

<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> The University of Manchester		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 21 (Sociology)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Influencing cultural policy for democracy by mobilising the civic capacity of 'left behind' communities		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012 - 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Prof. Andrew Miles	Professor of Sociology	2014 - present
Dr Jill Ebrey	Research Associate in Sociology	2014 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>University of Manchester research on 'everyday' participation has demonstrated the value of informal cultural practices and local cultural institutions, leading UK national and local government to embrace a broader, more inclusive, definition of culture. Specifically, the research has had impact in three key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. enhancing social and cultural capital within the local community of Peterculter, Scotland by raising civic capacity, leveraging resources, and improving perceptions of the social and civic importance of locally situated everyday cultural practices;</li> <li>2. enacting organisational and strategic change within Creative Scotland (the Scottish national cultural funding body) through the adoption of a broader, more inclusive definition of culture;</li> <li>3. shaping Scottish government cultural policy to encompass vernacular, everyday cultural practices.</li> </ol>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Research led by Prof. Andrew Miles at The University of Manchester (UoM) has revealed how 'official' definitions of culture are constructed and mobilised in policy discourses by traditional interests and narrow empirical approaches. The research emanates from the interdisciplinary, multi-institution Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) project 'Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values' (2012 – 2017) (i).</p> <p>The research investigated Miles' concept of the 'deficit model in cultural participation' [1], which is now a core narrative in both UK cultural policy and cultural policy studies. The deficit model defined culture and cultural participation in very restricted ways, allowing the so-called 'non-users' of traditional cultural venues to be labelled as 'socially excluded' and 'disengaged' [1]. In contrast, Miles' research showed that the "cultural participation 'cold spots'" claimed by policymakers working with survey instruments like the Taking Part Survey do not exist in reality, being an artefact of the methods employed [2, 3]. Providing new insights into the <i>situated</i> dynamics and stakes attached to everyday forms of cultural participation, the research highlighted the personal, social and civic value of supposedly 'mundane' cultural practices. Its findings are particularly germane to key debates on culture, class and inequality in Sociology [2], and to understandings of equity, accountability and efficiency in policy making, which inform ongoing debates about cultural</p>		

value, including current concerns with 'cultural democracy' in Arts Management and Cultural Policy Studies [4].

Key findings particularly relevant to the impact described in this case study stem from the intensive, longitudinal work carried out by Miles and Ebrey in Peterculter, a suburban 'village' on the edge of Aberdeen [5]. Originally funded by Creative Scotland (ii), it received further support from Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Accelerator Account (IAA) funding from 2017 - 2019. The research in Peterculter began in 2014 and was designed in collaboration with Creative Scotland to respond to its particular strategic policy concern with what the organisation regarded as culturally peripheral or 'edge' communities in Scotland. IAA funding supported the work of two resident citizen researchers, who conducted a cultural planning survey and interviews, and helped to organise community planning meetings and focus groups. The citizen research approach added new value by accessing and representing hard-to-reach groups in the village, ensuring a voice was given to marginalised people, and providing a ground-up dynamic to local cultural policy development.

Peterculter is, in fact, a microcosm of the peripheral urban settlements in which the majority of UK citizens live but which have been more broadly overlooked in UK social and cultural policy [4]. Understanding Everyday Participation (UEP) research here has shown *how* the neglect of such communities reinforces the deficit model of participation [1], fostering feelings of being 'left behind', while failing to realise the potential of their social and civic resources [5]. In the specific context of policy understandings of cultural participation, UEP research in Peterculter has demonstrated that the metropolitan bias in creative industries policy discourse obscures alternative models of participation and cultural value, and a poor understanding of the spatialisation of participation places communities on the edge of city centres and urban cores, such as Peterculter, in a policy vacuum. The research recommends that investment prioritise the democratic renewal of local cultural infrastructures and the networks of voluntary activity that sustain them.

### 3. References to the research

- [1] **Miles, A.** and Sullivan, A. (2012). 'Understanding Taste and Participation in Culture and Sport: Mixing Methods, Reordering Knowledges', *Cultural Trends*, 21(4), 311-324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2012.726795>
- [2] **Miles, A.** (2016). 'Telling tales of participation: exploring the interplay of time and territory in cultural boundary work using participation narratives', *Cultural Trends*, 25(3), 182-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1204046>
- [3] Leguina, A. and **Miles, A.** (2017). 'Fields of participation and lifestyle in England: revealing the regional dimension from a reanalysis of the Taking Part Survey using Multiple Factor Analysis', *Cultural Trends*, 26(1), 4-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2017.1274356>
- [4] Bunting, C., Gilmore, A. and **Miles, A.** (2020). 'Calling participation to account: Taking part in the politics of method', in E. Belfiore and L. Gibson (eds.), *Histories of Cultural Participation, Values and Governance*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [5] **Miles, A.** and **Ebrey, J.** (2017), The Village in the city: participation and cultural value on the urban periphery, *Cultural Trends*, 26(1), 58-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2017.1274360>

### Related grant awards:

- (i) Miles, A. (PI), Gilmore, A. (Co-I), 'Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values (UEP)', AHRC, (2012 – 2017), GBP1,500,000.

