

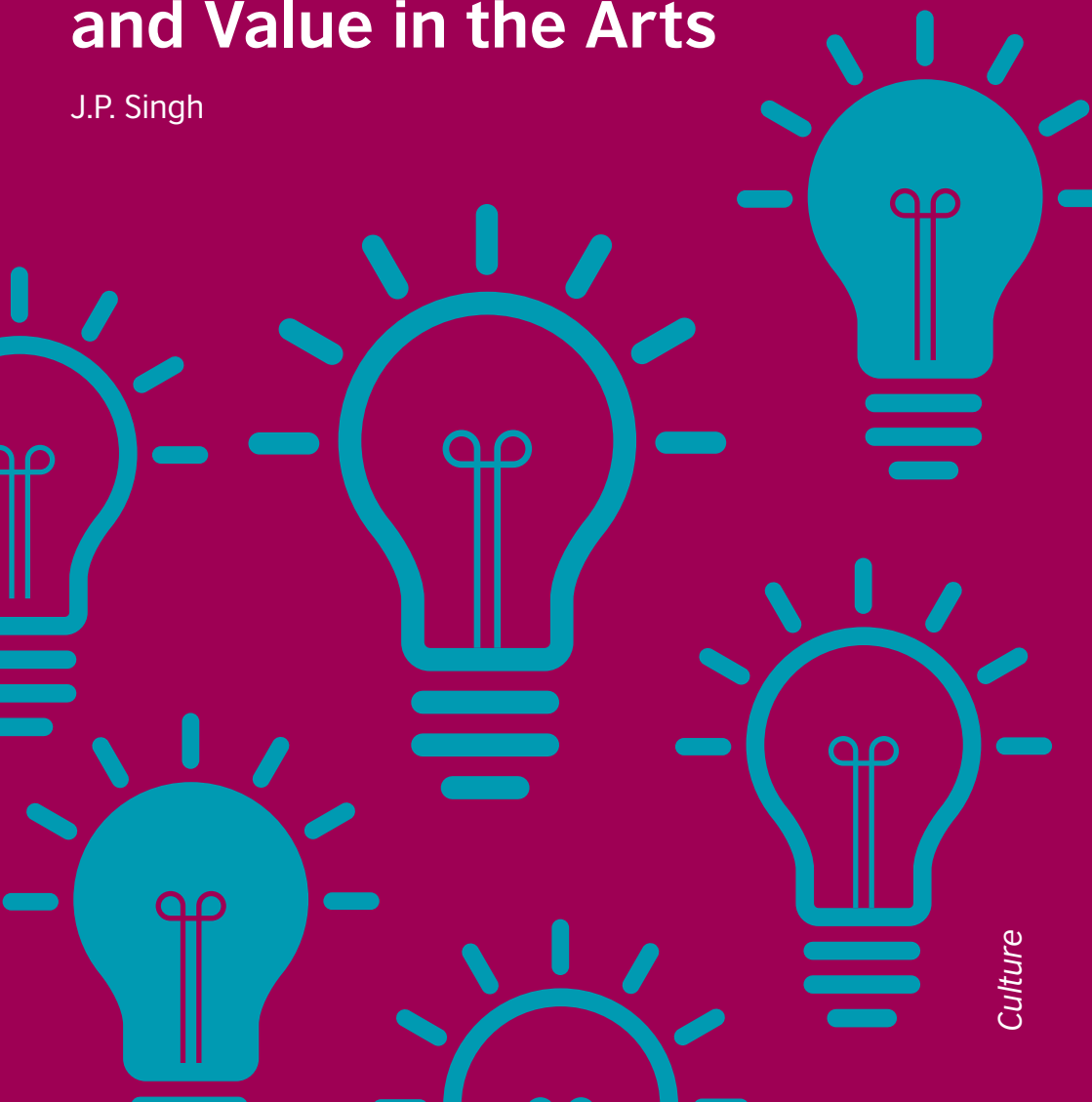
Cultural Relations Collection

Edited by J.P. Singh



The Cultural Turn in International Development: Participatory Infrastructures and Value in the Arts

J.P. Singh



Culture

Acknowledgements

Authors and editors:

Authors: J.P. Singh

Series editor: J.P. Singh

Contributing editor: Jo Beall

Copy editor: Rodney Bolt

Reviewers:

Christine Wilson

Dan Shah

Ian Thomas

Jen Bardsley

Michael Peak

Mona Lotten

Reece Waldron

The author

Professor J.P. Singh is Professor of International Commerce and Policy in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, USA. He is also the Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin.

The series editor

J.P. Singh is Professor of International Commerce and Policy at the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow with the Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin. He specializes in culture and political economy. Singh has authored or edited ten books, and published over 100 scholarly articles. He has worked with international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.

The British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

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Foreword

I am delighted at the release and publication of the first contributions to what I hope will be an important collection on cultural relations and the mission of the British Council. Not always easy to describe and at times even more difficult to measure, when you see cultural relations in action you know what it is about: working over the long term with individuals, communities and institutions in a spirit of mutuality.

Our mission is not only about what we do but also how we engage. This is what distinguishes a cultural relations approach from other forms of public or cultural diplomacy. It is about activities and opportunities, but it is also about how relationships are formed and nourished. And in our case as the British Council it happens in over one hundred countries, working with the English language and through cultural engagement in the arts, education and skills.

This collection provides an overview and analysis of diverse examples of this distinctive cultural relations approach and how it is used to further the British Council's charitable objects, and how the approach benefits both the UK and the people with whom we work. The ways of working apply whether convening the global leaders of international higher education, or building partnerships with civil society organisations or artists within a single country. The cultural relations thread also applies across the British Council's largest programmes, including those such as English Language teaching which deliver income.

Over the past decade the British Council has been consolidating its activities in order to increase the commonality across different countries and regions. Yet a cultural relations approach will always necessitate some variety, because mutuality involves degrees of exchange, co-production and adaptation to local needs. An example in this collection shows how in 2016 within Shakespeare Lives, a global programme celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and operating to consistent global production values, a small, country-based arts investment in Nigeria saw the production and touring of a locally relevant Shakespeare play performed in Nigerian Pidgin.

