of the economic growth of cities. It presented Catalan culture as one more component of (metropolitan) culture, but not the central one. This reinforced the relationship between culture and city, transcending the national or state-wide dimension of culture, and a new, different, image of cultural policy was put forward.

Ultimately, the symbolic legitimacy of cultural policies was not only eroded in the case of a particular government (in this case, the Catalan government), but rather, the ideational crisis affected the policy domain and policy image as a whole. As early as 1994, Ferran Mascarell, who would later become the head of cultural policy of the Barcelona City Council and subsequently of the Catalan government, wrote: 'Public policies continue to act as if they have a monopoly of all things cultural. As this is not the case, they appear less and less incisive and necessary, and remote from the real ways of producing, distributing and consuming culture' (2005 p.177, author's translation). At the end of the 1990s some professionals in the cultural sector demanded the creation of an arts council that would, in practice, replace the executive functions of the Catalan government's Department of Culture. It was argued that administrative bodies were not a good instrument for cultural policies, and that public policy and administration were enemies of culture (Generalitat de Catalunya 2005). Such a scenario opened the way to alignment processes between the policy frames of different actors and the master frame, and thus to a period of significant changes in cultural policies.

Policy frame alignment, new legitimacy and policy change

From the beginning of the 2000s, and at least up to the CONCA law (2008), it is possible to identify a period of significant changes in the contents and forms of the cultural policies of the Catalan government. Table Number 1 compares the periods of policy continuity and policy change, including the frames developed by governmental actors in those periods, the institutional arrangements, the budget and the type of main initiatives.

Table 1. *Policy periods in the development of the Catalan Government's cultural policies.*

		Period	
		Policy continuity	Policy change
Policy frame	Main diagnosis	Lack of <i>normality</i> , i.d. weakness of national cultural production	Weakness of the cultural industry, particularly on internationalization and distribution
	Main prognosis	Standardization (<i>normalització</i>): <i>autonomisation</i> , resisting and rescuing Catalan culture	Modernization: adapting Catalan culture and coexisting in the world cultural order
	Motivation	Catalan government as the main policy maker and implementer - almost the only one capable of doing so	Catalan government as the main policy maker and implementer, but local governments, industrial sector and creators are also responsible
Institutional arrangements	Organizational chart	Stabilization, three main areas: cultural promotion, heritage and language	Significant changes: orientation by cultural sectors (music, cinema, etc.) and by type of cultural agent (creators, managers, distributors, etc.)
	Public management model	Direct and integrated intervention: the Government of Catalonia's Department of Cultural Policies, with directorates in heritage policy and the promotion of cultural production	<i>Desetatisation</i> and proliferation of autonomous bodies: Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries (ICIC, in 2000), Ramon Llull Institute for the internationalization of Catalan culture (IRL, in 2002), National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONCA, in 2008)
Budget	General trend	Consolidation and stagnation	Expansion, increase
	Public management model	Emphasis on direct and integrated intervention, with the aim of institutionalizing cultural policies	Emphasis on transfers to agencies, consortiums and public law bodies
	Main areas of investment	Heritage and major infrastructures (National Theatre of Catalonia, The Auditori, etc.)	Cultural promotion policies: music, performing arts, cinema
Types of initiatives	Main area of intervention	Emphasis on generating cultural offers (particularly in Catalan language)	Diversification of intervention: industrial production and distribution (emphasis on internationalization of Catalan culture)

	<i>Main trend in policy planning</i>	Limited decentralization of cultural policies, emphasis on building national symbolic cultural infrastructures in Barcelona	Attempt at strategic (economic) planning with cultural sectors and cultural industries
	<i>Main area of legislation</i>	Language and heritage	Cultural industries and creation

More details about the elements presented in the table are explained throughout the article (see explicit references). However, it is important to point out that the policy change process began before the change of the coalition government in the Catalan government in 2003, which meant the arrival of the socialist party in the Department of Culture. Even if this significant institutional perturbation from outside of the policy domain is a key factor, it does not explain the process of policy change.

How can this process be better understood when examined from the angle of policy frames and actors' (relative) margin of agency? Ideational crises do not guarantee that policy contents will change, nor do they explain their orientation. These changes take place in parallel with a growth in the symbolic legitimization of government intervention in the cultural arena (see the right part of the figure 1). Key to this development are the processes of effective alignment between the policy frames of the different actors (in this case, governmental ones) and the master frame. In these alignment processes, the actors reappraise their own views on culture and reconstruct diagnoses, prognoses and motivations to act in the cultural arena. Effective policy change shows itself in micro-mobilizations of this type: constituent and not exclusively instrumental, dynamic and not mere reflections of stable interests.

