The Changing Landscape of Arts Participation

A Synthesis of Literature and Expert Interviews

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Overview

The 21st century cultural landscape is undergoing dramatic change. Social forces driving this change are the U.S. population's historic demographic transformation to becoming a majority-minority society; rapid evolution in technological capabilities making more forms of artistic expression and culture more accessible than ever before and enabling new forms of expression; and new expectations about work, leisure, and opportunities for self-expression and engagement. The cultural sector is a complex ecosystem made up of the commercial arts, the nonprofit professional arts, and the creative, expressive and cultural practices that people engage in every day. Yet, over the past several decades, arts participation has largely been measured as consumption—via ticket and product sales, and as numbers of people attending events. A downward trend in the rate of adult attendance at benchmark arts events continued into 2012, based on findings from the National Endowment for the Arts's 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. However, there is national, regionally-based and international recognition that the nonprofit arts field needs a much broader lens than *arts-participation-as-measured-by-attendance* in order to understand the tastes and choices of contemporary cultural audiences. Analyzing *cultural participation*, broadly defined, demands a holistic perspective that includes consideration of a wide array of professional and avocational arts, creative and cultural activity, people, places and organizations (Kreidler and Trounstine, 2005, 6-7; Markusen, 2011, 2; Stern and Seifert, 2005, 8).

A broadened lens of *cultural participation* demands new tools, as recognized in a recent UNESCO report:

> "We are currently observing big changes and the rise of new cultural paradigms and behaviour, armed with a set of research tools elaborated in the last century and adapted to analyse social life through a well-defined taxonomy that is every year less adequate for helping our understanding." (UNESCO, 2012, 12)

The shift in the cultural landscape now underway requires a fundamental reconceptualization of cultural forms, modes of interaction, sites of engagement, and actors. This is a critical moment for taking stock of the field and for posing new questions:

- *What are the many artistic, creative and aesthetic forms that people engage in?*
- *How can we understand and describe the multiple dimensions and variations in experiences, settings, contexts and motivations for how individuals engage in this broad domain of activity?*
- *How can the many dimensions and nuances of such activity be appropriately and effectively captured in a short survey instrument?*

This report provides an overview of theoretical issues concerning:

- **How people participate**, both in terms of what activities should be included within the larger, ecological domain of artistic and cultural activity, and the manner and degree of people's involvement with them
- **Who** participates
- **Where** participation happens
- **Motivations and barriers** to participation

This report is informed by a review of academic and grey literature and expert interviews. A substantial portion of literature reviewed employed an anthropological, ethnographic or sociological approach to documenting and studying communities in California in an effort to identify activities that are artistically and culturally meaningful—both in terms of heritage-based and folk traditions specific to communities that reflect the state's diverse population. This report was originally developed by NORC at the University of Chicago with support from The James Irvine Foundation during the design phase of the *California Survey of Arts & Cultural Participation.* California is already home to a majority-minority population and is leading the nation's shift in this demographic direction. This review of literature is therefore oriented to understanding the "cultural frames" of various socio-demographic communities and to unpacking the many dimensions—meanings, settings, and social context—related to this domain of cultural participation. An especially important component of the expanded analysis is related to the evolving online and digital activity that enables the production, consumption, promotion and support of artistic activity.[1]

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[1] Jennifer Novak-Leonard and Nick Rabkin conducted interviews with: Jeff Chang, Executive Director of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts + Committee on Black Performing Arts at Stanford University; Amy Kitchener, Executive Director, Alliance for California Traditional Arts; Bill Ivey, Director of the Vanderbilt University US-China Center for Education and Culture and a former NEA chairman; David Mas Masumoto, writer and farmer based in Del Rey, CA; Hugo Morales, Executive Director and co-founder of Radio Bilingüe Inc.; Daniel Sheehy, Curator and Director, Smithsonian Folkways.

How People Participate

The Fuzzy Concepts of "Arts participation" & "cultural participation"

Music, visual arts, dance, and narrative-based art forms are all means of expression. However, there is not always a consensus about what constitutes art or creative expression, about what is broadly cultural, and about what is relevant for measurement purposes.

Taking a broad perspective, UNESCO in 2001 defined culture as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2001).

Kreidler and Trounstine (2005) offer a conceptual model for describing the cultural ecosystem that can serve as an initial guide for thinking about the nature of "arts participation." Their model includes arts, as defined by broad consensus and anchored by the professional production and delivery of those arts, as its narrowest lens. But the model also broadens to describe participatory activity that, in its widest aperture, includes cultural literacy—"the fluency in traditions, aesthetics, manners, customs, language and the arts, and the ability to apply critical thinking and creativity to these elements" (6).

Significant efforts have been made by cultural policy makers and researchers to define "what counts" as artistic and/or cultural activity. The European Statistical System Network for Culture (ESSnet-Culture) has detailed cultural domains of activity and dimensions in an elaborate structure to define what counts. Specifically, they build on the tenets that cultural activities are:

■   "Related to notions of cultural expressions" and
■   "Rooted in creation and communication through symbols" (ESSnet 2012, 42)[2]

ESSNet-Culture developed ten cultural domains, eight[3] of which they suggest are relevant for "participation" statistics (UNESCO 2012, 17):

1.   Heritage — including Museums, Historical places, Archaeological sites, Intangible heritage (e.g., language)
2.   Archives

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[2] ESSnet also develops tenets specific to market-based activity, such as activities leading to intellectual property rights.

[3] Advertising and architecture are the two domains suggested as not pertinent to "participation" measures.

