

The civic role of arts organisations: A literature review for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

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Executive Summary

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has initiated an inquiry into the civic role of arts organisations. The inquiry seeks to increase awareness of the civic role that arts organisations play nationally and in their communities. Through research and consultation they will develop understanding of what constitutes 'next practice' and create a movement of organisations committed to demonstrating it. This literature review provides a starting point for the research that supports the inquiry.

Defining the civic role of arts organisations

A real challenge at the heart of this work is defining precisely what is meant by 'civic role'. It brings to mind politics, community, rights and responsibilities. The arts can be used to provoke, to catalyse, to enable and inhibit the way that people engage with the world around them. After reviewing the relevant literature we have taken the civic role of arts organisations to mean: The ways in which arts organisations animate, enhance and enable processes by which people exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities.

The dual aspects of 'civic role'

The literature on the civic role of arts organisations tackles a variety of themes that are broadly grouped under two main headings: the effect of arts organisations on places and on people. Unsurprisingly, the literature is strongest (and most abundant) in settings where there is the greatest amount (and most sophisticated manifestation) of an explicit attempt to support and evaluate the civic role of arts organisations. We believe we are able to identify five distinct groups of arts organisations vibrantly pursuing their civic roles: those that commission work, organisations that have re-configured themselves, organisations that exploit their assets, building-less organisations, individual artists whose work is relevant, and Arts Councils that have policy to support this work.

Multiple disciplines have examined these phenomena

This review has drawn from a complex mix of different attempts to understand the civic role of arts organisations. Each intellectual tradition and academic discipline has its strengths and weaknesses. A cultural studies approach emphasises the subjective experience of art upon people. Urban planning, human geography and cultural economics bring another set of perspectives. These disciplines attempt to capture what is characteristic of a place (for example, what are the attributes of places) whilst also capturing data on activity that happens therein. A sociological perspective is built upon the recognition that the phenomena being studied are culturally specific and contested, and that there are hierarchies in society that may not be immediately identifiable. Finally an arts-based approach considers art as a manifestation of people's engagement with the world and seeks to understand it on those terms.

The prominence of these approaches in the United States

The bulk of activity (and resulting literature) undertaken to support and understand the civic role of the arts seems to have occurred in the United States. There may be a few reasons for this. Firstly, there is not the long-standing infrastructure or tradition of

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public funding support for the arts in the US as exists in the UK and in continental Europe. Secondly, the febrile social history of the US during the 20th century has seen the arts used as a conspicuous tool for empowerment and self-expression in social movements in the service of civil rights and urban renewal.

Arguments for and against arts organisations pursuing their civic role

We have not found any arguments *against* arts organisations acknowledging or developing their civic role. Arguments in favour of this role comprise the following:

- The inherent argument: Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes ‘a right to participate in the cultural life of the community’ and that it is in the duty of every arts organisation to reach out and be an active part of their communities, especially if they receive public funding or protection.
- The social justice argument: We live in unequal and divided societies and arts organisations are well placed to articulate this disparity and (furthermore) enable social action by, with and for the disadvantaged to ameliorate the situation.
- The intrinsic argument: Arts organisations are uniquely placed to engage in civic matters since they are seen as neutral or third spaces and that people respond to the material of the arts using different values and faculties from those they apply to explicitly political media.
- The dutiful argument: In a society in which trust, engagement and investment in traditional civic organisations (such as churches, political parties, etc.) is seemingly declining, arts and cultural organisations represent a last resort (or perhaps preferred agency) through which to mobilise and animate citizens in democratic processes.

The challenges of evaluating the civic role of arts organisations

Two fundamental shortcomings hamper attempts to evaluate the civic role of arts organisations. The first of these is the methodological difficulties that dog all evaluations seeking to understand the impact of these interventions: the impacts can be diffuse, the means to collect data can be intrusive or inappropriate, and the resource (in terms of people and money) to do it properly can be prohibitive. The second shortcoming is the lack of well-considered theories of change. These shortcomings are further compounded by a “literature gap”: either great work is taking place that is not being sufficiently evaluated, or there is energy and enthusiasm expended on projects that have no measurable benefit.

The barriers and opportunities for arts organisations seeking to become more civically engaged

All of the literature seems to concentrate on intrinsic rather than extrinsic barriers, offering advice and observations about how organisations (rather than policymakers or third sector agencies) should go about the business of civic engagement. The barriers can be summarised as: a lack of funding and austerity, a structural lack of attention and skills assigned to this work, reticence with the arts to be leaders and be confident about

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the arts' contribution, a disconnect between artists and communities regarding what art is and what art does, and finally the ways that the arts can be hampered by its association with privilege. Conversely, we found at least two clear opportunities identified in the literature: work with young people has the possibility to shape the future for the better; and digital technology creates new ways for the arts to fulfill their civic role.

Looking to the future

There are two concurrent trends which are likely to place an ever-increasing emphasis on arts organisations to develop their 'civic role'. These are the continuation of cuts to public services under the premise of austerity and the ongoing push from policymakers and the public for greater measurable benefits from investment in the arts. The work that the Gulbenkian is proposing is vital to supporting and sustaining a vibrant and relevant arts sector in the UK. This forward-thinking project will potentially shape the future direction of the arts sector and allow it to be better prepared for increased demands that this review has shown are likely to be around for a while.

1. About us

1.1. About King's College London

King's College London is a research-led university with an outstanding reputation for driving cutting-edge research across Arts & Sciences and Health. Its experts advance science, inform policy, shape industry, pursue cultural enquiry and engage communities – in Britain and throughout the world. Collaborating internationally and across the disciplines, researchers at King's are united in responding to global challenges and making a difference.

1.2. About Culture at King's College London

Across King's College London, arts and culture offer distinctive opportunities to students and academics, helping to deliver world-class education and research that drives innovation, creates impact and engages beyond the university. Our partnerships with artists and cultural organisations enhance the King's experience and, at the same time, add value and deliver benefits across the cultural sector. Building on a long history of partnership and collaboration, King's has developed rich programmes of teaching and research that connect students and academics to cultural London and beyond, and span a broad subject/discipline range, from MAs within the department of Culture, Media & Creative Industries to the Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery's Culture and Care programme.

The university's programme of Cultural Enquiries provide a neutral space in which the cultural sector can come together to address shared questions and common concerns, as well as access to the academic analysis and rigour that can provoke new thinking and inform debate.

1.3. About the authors

This report is written by Dr James Doeser with support from Dr Viktoria Vona. James is a Research Associate at King's College London. He is the editor of CultureCase (a research resource for the cultural sector) and the author of *Step By Step* (a report charting the history of arts education in England). Viktoria completed her PhD at King's in 2016. Her research interests focus on the role of art and artists in gentrification and placemaking.

2. Introduction

Why, in 2016, has the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation chosen to investigate civic role of arts organisations? Arts organisations (especially those in receipt of public funding) are increasingly being asked to objectively demonstrate their contribution to society. At the same time, after successive generations of investment in an arts infrastructure purporting to serve a broad population, recent research (in particular the Warwick Commission 2015) has shown how the arts sector in the UK continues to reflect (and perhaps even reinforces) persistent social inequalities. It's worth reflecting on how we have arrived at this situation.