- (ii) Miles, A. Creative Scotland, GBP175,000.
- (iii) Miles, A. ESRC Impact Accelerator Account (IAA), (2017 – 2019), GBP35,000.

**Evidence of research quality:** Publications 1-3 and 5 appeared in a peer-reviewed, field-leading journal. Ranking among the most downloaded articles in the journal, they have also been widely cited.

#### 4. Details of the impact

Research findings of the UEP project have influenced the reform of cultural planning and policy to reflect a broader and richer definition of culture at local and national scales in Scotland. This has resulted in widening the inclusion of previously marginalised groups and forms of participation and opened up opportunities to access resources for local cultural development.

##### 1. Enhancing social and cultural capital within the local community of Peterculter

Miles and Ebrey worked within Peterculter, Aberdeen (population 7,220) to raise civic capacity, leverage resources, and improve perceptions of the social and civic importance of locally situated everyday cultural practices. Sustained engagement with the village through long-term, embedded ethnographic work, directly involved local people in UEP's research [5]. It included walking workshops around local cultural spaces, a photographic exhibition about place and memory, village meetings and involvement in the annual gala, engaging with more than 3,000 people. In 2015, a community film, 'A Short Film About Everyday Participation in Culter', was developed, which Fergus Hardie, former Chair of Culter Village Hall, explains "*premiered...to great acclaim amongst a capacity audience of 300*" at Culter Village Hall [A]. These activities "*encouraged a feeling of confidence amongst Culter residents*" fostering a "*positive, critical appraisal of village life*" [A]. David Wakefield, Chair of Culter Community Council (CCC), states that "*the research...has built up community cohesion and is helping us work towards building a more diverse representation in the institutions of village life irrespective of culture or economic status*" [B].

The researchers harnessed the community's new found awareness to address the negative effects of perceived policy neglect, working with citizen researchers to develop a co-produced cultural action plan (CCAP) for the village [C]. The CCAP identifies five priorities all of which have been implemented by CCC. Wakefield writes that, "*UEP research has made a very significant contribution to our village community and is in my view an excellent ambassador for publicly funded research ... enacting some real changes*" [B]. The research has enabled: 1) the development of a new purpose-built central facility by the local authority; 2) the creation of a "*virtual village*" employing a communications specialist; 3) repairs to a flood-damaged riverside walk; and 4) the enactment of new government legislation *to develop "community spaces"* [A, B]. The latter was taken forward by "*a new, more diverse*" Culter Volunteer Force [B]. Hardie adds, "*we now have a thriving [youth] club at which weekly attendance averages thirty young people*" [A]. To date, "*under UEP's influence*", more than GBP18,000 has been raised from local businesses, Aberdeen City Council and Co-operative Community Fund sources [A, B].

##### 2. Enacting organisational and strategic change within Aberdeen City Council and Creative Scotland to mobilise a more diverse and inclusive definition of culture

The research findings supported a move towards the recognition of the value of participation and "*individual wellbeing and social cohesion*", in the practices of Aberdeen local authority [D]. Lesley Thompson, former Cultural Policy & Partnership Manager for

Aberdeen City Council writes that the research process and findings “*shifted the thinking within the city’s creative sector and within the Council away from a deficit model, wherein participation was defined by engagement (or not) within specific forms of arts activity (such as the subsidised performing or visual arts)*” [D]. The research demonstrated that Culter had a very distinct context which “*was not being actively considered or reflected within priorities, working practices or the allocation of funds*” influencing a shift in the priorities and process of the local authority’s Creative Funding programme, to an emphasis on responding to distinct contexts and involvement of residents within its funding processes. “*This is a major shift in thinking for the city, and UEP ... was the key instigator of this*” [D].