3. Libraries

4. Book & Press

5. Visuals arts - Plastic arts, Photography, Design)

6. Performing arts - Music, Dance, Drama, Combined arts and other live show

7. Audiovisual & Multimedia - Film, Radio, Television, Video, Sound recordings, Multimedia works, Videogames

8. Art crafts

UNESCO (2012, 16-17) defines relevant cultural domains as:

1. Cultural and Natural Heritage

2. Performance and Celebration

3. Visual Arts and Crafts

4. Books and Press

5. Audio-visual and Interactive Media

6. Design and Creative Services

And they identify four "transversal" domains that cut across those listed above:

■ Intangible Cultural Heritage

■ Education & Training

■ Archiving & Conservation

■ Equipment & Supporting Materials

The degree to which the term "art" resonates with individuals varies greatly, despite more general consensus about being involved in artistic creation and practices. Lena and Lindemann (2014) have found that even individuals who earned arts degrees and have been or are employed in the creation of artistic work do not necessarily self-identify as artists. They suggest that some level of embeddedness— be it emotional, physical, or another form—in the "art world," formally defined, is fundamental to self-identifying with artistic endeavors. This was echoed by one of our interviewees:

> *I'm a writer. For a long time I thought of myself as a journalist, not an artist. Then I won a USA Artists award. But I've always been around the arts and creative[people]. That is what I write about, but I always felt like writing about them was not art. But now I do...This feeling of being part of a network. I'm lucky to have those moments every day. Occasionally you have some ecstatic moments.* (interview with Jeff Chang [paraphrased], April 12, 2013)

Self-identifying as an artist or creative person can also be grounded by one's own social networks and shared values and perspectives. For example, another of our interviewees, David

Mas Masumoto, said that he feels he is part of the local *creative economy* that is fueled by daily conversations and interactions (interview [paraphrased], April 3, 2013).

Lena and Lindemann (2014) emphasize the important role terminology plays for policy and measurement. They ask, for example, if a survey researcher is more interested in capturing the attention of people who identify themselves with "arts" or people who identify with aesthetically creative and expressive activity.

As a practical example, the Alliance for California Traditional Arts[4] (ACTA) does not put out "calls for artists," since they found that the individuals the Alliance thought of as primary candidates for their calls may not self-identify with the term "artist". Instead, ACTA has found that variations on the term "culture" resonate more strongly with their targeted communities. ACTA has found that many of the people they work with, although intensely involved in traditional arts, do not self-identify as "artists" but rather as individuals wanting to preserve or celebrate their cultural practices: "People often talk about keeping culture alive [through] teaching—about an active process of preservation" (interview with Amy Kitchener, April 9, 2013). A key insight for broadening an understanding of cultural participation is that networks and social circles are influential in terms of self-identification, activities undertaken, and taste development.

> *I try to not use the word art; it's a misnomer because of the specific cultural baggage it carries. If you use that term, then you'll start the conversation off on the wrong foot. I like Bill Ivey's term expressive lives; many cultures don't have the word art. David Warren, historian of North American Indians and Latin American indigenous people and member of the Santa Clara Pueblo, talks about how the closest term for art is the word for "good work"... For a lot of people, art is just part of culture, I find this especially true for young people. It's a lifestyle, in a deeper sense – how you think, what you value and how you express yourself and express yourself as part of group.*
> (interview with Daniel Sheehy [paraphrased], April 17, 2013)
>
> *"Arts participation" has come to mean "attendance at performances and exhibitions:" it's no longer a useful term at all from the perspective of the ways people actually engage art.* (interview with Bill Ivey [paraphrased], April 17, 2013)

Because the term "arts participation" for many people implies the consumption of Western, canonical artistic forms, capturing a broader range of cultural participation will require new terminology that includes a far broader range of activities.

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[4] www.actaonline.org

Folk and traditional arts

For a number of years, researchers have been aware of the large number and variety of "folk" arts in which Americans take part, although it seems that there has been an attempt only recently to include these activities under the umbrella of "arts participation." Folk, or "traditional," cultural experiences tend to revolve around heritage activities, such as traditional music and dance, performing indigenous rituals, and learning a community-specific craft, to name a few examples.[5] Recent studies undertaken to account for these otherwise overlooked activities have indicated that the folk arts play a crucial role in strengthening racial and ethnic social identities within specific communities in the U.S.

Folk art activity continues to slip under the radar of arts participation studies because these experiences often take the form of unincorporated arts or informal arts, which is to say that they are among the many activities that do not take place in conjunction with a nonprofit or commercial organization (Peters and Cherbo, 1998; Wali et al., 2002). For example, an important part of Hmong expressive culture in the San Joaquin Valley in California is the funeral ceremony that involves playing the qeej, a reeded bamboo mouth organ, which is played to guide the spirit of the deceased through its journey to the spirit world. This instrument is used at ceremonial, as well as public celebratory occasions throughout the year (interview with Amy Kitchener, April 9, 2013).

Many of the folk arts are practiced within a specific community in order to celebrate heritage; they are passed down to younger generations by family and other group members, thereby keeping these activities away from the domain of formal agencies, non-profit or otherwise (Peterson, 1996). By virtue of being largely independent of established institutions, folk art groups are often not considered for major funding or for any funding at all. Folk arts have also been missing from previous measurements of the health of U.S. arts organizations and cultural participation because they have yet to be included on major survey instruments with the intent of capturing the breadth and depth of public engagement in these activities. Peters and Cherbo project that, instead of only 57.9 percent of Americans appearing to participate in arts and culture experiences, as reported in the 1992 NEA Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, we would have seen approximately 95 percent engagement in arts and culture by adults that year had these "unincorporated arts" been included on the SPPA and similar surveys (Peters and Cherbo, 1998, 123).

In addition to the identification and recognition of types of folk art activities prevalent today, studies have found that these experiences play a vital role in strengthening social bonds within a community, as well as carrying traditions into the present. Practicing a traditional art within one's own community has been

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[5] See http://www.actaonline.org/content/find-artists-communities for examples of California based traditional arts groups.

demonstrated to help sustain a "community of memory" for the corresponding racial or ethnic group (Peterson, 1996, 14). When traditional music and dance are passed down to a younger generation of heritage group members, for example, the transfer of knowledge and expression of community identity inherent in such activity serves to strengthen social bonds within the specific heritage group (Peterson, 1996). On an individual level, connecting with one's racial or ethnic group via engagement in relevant folk arts is a powerful means of cultivating ethnic pride and a sense of social belonging (Salazar, 2011; Wallingford, 2010). The passing down of knowledge from older to younger generations in the form of folk arts and cultural experiences also has the effect of helping that community to negotiate their place in present-day America. By continuing an indigenous tradition in what may be a relatively new home for a given racial or ethnic group, younger generations are bridging the gap between practices previously carried out in their ancestral homeland and what may be the recent establishment of community social networks in the U.S. (Elkin, 2007; Cannon, 2005). Bill Ivey, former NEA Chairman, has argued that both "heritage" and "voice" are critical dimensions of participation.

