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Citation: Ho, L. 2017. Toward Cultural Policy Studies on Mobility: Reflections on a Study of the Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme. *Cultural Studies Review*, 23:01, 69-86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/csr.v23i1.5495>

ISSN 1837-8692 | Published by UTS ePRESS | <http://csrj.epress.lib.uts.edu.au>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Toward Cultural Policy Studies on Mobility: Reflections on a Study of the Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/csr.v23i1.5495>

Article History: Received 08/08/2016; Revised 15/02/2017; Accepted 22/02/2017; Published 15/05/2017

Abstract

Cultural policy is predominantly, and practically, considered the sum of a government's activities with respect to the arts, humanities and heritage. Thus, cultural policy encompasses a much broader range of activities than was traditionally associated with an arts policy. Critical cultural policy studies, then, sees a distinction between 'explicit' cultural policies that are manifestly labelled as 'cultural', and 'implicit' cultural policies that are not labelled as such, but that work to shape cultural experiences. This article considers this explicit/implicit cultural policy distinction through John Urry's idea of 'social as mobility', suggesting that some public policies regarding mobility (such as immigration, international trade and labour policy) have led to specific cultural consequences and therefore qualify as implicit cultural policy. Using Hong Kong's working holiday scheme as a case study, this article explores how an economic policy on temporary immigrant labour involves a deliberate cultural agenda as well as 'unintentional' cultural consequences and problematises the fact that cultural policy studies are largely framed by the idea of 'social as society'.

Keywords

Cultural policy studies; implicit cultural policy; Hong Kong; working holiday; mobility

Introduction

In terms of methodology, cultural policy studies have evolved three approaches. First, a positivist approach that observes the common phenomena of cultural activities and identifies universal laws from empirical materials against the theoretical background of economics—especially neoclassical economics, public choice theory studies and cultural economics. Second, interpreting the phenomena and arguments of cultural policies using critical theories and cultural studies. Third, applying sociology and the realist methodology of political science to activities related to cultural policies.¹ The divergence in cultural policy studies methodologies derives from the diversification of academic communities involved in the field, as well as different argumentation bases.² According to Adrienne Scullion and Beatriz Garcia, cultural policy studies can be roughly classified into two major traditions: the ‘arts-humanities approach’ and an ‘applied research tradition’.³ The former then evolved into the critical cultural policy studies mentioned by Oliver Bennett—as opposed to informing cultural policy studies—thereby forming the divided landscape outlined above.⁴ In this article, my question is whether cultural policy studies has considered all the possibilities of this research field. In other words, is it valid to assume that different approaches to cultural policy studies build on a common conceptual basis? Shall we further extend the scope of cultural policy studies? I raise my questions from a standpoint consistent with critical cultural policy studies that believes that the field is a critical ‘reformist project’ that aims to create ‘a disciplined imagining of alternatives’.⁵ This article, therefore, will attempt to reflect the existing configurations of cultural policy studies and their potential limitations, and consider the potential of cultural policy studies on mobility.

In response to Raymond Williams’s conceptual discussion about the differences between ‘cultural policy as display’ and ‘cultural policy proper’ quoted by Jim McGuigan, Jeremy Ahearne proposed the ‘cultural policy explicit and implicit’ theoretical structure to more effectively explore the cultural nature of public policies not covered by cultural policy studies (at that time) in a

1 Clive Gray, ‘Analysing Cultural Policy: Incurably Plural or Ontologically Incompatible?’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2010, pp. 215–30; David Bell and Kate Oakley, *Cultural Policy*, Routledge, London, 2015.

2 Convened in Bergen in 1999, the First International Conference on Cultural Policy Research (ICCP) attracted 140 scholars from 17 countries and released about 60 research findings. Although cultural policy studies started earlier than this conference, the conference was historically significant by showing that cultural policy studies were established as a category in the academic circle and an academic community for cultural policy studies was formed. Over the past twenty to thirty years, the academic community for cultural policy studies has developed different methods and orientations for cultural policy studies (Adrienne Scullion and Beatriz Garcia, ‘What is Cultural Policy Research?’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, pp. 113–27; Oliver Bennett, ‘The Torn Halves of Cultural Policy Research’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2004, pp. 237–48) gradually through a variety of academic journals (such as *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *Journal of Cultural Economics*, *Journal of Arts, Management, Law and Society* and *Cultural Trends*), as well as a number of groundbreaking works (Justin Lewis and Toby Miller (eds), *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2003; Toby Miller and George Yudice, *Cultural Policy*, Sage, London, 2002; Mark Schuster, *Informing Cultural Policy: The Research and Information Infrastructure*, Centre for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ, 2002; Jim McGuigan, *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, Open University Press, Berkshire, 2004).

3 Adrienne Scullion and Beatriz Garcia, ‘What is Cultural Policy Research?’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, pp. 113–27.

