

# CULTURE PLANNING AND CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN THE MAKING AND MAINTAINING OF ENTITIES

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relations between socio-cultural planning endeavors and the ensuing processes of acceptance and resistance, otherwise called “market conditions.”

## 2. Hypothesis

I suggest that the vector of culture planning initiatives can better be followed and explained when analyzed in its relations to access-to-resources and mobility.

## 3. Culture planning

Culture planning is conceived of as a deliberate act of intervention, either by power holders or by “free agents,” into an extant or a crystallizing repertoire. Hence, it entails the introduction of change into a current state of affairs. Its prospective success depends on an effective undertaking.

### 3.1. Culture planning and the making of entities

Since antiquity, but definitely with augmented vigor since the 18th Century, culture planning has become a major factor in the making, re-making, and maintaining of collective entities. In this process, the role of “free agents,” mostly people without direct access to power, has become more and more decisive.

The entities referred to here, i.e., such social units as “people”, or “nation”, are—we all seem to agree—not “natural” objects. They are formed by the acts of individuals, or small groups of people, who take initiative and are successful in mobilizing the resources needed for the task. The most vital element among those

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resources is a cultural repertoire that makes it possible for the endeavoring group to provide not only effective models, but also justification to the (separate and distinct) existence of the entity.

### **3.1.1. Making**

The “making” of units is manifest on the socio-political level in a variety of ways, and on various levels.

(1) New Units are created where they did not exist as such before. Examples: Germany (by unification of various other units, 1870), Italy (same, 1860), Norway (by secession, 1905), Yugoslavia (same, 1918), Israel (by partition, 1948), Spanish Galicia and Catalonia (by autonomization).

Each of these cases has had a different history, but what they all share in common is the more or less intensive cultural planning work that not only preceded and accompanied their making, but also partly—if not primarily—made it possible in the first place.

(2) Extant units gained more cohesion. Example: France, Sweden (throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries).

While the most conspicuous cases are those of nations and states, there is no reason to restrict this concept to them alone. Rather, making may refer to any initiatives taken in order to create a social formation on whatever scale. Such processes are universal, but at some periods thus may be more vigorous on the larger scale than in other periods. For example, during the 19th and the 20th centuries, the option for making large entities has been more forceful than for several centuries before.

### **3.1.2. Re-making and maintaining**

By “re-making” I refer to all of those cases where political, social, and cultural entities have been transformed in some way and eventually are re-made, or re-constructed, via deliberate endeavors. Cases that belong here may include entities that had lost their separate (“independent”) existence (such as Poland before 1914), or have adapted themselves to an exogenous repertoire thus altering their erstwhile culture (such as Finland until the late 19th Century). In all of these cases, for re-making the entity, efforts were invested in making, or re-making, the necessary repertoire for augmenting the level of belonging and affinity of the population to the made entity.

Among the indispensable ingredients of any made repertoire there is normally an established subset with the help of which the group's distinct entity is demarcated. This marked subset is perceived as creating a collective as well as individual identity. For both made, re-made, and maintained entities, this subset becomes a major vehicle for the making and preservation of the entity.

## **4. Cultural labor as a source of energy**

I contend that where a planning activity takes place, regardless of the consequences, the relevant entity—or the agglomerate of people who form it—may have achieved better access to resources, which means an improvement of their standard of life.

Moreover, from the point of view of the maintenance of any collective human entity, the labor involved with the making of repertoires is in itself an advantage because it eventually creates motion of some scale, i.e., a socio-cultural energy. This

alone increases the chance that members of this entity may attain access to options from which they have been previously deprived or barred.

It can, of course, be argued that the engagement with cultural labor is a result of energy rather than the other way around. Wherever there is social action, people react to and reflect on it. They may also write texts and develop ideas, and thereby contribute very lively to creating new repertoires.

However, in all of the cases which served as input for my work on culture planning, one could clearly observe that preoccupation with planning began at a very low state in the welfare of a population. This does not mean that they all were equally humiliated or underprivileged, but that they all had less access to resources than what were their expectations.

#### **4.1. Energy and wealth**

I would like to propose the use of the term “wealth” for the relation between socio-cultural energy and the accessibility of resources, first and foremost on the level of the collective, but in a more detailed analysis also on the level of individuals. As a rule, wealth in economic theories must eventually be manifest in such parameters as GNP. While this parameter is not irrelevant to the concept of wealth suggested here, the decisive concept in my approach is the access to resources on a more encompassing level. I am thinking of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital which may be enlarged to apply to entities as wholes, in addition to its validity for the life of individuals. That such capitals may eventually surface in terms of GNP, as well as in material wealth of individuals and defined groups, goes without saying. The point is here, however, to get relatively liberated from this restrictive view in order to allow for other, less technical parameters of wealth, such as the positions that can be acquired, mutual aid between members of the collective, the scope of allowed activities, the sense of self-confidence, access to enterprising options, and more.