2.1. A brief history

To look at the 'history' of the changing civic role of arts organisations, we must confront the fact that this story encompasses multiple histories. To just pick just two elements of the chronology: the history of socially engaged arts practice tells one story; the history of community and voluntary arts tells another. The bulk of literature published today on the civic role of arts organisations comes from a much younger tradition: a re-conceptualisation of arts organisations as vehicles for delivering instrumental civic and social benefits (eg Belfiore 2002; Bunting 2008).

Historically, those organisations most directly associated with performing a 'civic role' in the UK were the Regional Arts Associations and the voluntary arts sector (many of the organisations that became these Associations began life in the 1940s and 1950s as coalitions of local voluntary groups supported by sympathetic local authorities). The burst of building activity that formed part of the post-war redevelopment of the 1950s and 1960s was couched directly in terms that would today be considered part of a 'civic role' rhetoric: these buildings were to be places where people could join together in the performance and enjoyment of cultural activity. This continued into the 1970s with a growing propensity of local authorities to sponsor the construction of Arts Centres: explicitly democratic multi-art-form venues that were designed not to be partisan to one art form or organisation within any community, and often designed to act a neutral space to foster community cohesion and self-expression (Hutchison & Forrester 1987). At every turn throughout the twentieth century, the arts sector's responses to social challenges (whether it be immigration, unemployment or regeneration) reflect the broader political and social movements of their time.

In 2002 Michelle Reeves (then a Research Officer at the Arts Council) was tasked with surveying the literature on the social and economic impact of the arts. Her landmark report acknowledges the history and heritage of the arts sector's approach to the question of its wider social role but also the challenge of accounting for the impact of this work:

'The social benefits of the arts on individual and community development had been argued by the Community Arts Movement since the 1960s. However, although there was a significant body of evidence to support this argument, most of it was anecdotal and there were significant gaps in the documentation of work.' (Reeves 2002, 7)

Reeves goes on to explain how during the 1980s art and culture were increasingly folded into urban regeneration agendas:

'Cities, in particular, sought solutions to economic restructuring and the decline of traditional manufacturing industry. Taking their inspiration from the experiences of American and European cities, major cities such as Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool embarked on ambitious cultural development strategies, often based on flagship capital projects.' (Reeves 2002, 7)

Fast-forward to the New Labour government of the late 1990s: a government that took an explicitly instrumentalising approach to the development of arts policy in the UK. The Prime Minister's Policy Action Team 10 (the one with culture in its remit) reported that arts, sports, cultural and recreational activity 'can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived

communities' (DCMS 1999). It is fair to say that the evidence to support such claims is rather sparse and weak in many of the domains (health and education are perhaps exceptions – for an overview of the evidence see www.culturecase.org). Nonetheless the rhetoric around arts and culture took a distinctly instrumental turn in the late 1990s that has persisted for the last 20 years.

One of the Department for Culture Media and Sport's flagship cultural policies in response to the Prime Minister's call-to-arms was *Centres for Social Change: Museums Galleries and Archives* (DCMS 2000). This seemed to conflate a desire to widen access to the cultural assets and services provided through museums and galleries with a desire to use them as a tool to address a government-wide social inclusion agenda. The eleventh of eleven policy objectives in the document was that 'Museums, galleries and archives should consider how they can further develop their role and act as agents of social change' (DCMS 2000, 5). In retrospect it is difficult to establish the extent to which these considerations took place, and even harder to account for any impacts of such reconsiderations.

2010 brought the arrival of a Conservative-led coalition government (and since 2015 a Conservative majority government), both of which have deployed a continuing expectation that arts organisations should play a civic role in their communities, although it is no more a priority now than it has been in the past. The mandate to play a greater civic role has been amplified by austerity cuts to local services in which local arts organisations are situated and exacerbated by cuts to the arts organisations themselves who are being asked to do 'more with less'.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation sees its work in the next four years focusing around four main themes, one of these being 'Creating the conditions for change' which promotes social innovation, strengthening civil society and philanthropic practice. It is within this strand that the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's inquiry into the better understanding of the civic role of art organisations is embedded and which this present report considers.

The remainder of this section sets out the approach we have taken to the review. It highlights the complexities of examining a topic like the civic role of arts organisations – an area of research that both crosses interdisciplinary boundaries and falls in the gaps between them. With the resources available to us we have taken a pragmatic approach to encapsulating the complex and multifarious histories of creative placemaking, socially engaged arts practice, civic activism and public performance.

2.2. Defining the civic role of arts organisations

A real challenge at the heart of this work is defining precisely what is meant by 'civic role'. It brings to mind politics, community, rights and responsibilities. The arts can be used to provoke, to catalyse, to enable and inhibit the way that people engage with the world around them. The Gulbenkian Foundation is working from a principle that arts organisations should play a civic role in their communities, and that this role is currently under-played and under-acknowledged. But what exactly does civic role mean in this context? What does it look like? How can it be measured? What are its attributes? Getting answers to these questions will be vital to developing and supporting more of the work that the Gulbenkian would like to see take place.

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In pragmatically sifting through the literature, appraising its relevance and robustness, we have encountered a soup of vocabulary: Civic Engagement; Civic Renewal/Revitalisation; Creative Placemaking; Community Arts; Community Development; Cultural Citizenship; Cultural Districts; Cultural Planning; Neighbourhood Impacts; Participatory Arts; Public Art; Socially Engaged Arts Practice; Social Impacts; Social Inclusion. All of these make an appearance at one point or another in the literature.

To help simplify the challenge, we have separated ‘civic role’ from ‘arts organisation’ before hafting them back together to generate a working definition for the remainder of the review.

2.2.1. Civic role

For the purposes of this review we have taken the ‘civic role’ to mean the socio-political impact that organisations make on a place and its people through programmes of activity, or simply their existence. The dual aspects of people and place reflect the dictionary definitions of ‘civic’. (The OED defines ‘civic’ to mean [among other things] ‘Of, belonging to, or relating to a citizen or citizens; of or relating to citizenship or to the rights, duties, etc., of the citizen; befitting a citizen’ and ‘Of, belonging to, or relating to a city, town, borough, or other community of citizens; esp. of or relating to the administration and affairs of such a community; municipal’.) Our definition also reflects the shape of the literature that informs this review, the terminology used by policymakers in this area, and the plausible tangible effects that might be observed, should arts organisations be thought to play such a role.

In order to gather research for this review we have searched relevant books and journals using the term ‘civic’. Given the fact that it is a relatively new (or renewed) word to use, and given that the work relevant to this review may use an alternative vocabulary, we have also scoured the literature for allied terms like civil, social impact, citizenship, democracy, placemaking. To give an indication of how frequently the conceptual overlap is accompanied by linguistic dissonance, the substantial literature review for the ArtWorks project (DHA & ICP 2015) does not feature the word civic at all, despite being a rigorous and in-depth analysis of literature pertaining to participatory arts: a part of the arts sector that is allied and overlapping with organisations performing a civic role.

2.2.2. Arts organisation

It is easier to define ‘arts organisation’ than ‘civic role’. Throughout this review we have taken arts organisation to mean a formally constituted entity comprising of one or more people whose primary purpose is the production, performance or promotion of the arts. Within ‘the arts’ we include visual art, music, drama, literature, dance, and digital art. Organisations may or may not be building-based. Organisations are distinct from individual artists.

