

Institution: University of Warwick
Unit of Assessment: 35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
Title of case study: Re-thinking the value of arts and culture
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research in the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies has demonstrated that contemporary debates about the place of the arts in our society are shaped by the long-standing and often unacknowledged assumption, going back to Ancient Greece, that the arts can positively transform societies. By providing policymakers, arts funders and advocates with a new way of thinking about the impact and value of the arts in a broader social context, the research has presented an original and fresh approach to the cultural value debate. This work has also demonstrated that arts and humanities scholarship has a distinctive and valuable contribution to make to cultural policy debates and public discourse on the role of the arts in society.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research is a sustained intellectual engagement with the question of the social value of the arts, and its articulation in scholarship, public discourse and policy. Dr Eleonora Belfiore has critically examined policy discourse, bringing into focus the underlying yet often unacknowledged assumptions of the 'arts are good for you' rhetoric that underpins much of post war British and European cultural policy. It has two main strands:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The intellectual history underlying contemporary assumptions about the arts as agents of personal and social transformation; how this rhetoric has become embedded in institutions and how it drives the formation of cultural, social and economic policies; and how 'value' has been allocated historically to some cultural activities but not others. 2. The question of 'value' and the problem of its measurement in the sphere of cultural policy and within Higher Education, especially a critique of the use of 'impact' as a proxy for 'value' and the exploration of non-economic approaches to value and valuation. <p>With Professor Oliver Bennett (appointed 1992), Dr Belfiore (appointed 2004) developed a critical-historical approach to the social impact of the arts and its role in cultural policy. This involved an intellectual history of the idea of 'social impact', and the exploration of the theoretical and methodological challenges posed by the need to evaluate and measure impact in a policy context. The research showed that attributing value to the arts based on their alleged positive social effects is, in fact, an intellectual stance as old as Western civilisation itself rather than a New Labour development. The research also demonstrated that arguments articulating the negative effects of the arts have been as strong historically as those advocating its benefits, but have been obscured in policy discourse because they did not fit the dominant rhetoric.</p> <p>Later phases of the research analyse the value and impact discourse as it relates to arts and humanities research. This led to a mapping of the 'impact discourse' in Higher Education, and the identification of two strands of thinking and writing: a 'doom and gloom' strand that sees arts and humanities in perpetual crisis and a second strand composed of ambitious and unrealistic declarations about the social, economic and cultural impacts of the humanities. Through research which has coalesced in the co-edited volume <i>Humanities in the 21st Century</i> (July 2013), Belfiore demonstrates a 'third-way' in the debate by illustrating that the arts and humanities are already engaged in tackling the big challenges of contemporary life through interdisciplinary academic and professional collaborations.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p><u>Monographs:</u> Belfiore and Bennett, <i>The Social Impact of the Arts: An intellectual history</i>. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008. [REF2]</p> <p><u>Edited books:</u> Belfiore and Anna Upchurch, eds., <i>Humanities in the 21st Century: Beyond utility and markets</i>. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013.</p> <p><u>Peer-reviewed articles:</u> 1. Belfiore and Bennett (2010) 'Beyond the "toolkit approach": Arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy-making', <i>Journal for Cultural Research</i>, Vol. 14, n. 2, pp. 121-142. [REF2]</p>

2. Belfiore (2009) 'On bullshit in cultural policy practice and research: Notes from the British case', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 15, n. 3, pp. 343-359. [REF2]
3. Belfiore and Bennett (2007) 'Rethinking the Social Impacts of the Arts', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol. 13, n. 2 (Vienna Conference Issue: Part I), pp. 135-151.
4. Belfiore and Bennett (2004) 'Auditing Culture: The Subsidised cultural sector in the New Public Management', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 10:2, pp. 183-202.

Evidence of quality:

The Social Impact of the Arts was endorsed by the former Chairman of ACE. It was favourably reviewed in *THES* twice and in the following art and policy journals: *Arts Professional*, *Media International Australia*, *Theatre Quarterly*, *Leisure Studies*, *The Journal of Arts Management*, *Law and Society* and *Cultural Trends*.

In his review for the *Times Higher Education* (Feb 2011), Chris Jones (Senior Lecturer, English, University of St. Andrews) described the book as 'superlative', remarking that 'the book's compass and ambition is nothing short of humbling'.

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=415278§ioncode=26>.

The peer-reviewed journal articles and monograph have been cited extensively in academic and policy literature. Several invitations to present work to non-academic audiences and to advise on policy developments in Britain and abroad have resulted directly from their wide and diverse readerships.

