August 2016. Vol. 20, No. 3. — Who is Writing about Cultural Policy and Arts Management? – Eleonora Redaelli and Jonathan Paquette

Providing research data about arts and culture has been a long standing challenge for many organizations.   For instance, imagine a request from your Board regarding your organization's impact in your sector; where can you find the data to present to the Directors at the next meeting? Or do you need to deliver a grant proposal that includes detailed citations of specialized studies in order to support the mission of your work? What about putting forward an argument to your supervisor for the type of project you feel would be the next step in providing services to targeted audiences? Or maybe you want to better understand the arts and culture sector broadly. Where do you go for data or other types of research information when you need it?

In this issue of *CultureWork: A Periodic Broadside for Arts & Culture Workers*, Eleonora Redaelli and Jonathan Paquette share where knowledge in the field is created, produced, and published. They also suggest ways of accessing such knowledge whether from government, discipline based, service organizations, academia, or other sources. Read more.

Regards,
Julie Voelker-Morris
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Editors

Who is Writing about Cultural Policy and Arts Management?

By Eleonora Redaelli and Jonathan Paquette

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Introduction

Arts managers often see themselves in positions where they are looking for information more than knowledge. However, on occasion, the problems may seem more complex than the usual and the normal solutions and ways of answering the challenges appear to be no longer effective. In these occasions, arts managers seek more than information, they seek new ways to envision these challenges or to make sense of a reality that is changing right before them. Whether it is to have a better command of their environment, whether it is to gain deeper cultural understanding of their community, or whether it is driven by a quest to understand how they impact their sector, art managers will, at some point, be in search of knowledge and see themselves as knowledge users.

Jürgen Habermas (1968), one of the most thought-provoking individuals of the 20th century, once suggested that knowledge is not without purpose, and that any form of knowledge is ultimately linked to a sort of interest ([1]). Knowledge is intimately linked to interests, and the reality is that these interests are multiple. Habermas thought that there were three main interests conducting the quest for knowledge: a) we produce knowledge to master our environment (technical interest), b) we produce knowledge for greater cultural understanding (to understand one-another); but, c) we can also produce knowledge to change our conditions and question ourselves and our own practices (our desire to emancipate ourselves).

In this article, we try to unveil the dynamics of such knowledge production related to arts management and cultural policy. The purpose is twofold. Firstly, we want to bring forward how the knowledge production in our field is

diversified and fragmented. And rather than suggesting this is a weakening factor, we argue that it is in fact a very positive element. Secondly, our objective here is ethical and tries to overcome some of the false debates that often impede on our capacity to connect and exchange together because of misperception of others and their contributions.

Too practical… too theoretical… these are misconceptions about the nature of knowledge. The reality is that arts managers as knowledge users are "bricoleurs"; they repurpose and adapt what they learn, practical and theoretical knowledge, to fit their own organizational realities. In other words, as knowledge users, arts managers are extremely creative with knowledge which is consistent with the spirit of innovation.In these pages, we describe more or less the ecology of the arts manager as a knowledge user and conclude that this diversity offers for a great organizational and managerial creativity.

The aim of this broadside is to describe and analyze sources of this polyphonic research, charting the different institutional settings where knowledge in the field is created. Considering that institutions are context specific as they are linked to the social, economic, and political history of a country, this map focuses on the United States. Four main institutional settings for sources of research in this field have been identified: academia, arts organizations, government, and a collection of private organizations.

Four main institutional settings graphic

Academia

Academia and its disciplines is one of the many spaces of knowledge production. Scholars in geography, marketing, and public policy/political science, among others, have dedicated their attentions to issues related to arts and culture. Each discipline contributes, according to its epistemological assumptions and methodologies, to the common objective of providing a deeper understanding of arts and culture and their role in the overall society.

For instance, in political science, we can trace an interest for the arts and its political dimension all the way back to the contributions of major political philosophers such as Plato or Aristotle. In other areas of political science more concerned with institutions, researchers have produced research on the evolutions of the institutional settings regulating the arts and raised questions on the structures of art councils and ministries of culture.

Geography and urban studies have looked at the role of arts in the overall wellbeing of the community and the economic development of a place; their interests focus on spatial dynamics of the arts. One major theme that has emerged from urban studies is cultural planning. For example, Ann Markusen has greatly contributed to understanding the economic relevance of the arts–and its occupations–in the community (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Markusen, Nicodemus, & Barbour, 2013; Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008; Markusen & Schrock, 2006).

Important studies have also emerged from the discipline of art education. The work of James Hutchens collected perspectives on how the training of community arts administrators enhanced their role as art educators (Hutchens & Zoe, 1985; Hutchens, 1986). Similarly, Kristin Congdon and Doug Blandy (2003) developed an arts administration research project that explored the importance of art education has in enhancing the culture of everyday live–the folklife of communities.

This brief overview of the main disciplines addressing issues of arts management and cultural policy highlights the names of influential scholars.

However, it is also important to point out the role that student research has had in shaping the

> *field.*

A final requirement for master's programs in arts management is often a research effort in the form of a thesis or research project. The knowledge resulting from this research is what students bring to their future employers–and is what will help them shape the field moving forward.

Few universities have academic centers dedicated to arts management and cultural policy research. One of the first centers of this nature was the Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Princeton. A growing center for research in arts management and cultural policy is the Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago. Vanderbilt University and the University of Oregon are also investing in research connecting the arts, policy and the community.

Recently, two new centers were created that emphasize a growing interest for research in arts management and cultural policy. The National Center for Arts Research, at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, was founded in 2012 to produce evidence-based research to support cultural leaders. Their first report provides an assessment of the health of arts and cultural organizations. At Ohio State University (OSU), the Lawrence and Isabel Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise opened in 2014 with the purpose of increasing understanding of the worlds of arts management, policy, and culture.

