

# Accounting for Multiculturalism: The Utility of Cultural Indicators and the Politics of Diversity and Participation

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## Abstract

Multiculturalism has become a charged arena in recent times with proponents and critics focusing on the value of its utility. Existing models measuring the outcome of multiculturalism emanate from the social sciences that attempt to assess the degree of inter-cultural integration through cultural indices on ethnicity and tradition. This article argues that arts impact studies in general, and emergent cultural indicator frameworks in particular, provide a more robust arena for considering the utility of multiculturalism to claims of social, cultural and economic wellbeing. This article examines the impact of multicultural arts through the quality of cultural participation. It begins by critically surveying global, national and local indicator frameworks on measuring multiculturalism in recent developments of cultural policy. It suggests that current frameworks for thinking about cultural diversity and cultural participation are inadequate, and there is a need to develop a more nuanced understanding of these relations as they are played out in the context of people's everyday cultural lives. It proposes a new framework that highlights a bi-directional theory-based approach to cultural citizenship and tests its utility against original fieldwork conducted in the growth corridor outer suburb of Whittlesea in Melbourne, Australia.



### Keywords

Cultural participation, multiculturalism,  
cultural indicators, cultural diversity,  
cultural citizenship

## **Biographical statements**

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## Introduction

Multiculturalism has become a charged arena in recent times with proponents and critics focusing on the value of its utility. Existing models measuring the outcome of multiculturalism emanate from the social sciences that attempt to assess the degree of inter-cultural integration through cultural indices on ethnicity and tradition. By critically examining the impact of multicultural arts through discussing the politics of cultural participation, this article argues that arts impact studies in general, and emergent cultural indicator frameworks in particular, provide a more robust arena for considering the utility of multiculturalism to claims of social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

The focus on cultural participation in this paper is a critical attempt to intervene in the cultural policy debates on the politics of participation. Cultural participation has been proclaimed by UNESCO as a fundamental right—the right of everyone to freely participate in the cultural life of a community and enjoy the benefits of the arts and culture (UNESCO 2012: 7). In this way, claims to cultural rights are also claims to cultural citizenship. Cultural citizenship has been widely discussed as the fourth dimension of citizenship (after social, economic and political rights), and its success or failure can be measured through cultural participation (Murray 2005). Cultural participation has also been used by governments as a measure of economic consumption and an indicator of wellbeing, such as in national surveys conducted in the US (Balfe 2003, National Endowment 1995), the UK (Bridgwood and Skelton 2000) and Australia (Australia Council 2000, ABS 2008). While cultural participation's perceived contribution to social and economic goals – such as its role in increasing social inclusion, stimulating tourism and the growth of the creative industries – has been well-documented (Throsby 2001), what counts as participation and what constitutes the domains of participation are contested. In this paper, we define cultural participation as the



practice of engaging in a wide range of activities (official, informal and traditional) that make up the vitality of cultural life. This definition extends the narrow understandings of participation as mere attendance at cultural events and activities, or as participation in a limited range of activities defined as being ‘cultural’ (Jackson 2003). It attends to differences in the type and quality of cultural participation, as well as the different social contexts of the individuals involved (Galloway 2006). For culturally diverse communities, such as the multicultural subjects of our discussion, this means developing an understanding of the factors that enable or restrict various forms of cultural participation and finding new approaches and methods to better understand the value of cultural engagement. Key to this understanding of cultural participation is also the contested terrain of culture.

While culture is ordinary and constitutes a whole way of life (Williams 1986), cultural policy scholars have argued that the concept has to be more narrowly conceived in order for it to be an effective measure of its impacts on individuals and society. In the context of policy and evaluation, culture refers to arts institutions that receive public funding (Holden 2006); in the context of governmentality and its formation of the social, culture refers to the processes by which it is institutionalised (Hunter 1988). This tension between the ordinary and the institutional is demonstrated in our discussion below on multiculturalism and multicultural arts. Where multiculturalism is the terrain of the ordinary, as suggested by the term ‘everyday multiculturalism’, multicultural arts is prescribed by the terrain of the institutional, as suggested by the term ‘official multiculturalism’ (Hage 1998). Our proposed framework below critically addresses these politics of cultural participation and multiculturalism.

