



***Enabling* as the anchor for regenerative cultural policy**

Patrycja Kaszynska

To cite this article: Patrycja Kaszynska (2025) *Enabling* as the anchor for regenerative cultural policy, International Journal of Cultural Policy, 31:4, 422-433, DOI: [10.1080/10286632.2025.2470811](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2025.2470811)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2025.2470811>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 19 Mar 2025.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 783



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 7 View citing articles [↗](#)

ARTICLE



Enabling as the anchor for regenerative cultural policy

Patrycja Kaszynska 

University of the Arts London, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Approaches known as *wealth accounting* share the assumption that our prosperity – and survival – depend on our ability to take a systemic approach to value creation across the interconnected dimensions collectively supporting social wellbeing. The key argument of this article is that the arts and culture, when considered in terms of wealth accounting, can improve the system in which they operate through *enabling*. Enabling means contributing to the production of goods and services in other domains and informing the dynamics of the system without being a directly measurable outcome. A different way to put this is that cultural assets, qua enabling, sustain and orient: they support production in other domains, and regulate relationships across the entire system. Moreover, the arts and culture are effective in enabling by pursuing goals inherent to culture, rather than intentionally seeking externally imposed impacts. Enabling should thus be the anchor for regenerative cultural policy.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 February 2024
Accepted 17 August 2024

KEYWORDS

enabling; cultural policy;
regenerative frameworks;
inclusive wealth; cultural
value

Introduction

This article asks: how can the arts and culture not just support but regenerate, not just themselves but the systems in which they are embedded?; and furthermore, what forms of cultural policy can support this? The simple answer is that, in order to be effective in regenerating, the arts and culture have to be allowed to operate on their own terms, rather than being geared up for fulfilling demands from other policy domains. In other words, rather than being motivated by meeting objectives imposed by external policy agendas (e.g. driving the so-called *culture-led regeneration*), the arts and culture should focus on pursuing endogenous ends – those inherent to the arts and culture. It is fundamentally by perfecting the means of symbolic representation and aesthetic expression, and with this by enhancing the value derived from cultural engagements, that creative and cultural practices regenerate by configuring and reconfiguring the elements of the total system.

Before explaining how the arts and culture regenerate by acting on the system level, it is useful to clarify what the claim of the opening paragraph does not mean to imply. The intention here is not to advocate for the notion of intrinsic value in its various articulations (Mirza 2006; Tusa 2000); even less the motivation is to resurrect the obsolete intrinsic-instrumental dichotomy (for a critique see Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Rather, the claim is that by allowing creative practitioners to practice creative practice in accordance with the goals recognised as inherent to this practice (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2013) – the arts and culture can be effective in impacting domains outside of culture, as well as bolstering themselves. In short, culture regenerates (Dâmaso and Rex 2025) when it is *good* culture, whatever this means given the historically and geographically changing perceptions and standards.

CONTACT Patrycja Kaszynska  p.kaszynska@arts.ac.uk  University of the Arts London, Granary Building 1, Granary Square King's Cross, N1C 4AA, London, UK

© 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

The article explains how this understanding of regeneration through culture can be operationalised in decision-making using the emergent accounting frameworks of *inclusive wealth* (see UNU-IHDP (2012); UNEP 2023) or *comprehensive wealth* (see World Bank 2011, 2021). In these frameworks, the arts and culture are best conceptualised as enabling assets. Enabling assets support and facilitate the production of other goods and services without themselves being a direct, measurable outcome (Dasgupta 2021). In this article, cultural enabling is argued to take two specific manifestations: sustaining, that is, enhancing the value of other capital assets; and orienting, that is, re-adjusting the relationships within the system. Setting cultural regeneration in the context of wealth accounting, the article challenges the prevalent cultural policy position that conceives of cultural regeneration narrowly and as a tool of urban development, and often, of gentrification; and as something whose value can be assessed through atomised outcome indicators imported exogenously from other areas. Rather, by putting emphasis on the regenerative effects of enabling, the main argument emphasises the importance of comprehending and capturing the value creation on cultural and artistic terms and through the arts and culture across the interconnected dimensions of one system.

This article is structured as follows: it starts with a review of the discourse of cultural regeneration, as traditionally – narrowly and problematically – conceived. Next it reflects on what is meant by regeneration when it is not reductively understood and how the frameworks of wealth accounting support this understanding. In the subsequent section, the article discusses how the arts and culture regenerate as enabling assets. The article concludes by highlighting the implications this has for cultural policy. Methodologically speaking, the article relies on policy and discourse analysis across the fields of critical theory, cultural studies, cultural policy, urban planning and cultural management, while engaging recent concepts from environmental and ecological economics.

Culture-led regeneration and its – many – discontents

‘Culture-led’ and ‘culture-driven’ regeneration are terms well established in cultural policy (Campbell, Cox, and O’Brien 2017; Evans and Shaw 2004; García 2004; Pratt 2008). In the most canonical manifestation, what is at issue is the so-called ‘Bilbao effect’ (Plaza, Tironi, and Haarich 2009, 1712): the success attributed to Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in driving tourism and investment into the post-industrial Bilbao. This is an example focused on the ‘hardware’ (buildings and built infrastructure) but other examples more focused on the ‘software’ such as community-facing activities and events, can be cited (Sacco, Blessi, and Nuccio 2009). The European Capital of Culture programme has been claimed transformatory for the refashioning of Glasgow’s image: away from the city suffering from industrial decline to a cultural hub (García 2020; Landry and Bianchini 1995). More recently, programmes such as The UK City of Culture aspired to drive change in places around the UK (see for instance Neelands et al. 2022).