2.2.3. Our working definition

Therefore, for the remainder of this review, we have taken the civic role of arts organisations to mean:

The ways in which arts organisations animate, enhance and enable processes by which people exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of communities.

We use 'animate, enhance and enable' to signify the fact that the civic role is active, contributory and primarily for the benefit of people (rather than the arts or artists).

We do not presuppose or restrict the activities that people may undertake (or seek to undertake) as 'members of communities'. Nor do we define 'communities' any further.

2.3. Themes in the literature

The literature on the civic role of arts organisations tackles a variety of themes that are broadly grouped under two main headings, each of which reflects the dual aspects of 'civic role', namely the effect of arts organisations on places and on people.

Unsurprisingly, the literature is strongest (and most abundant) in settings where there is the greatest amount (and most sophisticated manifestation) of an explicit attempt to support and evaluate the civic role of arts organisations. Chief amongst these is urban centres in the United States. Elsewhere, we cite studies and reports describing the role of arts organisations in urban and rural settings in the UK, Australia, Canada and Western Europe.

The literature consulted in this review spans a rich variety of disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Much of it is descriptive rather than analytical. The problematic lack of evaluation that plagues the arts sector also affects efforts to understand the civic role it plays. This means that empirical and evaluative studies are thin on the ground. They primarily exist where there has been a time-limited, outcome-based program of activity commissioned by a funder with a genuine interest in ongoing improvement and measuring impact. Unfortunately, this is not a widespread approach.

Most of the writing on this topic comes from a handful of marginally overlapping intellectual disciplines. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, and each is outlined in the next section of the report.

2.3.1. Cultural Studies

A cultural studies approach (eg Harvie 2013; Froggett et al. 2015) emphasises the subjective experience of art upon people. It is particular and specific. It does not attempt to generate hypotheses or universal theories that can be discarded upon the presentation of any counter-evidence. This sort of approach is popular amongst artists because it is perceived to be holistic and non-reductive. It does not turn a creative process into a mere assemblage of numbers and indicators.

2.3.2. Geography and Planning

Urban planning, human geography and cultural economics bring another set of perspectives (eg Stern & Seifert 2009; Markusen & Gadwa 2010). These disciplines attempt to capture what is characteristic of a place (for example, what are the attributes of places) whilst also capturing data on activity that happens therein. Through comparing different places with similar attributes or different scenarios within the same places, they are interested in isolating specific factors or conditions which generate the world we see today.

2.3.3. Sociology

There is an explicitly sociological inquiry that is commonplace when looking at the civic role of arts organisations (eg Stevenson 2004; Byrd 2014). A sociological perspective is built upon the recognition that the phenomena being studied are culturally specific and contested, and that there are hierarchies in society that may not be immediately identifiable. In this case, they emphasise that different societies have different ideas about what art is, and furthermore that cultural policy inevitably privileges one conception of art at the expense of others.

2.3.4. Arts

The arts approach considers art as a manifestation of people's engagement with the world and seeks to understand it on those terms. In this vein, much contemporary art, and by association, art organisations, have aspirations to have relevance and impact beyond the purely aesthetic realm (Gosse 2010). This intention naturally pushes the art outside of the confines of the art world (Kester 1998) and towards civic engagement. Art's engagement with all things civic in pursuit of social change through the deployment of cultural resources has been termed 'cultural activism' (Wallis 1990).

2.4. The US approach

The bulk of activity (and resulting literature) undertaken to support and understand the civic role of the arts seems to have occurred in the United States. There may be a few reasons for this. Firstly, there is not the long-standing infrastructure or tradition of public funding support for the arts in the US as exists in the UK and in continental Europe. Secondly, the febrile social history of the US during the 20th century has seen the arts used as a conspicuous tool for empowerment and self-expression in social movements in the service of civil rights and urban renewal.

The story of social change (and the role of the artists within it) is told by Tom Finkelpearl in the opening chapter to his book *What We Made* (Finkelpearl 2013). It is instructive, but it is not a uniquely US story. Racial, technological, demographic and social strife occurs elsewhere of course, while the influences of movements like the Situationists, Fluxus and various raucous performance traditions span the globe.

While the US has come to dominate the global discourse around the civic role of the arts, the civic role of the arts has also come to dominate the US approach to cultural policy. In this context, the terminology used is 'creative placemaking'. The ascendancy and complete acceptance of the 'creative placemaking' approach to cultural policy in the United States has placed the civic role of arts organisations under ever greater scrutiny,

and brought it to the fore. The shift in cultural policy in the US has also changed the notion of who or what is supposed to benefit from the arts. The focus is now on the 'neighborhood or the city as the salient unit of analysis rather than the individual artist or arts organisation' (Rushton 2015, 28).

While the literature (and activity) relating to the civic roles of arts organisations is dominated by North American examples, we have attempted to cite and extrapolate upon non-US sources where possible as we approach the six questions which drive this enquiry and form the remainder of this review.

3. How is the civic role of arts organisations conceptualised or understood in the literature?

Overall, the literature conceptualises the civic role of arts organisations in two ways: the sustaining and enhancing effect they have on places, and the transformational and emancipatory effect on people. Each of these two aspects (place and people) are taken in turn:

3.1. The civic role pertaining to place

Nicodemus's summary in *Cultural Trends* (2013) tells the story of how creative placemaking came to dominate US cultural policy. The approach has since been exported to the UK and elsewhere as the default framework through which to imagine the civic role of the arts as it relates to places. Nicodemus identifies how key agents in the policymaking process were able to assemble an unlikely coalition of funders from across the private-public divide to come together around a compelling yet 'fuzzy' idea:

“Creative placemaking” and its “livability”, and “vibrancy” outcomes are malleable concepts, open to interpretation. Although this has increased creative placemaking’s appeal to varied stakeholders, it has also left it susceptible to criticism – that it is vague and supports development and gentrification over social equity. As funders and policy-makers develop indicators and metrics for measuring the success of creative placemaking projects, these fuzzy concepts are becoming less opaque and, therefore, even more open to challenge and contestation.’ (Nicodemus 2013, 214)

A broadly accepted definition of creative placemaking is as follows:

‘In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighbourhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.’ (Markusen & Gadwa 2010, 3)

Elsewhere in the world creative placemaking is described as cultural planning. For example, Stevenson (2004) writes from Australia: ‘Cultural planning is concerned with how people live in places and communities (as citizens), and with the ways in which they use the arts and other forms of creative endeavour to enhance, consolidate and express these attachments’ (Stevenson 2004, 124).

Stevenson identifies more concrete social objectives for the policies relating to creative placemaking. At its core, it is an instrument of social engineering. 'Cultural planning is conceived as a strategy for "reconnecting" the excluded to the public sphere through "animating" and regenerating public space and recreating civic cultures. In this respect, the culture of cultural planning is clearly regarded as civilising' (Stevenson 2004, 128).

