



Making Culture Count

The Politics of Cultural Measurement

Edited by Lachlan MacDowall, Marnie Badham,
Emma Blomkamp, Kim Dunphy

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Culture and cultural development are now internationally recognised as important dimensions of contemporary governance and public policy. The production of accurate and relevant data has become central to cultural policy and how the cultural lives of citizens are understood. Conceptual and practical developments in measurement tools, such as cultural indicators, have the potential to enrich our understanding of culture's role in wellbeing, vitality and

citizenship. From UNESCO's benchmarks for cultural freedom to comparative measures of provision and creative cities indices, diverse approaches to quantifying culture and tracking progress now exist. But how useful are all these measures? Are they helping us to keep track of what matters? What opportunities exist to contest, refine or democratise these systems of measurement? *Making Culture Count* brings together diverse perspectives from scholars, policy-makers and creative practitioners to explore the burgeoning field of cultural measurement and its political implications.

Dr. Lachlan MacDowall is Head of the Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Faculty of VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne, Australia. His research examines the politics of evaluation and cultural measurement. He has also published widely on modes of urban informality such as graffiti and street art.

Dr. Marnie Badham is Lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Faculty of VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne, Australia. She has undertaken community-based research in Indonesia, Canada, and Australia exploring representational practice in policy, art and research.

Dr. Emma Blomkamp leads social innovation projects for Innovate Change in Auckland, New Zealand, and holds governance roles with cultural organisations. Emma is interested in creative and participatory approaches to social and political issues, especially in cultural policy and through human-centred design.

Dr. Kim Dunphy is Research Program Manager of the Cultural Development Network, at RMIT University, in Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests include how change is effected on culture, and through the arts, and how that change is understood or measured.

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REVIEW COMMENTS:

Here is where the rubber meets the road: how much does a critical cultural studies have to contribute to the lived lives of culture? Read this insightful and diverse collection of perspectives on the theory, history and purposes of cultural indicators to find out. A pathway toward democratising the measurement of culture and cultural value is mapped out in this excellent book. Scholars, policy-makers and cultural activists alike will find these contributions both enlightening and useful.

Carole Rosenstein, George Mason University, USA

The transnational context refreshes cultural policy practices, which rarely wander far from home... It is to the credit of the collection that there is also great variation in the chapters. Many of the chapters offer comprehensive histories of forms of evaluation and provide innovative contributions to debates on the various roles of "the cultural" in understanding and encouraging positive social change, with an added bonus of rewarding bibliographies for further reading... The collection also presents some thought-provoking responses to many current problems with the terms of the arguments, be they economic, cultural, political or social (as much as those can be separated), in attempts to move the debate forward. As such, the book offers a précis of a moment for Cultural Policy Studies, across the book's broad range of themes and "diverse essays" connected to the "history, theory and purposes" of cultural evaluation. I would recommend this book for cultural policy scholars and practitioners, and even activists, as well as those interested in indicators of the social and development studies.

Susan Oman, Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, UK