Creative Scotland’s Head of Research and Knowledge, Alastair Evans, notes how the organisation’s involvement in UEP’s work “*has given us a rare opportunity to look closely at local cultural ecosystems and to benefit from detailed ethnographic research*”, making the organisation “*more cognisant of the structural limitations of current typologies of cultural engagement*” and helping it to “*take a more holistic view of the cultural lives of those we serve*” [E]. Specifically, UEP’s expanded understanding of culture, which was subsequently embedded in the new Scottish Cultural Strategy (Section 3 below), has directly influenced the design of Creative Scotland’s own research and evaluation tools. In 2016, Creative Scotland amended its end-of-project-monitoring forms for grantees to capture narrative accounts of the social and community impacts leading the organisation to focus “*more explicitly on reporting inequalities in cultural provision and uptake*” [E]. From 2017, Creative Scotland also began publishing analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as part of its Annual Review of Performance [E].

Gary Cameron, Head of Place, Partnerships and Communities (PPC) at Creative Scotland writes that the research “*has had a significant impact on our thinking and practice as a team... [it has] focused our attention to, and deepened our appreciation of, the breadth and value of everyday cultural participation*” [F]. The research has, “*had direct and meaningful impact on*” Creative Scotland’s new funding strategy which, owing to the impact of Covid-19, has not yet been published [F]. Changes include the introduction of direct support which “*more overtly*” responds to and is informed by the specific context of each locale, resulting in a “*more diverse range of activity being supported*” [F]. The UEP research has also had a wider impact on the organisational practices of Creative Scotland, supporting internal dialogue and collaboration between the PPC Team and art-form colleagues [F]. Cameron states that, “*it sparked a series of internal and external discussions on the value and validity of everyday participation as forms of cultural engagement and the role of a national body therein*” [F].

### **3. Shaping Scottish government cultural policy to incorporate vernacular, everyday cultural practices**

Subsequently, UEP research was central to the development of a new Scottish National Cultural Strategy (2018-20) [G, H]. Ebrey played “*a leading role*” [G] in the standing academic roundtable set up to advise on the draft strategy, where evidence and argument from UEP research “*fed directly into discussions*” and “*helped to establish the frames for debate*” [H]. This was particularly evident in the specific recommendations of the group, both in terms of how ‘culture’ should be defined and the types of activities that might thus be valued and supported [H].

The previous national cultural strategy published in 2000, with its top-down focus on the arts and social inclusion, reinforced the deficit model of culture [1]. The 2020 document employs a much wider definition of culture and understanding of cultural participation [I].

Leonie Bell, the Scottish Government's former Head of Cultural Strategy, writes that the research, "*crucially influenced new understandings of culture during our development of the new culture strategy...how we articulated the meaning and purpose of culture, can be traced back clearly to UEP's work on the edge of Aberdeen*" [H]. The direct impact of UEP's research on policy can then be seen in the final definition of participation that was adopted in the new Culture Strategy for Scotland and the new national outcome for culture. "*The fact that the strategy adopts a plural understanding is a direct reflection of Andy and Jill's work [which] also shifted thinking about how to understand culture in policy, from an emphasis on measurement to a more qualitative concern with what it is and what it does*" [H].

The new strategy states "*Cultural engagement and participation is currently measured relative to more formal and established forms of culture, many of which are free and accessible. However not everyone participates in these forms of cultural engagement. People engage in cultural activity in many different ways and how that is measured and reported must be reconsidered to better reflect the nature and breadth of cultural engagement*" [I, p. 44]. Bell refers to the recursive impact of UEP research in policy whereby the national strategy's change of emphasis has opened up new opportunities for cultural understanding and engagement at the local level. Writing in her current role as the Strategic Lead of Paisley's Cultural Regeneration Partnership, she highlights how the influence of UEP's research has come full circle: "*recognising and supporting 'everyday participation' is now one of our strategic priorities in Paisley... and we are using the expanded definition of culture to break down the historic barriers to existing civic institutions. In this sense the new cultural strategy has authorised the local authority to see culture through a UEP lens and, in turn, the whole idea of cultural policy suddenly makes sense to ordinary people*" [H].

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [A] Testimonial from Former Chair, Culter Village Hall. Received 11 April 2019.
- [B] Testimonial from Chair of Culter Community Council. Received 22 June 2020.
- [C] Culter Cultural Action Plan
- [D] Testimonial from Former Head of Culture, Aberdeen City Council, Received 9 October 2020.
- [E] Testimonial from Head of Research, Creative Scotland. Received 29 June 2020.
- [F] Testimonial from Head of Places, Partnership & Communities, Creative Scotland. Received 30 September 2020.
- [G] Testimonial from Chair of Cultural Strategy Academic sub-group. Received 23 October 2020
- [H] Testimonial from Former Director of Scottish National Cultural Strategy. Received 2 July 2020.
- [I] National Scottish Cultural Strategy 2020, <https://bit.ly/2HdnZuU>