The collection also reflects on the long view and includes two contributions which draw on historical investigation to understand the British Council's role over many decades in Burma/Myanmar and the Soviet Union/Russia, drawing on deep scholarship of post-colonialism and the Cold War respectively. It is to be applauded that the editors and authors allow such critical reflection, avoiding the risk of self-congratulation and enabling organisational learning and growth.

Reading these contributions together as a collection reminds me that while all these different areas constitute cultural relations in their own right, together they add up to more than the sum of their parts. Hard work in one area leads to networks and builds the trust that enables the British Council to undertake activities in different areas and with diverse kinds of partners.

It is not always easy to quantify cultural relations or the impact of an individual institution like the British Council over the arc of time and geography. Today, great effort is put into evaluating both the programmatic and organisational impact of our work. Yet the methodologies to assess the effects of multiple decades of engagement are still developing. Friends made, understanding gained and trust increased are things we know to be important. Proving their worth is harder.

Historical investigation helps, but in the end, as Martin Rose says of cultural relations in his essay in this collection: "It has been said of diplomacy that its success can be measured by wars not fought.... The same might be said of the British Council, though it operates at a more human level with individuals and communities rather than nations." Seen in this way, cultural relations is as much about the absence of negatives as the presence of positives. Cultural relations delivers the calm, reflective response as well as the bustling, creative one. This collection, authored by both well-known scholars and authoritative practitioners shows both. And it does so in a way that I hope you find to be accessible, enlightening and compelling. I commend it to you with enthusiasm.

Sir Ciarán Devane,
Chief Executive, *British Council*

Preface to the Cultural Relations Collection

The British Council is often viewed as an organisation that ‘does’, and it does a great deal, but it is also a ‘thinking’ and learning organisation and in recent years has begun to increase its investment in commissioning, using and sometimes undertaking research. It does so for three key reasons.

As an organisation that provides thought leadership in cultural relations it is important that the British Council contributes to, demonstrates and shares a thorough understanding of cultural relations, and of how this approach contributes to the United Kingdom’s attraction and trusted connections in international relations. It does this, for example, through regular studies on the influence and measurement of soft power that track perceptions of the UK, particularly among young people across the world.

Second, we commission and undertake research as trusted expert practitioners in the thematic areas in which we work: in the arts, international education, English language teaching and assessment, and activities undertaken largely with young people in communities and civil society organisations, such as through the Active Citizens Programme. In each of these areas we convene informed debates based on the provision, sharing or curating of new knowledge, in many cases disseminated in well regarded publications and series.

A third reason is to increase the evidence and understanding for ourselves and others of what works to generate cultural relations impact and why. We seek to demonstrate engagement of the highest standard to supporters and partners, while also building our capacity as an organisation to benefit from using research and evidence, both our own and work by others’, in order to make strategic decisions, engage global stakeholders, and exchange knowledge. Together, each of these research areas contributes useful new knowledge to further our charitable purpose through generating new insights and understanding in areas relevant to our work, in turn enhancing our ability to influence policy or to impact debates.

This cultural relations collection arose out of an early initiative when the British Council first established the small research team that would become part of the new global function led from the Research and Policy Insight Directorate. In commissioning a series of in-house and external studies it had three key aims. The first was to clarify our understanding of cultural relations as an encompassing venture that permeated all our work, whether specific to a sector or not and whether income generating or not. Here the contributions on English language and on assessment are particularly illustrative. The second aim was to provide an opportunity to country offices and regional teams, through a competitive bidding process, to commission research on initiatives that were able to illustrate a cultural relations approach in action at a local level. The fascinating contribution on Shakespeare in Nigerian Pidgin stems from this call. A third aim was to grapple with the challenges of understanding and demonstrating impact when reviewing the British Council’s work in an area of activity or in a country over a long period of time. The contributions on science diplomacy and on Myanmar fit here and demonstrate the richness of reviewing cultural relations over time, alongside the challenges of making assessments across the long arc of history.

This cultural relations collection has provided an opportunity to show the work of the British Council in its rich diversity, linked by this common thread and demonstrating that as with the best partnerships, mutuality in approach often produces things that are not what were originally designed, which are often better as a result and that sometimes grow in ways over which no individual or organisation has control.

Dan Shah
Director Research and Policy Insight
British Council

Editor's Note

A growing interest in culture in international development in recent years, along with heightened emphases on bottom-up and participatory approaches, means there is sometimes a blurred line between soft power initiatives driven by a cultural relations approach and those falling under the rubric of international development. The British Council sees cultural relations as both process and product. In this contribution to the cultural relations collection the author suggests that culture as a final product is at the root of cultural diplomacy, often characterised by showcasing, while development interventions focus on the process, described here in terms of a value chain. In reality both process and product are part of cultural relations, which sit a continuum of soft power that includes international development.

However, this contribution gives analytical centre stage to initiatives and responses from countries and societies that are targets of soft power or recipients of development aid. Thus the emphasis is shifted from external actors and institutions to the cultural mores and expressions upon which international development discourse and practice is overlaid. As such we are reminded that culture is not static but mutates and sometimes does so in response to external engagement. Examples range from opposition to colonialism to the questioning of contemporary international development, highlighting its limitations as well as its possibilities. As such we are reminded that culture, however understood, is neither confined to external interventions nor dependent on them. These insights lie at the heart of dialogic engagement and underscore the need for mutuality from design to execution in international partnerships. It also means recognising that the advancement of local voice and culture might involve challenges or even rejection while at the same time being a goal of international development (and cultural relations).

Introduction

The cultural turn in international development can be traced back to the 1980s. Culture – whether understood as collective ways of life in the anthropological sense, or symbolic representations in the artistic sense – would seem to be central to development efforts. Development interventions are intrinsically cultural in being largely passed through or aimed at collective formations, be they nation-states or local societies. However, the study of culture is a relatively new entrant in the lexicon of international development. In hindsight, this is surprising.

The absence of cultural ideas from development-thought becomes understandable when exhuming the rather technocratic and overly economic models that informed the efforts of post-war institutions of development such as the World Bank or the bilateral aid agencies. While situated in a particular development context, that of European ‘modernisation’ and notions of progress, the lessons were universalised into ‘ahistoric’ formulas that could be applied anywhere. Critiques from social scientists and the rise of participatory development practices have now brought culture to the fore of development.

