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RETHINKING CULTURE

A Provocation

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MEASURING & VALUING SOUTH AFRICA'S CULTURAL & CREATIVE ECONOMY



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Introduction

“Culture” is a much-contested, much-defined term used extensively in a variety of different political, social and other contexts so that it often loses meaning, or it comes to be so all-inclusive that its policy applications are rendered nebulous. This could be why policy-makers avoid the term when determining clearly-definable interventions such as the Sustainable Development Goals with clear outcomes and time frameworks.

Yet, simply because “culture” might be a difficult term cannot be why we should avoid talking about it, particularly as culture – in its broad sense of values, ideas, worldviews, traditions and belief systems that inform individual and community identities and ways of making sense of the world – impacts directly on every facet of our lives. Thus, when considering strategies to change the world, principally in order to improve the length and quality of people’s lives, culture has to be a consideration for the ways in which it might inhibit, facilitate or mediate such strategies.

“Cultural policies” contribute to the confusing discourse around “culture” as they purport to address “culture” generally but are - often - at best limited to different dimensions and practices of the arts (merely expressions of culture) and heritage. Moreover, “cultural policies” are generally developed and managed through a silo department with little status within most governments rather than as a transversal phenomenon having impact across numerous ministries.

At this time when the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage is being revised, this Discussion Paper seeks to serve as a provocation in “Rethinking Culture” and will seek to do three things in particular:

1. identify some of the key themes in contemporary cultural policy globally and regionally and interrogate their relevance to African and South African conditions
2. make recommendations for core cultural policies that are most relevant to the material, political, social and cultural conditions of South Africa, especially to the paradigm of “development” and
3. be accessible to a wide audience including non-academic cultural activists, creative practitioners, government policy makers and others who may not have the time, inclination or resources to undertake extensive research and reading, but who require sufficient information and perspectives to consider – and perhaps be persuaded - by this document’s key arguments.

This provocation is not necessarily representative of the views and current policy emphases of the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO), but it is placed within the public domain as a contribution by the Observatory to the necessary contestation of ideas in the cultural policy domain, in order to arrive at the most appropriate policies to address a range of South African realities.

Major international cultural policy themes

A few key institutions assert cultural policy priorities and themes, and through their global reach, influence the formulation and application of cultural policies in most regions of the world, including Africa.

These multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and its agencies - principally the UN Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the European Union and its various components (European Parliament, European Commission, European Union National Institutions of Culture such as Goethe Institute, French Institute and the British Council), and development or donor bodies active in arts and culture, are generally located in the Global North.

Regional bodies such as MERCOSUR (the Latin American trading bloc comprising Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay), the African Union (AU), the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) and the African Caribbean Pacific Group of States (ACP) all have policies that have a cultural dimension. However, while these policies may reflect particular regional particularities, they generally imitate the cultural policy themes determined by institutions with greater global reach, and who have the resources (human, financial, intellectual) to exert influence.

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) - a global network of public funding arts councils and ministries responsible for arts, culture and heritage - no longer has its World Cultural Policy project, but it still influences policy-making through its world summits, research reports and its international and regional networking activities.

Even when participating in international forums that determine policy, Global South representatives, particularly from less-resourced countries, lack the data, the expertise and often the confidence to engage on matters to do with policy and end up agreeing to the proposals emanating from more resourced countries. Once such policies are adopted however, countries in the Global South generally lack the political support, the funding and the human capacity to implement such policies effectively.

This state of affairs is affirmed by the introductory comments of a document distributed at the 4th ACP Ministers of Culture Meeting in November 2017 “cultural development strategies were also formulated at the regional level, but the financial efforts made by States and their technical and financial partners do not yet measure up to the stated objectives”.¹

Cultural policy and theorising around culture for the purpose of making or influencing cultural policy has tended, in recent times, to emanate more from regional events (particularly in the Global North), and from developments in the post-Cold War era of globalisation, than from academic scholarship,

¹ Integration of Culture in all the Strategies and the Policies for a Leverage on the Sustainable Development, 4th ACP Ministers of Culture Meeting, Brussels, 7-10 November 2017

although such scholarship has contributed not insubstantially to the further refining of such policies.

The following are six of the key themes shaping contemporary cultural policy:

Cultural diversity

A key international cultural policy document of the contemporary era is the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The emergence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the 1990s as a mechanism to regulate international trade, with the neo-liberal emphasis on “the rule of the market” that sought to minimise government constraints on the movement of capital, goods and services in the pursuit of profits, caused discomfort in countries such as France and Canada because of the potential impact of free trade regulations on their respective creative and culture industries. They argued that creative goods such as films and television programmes were different to other tradeable goods like motor vehicles and T-shirts, as values, worldviews and ideas were embedded within creative goods. Thus, consumers of such goods would be influenced in the way in which they made meaning of the world, and have their self and group identities shaped (whether consciously or unconsciously).

Should creative goods from dominant economies not be subject to trade regulations, it was likely – went the argument – that, for example, movies from Hollywood would flood the markets of less-resourced countries, and consumers would thus begin to see the world in the image that Hollywood has created, thereby resulting in greater homogenisation, less global democracy and the erosion of national identity.

As argued by UNESCO

The current era of globalisation, with its unprecedented acceleration and intensification in the global flows of capital, labour and information, is having a homogenising influence on local culture. While this phenomenon promotes the integration of societies and has provided millions of people with new opportunities, it may also bring with it a loss of uniqueness of local culture, which in turn can lead to loss of identity, exclusion and even conflict.²

It is against this background that the UNESCO Convention was created as a legal instrument to grant governments the right to institute policies to protect and promote their respective creative and cultural industries, without these policies – including national subsidies to support such industries - being regarded as unfair or inappropriate interventions in the “rule of the market”.

² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/globalization-and-culture/>

On the back of *Our Creative Diversity*, the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development³, the Convention sought – and still seeks – to achieve two key goals:

- a. maintain and celebrate a culturally diverse world through equitable trade in creative goods and services and
- b. advance human and social development, particularly in the Global South

Culture, Development and the Creative Economy

One of the key themes in international, African and South African cultural policy discourse is that of “culture and development”. The “cultural dimension of development” has been part of the cultural policy lexicon at least since the post-colonial period of the 1960s. In more recent times, given the influence of the “Brundtland Commission” in affirming the ecological dimensions of development in 1987 by defining “sustainable development” as “a process that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”⁴, contemporary cultural discourse links “culture” to “sustainable development”. (Indeed, for some advocates, culture is viewed as the fourth pillar of sustainable development along with economic growth, social equity and environmental protection).

World leaders met at the United Nations in 2000 and agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015, and which would substantially alter the lives of the poor through better education, access to health care and clean water, among other things.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) produced two Creative Economy Reports in 2008 and 2010 respectively which were highly influential in shaping the discourse around the contribution of culture to development.

With the deadline for the MDGs fast approaching and with resources less available because of the global economic downturn from 2008, the creative and cultural industries were advanced as key drivers of economic growth and employment.

In 2009, the European Commission and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Secretariat hosted a colloquium of cultural professionals and ministers responsible for culture from these regions, with the theme “Culture as a Vector of Development”. The Declaration adopted by artists, cultural professionals and entrepreneurs gathered at the event, reinforced “the contribution of culture to the fight against poverty and the improvement of living conditions of people in ACP countries through cultural activities that create employment and wealth”⁵

³ *Our Creative Diversity* was a project of the World Commission on Culture and Development headed by Javier Perez de Cuellar, and was published by UNESCO in 1996

⁴ Report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development, United Nations, 1987, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland

⁵ Brussels Declaration by Artists and Cultural Professionals and Entrepreneurs, 3 April 2009

The World Commission on Culture and Development had earlier recognised the need to broaden the understanding of development beyond economics, but the pursuit of the MDGs on the one hand and recessionary conditions on the other, once more narrowly asserted the economic contribution of culture to development, more particularly through the creative and cultural industries.