The article first begins by critically surveying global, national and local indicator frameworks on measuring multiculturalism in recent developments of cultural policy. It suggests that current frameworks for thinking about cultural diversity and cultural

participation are inadequate, and there is a need to develop a more nuanced understanding of these relations as they are played out in the context of people's everyday cultural lives. It proposes a new framework that highlights a bi-directional theory-based approach to cultural citizenship and tests its utility using original fieldwork conducted in the growth corridor outer suburb of Whittlesea in Melbourne, Australia.

### **The Development of Cultural Indicators**

The inception of multiculturalism has resulted in attempts to evaluate its efficacy and impact. Most of these scholarships fall in the social sciences that attempt to measure ethnicity and are usually (and problematically) based on traditional nominal measures of cultural identity based on language, religion and rituals (e.g. Burton, Nandi & Platt 2010). Some, such as the concept of 'culturometrics', attempt to produce cultural indices based on the degree of cross-cultural composite identities in multicultural societies (Boufoy-Bastick 2008: 2). Despite these much debated and problematic measures, there is a lack of strong empirical evidence to measure the outcomes of multicultural policy (Jedwab 2007).

In recent years, the move towards measuring the outcomes of multiculturalism has developed in tandem with two sets of forces. The first is the defence of multiculturalism; this discourse emerged against a group of detractors who blame multiculturalism for social inequities, weak national identity and problems of cohesion (and these criticisms are often speculative and lack conjecture). The second is from proponents of multiculturalism who see it as a resource to be harnessed for maintaining national vibrancy and the cultural economy; this discourse has arisen alongside arts impact studies and new cultural indicator frameworks for measuring cultural diversity and participation.

Neoliberal political frameworks place increasing pressure on arts organisations to

account for their work in ways that are quantitative and ‘evidence-based’. Such pressures have generated a range of frameworks for measuring the impact of the arts, as well as concepts that seek to describe these impacts. There is much academic literature about what sorts of ‘indicators’ are appropriate for measuring culture. However, there is little specific attention paid to what such measures might tell us about the impact of cultural participation on relations of cultural diversity. This section considers the problems involved in generating cultural indicators that more meaningfully reflect on these issues and which are relevant at both a macro-policy level and at the level of everyday cultural activity. The following presents a critical overview of some of these cultural indicator frameworks and assesses its efficacy and drawbacks.

Cultural indicators are quantitative (statistical) measures and qualitative data used to describe and provide a basis for the interpretation of cultural phenomena (Madden 2004, 2005). They have many uses, such as reducing statistical information to key measures that allow trends to be monitored; providing a robust evidence base for strategic planning and public and private investment; supporting advocacy; and guiding policy-making and the activities of arts workers (Duxbury 2008). The recent development of cultural indicators has been prompted by the imperative to find better ways to measure progress, engage the community in dialogue about the future and improve social indicators. Cultural indicators have arisen as an emergent field of study as a result of the new neoliberal public management in countries such as the UK and Australia, where publicly funded institutions have been put under pressure to report on the social and economic impacts of the arts and culture. While scholars have criticised the fact that cultural measurement’s instrumental rationality is tied to a certain idea of rationality, which is the legacy of the Enlightenment that favours the scientific and universal over the oral and particular (e.g. Belfiore and Bennett 2010), it is



significant to note its growing importance in the sector. Driven by different national and contextual priorities, governments and cultural agencies internationally have undertaken cultural measurement initiatives. Below we provide a brief critical survey to consider their discourses of multicultural participation

National initiatives include Canada's *Analysis of Methodologies Used by Cultural Observatories: Guidelines for Trainers and Researchers* (Allaire 2006); New Zealand's *Cultural Indicators for New Zealand* (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2009); Australia's *Vital Signs: Cultural Indicators for Australia* (Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group 2010); and USA's National Arts Index (Kushner and Cohen 2011). Global level indicator development includes UNESCO's *World Report on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO 2009), and local level initiatives include developing community indicators on cultural vitality (Jackson et al 2006, Duxbury 2007). National level indicators are based more a 'commodity-centred' approach to development, while global and local-level cultural indicators are based on a more 'people-centred' approach (Throsby 2010). 'Macro' or nation state-level approaches tend to examine the economic contributions to culture while 'micro', or local community approaches tend to focus on the social contributions to culture.