This essay analyses two important aspects of culture and international development:

- Notions of human well-being are fundamental to both involving people in development efforts and in thinking of how they may participate in improving their lives. Well-being includes a life of dignity and the cultural space to realise one’s identity and name one’s world. Notions of human well-being follow a vast literature from Amartya Sen (2000), Martha Nussbaum (2001), Kwame Appiah (1994), and Paulo Freire (1971). The essay distinguishes between the ability of cultural expressions to allow people to ‘name their world’ (cultural voice and identity) versus affordances – the ability of cultural expressions to allow people to do things they were unable to do before.

- Cultural infrastructures: cultural expressions require sustainable infrastructures that allow for cultural creation, production, distribution, archiving – the value-chain of cultural expressions. A permissible social and political environment is important throughout the value-chain as is proper training and access to finance and technologies.

Taking both factors together, the essay emphasises cultural processes that sustain cultural production rather than the product itself. In ideas and policy, the world of art often privileges the spectacle of the final products rather than the infrastructure that may or may not be able to sustain such products in the long run. The ecology of culture and development, however, includes notions of human well-being and the value-chain that must be brought together. The arts have been intrinsic to who we are, what we think, and what we do. The process model in this essay looks beneath the ‘end-product’ of an artistic production to examine the ways that culture sustains development. The anthropological ‘ways of life’ understanding of culture informs the artistic ‘symbolic representations’ aspect of culture.

The essay is divided into three parts: (1) a survey of the literature on culture and development; (2) an exploration of human well-being and culture; (3) a cultural infrastructure and value-chain perspective with empirical examples. The review is interdisciplinary, drawing from anthropology, cultural studies, economics, post-colonial history and literatures, international relations, political science, and sociology.

Bringing Back Culture

International development efforts in the era following the Second World War fashioned a narrative from a specific European experience, and both its assumptions as well as its transferability were eventually called into question by anthropologists and sociologists. Arturo Escobar (1995), in evaluating the modernisation narrative, writes that abstract representations constitute reality, and the development narrative 'created' a historical reality that policy-makers and academics believed. The narrative was that of 'progress' and the historical circumstance it reflected was of 19th-century European industrialisation. In hindsight, the cultural folly of the early development gestalt is easy to see. The local context of societies and cultures was missing in the development models that sought to improve their condition.

This section examines cultural policies in post-colonial states and the ways that international and national efforts opened up participatory spaces.

Cultural Policies

The newly independent post-colonial governments lacked the legitimacy, resources, and imagination to play an effective role in cultural policy-making. The policy and elite consensus around economic development emphasised agricultural and industrial development, and cultural policy had little role to play in efforts that became known as modernisation policies. If anything, while the colonial-era movements often evoked cultural history and heritage for solidarity, the post-colonial state viewed culture more or less as traditional. National cultural identity was important for the purposes of nation-state building but it was not imagined with respect to creative expressions and products. It was no wonder that ministries or departments in charge of culture also often dealt with the science and technology portfolios; the latter would provide a future, more 'modern' direction for culture.

The post-colonial state inherited the legitimacy attached to being at the forefront of modernisation efforts in the developing world, but its primary resources were directed toward agriculture and industry (Lerner, 1958). As such, the consensus among cultural policy specialists is that creative products received "a comparatively low priority, when pitted against the needs of a developing economy, a backward industry" (Vatsayan, 1972).

In states such as China and Cuba, headed in the communist direction, a focus on culture was also seen as decadent and bourgeois.

With respect to cultural organisations or infrastructures such as production studios and museums, government agencies were ill-equipped to deal with cultural heritage, promotion, or exchanges. Very few developing countries singled out culture or creative industries for prioritisation, with the exception of a few state-sponsored programmes here and there and impetus given to cultural tourism in a few places. Rudolph's summary of cultural policies in India could be applied to many other parts of the developing world: "Government's reluctance to respect the autonomy of cultural organisations created to promote the values and interests of the arts (and history) is in part a reflection of its paternalism" (1983, p. 12). The state used its pulpit to speak about modernisation and the value of the nation-state but, being resource constrained, it was not instrumental in putting any heft behind implementing policies to help the existing cultural sectors.

Culture and Development

Culture is not static or immutable but rather a process. The cultural turn in development has meant examining complex and subtle changes in ways of life and their representations as they influence development. On the latter, the desired goals of development interventions were 'outputs' such as per capita income, rate of industrialisation, or agricultural productivity. As averages they meant very little. The per capita income of \$1,600 in India in 2017 does not reveal the nearly 300 million people living in poverty for less than \$1 per day, nor does it reveal that the richest 1% of Indian population accumulates nearly 60% of the country's wealth (land and capital stock), making it one of the most unequal societies in the world.

Table 1 is a preliminary survey of the literature on culture and development. The grand view of culture and development posits the West as civilised and developed while the developing world is cast as uncivilised and inferior, in some accounts, or in opposition to the West in others. The grand view includes a clash of civilisations. Occasional controversies in the world of art that evoke the grand view include those holding a canonical view of Eurocentric art. A slightly less grand view, not shown in the table below,

still identifies each culture with 'core values' and posits cultures as somewhat distinct from each other but does away with the grandness of one culture being inferior or superior. However, this view also remains problematic because of its essentialism and staticity. The social science, anthropological and cultural studies views of culture are discussed in detail later, but they allow for learning, hybridity, possibilities and constraints for human agency, and resisting or challenging cultural hierarchies.