4 Bennett, pp. 237–48.

5 Lewis and Miller (eds), p. 2.

broad sense.⁶ Explicit cultural policy refers to public policy on culture as conventionally defined, such as arts funding and heritage conservation. In contrast, implicit cultural policy refers to public policies that govern cultural experience, including industrial and foreign policies. Ahearne adds:

Within the domain of ‘implicit’ cultural policies, one might also distinguish between the unintended cultural side effects of various kinds of policy and those deliberate courses of action intended to shape cultures but which are not expressly thematised as such. It is true that policies are usually conceived as deliberate strategic courses of action, but these can usefully be analysed in terms of the patterns of neglect or inattention they imply.⁷

This article argues that further reflection and application of the explicit/implicit cultural policy distinction as an analytical tool will not only provide insight into intentional strategic ‘neglect’ by policymakers,⁸ but also reveal research ‘inattention’ caused by the concept of the ‘social as society’.⁹

With the theoretical enrichment offered by John Urry’s notion of the ‘social as mobility’ and insights driven from a pilot study on Hong Kong’s Working Holiday scheme, this article responds to Ahearne’s concept by reflecting on how existing cultural policy studies have been stuck in an understanding of the ‘social as society’, and points out the advantages of thinking about cultural policy studies from the perspective of the ‘social as mobility’.¹⁰ It does so in two parts. The first explores the possibilities of cultural policy studies offered by a genealogical study of the field and an examination of it through the theoretical lens of ‘mobility’. The second outlines the case study of Hong Kong’s Working Holiday Scheme, based on in-depth interviews with thirty participants, to unpack the possibilities involved in *doing* cultural policy studies concerning mobility.

‘Mobilities’ in the existing cultural policy studies

First of all, I would like to pose a basic question: What is cultural policy? Margaret Wyszomirski once defined it as entailing ‘a large, heterogeneous set of individuals and organisations engaged in the creation, production, presentation, distribution, and preservations of and education about aesthetic heritage, and entertainment activities, products and artefacts’.¹¹ However, the heterogeneity of cultural policy is related to the concerns it encapsulates as well as to its stakeholders. According to Clive Gray, the interests of today’s cultural policy include:

Community cultural development, cultural diversity, cultural sustainability, cultural heritage, the cultural and creative industries, lifestyle culture and eco-culture, planning

6 McGuigan; Jeremy Ahearne, ‘Cultural Policy Explicit and Implicit: A Distinction and Some Uses’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2009, pp. 141–53.

7 Ahearne, p. 144.

8 Ibid. pp. 141–53; David Throsby, ‘Explicit and Implicit Cultural Policy: Some Economic Aspects’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2009, pp. 179–85.

9 John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge, London, 2000.

10 Ibid.

11 Margaret Wyszomirski, ‘Arts and Culture’, in *The State of Nonprofit America*, ed. Salamon Lester, Brookings University Press, 2002, Washington, DC, p. 187.

for the intercultural city, cultural planning *per se*, support for national languages, ‘currently controversial issues in the wider society’, the ‘culture wars’ in the USA, ‘the production of cultural citizens’ as well as being concerned with ‘representation, meaning and interpretation’ and being a ‘transhistorical political function’.¹²

When we consider Wyszomirski and Gray’s descriptions, we notice that the concerns of cultural policy are based on two key perspectives: culture as a series of artistic activities and products, and culture as a lifestyle. The former inherits Victorian traditional thought since the 1860s, while the latter represents an anthropological understanding underpinned by cultural studies and expanded to a definition of culture that is almost all-inclusive.¹³ These apparently opposite cultural approaches have aroused widespread conceptual controversies since the 1940s. Regardless of the dispute over the definition of culture, current analysis of cultural policies are established and developed along two axes: different forms of culture and art (from opera to comics) and the scale of ‘society’ (from community to city, and between countries).

In 2003, Justin Lewis and Toby Miller co-edited a influential book titled *Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader*. The book includes articles that revolve around topics of cultural policy (with a focus on the United Kingdom and the United States) in the 1990s, most written by scholars in communication and cultural studies. The main body of the book consists of eight sections: Radio; Television and Film; the Internet; the Arts and Museums; Sport; Music; International Organizations and National Cultures; and Urban Planning. Oliver Bennett commented on the structure of the book as follows:

The concept of culture that these categories reflect is largely that of culture as a set of signifying practices or symbolic goods. At same time, with the inclusion of sport and urban planning, the editors gesture towards a broader, anthropological notion of culture as ‘a whole way of life’ ... Within the narrower definition of culture, there are some surprising omissions ... and within the broader definition, the selections just seem arbitrary.¹⁴

Bennett’s criticisms were aimed at the broad and narrow definitions of culture behind cultural policy studies and the discussion about cultural exclusiveness and inclusiveness. However, I would like to point out that regardless of ‘omissions’ or the ‘arbitrary’ content, Lewis and Miller’s book was organised according to common lines of thinking in cultural policy studies; that is, to classify analysis targets by different cultural types. Even if different issues, such as creative labour, are involved, the research is mostly confined to particular cultural types.¹⁵

The classification by cultural type is not based on creative outcomes (or products) alone, but also involves an assumption of a unified group applying creative methods. In other words, although such cultural policy analysis is conducted according to cultural types, the imagined

12 Gray, p. 218.

13 David Loosely, *The Politics of Fun: Cultural Policy and Debate in Contemporary France*, Berg, Oxford, 1995; McGuigan; David Hesmondhalgh, ‘Media and Public Policy as Cultural Policy: The Case of the British Labour government’, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 11 no. 1, 2005; Gray.