The broader historical perspective on policies relating to cultural planning or creative placemaking must take account of a growing interest in using culture for revitalisation and regeneration. Again, reflecting on the experience of the United States:

'The adoption of such "culture as development" policies grows out of the ambitions of city boosters, who are eager to attract tourists and improve their cities' images through association with highbrow arts projects. They also meet the needs of arts administrators, who welcome the infusion of capital and see advantages in linking their missions to those of city marketers. These shared goals and interests are manifested in the emergence of new alliances and organizational structures that unite business promotion, place marketing and cultural support.' (Strom 2003, 261)

Although it forms something of a cultural policy consensus, there is not a large amount of empirical evaluation of creative placemaking or cultural planning. This is partly due to the time required to generate such studies, but also because the outcomes (desired or unintended) can be hard to identify and even harder to measure.

3.2. The civic role pertaining to people

The consideration of the civic role as it relates to people is a far more problematic and complex issue. This is because it is dependent on one's model of how human societies operate, an understanding of the specific role and contribution of arts organisations, and the concept of what is a socially or civically desirable outcome for society and its citizens. All these issues are inherently contested.

There is an ever-growing literature from cultural studies disciplines that takes certain *a priori* positions on what is socially desirable and shows how art and performance might lead people to that place in a way that capitalist modes of consumption and production never will. These studies tend to be largely documentary and reflective (rather than empirical and analytical) yet usefully weave together theories of aesthetics, artistic labour, social theory and citizenship (eg Jackson 2011 for a US perspective and Harvie 2013 for a UK version).

With an approach more rooted in social science, Stern and Seifert (2009) explore the civic role of arts and culture by isolating and describing the concepts of civic capacity and social capacity, as well as social capital (specifically as they relate to the arts). They also turn their attention to 'the concepts of the cultural public sphere and cultural citizenship' which they posit 'are an attempt to redefine the public sphere and citizenship in light of a global and information-based society' (Stern & Seifert 2009, 14). Linked to this, the concept of democratic learning is introduced by Lawy et al. (2010), who postulate that the engagement of school children in the arts by 'doing' in the context of working in an artistic practice, rather than being 'taught', helps them to appreciate the role of democratic involvement in citizenship.

More recently, Zapata-Barrero (2015) has further complicated things by taking a different standpoint to analyse the use of culture in supporting 'cultural citizenship'. Rather than looking at what kinds of cultural engagement might support civic engagement, he looks at what models of citizenship shape cultural policy. This addresses a point made elsewhere in the literature: 'There is a worrying silence about what citizenship actually means within cultural planning' (Stevenson 2004, 128). People need to think harder about which approach from the 'plurality of democratic citizenship traditions' they are founding their policy on. Zapata-Barrero (2015) points out that hugely different policies result when the approach is liberal, communitarian or republican – since each one of these views the role and purpose of cultural engagement very differently (Zapata-Barrero 2015, 14).

4. What main arguments are made for and against a civic role for arts organisations?

We have not found any arguments *against* arts organisations acknowledging or developing their civic role. However, one could imagine such arguments being based on the following statements:

- arts organisations need to stay true to their vision and mission – not all will have a civic component
- asking arts organisations to take on a civic role may in fact be an abrogation of local or central government's responsibilities to communities and should therefore be resisted
- arts and culture are politically contested and therefore any one arts organisation will inevitably privilege one group over another, whether intentionally or otherwise
- arts organisations developing their civic role may intentionally or unintentionally, directly or indirectly, contribute to the process of gentrification and therefore have a negative effect on some audiences and artists in that locality

The final bullet point calls for further analysis. The connection between art and gentrification is undeniable. Clay (1979) first outlined the relationship between the presence of artists in an area (attracted by cheap rents and gritty urban realism) and the rapid onset of gentrification. This developing artistic community is then seen as 'cool' and 'edgy' and attractive to the richer middle classes, but also safe enough to consider moving into. Following this is the familiar spiral of rising house prices and displacement of the area's lower income residents.

Molotch and Treskon (2009) document this directly with a case study of the relocation of galleries in New York, primarily driven by the need to find cheaper rents, but with the end result of ultimately driving up rents. The role played by art and artists in effectively sanitising an area to be safe for a middle-class influx and redevelopment has not escaped city planners, developers and policymakers. The 'cultural capital' of this creative class has been conceptualised by Florida (2002a; 2002b) and spearheads this policy-led artistic driven regeneration (or, from a more critical viewpoint: policy-led gentrification). A particularly famous example of this was the development by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao in an attempt to create a cultural quarter (see Plaza et al. 2009).

Awareness of the importance of the arts in London's regeneration is evident in the London Plan (Mayor of London 2015), a London-wide strategic plan which claims that it 'sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2036'. Some relevant objectives are:

- Enhance and protect creative work and performance spaces and related facilities in particular in areas of defined need.
- Support the temporary use of vacant buildings for performance and creative work.
- Designate and develop cultural quarters to accommodate new arts, cultural and leisure activities, enabling them to contribute more effectively to regeneration.

However, the link between the presence of artists and art organisations and the negative impacts of gentrification is only one side of the story. Cultural activities are seen as encouraging civic participation and community cohesion in general (Bagwell et al. 2014) and arguments *in favour* of arts organisations developing a civic role are more numerous and varied. They broadly fall into four categories, which we have described as the 'inherent' argument, the 'social justice' argument, the 'intrinsic' argument and the 'dutiful' argument. Each is now described in turn.

4.1. The inherent argument

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes 'a right to participate in the cultural life of the community' and that it is in the duty of every arts organisation to reach out and be an active part of their communities, especially if they receive public funding or protection.

Bacon and Korza (1999) reflect on the purpose and work of arts organisations in the Animating Democracy scheme (see below). In doing so, they articulate the contribution that arts make to this area and what the overall social objectives of such role may be:

'Cultural institutions are playing a key part in this [civic] work as catalysts, conveners, or forums for civic dialogue. They are offering space as well as organizational and interpretive capacity, and they are building local relationships to encourage various publics to participate in the process. In exercising this civic role, cultural institutions are expanding opportunities for both democratic participation and aesthetic experience, engaging a broader, more diverse public in giving voice to critical issues of our time.' (Bacon & Korza 1999, 2)

The inherent argument might well lead to the arts being used to support the civic lives of everyone. But with limited resources and an unequal world, it becomes clear that some people should benefit more than others. While some people are rich in capital (financial, social, cultural), others are not. The arts have a responsibility to overcome that divide. It is a matter of social justice.

4.2. The social justice argument

We live in unequal and divided societies and arts organisations are well placed to articulate this disparity and (furthermore) enable social action by, with and for the disadvantaged to ameliorate the situation.

The default position amongst many sociologists seems to be to 'emphasise art as powerful because of its expressive, emotional, liberatory, and even redemptive power: art can bring subaltern communities together, frame common experiences in transformational ways, and communicate powerful messages' (Lee & Lingo 2011, 316-317).

The challenge to this is that art can be as divisive as it is unifying, and its exploitation or deployment to the furtherance of one group is sometimes at the expense of others. Managing this tension, and acknowledging the paradox at the heart of this approach, seems to be an important aspect for arts organisations seeking to further their civic role.

There may be many organisations in non-arts sectors that could perform this socially progressive role – giving voice to the voiceless and acting as an agent of change and betterment within communities. Why should arts organisations be particularly well placed to deliver these things? The answer lies in our next argument:

4.3. The intrinsic argument

Arts organisations are uniquely placed to engage in civic matters since they are seen as neutral or third spaces and that people respond to the material of the arts using different values and faculties from those they apply to explicitly political media. 'Because the arts provide a neutral meeting ground and inherently involve dialogue and cooperation, they are especially conducive to bridging socio-economic, ethnic, generational, and educational differences' (Saguaro 1999).