Reviving places using the arts and culture has been accepted as a way of driving economic and social development. The reporting has accordingly been carried out using economic registers, occasionally social value approaches, with the composite measures of wellbeing employed more sporadically (Coaffee 2008; Lees and Melhuish 2015; Paddison and Miles 2020). The upshot is that already in 2005, Miles and Paddison pointed out that ‘within the space of little more than two decades, the initiation of culture-driven urban (re)generation has come to occupy a pivotal position in the new urban entrepreneurialism’ (Miles and Paddison 2005, 833).

The popularity of the approach with policymakers notwithstanding, a volume of criticism targeting the lack of evidence base to support the claims of impact has been produced over the years. Writing in 2017, Campbell et al. have summed it up:

[...] much research (e.g. Reeves 2002, 17; García 2004, Oakley 2004, 72; Selwood 2006, 45; Gray 2006, 111; 321; Lees and Melhuish 2015, 253) repeatedly notes a lack of robust evidence as we move into the first decade of the twenty-first century. (Campbell, Cox, and O’Brien 2017, 51)

Indeed, based on the review of 151 relevant sources from the period 2006–2014, and covering publications from cultural organisations, commissioned evaluation and academic research, Campbell's report of the effects of arts and culture on urban regeneration for the AHRC Cultural Value Project has been indicatively titled 'Evidence of Things That Appear Not?' (Campbell et al. 2015). Short-termism, definitional vagueness and the lack of consistent baselines and benchmarking – are the reasons cited in the review in question and echoed elsewhere (Garcia and Cox 2013). This scepticism has been channelled into other lines of argumentation highlighting the top-down character of many culture-led regeneration initiatives and the lack of community engagement in their implementation approaches (Evans 2024; Sacco, Blessi, and Nuccio 2009). Also, the concomitant danger of reducing culture to *regeneration triggers* – while losing sight of culture qua culture – has been noted (Garcia 2005; Johnson and Thomas 2001). This is set against the background critiques of the rampant instrumentalization of the effects of arts participation and cultural engagement in culture-led regeneration and beyond (Belfiore 2002; Gray 2007; Yúdice 2003).

Against this critical backdrop, a few new strands of practice and research should be noted. Rather than regeneration, these approaches emphasise 'community development' (Duxbury and Gillette 2007) and 'urban sustainability' (Duxbury, Durrer, and Sitas 2024). These more community-embedded and locally-understood approaches show a more comprehensive, and at times, more holistic ambitions to understand the role of culture in making places and communities more sustainable but, by the admission of some of the proponents: [...] 'defining the terms and conditions for how culture comes to be understood, described, and operationalised remains a significant hurdle, especially beyond mandated state authorities and institutions dedicated to arts, culture, and heritage' (Duxbury, Durrer, and Sitas 2024, 100584). Proposing, as it does, an explicit framework to understand the role of culture in the creation of inclusive wealth – this paper moves these discussions forward.

'Culture-led regeneration' as a failure to understand systemic value creation

The root of the problem with the traditional approach to culture-led regeneration as a way of driving social and economic development consists in a fundamental failure to understand the process of value creation in relation to culture, and concomitantly, what evaluation and accounting measures are needed to capture it. Translated into a valuation problem, the issue with culture-led initiatives and practices over the last 30 years has been that: (1) they evaluate and measure in terms of the exogenously defined impacts, (2) express outcomes through siloed registers and, relatedly, (3) operate with an input-output models to understand change. This means that, in a simplified way: (1) the effects of cultural *interventions* are recorded in terms of what the funders want to achieve on economic and social grounds; (2) the metrics, even if expressed in terms of Triple and Quadruple Bottom Lines (see next paragraph) presuppose that the reporting lines stay parallel, rather than intersecting and relational; and that (3) success is measured in terms of how much change has been created in a siloed register rather than the effects across the entire systems. The remainder of this section focuses on spelling out the problem, before turning in the next section to an outline of how to improve the situation.

The failure to understand value creation as systemic is not a problem unique to the context of culture-led regeneration. In the still dominant New Public Management paradigm, input-output reporting uses the categories of impacts 'desired' by policy agendas (Rana and Parker 2023). These would typically be economic, social and environmental types of impacts. The problem is not just that the categories of impacts are externally imposed, as highlighted in the critiques of instrumentalism quoted above, but that the impact registers are presumed to be siloed. This can be illustrated with the the Triple and Quadruple Bottom Line accounting approaches. On the one hand, these approaches can be claimed advanced in that, rather than accounting for just financial value, the Triple Bottom Line has been used in business to monitor performance in economic, social and environmental registers (Bowden, Lane, and Martin 2001). The fourth line has been more recently added to track the dimensions of

purpose, governance, motives – in short, *how* an organisation operates (Alibašić 2017). These approaches however do not solve the problems identified in relation to culture-led regeneration. Indeed, Elkington – an initial proponent and advocate of the Triple Bottom Line – raised doubts about the usefulness of this model from the point of view of sustainability because, in practice, the interdependence of the three main score lines is not recognised (Elkington 2018). The lack of systemic thinking in reporting means that each line – with the attached suite of indicators – is measured separately. The result is that the model fails ‘to tie them together at the end and makes no comment on intermediate cause – effect relations at levels above the bottom line’ (Sridhar and Jones 2013, 106). The more recent People-Planet-Profit framework (Fisk 2010) and the Governance, Planet, People and Prosperity model (World Economic Forum 2020), introduced specifically in relation to UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, can be cited as examples of the approaches that do not have enough systemic integration.