14 Bennett, p. 238.

15 This plausible analytical approach has a certain legitimacy as the definition of specific research targets will lead to focused statistics and analytical results. Another example is that such research results, which build on the execution of public policies and the classification of industries and types, can be more easily linked with specific policy proposals and actual implementation. However, we should critically think about the logic of such an analytical framework to avoid falling into methodological reductionism.

research scope actually focuses on communities engaged in specific industries and types; that is, on a society with common links. Yet, in my view, an analytic methodology classified by cultural type actually represents the development of the ‘society’ dimension on the axis of ‘body-home-community-city-region-nation-global’:

Let’s start with home ... in terms of watching television (whether the viewing habits of Eurobarometer respondents or our own TV news watching). Cultural policy enters the home in many and various ways ... One day in October 2013, David was standing outside the City Art Gallery in his hometown of Leeds when he saw an unusual sight: passer-by, heading to and from the art gallery, clutching strange oversized bags. What was in the bags? Paintings. These folk were members of the gallery’s picture lending scheme ... This curious sight on an autumnal Saturday lunchtime gives us a rather particular example of cultural policy entering domestic space.¹⁶

David Bell and Kate Oakley’s statement, above, reveals the underlying logic of the ‘body-home-community-city-region-nation-global’ dimension, which represents varying degrees of extension and contraction of the concept of ‘domestic’.¹⁷ The notion of the domestic originates from the correlation between subjectivity and societies of different sizes. From a family member and villager to a member of an ethnic group and even a (so-called) global citizen, this link does not lie in geographical regions, but in societies relating to different senses of identity, including gender and ethnicity. The seemingly stable and fixed social classification, based on an understanding of the ‘social as society’ as discussed by John Urry, dominates our awareness of the links between us and the rest of the world, which, just like concentric circles growing bigger and bigger, produces links of various depths between subjectivity and society.¹⁸ This simple ideological framework has constituted different perspectives, measures, systems and policies regarding society, which also ‘directly’ evolved into public policy studies, including the analytical framework of cultural policy studies. Since then, cultural policy studies has been extended from the city to national and even to international cultural policy studies, thus involving the idea of ‘mobilities’.

When analysing urban redevelopment in North London, Andy Pratt observed that the creative city concept was often uncritically reproduced by policy makers in their policy documents—the relationship between the abstract concept and its development within the local context was ignored.¹⁹ Follow-up studies by Carl Grodach further explored how different cities had misused the concept, theory and language of the creative city to package

16 Bell and Oakley, p. 10.

17 A typical analysis unit, for example, in cultural policy studies is ‘nation’. When cultural policy studies were encouraged to focus analytical attention on the sub-national in the United States, Mark Schuster pointed out that national cultural policy studies had traditionally centred on the following questions: What is the role of a nation in cultural and artistic activities? What is the legitimacy of public fiscal support for culture and art? How does a nation use culture as an ideological tool? Should a nation support or limit various cultural activities?. These issues constituted what he called ‘descriptive literature’ in cultural policy studies (Schuster, p. 185) or single-site case studies that accounted for cultural policy formation in the context of national culture, politics and character (Bell and Oakley, p. 115). Studies using the nation state as a unit of analysis can be stretched to comparative studies among different countries, but Schuster believes that sub-national level cultural policy, as an ‘increasingly important locus of interest for those who are concerned with the health and stability of the arts, culture, and humanities’, could achieve theoretical applications in other parts of the world more effectively (Schuster, p. 183).

18 Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies*.

19 Andy Pratt, ‘Urban Regeneration: From the Arts “Feel Good” Factor to the Cultural Economy: A Case Study of Hoxton, London’, *Urban Studies*, vol. 46, nos 5–6, 2009, pp. 1041–61.

conventional economic development strategies within discussions about the cultural economy (despite having different purposes).²⁰ Here, I have to mention that studies on globalisation of the cultural economy indeed involve important discussions about policy mobilities, but mostly focus on exploring the topic of policy transfer. Among these studies, a large portion centre on discussions about ‘fast policy’ proposed by Jamie Peck, or into how policies are transferred from administrative organs to elsewhere through a globalised consulting architecture while ignoring local political and economic environments.²¹ Despite their high research value, such studies put more emphasis on comparing the results of policy transfer rather than on policy mobilities.

Policy transfer generally refers to the diffusion of a single policy or a basket of policies from one place to another. In public policy studies, discussions about policy transfer have experienced ups and downs since the 1990s.²² But, as Mark Evans analyses, such studies were mostly confined to ‘descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive’ theories, without an in-depth understanding of the multi-level development of policies.²³ Simply put, to get a more comprehensive understanding of the mobility and immobility of policy transfer, we need to keep track of how different regulations, tensions and agencies driven by policy transfer will move and turn around in national contexts and in policy practice. To do this we need to go beyond the ‘society as social’ framework.