Table 1: Three Views of Culture and Development and a Possible Hybridity

	Grand View	Social Science/ Anthropology	Hybrid View	Cultural Studies
Theme/s	'Us' versus 'Them'	Culture as a way of life: adaptation and efficiency	Cultural adaptation and hierarchies	Culture ('way of life') but an arena for power struggles
Notes on identity	Identity fixed through time	Cultural hybridity manifests in various ways: cultural studies scholars especially pay attention to the way power hierarchies are re-produced through hybridity		
Notes on human action/ agency	Humans are rational & instrumental	Agency embedded in social circumstances	Structures/ agency	Agency/resistance/ structure
View of art	Backward versus progressive art	Arts reflect society	Art can bring about marginal change	Art reflects power structures including ideology
Possibility of Intellectual interventions	Backward versus progressive art	Situate development interventions in social/cultural understandings	Intervention & participation	Limited by current power structures
Current practice/ practitioners	Pericles, Weber	North (1994)	Freire (1970)	Said (1978)
Current practice/ practitioners	Harrison and Huntington (2002)	Rao and Walton (2004)	Participatory Action Research	Escobar (1995)

The Rise of Participatory Development

Narratives are not only contested but they also respond to each other. The persistent counter-narrative to ideas shaped and implemented from international organisations was that they were not in touch with grassroots contexts and participation. The instrumental imaginary of the post-war international development is often characterised as monologic, while dialogic communication informs participatory development. Participatory narratives are therefore presented as inherently emancipatory in allowing populations voice and freedom, and bring out the centrality of communication in the shape of development narratives.

Another way to engage participation is to situate development, ideationally, within the broader context of culture of everyday life in an anthropological sense. Institutional economics, with its focus on evolutionary rules governing human behaviour, hints at culture but does not engage it explicitly. North (1994, p. 364) writes: "It is culture that provides the key to path dependence – a term used to describe the powerful influence of the past on the present and future." Nevertheless, the language of culture, like that of poverty as a human rights violation, is difficult to construct in political economy without the slippery slope of attributing everything unexplained to cultural factors. An important publication from the World Bank (Rao and Walton, 2004), reflecting the build-up of initiatives in other UN agencies described below, brought together interdisciplinary practitioners to conceptualise a development agenda rooted in cultural practices. The volume speaks to understanding preferences, incentives, and behaviours as rooted in cultural practices. However, the broader reaches of the World Bank have not responded to including cultural variables.

The Role of the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies

Historically, UNESCO, with its World Heritage programme, began explicitly to promote the idea of cultural policies, but the links to development, in the form of alleviation of poverty and deprivation, had not been made. The 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies, or *Mondiacult*, held in Mexico City, tried to forge this link through an anthropological focus on culture. In 1987, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, secretary-general of the UN, responded to pressures from the Group of 77 (G77) developing countries to declare 1988-97 as the Decade for Culture and Development. The idea of a World Commission on Culture and Development originated from this decade.

In 1993, UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali and UNESCO director-general Federico Mayor created the World Commission on Culture and Development. Former UN secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was appointed its president. The Commission presented its report *Our Creative Diversity* to both the UN General Assembly and the UNESCO General Conference in 1995 (Pérez de Cuéllar, 1995). The central lesson of the report is aptly summarised in the oft-quoted first sentence of the report's executive summary: "Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul" (p. 15).

The World Commission on Culture and Development was responding to various past historical and ideational developments in its report (Arizpe, 2004). As these ideas progressed through the UN and UNESCO, they also reflected the link between culture and development explicitly addressed in colonialist and post-colonial literatures that questioned the oppressive imposition of 'White' cultures in the colonial worlds. Writers such as Aimé Césaire, Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Léopold Senghor, Steve Biko, and Paulo Freire highlighted the cultural factors in colonialism that assigned people an inferior status: only through awakening consciousness and articulating a cultural voice from within would the developing world free itself of such oppression. "Poverty, national oppression, and cultural repression are one and the same," wrote Frantz Fanon (2004/1963, p. 172). In 1978, Edward Said's powerful treatise *Orientalism* recreated in meticulous detail the genealogy of historical ideas in Europe that assigned inferiority to the Orient – its generalisability then extended, among intellectual communities, to all colonised and oppressed peoples. Like Fanon and Freire, Said (1978, p. 40) argued that the Occident created its superiority precisely by 'othering' the Orient: "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'."

Our Creative Diversity from the World Commission on Culture and Development (1995) reflects the dual impetus to bring culture into debates on economic development, while being starkly aware that culture must be understood in a liberating sense of an ethic that allows for diversity, pluralism, and freedom. The report argued that, “development embraces not only access to goods and services but also the opportunity to choose a full satisfying, valuable, and valued way of life”. It also took into account Samuel Huntington’s (1993) provocative thesis on the clash of civilisations, which posited that the differences between the Judeo-Christian and Islamic-Confucian civilisation were irreconcilable and thus an endemic source of conflict. *Our Creative Diversity*, instead, argued that cultural diversity should lead and not thwart endeavors of peaceful coexistence in recognising that diversity is the basis of interaction and cultural syntheses.

Our Creative Diversity adopted ideas from UNDP’s Human Development Reports and argued for development as entitlement to a dignified way of life. It also called for increasing the participation of women and young people, and public and private organisations at all levels of governance to mobilise people for culture and development. The 1998 Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development marked the end of the World Decade for Cultural Development and followed the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development. The Stockholm conference sought to prioritise culture in development strategies and expand efforts to galvanise financial and human resources in support of such efforts. A direct result of the *Our Creative Diversity* report was the publication of World Culture Reports (1998 & 2000) from UNESCO. In conclusion, though, the agenda for culture and development did not move forward much in terms of wider development thinking and policy even though UNESCO has continued to produce reports that highlight its importance (UNESCO, 2010). A mix of resource constraints, lack of clear incentives, and the dominance of other cultural issues within UNESCO are the likely causes. The culture and development narrative was, for example, overshadowed by the debates on cultural diversity, mostly about entertainment/cultural industries at UNESCO (Singh, 2011a).

Dialogic Communication and Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The concept of dialogic communication, as a pedagogy of development, dates back to the Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire, who locates its origins in consciousness awakening – a form of learning and knowing in which the subjects understand their historical circumstances and are able to name the world and themselves within it, thus finding a cultural voice. This is the necessary condition for the oppressed to see their circumstances “as a limiting situation they can transform” (Freire, 2000/1970, p. 49). The next step is dialogic communication, the sufficient condition, which entails problem solving informed by multiple or dialectical perspectives. The latter allow the actors to examine their life situation from multiple perspectives and indulge in problem solving. “In this theory of action one cannot speak of an actor, nor simply of actors, but rather of actors in communication” (Freire 2000, p. 129).