UNESCO's 2013 Creative Economy Report and UNCTAD's 2015 Report on the Creative Economy all continued to affirm the importance of the creative industries in contemporary cultural policy.

Notwithstanding this, and a concerted global campaign led by UNESCO and international NGOs to integrate culture into the post-2015 development goals, culture has largely been excluded from the Sustainable Development Goals as they came to be known. (The work of the World Commission on Culture and Development in highlighting the potentially constructive and/or adverse relationships between development strategies on the one hand and the culture of the intended beneficiaries on the other - their values, worldviews, traditions and general way of life - was also ignored by the world leaders when adopting the SDGs).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals with their 169 targets make 5 broad references to culture: ensure that learners acquire an appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development; promote sustainable tourism that promotes local culture and products; develop tools to monitor the latter; strengthen efforts to safeguard the world's cultural heritage and encourage development that supports creativity and innovation.

These references are weak and general, and, if it is true that the cultural dimension of development is much more than economic growth, then it is likely that by 2030 - with so little attention having been paid to culture in the pursuit of the SDGs - the goals achieved would be unsustainable at worst and relatively shallow at best.

The SDGs recognise that "private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive growth and job creation" ⁶ and that "international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction" ⁷, yet they fail to recognise the contribution of the creative and cultural industries in this regard (despite it being a key feature of many governments' policies) and notwithstanding the 2005 UNESCO Convention which is a key instrument promoting fairer trade in creative goods and services.

Ironically though, whereas the "cultural dimension of development" was recognised first precisely because of the recognition of the inappropriateness of applying an economic model that worked in one cultural context in a cultural

⁶ Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, United Nations, par 67

⁷ Ibid

context that was fundamentally different, the advocates of the creative and cultural industries as drivers of development in Africa have repeated, and continue to repeat the same error of proposing an economic strategy that was, is successful in one – Global North - context to another in which the conditions (infrastructure, human capacity, access to capital, markets with disposable income, etc) to support such a strategy – generally - do not exist.

The global association - United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) - adopted culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development in November 2012, pointing first, to the development of the cultural sector in its own right (heritage, creativity, cultural industries, cultural tourism, etc) and then to culture as a transversal phenomenon relevant to other sectors such as education, the economy, science, the environment, social cohesion, communication and international co-operation. The UCLG recognised both the economic potential of the cultural sector as well as its transversal relevance as a facilitative or inhibitive factor in development strategies.

In 2013, Arterial Network – a pan African civil society network of creative enterprises, cultural NGOs, creative practitioners and activists – adopted a Position Paper on Culture in an International and National Development Agenda at its third African Creative Economy conference hosted in Cape Town that recognised

That development – premised on values, ideas and a worldview that seeks to bring about change, generally intended to improve the lives of the beneficiaries – is itself an act of culture, rupturing the culture of the beneficiaries and impacting on such culture directly, indirectly and in ways that could be foreseen or not, and in short, medium and long term time frameworks

Arterial Network arrived at a definition of development which is

“the ongoing generation and application of resources (financial, human, infrastructural and other) to create the optimal conditions (political, cultural, social, economic and other) in which human beings may enjoy the full range of human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

According to this definition, the end of development is (or should be) fundamental human rights and freedoms for all, and development must then be about integrating social, economic, political and other strategies to create the conditions in which such freedoms and rights are enjoyed, protected and sustained.

This brief overview of the “culture and development” discourse internationally highlights two themes in particular:

1. while there is much debate about “culture”, there is a lack of clarity on what is meant by development so that for decision-makers outside the cultural sector, the relationship between culture and development is viewed primarily in economic terms, with the cultural and creative

- industries regarded, at best, as contributors to economic growth and job creation, thus contributing to a general notion of “development” and
2. traditionally, cultural policy refers to the arts and to heritage, so that while the transversal nature of culture has relevance to all other sectors of society (education, health, the economy, justice, etc), the remit of cultural policy and of departments responsible for arts and culture seldom ventures beyond arts and heritage, largely because the political case for culture has not been won (beyond its economic contribution)

The emphasis on the creative industries as the best contribution that the creative sector can make to ‘development’ in the hope of convincing sceptical politicians of the value of the arts, ironically runs the risk of undermining the arts as these are reduced to their economic value and to ‘what the market wants’ and their broader value to society is compromised as investments and subsidies are made primarily to those disciplines and cultural activities that show the best economic return.

Culture and Conflict

One of the most significant events to shape modern history was the attack on the World Trade Towers in New York which not only unleashed the ongoing “war on terror” in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, but also appeared to give credence to Samuel Huntington’s hypothesis that the most important distinctions between people were not ideological, political or economic but cultural, and that future conflicts would occur around notions of cultural differences.⁸

With the perceived rise of “radical Islam” and the surge to Europe and other western countries of refugees from wars in Syria and other Muslim-majority countries, the idea of “clashing civilisations” or “warring cultures” has gained momentum leading to a rise in nationalism and anti-immigrant behaviour in western democracies.⁹

In a speech to the Munich Security Conference in 2011, former British Prime Minister, David Cameron stated

Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream.¹⁰

He went on to imply that multiculturalism had failed and had in fact contributed to the emergence of home-grown terror as many lived alienated lives within their own communities, without a sense of belonging to Britain as a whole, and thus were prime candidates as terror recruits.

⁸ The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order, Samuel P. Huntington, Simon and Schuster, 1996

⁹ Note the rise of anti-immigrant political parties in liberal democracies such as Germany, France and Sweden

¹⁰ <https://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/02/terrorism-islam-ideology>

Cameron called for the active promotion of values that all citizens would be required to subscribe to: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, the rule of law, democracy, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality. He also recommended that immigrants speak the language of their new home, that people are educated in elements of a common culture and that through a National Citizen Service, sixteen-year-olds from different backgrounds learned to live and work together.

While Cameron's position exemplifies a trend within liberal democracies to contradict the cultural diversity imperatives of the late nineties because of security concerns, the relationship between culture and conflict – with culture both a contributor to conflict and a tool for resolving conflict – is now recognised overtly in European policy.

Cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and cultural cooperation are all terms alluding to a similar political project to engage in cultural activities to counter perceived radicalism. As stated by the European Commission in its EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations

Inter-cultural dialogue, including inter-religious dialogue, can help promote the building of fair, peaceful and inclusive societies that value cultural diversity and respect for human rights...intercultural dialogue can defuse tensions, prevent crises from escalating, promote national reconciliation and encourage new narratives to counter radicalisation.

Culture and the City

A major development over the last 15-20 years has been the increasing focus on cities – rather than nation states – as key sites of cultural activity, and as generators of wealth (financial, human and organisational) rooted in creativity and innovation.

Some of the key thinkers in this regard – Richard Florida and Charles Landry – have written extensively about this phenomenon and have been highly influential in shaping cultural policies and strategies at metropolitan or city levels.¹¹

The “European Capital of Culture” project, an idea initiated in 1985 by the Greek and French ministers of culture¹², has grown exponentially, and has had such positive economic, social and cultural impacts for many of the designated cities, that the European Commission that manages the project, currently designates more than one European city as a capital of culture annually.