With the prevalence of globalisation—especially with global cultural tourism and the development of cultural economics—it is easy to see the interaction between international cultural policies, as well as the possibilities of introducing the concept of ‘mobility’. This has sparked debate over ‘policy mobilities’ in cultural policy research, that is, the mobility of cultural policies. For example, various global institutions established after World War II, such as the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), have restricted and promoted the development of different countries’ policies, with ‘culture’ often becoming an exception in global policy coordination and uniformity, creating a so-called ‘cultural exception’ in certain countries such as France and Canada.²⁴ Well-known examples include Article IV of GATT, which allows the implementation of screen quotas to protect the development of local cinema.²⁵ This has spurred investigation of international cultural policies in cultural policy research, as well as fueling discussions related to ‘policy mobilities’, which include cultural protectionism, the transfer of cultural policies, different interpretations of the concept of cultural policies in different countries. This article aims to show

20 Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver, *The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy: Global Perspectives*, London, Routledge, 2013.

21 Jamie Peck, ‘Geography and Public Policy: Constructions of Neoliberalism’, *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2004, pp. 392–405; Jamie Peck, ‘Struggling with the Creative Class’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2005, pp. 740–70.

22 John Ikenberry, ‘The International Spread of Privatisation Policies: Inducements, Learning and Policy Bandwagoning’, in (eds), *The Political Economy of Public Sector Reform*, ed. Erza Suleiman and John Waterbury, Westview Press, Boulder, 1990; Colin Bennett, ‘What is Policy Convergence and What Causes it?’, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1991; Giandomenico Majone, ‘Cross-national Sources of Regulatory Policy Making in Europe and the United States’, *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 11, 1991, pp. 79–106; Peter May, ‘Policy Learning and Failure’, *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 12, 1992, pp. 331–54; Michael Howlett, ‘Beyond Legalism? Policy Ideas, Implementation Styles and Emulation-based Convergence in Canadian and US Environment Policy’, *Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2000, pp. 305–29.

23 Mark Evans, ‘Policy Transfer in Critical Practice’, *Policy Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2009, pp. 243–68.

24 Bell and Oakley, p. 147.

25 Ibid.

that the concept of policy mobilities, however, is still primarily established on the aforementioned research on different types of culture. To further expand cultural research, this article suggests combining Ahearne's concern with implicit cultural policy with a deeper understanding of the importance and complexity of mobilities in culture and related policies. The following section analyses working holiday schemes as an entry point into implicit cultural policies, and ponders how research on the mobility of cultural policy research can be expanded.

Insight from a pilot project: Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme

Since 2001, the Hong Kong SAR government has signed bilateral agreements with other governments, including New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Canada, South Korea, France, England and Austria, allowing applicants aged from 18 to 30 years to apply for working holiday visas for short-term visits (usually one year) and employment. The website of the Hong Kong SAR government provides the following overview:

Travelling thousands of miles, experiencing local culture and earning money to cover traveling expenses ... are the dream[s] of many youngsters. Now, you have a chance to make your dream come true! ... Through the [Working Holiday] Schemes, young people aged 18 to 30 can gain valuable experience while living and working overseas. During their stay abroad, they can have a better understanding of the cultural and social developments of the above economies. The new experience that they gain would help enhance their self-confidence, adaptability and interpersonal skills.²⁶

'Experience', 'culture', 'dream' and 'youth' are keywords in the overview of the Working Holiday Scheme, in addition to 'money'. In this overview, the Working Holiday Scheme benefits young people by providing a rare opportunity for them to experience other cultures and societies. Simply, the scheme is described as an international and transcultural policy for adolescents, a social policy designed to deliver a new form of 'rite of passage', boosting young people's development and nurturing their self-confidence, adaptability and interpersonal aspects.²⁷ The Working Holiday Scheme was implemented by the Labour Department, suggesting that Working Holiday Scheme is a labour policy.

As an international agreement with a relatively short history, the Working Holiday Scheme has only been researched in the past decade. Most of this research has concentrated on the academic scope of tourist studies, including relations between work and tourism,²⁸ principles on designing travel route of working holidaymakers,²⁹ differences between and definitions of backpackers

26 Labour Department of HKSAR, 'Working Holiday Scheme', <<http://whs.esdlife.com/eng/about.asp>>.

27 Claudia Bell, 'The Big "OE": Young New Zealand Travelers as Secular Pilgrims', *Tourist Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2002, pp. 143-58.

28 Natan Uriely, "'Travelling Workers" and "Working Tourists": Variations Across the Interaction Between Work and Tourism', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 3, 2001, pp. 1-8.

29 Jeff Jarvis and Victoria Peel, 'Tourists for Hire: International Working Holidaymakers in a Work Based Destination in Regional Australia', *Tourism Management*, vol. 37, 2012, pp. 1134-24.

and working holidaymakers,³⁰ and the reasons working holidaymakers participate.³¹ In addition, there have been studies of the Working Holiday Scheme from economic and labour perspectives, explorations of the relationship between working holidays and local labour markets³² and analyses of the economic value of working holidaymakers.³³ Cultural considerations triggered by the Working Holiday Scheme have also drawn academic attention. Wilson, Fisher and Moore, for example, used the case of New Zealand to examine the cultural content of the working holiday and further extend the relevance of 'culture' to tourism and migration:

Ongoing cultural connections between these antipodal, but culturally similar, countries maintain the OE [overseas experience]. The OE is a cultural travel practice that does not easily fit into any definition of tourism ... In fact the OE can be understood on a number of levels—as migration; as work; as a cultural phenomenon; and as travel. Consequently, it can also be missed by each of these areas of study because it does not fit neatly within existing paradigms.³⁴