Latin American writers responded first to Freire, in the tradition of development praxis that came to be known as Participatory Action Research or PAR, and it provided not just a critique of modernisation theory but also, more recently, of market-based systems in general. Broadly conceived there is an element of participation at the local level in most development interventions these days. However, participation does not necessarily lead to consciousness-awakening unless subjects are able to name their world, challenge or question existing power relations, and then articulate action (the A in PAR) aimed toward transformation. PAR scholarship seldom meets all these criteria.

Participation and Global Development Efforts

Central elements of dialogic communication are often missing from development projects that claim to be participatory. At a macro level, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund introduced in 1999 as a precondition for debt-relief asked for broad participation from communities, stakeholders, and policymakers. In practice however, PRSPs yielded mixed results. Not only is such broad participation impossible to implement, but it also ignores existing power relations (Mansuri & Rao, 2013; Gaynor, 2010). Mansuri and Rao (2013), World Bank economists themselves, are also sceptical of types of participation that are “induced” from states or powerholders, rather than outcomes of “organic” civil society or social movement processes. In a prior era, while exploring the precarious links between democratic participation and modernisation in the developing world, Huntington and Nelson (1976) had distinguished between mobilised and autonomous participation. A widely used manual at the World Bank on participatory methods (Rietbergen-McCracken & Narayan, 1998), presents experts who engage people at the grassroots utilising various participatory techniques. However, in most of these methods, the emphasis is on engagement, rather than questioning the ways in which the experts acquired the codes and representations with which they wish to foster engagement.

Accounts of participatory development often provide a glossy view of these efforts in which societal actors work alongside those in authority with a great degree of harmony. This is an idealised model; participation can also involve conflict. Table 2 is illustrative. Along another dimension, societal or political structures may not allow society the agency or freedom to participate, or these structures may be internalised and constrain societal actors from exercising agency. For example, in a deeply patriarchal society, women may lack political rights, but they may also internalise this repression. A powerful passage from Tsitsi Dangarembga’s novel *Nervous Conditions* is illustrative, as the protagonist in the story begins to question the burden of sexism, patriarchy and colonialism in her life in colonial Rhodesia:

Nyasha was beside herself with fury. She rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth (‘Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies.’), breaking mirrors, her clay pots, anything she could lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot. ‘They’ve trapped us. They’ve trapped us. But I won’t be trapped. I’m not a good girl. I won’t be trapped.’

Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions, 1988, p. 201

Table 2: Cultures of Participation and Development

	Structured/Hierarchical	Agentic/Horizontal
Consensual (state-dominated)	<p>Stakeholder Discourse</p> <p>Literature: United Nations, International Organizations, Governments</p> <p>Examples: Creative economy (UNCTAD/ WIPO) Government-led initiatives</p>	<p>Network Consensual Discourse</p> <p>Literature: transnational and national societal networks</p> <p>Examples: Global Production & Consumption Networks</p>
Conflictual (societal pressures)	<p>Performative Mobilization Discourse</p> <p>Literature: advocacy and performance strategies</p> <p>Examples: Social movements’ use of ICTs and socialmedia, community theatre & performance</p>	<p>Oppositional Discourse</p> <p>Literature: critical theory, organizational behaviour</p> <p>Examples: Community radio, community arts productions</p>

Source: Modified for culture and development from Singh, J.P., and Mikkel Flyverboom.

“Representing participation in ICTD projects” Telecommunication Policy 40, no.7 (2016). P.693

Human Well-Being and Cultural Voice

The development narrative has shifted over time, alongside ideas of participatory development, toward embracing a cultural dimension. The latest iteration of this narrative speaks to subjective well-being of people parallel to an approach that offers the maximum number of possibilities in life (agency) along with dignity and lack of discrimination (Alkire, 2002; Hojman & Miranda, 2018). Participatory practices are important to this cultural shift because they emphasise inclusion and allow people, in the words of Freire, to name their world and articulate their cultural voice (Freire, 1971).

Toward Human Development

The paradigmatic shift in development thought came from the United Nations Development Programme. The approach that countered the World Bank's claim came to be known as human development. The human development approach is associated closely with the work of economists Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq. Amartya Sen's work (1983, 2000) on entitlements and development as freedom sought to go beyond earnings and growth to ask what sort of life people are entitled to in various societies. For example, high per capita incomes in various countries may not instruct us on the roles and freedoms available to women in strongly patriarchal societies. Living in a brick house in a favela or a slum with a mobile phone is also not necessarily an indicator of a high standard of living.

The United Nations Development Programme was created in 1965 through a synthesis of several development agencies. UNDP & the World Bank are often compared as offering different visions of development. Just as ideas of human development challenged the approach rooted in economic growth, UNDP also countered the World Bank's flagship annual publication, the World Development Report (WDR), published since 1978, with an annual Human Development Report (HDR) that started to be published in 1990. The HDR began publishing a Human Development Index, which took into account income growth and social entitlements such as education and life expectancy.

The human development approach has paralleled or spawned other narratives that speak to similar concerns. To be sure, the focus on human beings themselves, rather than as part of some output ratio, had precedents. UNDP thus succeeded in making these narratives institutional concerns during a period when international development narratives were settling into a dominant framework

that came from the World Bank. In fact, UNDP helped to encourage similar initiatives within the Bank including participatory development. The two agencies have also collaborated on various projects together.

The human development approach has its limitations. UNDP as an agency may be as inaccessible as the World Bank to grassroots development practitioners, including NGOs, and even human development appears as a set of "technical assistance" programmes designed in New York. While UNDP briefly turned toward community-led initiatives in the late 1990s, its connections to the epistemic communities in academia are stronger than knowledge generated at the community level (Murphy 2006, p. 347-349).

Beyond UNDP, there are human initiatives that are well-meaning and even institutionalised. However, many of them are broadly philosophical, and neither communities from below nor elite bureaucrats or policymakers know how to engage with them. One such approach is the characterisation of poverty as a human rights violation. This approach, advocated by political theorist Thomas Pogge (2007) was briefly deliberated at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Pogge argued that just as racism and slavery revealed societal prejudices, so does the continuation of poverty. The human rights approach was adopted in UNESCO in 2001 and related to UNESCO's mandate to remove the structural causes of violence (Singh, 2011b). Nevertheless, within five years the initiative had died with resistance from member states and the inability to spell out its feasibility (McNeill & St Clair 2009, p. 125-128).