Funding:

1. *The Social Impact of the Arts*, AHRC and ACE, 2004 – 2007, £146,148.
2. *Beyond Utility and the markets: Articulating the role of the humanities in the 21st century*, Research Workshops on the impact of the Humanities Scheme, AHRC, 2008 – 2009, £23,222; Graduate Liberal Studies program, Duke University, \$10,000 USD; North American Travel Fund, Warwick University, Jun-Jul 2009, £750.
3. *Cultural Value Initiative*, Research Development Fund Strategic Award, Warwick University, 2010 – 2011, £9,700.
4. *Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values*, AHRC, 2012 – 2017, £1,221,676, PI Andrew Miles, Manchester; Co-I Belfiore £56,779.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has contributed to discussions about the social value of the arts within public bodies, arts organisations and government culture departments in the UK, Europe and Australia. The research's key messages have been picked up by Senior Officers in Arts Council England, politicians and civil servants in cultural departments, as well as by culture professionals and creative practitioners. It has provided these beneficiaries with new ways of thinking about the value and impact of the arts and culture in a broader social context, providing an important first step towards developing new measurements and arguments for discussing value in a policy context.

The research was used by Arts Council England to inform its strategic thinking in the development of its new strategy in 2011. Belfiore's and Bennett's 2007 and 2010 articles were identified as 'particularly influential in reframing questions about the impacts of the arts' in the literature review prepared to inform the design of the strategy (2). The review highlighted two of their main messages – that the debate about intrinsic v. instrumental value of the arts has a long history and that recent research has become conflated with advocacy. The then Director of Research has confirmed that:

'The most useful aspect of *The Social Impact of the Arts* was not a specific output but rather the contribution of an in-depth, historical, critical analysis to contemporary debates about the role and value of the arts. It was helpful for the Arts Council to see its current dilemmas in the context of thousands of years of debate and to acknowledge a rich and well-established discourse about the potential negative impacts of the arts as well as the positive. More specifically, the classification of impacts has been a useful starting point for other research exercises and the work on determinants of impact has helped the Arts Council to understand the challenges and complexities of evaluating an individual's artistic experience.

The research was an important part of the background literature that the Arts Council reviewed to inform its ten-year strategic framework. As part of this process the Arts Council debated whether its long-term goals should include a focus on economic and social impact and eventually decided against this, choosing instead to focus on core areas such as participation and the sustainability of arts organisations where the Arts Council can have more direct influence. The research by Belfiore and Bennett was part of the wider discourse that informed and gave weight to this decision.’ (3)

That the research influenced the thinking of the most senior officers at ACE is illustrated by Sir Christopher Frayling, former Chairman of ACE, who used *The Social Impact of the Arts* in his valedictory lecture (29 Jan 2009) to argue that recent criticisms of the council’s work deflected from the real debates in the arts. In particular, Frayling drew out two of the research’s key messages – that the current debate about the value of the arts should be situated in a long-standing discussion going back to the origins of Western intellectual thought (chapters 2, 6 and 9, esp. pp. 178-83) and that the move towards evidence-based policy marginalises the subjective aesthetic experience provided by the arts (Introduction, esp. pp. 5-9). So important did Frayling consider this work (the only academic work referenced in his speech) that he said, ‘I can recommend Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett’s *The Social Impact of the Arts* published last year as a real nourishment to public debate.’ (1) This aspect of Frayling’s speech, referring to the historical tradition of debate about the arts going back to Plato, was cited in *The Guardian* (29 Jan 2009).

The research has also provided evidence-based arguments to charities and arts organisations who advocate policy makers to acknowledge the value spectrum of the arts and culture. Belfiore was consulted by telephone by cultural consultant John Knell, co-author of the Royal Society for the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce’s pamphlet ‘Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society’ to give advice and feedback on early drafts. It was distributed to culture professionals, practitioners and policymakers at the State of the Arts Conference, February 2011, and is available online (4,082 unique page views and 583 views on *Scribd*). The authors drew on Belfiore’s and Bennett’s research (published in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010) to claim that the sector needs to re-invent the instrumental case to argue more convincingly for the value of the arts. The publications were referenced 6 times; the 2004 and 2010 articles were quoted over several lines. Belfiore is the only university-based researcher named in the acknowledgements. (4)