### **5. Success and failure of initiated repertoires**

Planned repertoires may succeed, wholly or partly. It is not a simple task to determine when the results of repertoire making is to be considered a success or a failure. Often, what seems to be a failure in the eyes of the people involved with the enterprise appears to be a success in terms of its effectiveness in the long run. One of the reasons for this discrepancy is that for the entrepreneurs, the content of a repertoire may have become—throughout the years dedicated to its making and distribution—more important than the function of that repertoire for what was described as its ultimate goal.

#### **5.1.**

For example, if re-introducing a language is considered a *sine qua non* for the making, or re-making, of an entity, then in a case where this language does not prevail in the successfully made entity, this will be considered a disappointment for those who attached their worldview and self-identity to the language. The fact that their initiatives may have created real energy will then be no consolation at all.

#### **5.2.**

The reason for such—perhaps pathetic—occurrences lies in the very nature of the cultural enterprise. Success of a cultural enterprise may be achieved in a short time once culture entrepreneurs and holders of power begin to collaborate. However, if repertoire makers must create a power base and persevere for making their labor attractive enough to entice power holders, then the span of time between labor and its outcomes may be long, sometimes over a century. In such cases, the advocated alternative repertoire, designed under the initial conditions and thus fitted with solutions relevant to those conditions, by the time of implementation may already be cruelly dated.

## **6. Resistance to planned repertoire**

A partial success, or failure, means that some—or even major—bulks of the made repertoire(s) fail to be accepted and implemented by the targeted group. Among the crucial factors that determine the rate of success in the targeted group I would like to point out cultural resistance, both passive and active.

Any kind of resistance is a form of unwillingness towards the advocated, or inculcated, repertoire. I am not referring here to what Pujol (1979: 35) calls “[la] non-participation ouvrière aux institutions socio-culturelles,” where “institutions” denote organized activities in the restricted sense only, e.g., “the arts.” I am referring to a much wider repertoire, covering the wide range of organizing tools from daily habits to the image-of-the-self.

### **6.1.**

With a passive resistance, people do not engage themselves with working covertly against the new options. They simply ignore them. If they cannot avoid the options proposed for—or already current in—the public domain, they at least can avoid those meant for the homes.

For example, people may learn to speak a language in public, but do not necessarily make it their home vernacular. (In Italy, for example, it has taken almost over a century for Italian to become a domestic language. [De Mauro 1984: xvii]).

### **6.2.**

With an active resistance, people do more than avoidance. They may engage themselves in a more or less overt and straightforward struggle against the planned repertoire. This may take place at any stage of the active endeavors to implement the planned repertoire, i.e., while implemented, or when implementation seems to have been fully done.

## **7. The problem of resistance**

Resistance seems to need no explanation when repertoire is imposed by force, as means of political action, against the explicit culture of the targeted population. Throughout history, people resisted conversion, reforms pertaining to beliefs and time-honoured habits. Under totalitarian regimes, people often kept their culture concealed from the public eye, but returned to practicing it the moment it became feasible. In all these cases, cultural resistance may be only a form of an overt political resistance.

However, what may be puzzling in understanding cultural resistance are all of those cases where a seemingly common cause has been served by culture planning, or at least where culture planning appears as coinciding with the interests of the targeted group.

In such cases, the self-image of the concerned entity, and the ensuing official history written by the advocates of endeavor, do not recognize any such prospective unwillingness. The parameters of such cultural resistance may not be complicated or enigmatic at all, but to the best of my knowledge, they have not been sufficiently discussed, certainly not in the framework of culture planning.

### **7.1. Resistance and access to resources**

I would like to contend, fully aware of the crudeness of this hypothesis, that it would be necessary for all of these cases of cultural resistance to understand the conditions and terms of access to resources prevailing in the relevant society.

For example, the working class in France refuse to participate not only in the “socio-cultural institutions” of the dominant bourgeoisie, like the theater and literature. They also refuse to eat, talk, drink, marry, walk and wash like them, as so amply demonstrated by a host of researchers (most conspicuously, of course, by Bourdieu (*Distinction*, 1984 [originally 1979])). This seems to take place partly because, as suggested by Pujol (1979) and Swidler (1986), acquiring a different repertoire is painful and risky. That is, it is not an easy learning, especially when one is from the outset unequal to others, who may already be more familiar with the new repertoire. But this also makes it clear that people know that even if they try to learn the alternate repertoire, they will not be able to master it with the same ease as others, and hence would have little to gain by it.