Although this civic role is predominantly discussed in urban contexts, a different perspective comes from Australia, where McHenry (2011) has looked at the arts in rural settings by interviewing the people who lived in such communities. 'The arts were viewed as a means for encouraging and enabling civic participation. Thus, despite various social and cultural issues, community members could be given a voice on issues that impact them' (McHenry 2011, 251). McHenry's interviewees told him how the arts brought people together, and helped disparate communities work towards common goals.

Research comparing the voting habits (and other social behaviors) with arts attendance found that concert-going is related to increased civic engagement. Concert attendees are more likely to volunteer or make charitable donations, more likely attend community meetings (Polzella & Forbis 2014).

Concerts are also events that bring people together around a shared interest and experience. Whether through singing along in harmony, or dancing together, artistic spaces allow for collective experience. In some non-conventional concert settings (particularly those studied by Byrd 2014), there is discussion and exchange between the performer and their audience and within the audience itself.

Arts organisations may be well placed to do all this thanks to the unique qualities of art and culture, but what about the long-standing institutions that have been acting in this space for decades? The decline in membership of civic and amenity societies and other bastions of civic life demands a new approach: and that's where the arts come in.

4.4. The dutiful argument

In a society in which trust, engagement and investment in traditional civic organisations (such as churches, political parties, etc.) is seemingly declining, arts and cultural organisations represent a last resort (or perhaps preferred agency) through which to mobilise and animate citizens in democratic processes.

Animating Democracy (the American initiative mentioned previously) was concerned primarily with the 'people' side of the civic role equation. It was founded on the premise that arts organisations had something valuable and distinct to offer. This speaks to the intrinsic and social justice arguments. Yet its ultimate justification is most probably framed in the dutiful argument. It was directed towards enhancing and supporting civic engagement in the context of a perceived decline of traditional social and civic structures, as documented by Robert Putnam in his influential book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2001).

It is possible to see how Putnam's definitions of social capital can be applied to arts organisations. Bonding social capital (that which links together within groups of similar people) and bridging capital (that which links together people of different groups) are both feasibly provided through the spaces and activities provided by arts organisations. Furthermore, given the decline of traditional agencies and associations, arts organisations may increasingly be expected to provide such bridging and bonding capital.

5. Which UK arts organisations are regarded as demonstrating a strong commitment to their civic role and what are the key elements of their practice which lead to them being so regarded?

There is very little published material that explores the civic role of arts organisations in the UK. There are studies of community arts, of participatory projects, of socially informed arts practice, but as for the 'civic role' specifically, the literature is largely silent. It is impossible to objectively adjudicate where best practice and exceptional individuals are located. We are left with subjective reputation, anecdote, and sometimes rhetorical bluster. Based on word-of-mouth, recurrent names in the literature, reputation and media coverage, we have started to compile a list of individuals and organisations in the UK that are setting the agenda for the sector when it comes to the civic role. These are outlined below. This is then supplemented with a description of how national policymaking agencies (namely Arts Councils) have approached the question of the civic role.

We have segmented a sample of arts organisations that are based in the UK according to a typology that shows how each segment approaches their civic role differently. We believe we are able to identify five distinct groups: those that commission work, organisations that have re-configured themselves, organisations that exploit their

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assets, building-less organisations, individual artists whose work is relevant, and Arts Councils that have policy to support this work. Despite this review’s focus on organisations, we felt it was important to emphasise the role of individual artists (in the fourth group), simply because they have played such a key role in the UK and elsewhere.

5.1. Organisations that commission socially engaged art and public art

Artichoke	Grizedale Arts	Artangel	FACT	Helix Arts
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These organisations see their art as being located in communities. They attempt to produce art across disciplines and art forms that is authentic to people’s everyday experiences of the world which then elevates, transports, animates or provokes people out of their comfort zones. The work is often at the cutting edge of artistic practice without being esoteric or indulgent. The degree to which their work is successful depends on its affective capabilities (does it change the way people think or feel?) along with the degree to which it is adopted by the communities in which it is situated.

5.2. Organisations that have (re)configured their mission toward social benefits

The Albany	Happy Museum	Stratford Circus
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In many cases these sorts of organisations have a heritage that has imbued the organisations with a sense of belonging within communities, which may be through a building or a presence or an individual. However, in recent times this has been transformed and mobilised for explicitly civic objectives.

The arts are the means by which the core objectives of the organisations are achieved, therefore they tend to be flexible and non-dogmatic when it comes to the nature and perceived ‘quality’ of the cultural experience on offer (as defined by peer organisations or so-called ‘experts’ in the field).

5.3. Organisations that use their assets (primarily buildings) to host and foster civic activity

National Theatre Wales	Old Fire Station Oxford	Arcola Theatre
Shop Front Theatre (Theatre Absolute)	Battersea Arts Centre	Royal Opera House Thurrock

As with the previous category there is an inheritance here that imbues the organisations with a mandate and a role that they might not otherwise have within their communities. They are generous with their space and their assets, recognising that there is a safety and capital that they possess which allows for experimentation. Their reputations are not at risk because those reputations are built on taking risks.

These assets (primarily buildings) provide their communities with a space in which to use the arts as a forum to navigate and enliven civic matters.

5.4. Nimble, building-less organisations that assemble for specific activity with a civic element

Nest (inspired by Burning Man)	Fun Palaces	Doorstep Arts
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These organisations are without the same inheritance as those in other categories. They could disappear as easily as they were assembled. They are specifically about generating activity in communities for the purpose of bringing people together and having fun. The social and civic role that they perform is implicit, not explicit. They have none of the cachet and reputation that comes with being (or ever having been) an elite arts organisation.

5.5. Artists or performers who are active in this area

Jeremy Deller (Battle of Orgreave; Procession)	Dan Thompson (RiotCleanup; Empty Shops)	Assemble (Granby Four Streets)
Bob and Roberta Smith (Art School)	Alex Hartley (Nowhereisland)	Mark Wallinger (State Britain)

We add these people in as a reminder that it needn't take an organisation to demonstrate the powerful ways in which art can play a civic role. These individuals have used an explicitly civic element in the development of their artistic practice. They perhaps depend on organisations (in all the above categories) to support, host and propagate their work. Their practice also picks up a strong tradition in contemporary, socially-engaged arts practice in the United States. We briefly describe three such examples.

Project Row Houses, an ongoing art project in Houston, Texas (USA) aims to move beyond the traditional reach of fine art practice and step out from the confines of the art studio and the gallery by engaging in 'transforming the social environment'. More broadly, some of their notable civic aims include 'community development' and 'human empowerment'. These are achieved by focusing on issues such as education, sustainability and social safety nets, specifically with respect to African-American history and culture. The current programme focuses on art's role in 'challenging the political paradigm and fomenting political change' while previous projects explored the economic issues in the neighbouring community or the changing cultural landscape in a local district, among other civic concerns.

The work of Candy Chang includes aspects of street art that attempts to encourage an 'activation' or connection to communities. The 'Before I die' project is a participatory scheme in that allows people to contribute to stencilled writing on the walls of derelict buildings to voice their 'longings, anxieties, joys, and struggles.' The aim here is to open up a community to each other through via experiences.