The difficulties with institutionalising and propagating human rights or broadly cultural approaches to development notwithstanding, the idea that development initiatives must have resonance with people's daily lives is now firmly entrenched. The latest iteration of human development is subjective well-being, which builds upon Amartya Sen's approach to development as freedom and capabilities to pursue several alternatives and a life of dignity. Hojman and Miranda (2018, p. 1) develop indicators of subjective well-being that include human agency and dignity: "Human agency refers to the capability of an individual to control her destiny and make choices to fulfill goals set autonomously.

Human dignity is associated with the absence of feelings of shame and humiliation, and is ultimately related to social inclusion.” Their empirical tests, based on a household survey conducted in Chile, show that subjective well-being is related to life satisfaction and higher income. Hajnal and Miranda’s tests for agency and dignity stand over and above other psychological personality variables, for which they control and that may be related to notions of well-being.

Cultural Voice and Agency

The notion of human agency and dignity provides a connection with anthropological and other studies in social science that attend to participation in cultural activities. Cultural expressions make visible the possibilities for people’s lives and, in doing so, they speak to the absence or presence of shame and dignity. However, the possibilities and agency that cultural expressions afford must be weighed against the social hierarchies within which they are embedded and which they help to maintain. As Abu-Lughod (1986) reminds us in the context of Bedouin poetry, they also provide a way of maintaining social hierarchies and exclusion. By the same token, these expressions also provide a vehicle for changing these practices from within and suggesting further possibilities.

Cultural expressions are vehicles for group identity and are often symbols of dignity and identity for groups. Mbaqanga music in South Africa provided a way for people to not only assert a Zulu identity in the post-apartheid multi-ethnic South African society, but also to negotiate tradition and modernity (Meintjes, 2003). Similarly, folk theatre in India has long called attention to social issues and has also been instrumentalised to raise consciousness about developmental strategies ranging from healthcare to agricultural practices (Srampickal, 1994).

The literature on cultural participation and development ascribes multiple values beyond economic to understanding their importance (Throsby, 2001). These can range from the economic value of cultural activities to include historic, religious, intrinsic values of arts to communities. In the words of Maya Angelou, “a bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer, but because it has a song.” Throsby (2001) and Hutter and Throsby (2008) describe the various types of cultural value as follows:

- Aesthetic value: or properties of beauty or art shared in a culture
- Spiritual value: or value to a religious group
- Social value: expressed in terms of identity and location
- Historical value: reflecting cultures through time
- Symbolic value: as purveyor of representational meaning
- Authenticity value: accruing to the original work

These multivalenced notions of value provide both a vocabulary and caution for connecting arts with participation and empowerment. Matarasso (1997, p. 89) notes that “[m]ore than any other human activity, culture – and art as its most highly-charged expression – is concerned with values and meanings.” As such, “participation in the arts has the capacity, in partnership with other initiatives, to tackle serious social problems and the disempowerment which results from them” (p. 88). However, Matarasso goes on to articulate the existential condition of the arts in any society: while arts can be empowering, they are also often devalued in social and educational policy. The ever-present debates internationally on arts funding are an example.

Arts and the Limits to Empowerment

A broader existential concern with arts and social empowerment also arises from the possibilities of agency and voice described above. If arts provide a way for societies to name their world, then they can also limit the possibilities of naming this world in different ways. The not-so-metaphorical handcuffs have been brought globally to incarcerate cultural producers who dared to question deeply situated cultural meanings even when they might be oppressive. Bollywood's *Padmavaat* in 2017–2018 ignited controversies with far-right Hindu nationalists for its portrayal of an apocryphal Hindu princess – the producers relented to various cuts and amendments including covering the waist, through computerised colouring, of the actress Deepika Padukone in one of the dance sequences in the film. Higher-caste Rajputs, mostly men, had protested that a Hindu princess would never show her waist in public. The protests are symbolic of recent gender-related controversies in India and the patriarchal practices in which they are embedded.

Cultural sensitivity also brings us to the limits of these cultural possibilities. Political and social freedoms are important for cultural expressions to question existing understandings that may be oppressive. While the internal vocabulary of cultures may allow for this questioning, it may equally allow for the quashing of these expressions and sanction anything from verbal harassment to bodily violence against the cultural producers.

In summary, there are two possibilities for cultural expressions to question existing development limitations and possibilities. The anthropological and sociological and possibility lies in working within the frameworks of practice to situate the new understandings. However, political economists have also called attention to political pluralism and lack of restrictions on human rights in general as incentives toward the production of new cultural expressions. “Our discussion also points out at the relevance of the State – through education and social policies that affect segregation and stigmatization – in shaping the cultural boundaries that make dignity and equal respect more or less likely to prevail in a given society” (Hojman and Miranda 2018). In providing a space for cultural expressions, both cultural sensitivity and state-backed political freedoms are important.

A Value Chain Perspective

A cultural infrastructure is necessary to move from cultural participation to sustainable human well-being. Arts practices, no matter how embedded in communities, cannot survive without adequate support extending from political and social space to create art, financial rewards for cultural production, and adequate exhibition and distribution networks. We have traced the context of cultural voices in the developing world at various levels and across multiple art forms, but they all face the problem of an inadequate cultural infrastructure. Pierre Sauvé (2006, p. 6) notes: “For most developing countries, structural difficulties represent daunting obstacles to cultural production and diffusion. This ranges from factors as diverse as the paucity of disposable income to spend on non-essential consumption, literacy, problems of secure and reliable access to electricity, particularly in rural areas, the low availability of consumer equipment (TVs, DVD players) as well as a general dearth of producers’, broadcasters’ and distributors’ facilities.”