The key insight of systems thinking and modelling is that while a system consists of parts that can be looked at individually, the health of any system – and regeneration – cannot be understood without recognising the relationships among the constituent parts and, more importantly, recording that change in one dimension has knock off effects on other dimensions (Smith, Stirling, and Berkhout 2005). What is needed is accounting for how the changes in individual bottom lines affect the other bottom lines and an acceptance, to put the point bluntly, that some things have to come down for others to go up. This is a general lesson for the New Public Management and a more specific lesson for culture-led regeneration. As the next section explains, understanding regeneration non-reductively presupposes understanding value creation and co-creation in systemic terms (Capra 1997; Naess 1989; Schmidt, Brown, and Orr 2016).

Regeneration, non-reductively speaking

What is regeneration outside of the narrowly understood culture-led regeneration? Regeneration, we are told, ‘derives from “generare,” meaning giving birth/generation. Regenerative is also used in sciences – such as ecology, physiology, and medicine – to imply a functional self-renewal or, more commonly, a morphogenic substitution of parts or components destroyed or damaged in animals or habitats’ (Jain 2021, 3). This etymological exposition is a helpful start. This understanding is echoed in ‘regenerative agriculture’ – one of the first contexts where the term was intentionally deployed to mean an approach to value creation. As used by the agriculturalist J. I. Rodale, regeneration is the maintenance and improvement of resources through organic renewal in living systems (Rodale 1983).

What does organic renewal mean outside of the agricultural frameworks? This question can be elucidated by looking at some frameworks where the language of natural processes is used, e.g. ‘regenerative economic development’ (Mang and Reed 2012) and ‘regenerative capitalism’ (Fullerton 2015). Fullerton’s ‘regenerative capitalism’ or ‘regenerative economy’ is defined by ‘the application of nature’s laws and patterns of systemic health, self-organisation, self-renewal, and regenerative vitality to socioeconomic systems’ (Capital Institute n.d.). This takes the understanding of ‘regeneration’, as initially developed for physio-biological systems, and applies it to human socio-cultural economies. The framework has an explicitly holistic and integrative perspective which presupposes self-regulation rather than external interventions. Indeed, Fullerton – alongside other proponents of systemic approaches such as Capra (1997) – recognises that systems, rather than their individual components, can be ascribed goals such as sustainability or regeneration (see also Naess 1989). In other words, regeneration is a system level concept capable of registering that growth in one region causes damage in others; functionally it designates an ability to self-regulate and restore balance in the constituent parts of the system. How can this be reflected on the level of decision-making?

Decision-making frameworks that support regeneration?

Concerns about what has been seen as the mechanistic and extractive character of the dominant evaluation and valuation approaches have underpinned the development of frameworks that are sometimes referred to as *Beyond GDP* (Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi 2009; Hoekstra 2019). What they share is ‘now widespread recognition that [GDP] is not an adequate metric in isolation from other measures for capturing the full set of goods and services that improve societal wellbeing’ (Kaszynska et al. 2022, 21). These frameworks, the article argues, merit examination in the present context.

An important feature of the *Beyond GDP* accounting frameworks is that they put emphasis on wealth, rather than value. This is meant to prevent the kind of reductivism found in the culture-led regeneration discourse, as discussed above. To explain this, it is useful to look at two best-established frameworks referred to as wealth accounting: inclusive wealth and comprehensive wealth. The former is at the bottom of the United Nations Inclusive Wealth Reports (e.g. UNU-IHDP (2012); UNEP (2023); see also Arrow et al. 2012), the latter has been pursued by the World Bank (e.g. 2011; 2021). While there is a difference in how the actual accounting is done in the UN’s and World Bank’s approaches (Engelbrecht 2015), the basic idea behind both is the same and rests on the realisation that prosperity and sustainability are related; furthermore, that they depend on preserving different forms of wealth, not on maximising value as traditionally measured. In the words of one of the commentators: ‘economic sustainability [in those frameworks] is assumed to require a non-declining level of total assets (i.e. capital or wealth) per capita over time, not a non-declining level of output as conventionally measured by GDP per capita (GDP pc)’ (Engelbrecht 2015, 3). Without going into technical details, the foundational claim for both is that social wellbeing is equal to inclusive wealth in a general setting (Arrow, Dasgupta, and Mäler 2003; Dasgupta and Mäler 2000). Moreover, in the words of Arrow et al. ‘their presumption is that at any given date social well-being is not only the wellbeing of the current generation, but also the potential welfare of the generations that are to follow’ (Arrow et al. 2012, 318).

Thus, accounting for social wellbeing – now and for future generations – requires the balancing of different wealth domains or what is also referred to as *capitals*. Adopting the notion of capital is important for two reasons. Firstly, capital is, by definition, extended in time and forces the consideration of time into valuation decisions: ‘any capital asset’s value today depends not only on its physical condition and how well it is maintained, but also on the stream of future benefits expected to flow from it over its lifetime (generally discounted in some way)’ (Kaszynska et al. 2022, 9). Secondly, capitals are plural. Different frameworks recognise different types and numbers of capitals (DLUHC 2022; Ferreira and Hamilton 2010). For the purpose of the present argument, the tripartite classification used by the UN is chosen with the types of capital assets described as follows: ‘produced capital (roads, buildings, machines, ports), [...] human capital (health, education, aptitude)’ (Dasgupta 2021, 31) and natural capital which is used interchangeably with ‘nature, [...] the natural environment, the biosphere, and the natural world’ (3).

