Economies and ecologies of cultural policy for the Baltic Sea Region – a case study of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy, Priority Area Culture: investigating relations between culture, policy, and sustainability

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The transversality of both culture and sustainability challenges the disciplinary approaches that dominate policy making. Cultural policy is not a top priority, neither in national, nor in international spheres,; it tends to be ranked below security and growth. Within cultural policy, sustainability is making its way, in sometimes subtle ways, while the fundamental questions around the deeper relation between policy, culture, and sustainability mostly remain blurred.

A plethora of questions can be asked into cultural policy for sustainability (CPfS). We must address the complex networks around policies, to get a better picture of: what works in CPfS; how and where it works, who or what benefits or loses from the priorities; how do the policies that link culture and sustainability to one another, connect to one another; as well as to external factors influencing sustainability? How may disciplinary and departmental divides be bridged, and what picture do we get when we do this? How do the specificities of the fields of culture and sustainability affect back onto policy? What affects does CPfS induce in communities or agents? Does CPfS encourage transdisciplinarity, creativity, sensitivity, action-learning? Etc.

I will take up the case of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy, Priority Area no. 17 on culture, and look at: the BSR Strategy 2007-2015; connections to agents and institutions in the field; values, policies, and instruments; the role of flagship projects; and economies and ecologies of the EU BSR PA Cultural policy. How does policy connect with e.g. established film industry, start-up creatives, sharing and circular economy? How does cultural policy care for or exploit value? How does it internalize previously externalized elements? Ecologies: how does CPfS relate to environments, what is its relation to resources, possibilities, and resilience? What are the ecologies of organizing people and matter in flows of value?

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