Theaster Gates is an artist primarily working in installations who uses his work to attempt to encourage revitalisation of poorer neighbourhoods. Gates is quite distinctive in this field in that he is also qualified in urban planning as well as being a practicing artist. Through his work, he attempts to encourage cultural engagement, a particular

method used in his work is to incorporate found materials from the communities in which he is working to give them some cultural rooting.

Outside of the conventional definitions of the arts, it is worth remembering that the heritage and built environment sectors have continually grappled with the same issues that are discussed here. The now defunct agency CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) had their People and Places programme. Nowadays its modern manifestation is in the British Academy's Where We Live Now project.

5.6. The Arts Councils' approaches

The drive to develop the civic role of arts organisations hasn't simply been left to individual arts organisations. It has also been a policy concern for some of the Arts Councils in the UK.

- Arts Council England – Since 2010 its policy has been directed by its 10 Year Strategy *Achieving Great Art for Everyone* (ACE 2010). Goal 4 of the strategy's five strategic goals is to ensure that the 'leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled'. As part of that, they use case studies highlighting Civic Leadership in the North of England, and elsewhere it is realised through the deployment of Lottery Capital Grants to build and renovate the physical infrastructure of the arts.
- Arts Council Northern Ireland – has one public art programme that is specifically targeted to community building and enhancement. The Building Peace through the Arts - Re-Imaging Communities Programme came to an end in 2015 and an evaluation is imminent.
- Creative Scotland – does not have an explicit or distinct programme of activity specifically to foster civic engagement through the arts. Instead, the word crops up more frequently in the context of large capital grants it makes to build or rebuild theatres or galleries.
- Arts Council Wales – seems to be unique amongst the Arts Councils in the UK to have a programme specifically directed towards the deployment of the arts in civic settings. The concept of Ideas: People: Places is to work with artists and communities in projects designed to regenerate those areas in an imaginative and ambitious way, in line with what the citizens would like to see for themselves.

6. How have previous initiatives to encourage arts organisations to consider their civic role been structured, delivered and evaluated, and have they been perceived as successful or otherwise?

From the world of social science, several standard methodologies exist to evaluate the civic role of arts organisations. Firstly, quantitative data from sources such as internal reports can be used to get an indication of the proportion of program time or budget put aside for civic activities. Supplementing this are data collected from interviews or questionnaires with various stakeholders such as community members (visitors), organisation directors and local government officials.

However, to properly answer this question we must look at some specific case studies and once again direct our attention across the Atlantic. Doug Borwick's *Building Communities, not Audiences* takes in a sweeping array of activities across a rich mix of art forms that illustrate how arts organisations are renewing and fulfilling their civic roles in the US (Borwick 2012, 190-276). The challenge for this review is that the book (despite its many good points) is rather light (to the point of non-existent) on detail that critically appraises how these activities have been structured, delivered and evaluated. So once again, we are confronted with the challenge of the literature gap: either great work is taking place that is not being sufficiently evaluated, or there is energy and enthusiasm expended on projects that have no measurable benefit.

Looking at the United States, there are three substantial schemes that we believe are most worth focusing on: ArtPlace America, Animating Democracy and NOCD-NY. Each of these deals with key aspects of civic role: the first concentrates attention on the way that arts organisations affect places; the second is emphatically about using arts organisations to affect socio-political change in people and communities, finally NOCD-NY promotes the co-operative power of a consortium of smaller groups. We outline each of these in turn.

6.1. ArtPlace America

The greatest expression of creative placemaking in the United States is to be found in the ongoing ArtPlace America program. The website describes the program thus:

'ArtPlace America is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.'

It is inspired by the theories and work of Jane Jacobs – an important figure in the history of town planning and community activism in 20th century America. Essentially, her approach was to put human beings at the centre of town planning. ArtPlace's ambition is to do just that, but by having art and culture considered alongside (and at the same level) as housing and transportation in various development projects underway in the US.

ArtPlace America is an expansion and refinement of the type of projects funded through the Our Town grants of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). These were part of an attempt by the NEA to show how arts and culture could take a lead role in revitalising cities suffering from de-industrialisation and looking for ways to boost their identity and attractiveness in the wake of the 2008 recession.

ArtPlace America is still in train, and therefore has not been able to fully report on any evaluative activities, yet there are promising signs that it is taking evaluation seriously and will generate substantial contribution to our understanding of the civic role of arts organisations in positively impacting place.

6.2. Animating Democracy

Animating Democracy is a stand of work coordinated by Americans for the Arts and has undertaken a huge array of activity since 1996, with the bulk of work taking place from the late 1990s to the late 2000s. It brought people together in a major conference (the National Exchange on Art and Civic Dialogue), generated a variety of critical and reflexive literature, and spent hundreds of thousands of US dollars supporting a small number of 'exemplar organisations' to develop programs of work with reports documenting them.

It was about supporting 'arts and cultural organizations whose work, through its aesthetics and processes, engages the public in dialogue on key civic issues as a conscious, purposeful act of artistic creation and presentation' (Bacon & Korza 1999, 1). Animating Democracy was 'stimulated by the belief that art offers a fresh approach to engaging people in civic issues' (Bacon & Korza 1999, 2).

In thinking about the overall impact of the work supported through Animating Democracy – and building upon its learning, Bacon & Korza lament the fact that although there is anecdotal evidence to support claims about the impact of the arts on civic discourse 'there is a recognized lack of serious, outcome-based evaluation' (Bacon & Korza 1999, 6).

Stern and Seifert re-assessed the work of Animating Democracy at the end of the 2000s (2009). In their work they spend a great deal of time describing two fundamental shortcomings of attempts to evaluate the civic role of arts. The first of these is the methodological difficulties that dog all evaluations seeking to understand the impact of these interventions: the impacts can be diffuse, the means to collect data can be intrusive or inappropriate, and the resource (in terms of people and money) to do it properly can be prohibitive. These pick up a variety of points also made by Guetzkow (2002). The second shortcoming is the lack of well-considered theories of change. Their work outlines a variety of means by which such theories could be developed, drawing on experience from international development and civic engagement more widely (Stern & Seifert 2009). Without a theory of change it is impossible to appraise the success of any intervention and for arts organisations to identify their specific role in bringing about any change in the world.

Stern and Seifert take these two observations together to say that evaluations (where they do exist) are left pointing to 'anticipated outcomes' rather than measured ones, therefore 'evaluation studies tend to fall short on evidence that connects arts initiatives with their social goals' (Stern & Seifert 2009, 56).

6.3. NOCD-NY

Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY) is a charitable organisation with the defined goal of revitalising New York from the neighbourhood upwards. In essence, this is a consortium of artistic organisations coming together to promote community involvement through various art-oriented programmes. As mentioned above, gentrification is a major concern at community level in cities such as New York, realisation of the possible involvement of art and artists in this process has led to a growth in activism amongst artists and community groups to resist these processes.

NOCD-NY may be seen as artistic resistance to this perceived deterioration of community in the style of other co-operatives such as the Occupy movement.