In their collection *Cities, Cultural Policy and Governance*, Helmut Anheier and Raj Isar suggest that with the world undergoing massive urbanisation, especially in the Global South, cities such as Shanghai, Cairo, Mexico City and Mumbai have gained “considerable influence and stature in cultural

¹¹ See Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *The Creative City: A toolkit for Urban Innovation* by Charles Landry

¹² Melina Mercouri of Greece and Jack Lang of France

terms” by seizing the opportunities afforded by globalisation better than the countries in which they are located. (Anheier and Isar: 2012, 1).

UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network currently comprises 180 cities with the common objective of placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans.¹³

The global association - United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) - adopted culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development in November 2012, pointing first, to the development of the cultural sector in its own right (heritage, creativity, cultural industries, cultural tourism, etc) and then to culture as a transversal phenomenon relevant to other sectors such as education, the economy, science, the environment, social cohesion, communication and international co-operation. The UCLG recognised both the economic potential of the cultural sector as well as its transversal relevance as a facilitative or inhibitive factor in development strategies.

In 2004, the UCLG adopted Agenda 21 for Culture, an undertaking by cities and governments to commit themselves to cultural development as an integral component of development generally.

The importance of cities as economic drivers within countries, the closer proximity of their political leadership to citizens (than national politicians), their capacity to generate independent sources of revenue and their networking beyond national boundaries, have made them key players in development generally, and in cultural development in particular.

Culture and Governance

A theme that has gained increasing attention in the cultural space is “cultural governance” which UNESCO describes as “encompassing standard-setting frameworks, public policies, infrastructures, institutional capabilities and processes intended to foster cultural development, structure dynamic cultural sectors and promote diversity”.¹⁴

In their article, *Literature Review on Cultural Governance and Cities*, Jordi Balta Portoles, Vesna Copic and Andrej Srakar examine the term “cultural governance” and the various meanings it has been given and could have. It would appear from their article that the most consistent meaning of the term is for an inclusive approach to setting policies, frameworks and processes for managing society generally, and culture in particular.

The emphasis has moved away from “good government” which concentrates on public authorities at various levels to “good governance” which includes all spheres of government, the private sector, educational institutions, creative practitioners and civil society collaborating in creating the optimum conditions

¹³ <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

¹⁴ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/development-indicators/dimensions/governance>

in which cultural rights of citizens may be enjoyed. "...cultural governance plays a key role in enabling culture to fully contribute to inclusive, rights-based human development". (ibid)

The UCLG, in its Agenda 21 for Culture programme, recognises that cultural development relies on a host of social actors so that good governance in this sphere would include transparency in the distribution of information and public participation in the formulation of cultural policies, as well as their related decision-making processes and assessment of programmes.

UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions strongly advocates for the inclusion of Civil Society in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Convention. While State Parties to the Convention meet on at least an annual basis to consider matters related to the Convention, Civil Society now enjoys the right to participate in such meetings and to provide its critical and supportive perspectives as it deems fit so that UNESCO is giving concrete expression to its understanding of cultural governance as an inclusive phenomenon, not limited to governments.

Culture and Technology

UNESCO's reports on the implementation of the 2005 Convention have emphasised the changes taking place in the creative sector as a result of technology.¹⁵ For example, the traditional "pipeline model" of the value chain – creation, production, distribution and consumption – has been replaced by the "network model" with much more direct relationships between creators, producers, distributors and consumers.

According to the UNESCO's 2018 Report, digital revenues in the music market grew by nearly 18% driven by an increase of 60,4% in the share of revenues from online streaming platforms, "the first time that digital revenues made up 50% of the recorded music market".¹⁶

Creators are able to use digital platforms to crowdfund their projects, to market their work directly to their consumers, and to generate income by selling through such platforms without having to go through traditional distributors.

The digital era has required states to update their copyright legislation "to ensure a better balance in the remuneration of different actors in the value chain as well as greater transparency in contractual arrangements between creators and online platforms"¹⁷

In all countries, even in the most developed, it is the private sector and civil society that is far more advanced – than the public sector – in developing digital technology and using it to their advantage, with governments often

¹⁵ Reshaping Cultural Policies, 2005 Convention Global Report, 2015 and Reshaping Cultural Policies, Advancing Creativity for Development, 2018

¹⁶ Reshaping Cultural Policies, 2018: 69

¹⁷ Reshaping Cultural Policies 2018: 73`

having to play catch up and create regulatory frameworks after the fact, rather than in anticipation of it.

Digital technology has helped to democratise the distribution of and access to information, but there are key challenges for the creative sector which include the divides between Global North and Global South countries with regard to connectivity (fibre versus prepaid mobile phones), the language of content creation and distribution, global platforms that crowd out smaller, local initiatives so that cultural diversity is compromised, with citizens in the Global South playing the role more of consumers than content-creators and providers.

Relevance of these themes to Africa

Africa, home to more than a billion people and with 54 countries, is the world's poorest continent, so that the aims of some of these international themes are most relevant to the development of the continent, and to the quality of life of its citizens, but whether the conditions exist for these themes to be applied across the continent, is moot.

Given the history of colonisation of the continent, it is inevitable that historical cultural, economic and political links will result in policies that originate in Europe, being introduced to Africa. Africans participate in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and UNESCO, but seldom have sufficient resources (human, financial and intellectual) to contribute substantially to the debates that inform policies, so that Africans are generally policy consumers or imitators.

Few African governments invest sufficiently in the intellectual and human resource capacity of ministries responsible for arts and culture, so that there is seldom policy that emanates from within African conditions. Even when the African Union facilitates the formulation of policies that are relevant to all African countries such as the AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries of 2008, many African governments lack the political will and resources to implement such policies. The AU lacks legal, funding and political clout to ensure that its policies – often adopted by the majority of its members – are implemented.

Africa has embraced UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, with 43 African countries having ratified the Convention.¹⁸

The conditions vary between different African regions as well as from country to country, but there are broad critiques of the six international themes which some – both in the Global North and in Africa - may seek to apply to most African countries:

¹⁸ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/the-convention/parties-to-the-convention/>

First, more Africans live in poverty (\$1,90 or less per day) today than was the case in 1990. Africa is the only region in which poverty is increasing. Creative industries – like any industry – require markets to sustain themselves and to grow. With poverty still rampant across the continent, it is unlikely that there are strong enough markets to sustain creative industries in many African countries, thus rendering the creative and cultural industries as instruments of poverty alleviation, redundant.

Secondly, the creative industries are premised on intellectual property regimes, related legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. Given the levels of poverty, African markets may still demand access to creative products, but at much cheaper prices than what producers require or demand, hence the prevalence of piracy in many African countries, and the difficulty of building wealth based on creative intellectual property.

Thirdly, most Africans – and this would include artists - make their living within the informal sector. According to the African Development Bank, 55% of Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP derives from the informal sector, as does 80% of the labour force.¹⁹ The predominantly informal economy makes it difficult to collect data, let alone taxes that would contribute to the national fiscus for publicly-driven social and human development, thus further hollowing out the promise of the creative industries as the key cultural dimension of development.

Fourth, if the primary motivation for advocating the creative and cultural industries in Africa is to drive economic growth in order to generate the resources to pursue human and social development, then this would be contradicted by 10-15 years of generally positive economic growth across the continent, and yet with little difference being made to the alleviation of poverty, or better human development indicators in most countries where such economic growth has occurred.²⁰ There is no direct nor necessary correlation between economic growth on the one hand and human and social development on the other, at least in the experience of many African countries.