This section briefly documents a few key challenges for the developing world through various stages of cultural production. The supply and demand of creative products entails a value chain as depicted in Figure 1. Developing countries encounter difficulties with all aspects of the value or production chain though, depending on the type of activity, the barriers to entry in particular stages may vary. UNCTAD (2008, p. 44) notes, for example, that in Africa the “value chain is simple (primary inputs combined to produce outputs sold directly to consumers).” Despite the presence of well-known musicians all over sub-Saharan Africa, only seven African countries have an established live-performance industry, with venues and equipment. These are Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Mali, and Senegal. The renowned Senegalese musician Youssou N’Dour, associated with the Wolof polyrhythmic mbalax style, has set up his own performance establishment (Thioissane) and a recording studio (Xippi) in Dakar. However, only South Africa and Zimbabwe possess a well-established recording industry. Nearly 100 per cent of music in Africa is pirated and it is thus hard for musicians to earn royalties from local sales. In contrast, Latin America, which accounts for five per cent of the world’s music sales, “has an established live music practice, a local and national broadcasting system, a domestic recording industry and in some instances access to international markets” (Cunningham et al. 2008, p.5).

While value chain is presented here in a linear way for illustrative purposes, in practice the value chain may not only be non-linear but each of the processes illustrated below may occur and re-occur and may be connected to all other parts of the value chain. For example, the lack of exhibition spaces may guide a playwright in the kind of theatre she may write. Therefore, another way of imagining the value chain below may be to view each stage as a spoke in a wheel with all parts connected to each other

The following two cases illustrate in narrative form a few challenges to value chains in various developing country contexts:

Case 1: African Book Publishing & Film Production

Cultural infrastructures in Africa reveal a patchwork of support and project-based, rather than sustainable, financing. The example of book production is typical of the challenges. Nearly 98% of the books in circulation in Sub-Saharan Africa are textbooks. There were few avenues for literary works, although several publishing and distribution networks since the late 1980s have helped: the Pan-African Writers' Association (PAWA), African Publishers Network (APNET), Pan-African Booksellers Association (PABA), and African Books Collective (ABC) (Nyamnjoh, 2008). The problems of book publishing reflect those of other forms of cultural production. Brickhill (2010) notes that a great deal of artistic production in Africa rests on "cyclical project funding", even when there is infrastructural capacity for training and the development of the arts. Despite these obstacles, African traditions of storytelling have resonated through various artistic practices and crossovers: Ngūgī wa Thiong'o started off writing in English but then turned to his native Gikuyu; Ousmane Sembène switched from fiction to film to make the point that African storytelling was well suited for multimedia and aural traditions rather than printed texts.

In contrast to book publishing, African filmmaking traditions, while instructive for lack of infrastructural capacity, also feature recent developments that bridge this gap. Burkina Faso, home of the biennial film festival FESPACO, provides an interesting case. Its film industry generally produced two to three films per year since 1971 and was completely dependent on foreign funding (Hoefert de Turégano, 2008). The latter created an elite set of filmmakers but not a general capacity for film production. Meanwhile, film distribution remained concentrated with either a French or a US firm. Digital technology has had a two-pronged effect: first, the number of cinemas declined from 50 in 2001 to 19 in 2004 as film viewing moved indoors, but at the same time, new technologies offer filmmakers cost-effective opportunities that they lacked earlier. Famous directors such as Gaston Kaboré, Dani Kouyaté and Fanta Régina Nacro have created their own studios. Meanwhile, the government has provided incentives for film by including regional distribution incentives and tightening its copyright laws. However, Hoefert de Turégano's (2008, p. 126) summation of Burkina Faso's film industry is equally apt for other similar countries:

- This brings us back to the question of what form the film industry in Burkina Faso will take. Burkina has a rich film culture, it has a budding local production scene, it is grappling with the problems of distribution and exhibition, it is not neglecting the importance of film education and training, it has the best African film festival in the world, and it has a government that is working to create a structured, legal context for the film and audiovisual sector, in sum, many factors working in its favour. Whether these advantages can be translated into economic success remains to be seen.

Figure 1: Analytical Model of the 'Cultural Production Chain' or 'Culture Cycle'



A counterpoint comes from South Africa. Lacking finance, South African cinema has tied up with foreign investors through the government's National Film and Video Foundation, which has an aggressive film development programme. Award-winning films such as *Yesterday* (2004), *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), *Tsotsi* (2005), *Beauty* (2011), and *The Wound* (2017) speak to this success. The NFVF also condemned threats of violence that surrounded the depiction of closeted homosexuality among Xhosa men in *The Wound*, and helped the film's producers register their concerns with the South African Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality.

Securing financing and marketing for South African films are NFVF's key objectives and highlight a networked approach in which public and private, and domestic and international agencies play a role. The Indaba Charter adopted by NFVF and film stakeholders in South Africa in 2005 was clear in mobilising a network approach and breaking the "dependency syndrome", which overzealously relies on the government (National Film and Video Foundation, 2006, p. 7). NFVF has also raised the profile of its films through some high-profile participation moves at international film festivals such as Cannes and Berlin, where it regularly partners with Trade and Investment South Africa (TISA), the semi-autonomous investment promotion vehicle. NFVF also backs South Africa's objective to provide leadership for African cinema in general. South Africa now hosts the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) responsible for the FESPACO film festival in Ougadougou. As noted earlier, FESPACO was a French-run show for Francophone cinema; the locus of shift to South Africa is significant. West African film industry professionals have long accepted, yet bemoaned French funding and control of their fledgling film industry. They are sceptical of South African moves, but equally fatigued from pulling at the patronage strings of French agencies. While many professionals have decried the loss of African identity and values through commercialisation, others see tremendous opportunities in global market networks and diffusion of technology, especially the way the video-based Nollywood – nicknamed 'vrai cinema africain' – has grown in the last decade.

Case 2: Jamaican Reggae

Jamaican reggae stands out as a success story of cultural voice, participation, and production. "Persistently neglected by state and society", Jamaican reggae provided dignity to the creole "patois speaking Black sub-altern classes" (Paul, 2010). The reggae sound arose through communities and their cultural infrastructures: the "neighborhood sound system" and dancehalls (p. 128). It was then distributed through small labels such as Studio One and Island Records that catered to legends like Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff. Nevertheless, the global sales of reggae have not benefitted Jamaica or its economy, even when the record labels are owned by Jamaican migrants. The business model of Jamaican reggae was not incentivised toward generating added value at various stages of production (Reis & Davis, 2008). For example, until recently overseas firms controlled up to 14% of Jamaican reggae royalty deals. The overall result is that despite reggae's success, Jamaica was not among the top eight recorded-music producers in Latin America at the turn of the century. These were: Brazil, Argentina, Central America, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Mexico (p. 194).