Cultural diversity is sometimes integrated in these macro and micro frameworks. In the UK, for example, public value frameworks look to cultural participation to advance the social cohesion agenda (Jowell 2004). Canada has a distinctive approach to managing multiculturalism that makes equilibrium a key feature of cultural measurement initiatives (Stone et al. 2007). In New Zealand, where biculturalism is an established policy, the politics of biculturalism has underpinned the country's developments in community participation, education, media and creative industries. In particular, biculturalism is a key feature of the country's cultural indicators framework that focuses on identity/place and cultural tourism

(Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2009). These frameworks also highlight the continuum of cultural participation to include: arts and cultural production (from policy to practice), the culture of exhibition and dissemination (distribution), audiences and engagement (consumption and identity). To draw out the relevance of these approaches to multicultural arts in Australia, it is necessary to first define what constitutes multicultural arts.

### **Framing Multicultural Arts in Australia**

In Australia's policy development of the arts, multiculturalism has two definitions: a narrow definition that explicitly addresses immigrant disadvantage, the problem of minority access and the need to celebrate ethnic difference and serve cultural maintenance – and a wider definition that implicitly addresses the broader domain of cultural diversity, including multiple identities and hybridities, and a global cosmopolitan post-national mainstream (Cope et al 2003: 11). These definitions can place multicultural arts in a continuum, from the intrinsic value of arts aesthetics to the instrumental value of arts as a resource for redistribution, national distinction and building economic wealth. These definitions highlight the politics of aesthetics versus welfare multiculturalism.

For several decades now, funding programmes in Australia have been scrutinised for the ways in which they perpetuate hierarchies of taste – privileging 'high' or 'traditional' art forms at the expense of more 'grassroots', 'community'–based or culturally diverse forms of artistic expression. Commentators were concerned with whether existing funding policies and frameworks of aesthetic evaluation are inclusive of immigrant communities and artists, and whether these groups have the same sort of access to resources and opportunities as 'mainstream' communities (Hawkins 1993). Such scrutiny has resulted in ongoing pressure to democratise arts funding structures. And this tension between support for the 'high' arts and a

more democratic approach to arts funding has defined the Australia Council's two key objectives – that of 'excellence' and 'access'. The Australia Council is Australia's peak federal arts funding body, similar to the Arts Council UK. Its first objective – of 'excellence' – was about fostering artistic work that was of a particular aesthetic standard, and it has led many to critique its elitist and exclusionary politics. The latter objective – of cultural 'access' – was a way of curbing the elitism by attempting to democratise the arts. It is this principle of 'access' that has traditionally defined the parameters of what is known in Australia as 'multicultural arts'. However, this resulted in a historical association between 'ethnic' or 'multicultural arts' with 'community'-based or 'amateur' artistic expression, an association that is part of a broader discourse of 'welfare' multiculturalism. It is in response to this association that there has been a more recent shift towards (what we can describe as) 'aesthetic' multiculturalism.

Arts organisations that describe their role as 'mainstreaming' multicultural arts – the strategy of which is to reposition the work of culturally diverse artists as something that can exist alongside, and on equal terms with, 'mainstream' or 'high end' arts practices—invoke a return to the objective of 'excellence'. The difficulty here is when the tension also evokes a distinction between mainstream vs ethnic minority arts. While this tension has the tendency to associate multicultural arts with popular art (and multicultural art is not always and necessarily popular art), what is clear here is that this discourse shifts the development of 'multicultural arts' to an aesthetic field (and market) with its own audiences, funding structures, advocacy groups, markets and so on. This move has been encouraged (and accommodated) by neoliberal cultural policies, which emphasise the economic value of culture that has in turn brought about a return to the focus on aesthetics, valuing 'high end' or high art cultural forms that bring cosmopolitan cachet to Australian cities. This tension –



between aesthetic and welfare notions of multicultural arts; between excellence and access – remains unresolved in existing policy frameworks for thinking about multicultural arts.