What matters from the point of view of the present argument is that all of these capital frameworks share an important feature of adopting a portfolio approach to balancing capitals. This means that they recognise different sources of wealth that are not mutually reducible. It is important to note however that these frameworks are committed to weak sustainability, meaning that a degree of substitution between the capital types is allowed (Dietz and Neumayer 2007). A nation could, for instance, decide to sacrifice some of its natural capital to grow human capital. Indeed, because of this, as well as because inclusive wealth is defined as ‘the *aggregate* value of all capital assets’ (Polasky et al. 2015, 446), some critics have disputed whether the *Beyond GDP* approaches are anything but ‘business as usual’ and a form of ‘asset management’ (Spash and Hache 2022).

A possible way of responding can be to point out that these accounting frameworks were designed to make visible the trade-offs between different types of capital and therefore, while not precluding ‘sacrificing’ one type for the sake of others, they can alert decision makers where and when a reckless use or depletion of some capital types might be at issue. Also, the proponents of

these approaches could note that ‘much of the strength of the inclusive wealth framework lies in the shadow price’ (Duraiappah and Muñoz 2012, 366) which departs from the standard approach to valuation based on aggregating utility alone. Without going into technical details, it could be argued that using shadow prices is decisively not doing business as usual but rather presents a radical effort to account for the externalities of use (including costs that are invisible in the traditional approaches) as well as future contributions to wellbeing (which, once again, are not considered in standard approaches). It should be noted however that calculating shadow prices is an on-going and incomplete project for the time being (Engelbrecht 2015).

Practical challenges remain. With this said, the claim of this article is that the wealth accounting approaches provide a theoretical framework which, in principle, could provide a solid foundation for implementing more sustainable, if not regenerative, policies. The position taken here is that, if the objective is to facilitate a transition from the current decision-making practices happening in silos – towards less extractive and exploitative and more holistic and integrative approaches – the wealth accounting frameworks are the best viable option for policymaking.

Culture as an enabling asset

This article draws on the wealth accounting frameworks to articulate how the arts and culture can be thought to function regeneratively and how this can be valued in policymaking. For the purposes of conceptualising the role of culture in a way that can be operationally translated into decision-making, the article appeals to the concept of *enabling*.

According to the wealth accounting frameworks, all assets can be sorted into two overarching categories of capital and enabling assets. Capital assets are directly measured through their contribution to the production of social wellbeing; enabling assets, in contrast, are inputs into productive processes and are only implicitly expressed in the accounting prices of capital goods. In the words of Dasgupta [...] ‘enabling assets are not always usefully measurable, but that does not matter, for they enable human societies to function healthily; and these functions can be measured’ (Dasgupta 2021, 325). He considers what this means for a range of such assets:

Quantifying such assets as public knowledge, institutions and mutual trust raises insuperable difficulties. Try, for example, to estimate the accounting price of differential calculus, or good governance, or the extent of trust among citizens, and the stumbling block becomes apparent. So we create a separate category named *enabling assets*, for they help societies to allocate capital goods [...] The value of enabling assets is reflected in the accounting prices of capital goods. A classroom in a society at peace can function in ways it cannot in a country at civil war. That alone means its accounting price is not the same in the two contexts. A society could raise its inclusive wealth and thereby social well-being simply by improving its institutions and practices. (Dasgupta 2021, 41)

The passage quoted above is telling: to start, it suggests that it is possible to improve social wellbeing by changing distribution and configuration, and not just through growth. Secondly, it suggests that the value of a range of what can be considered most precious social assets, including the arts and culture, cannot be meaningfully measured.

While the argument often made in policy is that without a monetary proxy, types of assets can be valued at zero through Cost-Benefit-Analysis (CBA) (e.g. Sagger, Philips, and Haque 2021) – this can be questioned on empirical and historical grounds (Woronkowicz, Rabovsky, and Rushton 2019). Moreover, there is growing consensus across cultural economists, cultural professionals and arts and humanities scholars that cultural value cannot be measured using the welfare economics approaches (for an explicit articulation in cultural economics see Throsby 2001, 2003; for an argument from the arts and humanities see; Kaszynska 2020; 2024). Given the above considerations, seeing culture as an enabling asset – which removes the pressure to measure it – can be embraced as a positive development. There are other benefits too. Interestingly – and in a way that is not immediately apparent – treating the arts and culture as enabling assets allows us to account better for how culture generates value *qua* culture, rather than in terms of the exogenous, auxiliary effects

found in the dominant discourse of culture-led regeneration considered above. Enabling, as the next section shows, provides the means of showing how the arts and culture operate and generate value by pursuing the ends inherent to the cultural domain.

Cultural enabling in regenerative frameworks

In the traditionally conceived cultural policy, with the discourse of culture-led regeneration as an example, culture has been largely apprehended as a commodity, capital asset and an agent of economic growth. This way of thinking about culture is shaped by policy needs from other domains, rather than something originating in or inherent to the cultural domain. This also reflects the premise that, in order to be considered in government decision-making, cultural assets have to be monetised as part of CBA. This approach has serious shortcomings, not least because of the difficulties of measurement referred to above; furthermore, the reduction of the value of cultural practice to economic impact and alike alienates creative practitioners; last but not least is the problem that this CBA approach cannot account for the systemic and regenerative role of culture.

