

# counting culture

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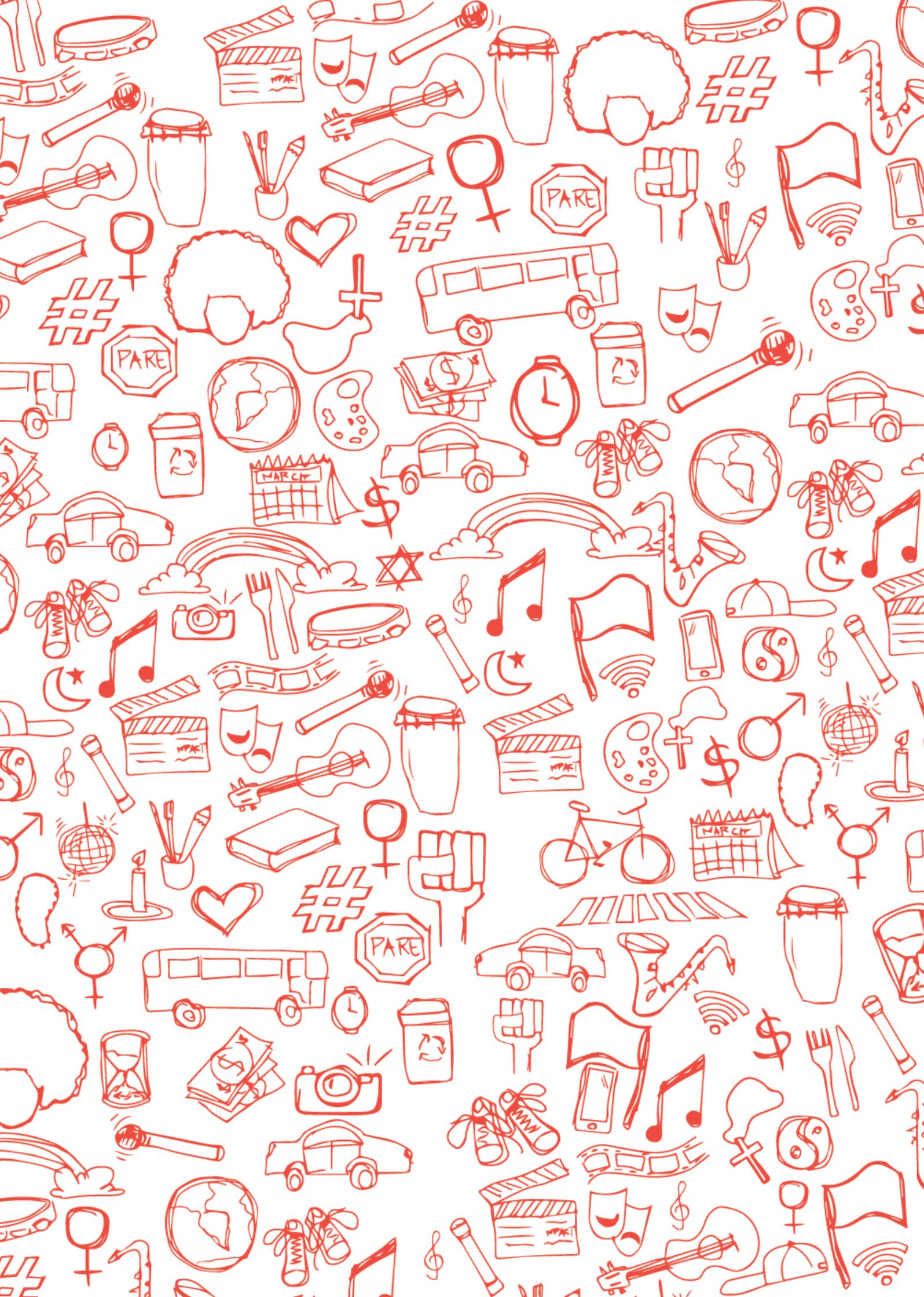
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# Cultural Policy in the UK: Counting Culture Literature Review

## INTRODUCTION

Once called ‘the arts’, then designated the ‘cultural industries’, cultural policy now refers to ‘activities based on individual talent to produce content, services or products with cultural and symbolic value’ as ‘the creative industries’, with increasing local and national attention in policy rhetoric being placed on their economic and social importance (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 1998). This shift in government policy marks a significant change in the value these industries are perceived to contribute to the economy as well as to achieving benefits to society. Sometimes overlooked and misunderstood by practitioners, cultural policy is incredibly important in understanding how funding is allocated; which art forms and levels of professionalism are viewed as more important than others; how the UK positions itself on a global stage and how the creative industries as a whole make a case for themselves in the broader picture of government priorities and support. The two major government bodies that set the parameters for public funding in the UK are DCMS and Arts Council England (ACE). ACE is a public body that supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries in England, which ‘includes a wide range of visual, performing and literary art forms, music,

dance, theatre and literature’ (ACE, 2010, p. 13). DCMS is ACE’s parent government department, with the aim of making ‘the arts and the wider culture of museums and libraries an integral part of everyday public life, accessible to all, and understood as essential to the national economy and to the health and happiness of society’ (Cebr, 2019, p. 12). The origins of these government bodies are discussed in more detail in the first section.