> *When categorizing creative, participatory practices, I have some confidence in the dichotomy of motivation between "heritage" on one hand, and "voice" on the other. People get involved in creative practices to satisfy both needs -- "heritage" to be part of history, continuity, and community; "voice" to stand apart as individuals, expressing a unique personality and vision. Every creative context is unique: Artistry in a Native American community might emphasize heritage, while creative work among New York City painters might be mostly about voice; but ultimately a meaningful expressive life requires a measure of both.* (interview with Bill Ivey [paraphrased], April 17, 2013)

Folk arts can also impact people outside the heritage group from which the activity in question originated. As it has been discovered in multiple studies, engagement in traditional arts and culture can have the effect of bringing people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds together around the same experience, resulting in new social connections. In many cases, people who have a mutual interest in learning a specific instrument or watching performances of a particular musical genre often find themselves among others outside their immediate social or heritage community. For example, students of the North Indian tabla drum tend to be a mix of people of both Indian and non-Indian descent, though people of both backgrounds learn under a native tabla "guru," or teacher (Nuttall, 2010). Both parties share in the experience of learning the instrument itself, as well as North Indian "ways of thinking" in the course of their apprenticeship (Nuttall, 2010, 5). Similarly, *Bals de maiso*n—celebrations that take place in domestic spaces with a focus on Creole music, food, and social dance—which originated in the California Bay Area as events with exclusively Creole attendance, have since expanded to include a broader range of participants from other backgrounds. The gradual shift in the nature of these events can be attributed to an outgrowth of dance lessons, music groups, and social clubs related to Creole music and culture in the

area that draw people from other social groups to *Bals de maison* (DeWitt, 2009, 19). Beyond making connections over a specific shared interest, the variety of activities offered at outdoor festivals in the U.S. attracts a crowd from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to the same experience (Rosenstein, 2010 (a) (b). Many outdoor festivals are hosted in order to celebrate the art and culture of a specific heritage group. However, the variety of activities offered at these events—music, dance, visual art—acts as a draw for people from all over a given region, thus connecting people who may not normally interact with each other within the same space.

In their ability to bring people of various backgrounds together, folk arts generally make less of a distinction between "artists" and audience. These activities might draw a more diverse crowd of participants at outdoor festivals because the social character of these events erases the expectation that attendees sit in silence while watching a performance. Many festivals also feature educational opportunities wherein attendees can learn a skill from professional artists, as seen in the case of performance workshops at Mariachi festivals in California (Rosenstein, 2010(a) (b); Salazar, 2011, 195). Folk arts tend to blur the line between artists and non-artists, as they are often passed down to newer generations within a specific heritage, allowing young people to learn an art form through observation of and working alongside elders or more experienced practitioners. This pattern seems to occur in both folk music and visual arts and crafts: learning how to construct rap lyrics by observing battles (Alim et al., 2011), developing drumming skills through playing alongside a master player (Nuttall, 2010), and spending time with family members in order to learn basket weaving or needlework (Chavez, 2012; Peters and Cherbo, 1998; Peterson, 1996; Baach, 2010). All of these activities demonstrate a crucial aspect of folk art traditions: the lack of distinction between artist/performer and audience.

Although no amount of research can fully elucidate the true variety and scope of folk art activity that occurs in the U.S. today, several studies have found that the majority of such experiences involve learning and performing heritage music and visual arts and crafts. Festivals that foreground heritage music and craft activities have been found to be major areas of participation for people who identify with various racial and ethnic communities (Rosenstein, 2010 (a) (b)). Singing heritage songs and playing traditional instruments for practice and/or performance have often played a central role in perpetuating community traditions and are commonly found at cultural festivals. Several of such "unincorporated" music and verbal arts have been the focus of recent studies: Mariachi festivals and music workshops in southern California (Salazar, 2011; Peterson, 1996), learning the North Indian tabla drum (Nuttall, 2010), the rap battle phenomenon in Los Angeles (Alim et al., 2011), Creole music "jam sessions" and home performances in the California Bay Area (DeWitt, 2009), and poetry slams and open-mic nights (Vernon, 2010) represent just a few examples of this kind of activity taking place in the U.S. at present. Crafts and

visual arts also have a predominant place in folk traditions: learning Hmong *pa ndau* needlework from mothers and grandmothers (Baach, 2010), practicing basket weaving under the guidance of family members and small cultural organizations (Chavez, 2012; Peters and Cherbo, 1998; Peterson, 1996), and local quilt making groups in Mississippi (Peterson, 1996, 52) all fall under the broad category of folk visual arts. Beyond music and visual arts, folk arts and culture activity has also been shown to include practicing and performing traditional dance, creative writing, personal photography or filmmaking (Peters and Cherbo, 1998; Peterson, 1996), performing ancient prayers and rituals (Hernandez-Avila, 2010), learning a language, preparing specific foods, practicing traditional agriculture (Wallingford, 2010, 37) and storytelling (Kaimikaua, 2011).

> *[It is] about the presence of a developed aesthetic system around whatever practice it is that is defined by the community...and there is a specificity around tradition in terms of meaning and context, not only art for art's sake.* (interview with Amy Kitchener, April 9, 2013)

> *Look at the culinary arts. The forgotten art form.... You start looking at this whole world of presentation. Not just the high end, table top presentation, but the food trucks. ...It's fantastic how a peach taco is presented on a plate. ...Amazing way of expression.* (interview with Davis Mas Masumoto [paraphrased], April 3, 2013)

> *[What kinds of cultural or creative activities are you involved with?] I DJ. I don't dance formally. But I like to dance at parties. I practice martial arts. I do all the forms. I do play music. Came up as a DJ, though I don't DJ publicly any more. I write pretty much every day.* (interview with Jeff Chang [paraphrased], April 12, 2013)

Online and digital activity

Scholars and arts organizations alike are trying to find ways to describe and understand the new means of cultural participation through digital technologies. Since the subject area is still relatively new, and continually changing, it is difficult to define this activity. One could argue, for instance, that platforms such as online-gaming (Taylor, 2006), crowd-sourced art (Literat, 2012), writing and posting fan-fiction, and sharing YouTube content , either self-created or otherwise (Burgess and Green, 2009), fit the criteria for online cultural and arts participation. Furthermore, beyond purely "what" defines cultural participation, many are trying to understand why and to what degree people participate in arts and cultural online platforms.