This article therefore recovers two types of frame alignment: frame amplification and frame extension, described by Snow *et al.* (1986), adapts them, and applies them to the analysis of policy change.

Policy frame amplification

A policy frame amplification process implies the clarification and reinforcement of a policy frame. It can occur through the identification and elevation of values or beliefs. The case of the evolution of the cultural policies of the autonomous government of Catalonia

illustrates how certain beliefs came to be amplified, and the consequences for policy change.

On the one hand, in the Catalan government's policy discourse on culture, evidence was gathered about phenomena regarded as obstacles to collective action: e.g. the apparently conservative attitudes of certain cultural actors in Catalonia. These attitudes were linked to the policy discourse of cultural standardization. For two decades standardization was a policy discourse of a resistentialist nature, advocating national rebuilding. It presented culture as a core-differentiating element of Catalonia, an identity and a language under attack (after four decades of dictatorship). Thus, in order to face this *lack of normality*, for two decades the policy discourse emphasized the need to generate cultural items to offer to the internal market. In turn, from the beginning of the 2000s, the policy discourse of the Catalan government officials did not deny the historical weakness of Catalan culture; it did not leave behind the master frame, but it amplified the belief that the unchanged nationalist standpoint represented an obstacle to collective action.

These heroic and resistentialist attitudes saved the legacy of a traditional popular national culture. Yet if we do not modify them, they may end up driving young people away and impeding this culture from transforming, adapting, modernizing and continuing to be the place to build the future traditional popular culture (...) The same policies that saved our heritage in the past may then fossilize it.

(Joan Manuel Tresserras, Minister of Culture, Catalan government, 2010 p. 22, author's translation)

One can observe here a process of alignment between the policy frame of the Minister of Culture and the master frame (cultural standardization). It reveals the actor's margin of agency, i.e. the process of questioning the master frame and demanding a reformulation, not denying the official focus of attention for actors in the policy process, but adding new challenges. In contrast to the risk that Catalan culture ran during the dictatorship (and also after that, to some extent), the added challenge presented by the policy discourse in the beginning of the 21st century was to adapt, to coexist. It was deemed necessary to take part in the building of the new world cultural order, in the 'initiatives that constitute contemporary culture from a worldwide perspective', as the Catalan Minister of Culture Jordi Vilajoana pointed out (Vilajoana 2000, p. 13, author's translation). Thus, the process

of policy frame amplification reveals actor's decisions to overcome the indifference, to inspire the collective action and to mobilize support for policy change.

Without a strong international exposure, we will probably not reach a big enough market for the country's cultural creations. We will probably not be able to develop the role of creators. We will probably not make our creative companies sustainable. We will probably not be able to make our voice heard. We will probably not be able to be anything but good consumers of other people's culture, particularly that produced by the dominant cultural powers.

(Ferran Mascarell, Minister of Culture, Catalan government, 2006:11, author's translation)

In this policy discourse, the apparent lack of ambition of national cultures, expressed by the weakness of their international projection and cultural industry, was seen as one of the main policy problems. In this policy frame alignment, the Minister of Culture reconstructs the main diagnosis of Catalan culture, particularly in terms of who is seen to be causing the policy problem. This process also highlights the effects of actors' policy frames, which are capable of conditioning public solutions, reconstructing the main prognosis, i.e. an idea about what should be done and what could happen in each possible alternative (see Table 1, "diagnosis" and "prognosis"). This process highlights the actors' capacity for re-legitimizing the government intervention in cultural affairs. Hence, the change to a cultural policy that involved promoting not mainly the production but the international distribution of cultural products was also embedded in this process of policy frame alignment (see Table 1, "types of initiatives").

On the other hand, the process of amplifying certain beliefs also implies the gathering of evidence about the efficiency of collective action. In this case, a policy frame is reinforced by appealing to certain actors to participate.

For two decades, for the policy discourse of the Catalan government officials, defending and standardizing culture was considered to be a task that only the Department of Culture had the capacity and status to take on. From the beginning of the 2000s, one can identify a process of amplification of the belief that only if certain actors participate can policy change come about. Even if the cultural policy process in Catalonia remained conditioned by the master frame, alternative framing activity was developed. New voices were represented in the Department of Culture's policy texts. Who were the agents called on to solve Catalonia's cultural policy problems? The Catalan government remained as the mainly

policy maker and implementer (master frame), but the policy discourse appealed to the industrial sector to act, through sectorial concentration and the search for new markets (see Table 1, “motivation”).