Government funding in the UK has been interpreted by some as leaning towards more elitist, ‘high art’ notions, with support for art forms such as theatre, ballet, and fine arts taking precedence historically. However, the focus on the creative industries now encompasses a more wide-ranging and pragmatic focus with an emphasis on the creative industries’ contribution to employment creation, social impact, and economic growth (Throsby, 2008). While definitions of ‘culture’ are contested, in the discourse to follow, the term ‘culture’ is used interchangeably with ‘(the) arts’ and later ‘the creative industries’ for the sake of simplicity. The creative industries are now deemed by policymakers to make a more significant economic contribution than in the past and are positioned as the means to achieve other policy initiatives, such as those aiming to

address social exclusion, urban regeneration, and well-being (Oakley, 2013). It is impossible in contemporary discussions of cultural policy in the UK not to acknowledge the social benefit of cultural activity, and as a consequence the creative industries are now very much shaped by their instrumental as well as intrinsic value to society. It is not enough merely to appreciate a piece of art for its aesthetic value, one must also recognise the benefit it brings to communities, in social cohesion, regeneration, well-being, and many other social concerns whose solutions were once claimed solely by the public and charity sectors. While this has had many advantages for the creative industries, there are also problematic aspects to this broadening of the value of culture and cultural activity that will be further outlined in the second section. Lastly, contemporary cultural policy will help to offer insights into the future of the creative industries in the UK.

## **I. FROM THE ARTS TO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**

While the arts in the UK has traditionally been more associated with artistic and cultural excellence, the establishment of Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) during the second world war offered a glimpse into how cultural policy could support more of a focus on the social benefits offered by arts activity. CEMA was 'an emergency wartime organisation' for 'the purpose of keeping musicians and actors in employment and to provide solace to evacuees scattered across the country' (Evans and Glasgow 1949, p. 46; Belfiore, 2019). Before this period, government support was minimal though signs of how cultural policy would be shaped in the future and the importance of its benefit to society can be found in *The 1919 Report*. This report argued primarily in favour of arts education, but also made a strong case for 'the importance of cultural opportunities where people live', though 'despite the innovative, bold and ambitious scope of the recommendations, ... its influence in shaping actual provision was limited' (Ministry of Reconstruction, 1980 [1919]; Belfiore, 2019, p. 74). Twenty years later, another report was

published, *The Annual Report of the Pilgrim Trust*, that argued that 'the enjoyment of the arts is closely linked with their practice' (Leventhal 1990, p. 295) and that 'ordinary people should be able to experience the arts as practitioners, not just as passive consumers', hinting again at its social importance (Belfiore, 2019, p. 76).

When CEMA was founded in 1939, the world faced an unprecedented shift created by the exceptional circumstances of wartime. The council was founded on the objective not to maintain the status quo of a focus on excellence in art by funding professional artists and organisations, but to encourage people's experience of the arts as practitioners, supporting what would now be described in today's arts lexicon as 'everyday creativity' or participatory arts. These 'participatory arts activities' were a central focus of CEMA's mission, with a clear emphasis on investing in local activities and encouraging arts participation in regional, often remote settings across the UK where morale was low and opportunities for leisure and entertainment were few. Though many professional musicians, artists and performers were employed by CEMA, initially the lines between amateur and professional and the strong emphasis on audiences were not as clearly defined as they are today in an attempt to use the arts to relieve the 'tedium of over-work in civilian life under the exceptional wartime conditions' (Evans and Glasgow, 1949, p. 3). In its first few months, CEMA mostly funded amateur artists, prioritising supporting activity outside London due to the growing danger of bombings in the capital. As a result, many major cultural venues moved their activities outside London, equalising opportunity and access nationally: '... in this wartime effort there was laid down, for the first time, the principle that the best the arts have to offer is not the sole perquisite of big centres; the many in smaller centres have an equal right to this enjoyment' (Landstone, 1953, p. 22).

Post-World War II in the 1940s, however, was the 'formative period of the cultural funding infrastructure in Britain' as it stands today which saw a regression back to a focus on

artistic excellence (Belfiore, 2019, p. 74). There was a transition of leadership as John Maynard Keynes came on as chairman, and in 1942, the way in which CEMA was funded altered, causing changes in organisational structure which also led to a shift in focus away from 'everyday creativity' or what was seen as a 'welfare approach' by some in favour of higher 'aesthetic standards' (Belfiore, 2019, p.82). Six years later ACE (then Arts Council Great Britain (ACGB)) in 1947 received its Royal Charter with Keynes as its first Chair. The new Arts Council was much more in favour of using public funds to promote artistic excellence with a view that cultural consumption was a way of 'raising the working classes to a better life' (O'Brien, 2015, p.40). Rather than focus on 'programmes designed to reflect citizens' lived experiences of culture', there was a more 'narrow conception of excellence via 'high art'' (O'Brien, 2015, p. 41; Belfiore, 2002). Keynes' appointment at a time of historic destabilisation in the wake of World War II therefore marked a significant move away from CEMA's focus on cultural democracy, or 'cultivating arts work at the grass roots and encouraging people to express themselves' (Shaw, 1980, p. 75). He stated:

The purpose of the Arts Council of Great Britain is to create an environment to breed a spirit, to cultivate an opinion, to offer a stimulus to such purpose that the artist and the public can each sustain and live on the other in that union which has occasionally existed in the past at the great ages of a communal, civilised life. (Keynes 1982, p. 372)

Keynes' notions of the 'civilised life' gave immediate rise to an inclination towards 'art forms and institutions of "high culture" – opera, classical music, ballet, theatre, and art museums', signalling a move away from cultural democracy and towards the democratisation of culture or 'making the best of the arts available to more people', remnants of which are still evident in ACE's 2010 mission, 'Great Art for Everyone', and its 2020-2030 strategy that still separates culture and creativity, further outlined in the last section (Shaw, 1980, p. 75; Upchurch, 2011;