This dilemma can be traced to tensions that inform definitions of culture in cultural policy more generally. Historically, cultural policies have been arts policies. But in the 1970s there was a deliberate attempt to expand to a broader, anthropological definition of ‘culture’, identified earlier as ordinary culture as well as everyday multicultures. However, in practice, cultural policies still oscillate between the two, in ways that are not always made explicit. So it is within this context that we can situate the specific dilemma of multicultural arts – that it is, on the one hand, the result of an expanded anthropological definition of culture and, on the other hand, a continuation of a more narrow cultural policy discourse concerned with ‘art’.

This dilemma accentuates the two discourses of culture that are different and incompatible.

Given these existing definitions and discourses of multiculturalism, what frameworks are in place (or could be developed) for testing or measuring the outcomes of multiculturalism? The following shows how the discourses and debates of multiculturalism (in Australia) share with emerging cultural indicator studies a range of similar aims in their assessment of the efficacy of cultural diversity, social inclusion, engagement, cultural vitality and community wellbeing. We examine the cogency of these aims through a further examination of how current indicator models explicitly engage cultural diversity and participation.

### **Cultural Indicator Models: On Diversity and Participation**

The New Zealand model (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2009) is the most innovative for its recognition of its bicultural heritage, and it is the only model to explicitly identify ‘diversity’ as a theme. Cultural indicators are divided into the following themes: engagement, cultural identity, diversity, social cohesion and economic development. Each theme has a

number of 'outcomes' and related indicators. For example, engagement is defined across the range of the cultural circuit as 'engagement in cultural activities as a creator, producer, consumer or participants' (6). This theme has eight indicators: cultural employment; employment in creative occupations; median incomes from creative occupations; cultural experiences; barriers to cultural experiences; household spending on cultural items; heritage protection; and access to arts, culture and heritage activities and events. There are three indicators related to the theme of diversity: grants to minority ethnic cultural groups; attendance/participation at/in ethnic cultural activities; and minority culture activities. As with engagement, participation is evaluated across a range of practices, from the input of production to the consumption practices of audiences and events.

These themes of engagement and diversity are also related to, for example, the aims of aesthetic and welfare multiculturalism discussed earlier. This is evident through the themes of social cohesion and economic development. The former addresses the issue of social connectedness; how arts and cultural participation foster these connections; Non-Maori attendance at Maori cultural events; the number of other ethnic attendees; and the quality of community cultural experience. The latter measures the income of the cultural industries; the value-added contribution by the creative industries; and the creative industries' proportion of total industry value added. In these inter-relations across the four themes of diversity, engagement, social cohesion and economic development, the themes conjoin to simultaneously measure social inclusion and economic wealth concurrently. This model examines the representation of minorities in different cultural practices. It recognises Maori cultural heritage as an integral part of the country's framework for cultural statistics and aims to measure whether the country's growing cultural diversity is freely expressed, respected and valued (MacKenzie 2007). The UNESCO model has also developed alongside the NZ's

bicultural framework.

The *UNESCO World Report on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO 2009) has three features: it establishes the social model of culture; it develops statistical tools for defining the social element of culture; and it provides a general framework for assessing diversity. Elaborating on the third feature will help elucidate how the assessment of diversity is reflected in the social model of culture and its new statistical framework.

The 'Cultural Diversity Programming Lens' Framework (CDPLF) (UNESCO 2009: 214) defines multiculturalism through an expanded definition of culture. Culture is measured across the continuum of artistic activity, social innovation and economic growth, and includes the added value of cultural diversity in contemporary arts practices, crafts and tourism to corporate activities, ranging from management and human resources to marketing and 'cultural intelligence'. The CDPLF avoids ethnocentrism by stressing that diversity is constantly changing as a result of globalisation and innovation. It emphasises that the development of 'culture' in cultural policy values tradition in such a way that responds to its continuing vitality.

In the CDPLF, the diversity of a nation is expressed not just by diversity of products but also by diversity of creators, consumers and actors of cultural activities and products. If we evaluate it by looking at the supply and demand of cultural goods and services (UNESCO 2009: 213), this framework suggests that cultural expressions should be examined and measured at all stages in the value chain, from production to distribution to consumption, and it should include both commodified cultural goods and services and un-commodified activities (e.g. amateur practices or Internet use).

The measurement of diversity follows the new framework for cultural statistics, which uses the culture cycle to expand cultural participation to include all levels of participation and



include the arts and everyday life activities that are related to enjoyment. This framework follows Morrone's (2006) 'Guidelines for Measuring Cultural Participation', which propose a definition of cultural practices according to three categories: (1) home-based; (2) going out; (3) identity-building.