In order to understand how culture enables, and thus regenerates, a good place to start is with the culturalist discourse. This paper defines the culturalist discourse as: non-economic fields with an ambition to articulate the value of culture such as the arts and humanities, philosophy of art and aesthetics, as well as the cross- and inter-disciplinary fields of critical theory and cultural studies, alongside the more empirically grounded participation studies and audience research. This body of literature is vast and cannot be adequately referenced within the scope of the present paper. An indicative overview of some of this literature can be found in the *Understanding the Value of Art and Culture* report culminating the AHRC Cultural Value Project.

Analysing the culturalist discourse helps to see how the goals inherent to culture can support overall social wellbeing and inclusive wealth. Crucial to the argument of the present article is the ability of the arts and culture to perform sustaining and orienting functions. Proposing these categories is an original contribution of this paper, however sustaining can be traced to the term 'supporting' used in the economics of natural capital, orienting, in turn, can be linked to 'regulating'. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Conceptual Framework defines supporting services as 'those that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, such as primary production, production of oxygen, and soil formation'; regulating services, in turn, 'are the benefits people obtain from the regulation of ecosystem processes, including air quality maintenance, climate regulation, erosion control, regulation of human diseases, and water purification' (Chopra et al. 2005, 29). How are supporting and regulating manifested in the cultural realm?

Significantly, both sustaining and orienting functions are best delivered by pursuing ends and objectives originating in the cultural domain. In other words, enabling, in its different manifestations, is best achieved through stimulating creativity and imagination, captivating attention and bringing aesthetic pleasure, provoking the feeling of estrangement and cognitive re-framing, providing an opportunity for collective sense-making and interpretation, and so on. These registers are valued by the communities of creative practices, they are inherent to the cultural discourse and the domains of art-making and cultural engagement. In short, these ends are those well theorised in the culturalist discourse as originating in the concern with meaning-making, symbolic representation and aesthetic expression.

To be more specific, starting with sustaining, the claim is that interacting with cultural assets can enhance the measurable value of the other capitals. In more technical terms, cultural assets can thus be said to combine with the key capitals to support the creation of value. For instance, arts participation and cultural engagement have been linked to educational impacts (Schneider and Rohmann 2021; Hetland and Winner 2001) and health and wellbeing (Fancourt and Finn 2019; Gordon-Nesbitt and Howarth 2020). It could be suggested that the arts and culture sustain value creation in the domain of human capital. As a concrete example, let's think of a school that houses the classroom mentioned by Dasgupta in the quote above. What if the school itself is a building

admired by a local community – a cultural heritage asset rather than a purely functional solution to educating people? We can imagine that coming to this school and experiencing the building as a cultural asset – because of its symbolic and aesthetic features – can enhance the learning experience by inspiring or stimulating a sense of local pride. With this, in the technical language introduced above, cultural enabling feeds into the productive, measurable outcomes in the domain of human capital.

Now, turning to the orienting function – what is at issue is the ability of the arts and culture to re-configure how the relationships between the capitals are structured and conceived. This speaks to the long-established claim in the arts and humanities that arts participation and cultural engagement orient our judgement of other goods, provoke reflection on what matters in life and give a vantage point on what a good life is in the first place: starting with the ancient arguments concerning the cathartic effects of arts participation and arriving at the multiple framings of the *transformative effects* of artistic, aesthetic and cultural experiences found in the critical theory and cultural studies (e.g. Adorno 1997; Bernstein 2010; Hall 1997; Marcuse 1979; Shusterman 2002; Wellmer 1984). Here again we can think of the school building and the function it might play in the village. Let's assume that the school was used for Quakers assemblies (where a community comes together to decide on what actions should be taken concerning this community) and the cultural features of the building speak to this. This heritage value goes normally unnoticed but can we imagine that having one's attention drawn to it on a day of local election might have an impact on one's decision whether to vote or not? Of course, much more explicit examples of culture's transformative potential could be given, e.g. the plays written to provoke an alimentation effect to make one see the everyday in a different light or the carnivals used to subvert the traditional social roles, thereby giving a means of questioning the status quo. Can those instances of cultural engagement change perceptions enough to alter attitudes and behaviours, and for this to impact human action and how priorities in policy are set?

This line of thinking, established in the humanities, can also be linked to some emergent arguments concerning the place of culture vis-à-vis sustainability (Soini and Birkeland 2014; Soini and Dessein 2016). Those contexts consider different ways that culture can be thought to relate to society, economy and environment. Some of those models or representations see culture as coordinating or mediating different spheres of life in the sense of being 'a resource for development and a means to conceptualize, regulate, and shape development processes' (Soini and Dessein 2016, 167). Going further, culture is also discussed as a foundation for meeting the overall aims of sustainability as 'the main driving force for either rejecting or accepting a sustainable situation of "cultural transformation" or for "evolutionary redesign of worldviews, institutions, and technologies to reach the goals of sustainability"' (Soini and Birkeland 2014, 218). This language clearly speaks to some aspects of the sustaining and orienting functions introduced in this article and exploring overlaps and differences between the present proposal and the emergent discourse of 'sustainable culture' (Pyykkönen et al. 2024) merits further research.

Conclusion

The key contribution of this article is to propose a way of conceptualising how the regenerative value of arts and culture can be recorded in the context of decision-making. The proposal rejects the narrow and distorting discourse of culture-led regeneration which assesses the impacts of culture in mechanistic and atomistic registers imported from domains other than culture. The article also advocates a need to go beyond the forms of cultural policy narrowly preoccupied with understanding the arts and culture in 'sectoral' terms, be it through the prism of individuated cultural asset types, the cultural sector or the creative industries (O'Connor 2024). Rather, the need for a systemic approach to understand the value creation in arts and culture is asserted. Accordingly, this article turns to the wealth accounting frameworks which register the interlinked character of capitals and

recognise that value creation consists not just in maximising the flows of benefits from individual capitals but crucially, in balancing across the system.