ACE, 2010; ACE, 2020). There was another candidate for the role of chairman at the time, Tom Jones, who stood in direct opposition to Keynes and believed in a 'refusal to separate the world of the professional and the highest standards of execution from that of the local player or art club member' (McArthur, 2013, p. 189). The union of these two actors 'formed not only an artistic continuum but also a social and ultimately a moral one' where amateur participation was the ballast of democratic social purpose [for Jones], but 'for Keynes, it was a dead weight to be jettisoned' (McArthur, 2013, p. 189). Keynes' appointment therefore demonstrates a continuing prioritisation towards maintaining a focus on excellence. Under Keynes' leadership, there was also a notable and intentional move away from one of CEMA's key funders, the National Council of Social Service (now known as the National Council of Voluntary Organisations), which was more in favour of supporting amateur artists and local support than of London-centric, artistic excellence. Keynes was also a proponent of making ACGB a semi-autonomous funding body, 'excluding politicians from influencing decisions about what art is produced', a means of 'distancing government from an institution that it created and financed' which became known in the 1970s as the 'arm's length principle', further discussed in the next section (Upchurch, 2011, p. 72; Hewison, 1995).

This renewed alignment on artistic excellence rather than the social merits of more equitable participation gave rise to a plethora of new issues around cultural authority and decisions about how and who receives support. When funding is limited, there will be a question of legitimacy of cultural content in what is funded based on merits of 'quality', 'artistic excellence' and 'cultural value', but who decides how excellence and value are defined is a debate still rife in today's cultural policy discourse, often viewed a ripe environment for promoting inequality. If one was to question which cultural practices and products are most valued, the answer is most likely to be 'those of the dominant group and the past traditions with which it aligns itself', whereby 'social inequality is legitimated through

culture' (Jordan and Weedon 1995, p. 5). The root of cultural authority is power, reverting back to notions in the 1800s of access to culture as a means of 'controlling and civilising the working classes', an anxiety that 'made many of the art's patrons and supporters hail the arts as agents of refinement', through admiring 'the great works of civilisation embodying the universal principles of beauty and order' (Minihan, 1977, p. 27). The cultural sector during this period therefore promoted the status quo regarding power and class in the UK, and the effect was to exclude what was seen as 'other', such as 'popular culture, much work by women, the work of Black and Asian writers and artists, and the so-called "primitive" art of non-Western cultures', reflecting 'broader societal power relations' opting to favour 'white, middle-class and male interests' (Jordan and Weedon, 1995, p. 11). This was by no means explicit, as Keynes hoped that 'greater provision of professional arts would also improve public receptivity to the arts in general, thereby enhancing artists' potential for future employment' through sheltering 'qualified artists from the market economy' (Upchurch 2011, p. 75). There was also an assumption at the time that the arts in and of themselves were valuable and 'its worth was not questioned' in contrast to discourses today which demonstrate that the arts need to continually justify their existence, often by drawing attention to their value to other policy agendas (O'Brien, 2015, p. 39), further outlined in the second section.

Though the focus was arguably on more elite, 'highbrow' forms of art, there was still an assumption underlying the creation of ACGB that art, its consumption and creation, should be free from the normal constraints of the free market. Through these policy shifts, there was a distinct divide between arts policy based broadly on 'principles of patronage and enlightenment assumptions' which assumed an 'inherent opposition between art and commerce' and policy more directed towards regulating mass media and popular culture (Garnham, 2005, p. 16). The main concerns of these 'mass media' industries such as film, radio and television were 'press freedom and pluralism, defence

of a national film industry, and the regulation and public service provision of broadcasting' and were therefore quite different to those of the arts (Garnham, 2005, p. 16). By the second half of the twentieth century, however, it was difficult for the government to deny the growing economic potential of the cultural industries. At this time, there was an increase in prosperity of the global North, which allowed for more time for leisure, a rise in literacy levels, the growth in popularity and technology in television and the increasing importance of 'cultural hardware' (hi-fi systems, TV, and later videocassette recorders and personal computers) for the consumer goods industry (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005). Sparked by the Thatcher-era government and later accelerated by the Labour Party or 'New Labour', there was a shift from state-run entities towards commercialisation and marketisation across a wide scope of public provision, culminating in a major shift in 1998 with the release of DCMS' *Creative Industries Mapping Document*, which laid the foundation for contemporary policy structures in the UK and many other countries around the world, further outlined in the following section (Garnham, 2005).

## II. A NEW PARADIGM: FROM THE CULTURAL TO THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Many institutions in the creative industries 'play a vital role in nurturing and advancing the arts' but also in creating value for society, operating in a challenging environment where they have to consistently 'reassess their business strategies to ensure that they are still capable of delivering on the artistic and cultural objectives' fundamental to their purpose (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2009, p. 1). Value in the creative industries is 'created in the encounter between a person (or multiple people) and an object (which may be tangible or intangible, as in an idea or activity)', where 'neither is fully formed in the object, nor is it entirely produced in the eye of the beholder – but is produced in the encounter of the two' (ACE, 2014, p. 8). While some tension and criticality has fallen on arts policy since the founding of ACE, the most significant changes

in current cultural policy have taken place since 1998 when DCMS released its cultural mapping document, changing the terminology of policy in the arts from the 'cultural industries' to the 'creative industries' (Garnham, 2005; DCMS, 1998). This change was not 'a mere change of labels': there were 'both theoretical and policy stakes involved in this shift' (Garnham, 2005, p. 15), and the UK's policy initiative led to many other countries adopting similar mapping of their creative economies (Potts et al., 2008). So, in 1998, the term 'creative industries' was born. Using the word 'industry' to describe the arts sector, however, dates back to 1979 when the 'culture industry' term was devised by two academics in opposition of adopting that term to describe the arts, with their criticism emphasising the sharp contrast between culture and industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979). They took issue with the way the term 'culture' is often used to align more closely with a civilised nation, or the 'meretricious and superficial taste and social practices of an elite', believing rather that culture was 'the expression of the deepest shared values of a social group' (Garnham, 2005, p. 17). When culture is paired with industry, synonymous with 'concepts of commodification, commodity exchange, capital concentration and worker alienation at the point of production', it changes the nature of the way art is conceptualised in society and in policy (Garnham, 2005, p. 17). In this instance, culture is used synonymously with 'the arts', a modern view of culture as 'creative achievement and production of artistic work, in contrast to aristocratic notions of social position expressed in good manner' (O'Brien, 2014, p. 2).