Fifth, if industries with greater income-potential and with lower entry barriers such as agriculture and mining have been unable to fulfil the development and employment challenges of the continent, it is unlikely that the creative industries – requiring higher levels of expertise and education and characterised by small and micro-enterprises – will be able to meet these challenges.

Sixth, as with minerals, Africa is not short of talent. However, as with minerals too, there is a lack of infrastructure and human resources to “beneficiate” this talent at all levels of the value chain, with limited – if any – funds available to

¹⁹ <https://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/afdb-championing-inclusive-growth-across-africa/post/recognizing-africas-informal-sector-11645/>

²⁰ Africa by Numbers, Arterial Network, 2013

invest in creative and cultural industries that have limited chance of survival, let alone of securing sound returns for the investors.

Seventh, while the 2005 UNESCO Convention encourages preferential treatment and access to Global North markets for creative and cultural goods from the Global South, in reality, because of inadequate investment in infrastructure and human resources, products from Africa struggle to compete in terms of quality with similar creative goods from other regions.

Eighth, the Convention promotes the mobility of artists with remittances a key contributor to Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP.²¹ To alleviate poverty in Africa, artists from the continent should be encouraged to travel and tour their work abroad. However, increasingly stringent security and economic constraints in the Global North prejudice African artists, with many declined visas and work permits outside of Africa, contradicting the noble intentions of the Convention.

Ninth, cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and international cultural cooperation between Africa and other regions, particularly the Global North, take place within the context of gross inequality with regard to funding, expertise and mobility. Inherent in such projects, are unequal power relations that favour the Global North, so that – for as long as they lack resources and are dependent on the Global North – Africans will be unable to take the lead and project their values and perspectives into the global market of ideas through their creative products.

Tenth, while advocates for the cultural dimension of development emphasise the positive contributions of creative industries to development and while development experts ignore the relevance of culture to development, the negative impacts of culture on development continue. Besides military costs, the 2016 costs for Nigeria to respond to humanitarian needs as a result of Boko Haram's insurgency was \$2,6 billion; the estimated contribution of Nigeria's film industry, the second largest in the world, is \$600 million per year. So, on the one hand, creative and cultural industries contribute to economic growth; on the other, conflicts with a cultural dimension consume even greater resources. For this reason, the cultural dimension of conflict needs to be understood and mitigated.

Eleventh, the international theme that emphasises good cultural governance is appropriate mainly to Global North liberal democracies; most African states are authoritarian in nature or are a hybrid of authoritarianism and democratic features, with only a minority of countries engaged in inclusive governance and respect for Civil Society.

Twelfth, digital technology is growing across the African continent but much of its use is concentrated in three countries, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa, and to a lesser degree, Kenya.²² The primary form of internet access is through mobile technology, and given the levels of poverty on the continent, most

²¹ The World Bank estimated Africa's share of remittances in 2016 at \$33 billion

²² Africa by Numbers, Arterial Network, 2013

users are pre-paid subscribers so that they are unlikely to surf the internet because of the relatively high costs of data. The digital divides between the Global North and Africa are stark, and with the rapid advancements in this area, it is likely that these divides will continue to expand, unless significant investments are made in African digital infrastructure and human resources.

African Cultural Discourse

Notwithstanding any of the above, official cultural policies in many African countries continue to emphasise the “cultural and creative industries”, even though the material, human and market conditions for such industries do not exist.

The 4th ACP Meeting of Ministers of Culture in Brussels adopted a Declaration on 10 November 2017 that reaffirmed their commitment to make culture a priority in their respective states “based on the added value generated by the cultural and creative industries, as well as their social impact”²³

The Ministers also committed themselves to ratify and implement the different UNESCO conventions on culture and to recommend the inclusion of Creative and Cultural Industries in the industrial and commercial strategies of their respective countries. This was at least partly based on a document circulated at the meeting which stated that world trade in cultural goods and services was growing at annual rates in excess of 10%, without spelling out the conditions necessary for such growth to occur.

This Declaration – and other policies such as the AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries – reflect the extent to which African authorities imitate cultural policies that are relevant to Global North conditions, without critically reflecting on whether they are appropriate to African circumstances. Little wonder then that these policies are seldom implemented.²⁴

The African Union’s Agenda 2063, a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over a period of 50 years (2014-2063) has as its guiding vision “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”. One of seven African Aspirations listed in Agenda 2063 is of “Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics”, with another being “An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law”.

These are not unworthy goals, but the record of the African Union in implementing its vision and plans, and its dependence on foreign countries for

²³ 4th Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture Brussels Declaration, Making Culture an Impact Investment in achieving 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, 7-10 November 2017

²⁴ The Declaration’s Preamble begins with reiterating the commitments made at previous meetings in Dakar 2003, Santo Domingo 2006 and Brussels 2012 “while regretting that an effective follow-up mechanism has not been established”.

much of its budget, raises questions about whether these goals will be pursued, let alone realised.

The Declaration arising from the 4th ACP Ministers of Culture meeting, chaired by the Minister of Tourism and Culture from the Gambia, hinted at some possibilities for particularly Global South and African approaches in the field of culture. These include:

- a. an affirmation of multiculturalism as a binding force for unity, solidarity and social cohesion (as opposed to Cameron's suggestion about multiculturalism having failed in the United Kingdom)
- b. a determination to make culture a strategic vehicle to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (even though the SDGs are short on the integration of culture)
- c. a recognition of the need to adapt cultural policies relative to the challenges, risks and opportunities associated with the digital revolution
- d. underscoring the importance of cultural policy implementation in cities and local communities as drivers of social inclusion and economic development and
- e. promoting the integration of culture into national development strategies and sectoral policies in particular, those relating to gender, employment, education, trade, tourism, environment, climate change and natural disaster risk reduction and resilience²⁵

From the Declaration, while highlighting the importance of cultural and creative industries, there appears to be a broader understanding of the role of culture in development within African conditions.

South Africa

South Africa has been a key player in international cultural policy discourse (a former cabinet minister, Kader Asmal, chaired the committee that drafted the 2005 UNESCO Convention) and on the African continent (a current cabinet minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma is the former Chairperson of the African Union Commission that drafted Agenda 2063).

However, the country's participation in international and regional forums is uneven, both in providing input into these, as well as having its own policies and strategies influenced by international or regional policy documents.

It is difficult to ascertain the current arts, culture and heritage policy of the South African government as the revision of the 1996 White Paper has been in progress for almost five years. First tabled under a previous minister in 2013, the Revised White Paper was presented under the current minister of arts and culture in March 2015 and has yet to be finalised nearly three years later. With the current changes taking place in reducing the number of national departments and changing cabinet ministers, it could well be that the revision of the White Paper takes place under three different cabinet

²⁵ Brussels Declaration, 4th Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture, November 2016

ministers. While all would derive from the same ruling party, the emphases provided by each could be different.

Notwithstanding this policy limbo, the arts, culture and heritage sector continues to function, pointing to the resilience and innovation of the private sector and of civil society actors in this space.

The latest version of the Revised White Paper ticks the right boxes with regard to the international and African themes listed above:

- it claims to be informed by a range of African and international policy documents, including the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- it locates itself within a development framework, aligning its imperatives as an arts and culture policy document to the goals of the National Development Plan
- it places much emphasis on the creative and cultural industries as drivers of economic growth
- it stresses the need for culture to play a role in social cohesion, nation-building and the addressing of conflict
- it recognises the importance of cities and other tiers of government in the implementation of policy and delivery of services
- it accepts the need for sound governance and for involving the private sector and Civil Society in cultural governance
- it takes account of the digital revolution and makes policy recommendations in this regard
- it underlines the need for culture to be integrated into other ministries given its transversal nature and makes structural proposals for how this can be done

However, beyond these broad statements of policy there are five areas that need further interrogation.

