Abstract

European cultural policy is widely based on projects carried out by non-governmental actors. This can be broadly captured as a form of projectified governance with a unique interplay of top-down and bottom-up mechanisms. The Commission takes advantage of these structures because of its lacking regulatory power: In this way, the Commission accomplishes targeted policy making in the highly diverse and fragmented cultural field, which would actually comprise not very beneficial conditions for the supranationally organised Commission to exert a considerable impact. However, there is hardly any empirical evidence on the specific objectives of the Commission and even less on variations in these goals over the past 25 years of distributing project funds in the extraordinarily dynamic cultural field. Eastern Enlargements and several crises – both economic and societal ones – constitute significant challenges to cultural policy making in the Union. By conducting an explanatory sequential analysis on the calls for proposals since the very beginning of cultural policy making in the Union, the mixed-methods research design aims at capturing the Commission’s dynamic objectives in the cultural field. This includes a bags-of-words analysis and a text-reuse analysis to account both for differences and constants over the period of analysis (1995-2020). The analysis is complemented with additional expert interviews for further validation of the predominantly quantitative analysis.

Keywords: diversity, European Union, identity, integration, unification