While these two models explicitly engage cultural diversity, they also suggest that there is no clear or common understanding or definition of the diversity of cultural expressions.<sup>1</sup> But what is clear is that both models expand the definition of cultural participation to encompass the imperatives underpinning both aesthetic and welfare multiculturalism. This two-pronged approach is similarly applied in Australia.

In *Vital Signs: Cultural Indicators for Australia* (Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group 2010), the cultural indicators framework uses three themes: (1) economic development; (2) cultural value; and (3) engagement and social impact. Economic development is measured through cultural employment; household expenditure on cultural goods and services; visitor expenditure on cultural goods and services; government support for culture; private support for culture; voluntary work in arts and culture; and the economic contribution of cultural industries. Cultural value, defined as the recognition of the importance of non-economic values – such as historical, social, symbolic, aesthetic and spiritual value – is measured through cultural assets (infrastructure, heritage listings and sites); talent (human capital), i.e. the development of and support for artists and their creative practices; cultural identity, i.e. the opportunity to experience and express ourselves as Australians; innovation (support for innovation in the arts and culture) and global reach. Engagement and social impact are measured through cultural attendance; community cultural participation; access (e.g. provision of regional programmes in arts and culture); and education. While this framework does not address multiculturalism explicitly, it engages it by

locating cultural diversity as a resource for addressing social cohesion. What is crucial here too is that the themes of economic development and cultural value also focus on the social model of culture by expanding cultural participation to include access and community cultural participation. In this way, and similar to the aforementioned models, the dilemma between aesthetics (excellence) and welfare (access) is ameliorated to highlight the resource of multiculturalism as a neoliberal practice of productive diversity.

Rather than critiquing the instrumentalism of these models, it is significant to note that these models shift the conceptual framework from a business to people-based model where new indicators are developed to recognise how arts impact the quality of life and contribute to culture and health. These models also illustrate how a macro approach to sectoral mapping can usefully provide indicators to enrich social impact. However, they usually follow the one-way linear structure of programme logic that focuses on inputs, outputs and outcomes. Not only do they not tell us much about how diversity is lived as an everyday practice, they also polarise the discussions of multiculturalism between a social justice agenda of redistribution or a neo-liberal cultural agenda of productive and economic diversity (for a criticism of this, see Murray 2005). Increasingly, indicator models (whether developed by arts advocates or academic researchers) have also been criticised for its applied approach and lack of critical rigour. When developing indicators about diversity and participation, it is critical to attend to the rigour of method.

### **A Bi-Directional Theory-Based Method to Cultural Citizenship**

While the cultural indicator movement is fuelled by its evidence-based approach to policy-making and has been criticised as instrumentalist, it is important to note that the intellectual history of cultural policy, whether from the aesthetics of humanism (Belfoire and Bennett

2008) or its Foucauldian approach to self-development (Bennett 1998), has also been a history of instrumentalism. Rather than dismissing the movement as instrumentalist, we suggest a need for a more robust debate about the pragmatism of culture. One way to invigorate this debate is to resist the administrative pragmatism of ‘culture-as-resource’ (Osbourne 2006). It is thus necessary to take a theory-based approach to addressing the limitations of arts impact (Galloway 2009). To this end, we propose a bi-directional method that draws on the study by Michalos (2006) and his team in their development of indicators and indexes of wellbeing. The bi-directional framework is a pragmatic combination of a top-down theoretical framework and a bottom-up empirical fieldwork. This approach, starting with a theoretically-informed top-down approach and then testing this with bottom-up data from the community, is adopted in Duxbury’s (2007, 2008) local indicator model of cultural citizenship.

At the top-down level, Duxbury begins with a conceptual understanding of cultural participation. She uses the concept of cultural citizenship as a framework, because it has the capacity to measure the quality of cultural participation through its emphasis on community wellbeing, social inclusion, quality of life, sustainability and cultural vitality. At the bottom-up level, she collected data—using stakeholder interviews, programme evaluation, participation surveys, cultural statistics – on what constitutes cultural citizenship. The bi-directional method critically analyses the concepts with empirical data, and together with ethnographic studies of arts and culture, it is useful for producing thick descriptions of cultural citizenship.