Human Rights versus Cultural Rights

The Revised White Paper asserts the right to freedom of expression. It also asserts the cultural rights of all – i.e. the right of everyone to practice the culture and speak the language of their choice - as enshrined in the Constitution.

One of the biggest cultural controversies in the last twenty-three years, was the exercise of freedom of artistic expression versus culture in the case of *The Spear* painting by Brett Murray. On the one hand, the artist was exercising his constitutional right to freedom of creative expression by making a painting that depicted the rape of the public purse (long before the State Capture Report), while one of the chief criticisms levelled at the painting was that it was insensitive to African culture by publicly depicting the genitals of then President Zuma.

The recent case of *Inxeba*, a film about the initiation of Xhosa men and which explored a queer theme in this context, highlights this contradiction too, with

the Film and Publications Board setting a restrictive age limit after complaints about dishonouring Xhosa culture were received from those claiming to be custodians of Xhosa culture.

That African governments have used the argument that it is contrary to African culture to affirm the rights of gay people further highlights the tensions between the rights to cultural practices that might contradict and even deny fundamental human rights.

By affirming both cultural rights and human rights (with cultural rights deemed to be human rights too), contemporary cultural policy does not deal with the contradictions and tensions between these, nor with mechanisms in managing or resolving such tensions.

These tensions play themselves out at international levels too, with the Western emphasis on the fundamental right to freedom of expression e.g. drawing cartoons of the prophet Mohammed versus the cultural (i.e. religious) rights of the Muslim community who believe this to be blasphemous, and an insult to their beliefs. The 2005 Convention affirms both cultural rights and the right to freedom of expression, but within western countries, the individual right to freedom of expression is upheld more than the collective cultural right of those who feel culturally affronted.

The question is whether these tensions are able to be resolved, or if they are forever to be potential causes of conflict.

Of further interest to this discussion – particularly in the initial censorship of *Inxeba* – is the potential conflict between “culture rights” on the one hand, and on the other, the creative and cultural industries and the challenges they are supposed to address i.e. unemployment, inequality and poverty (in terms of contemporary cultural policy). The “cultural” factors contributing to the re-classification of the film were deemed to be of greater importance than the economic benefits of showing the film.

Human Rights versus Creative and Cultural Industries

One of the recurring themes in the Revised White Paper is of the contribution of the “arts, culture and heritage and cultural and creative industries” to addressing the country’s key challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. A key starting point for the policy is the overtly political imperative of creating jobs, decreasing poverty and creating a more equitable society. This differs fundamentally from the vision of the 1996 White Paper, which was premised on the fundamental human right to ensure that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts”.

It is understandable that in South Africa, 23 years into our democracy, and with the National Planning Commissions’ diagnostic study showing that unemployment is unsustainably high (currently 26%), more than half of the population lives in poverty, and that we now have one of the most unequal

societies in the world (with the richest 20% earning 70% of the national income compared to the bottom 40% earning 7%), government is concerned about addressing these challenges.

While the creation of jobs, eliminating poverty and reducing inequality are worthy and noble goals, the questions raised are three-fold:

- a. whether the arts, culture and heritage sector is able to do this at all or on the scale required to warrant such a policy emphasis (and if not, what this might mean for the positioning of arts and culture within the political landscape – are the arts, culture and heritage being set up for failure?)
- b. whether by using a different starting point – one that promotes arts, culture and heritage in their own right – it is possible to arrive at different strategies but achieve similar and more sustainable ends, without traumas of having to conform to overtly political imperatives
- c. the extent to which government – and specifically the Department of Arts and Culture – can stimulate job creation in the cultural and creative industries, which are privately rather than publicly-driven and dependent on markets as opposed to government's more traditional engagement in the sector, which is the non-profit, subsidized realm.

The Revised White Paper quotes various reports that show impressive contributions of arts, culture and heritage sectors to economic growth, to employment and to income generation both directly and indirectly

However:

1. In 1998, the DAC embarked on the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS) that had similar aims to the basic premise of the revised policy. At that time, the unemployment rate was 16,9%; today, official unemployment stands at 25%. In other words, notwithstanding government's concentration on the cultural and creative industries in the last 20 years, unemployment, poverty and inequality have grown in that period so that it is not necessarily the case that concentrating on the cultural and creative industries will meet these triple challenges.
2. One of the country's poorest provinces - the Eastern Cape - hosts the country's National Arts Festival in Grahamstown every year and has done so for more than 40 years. The Festival has delivered economic impact studies, the most recent of which shows that the Festival generates more than R90m for Grahamstown and in excess of R230m for the broader region; however, the question is, who actually benefits from such economic injections? Over more than four decades, the festival has failed to reduce Grahamstown's high unemployment rate (in excess of 70%) or to contribute to social cohesion, infrastructural and human development on the scale required to make a substantial and sustainable difference. While the Festival may make these contributions to the GDP of Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape

region, it would appear that it is not the poor, nor the 88% black African households in the region, but rather transport companies, hotels, restaurants, guest houses, etc owned – largely - by the historically advantaged who are the primary beneficiaries.

3. Another project favoured for investment by the DAC, is the Cape Town International Jazz Festival that also produces economic impact reports signifying substantial direct and indirect contributions to the GDP of the city and the province, providing numerous job opportunities and through free concerts, offers access to a festival for people who otherwise could not afford entry to an elitist event. This reflects another contradiction inherent in a cultural and creative industries approach: it necessarily requires markets with disposable income to generate profits and wealth for its shareholders, and accordingly, is available to those with resources, while excluding the majority of the country's inhabitants who are poor, unemployed and who struggle to eke out an existence in the informal sector. While the 1996 White Paper is premised on "everyone participating in the cultural life of the community and enjoying the arts" and on "the doors of learning and culture being open to all", the Revised White Paper – through its emphasis on market-based strategies to contribute to economic growth, potentially – and ironically - excludes the majority of South Africans.
4. With the emphasis on the creative and cultural industries as drivers of economic growth, poverty reduction and the elimination of inequality, there is the danger of public sector support being provided primarily to those creative industry sectors that are most able to contribute to these goals. As with the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS) that concentrated on film, contemporary music, craft and publishing, while there might be the expectation on the part of the broader arts, culture and heritage sector to benefit from public sector investment and support, it will be primarily those sectors considered most likely to achieve the aims of job creation, etc that will obtain such support.

Ironically, those sectors that may provide large-scale employment – theatre, opera, dance, orchestras, choirs, etc – are unlikely to receive significant support as they are deemed to be consumers of resources rather than being able to survive and be profitable "in the market place". It is far easier and cheaper to export a DVD, a CD, a book, a piece of craft, etc than it is to tour a play, a dance company, an orchestra or an opera company, no matter how "transformed" such companies are, or no matter how many opportunities to generate income they may provide for their individual members. A blanket "cultural and creative industries" approach that relies on, or preferences "the market", by definition prejudices those sectors that would struggle to survive purely on box office income, and that (may) require a permanent measure of state subsidy.