### **7.2. Cases of culture planning coupled with unestablished entities seem to be different**

In these cases, such as Italy, Germany, Galicia, Norway, or Israel (to name just a few), the very rationale for making new repertoires, as propagated by their advocates, was to achieve improvement of life for the targeted collective. Theoretically, none of the people in the targeted group had any advantageous position vis-à-vis the new repertoire, and hence its acquisition was to be open to everybody on equal terms. The skepticism and sense of discrimination usually involved with the adoption of a repertoire of a dominant group (as is the case of the French working class) are not present, as it were, in these cases.

In view of the current situation in most of the cases mentioned above, this assumption seems to be a fallacy. It is true that for a short span of time, everybody can adhere to the new repertoire and gain better position and access to better life if the new entity succeeds in getting established and maintained. However, the distribution of the triumphant repertoire has not, and cannot, be even among the population. If, as a result of the triumph of the repertoire, the endeavors towards its continued implementation decrease (because it may be believed that it has been fully accepted), all those members of the entity who never really adhered to the enterprise, or begin to feel unable to learn the new repertoire, or begin to identify the repertoire with discrimination, may develop ever growing resistance. The situation that emerges can be summarized to be one where

either for lack of learning or competing ability, the planned, new repertoire does not lead to a successful access to resources.

### **7.3. Resistance in Spanish Galicia**

In the Galician case, the adoption of the refurbished Galician language by the masses in contemporary autonomous Galicia seems to be perceived as disadvantageous. Today, it seems that only those members of the entity who have acquired satisfactory proficiency in Castilian are prone to adopt and advocate the new Galician. As matters stand now, it seems that the majority of the Galicians who are in the process of urbanization do not encourage their children to use the new Galician. Rather, it is with mastering Castilian that access to resources appears to be more promising even in the framework of the by now separate Galician entity. If this observation is correct (it still needs to be supported by more research), then what has been a most crucial item in the new Galician repertoire, one which has been a flag for the Galician enterprise, may disappear in the course of a few decades to be fully replaced by a language which up to a certain point was identified with all evils.

### **7.4. Resistance in Israel**

In Israel, a quite radically invented repertoire managed to establish itself by 1948. The masses of ensuing immigrants, however, needed some forty years to bring their resistance to this repertoire to a level of overt cultural struggle, involved with political repercussion of quite a large scale.

In this case, the Hebrew language, an essential part of the new repertoire, which was beginning to become a living vernacular towards the end of the 19th Century in Ottoman Palestine, has been a tremendous success. In contradistinction to the Galician case, there has been no other language capable of replacing it. However, many other ingredients of the new repertoire are now becoming more and more questionable. Be the level one chooses to discuss “high” (such as “identity” and “self-image”), or “low” (such as food, drink, and mobility habits), there will be one segment defending one repertoire, and another defending a different repertoire, with little ability to compromise. Again, if this observation is correct, then either a state of multi-culturalism is eventually accepted, or a bitter Kulturkampf will endanger the whole entity.

## **8. Summing up**

It is definitely not my contention that the questions of access to resources and mobility are the magic clue to understanding cultural resistance and, on a more general level, the chances of any particular culture planning to succeed. But it seems that the analysis of resistance in the context of culture planning and the making of entities provides better explanations of the function of this cultural procedure than the discussion of the ideas involved with the propagation of repertoire, the nature of the ingredients involved, or the abstract prospects of models of collective figurations, such as small communities or nations.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper suggests we discuss the prospects of culture planning—that is, its chances for failure or success—as constrained by both collective and individual possibilities of accessing resources and exercising mobility which it offers to the targeted group. The paper maintains that resistance to culture planning may grow when the targeted, or affected, populations cannot increase their socio-cultural wealth in adopting the proposed new repertoire of options. In such situations, a whole range of alternative repertoires may be propagated in replacement. This does not necessarily mean that culture planning has been a failure, if sufficient energy is produced to create more options for access to resources.

**Key words: Culture planning, resources, mobility, cultural resistance, repertoire of options**

## 提 要

文化計畫的成敗，有賴於群體與個體是否取得資源，能否善用其所提供計畫實施社群的機動性。本文指出，接納了新選項類編之後，計畫實施對象的社會文化財富如果並未增加，就會產生對文化計畫的抗拒。在這種情形之下，我們可以提出一整套替代類編。而只要能產生足夠的能量以創造更多資源取得選擇，就不表示該文化計畫失敗。

**關鍵詞：**文化計畫、資源、機動性、文化抗拒、選項類編

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