The central argument of this article is that culture should be recognised as an essential element of the wealth accounting frameworks and valued for its enabling functions. To reiterate, the two key functions that the arts and culture perform are: sustaining the productive activities in other domains and orienting how the relationships and interactions of the other system domains are conceived and implemented. In this sense, while not directly measured, the arts and culture, *qua* enabling, are shown essential to the health – as well as regeneration – of the system in which they are embedded. This is a novel position in cultural policy.

Thinking of cultural assets as enabling assets capable of enhancing and re-configuring the elements of the system where they are embedded paves a way for an alternative approach to cultural regeneration where the arts and culture can improve the systems where they operate by following the logic inherent to the arts and culture. In the words of the editors of the special issue – ‘the issue [is to] suggest that the cultural sector also creates dynamics that reinforce its own existence and, through it (e.g. by fostering the inclusion of multiple voices, by celebrating and supporting the survival and continued relevance of traditional practices and identities, etc.), contributes to regenerating its broader social, economic and environmental context from the bottom-up.’ Enabling, this article concludes, is how the arts and culture achieve this simultaneous double effect; enabling should thus be recognised as the anchor for regenerative cultural policy.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Patrycja Kaszynska is Senior Research Fellow, University of the Arts London, Research Affiliate at Northeastern University London and Research Fellow at Creative PEC. Patrycja's expertise is in cultural value and in valuing culture in decision-making. Her research sits at the intersection of critical theory, pragmatic philosophy, cultural studies and cultural policy - as these converge in the field of cultural value. Patrycja has a track record of shaping the cross-sectoral understanding of the value of arts, culture and heritage in the UK: first as the researcher for the AHRC Cultural Value Project; then as the lead of the Cultural Value Scoping Project; and most recently as the Principal Investigator for AHRC and DCMS-funded Scoping Culture and Heritage Capital project.

ORCID

Patrycja Kaszynska  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9344-3326>

References

- Adorno, T. W. 1997. *Aesthetic Theory*. London: The Althone Press.
- Alibašić, H. 2017. "Measuring the Sustainability Impact in Local Governments Using the Quadruple Bottom Line." *The International Journal of Sustainability Policy and Practice* 13 (3): 37. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2325-1166/CGP/v13i03/37-45>.
- Arrow, K. J., P. Dasgupta, L. H. Goulder, K. J. Mumford, and K. Oleson. 2012. "Sustainability and the Measurement of Wealth." *Environment and Development Economics* 17 (3): 317–353. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355770X12000137>.
- Arrow, K. J., P. Dasgupta, and K.-G. Mäler. 2003. "Evaluating Projects and Assessing Sustainable Development in Imperfect Economies." *Environmental & Resource Economics* 26 (4): 647–685. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:EARE.0000007353.78828.98>.
- Belfiore, E. 2002. "Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion: Does it Really Work? A Critique of Instrumental Cultural Policies and Social Impact Studies in the UK." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8 (1): 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/102866302900324658>.
- Bernstein, R. J. 2010. *The Pragmatic Turn*. Cambridge: Polity.