In a study on media education, Jenkins describes online participation as having:

1. Relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement,
2. Strong support for creating and sharing creations with others,

3. Some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices,

4. Members who believe that their contributions matter, and

5. Members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at least, they care what other people think about what they have created). (Jenkins et al., 2009, 5-6).

The ability to choose when and how to participate is central to this medium. As Jenkins (2006) has argued, "consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers" (18). This implies that consumers of media and online forms control their consumption and production; therein lies the definition of online participatory culture, whether it be interactive video-gaming or collaborating on GarageBand projects.

In 2010, the media consulting firm MTM London conducted a study in the UK to understand people's Internet activity with regard to the arts. Its findings show that accessing arts and culture via the Internet is now a "mainstream" activity (MTM London, 4). Moreover, this form of participation does not replace live experiences. This sentiment is echoed by UNESCO, which cites the NEA's work, "…there is evidence that participation via the media encourages face to face participation, especially for some groups of the population (for instance, older people, some ethnic groups, disabled people, single mothers with children, or people living in rural areas). (NEA, 2011)" (UNESCO, 2012, 25). Online participation is not a substitute for live attendance or experiences, but there still remain questions about the extent to which people participate online, and how this kind of engagement is best defined and measured.

MTM London (2010, 5) found five general ways in which people engage with arts and culture online that require increasingly refined skills and knowledge to leverage:

■ Access - Finding out what's going on (e.g., performance dates/times/ticket information);

■ Learning - Gaining new skills and knowledge (e.g., "behind the scenes" tours, video tutorials, virtual tours);

■ Experience - Watching a full performance, work, or exhibition;

■ Sharing - Sharing content, experiences, and opinions (primarily via social media);

■ Creating - Using the internet as a means for artistic production

To investigate online "creating" activity, Literat (2012) studied online crowd-sourced art movements to understand the varying levels of investment from participants and the structures provided or imposed by the artists behind the works. Online crowd-sourced art is a relatively new phenomenon, one that allows audiences to participate in and engage with the construction of artworks on various levels. Literat

classifies these works into three categories: receptive, structural, and executor (14). *Receptive participation* is defined as purely consumptive, while *executory participation* generally allows audiences and participants to contribute to a project within given parameters and a structure put in place by an artist. Participants can either fully know the end goals of the artist or not; they have a defined task, but their level of awareness of the larger scope rests in the hands of the guiding artists. *Structural participation* allows participants to play more of a collaborative role, giving them some agency in the direction of the project, perhaps even resulting in some recognition for their contribution. Personal creative activity that occurs online therefore encompasses varying degrees to which individuals have control over the parameters of the content they contribute and their knowledge about the direction of the creative process.

Despite the variety of opportunities available for people to participate in creating a work of art online, multiple studies find that this audience is relatively small and niche-based (MTM London, 2010; Hargittai et al., 2008). The majority of people engaging in online arts activity tend to be young, since this group accesses the web more often and has more advanced knowledge of online technology than older generations (Hargittai et al., 2008). In a 2008 study of University of Illinois, Chicago college freshman, the authors found that the mediums of the most interest to students were creating music, writing fiction or poetry, taking photographs, and creating videos. Of the group that reported participating in the aforementioned activities, only 56 percent said that they post their artistic material online, with men making up the majority of that group. The mediums that were found to be published online most frequently were poetry or fiction and original videos (Hargittai et al., 2008).

Arts participation modalities

Different conceptual frames offer ways of describing and categorizing arts participation behavior. Over the past few decades, arts participation has been thought of as either primarily "active" or "passive." However, many now recognize that this categorization is too simple to describe even formal arts presentations where there is a clear division between artist and audience (Conner, 2008).

Based on the 2008 SPPA instrument, the NEA uses the term "modes" to describe live attendance, live personal creation and performance-based activities, and media-based engagement with arts (Novak-Leonard and Brown, 2011). These modes are segmented by notions of consumptive and generative mechanisms of behavior, in both the live and media-based experiences.

Brown (2004) offers a way to categorize a spectrum of activity defined by the degree to which an individual has creative control over an arts experience. Brown described activities that give an individual complete creative control and license as *inventive*, such as composing music or writing original poetry.

Next, activities where an individual adds his or her own creative expression or adds aesthetic value to pre-existing work are considered *interpretive*. *Curatorial participation* includes activities where an individual expressed personal artistic sensibility in the selection or collection of existing artistic work. Finally, Brown describes audience-based, or consumptive activity, as *observational*, which can be for live or media-based experiences. Brown includes a final category, *ambient participation*, where an individual happens to encounter art and has no creative control over the experience. Other research (UNESCO, 2012, 18) suggests that an individual must be conscious of seeking out or having an arts experience for the purpose of measuring participation. Increased focus is being paid to refining the notion of intentional and unintentional arts experiences, especially given online behavior. Additionally, cultural participation can include support, including financial (Tepper and Gao, 2008), as well as leveraging social networks.

While Brown's model seems most apt in describing live experiences, MTM London, as discussed earlier, classifies online arts and cultural participation by access, learning new skills and knowledge, experience of watching, sharing (primarily via social media), and, creating content (2010, 5). The modalities for live and online activity are largely parallel, based on the extent to which an individual asserts creative control. Online activity provides ease of information gathering, exposure/taste development, and transactional activity.

Co-creation: live and online experiences

An additional layer for describing arts participation considers how, or to what degree, individuals engage in the creative process with an artist or arts organization (in the conventional sense) as an "enabler" (Jones, 2009, 59-60). This idea speaks to our increasing social expectations of participatory experiences.

Live experiences

Co-creative, or participatory, arts experiences vary by the emphasis placed on process versus product (Brown and Novak-Leonard, 2011). As organizations and audience members have begun to adapt their activity to the changing landscape of arts and culture participation, co-creative theater experiences , in particular, have become more widely available (Walmsley, 2013, 3). Co-creative theater often emphasizes creating a product intended for an audience, since, for participants and artistic leadership alike, value is placed on "collaboration, interaction, invention, participation, experience, value and exchange" (Walmsley, 2013, 3).

