

Editorial Note– Glocal Approaches to Culture and Sustainability: Measuring the Values and Impacts of Culture

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Cultural sustainability is an emerging academic and important policy concept.

Since the landmark 1972 Stockholm Conference, the issue of the environment has been placed within the framework of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were developed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The purpose was to create a set of global goals, related to the environmental, political, and economic challenges that we face as humanity. Since then, scholars have investigated the relationship between culture and sustainability. They have tried to introduce various theoretical approaches (for instance "culture in sustainability," "culture for sustainability," and "culture as sustainability") in order to define how culture is positioned with regards to the concept of sustainability. Although culture is still not part of the SDGs, it is noted that the concepts of culture, sustainability, and sustainable development cannot become operational in empirical terms, without avoiding issues regarding their theoretical vagueness and generality. Thus, all stakeholders (including governments, businesses, and NPOs) expect the cultural and creative sectors to assert its values and material impacts with regards to the environment, economy, and society.

Why is it necessary to measure the value and impact of culture? Can it be measured. if it can be, then might researchers and practitioners today come up with a more robust method to measure the different values and impacts of culture either (or in combination) quantitatively and qualitatively? Can culture make its impacts on the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainable development more specifically? This special issue on "Cultural Sustainability: Can 'Cultural Impact' be Measured?" intends to challenge researchers across the globe to re-assess our common methodologies and consider if these contain sufficient acknowledgement of sustainability in measuring the impact of arts and culture on society.

In this special issue of "Cultural Sustainability: Can 'Cultural Impact' be Measured?", we have included three academic research articles, one case report, and three review articles. In the first research article, **CHEN Te-Ling** examines the question regarding why documentary directors in the film industry are eager to drive changes in society. Furthermore, why do we need to measure the social impact of documentaries if stories mean to inspire sympathy. Going behind the documentary production scene in Taiwan, Chen argues for the expansion of the research spectrum of documentary study in order to incorporate dialectical discussions of the economic, cultural, public, and social value as well as the impacts of a documentary, which is in addition to its production, aesthetics, and political history. She urges for the establishment of sustainable infrastructures, which would better support the diverse values in the documentary ecosystem.

YANG Meng-Yin's paper explores the cultural and social impact of the independent administrative institutions of the art-culture field in Taiwan after the 2000s. She observes the funding and out-sourcing difficulties faced by the independent administrative institutions in an age of governmental organizational reform, which emphasizes flexibility, transparency, strengthened control, and accountability. Yang reviews the debates between the inherent value, instrumental value, economic value, and public value of the institution and proposes a new thinking framework for the measurement of social and cultural impacts of independent administrative institution. **Elena Raevskikh** reviews evidence-based research in Europe and the United Arab Emirates and addresses the methodological challenges of measuring the artistic innovation. She identifies the social processes of production, social assimilation, and territorial anchors of artistic innovation, and suggests for a bottom-up and empirical sociological approach to reveal the social indicators of artistic innovation. As Raevskikh asserts, artistic innovation becomes an important tool to value diversity and reduce inequalities, as these artistic innovations interconnect extra-local and the global, the traditional artistic expressions and the new technologies.

In the case report, **YU Kwok-Lit** uses the BEAM-GEST (BEAM for Belief and Value, Everyday Lifestyle, Arts and Creation, Memories and Tradition; and GEST for the Geoclimatic, Economic, Socio-Political, and Technological Environment) cultural model to build the Cultural Indicators System for the city of Hong Kong. The results of the pilot project provide evidence to reveal the cultural characteristics of different districts, the cultural vibrancy gap between the urban and suburban area, and the strong relationship between old city areas and cultural vibrancy in Hong Kong.

The invited art critique of **Julien Volper** takes on the controversy of selling human relics (two human skulls and one fragment of a skull brought back in the 1890s from the Congo) at the Vanderkindere auction house in Brussels, on December 13 and 14 2022. Press discussion leads the auction house to withdraw the skulls from the sale later and present an apology. **LAI Wei-Chun's** policy review investigates the governance challenges of Taiwan's local public art museums as non-departmental public bodies and seeks the balance between the pursuing of independent and flexible business performance and demonstrating the social mission and public value of museums. Finally, **LEE Zheng-Wei**

comments on the issue of transitional justice and the reconstruction of the memory of negative history through the regeneration of Taiwan's difficult heritages.

Each author offers an individual angle and approach to measuring cultural impact. However, what they all have in common is that in order to capture the full potential of arts and culture that a quantitative-evidence-based-approach is not sufficient. All of authors are looking at new ways to measure the values of arts and culture. The diversity of the arts and cultural sector is so typical and therefore not easy to capture. Diversity is also a value on itself and policy makers should value this as well and take this into account when it comes to control mechanisms and appreciating the role of arts and culture within society.

Arts and culture should on the other hand not be afraid to show and demonstrate what their values are at different levels and within different contexts. It would make their position stronger in the dialogue with society and to policy makers. Also in the debate about sustainability and the role of culture regarding sustainability we need much more refined and locally based research. Then, also the importance of arts and culture for a more sustainable world can be recognized at a global level.

The discussion for including culture in the next SDGs was launched during the Mondiacult gathering in Mexico in October 2022 and is still continuing. After a 30 years long neo-liberal discourse regarding the importance of the creative and cultural industries for the economy, the emphasis is again on the role of arts & culture as a "public" or better "common" good. The corona pandemic indeed reinforced this shift to a more human centered approach to arts & culture. If we remember back in the middle of the pandemic we were advised not to have social contact anymore and it was often argued that culture revealed a deep human need and as an essential requirement for mental health. In order to make the arts & culture more resilient the sector itself should collaborate with academia to show what their values and impact can be on society. With this publication we want to take a first step from a truly global approach. This special issue is the first publication in its kind, where researchers from Asia and Europe—each from their perspective—share their knowledge and good practices.