In a study attempting to capture the cultural implications of working holidays, Nick Clarke discusses the autonomy of working holidaymakers and in doing so touches upon a typical topic of cultural studies: the interaction between the structure of working holidays and the agency of working holidaymakers.³⁵ By regarding working holiday studies as an individual case, Clarke draws on the theoretical basis of James Clifford's inclusion of mobility in anthropological research and Urry's ideas to explore mobility research initiated by Rosa Braidotti, Tim Cresswell's criticism of the political and economic structure of mobility and the political nature of mobility outlined by Natan Crag.³⁶ Clarke then demonstrates the possible implications of mobility research methodology.³⁷

Here, I further reinforce Clarke's attempt to review mobility research through working holidays, and highlight the possibilities of using the Working Holiday Scheme as a research subject of critical

30 Christopher Brennan, 'Backpackers or Working Holiday Makers? Working Tourists in Australia', *Qualitative Sociology Review*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2014, pp. 94–114.

31 Chaang-luan Ho, Pi-Yueh Lin and Shu-Chin Huang, 'Exploring Taiwanese Working Holiday Makers' Motivations: An Analysis of Means-end Hierarchies', *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, vol. 38, 2012, pp. 463–86.

32 Kumiko Kawashima, 'Japanese Working Holiday Makers in Australia and their Relationship to the Japanese Labour Market: Before and After', *Asian Study Review*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2010, pp. 267–86.

33 Yan Tan and Laurance H. Lester, 'Labour Market and Economic Impacts of International Working Holiday Temporary Migrants to Australia', *Population Space and Place*, vol. 18, 2011, pp. 359–83.

34 Jude Wilson, David Fische and Kevin Moore, 'The "OE" Goes Home: Cultural Aspects of a Working Holiday Experience', *Tourist Studies*, vol. 9, 2010, p. 17.

35 Natan Clarke, 'Free Independent Travelers? British Working Holiday Makers in Australia', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, vol. 29, no.4, 2004, pp. 499–509.

36 Natan Clarke, 'Writing Mobility: Thoughts from a Research Project on British Working Holiday Makers in Australia', in *Mobile Methodologies*, ed. Ben Fincham, Mark McGuinness and Lesley Murray, Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke, 2004; James Clifford, 'Travelling Cultures', in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, Routledge, New York, 1992; Urry; Rosa Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994; Tim Cresswell, 'The Production of Mobilities', *New Formations*, vol. 43, 2001, pp. 11–25; Mike Crang, 'Between Places: Producing Hubs, Flows and Networks', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 34, 2002, pp. 569–74.

37 Clarke, 'Writing Mobility'.

cultural policy studies of mobility.³⁸ One concern of cultural policy research is to demonstrate control in terms of culture, imagination and effects of establishment and policies. While traditional policy research focuses on the different types of arts, in this article I adopt Ahearne's ideas to build upon the idea of working holiday scheme as an implicit cultural policy, attempting to explore the cultural aspect of mobility. I make a number of observations based on a pilot study in which I considered the Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme as an implicit cultural policy and attempted to explore its cultural significances through interviews with thirty participants in working holidays. These participants came from different social classes, and stayed or worked in various places for at least six months under the scheme. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the study focused on topics of subjectivity and mobility, such as participation purposes and experience, results of trips, initial expectations and overall memories after completion. Participants' detailed answers, as well as official materials and records of the Hong Kong Working Holiday Scheme, formed an outline of explanatory links between public governance of the scheme, individuals' mobility and cultural experience.

Since its launch in Hong Kong, the Working Holiday Scheme has received widespread attention from the public, particularly young people. The growing public interest has been reflected in the increasing number of applications. The number of applicants for a visa to work in Australia—the most popular destination—grew from 3,252 people in 2009 to 5,609 in 2011, and then to 12,625 in 2013. Such a significant increase raises the immediate question: Why are an increasing number of young people keen to participate in working holidays? But paying attention to mobility and to understanding the scheme as cultural policy, may make us think more deeply and ask: How does the policy formulation for the Working Holiday Scheme and the subjectivity of participants interact, thus generating various mobile choices and different cultural experiences from their mobilities?

In 1988, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari co-authored *A Thousand Plateaus*, a classic work that put forward the idea of a 'treatise on nomadology', using the nomad as a historical-contextual and metaphorical concept to explain how individuals moved between points and lines under power interference and to point out that power tended to manage fluid through regulated points and lines.³⁹ However, Deleuze and Guattari also stressed that movement between specific points had its own (non-purposeful) autonomy, as Peter Adey said in interpreting the treatise:

The path or the movement is, therefore, not dominated by the point, but it has an autonomy and a 'direction of its own'. The nomad goes from point to point only as a necessity and not as an aim.⁴⁰

If we understand the provisions set out in the Working Holiday Scheme to actually represent control imposed over individuals through legal procedures, which is 'solid' as described by Deleuze and Guattari, then how about the necessity of working holidaymakers' movement between these fixed points? This study starts our discussion from the beginning point of movement of various working holidaymakers.