This transition from 'cultural' to 'creative' industries, or 'activities based on individual talent to produce content, services or products with cultural and symbolic value' (DCMS, 1998; Granados et al., 2017) had wider, and even farther-reaching policy implications still very much present today. The definition of the 'creative industries' now includes advertising, architecture, arts and antiques markets, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services,

and television and radio (DCMS, 1998). Industries which are traditionally more commercial such as fashion, gaming, design, or craft, for example, where there are more tangible products that emerge and measuring their value can be more straightforward were now classified alongside ballet, opera, theatre, and visual arts, whose monetary value was not as straightforward (Throsby, 2008; Banks, 2006). Many of the latter industries have associations with more elitist, 'high art' notions focused on artistic excellence, and still receive a large amount of public subsidy where those seen as more commercial do not (Throsby, 2008). Many of the industries such as software and database design seemed to have little in common with cultural activities more traditionally subsidised, with the justification for the agglomeration coming down to defining the economic aspects of culture related to intellectual property: '...those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, which have the potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (O'Brien, 2014; DCMS, 1998). The difficulty of monetising aspects of the art forms supported through ACE funding was another catalyst that led to the need to justify the value they produced in other ways, such as their contribution to employment creation, social impact and economic growth, or instrumentalisation (Throsby, 2008). These were seen by many as a way for the UK government to use the creative industries to drive other public policy agendas, 'cultural funding to help deliver their other policy priorities' (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016). The creative industries now make a more significant economic contribution than in the past and were positioned as the means to achieve other policy initiatives such as those associated with social exclusion, urban regeneration, and well-being to substantiate public spending (Oakley, 2013). So, rather than culture being valued intrinsically in and for itself, there was also a need to accompany that value judgement with an idea that it could benefit other policy initiatives. On the one hand, there were benefits for culture to be included in wider governmental policy discussions where it previously was not considered but, on the other hand, there were also problematic aspects

in this classification. The discussion to follow builds upon the strengths and weaknesses of this classification, drawing upon Oakley's assertion that 'the particular mix of cultural, economic and social assumptions' in cultural policy rhetoric 'need to be unpicked and critically examined if we are to progress either in economically developing the creative industries, or in understanding the role of creative activities in society more generally'. (2006, p. 271). Hence, a brief summary of the benefits and challenges of the new paradigm of the creative industries is outlined below in three main categories: economic, cultural, and social.

### Economic

The transition of emphasis away from the cultural to the creative industries and its subsequent focus on growth of the creative economy coincided with other political and economic shifts taking place at the time (Belfiore, 2002). The movement from an inclusive to more exclusive society in the 1980s and 1990s marked by the 'reduction in the primary labour market and an expansion of the knowledge-based secondary market' restructured the economy in a way that caused an increase in unemployment and later 'the creation of an underclass of structurally unemployed' people (Belfiore, 2002, p. 93). In the UK, New Labour's victory in 1997 signalled a renewed emphasis on the creative economy and its role – not only to generate revenue for the UK's economy but also to justify the spend of public funding through its ability to address social issues, namely social exclusion and urban regeneration, firmly backed up by DCMS. Based on what is referred to the 'arm's length principle', ACE should have autonomy to make funding decisions unaffected by political consideration. However it is regulated by a funding agreement with DCMS so the actuality of 'arm's length' is debatable (Belfiore, 2002). While the 'arm's length' policy remained in place to decide how funding was spent in relation to the government's objectives, there was also an emphasis on marketisation. Rather than relying on a small group on a peer review panel to decide what was deemed as culturally valuable to validate how funding should be spent, the market

value of cultural activity was increasingly being emphasised. In this case, 'productions became "the product", the audience "consumers", and the language of subsidy became the language of "investment"' (Hewison, 1995; Belfiore, 2002, p. 95). There has been a strong argument made for job creation through the creative economy to justify investment; it is rarer for it to be acknowledged that these jobs are mostly part-time, insecure, or low wage, and, therefore, are far from being a solution for contemporary problems of structural unemployment (Belfiore, 2002, p. 95; Lorente, 1996). There are also strong claims about the economic power of the arts for urban renewal to 'bring new life to inner cities' (Hewison, 1995, p. 258). This often took the form of cultural 'flagships' which, on the surface, regenerated communities but often did little to invest in local infrastructure, so many of those living in those regenerated communities were subsequently pushed out (O'Brien, 2015).

There were benefits when creative industries policy that once sat on the margins of policy discussions was now being seen at an urban, regional and national level as economically relevant by politicians and advisers (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005). There was also impressions from some that the new creative industries policy was more 'democratising and anti-elitist', moving away from the inequality perceived by many to be embedded in arts policy that subsidised 'cultural production that could not meet its costs through the market' (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005, p. 7). There is no doubt now of the creative industries' significance, with the total GDP contribution approximated at 3% globally, and in a time of the decline of domestic manufacturing and its subsequent exports, there is incredible potential in employment and exports especially, and 'where many of the jobs and much of the wealth of the next century are going to come from' (Cebr, 2019; Smith, 1998, p. 25). Embracing the expanded industry focus that had been enabled through the term 'creative' replacing 'cultural', the sector was able to argue that, without public support, there would not be enough creative workers to keep it going and to maximise its potential for international competitiveness.