This policy framing process entailed redefining the role of the Government of Catalonia, and generally, the role of public policies in the cultural domain. The policy image was re-created, and from then on it was assumed that cultural policy was responsible for designing specific tools to promote agents of the so-called cultural system. In other words, the rationale behind cultural policy was basically the promotion of businesses and creators.

This framing process highlights the effects of actors’ policy frames. Rebuilding the motivation, i.e. the viability of the policy alternative depending on its main responsible actors and mechanisms, actors are capable of re-legitimizing government intervention, not only in the case of a particular government (in this case, the Catalan government), but the degree to which cultural policies are accepted as a legitimate space for public policies. This process included significant changes in the organizational chart of the Department of Culture, and also the tendency towards *desetatization* by means of creating autonomous bodies dedicated to the different cultural agents: the Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries (ICIC, in 2000) for the industrial sector and the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONCA, in 2008) for the creative arts sector (see Table 1, “institutional arrangements”). The place occupied by the coalition Platform for an Arts Council as the principal interlocutor in the process of creation of this body exemplifies the consolidation of certain private cultural actors as policy-makers and at the same time recipients of cultural policies.

Policy frame extension

The extension of the boundaries of a policy frame also explains the process of alignment with the master frame. The actors (and the organizations they make up) reorganize their priorities for evaluating events, assuming different values and interests of diverse groups in the policy frame. In our case study, the policy discourse of the Catalan government officials took on the values and interests of political parties and representatives of professional bodies, which were thus given the possibility of participating in the formulation and implementation of new cultural policies. These were the same groups whose values and interests began to stand out in the master frame, especially after the crisis in symbolic legitimacy undergone by the cultural standardization program.

Thus, if for two decades the Department of Culture's policy frame was built on the link between culture and national identity, from the beginning of the 2000s it expanded and took on other notions such as competitiveness. This process of alignment by extension of frames led to modifications in the idea of culture, in the idea of Catalan culture and in the notion of Catalonia that were present in the policy discourse of Catalan government officials. That is why one can identify a process of frame alignment, a process in which cultural policy actors reappraise their own views on culture.

For almost two decades, from 1980 onwards, the policy discourse of Catalan government officials presented culture as a habit, a tacit sphere.

Catalunya is the long chain of generations, united by the Catalan language and tradition, that succeed each other in the territory where we live. The identity of Catalunya is, to a very large extent, linguistic and cultural.

(Jordi Pujol, President of Catalonia 1980–2003, quoted by Castells 2000, p. 51)

Thus, it was taken for granted that there was no need to explain what (Catalan) culture was, or discuss this core issue excessively, since it was something that was enshrined in the tradition and language, in the national identity. The Catalan Minister of Culture Joan Maria Pujals (1996) defined culture 'according to Édouard Herriot: culture is what remains after you have forgotten everything' (Pujals 1996 p. 3357, author's translation).

However, from the beginning of the 2000s, as in a good number of European cultural policies (from European Capitals of Culture to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation), culture was understood (to borrow words from Appadurai 1996, p. 44) as a political arena for conscious justifications, struggles and representations. As the Catalan Minister of Culture Joan Manuel Tresserras pointed out: 'culture is precisely the platform, the place where it is possible to reassign meaning and to redefine identities' (Tresserras 2007, p. 5, author's translation).

This process of re-conceptualization of culture implied the extension of a policy frame, which integrated national identity and economic competitiveness in the same frame. Culture continued to be one of the central elements of the idea of Catalonia, which meant no change with regard to the master frame of standardization. But this reference came with a notion of culture as a productive process of accumulation of goods, knowledge and values. The policy frame extension entailed a microbilization process, where the actors' have a

(relative) margin of agency to extend the boundaries of its primary framework and thus to increase support and participation in activities that lead to both the re-legitimization of cultural policies and policy change. Culture was certainly redefined as an economic resource, but embodied in creative industries and creative economy thinking which would contribute to national economic competitiveness. Thus, public intervention in culture was justified as being something that was not only a promoter of economic development, but also as a guarantor of the existence of products related to Catalan culture. Two concepts became consolidated in the policy discourse on culture of the Catalan government officials: the economy of experience (Minister of Culture Ferran Mascarell, see Mascarell 2005) and the economy of identity (Minister of Culture Joan Manuel Tresserras, see Tresserras 2008).

This policy discourse on an extended concept of culture was a reflection and at the same time a condition of the lack of boundaries in the area of cultural policies, which in large measure has allowed significant change to take place. What is lost in ideological coherence is gained in the flexibility arising from the use of a wide range of concepts and norms, including some which are contradictory.

To think about culture as a transversal phenomenon that has to do with the economy, with welfare, with education, with civility, with the capacity for internationalization, with the image of the country, with everything.