The problem with this approach – that all arts, culture and heritage are creative and cultural industries – is that it does not make distinctions between different sectors, and within sectors, so that in the competition for funding and official support, there is the danger of a one-size-fits-all approach. The value of a sector or a practice within a sector will be determined by its market viability, by the language and ethos of business and industry, rather than by a range of factors that include aesthetic quality, historical significance, etc.

5. While the creative and cultural industries certainly do create jobs, one question is “who does it create jobs for?” Studies have shown that the average profile of people employed in the creative and cultural industries is generally that of well-educated, with some experience, generally women, and of middle-class origin. The profile of the major unemployed cohort in South Africa is young, under-educated, under-skilled, with limited experience men. An emphasis on the creative and cultural industries is unlikely to impact on job creation where it most needed.

The revised policy position does not grapple sufficiently with and offer solutions to the contradiction between the fundamental human right of all to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts on the one hand and, on the other, the emphasis on the creative and cultural industries which requires markets with disposable income i.e. the right to access is determined by access to capital.

Social Cohesion and Nation-building versus Creative Industries

The revised policy position strongly advances the need for culture to contribute to social cohesion and nation-building, given the country’s divided past along racial lines.

However, there are two items that are not addressed in this approach.

The first is alluded to in the previous section, and has been a key problem with the “rainbow nation” narrative i.e. that while racial discrimination is illegal and South Africa is now a “united nation”, it is generally those within the middle and upper classes – irrespective of “race” – who are most able to participate in the “rainbow nation” as they have the education, language, accents and resources to do so.

The vast majority of poor people remain excluded from “the nation” so that unless policy addresses such exclusion (i.e. how poor people may participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts), the emphasis on social cohesion and nation-building rings hollow.

A second item to be addressed – and which is largely absent from the policy document – is whether social cohesion and nation-building includes the large number of African nationals resident in South Africa.

Tensions between local inhabitants and immigrants and refugees from other parts of the African continent have been well documented, with African nationals often having experienced violent attacks. Public funding is generally made available only for South African citizens in the arts and culture space.

How culture and related strategies will – as a matter of policy and funding – address these tensions is unclear.

Demographic Transformation versus Fundamental Transformation

No post-apartheid policy can avoid the issue of “transformation”, and even twenty-three years after the 1994 elections, the revised white paper on cultural policy continues to assert the need for transformation.

The policy document defines transformation as “to reconfigure the personnel, programmes and collections, exhibits, performances and events in arts, culture and heritage to reflect the demographics of an African society with diverse cultures”²⁶

While these may be necessary in a post-apartheid society, it remains in the realm of the superficial. What is absent from the policy document is an assessment of the transformation – as defined in the document – that has taken place over the last twenty-three years, and how it has contributed fundamentally to the transformation of the lives – including the quality of life – of the majority of South Africans.

During the first two decades of our democracy, it would appear that the relatively superficial aspects of transformation were dealt with – changing the demographics of the governance and management of publicly-funded cultural institutions, while not attending to substantive transformation on the scale required e.g. making available infrastructure to those who had been denied access in the past, ensuring that skills and resources were more equitably spread throughout the country, facilitating access to the arts by supporting touring exhibitions, performing arts companies, etc.

What would “transformation” mean for the majority of people still living below the poverty line, who are unemployed, who do not have disposable income to access the “cultural and creative industries”?

For this sector of the population, transformation would mean more than having people who look like them in strategic positions in publicly-funded institutions in which they are paid relatively good salaries; it could include:

²⁶ Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, Third Draft, 9

- a. having access to skills, training, mentorships and opportunities to enable them to work effectively at levels of the Value Chain that they choose
- b. having access to capital, to resources to create and distribute the arts
- c. having access to infrastructure, close to where they live to – studios, rehearsal space, etc – produce their work and to bring their works to an audience
- d. having access to markets that would sustain their work as creative producers
- e. as audiences, having access to the arts, to music, theatre, dance, etc within the city and within their own localities, for pure enjoyment

It is among poorer, marginalized communities that

- a. “the market” will be least effective in correcting apartheid’s skewed imbalances and
- b. a “developmental state” role of for government is most necessary

It is also here, that “transformation” is most needed in the form of delivery of arts and culture to the majority of people so that any demographic transformation should be evaluated in terms of its capacity to deliver such substantial transformation to this constituency. If we have learned anything from the last twenty-three years and from the daily service delivery protests, it is that simply because black people occupy strategic positions, it is not a guarantee of service delivery, nor of substantial transformation in correcting history’s and post-1994 inequities,

Cultural governance

The policy paper makes sound recommendations about engaging with the private sector, different tiers of government, inter-ministerial committees responsible for arts and culture as well as civil society in ensuring the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cultural sector and related policies.

However, the record of the Department of Arts and Culture in this regard is not a positive one in that it – in a top-down manner – created the Creative and Cultural Industries Federation of South Africa (CCIFSA), as the supposed representative structure of the creative sector.

Notwithstanding appeals from existing organisations and cultural activists about the folly and undemocratic nature of appointing this sweetheart structure, the DAC persisted. More than three years later and after a chaotic beginning, CCIFSA has done little to earn the respect of the sector, with cultural professionals organising themselves into more effective, albeit it smaller and non-funded structures.

That this would happen in a democracy where the rights of cultural professionals to organise themselves should be respected, is indicative of the challenges of “cultural governance” across the African continent and in other Global South countries where there is a great level of distrust between

government and Civil Society, with the independent cultural sector often existing and acting in parallel to, and despite, the public sector.

Culture and Development

Considering the international literature and the growth of theory related to the relationship of culture in a broad anthropological sense to development, the revised policy document does not pay sufficient attention to culture – the values, ideas, histories, traditions, worldviews and belief systems of a community and the expression of these in their behavior and organizational (social, political, economic, etc) structures – and the potential of culture in blocking or unleashing “development”, however it is defined.

With a “developmental” approach to solving the poverty, inequality and unemployment challenges of our country, as well as the social cohesion and nation-building issues, it is necessary to engage with culture in this anthropological sense, rather than foreground the creative and cultural industries as key means to address these. The Department of Arts and Culture (and, potentially Heritage), needs to focus far more energy, theory, practical strategies and resources on addressing the *cultural* challenges to human, social and economic development, and on mitigating these.

According to the National Development Plan’s Diagnostic Overview, (a plan with which the revised white paper seeks to align itself), the proportion of people living below the poverty line was 53% in 1995, declining to 48% in 2008; the diffusion of social grants was the most important contributor to decreasing poverty since 2000. South Africa is a highly unequal country. The richest 20% earns 70% of national income while the poorest 40% earns 6%-7%, with the poorest 20% earning 2,3%.

In 2008, median expenditure per capita for Black Africans was R454 per month compared to R5 668 for whites.

The proportion of Africans in the top 20% of income earners increased from 39% in 1995 to 48% in 2009. Inequality within the African population has increased sharply.

Poverty tends to be concentrated in rural areas and especially former bantustans. However, deep poverty is also found in cities with inward migration in search of work. Poverty rates among women-headed households are higher than the average and women continue to earn less than men....

About two-thirds of all unemployed are below the age of 35.

South Africa – states the Diagnostic Overview - remains a divided society....the poor performance of some public institutions further exacerbates the division in many ways. The rich are able to purchase private provision of essential services such as health, education and security.