This expansion of the activities included in the 'creative industries' also served to inflate – perhaps even to over-inflate – the economic significance of the sector (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005). According to infographics produced by the Creative Industries Council in 2018, the creative industries sector directly accounted for a GVA of £111.7 billion in a creative economy encompassing 3.2 million jobs (Creative Industries Council, 2018). These figures bear an ambiguous relation to the DCMS *Sectors Economic Estimates* for Employment in 2018, which record £32.3bn GVA from the arts and cultural sector in addition to the £111.7bn generated by the creative industries, while making more modest claims in relation to employment, of 0.659m and just over 2.0m respectively. While there is enormous potential in this area, the commodification of the arts is also a challenge in that it shifts these industries into 'complex value chains where profit is extracted at key nodes in the chain through control of production investment and distribution and the key "creative" labour is exploited' (Garnham, 2005, p. 20; Caves, 2000). The potential exploitation of the labour market is also fraught with arguments of intellectual property as 'contracts determining the distribution of profits to various rights-holders' are often 'negotiated between parties with highly unequal power' and is incredibly problematic when it comes to measuring wealth creation for individuals (Garnham, 2005, p. 20; O'Brien, 2013). In fact, it is uncommon for individuals to own their intellectual property in many instances, thereby often taking power away from the cultural creators and producers themselves and transferring it to larger corporate entities (O'Brien, 2013).

Another way to encourage wealth creation in relation to intellectual property relates to promoting cultural entrepreneurship on a policy level, encouraged by both DCMS and ACE (O'Brien, 2013). When the UK government transitioned from an economy focussing on manufacturing to one that was more knowledge-based, it also gave rise to a boom in entrepreneurial culture, supported by economic policy. This was seen as beneficial by

government, as it often gave rise to intellectual property which could generate economic benefits internationally and was a less labour-intensive means of production requiring much less governmental regulation (O'Brien, 2013). In these set of concepts of entrepreneurialism, bringing with it 'the idea of meritocracy', entrepreneurs in the knowledge economy can be seen as 'potential replacements for the sort of mass-produced worker to work in mass production, in the context of the renewal of the nation state' (O'Brien, 2013, p. 81). In the sub-text of these ideas of free individuals not reliant on the state nor the large institutions and the old structures of society, entrepreneurship was associated with the 'comparative advantage of the creative industries and thus something that could be exported' and the entrepreneurs themselves as the workers 'who are going to be the vanguard and the blueprint of a new economy' (O'Brien, 2013, p. 81). While cultural entrepreneurship is viewed with suspicion by some, particularly when it is used as a justification for the lack of a more inclusive cultural policy and for decreasing public funding for the arts, it also brings a great deal of opportunity for moving beyond the restraints of public funding (Bilton, 2010). Cultural entrepreneurs can find 'a balance between cultural and economic values' and it can even be a tool for wider social and systemic change (Hagoort, 2009, p. 21; Ratten and Ferriera, 2017). This view values the creative industries as a public good supported by public subsidy; however, the reality is that artists and organisations driving these industries are facing diminishing funding and that being entrepreneurial is a means to adapt accordingly (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016). Some would argue that this lack of funding is pushing artists and cultural leaders who work in the creative industries into being more entrepreneurial, when it is not in their nature or desire to do so; however, being entrepreneurial is increasingly necessary for the survival of the creative industries and can even be seen as an opportunity to shift systems and ways of working and as an extension to creative practice (Albinsson, 2017). Entrepreneurship can be problematic especially if it is used to justify funding cuts and for governments to be less

involved on a policy level though 'historically, very few artists worked as salaried workers' and research has demonstrated that artists and organisations who embraced the necessity of being entrepreneurial have benefitted in the long run (Woronkowicz and Noonan, 2017, p. 2). Generally, this involves not only a shift in practice but also a shift in mindset encouraged in contemporary arts strategy (ACE, 2020). These questions of the cultural economy are not mutually exclusive, also incorporating issues of cultural and social value, considered in the following two sections.

## Cultural

Utilising a wider conception of culture in the creative industries had a profound impact not only on the cultural economy but also how cultural value was understood. As stated previously, cultural value in this sense is the value of goods, services, and products with their root in creativity, with the concept of intrinsic and instrumental value playing a critical role when understanding cultural value. The 'idea that cultural engagement, as a practice with its own internal rewards rather than external monetary or status compensation, may drive intrinsic value orientation has been advocated since the ancient world by philosophers and theorists' (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016, p. 15). Despite notions of the intrinsic value of the arts, therein still lies an emphasis on delivering specific economic and social outcomes and maintaining much of its stance that artistic excellence is separate from the more socially engaged, participatory arts (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016). Many attempts have been made to justify the cultural value of the creative industries to wider society. However:

Despite a strong rhetoric of inclusion, both cultural and economic policies in the UK continue to reinforce the deep-seated belief that creativity is something (only) talented and artistic individuals do. This individualistic conception of creativity extends to the framing of the creative industries and the creative economy, where creativity is treated as

either a quasi-commodity or the preserve of the so-called 'creative class'.