(Joan Manuel Tresserras, Minister of Culture, Catalan government, 2007, p. 4, author's translation)

Although there were differences between the policy discourses of the parties and ministers responsible for cultural policies (CiU, PSC and ERC, the left wing nationalist party), the alignment process turned out to be common to all of them. This process included the significant changes made in the direction of cultural policy, in particular the move towards internationalization and budget growth (especially in policies for cultural promotion: cinema, music and the performing arts), the attempt at strategic (economic) planning with these cultural sectors and the legislation in cultural industries and creation (see Table 1, "budget" and "initiative types").

Conclusions

There is a long tradition in policy analysis that seeks to develop concepts that can link the agency of actors to (institutional) structures (Hajer and Laws 2006, p. 254). Based on this

tradition, this article proposes an analysis of policy change combining the discursive institutionalism approach with a symbolic interactionist perspective. In particular, an analysis is made of the role played by policy discourse and policy frames in the (relative) margin of agency of actors.

Based on evidence from cultural policy domain, and, particularly, from a case study of the development of cultural policy in Catalonia, this paper presents several findings. Firstly, it is shown that continuity in cultural policies corresponds to a significant degree of symbolic legitimacy on the part of government intervention. Secondly, a period of continuity gives way to one of changes when policies go through an ideational crisis. In this sense, this article confirms (in a different context and policy domain) a central thesis of discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2002, 2008). However, as well as making this confirmation, the article specifies the process of de-legitimization, identifying two significant phenomena. On the one hand, the incompatibility between policy discourses and socio-demographic characteristics and cultural production dynamics. And on the other hand, interaction (and conflict) with alternative discourses.

Contrary to that indicated by the punctuated equilibrium model (True *et al.* 2007, p. 158), openness to policy change does not come with (or after) a change in the level of public attention to policy problems, nor with access to the macro-political agenda. Neither can the process of policy change be explained by stating that it is politically determined. A significant political perturbation (such as the change in the coalition of the government of Catalonia after 23 years) represented a considerable, though insufficient, cause for the openness to policy change.

Thirdly, when and how then do policy discourse and policy frames matter when explaining policy change? After a period of ideational crisis, the policy change process corresponds to the symbolic re-legitimization of government intervention, in this case in cultural affairs. By adapting and applying the concept of frame alignment (Snow *et al.* 1986) to policy change analysis, this article shows that the alignment between a policy frame and a master frame underpins this symbolic re-legitimization and so helps in understanding policy change.

Actors (individually and collectively) are potential agents for change by means of their frames. Aligning with the master frame means aligning with the context of shared meaning and therefore resonating with the audience, which in this case consists not only of those who participate directly in policy formulation, but also those who influence this process. That is, the efficiency of a frame will lie in not only its robustness, in its internal

consistency, but also in its capacity to account for the complex relationships between the actors in the policy process and to resonate in a particular context of meaning. This process can happen in at least two ways.

Firstly, policy frame amplification means aligning with the master frame by identifying and elevating certain values or beliefs. Without denying the official focus of attention for actors in the policy process (the master frame), actors may demand its reformulation, adding new challenges. On the one hand, actors are capable (via their policy frames) of gathering new evidence about phenomena regarded as obstacles to collective action. They can condition who and what is seen as part of the (cultural) policy problems (diagnosis) and what could happen in each policy alternatives (prognosis). On the other hand, a process of policy frame amplification may entail identifying and elevating evidence about the efficiency of collective action, appealing to the need for certain actors to participate. In this case, actors are capable of rebuilding the role attribution in each policy alternative (motivation), and conditioning the viability of these options. In both cases, one can see actors' decisions that helps to reinvigorate a policy frame, overcome ambiguity and indifference for collective action and re-legitimize cultural policies as public policies.

Secondly, policy frame extension is achieved by reorganizing actors' values, extending the boundaries of the policy frame and including different points of view (values but also interests) of diverse groups. It is worth noting that these points of view may contain emerging values and interests, i.e. values and interests that may begin to stand out in the master frame, especially after a crisis in the symbolic legitimacy of cultural policies. The process of linking the respective actors' policy frame and the master frame is a microbilization process in which (cultural) policy actors reappraise their own views (on culture). The policy frame extension shows actors' (relative) margin of agency to increase the flexibility of a policy frame, even encompassing contradictory interests and values, and thus increasing the legitimacy for cultural policies and policy change.