The #culturalvalue Initiative, which began in 2012 and developed out of Belfiore’s critique of evidence-based cultural policy (2009; 2010), works with artists and culture professionals to enhance their discourse about the value of arts and culture through evidence-based arguments and offers them a voice in the debate about value in cultural policy making. The #culturalvalue Initiative connects to this community and this community to each other, scholars, policy makers and the general public through a website which fosters debate on how we articulate value in terms which are non-economic. It features a curated blog (with contributions from the sector in the UK and abroad) and resources. Three consultation events in 2013 have connected the artistic community with the research: ‘Dangerous Ground: reframing cultural value’, in collaboration with Mission, Models, Money, the cultural professional network, and a-n The Artists Information Company comprised events with invited creative practitioners in Manchester (30 artists; visual arts), London (20 artists; performing arts) and Edinburgh (12 artists; crafts). Organisations representing artists who participated in ‘Dangerous Ground’ have said that they think differently about the issues surrounding cultural value after collaborating with Belfiore, ‘She has created a language and a way of framing the issue that expresses the reality and importance of the debate for front line practitioners that enables them to engage.’ Susan Jones, Director of A-N, has confirmed that Belfiore ‘has been instrumental in raising issues about how to value creative practitioners that I and others can draw on to ensure that there is some kind of support for artists in the next phase of funding.’ She is considered among creative practitioners to be ‘a benchmark voice on the matter.’

Her research is immediately relevant to the current debate about cultural value in Scotland. Creative Scotland, the national organisation which oversees funding and development in the arts and culture, and the professional arts sector are presently re-evaluating the value system attributed

Impact case study (REF3b)

to the arts and culture in the country, and reflecting on the values that should underpin a future vision. In addition to the consultation Belfiore held with craft makers in Edinburgh as part of 'Dangerous Ground', she was an invited keynote speaker at the conference 'Culturing our Creativity' organised by Creative Scotland, Arts & Business Scotland, and the Cultural Enterprise Office, and involved arts charities and advocacy groups to identify the conditions needed for arts and culture to flourish in Scotland and to begin developing a strategic narrative for future support.

Belfiore has used her research to provide advice directly to UK policymakers. In 2011, she was invited to participate in two roundtable discussions (18 May and 11 July) on protecting cultural education with the then shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the then shadow Secretary of State for Education. Based on her research into the reasons underlying cultural policies, Belfiore argued that the Labour party needs to develop a political argument against cuts to cultural education in addition to economic and social justifications. In November 2011, Belfiore was invited to Portcullis House to advise the team for Dan Jarvis, the new shadow culture minister, about reforming Labour's Arts policies. (5) She was the keynote speaker at a policy roundtable organised by the charity Industry and Parliamentary Trust (5 Jun 2013). Speaking on the theme of 'The Role of the Arts in the 21st Century', Belfiore applied her research to the issue of value in the arts before MPs, members of the House of Lords, ACE, and professionals from arts and cultural organisations. The discussion was referenced by the event chair in a debate in the House of Lords about the contribution of the arts and culture to the economy (13 Jun 2013).

Belfiore's research influences discussions about cultural value in a policy context around the world. Since 2008, she has been invited to give keynote speeches for policymakers, public and private arts funders, community representatives and stakeholders in the USA, Europe and Australia. (6) She was an invited participant at a conference to develop the first draft of *Kulturleitbild Basel* which formed 'part of the ground pillars of the definitive draft and have helped to discuss and develop a cultural policy for the Canton of Basel.' (7)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Sir Christopher Frayling, Arts Council Chair's valedictory lecture, 29 Jan 2009, <http://www.policyreview.tv/podcast/228/2564>.
2. Bunting, Catherine (2010) *Achieving great art for everyone: A review of research and literature to inform the Arts Council's 10-year strategic framework* (London: Arts Council England), especially chapter 3, 'Arts Funding and Development'.
- 'In the academic arena, the work of Belfiore and Bennett (2007) has been particularly influential in reframing questions about the impacts of the arts. Their analysis provides a powerful reminder that the instrumentalisation debate is 2,500 years old and includes a rich discourse concerning the negative impacts of the arts as well as the positive. They argue the need for a more sophisticated approach to understanding cultural value and its contested nature, and for more specific and detailed exploration of the mechanisms by which the arts might impact on individuals and society more widely.'
3. Former Director of Research, Arts Council England, statement by email.
4. John Knell and Matthew Taylor, RSA, 'Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society: Remaking the case for the arts' (2011), http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/384482/RSA-Pamphlets-Arts_Funding_Austerity_BigSociety.pdf.
5. Invitations by email to consult with former Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Shadow Culture Minister (all 2011).
6. 'Making Culture Count: Re-thinking Measures of cultural vitality, well-being and citizenship' Conference Evaluation Report, Cultural Development Network, Melbourne, Australia, 2-4 May 2012.
7. Head of Marketing, Technorama, formerly of NonProCons, Basel, management and fundraising consultancy to non-profit organisations.
8. Director and Co-founder, Mission, Models, Money, London.
9. Director and Publisher, a-n The Artist Information Company, Newcastle and London.
10. Hansard Reports, House of Lords, 13 June 2013, p. 1749.