Brown, Novak-Leonard, and Gilbride's (2011) "audience involvement spectrum" elucidates the various levels of engagement provided by different levels of participatory audience engagement.

■ Crowd-Sourcing Artistic Content, is defined by the audience's involvement as a contribution to a larger work overseen or curated by a professional artist (16).

■ Co-Creation involves more direct involvement of the audience in the artistic experience. A co-creative experience might include audience members participating in the presentation of part of a program, such as in the case of professionals bringing attendees on stage to dance for part of a performance. This level of engagement involves an amount of artistic control that is given to the participant (17).

■ With "Audience as Artist," the deepest level of participation has been achieved. Audience members have full control over the creative process, with the possibility that a professional is supervising the experience (17).

Online experiences[6]

The work of Literat, Jenkins, and MTM conveys myriad reasons why people engage with the arts and culture online. However, in contrast to the potential for community collaboration through online "creative" participation, Literat (2012) argues that these means are not as 'democratic' as many artists and critics purport because they require a specific knowledge base and skillset to discover, navigate and be a part of these online activities. Involvement with an online arts project still requires both economic capital (having a computer for access to the Internet, having the leisure time to dedicate to creating) and cultural capital (knowledge about the artist or project and how to create and submit work). Jenkins (2006) defines this as the "digital divide;…we need to confront the cultural factors that diminish the likelihood that different groups will participate" (269). At the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Jenkins, Literat, and others are currently working to create a set of "new literacies" that will help those less familiar with online platforms navigate, negotiate, judge and participate with websites, games, and other media (http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/).

Intensity or centrality of involvement

Levels of arts participation involvement or commitment are often determined by using measures of time and money expenditures. A 2003 Urban Institute study found that people participate in arts and culture activity in four general ways: attending programs and events; giving their children opportunities to participate; creating art on an amateur level; and supporting the arts through donation of time and/or funding (Walker et al., 2003, 2). These modes represent "levels" of participation and are found to correspond with progressively deeper involvement for the individual who participates. For example,

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[6] See: http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs128/1102382269951/archive/1113028401920.html for examples of recent online projects.

attending arts/culture programming represents the lowest level of commitment, and people who *only* attend events are less likely to get involved in other ways. As individuals participate more in arts and culture activity (e.g., attending events and educating their child), they are more likely to take part in a wider variety of modes of participation (Walker et al. 2003, 12).

It is widely recognized that life stages (for example, a household made up of young adults with young children) influence levels and choice of arts participation activity. Time and resource expenditures, although important issues for consideration, do not measure if someone self-identifies him or herself as an artist or with an art form, or the role that arts or creative expression may play in one's life. How central an individual feels cultural participation is to his or her life and identity is another important indicator of engagement.

Who Participates

Current "Arts" participants

Almost 35 percent of U.S. adults reported attending at least one of the seven benchmark art events between May 2007 and May 2008; this rate declined to 33.3 percent for benchmark arts attendance between July 2011 and July 2012 (NEA, 2013). Of those reporting "benchmark" art participation, the vast majority was white (78.9 percent), had a college degree (48.2 percent), and had household incomes of $75,000 or above (49.1 percent) (NEA, 2009, 14). This is not a surprise, since for some time now "arts" audiences have been thought of as white, well-educated and wealthy. But, the findings are of concern because attendance at benchmark activities has served as the key data point informing policy discussions on arts participation more generally.

The SPPA's benchmark arts activities capture only a sliver of art activity and therefore represent a relative portion of "who participates in the arts." When looking at attendance-based activity through the lens of race/ethnicity, we see high levels of participation at arts and venues outside of the benchmark activities. Drawing on detailed analyses from the 2008 SPPA:

■ African Americans reported their highest rate of attendance at performances at religious institutions (26.3 percent);

■ The highest rates of attendance among Hispanics were at Latin and Salsa music performances (17.4 percent) and at performances at schools (17.5 percent);

■ Native American Indians attended arts fairs and festivals at a rate of 30.9 percent; outdoor artist festivals, 28.0 percent; and performances at schools, 23.3 percent.

■ Asians reported high attendance rates at art museums[7] (24.0 percent); historic locations (19.6 percent) and performances at schools (19.2 percent) (Novak-Leonard and Brown, 2011, 40-41).

Generational differences for immigrants

Participation in arts and culture is important in maintaining a sense of social identity for many people, but perhaps especially so for new immigrants who are negotiating a transition to life in the U.S. In a study of how immigrants engage in cultural activity, Fernandez-Kelly found that different generations of immigrants to the U.S. exhibit distinctive behaviors when it comes to expressing their heritage via arts and culture. First- and second-generation Cubans in South Florida, for example, differ in how they think

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[7] Attendance at art museums is one of the NEA's seven benchmark activities.

about and use art. Among first-generation immigrants, the arts are a means to affirm national pride of their country of origin and to sustain a "culture of nostalgia" focused on the nature of life in their home country (Fernandez-Kelly, 2010). In addition to being used as a means to connect to their past, first-generation immigrants might understand tapping into the American "high" arts as a means of signaling to the wider society that they wish to be assimilated into the upper class (Fernandez-Kelly, 2010, 70). For some new immigrants, the opportunity to view and discuss visual art in a museum context proved an effective and non-threatening way to learn and practice speaking English, particularly when there was a specific connection with their heritage through museum objects and exhibitions (Farrell and Medvedeva, 2010).

Second-generation Cubans in South Florida, in Fernandez-Kelly's study (2010), exhibited behavior around arts and culture that tended towards "fraction and innovation" as a means of integrating their cultural interests and identity with the wider network of activity currently unfolding in the U.S. (70). On the West coast, young Mexican-Americans in Southern California have also used arts and culture to express a constantly evolving sense of identity. Through the use of popular culture, they have challenged essentialized notions of what it means to be Chicano, which had been perpetuated by their elders as well as in negative stereotypes (Rodriguez, 2012, 19).