In the past, movement of people has often been brought about by practical economic and life needs, rather than romantic considerations. As Carl Sauer has said, 'mobility as a dominant character goes with mobility as specialised hunting economics or with life in meagre environments'.⁴¹

38 Ibid; Natan Clarke, 'Free Independent Travellers?', pp. 499–509.

39 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Athlone Press, London, 1998, p. 363.

40 Peter Adey, *Mobility*, Routledge, London, 2010, p. 60.

41 Carl Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, The American Geographical Society, New York, 1952, p. 22.

The Working Holiday Scheme serves as a temporary migrant labour policy. Supposing people work hard to earn money, are the purposes of working holidaymakers' participation in line with economic rationality? Notably, none of my respondents regarded money as a primary reason for participating in working holidays before they started out, although this did not continue in their experience after departure and was not reflected in reports they heard before departure:

I earned a lot of money at that time [during his working holiday], about HKD30,000 to 40,000 per month. I compared my salary with that of my friends in Hong Kong. They earned more than HKD10,000 a month, so I felt satisfied with my salary. Confident of my own ability, I would work harder, and finally made more than HKD100,000 when I came back to Hong Kong.⁴²

The respondents had different expectations on the economic benefit of a working holiday. Some expected it would be possible to accumulate over HKD 100,000 in savings, while some predicted earning only a sufficient amount to continue their journey. Although these expectations varied, most respondents felt that the economic benefit of a working holiday was in line with their expectations. Some respondents said they reaped financial returns from working holidays, although when asked about the primary reasons for their involvement in working holidays, money was not one of them.

Some respondents described working holidays as their 'final stop in youth practice' (others included 'wayward' and 'runaway' in the phrase). When they were asked to give more detail about their initial purposes, their narratives were full of romantic and rebellious laziness and revolt against the modern urban lifestyle. Respondent LYT said:

Unless you have aspirations, or know what you want to do or to engage in what sector, when you just graduated, without a plan for further study or entering the society, the best option is to live in another place to broaden your horizons and try different things in order to explore what you are interested in.⁴³

This advice may be generally associated with unpredictable and fluidic multitude conditions described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, namely: 'mass worker nomadism always express a refusal and search for liberation'.⁴⁴ However, I came to realise that the respondents' mobility was not totally unpredictable. Most 'predictable' is that the majority of working holidaymakers chose Australia as their destination, the site of their 'last youth practice'. Take the number of applicants in 2012 for example. About 150 young people applied for working holidays in Germany, 100 for Ireland, 422 for Japan, 221 for Canada and about 400 for New Zealand. In a sharp contrast, over 9,000 applied for Australia—and 88 per cent of the total successful applicants.⁴⁵ Why did Australia overwhelmingly rank top as the most popular destination for working holidaymakers?

Many respondents mentioned the convenience of applying for the Australian working holiday visa (that it is an English-speaking country also provided a strong impetus) and we cannot ignore the structural advantages of the Australia working holiday visa program, which did not have a quota. In comparison, other countries required annual quotas of different

42 Interview: WKC

43 Interview: LYT

44 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass, London, Harvard University, 2000, p. 212.

45 Reference statistics only involved Germany, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

forms and sizes: 500 in Korea; 400 in New Zealand; 200 for both France and Canada; 150 in Germany and 100 in Ireland. Australia's lack of quota allowed working holidaymakers to enjoy more freedom of 'practice' and 'laissez-faire travel plans', which well matched their ideas of movement without preconceived plans. Yet, was their mobility upon arrival at their destination 'unpredictable' as suggested by Hardt and Negri?⁴⁶

By referring to ecological theories and the 'Conservation of Energy' rule, George Zipf tried to appropriate the rules on movement of natural matter to apply to movements of human beings. He developed 'the Principle of Least Effort', believing that 'every individual's movement, of whatever sort, will always be over paths and will be always tend to be governed by one single primary principle'; that 'a person in solving his immediate problems will view these against the background of his probable future problems, as estimated by himself'.⁴⁷ Naturally, we will question the possibility of simplifying complicated and multi-purposeful mobilities to a single rule, but from interviews I found that mobile paths of most respondents were 'determined' by a key variable or a 'necessity', as noted in Adey's remarks above. That is, job opportunities. Respondent TK said: 'I once worked at three to four meat factories in different areas. For example, movement from Melbourne to the Gold Coast gave me a chance to travel while working.'⁴⁸ The memories of Respondent TK echoed the experience of other respondents. Most said they only planned events and accommodation for the city of arrival (most of the respondents prepared living costs for the first one to three months). From there, they would act according to actual circumstances. However, through the interviews it became apparent their 'next stop' was always determined by their job opportunities.

I once worked in a red wine factory, a cherry factory, an apple factory, a vineyard and some outdoor places. I also worked in exchange for accommodation. These jobs, which were seasonal, were offered in different seasons and locations. So I worked at different places. I changed my job every two months on average, or three to four months at most.⁴⁹

Considering the combination of work and holidays permitted under the Working Holiday Scheme, this study discovered that the movement paths of respondents mainly depended on their work at the outset, and those who claimed they came for sightseeing would arrange a time for sightseeing just before their trips ended. Our findings revealed that interviewed working holidaymakers put work before holidays instead of moving for holidays while at work, or even travelling completely freely without any restriction as they had imagined they might. In other words, it seems that the complicated movement paths of working holidaymakers were actually supported by relatively stable infrastructural variables. Instead of staying permanent, this fixedness provided a temporarily static connective state, lending the mobility process a dialectical relation between fixedness and mobility.