Both policy frame amplification and extension are processes of alignment: dynamic processes that lead to a modification of the actor's policy frame, with the actor being in this case mainly those in charge of public policies. Thus, collective action is not based on a type of instrumental rationality or a behavior that simply reflects interests that are defined, apparently stable and with an accompanying objective reality. Ideas and values are not mere addenda to institutional rules or interests. In policy change, the acknowledgement of what is considered real is not a prior step to be taken before making decisions, nor is discourse only instrumental in nature. Change is constituent to the development of public policies, though

not only in an evolutionary-positivist sense but also, and mainly, in a historic and social sense.

There are obvious limits to the extrapolation of this article's findings to other policy domains. However, it would be interesting to undertake a comparative narrative-interactionist analysis of cultural policy change and policy change in other (specific) policy domains. It would certainly be appropriate to make a comparison with ideational or institutionally hybrid domains, such as (for instance) policies for information and communication technologies or urban policies.

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¹De Vereaux (2006), Gattinger and Saint-Pierre (2008), Parker and Parenta (2009), Gray (2007, 2008) and Bordat (2012) just to mention some of the few examples.

² An example of a master frame is the concept of sustainable development. For a debate on the issues of sustainability, frame analysis and policy making see Triandafyllidou and Fotiou (1998) or Fletcher (2009).

³ The MAGEEQ and QUING research projects have deeply analysed the frame of gender equality in Europe, identifying numerous examples of policy frames. Verloo and the QUING consortium (2011) identify three groups of policy frames: *transformative* approaches to gender equality, *inclusive* understandings of gender equality, and policy frames that *reject* or *contest* gender equality.

⁴ For a debate on the issue of intentionality in frame theory, see Bachi (2009) or Lombardo and Meier (2009).

⁵ Regarding value amplification, Snow et al. (1986) analysed the case of peace activists who amplified equality and liberty by asserting their constitutional right to redress grievance and express dissent. In the case of belief amplification, they explained how participation in movement activity is contingent on the amplification of three types of beliefs: stereotypic beliefs about antagonists, beliefs about the probability of change and beliefs about the necessity of “standing up”.

⁶ The leaders of peace movements frequently elaborate goals in order to encompass auxiliary interests (Snow et al. 1986).

⁷ On the one hand, the debates of presidential investiture (1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2006). All these debates are available at: <http://www.parlament.cat/web/documentacio/publicacions/diari-ple>. On the other hand, the debates of the commission of cultural policy, particularly the debates where the Minister of Culture presents the cultural policy and action plan (1980: Minister Max Cahner, 1986: Minister Joaquim Ferrer, 1989: Minister Joan Guitart, 1994: Minister Joan Guitart, 1996: Minister Joan Maria Pujals, 2000: Minister Jordi Vilajoana, 2004: Minister Caterina Mieras, 2006: Minister Ferran Mascarell, 2007: Minister Joan Manuel Tresseras). All these debates are available at: <http://www.parlament.cat/web/documentacio/publicacions/diari-comissions> Minister Max Cahner; 1986, Minister Joaquim Ferrer; 1989, Minister Joan Guitart; 1994, Minister Joan Guitart

⁸ The analysis of the “motivation” dimension in a policy frame shows how the actors are capable of rebuilding the role attribution in each policy alternative: who takes part in the definition of the problem, who has a voice on it, and how the actors justify the viability of the preferred policy alternative depending on its main responsible actors.

⁹ The specific documents analysed using the technique of content analysis were: a) Annual policy reports (including budget information) from 1980 to 2008 (available at: <http://bit.ly/1lPVeg7>) b) Laws in the cultural policy domain (1981: *Llei de Biblioteques*, 1983: *Llei de Normalització Lingüística*, 1985: *Llei d'Arxius*, 1987: *Llei de la Institució de les Lletres Catalanes*, 1989: *Llei d'Arxius*, 1990: *Llei de Museus*, 1993: *Llei de Cultura Popular i Tradicional i de l'Associacionisme Cultural*, *Llei del Sistema Bibliotecari*, *Llei de Patrimoni Cultural Català*, 1997: *Llei de Política Lingüística*, 2000: *Llei de l'Institut Català de les Indústries Culturals*, 2008: *Llei del Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts*). c) Other publications referred to in the text.

¹⁰ A first group of interviews were held between January and April 2010, with the aim being to explore the relevance of the case study, corroborate the information obtained from hard data and build the potential narrative or hypothesis. A second group of interviews were held between October 2010 and January 2012, with the aim being to generate original information about the roles of the actors and institutional restrictions. For a complete list of interviewees see Barbieri (2012b).

¹¹ In the cultural policy domain see, for example, Gattinger and Saint-Pierre (2008), Parker and Parenta (2009) or Bordat (2012).

¹² See table 1 for a comparison between the periods of policy continuity and policy change.