The stand-out aspect here is the consortium nature of NOCD-NY; a collective of artists, non-profit organisations and activists have the power to become greater than the sum of their parts, the great power is the mix of individual organisations coming together under the umbrella of the NOCD-NY, with the power to appeal to all niches of New York City's urban communities. Via co-ordination and collaborative efforts, the structure and delivery of civic programmes from groups such as NOCD-NY is conceptually different from that of more contained entities. Borrup (2014) gives examples of similar bottom-up approaches such as in DUMBO (New York) which began as community collectives, but have become powerful voices (but importantly still community voices) in aspects of city planning and development.

The focus of NOCD-NY is solely concerned with the strengthening of community via civic involvement. As a collective, one of the ways in which the group's activities can be evaluated is through internal discussions and the formulation of 'next step' recommendations (Stern 2013).

6.4. A few UK examples

Coming to the UK, 2015 saw the publication of a rare study into the civic role of the arts using qualitative methods to measure the impact that two works had on the population of a small town.

Two major public artworks in Devon that formed part of the Cultural Olympiad were examined in detail by a team led by Lynne Froggett from the University of Central Lancashire. Her research was funded through the AHRC Cultural Value Project and took an in-depth look at the reactions and impacts generated by Damian Hirst's *Verity* and Alex Hartley's *Nowhereisland* on the people of Ilfracombe, Devon. The workshops, interviews and observations made through the research highlighted the 'civic, intellectual, aesthetic, environmental, and economic implications' of these works of public art (Froggett et al. 2015). The research found that *Nowhereisland* (in particular) was successful in provoking debate about topics like climate change, nationhood and democracy (Froggett et al. 2015, 59).

The Knitting Together Arts and Social Change programme in Peterborough (Cunningham 2013), had a very well defined objective of connecting local people with the arts in the context of social change and even included a definition of 'civic engagement' within the final report of the project. It was a two and a half year partnership between Peterborough City Council, Arts Council England East, the RSA and the citizens of Peterborough. Here, citizens were encouraged to join conversations, develop both connections and a willingness to change things. The Knitting Together Arts and Social Change Programme attempted to achieve this via a number of sub-projects, involving the community, but also a collective of local artists. For example, the 'Take Me To' project involved neighbourhood visits and allowing people to share stories that were important to them to foster a sense of place. By doing this, Peterborough was mapped by experiences rather than by geography. This project also identified a number of recommendations to promote civic engagement, significantly Cunningham (2013) encourages one to 'look sideways rather than upwards', this means not looking towards the funder but to 'allies', that is groups and individuals around the community, to reach

out to other arts organisations, the community and local people to develop connections. In essence, partnerships are the key to effective civic engagement.

7. What are the main current barriers and opportunities for arts organisations seeking to become more civically engaged?

This question is somewhat hampered by a lack of clarity about what the ultimate objective of being ‘more civically engaged’ actually entails. Nonetheless, it is necessary to separate opportunities and barriers that are extrinsic (and can therefore be changed through public policy or public action) or those which are intrinsic (and are therefore at the mercy of agents within the arts organisation itself). All of the literature seems to concentrate on the second of these, the intrinsic, offering advice and observations about how organisations should go about the business of civic engagement. There is far less in the literature that presents policymakers with instructions on how best to foster the conditions in which arts organisations may better develop their civic role.

7.1. Barrier: lack of funding and austerity

Kitchener and Markusen (2012) highlight the importance of the civic role that smaller (often non-profit) art organisations play and how this both contrasts and compliments that of larger, more mainstream commercial or government backed bodies. Interestingly, these smaller organisations are often under-counted when it comes to assessing the work of arts organisations because they are less likely to be obliged to respond to surveys and other forms of monitoring. It is also often the ‘hands-on’ nature of these organisations that make them stand out from more traditional art institutions. The main challenges faced by these smaller bodies is funding; often surviving on donations, volunteer work and borrowed spaces, their existence can be quite transient. Overall, it is the small-scale of these organisations that allow them to be better rooted in their communities, which also provides a challenge for policymakers to assess their civic role, but also more frustratingly, to even be aware of their presence and to support them.

In these current times of austerity, the arts are often seen as a soft target for budget cuts, or cuts in these budgets are necessitated by reductions in funding elsewhere (especially at a Local Authority level). With a drop in funding, there will of course be knock-on effects to the number and quality of civic involvement programmes that an organisation can host. One of the most basic ways that building-based organisations can maintain civic role is ensuring that their buildings are free to enter and use. Funding cuts have already led to closures and reduced opening hours at many institutions. Several studies have shown that the introduction of even a small charge for admission can act as a significant disincentive for prospective visitors, especially those from less affluent backgrounds (Kirchberg 1998; Lampi and Orth 2009).

7.2. Barrier: structural lack of attention and skills

Borwick (2012) highlights a few of the challenges to be overcome: these relate largely to the skills, capabilities and instincts of non-profit arts organisations (in the US). He indicates that arts organisations have management and governance structures that can hamper the processes required to conduct effective civic work, their attention is directed towards creating ‘excellent’ work that is deemed so by a network of artistic

peers rather than community stakeholders. Arts organisations may be taking on civic roles without adequate provision for the distinct skill set that is required to conduct such work (Borwick 2012, 30-36).

7.3. Barrier: reticence to be leaders and be confident about the arts' contribution

In surveying the landscape of community arts in the United States, Bacon and Korza are able to identify a number of specific factors relating to this barrier that hold organisations back: institutions are wary of taking ownership of civic issues, there is a nervousness about using the wrong language, there is a difficulty in recruiting diverse audiences and participants, and an overall recognition that art can be controversial and confrontational and not always soothing (Bacon & Korza 1999, 5). Much of this comes from a lack of confidence, which is projected out onto their community context.

7.4. Barrier: there is a disconnect between artists and communities regarding what art is and what art does

One of the most fascinating aspects of the literature are the critiques of energetic and enthusiastic attempts to use arts and culture in the development of civic programmes. For example, Lee and Lingo (2011) used some in-depth deliberative methods to look at the perception of art as a tool to help political movements and found that 'lay perceptions of the value of art in collective action may not reflect the more expansive conceptions held by contemporary activists, even when those laypersons are engaged in non-traditional forms of mobilization and are passionately devoted to the arts' (Lee & Lingo 2011, 316).

7.5. Barrier: the arts can be hampered by its association with privilege

Stevenson (2004) points to the tension (commonplace in the arts in the UK) 'between the goal of continuing to support traditional arts activities and organisations while, at the same time, arguing against the privileging of these forms of art.' Add to that (as Stevenson does) the whiff of patronising rhetoric that emerges from an ongoing approach to 'culture as a civilising process' and it becomes clear that the nervousness identified as an earlier barrier may actually be well founded (Stevenson 2004, 123).

So much for the barriers. Let's turn to the opportunities. In addition to those that can be inferred from the preceding sections (such as the arguments in favour of arts organisations performing a civic role), we have found at least two that emerge from the literature.

7.6. Opportunity: work with young people has the possibility to shape the future for the better

Many of the interventions in the literature focus on young people reached through formal and informal education settings. This reflects a recognition that the civic role (especially where it pertains to the 'people' dimension) is about sharing or inculcating a skill set, a proficiency, or a set of attitudes that allow for civic engagement. The McCormick Foundation in Chicago asked whether or not other institutions (not simply schools) could be charged with supporting this agenda, especially at a time when the school curriculum was being so heavily weighted towards STEM and languages, and

away from social and civic studies (Brouwer 2011). Looking at children's museums (as a distinct form of cultural organisation) presents some interesting possibilities. Colbert (2011) found that a third of such museums in the US identified as 'flagships in downtown revitalisation projects' and that this is increasingly the agenda in which the newer children's museums are being established (Colbert 2011, 606; 614).