- Bowden, A. R., M. R. Lane, and J. H. Martin. 2001. *Triple Bottom Line Risk Management: Enhancing Profit, Environmental Performance, and Community Benefits*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Campbell, P., T. Cox, S. Crone, and S. Wilks-Heeg. 2015. *Evidence of Things That Appear Not?—A Critical Review of the Role of Arts and Culture in the Regeneration of Urban Places and Urban Communities*. Swindon: AHRC.
- Campbell, P., T. Cox, and D. O'Brien. 2017. "The Social Life of Measurement: How Methods Have Shaped the Idea of Culture in Urban Regeneration." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 10 (1): 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2016.1248474>.
- Capital Institute. n.d. "The Regenerative Framework & White Paper." Website Publisher Name, Accessed November 30, 2023. <https://capitalinstitute.org/regenerative-capitalism/#:~:text=Definition%3A%20Regenerative%20Economics%20is%20the,regenerative%20vitality%20to%20socioeconomic%20systems>.
- Capra, F. 1997. *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*. London: Anchor.
- Chopra, K., R. Leemans, P. Kumar, and H. Simons. 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Policy Responses*. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
- Coaffee, J. 2008. "Sport, Culture and the Modern State: Emerging Themes in Stimulating Urban Regeneration in the UK." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 14 (4): 377–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630802445856>.
- Crossick, G., and P. Kasznska. 2016. *Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*. Arts and Humanities Research Council. <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AHRC-291121-UnderstandingTheValueOfArts-CulturalValueProjectReport.pdf>.
- Dâmaso, M., and B. Rex. 2025. "Editorial: Towards a Regenerative Approach to Cultural Policy." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 31 (4): 1–20.
- Dasgupta, P. 2021. *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review*. HM Treasury. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>.
- Dasgupta, P., and K.-G. Mäler. 2000. "Net National Product, Wealth, and Social Well-Being." *Environment and Development Economics* 5 (1): 69–93. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355770X00000061>.
- Dietz, S., and E. Neumayer. 2007. "Weak and Strong Sustainability in the SEEA: Concepts and Measurement." *Ecological Economics* 61 (4): 617–626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2006.09.007>.
- DLUHC. 2022. "Levelling Up the United Kingdom." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054769/Levelling_Up_the_United_Kingdom_accessible_version.pdf.
- Duraiappah, A. K., and P. Muñoz. 2012. "Environment and Development Economics." *Environment and Development Economics* 17 (3): 362–367. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355770X12000150>.
- Duxbury, N., V. Durrer, and R. Sitas. 2024. "Cultural Policy Actions Towards Urban Sustainability: Research and Practice Collaborations." *City, Culture & Society* 37:100584. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2024.100584>.
- Duxbury, N., and E. Gillette. 2007. "Culture as a Key Dimension of Sustainability: Exploring Concepts, Themes, and Models." *Working Paper No. 1*. Creative City Network of Canada.
- Elkington, J. 2018. "25 Years Ago I Coined the Phrase "Triple Bottom Line." Here's Why it's Time to Rethink it." *Harvard Business Review* 25:2–5.
- Engelbrecht, H.-J. 2015. *Comprehensive Wealth or Inclusive Wealth?: Preliminary Results from a Comparison of Alternative Wealth Estimates for a Sample of 123 Countries*. Wellington, New Zealand: Massey University College of Business, School of Economics and Finance.
- Evans, G. 2024. *Cultural Spaces, Production and Consumption*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Evans, G., and P. Shaw. 2004. *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence: A Report to the Department for Culture Media and Sport*. LondonMet. <https://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/id/eprint/6109>.
- Fancourt, D., and S. Finn. 2019. What is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. *World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe*.
- Ferreira, S., and K. Hamilton. 2010. "Comprehensive Wealth, Intangible Capital, and Development. Intangible Capital, and Development (October 1, 2010)." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5452*.
- Fisk, P. 2010. *People Planet Profit: How to Embrace Sustainability for Innovation and Business Growth*. London: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Fullerton, J. B. 2015. *Regenerative Capitalism: How Universal Principles and Patterns Will Shape Our New Economy*. Greenwich, CT: Capital Institute.
- García, B. 2004. "Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration in Western European Cities: Lessons from Experience, Prospects for the Future." *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit* 19 (4): 312–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0269094042000286828>.
- García, B. 2020. "Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990." In *Culture-Led Urban Regeneration*, edited by R. Paddison and R. S. Miles, 1–28. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Garcia, B., and T. Cox. 2013. "European Capitals of Culture. Success Strategies and Long Term Effects." [https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3002251/1/Garcia\(2013\)ECocSuccess+LongTermEffects.pdf](https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3002251/1/Garcia(2013)ECocSuccess+LongTermEffects.pdf).
- Gordon-Nesbitt, R., and A. Howarth. 2020. "The Arts and the Social Determinants of Health: Findings from an Inquiry Conducted by the United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing." *Arts & Health* 12 (1): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2019.1567563>.

- Gray, C. 2007. "Commodification and Instrumentality in Cultural Policy." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 13 (2): 203–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630701342899>.
- Hall, S., ed. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, 223–291. London: Sage Publications.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., and S. Baker. 2013. *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hetland, L., and E. Winner. 2001. "The Arts and Academic Achievement: What the Evidence Shows." *Arts Education Policy Review* 102 (5): 3–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632910109600008>.
- Hoekstra, R. 2019. *Replacing GDP by 2030: Towards a Common Language for the Well-Being and Sustainability Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jain, Y. 2021. "Regenerative Economies: A New Approach Towards Sustainability." In *No Poverty*, edited by W. Leal Filho, A. M. Azul, L. Brandli, A. Lange Salvia, P. Gökçin Özuyar, and T. Wall, 761–771. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Johnson, P., and B. Thomas. 2001. "Assessing the Economic Impact of the Arts." In *The UK Cultural Sector*, edited by S. Selwood, 2003–2016. London: Policy Studies Institute.
- Kaszynska, P. 2020. "Cultural Value and Economic Value in the Arts and Culture." In *Teaching Cultural Economics*, edited by T. Bille, A. Mignosa, and R. Towse, 51–57. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kaszynska, P. 2024. "Cultural Value as Meaning-Making." *Cultural Trends*: 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2024.2381767>.
- Kaszynska, P., D. Coyle, E. Dwyer, R. Lawton, P. Riganti, S. Watson, M. Dâmaso, and Y. Wang. 2022. *Scoping Culture and Heritage Capital Report*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scoping-culture-and-heritage-capital-report/scoping-culture-and-heritage-capital-report>.
- Landry, C., and F. Bianchini. 1995. *The Creative City*. Demos and Comedia. <https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/files/thecreativecity.pdf>.
- Lees, L., and C. Melhuish. 2015. "Arts-Led Regeneration in the UK: The Rhetoric and the Evidence on Urban Social Inclusion." *European Urban and Regional Studies* 22 (3): 242–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776412467474>.
- Mang, P., and B. Reed. 2012. "Regenerative Development and Design." *Encyclopaedia of Sustainability Science & Technology* 2112: 8855–8879.
- Marcuse, H. 1979. *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Vol. 595. Automated Printed InLocation: Beacon Press.
- Miles, S., and R. Paddison. 2005. "Introduction: The Rise and Rise of Culture-Led Urban Regeneration." *Urban Studies* 42 (5–6): 833–839. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107508>.
- Mirza, M., Ed. 2006. *Culture Vultures: Is UK Arts Policy Damaging the Arts*. Policy exchange. <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/culture-vultures-jan-06.pdf>.
- Naess, A. 1989. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. Cambridge University Press. <https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/files/thecreativecity.pdf>.
- Neelands, J., J. Hodgson, M. Scott, P. Kaszynska, and A. Dixon. 2022. *The Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project: Towards a Research-Informed Approach*. Coventry: University of Warwick.
- O'Connor, J. 2024. *Culture is Not an Industry: Reclaiming Art and Culture for the Common Good*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Paddison, R., and R. S. Miles, eds. 2020. *Culture-Led Urban Regeneration*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Plaza, B., M. Tironi, and S. Haarich. 2009. "Bilbao's Art Scene and the "Guggenheim Effect" Revisited." *European Planning Studies* 17 (11): 1711–1729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654310903230806>.
- Polasky, S., B. Bryant, P. Hawthorne, J. Johnson, B. Keeler, and D. Pennington. 2015. "Inclusive Wealth as a Metric of Sustainable Development." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 40 (1): 445–466. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-101813-013253>.
- Pratt, A. C. 2008. "Creative Cities: The Cultural Industries and the Creative Class." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90 (2): 107–117. Paragraph: use this for the first paragraph in a section, or to continue after an extract. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0467.2008.00281.x>.
- Pyykkönen, M., K. Kortekallio, K. Kumpulainen, M. Luonila, and S. Sokka. 2024. Kohti kestävää kulttuuria. *Wisdom Letters* 2024 (1): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.17011/wl/10>.
- Rana, T., and L. Parker, eds. 2023. *The Routledge Handbook of Public Sector Accounting*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Rodale, R. 1983. "Breaking New Ground: The Search for a Sustainable Agriculture." *The Futurist* 17 (1): 15–20.
- Sacco, P. L., G. T. Blessi, and M. Nuccio. 2009. "Cultural Policies and Local Planning Strategies: What is the Role of Culture in Local Sustainable Development?" *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 39 (1): 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JAML.39.1.45-64>.
- Sagger, H., J. Philips, and M. Haque. 2021. *Valuing Culture and Heritage Capital: A Framework Towards Informing Decision Making*. Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-culture-and-heritage-capital-a-framework-towards-decision-making/valuing-culture-and-heritage-capital-a-framework-towards-informing-decision-making>.
- Schmidt, J. J., P. G. Brown, and C. J. Orr. 2016. "Ethics in the Anthropocene: A Research Agenda." *The Anthropocene Review* 3 (3): 188–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019616662052>.