*(Wilson, 2010, p. 367)*

This relates to the shift in the prioritisation of certain art forms over others as well as which art forms are deemed as more valuable than others depending on who makes or takes part in them. DCMS and ACE prioritise artistic excellence in the way they attribute value to industries in the creative industries, though it still leaves questions as to where this value comes from and who it is administered by. Some merit of public support comes from economic viability through market value, though judgements of quality rather than those of popularity seemed to be increasingly fluid and difficult to articulate during the expansion to creative industries. The so-called 'market test', or how well an industry, organisation, or artist does commercially, is considered by some as the most rigorous test of excellence, though it is unclear how excellence is appropriately measured if audiences or consumers fail to support an artist's creative expression, for example. Most studies on value in the creative industries relate to this market test or 'use-value', or the direct 'value that consumers gain from using a good or service' similar to tangible resources, rather than the exchange value which takes into account non-use value or intangible value which can habitually be more significant (Baden-Fuller et al., 2017, p. 3; Scott, 2006). In particular, because the creative industries have received growing attention as agents of social impact and community change, non-use or intangible values become increasingly important as they are often not appropriately accounted for in terms of their market value (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2009). Attempts have been made to measure social value through evaluation and impact studies, as in Matarasso's work, for example; though the rigour is lacking in many cases (Belfiore, 2012). As stated by O'Connor:

Couching discussion around the 'value' or 'benefits' of culture has been a major theme in the world of publicly funded arts and culture since the growing threat

of budgetary cuts in the 1980s (though it has always been there). Claims as to the external benefits of culture (the cultural industries adding employment to the list of such benefits) have been met by equally passionate attacks on the attempted reduction of art and culture to their functional (in this case economic) value.

*(O'Connor, 2009, p. 1)*

Clearly, there is a 'contradiction at the heart of current policy between the stress on access and education and the emphasis on excellence' affecting how value is measured, whereby if there is an effort to move away from popularity being an indicator of excellence, what is left is the difficult task of articulating and measuring excellence, and even its social benefits (Garnham, 2005, p.28; Selwood, 2000).

ACE mitigates this tension through a peer review process of the organisations and artists it supports. Herein lies an almost inevitable steer towards exclusivity where there is a 'hierarchy of forms and activities as opposed to the normal everyday cultural products produced by the cultural/creative industries and consumed by their paying publics' (Garnham, 2005, p. 28). Until the 1990s, criteria about how funding was allocated were largely based solely on cultural value, or what is also known as 'art for art's sake', the term associated with 'art having no purpose outside of the aesthetic', where 'artists have more creativity and aesthetic judgement than the rest of society...unencumbered by politics finances or morals', and making art is part of a 'higher social purpose' (O'Brien, 2015, p. 7; Luxford, 2010). For many, the arts should live outside the constraints of the market and its coinciding management, often aimed at 'twisting culture's exploring/experimenting urge so that it fits into the frame of rationality the managers have drawn' (Bauman, 2004, p. 65). Art itself and cultural institutions face a challenge when it comes to placing value upon them as they 'express values that go beyond the market', which does not deny the integral nature of the market to the arts but instead shows

how 'aspects of culture transcend the market setting' (O'Brien, 2014, p. 13). Assigning cultural value is therefore quite complex, as 'in order to understand prices and economic value, we need to be able to make judgements about how a given object or activity will contribute to our well-being, or utility, which is expressed in price' (O'Brien, 2014, p. 13). This assumption then enters into how our well-being is measured, requiring a vision of what an ideal life will look like and how the individual's cultural experience will contribute to that picture. In the case of how support for the arts is managed at ACE, a small group of people on a peer review panel makes decisions about what high-quality culture is and what should be funded based on 'excellence, quality and artistic value' (Belfiore, 2002, p. 94). Around this time, the principle of access was coming under increased scrutiny, with the notion that ACE's focus on 'bringing high art to the people - based on the assumption that it would "do them good" - was the product of a paternalistic and patronising attitude that was no longer acceptable' (Belfiore, 2002, p. 84). These condescending, highbrow attitudes around access to and prioritisation of culture also relate directly to how cultural policy affects social value, further discussed in the next section.

## **Social**

Dating back thousands of years, the 'positive' tradition of thinking about the impacts of the arts comprises a number of different categories of claims, ranging from 'the cathartic effects of the arts, to their positive impacts on health and well-being, to their progressive social and political force' (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007, p. 143). However, the shift in policy further towards the instrumentalisation of the creative industries and away from the intrinsic value of culture in recent years has profoundly impacted how government used them as tools to achieve social policy agendas towards a more evidence-based approach (O'Brien, 2015). Along with the increasing need to justify the creative industries from an economic perspective, there came a need for the arts to address other policy concerns such as urban regeneration, social exclusion, and

well-being, both in terms of cultural participation (as in active art-making) and in access to cultural experiences such as watching theatre shows and visiting art galleries (Belfiore and Gibson, 2019). This instrumentalisation of the arts coincides with a search for legitimacy in public policy, its redefinition fraught with the need to increasingly justify how public funds are spent. So, rather than the benefits of the arts themselves being enough to satisfy the public spend, there is a growing need to align the sector's benefits with other policy initiatives (Oakley et al., 2013). This approach towards cultural policy has also been called defensive instrumentalism, or 'resorting to instrumental arguments to defend the arts and to make a case for their usefulness', without which their value to society would be groundless (Belfiore, 2012, p. 103). According to DCMS, high-quality arts should be 'available to the many not just the few', working to 'promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration, in pursuing sustainability and combating social exclusion and promoting regeneration' (DCMS, 2000). Local authorities also began to play an increased role in arts spending (from 1988, actually exceeding that of central government), which is mainly concerned with the social impact of the arts to communities over the aesthetic and economic concerns of ACE, similar to the initial days of CEMA (Belfiore, 2002).