Some conclusions to draw from the above

1. Given the high levels of inequality, the high rates of unemployment and the high rates of poverty in the country, it is inappropriate to have a “one-size-fits-all” arts, culture and heritage policy.
2. A policy that foregrounds or preferences the creative and cultural industries that, by definition, require markets of people with disposable income, will in effect, continue to exclude and marginalize the poor, who comprise more than 50% of South Africa’s population.
3. Gauteng and the Western Cape with their relatively high levels of education and income, would appear to be the best provinces in which to pursue the creative and cultural industries, while there is a great need for a “developmental state” approach and the re-prioritization of resources, infrastructure and expertise to the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, North West, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State and parts of KwaZulu Natal.
4. The high penetration of mobile phones, television sets, DVD players and satellite television (as shown in the 2011 Census) provide some indication of possible models for the distribution of information and products, while, on the other hand, the relatively low access to internet indicates the divides that prevail.
5. The breakdown in public services in other areas of social good – health, education, etc – is reflected within the arts, culture and heritage sector too, and any future policy needs seriously to examine the capacity of national, provincial and local governments to be able to deliver on such policy, and to find alternatives where necessary.
6. Simply to foreground demographic transformation of cultural institutions without the requisite management, mentorships, training, etc would be to repeat some of the mistakes of the last twenty-three years that have led to non-delivery of substantive transformation.
7. The relatively wealthy who earn 70% of the national income collectively will be able to purchase the public and private arts, culture and heritage services, goods and experiences on offer, just as they are able to purchase decent education, health and security services. The focus of cultural policy should be on ensuring access to ALL, the vision of the original White Paper, which remains as relevant, if not more so, today.
8. Corruption needs to be exposed and confronted within the arts, culture and heritage sector as much as in other sectors as it has a similar adverse, corrosive and divisive effect in this sector as elsewhere.
9. One of the biggest challenges within the arts, culture and heritage sector is to overcome the race, class, gender, provincial and other divides and bring together those with, or with access to skills, resources, networks, experience, infrastructure and markets and those who do not, in order collectively to work for the greater good for all. As it stands at the moment, those within the sector with skills, experience and resources are able to operate relatively effectively while those who

do not, encounter significant struggles, and the divides are exacerbated.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Philosophical premises of an arts and culture policy

Based on the context and the vision, as well as an understanding of the various roles that the arts, culture and heritage can play within varied conditions, it is recommended that we premise a policy, funding and general approach on the belief that arts, culture and heritage:

- a. have value in their own right in the context of individual and personal human development
- b. have social value in bringing about societal transformation and in being instrumentalised for socially good ends
- c. have economic value, generating wealth, contributing to direct and indirect economic growth, creating sustainable jobs, etc.

Each would be distinct practices, with their own funding mechanisms although artists would be able to work across all three.

Art, culture and heritage for human development

This is about art for its own sake, rather than in the service of anything, with its primary orientation being human development. It is about providing emotional, psychological and spiritual catharsis and sheer enjoyment for those who experience it; it is about building confidence, developing transversal problem-solving skills and indulging in creativity and innovation for those who participate actively in it. It is about exercising the fundamental human right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts, and to exercise the fundamental constitutional right to freedom of creative expression. This is not about the size of the audience or the market, it is for its own sake, because individual human beings matter, because we are more than physical entities in need of food and shelter; we also have psychological, emotional and intellectual dimensions to be stimulated, to be challenged, to be satisfied. This is also about documenting and archiving heritage for its own sake and for the benefit of future generations.

These artistic and heritage practices are also about affirming identities, celebrating values and worldviews of local communities, helping them to make sense of their world, offering local alternatives to the values, beliefs and worldviews embedded in the creative products consumed daily because of globalized markets.

Funding:

The funding of these activities requires structures like the National Arts Council, the National Film and Video Foundation, the National Heritage Council – bodies that allocate public funding to projects based on their intrinsic merits, and their value for human development and civilization. In funding such activities, the state recognizes the value of the arts and heritage

for human development, and it supports the right to freedom of creative expression by making available resources for this right to be practiced.

The nature of these activities are generally of the not-for-profit kind, and seldom, if at all, make a profit at the box office. At best, they may survive through a “mixed economy” model of public sector funding, private sector sponsorship and box office income, but generally, they will always be dependent on substantial public funding.

Artistic, cultural or heritage merit would be an over-riding criterion in the allocation of public funding, but funding to make such work accessible to as wide an audience as possible, particularly those who cannot afford it, would be an important secondary consideration.

Art, culture and heritage for social development

Given the nature of our society and the life experiences of the majority of people, it is in this area that the greatest need – and potential – for artistic and cultural interventions exists. It is also the area that requires the most resources.

This would – unashamedly – see the arts instrumentalised for socially good ends, and to change behavior towards a socially good end e.g. a theatre company doing a play that educates a community about HIV/AIDS; an art exhibition that affirms women; a dance piece that celebrates people living with disabilities and a music concert to promote anti-xenophobic attitudes. It is within this paradigm that art, culture and heritage projects that promote social cohesion, that proactively articulate positive moral values, that contribute to bridging divides between “population groups”, across gender, language, urban/rural and other divides are considered, and supported. Issues to do with transformation and projects that promote the development of skills, mentoring, capacity-building among marginalized communities are supported here. The provision of infrastructure and the support for projects and activities that utilize township homes, schools, church halls, taverns and open streets to promote the creation, distribution and enjoyment of the arts, culture and heritage are promoted here.

Projects that monitor the impact of development on cultural practices, that interrogate culture as vehicles or obstacles to development and that investigate the cultural premises of developmental projects, would also fit into this category.

Bursaries and the funding of courses, mentorships and training programmes to address human development needs will be supported.

Funding

The beneficiaries of projects that fall under this category are seldom “markets” i.e. people with disposable income. They tend to be “audiences”, people who are to benefit from what the works have to say to them, or from their

participation within the projects. Thus, the projects' creators and distributors require funding.

It is recommended that a Culture, Arts and Social Transformation Fund be established to fund projects in their own right, that have social transformation as their end, as well as projects that might be supported from other funds, but which to add or integrate further "social transformation" elements e.g. a theatre company that wants to mentor a new woman director as part of their programme.

This Fund would be supported by the DAC with a founding grant, but it will be supplemented with funding from other relevant departments (education, social welfare, etc); corporate social investment budgets, international agencies, the lottery, etc.

While artistic criteria will still be relevant (it is important that such projects contribute to the raising of aesthetic consciousness), the primary criteria for considering projects would be their potential impact on social transformation, on providing access to the arts for all, on serving the artistic, social and other needs of mainly disadvantaged communities and individuals.

This should be the largest fund, as it goes to the heart of redressing current imbalances, of transforming our society through the arts and culture, of providing access to 70% of our population, to transversal issues such as the empowerment of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, to developing the human resources, etc.

Art, culture and heritage for economic development

The third primary area of activity is art, culture and heritage for economic development – the commercialization of arts, culture and heritage, art for profit and to generate wealth; in short, the creative and cultural industries.

These products, services and experiences would be aimed at local markets with disposable income, tourist markets and international markets, and could include cultural tourism services, literary fiction, music (live and in the form of CDs and downloadable forms), films, craft works, visual art exhibitions and auctions, literary and other festivals, etc.

Here, cultural and creative entrepreneurs, cultural SMMEs and co-operatives will be supported with funding, with mentorships, with skills development.

Funding

Entrepreneurial activities require start-up capital to produce, or to produce at scale and to take products and services to the market. Such start-up capital may take the form of grants, or low interest loans, or a combination of these. This fund would be the Creative and Cultural Industries Fund, a fund that would support training courses for creative entrepreneurs, the creation and

production of goods, research and interventions to produce skilled human resources at all levels of the value chain for each sector.