- Schneider, V., and A. Rohmann. 2021. "Arts in Education: A Systematic Review of Competency Outcomes in Quasi-Experimental and Experimental Studies." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12:623935. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.623935>.
- Shusterman, R. 2002. *Surface and Depth: Dialectics of Criticism and Culture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Smith, A., A. Stirling, and F. Berkhout. 2005. "The Governance of Sustainable Socio-Technical Transitions." *Research Policy* 34 (10): 1491–1510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2005.07.005>.
- Soini, K., and I. Birkeland. 2014. "Exploring the Scientific Discourse on Cultural Sustainability." *Geoforum* 51:213–223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.12.001>.
- Soini, K., and J. Dessein. 2016. "Culture-Sustainability Relation: Towards a Conceptual Framework." *Sustainability* 8 (2): 167–179. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8020167>.
- Spash, C. L., and F. Hache. 2022. "The Dasgupta Review Deconstructed: An exposé of Biodiversity Economics." *Globalizations* 19 (5): 653–676. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1929007>.
- Sridhar, K., and G. Jones. 2013. "The Three Fundamental Criticisms of the Triple Bottom Line Approach: An Empirical Study to Link Sustainability Reports in Companies Based in the Asia-Pacific Region and TBL Shortcomings." *Asian Journal of Business Ethics* 2 (1): 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13520-012-0019-3>.
- Stiglitz, J. E., A. Sen, and J.-P. Fitoussi. 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. France. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/8131721/8131772/Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi-Commission-report.pdf>.
- Throsby, D. 2001. *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Throsby, D. 2003. "Determining the Value of Cultural Goods: How Much (Or How Little) Does Contingent Valuation Tell Us?" *Journal of Cultural Economics* 27 (3/4): 275–285. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026353905772>.
- Tusa, J. 2000. *Art Matters: Reflecting on Culture*. London: Methuen Publishing.
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). 2023. *Inclusive Wealth Report 2023: Measuring Sustainability and Equity*. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/43131>.
- UNU-IHDP (United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations University International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change). 2012. *Inclusive Wealth Report 2012: Measuring Progress Towards Sustainability*. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/32228>.
- Wellmer, A. 1984. "Truth, Semblance, Reconciliation: Adorno's Aesthetic Redemption of Modernity." *Telos* 1984 (62): 89–115. <https://doi.org/10.3817/1284062089>.
- World Bank. 2011. "The Changing Wealth of Nations: Measuring Sustainable Development in the New Millennium." <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/2252>.
- World Bank. 2021. "The Changing Wealth of Nations 2021: Managing Assets for the Future." <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/36400>.
- World Economic Forum. 2020. *Measuring Stakeholder Capitalism: Towards Common Metrics and Consistent Reporting of Sustainable Value Creation*. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/measuring-stakeholder-capitalism-towards-common-metrics-and-consistent-reporting-of-sustainable-value-creation/>.
- Woronkowicz, J., T. M. Rabovsky, and M. Rushton. 2019. "Performance Measurement as Policy Rhetoric: The Case of Federal Arts Councils." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 25 (3): 363–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2017.1290611>.
- Yúdice, G. 2003. *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.