While it is not within the scope of this essay to provide a detailed review of the established field of cultural citizenship, it remains important to note that cultural citizenship, with its theoretical questioning of the claims to cultural rights (multiculturalism, cultural



participation, migration, new belonging and consumption), is integral to critical considerations of diversity and participation (see e.g. Kymlicka 1996, Miller 2007, Ong 1999, Pakulski 1997, Stevenson 2003). Scholarly discussions of ‘cultural citizenship’ have examined how the term has opened up a space around the notion of ‘cultural rights’ (e.g. Couldry 2006). Cultural citizenship refers to the ‘cultural’ dimensions that involve membership of a national population, such as the forms of social participation and specific knowledge that citizens are required to engage in and possess. These ‘cultural’ dimensions of citizenship can also be articulated informally as social norms; values, practices and capacities which might enable belonging, particularly a nationalised belonging. It is perhaps broadly comparable to what Hage (1998) describes in his *White Nation* book as ‘national capital’. These aims of cultural citizenship are relevant to an indicator model for diversity and participation, and can be the theoretical starting point towards the development of a bi-directional approach.<sup>2</sup>

In particular, the rhetoric of cultural citizenship has increasingly been mobilised in Australia. A number of political developments have reflected this new language. For example, in 2007, the name of the Australian federal Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs was changed to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. However, to a large degree, the policy discourse of citizenship has focused on the obligations of immigrants. In the state of Victoria, for example, the government’s most recent statement on multiculturalism emphasises the need for volunteerism among immigrants, privileging the civic obligations associated with citizenship over ‘cultural rights’, thus raising the potential of cultural citizenship as a state tool for domestication (DPC 2013).

One of the things we are interested in is asking how cultural citizenship might be reconceived (more) affirmatively – how it can describe the political implications of arts and

cultural participation in ways that draw from this discourse of ‘cultural rights’ while also speaking to policy. And also, what it might do to help sidestep the tension between the principles of excellence and access. In the following, we demonstrate the bi-directional method and its approach to cultural citizenship in our case study.

### **Case Studies: The Cultural Programmes at the City of Whittlesea**

The case studies in this section emerge from our fieldwork in the City of Whittlesea (CoW) in the outer-rural region of greater Melbourne, Australia, which was funded by the Australian Research Council.<sup>3</sup> CoW is a new suburb in the state’s growth corridor about 20 kilometres north of the CBD. There are about 170,000 people living in an area of 489 square kilometres. People with Anglo-Celtic ancestry make up about one third of the population, and 43% of the population speak a language other than English at home. The main immigrant groups are Italians, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, Lebanese and Turkish. Geographically, it is one of the largest and most diverse municipalities in the state, with more than half of the residents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>

As an outer-suburban, semi-rural location with a rapidly increasing, and diversifying, population, the area faces a distinct cultural policy challenge: how to accommodate cultural diversity and provide opportunities for cultural expression, participation and exchange given the lack of cultural infrastructure in this area? Since 2011, at the start of our project, we have been conducting annual evaluations of the programmes in their Community Cultural Development Department. CoW’s cultural programmes take a broad view of what constitutes ‘art’ and ‘cultural participation’. Programmes take on different forms and encourage a range of modes of engagement, including pedagogy, celebration, conviviality as well as more ‘civic’ forms of cultural participation. Below we briefly discuss three events from a selection of these

programmes in order to highlight some limits of existing frameworks to cultural indicators and to test our bi-directional method to cultural citizenship.

The annual Whittlesea Community Festival is organised by the Festivals and Events Unit of the Council's Community Cultural Department every year in March. The event involves a variety of multicultural performances and displays, as well as market and information stalls, rides, activities and food vendors. Each year, the event attracts up to 10,000 attendees. The research conducted at the festival comprised an audience survey and participant observation. The purpose of this fieldwork was to understand the significance of such institutionalised forms of cultural participation in culturally diverse communities and the forms of cultural value that should be captured in an indicator framework.