Funding would be gleaned from the DAC, from DTI, from corporates as well as from entrepreneurs supported by the Fund, who make some contribution to it, so that it becomes a self-sustaining Fund.

CCIF would not support not-for-profit activities (these would be funded by the other funds); CCIF's primary role is to support artistic, heritage and cultural activities that will find sustenance in the market.

Criteria that would be used to allocate funding would include innovation, originality, profitability based on a business plan, capacity-building for entrepreneurs, expansion of markets, etc.

The Cultural Economy (rather than creative and cultural industries)

If culture is understood as “a way of life”, encompassing values, ideas, belief systems, traditions and the concrete expression of these in social, economic and political structures and forms of behaviour, then rather than “the cultural dimension of development”, it would be more appropriate to speak of the “development dimensions of culture”.

The Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage would need to be evaluated to ensure a wider, more transversal approach to culture and the policy implications thereof, some of which are listed below.

Cultural policy in South Africa has generally tended to support “non-profits”, even though in recent times, there has been much – contradictory - emphasis on the creative and cultural industries. There has also been a concerted effort on the part of structures like the National Arts Council to avoid funding “art for social development”, even though – in the context of a country where more than 50% of the population live below the poverty line – this might be the primary way in which most people would have access to the arts.

Policy-makers should recognise the range of conditions that exist in our country, for example, a wealthy minority with disposable income who could choose to pay for theatre, film, music, dance, etc and the larger part of the population that struggles to eke out a living on a daily basis, so that their right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts is severely limited by poverty.

Rather than the creative and cultural industries (there is ongoing debate about the differences between cultural and creative industries and what these terms cover), policy makers should embrace the cultural economy, defined as “the non-formal and formal, profit-making and non-profit, amateur and professional, community-based and mainstream practices in the arts and culture sector (understood as inclusive of all forms of music, theatre, dance, visual arts, heritage, museums, film, literature, arts festivals, craft, design) and which includes all those directly engaged – employees, volunteers and others

- in education, creation, production, distribution, consumption and documentation within the sector”.

With this understanding, there would be a recognition – as with the health, security and education sectors, for example – that there is room for a diversity of economic models in support of creative practice: fully-subsidised, fully privatised and supported by the market and a “mixed economy” i.e. a combination of public and private sector support, in-kind and community support, etc.

Such an approach would be more inclusive and more cognisant of the material realities of our country rather than an emphasis on market-driven creative and cultural industries that would exclude many from their fundamental right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts.

“Value” or what is considered “valuable” would not only, or primarily have an economic or financial dimension: value would also have dimensions of individual human fulfilment and happiness, and social dimensions i.e. a society at peace with itself with social equity and people living in peace with each other, the hallmarks of such a society.

Transversal nature of culture in development

Given the transversal nature of culture, and the facilitative and inhibitive roles that it can play in development strategies, from a policy perspective, rather than a Department of Arts and Culture operating in a silo and concentrating on arts and heritage matters, each government department should have a “cultural desk”, staffed by highly trained officials, whose primary focus would be on assessing and mitigating the cultural impacts of developmental strategies. It is through these departmental cultural desks that funding of “arts for social development” would generally be facilitated.

One of the outcomes of the recognition of the ecological dimension of sustainable development are Environmental Impact Studies, conducted prior to major development projects being implemented in order to assess the potential environmental consequences, and if necessary, to mitigate these. South African law similarly takes account of the impact of development on heritage, but there are no studies conducted to assess – and mitigate where necessary – the cultural impact of development or the impact of culture on development. Cultural Impact Studies should be pioneered for this purpose.

Development studies programmes at tertiary institutions should be evaluated, and where there are deficiencies in this regard, the study of culture and its relationship to development must be integrated as part of the core programme. As would have been seen from the overview provided earlier in this document, much of the literature and writing about culture and development has been done by individuals outside of Africa. There is an urgent need for a Centre for the Study of Culture and Development at a tertiary institution that would be tasked with studying the dialectical

relationship between culture and development in Africa generally and South Africa in particular, to inform local development practices and feed into international discourses about this theme. Such a centre would help to provide the literature, case studies and research opportunities to develop knowledgeable fieldworkers in the development sector and officials in the departments responsible for development and culture.

An under-researched area is the cultural impact of poverty – the effects that poverty has on the psyche of individuals and of communities, what those who live in poverty come to believe about themselves, how the psychological and emotional scars of poverty impact on social mobility, social integration and social cohesion. For human and social development strategies that particularly address poverty to be effective and sustainable in the long term, undertaking these studies would provide the insights necessary for such strategies.

Cultural values, nation-building and social cohesion

Against the background of racial discrimination and related inequalities, the project of “nation-building” has a clear mandate. However, other inequalities and forms of exclusion prevail within post-apartheid South African society, divisions based on gender (the consequences of a patriarchal society), nationality (hence the xenophobic violence against nationals from other African countries), class (so that the concept of “the rainbow nation” is fundamentally a middle-to-upper class one where people across racial lines share similar educational, income and lifestyle paradigms, to the exclusion of most South Africans who are largely black, uneducated, unemployed and poor).

That the Department of Arts and Culture has responsibility for social cohesion and nation-building as an intergovernmental and cross-sector project is to be welcomed as it points to the possibility of earlier recommendations about the importance of cultural strategies as transversal phenomena, relevant to all sectors.

Values and beliefs are acquired over time and through a variety of means, the educational system being one of these. To build a socially cohesive society, serious attention needs to be paid to cultural education within schools, not as an option or a “soft” subject, but rather as part of the core curriculum, with emphasis on the following:

1. a Cultural Charter – based on the Constitution and relevant legal clarity gleaned since 1994 – outlining and affirming the values of the ideal South African citizen
2. an appropriate cultural studies programme for all levels of schooling, from pre-primary to tertiary levels, in which participants would learn about their fellow citizens, about different religious beliefs and value systems, about historical gender and racial inequalities and contemporary perspectives on these, etc.
3. compulsory learning of an indigenous African language from primary school levels both to affirm languages that have historically

been suppressed but also to contribute to communication and social cohesiveness based not only on language, but on understanding and having insights into the culture communicated through/by the language

4. teacher training programmes are to include a cultural studies component so that teaching cultural studies is done by informed teachers, and that teachers themselves are sensitised to issues of cultural diversity
5. the educational curriculum at all levels is to be evaluated through an agreed cultural lens – as outlined in the Cultural Charter – to ensure that the curriculum does not intentionally favour a value or belief system without providing alternatives
6. a mechanism comprising educational and culture experts is to meet at least annually to consider ongoing developments in the field, while a conference is held every three years between educational authorities, traditional culture bodies, arts and culture institutions, constitutional bodies responsible for cultural dimensions of society, religious institutions, etc to reflect on the state of South African society, evaluate progress being made on building a socially cohesive society and make new proposals to this end where necessary, recognising the dynamic nature of culture and social progress

Conclusion

Advocates for arts and culture often do so on the backfoot. They always have to justify their relevance and need for funding.

In order to make their case, they appropriate language and metrics that they believe would appeal to decision-makers, sometimes to their disadvantage.

The case for culture though has been made before; what changes are the conditions in which and the personalities for whom the case needs to be made again.

But it is not only external decision-makers that need to be educated about the role and impact of culture in our lives; it is also the arts, culture and heritage sector that needs better to understand what they do, the contexts in which they do it, and to be able to articulate clearly the case for culture – and the arts that give expression to culture.

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APPROVALS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURAL OBSERVATORY PUBLICATION REPORT – Rethinking Culture

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