7.7. Opportunity: digital technology creates new ways for the arts to fulfill their civic role

One final opportunity that is not extensively explored by the literature, but which is hinted at in places by Doug Borwick (2013) and Jen Harvie (2013), is the role that digital technology might play. Digital technology introduces a number of enabling and disruptive factors to arts and the civic role such as non-hierarchical modes of communication, cross-cultural mobilisation through universal interfaces and efficient decision-making and planning processes.

Linked to this, the proliferation of social media facilitates the two-way process of involvement between individuals and art organisations in a way never before possible (Brown & Novak-Leonard 2011). Effective use of social media tools is one of the most important opportunities that an organisation must capitalise upon to be fully engaged with society.

8. What seem to be arts organisations' own perceptions of their civic role and to what extent is this reflected in the way they report on their activities?

Arts organisations' own reflections on their civic role seems only to comprise a few oblique or subtle references. This is despite the fact that governments and policymakers have not been shy about their desires to promote a civic role for arts organisations. This promotion, as outlined in Section 4, stems from very disparate motives (from social inclusion to promoting urban regeneration, even gentrification).

As far back as the late 1990s, the UK government began to refashion its approach to cultural policy in order to support an explicit agenda of social inclusion, spelling out the specific contribution that museums (for example) were expected to play: drawing in 'specific groups within the communities that they serve, including marginalized groups. Exploring the context of their community can allow people to come to a greater understanding of themselves and stimulate their interest in society more generally' (DCMS 2000). Despite this rhetoric, which is now more than fifteen years old, there is very little published material in which arts organisations themselves reflect upon this role.

Contrast this to the situation in North America. We see the emergence of State Art Agencies (SAA) since 1965 as a direct policy response to art being perceived as elitist and narrowly accessible (Lowell 2004). These were set up directly to provide civic access to the arts at a community level, using government funding. Their missions contrast with those organisations which existed primarily as arts organisations, but with a secondary civic role. Being specifically geared towards civic involvement, SAAs are very aware of their purpose and much of their reporting focuses on proving that they are playing an important role in society. Another example from the US is a study by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS 2015), which identifies a decline in

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visitors to both museums and libraries and equates this to failing in their basic mission. Interestingly, the civic role is seen here to be the very root of the existence of such organisations. The IMLS report highlights the need for innovation and organisational change, in particular in management (employing staff from 'non-traditional backgrounds') to maintain community interest.

In both the UK and US, there appears to be strong backing by governments for a stronger civic role of the arts (for whatever motive), however, in the US there appears to be a more developed field of academic analysis on the subject. For example, a report by Kumazawa (2013) looked at the civic role of SAAs in great detail, of interest here she interviewed several organisations and asked specifically what their perception of their civic role was; these were clearly dividable into three categories:

- Arts as a tool to inspire and to educate (discursive)
- Arts as a response to community challenges and as an impetus for community improvement (didactic)
- Arts as a general vehicle for participation (social capital)

In summary, Kumazawa emphasises that arts organisations see themselves as improving people's engagement with civic society at both an individual and community level.

Again in the US, the Smithsonian has explored the role of museums around three particular areas: Museums as Facilitators of Civic Engagement (thinking particularly about generating and enhancing social capital), Museums as Agents of Social Change (examples here come from the UK about tackling social exclusion or promoting environmental awareness) and Museums as Moderators of Sensitive Social Issues (tackling taboo and prejudice through exhibitions and installations) (Smithsonian 2002). 'Relevance, reflexiveness, and responsibility' were all key tenets that recurred in the literature surveyed by the Smithsonian (2002). In general, there is a growing awareness of the need for participatory practices for the mutual benefit of society and arts organisations as reported by Brown & Novak-Leonard (2011).

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that while arts organisations may have been engaged in a variety of activities that could be construed to demonstrate their civic role, they have not yet converged on a common vocabulary that is recognisable or very helpful for a review such as this. Another possibility is that the UK is a hive of activity with arts organisations energetically and enthusiastically fulfilling their civic roles, and the literature (especially the analytical and evaluative literature) lags behind the work taking place on the ground.

Having said that, this review has been able to identify the general intellectual and historical trajectory that has brought about the current impulse to examine and support arts organisations performing their civic roles. We have set out how the civic role of arts organisations emerges from multiple overlapping movements, and that analysis of this phenomenon has an equally numerous set of perspectives.

The Civic Role of Arts Organisations

The civic role of arts organisations relates to either the places in which they work or the people who live, work and play in those places. Sometimes both *place* and *people* are the focus of work.

Arts and culture generate diffuse and hard-to-measure impacts. Perhaps this is especially the case with activity associated with arts organisations and their civic role. Proper evaluation of these sensitive and humane activities may in fact prove to be intrusive and counter-productive. If that is the case then practical fieldwork (rather than literature review) is likely to yield a more complete picture of the work being achieved in this area.

A key factor determining the flavour, level of success, reception and resonance of any activity by arts organisations fulfilling their civic role seems to be whether or not such activity is part of the core mission of the organisation. Sincerity and authenticity seem to matter more in the literature than aesthetics or resources when it comes to success or failure. There may be more to it than just being a 'good neighbour' (as elaborated by Crane 2012 [in Borwick 2012, 83–91]), and the more active and programmatic the efforts to fulfill the civic role are, the greater demand there is for them to be core to the mission of the organisation.

9.1 The future of the civic role of arts organisations

There are two concurrent trends which are likely to place an ever-increasing emphasis on arts organisations to develop their 'civic role'. These are the continuation of cuts to public services under the premise of austerity and the ongoing push from policymakers and the public for greater measurable benefits from investment in the arts. The work that the Gulbenkian is proposing is vital to supporting and sustaining a vibrant and relevant arts sector in the UK. This forward-thinking project will potentially shape the future direction of the arts sector and allow it to be better prepared for increased demands that this review has shown are likely to be around for a while.

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11. Appendix

The brief set by the Gulbenkian Foundation asked King's to answer the following questions:

1. How is the civic role of arts organisations conceptualised or understood in the literature? What are the different perspectives, how have they evolved, and does there seem to be an emerging consensus or just a wide variety and range of views? Has this changed over time?
2. What main arguments are made for and against a civic role/s for arts organisations? Who are the leading proponents for and against?

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3. Which UK arts organisations are regarded as demonstrating a strong commitment to their civic role and what are the key elements of their practice which lead to them being so regarded?
4. Have any funding or other initiatives already been undertaken to encourage arts organisations to consider their civic role? How have these been structured/delivered/evaluated and have they been perceived as successful or otherwise?
5. What are the main current barriers and opportunities for arts organisations seeking to become more civically engaged?
6. [Where possible (and as far as can be deduced from the literature)] What seem to be arts organisations' own perceptions of their civic role? And to what extent is this reflected in the way they report on their activities?

The questions have been simplified and subsequently form the headings for the main section of the review.