In 2012, 216 completed questionnaires were collected by interviewers. The survey was successful in providing a broad account of some of the 'outcomes' of the festival, the audience members' perceptions of the event, the levels of engagement with various aspects of the event (for example, the festival's reflection of cultural diversity) and audience members' cultural interests and activities outside of the festival. A high proportion of the survey respondents stated that the event 'reflects the cultural diversity of the area', makes them 'glad to live in the local area' and that it 'inspires [them] to get more involved in the local community'. The survey also confirmed the role of the festival as an important source of connection, community-building and socialising for local audience members and participants.

However, general observations at the festival and the implementation of the survey itself revealed that there were significant limitations to the survey instrument. The most frequently visited cultural institutions were cinemas and public libraries, and this also reflects the national census data on cultural participation (ABS 2012). The survey demonstrated low levels of engagement in the traditional 'high arts'. However, the questionnaire was less

successful in capturing the range of forms of everyday, domestic cultural participation and the significance of the festival (and other forms of institutional culture) in the context of their everyday cultural lives. This reiterates the need for an indicator framework that incorporates qualitative, narrative-based approaches, which can better capture such experiences.

A large proportion of festival participants were young people, and we see a need to develop measures that can capture the experiences and interest of this significant community sector. Observational fieldwork and informal interviews with these participants indicated that the festival constituted an important site for seeking and building social capital among young people. However, these efforts to form social bonds are open-ended. The festival provides a space for unpredictable, largely unregulated and ‘agonistic’ encounters between strangers (Amin 2005). While this is an important rationale for cultural participation, and there is a need for an indicator framework that might capture this outcome, such encounters reflect the current limitations of indicator frameworks. Current policy agendas related to improving social inclusion, building community capacity and a ‘sense of belonging’ do not account for these more complex encounters. One of the significant functions of such festivals and events is their role in developing capacities for negotiating tension and difference.

Audience members at the festival reflected a broad, culturally diverse constituency. About half of the people surveyed were from a country other than Australia, and one third considered themselves members of a specific community. However, qualitative conversations and follow-up ethnographic research revealed multiple belongings—to the local community, to the broader Melbourne metropolitan region, engagements with popular culture and other more global attachments. These attachments are currently insufficiently captured by questions relating to ‘language spoken at home’, ‘country of birth’ and so on. There is a need for measures that can address these complex forms of cultural citizenship and attachment.

The Community Leadership Network is a programme of the CoW's Multicultural Unit. It began development in 2011, where community members who were identified as 'leaders' were invited to participate in group discussions about how these leadership capacities were best facilitated among the broader community. The network forms part of the Multicultural Unit's ongoing efforts to develop capacities for civic and political participation among local ethnic communities.

The programme emerged from a concern that immigrant communities experience significant isolation and lack advocacy skills. In this respect, the network has a significant cultural citizenship agenda, aiming to increase the feelings of belonging and capacities for public participation among these communities.

The group is still largely in a developmental phase. It meets on a monthly basis in order to clarify the ongoing aims and activities of the network and to ensure that the form and purpose of the network remain community-driven. Such activities will ultimately be the result of the combined cultural interest, priorities and activities of its members. In this respect, it is difficult to account for the exact processes by which these activities and purposes are determined. They are the result of ongoing and iterative processes of discussion and negotiation between members of the group.

The group have recently acquired a grant from the State Department for Planning and Community Development, which will be used to fund the employment of a dedicated project officer as well as a website. However, there is a tension in the group between being community-driven and the need (as articulated by the community members themselves) for direction and support from the council. The network consists of people from a range of backgrounds, who are involved in different types of group activities—there are representatives from ethnic community groups, people involved professionally in immigrant



advocacy groups, as well as individuals involved in community media and other kinds of grassroots cultural activities. The aim is that the activities of the group will eventually be formalised and institutionalised. However, there is a sense that the group is not yet ready for this level of formalisation, demonstrating the difficulties with this model of community-owned development.

The CoW's Accessible Art Exhibition seeks to provide an inclusive and non-hierarchical platform for aspiring local artists. Research at the exhibition involved interviews with participating artists, CoW staff and exhibition curators, observations at exhibition committee meetings and an audience survey.

The criteria for entering the exhibition are flexible. Participating artists are not explicitly framed in terms of their ethnicity, level of 'ability' or the quality of their work. Amateur artists are positioned alongside more experienced ones, artists from immigrant backgrounds alongside bushfire-affected<sup>5</sup> ones, and artists with disabilities alongside able-bodied ones. The event seeks to allow artists to represent themselves, and not in terms of pre-determined categories of identity, experience or artistic form.