Measuring the social value of the arts by positioning the creative industries to address policy outcomes such as well-being, social inclusion, and regeneration was initially received with disdain and perceived as devaluing the mission of many artists and organisations characterised by their 'high-quality art and meaningful cultural experiences' (Holden, 2004, p. 14). This hard rejection of the measurement of the social value of culture has since softened. This can be attributed, in part, to the growing recognition of the overlap between intrinsic value in a social sense, or 'the set of values that relate to the subjective experience of culture intellectually, emotionally and spiritually' (Holden 2004, p. 15), and instrumental value, or 'the ancillary effects of culture, where culture is used to achieve a social or economic purpose'

(Holden, 2004, p. 16). Measuring value in a societal context is a high priority in current cultural policy and seen now as essential for the survival of the arts, specifically where societal outcomes are used to decipher value. However, these often require longitudinal studies where causality is incredibly difficult and evaluation costs are high (ACE, 2014).

One key stimulus for the shift towards more evidence-based policy, if not the most influential catalyst for the shift towards it, was Matarasso's *Use or Ornament?* which was published in 1997 and outlined in detail a research study on the social benefits of the arts. The study offered exhaustive insights into key quantitative statistics to back up the social benefits (which previously were more anecdotal) with research being conducted internationally: about ninety projects were studied – including over 1000 interviews and surveys – and many more observed ethnographically. Most of the projects and people who contributed to the research were part of participatory arts projects rather than audiences who attended shows, events, or exhibitions, and the report acknowledged that, while 'audiences can be considered participants in the creative process, projects where people are actively engaged in shaping their own arts work (alone or in partnership with professional artists) are fundamentally different' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 99; Belfiore, 2019). It was the first large-scale study of its kind, concluding that 'marginal adjustment of priorities in cultural and social policy could deliver real socio-economic benefits to people and communities', and recommending 'a framework for developing the role of participatory arts initiatives in public policy' (Matarasso, 1997, p. 1). It argued that, while public policy has reflected the economic importance of the arts, their role in helping to better manage resources that benefit society and contribute to a more 'stable, confident and creative society' are missing (Matarasso, 1997, p. 1). The study showed key findings in six thematic areas: personal development, social cohesion, community empowerment and self-determination, local image and identity, imagination and vision, and health and well-being. Though the findings were impressive, it

was concluded that more research needed to be done in this area and warned against creating universal indicators that could be applied across the board. However, there were fifty possible social outcomes listed that were suggested starting points for trying to assess social impact for future projects.

The impact of Matarasso's *Use or Ornament?* was extensive in the way that cultural policy was shaped thereafter, cited extensively by the then Culture Secretary of State, Chris Smith, just ahead of the policy shifts in 1998. The increasing instrumentalisation brought forth by Matarasso's report did not escape criticism, however, with many challenging the legitimisation of the research methodologies and warning against leaning too heavily on 'evidence-based policy' that relied too much on the 'contribution of the arts and the cultural industries to the governmental socio-economic agenda' (Belfiore, 2009, p. 350). With too heavy a reliance on proving the value of culture to achieve social aims, there is an implication that the arts has no value at all outside of its social impacts, and a heavy burden is placed on the arts to achieve aims such as to 'alleviate the poverty of aspiration' which, even if achievable, are nearly impossible to attribute solely to cultural participation (Jowell, 2002; Belfiore, 2009). There is also an inherent air of condescension in this approach to participatory arts as a means of improving aspiration: that the arts contribute to a stable society where, if 'the wealthy are doing the "right" things, the poor should be soothed through therapeutic artistic activities' (Dewinter, 2020, p. 97). Even if these therapeutic aims were being achieved, proving this was complicated. Through an increase in emphasis on the social value of culture, there was more of a focus on outcomes over outputs that are more focused on process versus product which, while promising, often take longer to materialise than outputs and it is difficult to establish a causal link (Belfiore, 2002). Interestingly, artistic merit is not often cited as a main consideration for arts funding for cultural participation in that it is not often evaluated with the same emphasis as social outcomes. Rather, the focus is on the creative process rather than the quality of the

artistic output. Much of the criticism of the instrumentalisation of the arts is not that art for social change is negative but that, if there is a claim of social benefit, there should be a means of assessing social impact that is rigorous and stands up to other, more traditional social policies and warns against using the arts merely as a tool to achieve other aims (Belfiore, 2002). These issues are not new as the 'arts have been used as a tool to enforce and express power in social relations for as long as the arts themselves have been around' (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007, p. 140). One hopes, however, that the future can learn from the past, which is further discussed in the next section.

### III. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The debate between the intrinsic and instrumental dimensions of cultural policy have become more nuanced in contemporary discussions of cultural policy, shifting away from being people to whom instrumentalisation happens to being active agents who manage instrumentalisation for their own ends (Belfiore and Gibson, 2019). There have been various models of differentiating value in the creative industries and, with many of them based upon a high level of subjectivity, they are controversial and complex (Banks, 2006). This discussion offers a selection of key approaches along with critical issues from the past still affecting contemporary cultural policy. Challenges loom when attempting to translate artistic innovation or even social impact into monetary forms. Hence, in the creative industries, articulating how and what type of value is created is tenuous at best, as many of these concepts, such as cultural content, artistic innovation, and creativity, 'have no obvious metric' (Throsby, 2008, p. 150). Therefore, classification in the creative industries is relevant, particularly because of the implications on how value is placed upon various industries within the sector, and with different opportunities and pitfalls coinciding with these classifications. Analysing theatre, which has traditionally received more public funding, alongside the more commercial video game industry, for example, raises questions of economic viability which inevitably affect the way

society views these two very different creative sectors (Oakley, 2009). On the one hand, it can make a strong case for the economic impact of the creative industries but, on the other hand, it has the potential to feel disingenuous, skewing data for the sector and ultimately making it more difficult to generalise connections between sectors (Henry, 2007). Placing so many broad industries into one 'creative industries' category can be problematic. While they are all related to creative products and services, they may have very different needs operationally – particularly when it comes to business models – even if little is known about those differences (Culture Label Agency, 2014). It does not make the intangible aspects of the creative industries that are difficult to quantify any less valid – perhaps they contain even more future potential because there is intangible value created that has yet to be justly understood. How these intangible values related to social, cultural, and public and community benefits are captured in a way that does justice to how these programmes operate is of particular and pressing relevance to the individual, the organisation, to the wider creative community, and, arguably, other sectors and businesses on a global scale (ACE, 2014).