Beyond using cultural expression for political reasons, newer generations are using the field as an avenue to stand out in the labor market and to achieve social prominence (Fernandez-Kelly, 2010, 70). Hmong youth in the U.S., for example, have been appropriating the traditional embroidery craft of *pa ndau* as a means of social cohesion, economic gain, and political capital (Baach, 2010). Continuing this craft tradition outside of their country provides young Hmong the opportunity to continue to participate in heritage-based activity, since this embroidery is often used to adorn ceremonial clothing for events that take place in their neighborhood. *Pa ndau* has also been a powerful means of bringing members of the U.S. Hmong community together socially via the creation of craft circles. The Hmong have also found ways to make *pa ndau* relevant for Americans: changes in color of the cloth used to create these pieces, in addition to modifications made to the embroidery patterns themselves, have been part of a larger effort towards adapting the form to appeal to the tastes of American consumers . This has brought about change not only to the character of the craft itself, but also to internal relations among the Hmong. Since women are the creators of much *pa ndau* material, having their crafts sold in the U.S. has given them economic power in many families. By keeping the *pa ndau* tradition alive in the U.S., as well as adapting it to be accessible to an American audience, young Hmong have been successful in preserving and adapting their culture to suit the conditions of their immediate neighborhoods.

In each of these examples, we see a larger cultural shift among younger generations of immigrants as they use arts and cultural engagement to find their place within American society while still retaining vital bonds to their heritage group.

Where Participation Happens

Setting plays an integral part in the kinds of arts and culture opportunities available for people of a given neighborhood, city, or region. The combination of a particular group of people and a certain setting often explains the long-term development of arts and culture organizations in the area. Additionally, urban economics, community socioeconomics and demographics, and funding patterns of public and private organizations are all factors that have much to do with the landscape of opportunities available to community members (Markusen, 2011, 29). Setting is also a key component of the operations of small nonprofit arts organizations, for many of them rely a great deal on community relationships in order to produce relevant programming (Markusen , 2011, 6). Consequently, setting deserves a detailed examination in new studies of cultural participation.

Although "traditional" arts venues, such as concert halls and museums, play an important part in sustaining the health of various cultural organizations, "non-traditional" venues and spaces also host a wide variety of arts and culture experiences. For instance, outdoor venues play a vital role in motivating the public to participate in arts and culture events, and they tend to attract a more racially and ethnically diverse audience than traditional spaces (Rosenstein, 2010 (a) (b); Walker and Sherwood, 2003). Outdoor areas, such as parks and plazas, are typically also conceived of as open, community spaces. Festivals held in these outdoor spaces draw larger attendance numbers and more diverse audiences overall (Rosenstein, 2010 (a) (b) ; Walker and Sherwood, 2003, 2). One example of an ongoing festival is the annual Hmong New Year events in the San Joaquin Valley, California, with multiple sites in Fresno and Merced, as well as in Sacramento. Although staged primarily by and for the Hmong community, the events at these festivals are open for all to observe or participate in traditional sung poetry (kwv txhiaj), to watch staged shows of traditional dance and music, and to purchase traditional goods, such as embroidered pieces, musical instruments, or traditional medicines (interview with Amy Kitchener, April 9, 2013).

Schools also offer community-oriented venues that shape the character of arts and culture engagement in the U.S. Culturally-specific courses are hosted in some states, such as the courses on Mariachi music in some California schools (Salazar, 2011). Schools are also home to various after-school activities, some of which are tailored to explore the heritage of the predominant racial or ethnic groups attending a given institution (Wallingford, 2010). Churches and other religious buildings have also been found to be key venues for engagement. Community outreach and social services are often a focus in these settings, and the arts are often deployed as one way in which congregants can get in touch with their spirituality and deeper worship, such as through live music and singing (Johnson, 2010, 20; 126).

Although not usually considered a community venue, the home is frequently the site of gatherings that bring community members together in one space. Creole Bals de maison in the San Francisco Bay Area highlight this kind of experience, and they tend to draw a relatively large number of people via a network of the participants' friends and family who are invited to attend (DeWitt, 2009). Neighborhood establishments including bars, coffee shops, restaurants, and barber shops are also used as sites for arts and culture events, especially in the case of poetry slams and other verbal arts (Vernon, 2008). From spaces that are wide open (neighborhood parks) and settings that are relatively accessible (churches and others places of worship) to those that are relatively niche-based and hard-to-find (homes and small places of business), participation is thriving in "non-traditional" venues in this country. In order to adequately understand the state of public arts and culture engagement, attention must be given to this new range of settings.

Why People Participate

Motivations

Existing national arts participation surveys tend to focus on identifying whether an individual participates in arts for employment, study, or leisure when measuring motivations for involvement. Beyond the practical perspective, few regional studies have investigated the reasons behind participation. Why someone participates in the arts may or may not be conscious (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007), but the "why" question is often investigated as it relates to the notion of impact or the effect an arts experience had on an individual.[8] Below we examine a sampling of benefits and motivations noted in the literature that range from individual/intrinsic to broader civic and social impacts.

With a focus on short-term, individual-level impact and affect that can be self-reported after attending a specific performance or a specific visiting experience, Brown and Novak-Leonard (2013) have developed four main categories for measurement, based on a series of studies beginning in 2007:

- art as a means of feeling — which includes measures of captivation, a broad range of emotional affect, and notions of escape and transcendence
- art as a means of social bonding and bridging — which builds on Robert Putnam's (2000) theories included in *Bowling Along*
- art as a means of aesthetic development and creative stimulation
- art as means of learning and thinking, which includes notions of traditional learning of facts and topics, but also about being challenged to think critically or to be challenged in one's own beliefs

Immediate measures may be most suitable for describing experiences, but retrospective measures are found to be better equipped for predicting choice (WolfBrown , 2012, 9) and perhaps more aptly for describing motivations for participation.

> *I make my own little playlists. I give them names, and I use them when I write. If I am working on something longer, I will sometimes have a series of songs that are specific to that piece. In fact, for example, I'm working on a piece now about when I was a boy scout in the 8th grade. A kind of coming of age piece in the late '60s. It helps transport me back to that time. This is a fusion of pop culture with the experiences in my own life. I love it! I haven't finished the book yet, still trying to figure out where it's going. Maybe the project isn't a book. Maybe it's a digital story with music.* (interview with David Mas Masumoto [paraphrased], April 3, 2013)

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[8] For the purpose of this review, we are focusing on individual-level motivations and impacts.