The exhibition provides participants with the means to navigate and reconstruct their narratives. Creating these narratives in turn enables these participants to claim space within the civic and cultural institutions. It is via the question of 'identity' and 'representation' raised in this model that we can think about 'cultural citizenship'. It is difficult to identify the precise 'impacts' of the event, as these are distinct for different programme participants. There is a need to acknowledge the specificity of experiences and encounters for each of the artists involved in the exhibition, which is something that the research attempted to capture via in-depth interviews with a number of participating artists.

One of the artists interviewed described how participation in the exhibition, and the

encouragement she has received from the exhibition organisers, has prompted her to take her art practice seriously, to take up formal training and even start identifying herself as an ‘artist’. In this way, participating in this event has increased her relative levels of cultural capital and her confidence in engaging with other arts institutions and processes.

Another artist had first participated in the programme a number of years ago, and she is now part of the exhibition organising committee. This is another example of the generative capacities of this programme and the diverse trajectories and potential pathways that exhibition participants might take. It is also an example of cultural citizenship through participation. Being an artist in the exhibition helped this individual to develop the skills required for other forms of public participation. However, participating in the exhibition in the first place required her to have knowledge of this opportunity and a certain level of English language proficiency. This demonstrates the complex relationship of cultural capital to cultural participation and cultural citizenship.

These processes also point to the productivity of such programmes. Artists may go on to be involved in the production of the exhibition itself, or audience members at the exhibition may be inspired to create their own works. In this sense, there is a reflexive relationship between cultural institutions, artists, community participants and artistic products.

In sum, programme case studies at CoW reveal the complex, multi-directional and productive relationships between artists, institutions, policy, community participants and audience members and artistic products. For each event, as well as the individuals and communities involved in these activities, there are a range of possible relationships – between the participant, the expression of identity, governance and regulation, and the ongoing production and consumption of cultural content. Any meaningful cultural indicator framework must capture these relationships, their generative capacities and their contribution to cultural

capital, cultural citizenship and cultural participation. This can be achieved not simply through developing a set of cultural statistics but models that can map these relationships.

This is particularly the case given the ephemerality of cultural participation and production in some of these programmes. Much of the cultural participation that takes place at these sites is dynamic and somewhat volatile in nature. The processes by which such participation and production take place are not always documented and do not always have a sustained presence or are part of a lasting institutional memory.

### **Conclusion**

This paper began with a brief mapping of the emergence of cultural indicator development in global, national and local government contexts. Situating this ascendancy as part of the neoliberal imperative to provide evidence-based support for the arts, we highlighted the limits of business-centred approaches and proposed a more theoretically informed approach to cultural measurement. In particular, we suggested that this field has the potential to provide a more robust arena for evaluating the impact of multicultural diversity through its capacity to assess cultural participation. This paper further examined cultural indicator models on diversity and participation and demonstrated a theory-based approach to arts impact by developing a bi-directional method of assessing cultural citizenship. Framing cultural citizenship as a productive conjunction of diversity and participation, and using original fieldwork conducted in Melbourne's growth corridor outer suburb of Whittlesea, we hope we have tested its utility against narrative descriptions of cultural participation.

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<sup>1</sup> Other models of cultural diversity and indicators include Government of Canada (2003), Maitland (2006) and Ludviga (2009).

<sup>2</sup> On the relationship between citizenship, diversity and cultural policy, see Bennett (2001).

<sup>3</sup> The project is entitled ‘Multiculturalism and Governance: Evaluating Arts Policies and Engaging Cultural Citizenship’ (2011-2015, LP110100039), with Nikos Papastergiadis and Ghassan Hage.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Culturally and Linguistically Diverse’ is an Australian census term used to classify the country’s non-English speaking population. We use this term in this paper as an umbrella category.

<sup>5</sup> The term ‘bushfire-affected’ refers to those who were affected by the bushfires which decimated many towns in the region in the summer of 2009. The bushfires were named the Black Saturday bushfires, and Australia experienced the highest loss of lives caused by the extent of this disaster.