In ACE's 2020-2030 strategy, *Let's Create*, 'culture' and 'creativity' are two separate areas of focus for ACE that are 'deeply connected, but different' (ACE, 2020, p. 15). Creativity is defined as 'the process by which, either individually or with others, we make something new: a work of art, or a reimagining of an existing work'. Culture is 'the result of that creative process: we encounter it in the world, in museums and libraries, theatres and galleries, carnivals and concert halls' (ACE, 2020, p. 15). In short, these are broken down into a focus on creative process and on the creation and consumption of creative products made by professionals, with an aim for everyone to have more opportunities for both. They acknowledge in this strategy that many people already have rich cultural lives, though much of that activity may have traditionally fallen outside of ACE's remit, and therefore has not currently been publicly funded in the past. This touches on the fact that much of the way 'the arts' has been defined until present

day is 'essentially European high culture', with discussions of cultural ethnicity still situated in 'specific forms of ethnicity', and within the art forms still classified as 'culture' by government policy (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007, p. 136; ACE, 2020). There is a vow to continue to diversify in the strategy: in ethnicity, socio-economic class and disability. Progress has been noted, though the funded arts sector is far from being representative of society in the UK (ACE, 2020).

From an economic perspective, ACE is aware that the business models of many organisations are outdated and could be more entrepreneurial and focused on technological innovations, so there is a pledge to invest in these aims (ACE, 2020). There is also a focus on putting funding back into the regions, and continuing to move away from a London-centric funding focus, though four out of the top five highest funded organisations are based in the capital. A focus on the local, however, is present in the new strategic emphasis on investing in libraries across the country, as they are the most frequently attended cultural spaces and embody an inherent potential for democratisation: these are free spaces in the regions, visited regularly by those who are currently under-represented in much funded arts activity – women or those from black and ethnic minority backgrounds (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016). Library attendance in fact shows the smallest disparity between people of upper and lower socio-economic status, with 36% and 31%, respectively, attending across one year, according to a 2015 DCMS study (DCMS, 2015). In other parts of the ACE remit, the numbers were not so close, with 'the proportion of adults in the upper socio-economic group who had attended or participated in the arts in the previous year' stated as 82%, compared with 67% for the lower socio-economic group, with similar disparities in heritage, museums and galleries, and digital participation (DCMS, 2015). According to a survey done around the country by ACE for *Let's Create*, there still remains a widespread socio-economic and geographic difference in engagement in culture, with many finding the terms and terminology of engagement elitist. There are also commitments to increase collaboration with other organisations outside

of the arts, encourage entrepreneurialism, and improve investment in relationships with local authorities, which still allocate more funding towards the arts than ACE. While there are clearly benefits to cultural engagement – both in production and consumption of culture – outlined in this discussion, there also needs to be respect shown to those who choose not to engage, most likely because of lifestyle constraints, access, unrelatability, and even the forms of culture they do currently engage which are not acknowledged as ‘culture’ in policy discourse. Those who do not engage with the terms of UK cultural policy are therefore not included in these discussions but are instead viewed through the lens of the deficit model, as though those who do not participate in culture as defined by DCMS or ACE are missing something from their lives:

Policy discourse about inequality in arts and culture tends to emphasise consumption rather than production and is often driven by the distributional issues surrounding public subsidy. As we have observed, focusing on barriers to participation, or the deficit model by which absence from certain kinds of cultural engagement is what matters, can distract attention from the cultural practices to be found in supposedly excluded populations and communities.

*(Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016, p. 32)*

Through this expanded approach of what cultural participation might entail, we ‘may not dispose of the question of inequality, but it can help us understand the more complex realities that include what one important research project terms “everyday participation”, or everyday creativity (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016, p. 32). The starting point for this shift, first and foremost, should not be the ‘presence or absence of social groups from specific forms of culture’, rather, measures ‘would need to be expanded to capture wider everyday practices’ (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016, p. 32). With more of these practices included in the way cultural value is understood on an individual and

societal level, a more democratic and broader discussion of who makes decisions about how value is understood and how funding is allocated may be achievable. This builds upon ‘cultural policy’s potential to play its (much needed) part in promoting creativity as not only an individualistic phenomenon, the preserve of the talented few, but also as a social concept ... and holding the promise of a genuinely creative economy’ (Wilson, 2010, p. 367). What is lacking in current cultural policy is not only how culture can be democratised through access and how even glimpses of cultural democracy can be demonstrated through increased participation, but how more voices of those people who are not currently included in these debates can be empowered to make decisions on how funding is allocated and how policy is shaped. Until that happens, there will remain an ‘uneasy relationship between creativity and the economy’ (Wilson, 2010, p. 374). Cultural policy can enable this through ‘crossing boundaries’, ‘learning from difference’, and extending its scope ‘well beyond its habitual target market of those working in the creative industries, to include those voices that are otherwise left out and marginalised’ (Wilson, 2010, p. 374).

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