Asking individuals about their most memorable or otherwise influential cultural experience is one way to extract insights about motivation, since memories and associated values are predictors of future choice.[9]

To learn, discover and broaden one's horizons

Brown's (2006) model of arts benefits describes the positive effects related to personal growth of the individual that are sometimes derived from his or her participation in an arts experience. This study found that personal benefits are usually built up over a number of experiences, even though it is possible for one instance of arts participation to have a lasting impact and to lead to personal growth (Brown, 2006, 19). For example, co-creative, or participatory, experiences that require the individual to interact with professional artists and/or unfamiliar people have been shown to have an impact in terms of providing the individual with a healthy challenge to engage with others and learn something about him or herself. Participants in a Pro-Am theater project in the UK reported that the experience left them with a personal sense of accomplishment derived from their time working in a professional setting, having the chance to express themselves, feeling challenged, and being able to interact with other people. (Perry and Carnegie, 2012, 11)

Similarly, Walmsley found that amateurs working on a "co-creative" theater project with professionals reported that they felt the benefits to be gained from this type of endeavor included a sense of self and the ability to express that, as well as the opportunity to engage with others, develop confidence, and enrich creativity, communication, and "problem-solving" skills. (2013 [cites Brown et al., 2011, 4]).

To appreciate aesthetics / beauty

Some individuals engage in arts and cultural activities out of a passion for the aesthetic experience available at a particular kind of event. In the case of music experiences, studies of live jazz concerts and outdoor festivals (usually with an emphasis on musical events) found that participants are sometimes inclined to attend based on their appreciation for the art form itself. People seek live experiences of jazz music specifically because, unlike other genres of music, jazz involves a significant amount of improvisation. Audience members for a recent study reported that they value the live jazz performance because the intimacy of most jazz venues enables them to bear witness to improvisation in the music as it unfolds, and to see the expressions on performers' faces as they create on the spot (Pitts and Burland, 2013). American outdoor festivals are also distinctive experiences in this regard because they provide attendees with the opportunity to expose themselves to "unexpected art forms." This is possible since festivals offer a variety of activities in one centralized location (Rosenstein, 2010(b), 26).

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[9] Literature discussed in WolfBrown 2012, 9.

To be emotionally moved

During and right after going through an arts experience, people frequently report feeling captivated and spiritually awakened (Brown, 2006, 19). This dimension of motivations—based on the potential for emotional transformation—is a benefit that Brown describes being part of the "'imprint' of an arts experience"—the effect that it has on an individual when he or she is in the process of receiving the activity or immediately afterward.

To express one's self

Across a variety of mediums, research shows that people engage in arts and culture as a means of self-expression. One example of such an activity is tattooing, especially given the freedom of expression that it allows. Honma (2012) argues that, just as aesthetics change over time, the art of tattooing also changes with a new place or trend. "Skinscriptions" give an individual the creative control to depict and share cultural, sexual, racial or social identifications. Honma concludes, "examining tattoos as pigment of imagination asks us to consider how to embody the world differently" (137).

To develop or affirm a sense of belonging

Developing and reaffirming a sense of belonging is essential in many civic and social activities. Robert Putnam (2000) explains "social bonding" as the reaffirmation and development of one's own identity. In his tiers of arts benefits, Brown notes that interacting with others is a strong motivator of engagement in arts activity. Furthermore, experiences that occur in community settings have been shown to have the most positive impact on people (Brown, 2006, 19). In a very traditional sense, a family's annual tradition of attending *The Nutcracker* could exemplify this motivation, but so too do the following examples of less mainstream forms of arts participation and creative expression:

- Rap battles in L.A. are places where black social identity is constructed via interactions between participants, MCs, and audience members (Alim, 2011).
- Young men from San Jose Nuevo, Mexico are welcomed back into their community while visiting from the U.S. to participate in the annual Curpite dance celebration wherein the town's young male residents take center stage as performers. This ability for migrant workers to join in hometown tradition cultivates a sense of community belonging even when they do not permanently reside in that region anymore (Bishop, 2009, 403).

- Some communities are employing digital technology in order to express what it means to be part of that heritage group. For example, members of the Zhiqing Chinese community in the San Gabriel Valley in California recently participated in a project to record stories describing their lives in China, as well as community activity in their U.S. neighborhood. These stories were collected with video and audio recordings. Giving people the opportunity to tell and preserve their stories on digital media empowers participants, since the creative control involved ensures that they are part of the whole process of the publication of their story (Li, 2007, 8).

- Folk arts are important for the specific reason of sustaining a "community of memory" for a given ethnic/heritage group. This involves the sharing of knowledge about the community and practicing of traditional rituals, all expressed through art and culture activity (Peterson, 1996, 14).

- Hernandez-Avila described her involvement with Native American rituals and prayers as a way to keep her heritage alive in the 21st century (Hernandez-Avila, 2010).

- Mariachi festivals and school programs in the U.S. have served to cultivate ethnic pride in young Mexican-Americans (Salazar, 2011, 195; 200.)

- After-school programs that explore the identity of a specific heritage group, such as the example of a program geared toward Latino students in Ventura County, act as a space where kids and teens can openly express their social identity and cultivate a "sense of belonging" as members of a heritage group (Wallingford, 2010).

- Poetry slams and open-mic nights allow for a diverse, inclusive, working class audience by virtue of their open nature, bringing together "crews" of poets and the public (Vernon, 2010).

To meet people different from me

Putnam (2000) also discusses the value of "social bridging," or learning about and connecting with people who are different from you and members of your immediate social community. Examples of arts activity currently taking place in the U.S. that manifest this are:

- The Creole "house dance" tradition that started in California Bay Area in the 1940s has resulted in a network of Creole and non-Creole participants who, at present, share in the organizational responsibilities for these events at which Creole music, dance, and food in a domestic setting are defining qualities (DeWitt, 2009).

- In the case of the "Seeming Project"—a community play recently performed in Australia—participants reported that the most meaningful part of their experience rehearsing and performing the play was the time that they were able to spend with other members of their community (Madyaningrum and Sonn, 2011, 363).