Documents submitted by the Hong Kong Labour Department to the Legislative Council make clearer the mixed purposes of proposing the Working Holiday Scheme:

In 2001, the Government unveiled the Working Holiday Scheme for the first time, aiming to boost bilateral social and cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and

⁴⁶ Hardt and Negri, p. 212.

⁴⁷ George Zipf, *Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort*, Cambridge, Addison, Wesley, 1949, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Interview: TK

⁴⁹ Interview: YSH

other economies. Under this scheme, local young people aged 18–30 had access to living and working in other places, which would reinforce their understanding of local development and broaden their international horizons and knowledge. In addition to enhancing exchanges between Hong Kong and its partner economies, this scheme can promote bilateral cooperation and boost the development of each other's tourism industry.

The findings of this study, however, reveal that 'bilateral social and cultural exchanges' here are actually a semi-structured mobile path network. In other words, mobilities of the working holidaymakers are not as free as they imagined before their trips. It seems that working holidaymakers who had imagined laissez-faire travel experience paradoxically experienced the opposite, growing into members of industrialised labour under the pretext of working holiday. As we are using the analytical core of cultural policy research to determine whether such an approach to working holiday schemes can achieve different results from traditional research on the subject, we can then take cultural policy research as the basis of our theory and analysis to explore the mobility of culture and politics and reveal research opportunities in different aspects. At the same time, we can introduce more mobility-related discussions into research framework of cultural policies.

Understanding 'mobilities' in cultural policy studies

In examining the relationship between the history of cultural institutes and cultural nationalism, Gregory Paschalidis argues that current cultural policy studies always neglects the externality of cultural policies and disregards the importance of international cultural policy studies. He remarks:

Cultural policy research has so far focused almost exclusively on internal cultural policy: on the institutions, the principles and strategies that concern the administration and regulation of culture within national boundaries. Among the standard textbooks of the last decade, only Toby Miller and George Yudice's *Cultural Policy* devotes a few pages to USA foreign cultural policy. We need however to overcome this domestic bias.⁵⁰

Paschalidis instead argues for an 'international cultural policy', focused on topics such as the globalisation of the cultural economy, international art markets and protocols, cultural diversity, 'soft power' discussions, and the cultural imperialism of the cultural industry.⁵¹ What is the implication of these discussions for cultural policy studies on mobilities? Before further unpacking cultural policy studies on mobilities, I would like to turn to the theory of George Zipf (1949) and use it as a basis for subsequent discussions.

In *Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort*, Zipf used an interdisciplinary architecture covering physics, natural science and social science to explore conceptual topics such as energy conservation and interaction between ecology and human behaviour.⁵²

50 Toby Miller and George Yudice, *Cultural Policy*, London, Sage, 2002; Gregory Paschalidis, 'Exporting National Culture: Histories of Cultural Institutes Abroad', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2009, pp. 276–7.

51 Bell and Oakley; David Throsby, *The Economics of Cultural Policy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

52 Zipf.

Zipf proposed to imagine human beings as the transient matter-energy agglomerations that moved through their bodies:

we may say two things about John [an imaginary person] in reference to our theoretical paths of least effort. First, we may say that John is a set of paths over which matter-energy proceeds into his system of toolage, through his system of toolage, and out of his system of toolage. Secondly, John, as a unit, takes paths ... John's intrasystematic set of paths may seem to be rigidly stereotyped and determinate ... This view of John as simultaneously both taking paths and being paths leads ultimately to a profound question in dynamics that ... there is nothing in this transient matter-energy that can be called permanently 'John'.⁵³

Taking this imaginary person as an example, Zipf notes that John comprises a series of paths and is a system that matter-energy passes through and across. The unique permanence of this system stemmed from the stability of paths constituting John. The paths contributed to modular mobilities; that is to say, mobilities were not random, but followed a continuous sequence, just as John's movement was constrained by his interconnections with the outside world. Here, Zipf's abstract theory and his use of a metaphor for paths provides us with a crucial basis for presenting our argument in studies on mobilities. Mobilities are not neutral and random, but are 'mediated mobilities' involving politics. Here, what we need to explore is how cultural policies manage, build and understand mobilities, thus producing special cultural outcomes and experiences.

In *Sociology beyond Societies*, Urry discusses how a society reshapes 'the social' because of material transformations. He argues that in contemporary times, material transformations in technology and the economy have made mobility the underlying unit of society. Urry believes that a person does not move alone, but with other people and, without a variety of mobilities, the society we thought we were familiar with would fail to function.⁵⁴ This understanding of 'the social' has been echoed by many others. For example, Vincent Kaufmann noted that we should 'get rid of the very concept of society in order to replace it with an approach based on movement'.⁵⁵ However, I must emphasise that mobility in such arguments is relational. By extending the theory of Henri Lefebvre, Urry put forward the idea of interactive relations between mobility and relative stasis, and between mobility and permanence. Mobility should be understood relative to what he called 'moorings'. In another book, *Global Complexity*, Urry explains how a complex mobile system is supported by 'infrastructural moorings', and notes that today's life is built on 'material worlds that involve new and distinct moorings that enable, produce and presuppose extensive new mobilities'.⁵⁶

Yet, how is such an argument useful for cultural policy studies? Cultural policy studies, as a building block of public policy, is undergoing various forms of change caused by political and economic transformation, particularly changes in the policy landscape due to 'drifting' of public policies, namely, multi-purposeful development of policy implementation.⁵⁷ When

53 Ibid. pp. 10-12.

54 Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies*.