Conclusion

How are the arts relevant and sustainable in people's lives? Who decides? These two questions not only inform the ecology of culture and international development practices, but also their long-term survival. Locating participatory cultural practices is the first step toward making arts sustainable and vibrant. The next steps entail policy incentives and strategy.

Supporting arts value chains at a macro level historically meant either providing economic incentives governing production through property rights (rules guaranteeing tangible and intangible rewards), or direct subsidies and payments to the arts (Caves, 2002; Throsby, 2001; Vogel, 2007). Thinking of property rights and payments in a value-chain context needs some calibration at a micro level. Table 3 provides a preliminary list of the kinds of incentives and rewards that may be useful at each level of the value chain and lists a few examples of these worldwide. These include openness and guarantees for creative expression, material incentives for production, networks and exhibition spaces for distribution, and intellectual property rights protections.

There is no single type of incentive or award that will inform all aspects of the value chain. Fortunately, policies informing all aspects of the value chain are also not necessary. If an arts sector exists, then it probably contains some minimum levels of support at each aspect of the value chain. As seen above, the Jamaican reggae industry drew upon community infrastructure and local record labels in ways that African music has not been able to do. On the other hand, Jamaican musicians have lacked control over international distribution rights.

An art strategy in a given context would then entail examining the value chain for support where it is most needed. There are also three transversal categories for support that cut across the entire value chain.

- Training and education in the arts
- Availability of finance
- Information infrastructures including websites and telephony

The idea of a value chain is suggested here both as a formal and an intuitive methodology. In a formal sense, a sustainable cultural infrastructure implies taking stock of the inputs required at every stage of production and either qualitatively or quantitatively describing areas of strength and improvement. In an intuitive sense, it implies that even the most informal cultural productions entail a value chain. For example, street theatre may seem a perfectly viable practice in a particular setting but locating missing elements – social and political restrictions, training for actors, exhibition spaces – can help to locate room for improvement.

Adapted from J.P. Singh. (2011). *Globalized Arts: The Entertainment Economy and Cultural Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapter 7.

Table 3: Cultural Value Chain and Policy Instruments

Creative Value Chain and Target	Policy Objectives and Instruments	Examples and Exemplars
<i>Creative Imagination</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tolerance and freedom 2. Embedding arts in existing cultural practices 3. Creative flows and hybridity 4. Preserving arts in conflict 5. Security of life for artists 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative cities (Florida, 2002) 2. Openness to commerce (Cowen, 2006) 3. Open cities during World War II; artists' communes 4. Laws governing freedom of expression; grants and institutions encouraging creative expressions
<i>Production</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of creative-industry infrastructures and talent 2. Security of property rights governing creative production 3. Subsidies to cover revenue deficits and increasing costs of arts (Baumol's cost disease) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative Britain (DCMS, 2000) 2. Numerous arts-agency policies from local to international levels; tax incentives for philanthropy and charitable donations (O'Hare et al.,1983) 3. Emphasis in most national creative industry plans (UNCTAD, 2008)
<i>Distribution</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouraging arts festivals 2. Access to distribution networks through institutional support 3. Subsidies or grants for creating or accessing distribution networks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationalising demand and supply; inclusion & expressions (Snowball, 2005) 2. Creating arts/creative product distribution agencies such as South Africa's National Film and Video Foundation
<i>Exhibition</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State and market incentives for creating exhibition spaces 2. Cultural tourism policies for exhibiting heritage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State-led cultural policies (UNESCO, 2006) 2. Tourism campaigns worldwide (OECD, 2008)
<i>Archiving and Preservation</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copyright laws 2. Creative Commons 3. Creation of physical and digital archives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International and national copyright an intellectual property legislation (Watal, 2001) 2. Creativecommons.org 3. National museums (Canclini, 1995)

Another way to strategise a methodology for support entails understanding the key actors involved in arts production. While governments may play a role in sustaining the arts, often civil society, arts organisations, and businesses are far more active in the arts sectors. A case can be made for especially encouraging sustainable business practices, due to the existential state of arts funding worldwide.

Table 4 provides a list of examples of how key actors can be mobilised toward arts production in diverse contexts. It is simplified here for pedagogical reasons – usually any arts sector will feature a variety of actors. Two important points can be interpreted from this list in Table 4. First, identifying the value chain also leads to key actors being involved in the supply of products. Second, along with incentives noted in Table 3 above, there are many options and strategies toward working with key actors.

Table 4: Arts Sectors and Chief Actors Involved

Arts Sector	Chief Actors Involved	Notable Outcomes
Book Publishing in Africa	Publishing and distribution collectives	Networks promoting African writing – Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), African Publishers Network (APNET), Pan-African Book Sellers Association (PABA), African Books Collective (ABC)
Production	Government led	Support for arts clusters in China, participatory cultural policy making (CODECU – Puerto Rico), IT and design innovation hubs (several countries)
Creative Industries	Firm-led global production networks	Cinema (China, India, South Africa), telenovelas (Latin America), female singers (Lebanon, Egypt)
Arts and Technology	Global prosumers [producers and consumers]	Social media, DIY, Nollywood, international youth culture (Balinese reggae, death metal, etc.)

A final point now about intervention: while arts must be culturally sustainable, this does not mean that support from outside the culture is undesirable. Only a view of the arts that presents culture as insular and isolated would not see arts as constantly evolving and syncretic. This provides a rationale for intervention, in connecting one form or art with another. However, a far greater reason exists for external intervention. This means that to the extent that development interventions are culturally sensitive, they can both encourage and question existing practices. The best way to do that would be to involve the very actors who are involved at each stage of the arts production, and to have a dialogic, rather than a monologic, relationship with them.

A culturally sensitive approach to development advocates understanding, not condemnation. It entails locating possibilities and alternatives within cultural frameworks to allow for agency and dignity. In avoiding development interventions that are not culturally sensitive, the methodology does not rule out cultural changes; instead, it advocates those that will be sustainable and, if needed, less disruptive. Further, in connecting culturally sensitive interventions with cultural infrastructures, we make development interventions even more sustainable in the long run.

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