To socialize

The opportunity to spend time with people you know or are interested in getting to know is a key motivation for participation. For example, many people attend outdoor festivals because the setting promotes social interaction with family and friends (Rosenstein, 2010(b), 24; Alcedo, 2003). This is a primary motivation for youth, ages 18-24, to participate in social dance (Brown, Novak, and Kitchener, 2008).

To learn or continue cultural traditions

A number of arts and culture activities are undertaken in order to learn something about one's heritage or in the service of sustaining the traditions of a given racial or ethnic group. Elkin (2007) argues that actors at outdoor theatrical performances in southern California are taking control of their community and cultural identity by reshaping historical narratives and collective memories and subsequently structuring a sense of home and belonging in performances that are meant to tell the stories of specific ethnic communities. These presentations blend historically traditional performances with innovative cultural expression to retell stories of the arrival and colonization of Native American and Chicano groups in Southern California.

In a similar vein, African immigrants are mediating the lives and homes they have left behind with the new identities and networks they are creating in the U.S. through music and dance. More specifically, this negotiation of identity is being carried out through performance and online media. However, different African groups use these means differently, demonstrating that a "singular African diaspora is difficult to locate or define" (Cannon, 2005, vii). Other instances of expressing cultural traditions through arts and culture include:

- Contemporary artistry of Native American basket weaving that is continuing and growing in California. At first, this activity was in response to a consumer demand in the market for the artworks, but now artists and organizations are also practicing and promoting the craft to strengthen the tradition and pass down knowledge of their ancestors (Chavez, 2012).
- The Hawaiian diaspora in California is negotiating a 'third space' for expressing their heritage. One example of such a phenomenon is a hula dance school, Hula Halau, where students and teachers are using the art of hula to reaffirm and redefine their "Hawaiian-ness" for themselves and for their new communities. Many diaspora Hawaiians learn about their cultural identity through means such as storytelling, family folklore, and hula lessons (Kaimikaua, 2010).
- In the example of learning the tabla drum of North India, apprentices in the U.S. and other countries outside of India seek out a master and learn the instrument and related cultural traditions by following their example (Nuttall, 2010, 171).

■ The Hmong population of the Fresno, California area—as a relatively new group of immigrants—recently published an anthology of their writings entitled *How Do I Begin?* This text was produced as a means to capture the voices of the Hmong community in their area via poetry and essays (interview with David Mas Masumoto, April 3, 2013).

■ Mexican-American farmworkers in California sustain a sense of connection to their home country by playing guitar, singing, reading short novels, and writing letters in Spanish (interview with Hugo Morales, April 12, 2013).

To support one's local community (geographically defined)

Arts and culture events are opportunities for people to help their immediate community via volunteer service and donating in-kind resources. Outdoor festivals, hosted primarily in what are considered shared, community spaces, rely on large groups of volunteers to see that operations run smoothly. People from the geographical region surrounding the festival site are drawn to these events not only for the variety of art forms presented within, but also to volunteer their time (Rosenstein, 2010 (a) (b)). In the San Francisco Bay Area, where Creole house dances are popular social events, individuals from the neighborhood support these activities by donating their homes as a space for the event itself, making food and bringing alcohol to share with the attendees (DeWitt, 2009, 29). David Mas Masumoto, a Del Ray, California farmer and writer, reported his own experiences supporting his community by volunteering and funding arts and culture projects in his neighborhood area. One such project that Mas Masumoto funded was a folkloric group at the local high school. He has also assisted a Hmong writers' group by putting together an anthology of their work (interview with Mas Masumoto, April 3, 2013).

To convey or support a message or movement

There are also civic and societal motivations to engage in the arts, such as using art to symbolize and inspire social movements. For example, Rodriguez (2012, 19) describes the creation of popular culture about the contemporary Chicano experience as a means to challenge essentialized notions about what it means to be Chicano in the U.S. (19). These popular culture creations (e.g., movies, rock bands) express broader ideas about what Chicano identity looks like in the U.S. as a way to counteract nationalistic notions or negative stereotypes (3). Lundy conducted an ethnography of graffiti "*writers"* (2005, 13) in East Oakland, California to unearth their motivations for graffiti artistry, the symbolism in their work, and their connections with social activism. She argues that the art form of the mural is a culturally significant act of art, tradition, and activism. Vernon (2008) argues that the informal and communal nature of verbal art gives poets agency to address more subversive, or oppositional, content in their work. This art form allows for a diverse, inclusive, working class audience because of its general form (open in nature), the "crews" of poets, and the public interaction.

Immersing myself in a community of artists and creative [people] has been rewarding. [It's important] that you're part of building an intentional community of folks working for justice. (interview with Jeff Chang [paraphrased], April 12, 2013)

Decision Model & Barriers

Often, barriers to participation are discussed in the context of why attendance at traditional non-profit arts organizations is not higher. In 2001, McCarthy and Jinnett published the RAND arts participation model, which outlined background, perceptual, practical and experiential factors that, individually and collectively, define a cycle of variables influencing the decision-making process about arts participation.

Mirroring the RAND conceptual model, Farrell and Medvedeva (2010) summarize barriers to museum attendance (13-14):

- Historically-grounded cultural barriers to participation in many established cultural institutions because of overt discrimination and exclusionary practices
- The lack of specialized knowledge and a cultivated aesthetic taste ("cultural capital") required for understanding and appreciating what are perceived to be elite art forms
- No strong tradition of participation in the cultural form fostered in childhood or through family experience and tradition
- Lack of a strong social network that encourages participation in this art form
- Changing patterns of work and leisure, and changing structure and dynamics of family life that make limit time and opportunity for engagement
- Structural impediments: geography, transportation, financial barrier to entry

Conclusion

This report reviews a broad range of literature and expert insights about what constitutes art, culture, and/or creative expression. It aims to contribute to a public discussion about which aspects of expression are most relevant to and feasible for measurement, along with the most appropriate research tools and methodologies for capturing the breadth of cultural expression within multiple kinds of communities. A new cultural paradigm has emerged in which *participation*, broadly defined, has greatly expanded the range of activities that people engage in beyond *attendance* at traditionally defined cultural events taking place in traditionally recognized cultural settings. We hope that this report contributes to advancing the field by suggesting a wider scope of research in support of a deeper understanding of the activities, informal and formal, that contribute to vibrant cultural lives and communities.

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