55 Vincent Kaufmann, *Re-thinking Mobility: Contemporary Sociology*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2002, p. 18.

56 John Urry, *Global Complexity*, Polity, Cambridge, UK, 2003, p. 138.

57 Mark Bevir and Rod Rhodes, *Interpreting British Governance*, London, Routledge, 2003.

it comes to cultural policies, policymakers attempt to enrich the content of culture to make it serve the purposes of other social and economic policies, such as the establishment of community groups, unemployment issues and concerns over young people.⁵⁸ As the lines between different public policies have been increasingly blurred, especially as cultural policies have been scattered in a 'decentred' form in various corners of the public policy system, cultural policy studies also need to present an up-to-date analytical framework for effective discussion about cultural policies in both theory and practice.⁵⁹

The conceptual possibilities offered by implicit cultural policies and the idea of 'policy attachment' proposed by Gray can expand the scope of cultural policy studies, and provide clues to the flow of different policy purposes in the public policy system and resulting experiences in culture, aesthetics, daily life and politics.⁶⁰ Such thoughts further remind us of the basis of the argument for critical cultural policy studies:

Cultural policy is, in this sense, a site for the production of cultural citizens ... Cultural policies are a means of governance, of formatting public collective subjectivity ... A critical approach to cultural policy ... requires us to understand not only how cultural policies have worked, but how different policies might produce different outcomes.⁶¹

In these remarks, Lewis and Miller not only echo Tony Bennett's 'putting policy into cultural studies' rationale, but also remind us that 'cultural policies' specifically refer to policies involving management of 'public collective subjectivity'. From George Zipf's imagination of mobility and John Urry's 'mobile turn' research theory and methodology to the implicit cultural policy analysis framework and the original aim of critical cultural policy studies, this article unveils an area to be developed in cultural policy studies—mobility generated and managed by different public policies related to culture, subjectivity and politics. Just as McCann and Ward put it, we should 'stay close to practice' in research into policies and mobilities, an act which 'necessitates detailed description and tracing of the travels, comparative techniques, and representational strategies, of policy actors who mobilise policy and engage with global circuits of policy knowledge'.⁶²

Conclusion: Toward cultural policy studies on mobilities

This article has examined the contribution of cultural policy studies to cultural studies, and provided more critical proposals for policymakers, by exploring the existing analytical framework of knowledge in this field and considering the critical efficacy of the social as mobility paradigm. Here, I want to restate the definition of cultural policy studies given by Sullion and Garcia:

Cultural policy research is interdisciplinary. It draws on the social sciences for both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and to articulate its social and

58 Loosely.

59 Bevir and Rhodes.

60 Gray.

61 Lewis and Miller (eds), pp. 1–2.

62 Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward, 'Assembling Urbanism: Following Policies and "Studying Through" the Sites and Situations of Policymaking', *Environment & Planning A*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2012, p. 45.

economic role, its models of application and territorial difference. From the arts/humanities it draws on history and historiography—to understand policy making in the past and influence its future development and implementation—as well as cultural studies, from which come a concern with sign, representation and identity and, indeed, definitions and experiences of culture and its role in society.⁶³

From Scullion and Garcia's definition and Ahearne's conceptual proposal on explicit and implicit cultural policy, mentioned earlier, this article proposes that cultural policy studies should not only focus on researching policies about traditional art, ancient relics and the creative economy alone, but also include cultural studies research into different public policies, policy design and implementation, and audience interaction and other aspects enlivened by cultural research.⁶⁴

The article began by outlining the current research framework of cultural policy research and its focus on the types of culture and arts, as well as groups of different sizes. It then detailed how cultural policy research could be used as a critical form of cultural research in two ways: first, though adopting Ahearne's theory of implicit cultural policy and abandoning the traditional view of using cultural types as an analytical subject; second, combining this with a focus on mobility that goes beyond the scale of communities as the sole way of understanding society, thereby developing the branch of mobility-related cultural policy research.

The case study of Hong Kong's Working Holiday Scheme showed that traditional cultural policy studies encountered analysis bottlenecks because they were built on 'social as society', and so I examined the orientation of the scheme as a 'temporary immigration labour policy'. Doing so reflected the greater possibilities of cultural policy studies triggered by mobility. But the case study also echoed practical operations during the expansion of the scope of cultural policy studies by tracking practical policies and cases. It is only by turning to the details of policies and individual cases that cultural policy studies can focus on determining the priority between institutions and individuals in their contribution to cultural studies.

About the author

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63 Scullion and Garcia, p. 122.

64 However, will the extension of cultural policy studies to almost all public policies and even to defined culture of daily life in a broad sense lead to problems in research and policy implication.

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