Arts Organizations

Arts organizations may also act as spaces of knowledge production that operate in parameters similar to research centers in academia when one of their key and fundamental missions is directed towards the production of knowledge. The museum is a good example of an institution that is, in large part, dedicated to research. According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), museums revolve around three core activities: communication, preservation, and research. Museums and art galleries have always been associated to the production of knowledge. Museum professionals often engage in research activities that include research on artifacts, collections, and their audiences.

> *Most of the time, arts organizations contract out their research to fulfill their organizational needs, and rely on consultancy firms and service organizations as their sources for knowledge.*

Overall, however, arts organizations rarely have the time or resources for research on specific issues of arts management and cultural policy. Most of the time, arts organizations contract out their research to fulfill their organizational needs, and rely on consultancy firms and service organizations as their sources for knowledge. Even important leaders, such as arts managers who are actively engaged in the field, rarely theorize about the field, itself, or produce a body of knowledge that builds on previous research. Most exchanges of information in the field happen through professional conferences.

Only few *memoirs* outside of those produced by practitioners active within arts organizations can be considered as rich sources of practical knowledge. Thomas Hoving, for example, shares his experience as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from 1967 to 1977, in his *memoir*, *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* Joseph Volpe served from 1990 to 2006 as a general manager of the Metropolitan Opera (the Met). In total, Volpe worked 42 years at the Met, starting in 1964 as a carpenter and gradually advancing through the ranks to become the first general manager to be appointed from within (Walkin, 2006). In his memoir, *The Toughest Show on Earth: My Rise and Reign at the Metropolitan Opera* (Volpe, 2006), Volpe describes the challenges he faced during the two main stages of his career: the apprentice and the boss.

Finally, policy development or re-development is a process where the point of view and experiences of arts organizations are actively sought by governments. In more formal public consultation process to formulate or change a cultural policy, art organizations are asked to speak out, and to convey their experiences and their priorities. In these forums, arts organizations write on cultural policy, in a form that often takes the style of a policy evaluation piece as organizations explain how the current or future policy has or may affect their organizations.

Government

Different levels of government deal with research in the arts and culture in different ways. In the United States, the role of governmental organizations in the research for arts management and cultural policy seems to be particularly relevant a federal level. Local governments mainly contract out requests for research according to needs identified in the community by elected officials. State arts agencies publish reports on evaluations of their grants programs, and assessments of the role of arts in their respective states based economic, educational, and social perspectives. For example, the Oregon Arts Commission published a report on the projects realized through the support of the Arts Build Communities grant (Oregon Arts Commission, 2013). The report describes the content of the projects and the partners involved, and offers assessments for why the projects (and the grant, itself) worked and best practices for moving forward.

At the federal level, four main agencies are involved in leading and producing research for the arts sector: The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Smithsonian Institution. Each is an influential institution in the sector; however, the amount of crosspollination among their work is unclear. It is also unknown how much of their work is circulating in other institutional settings such as academia or arts organizations.

Private Organizations

Beyond academia, arts organizations, and government institutions, a constellation of private organizations is engaged in research efforts in the field of arts management and cultural policy. In particular, we identified four important groups: consultancy firms, service organizations, foundations, and think tanks.

Consultancy Firms

Landmark studies in arts management and cultural policy have been conducted by consultancy firms working for clients as diverse as government officials, arts organizations, architects, and developers. These studies have a direct impact on the cultural sector: they are commissioned by the sector's actors in response to sectorial needs. Consequently, these publications not only inform the understanding of the cultural sector, they often inform the decision-making processes of local governments—such as local arts agencies or a cultural affairs department of a city—and arts organizations. The biggest consultancy firms in the field, with a wide international range, are Lord Cultural Resources and WolfBrown. Lord Cultural Resources, based in Canada, has a noticeable presence throughout North America but provides service in numerous regions across the world.

Service Organizations

There are also service organizations which respond to information needs, opportunities to communicate, advocacy, public education, professional and volunteer training. Their sole purpose is to help other organizations produce, present, and/or preserve art, producing no art of their own. One crucial role of some of these service organizations has been in developing research about arts management and cultural policy. For instance, Americans for the Arts (AFTA) is the American national advocacy organization whose research office produces action-oriented research, monographs, and special reports on several key arts and culture topics with the goal of making a case for the arts to policymakers. Another key organization at the national level is the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). NASAA is a membership organization for state arts agencies that provides research and education for

public sector leadership in the arts. The topics of NASAA's research include creative economic development, arts education, arts participation, nonprofit finance, public art, and percent for arts policies.

> *One crucial role of some of these service organizations has been in developing research about arts management and cultural policy.*

Few scholars have pointed to service organizations as key actors in shaping the field (Wyszomirski & Cherbo, 2003). However, so much more needs to be done between service organizations and academia. Their roles is so crucial in bringing the actors in the field together and providing the knowledge required that it would be important to bridge it with academic programs both for a more informed training of the new generation of professionals and greater connections with scholarly research.

Foundations

In addition to service organizations, foundations have played a key role as knowledge producers over the years. One foundation that is particularly active today in research about arts management and cultural policy is the Wallace Foundation. The Wallace Foundation promotes change through the provision of research reports, practical tools, and grants. In the arts sector, the foundation's areas of concentration are arts education and audience development.

Some foundations have combined the provision of grants with the creation of knowledge through reflections and evaluations of the supported programs, and by an exchange of information among the grantees. An example of this process can be observed in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For example, in a decade-long program supporting orchestras, in addition to providing grants, the foundation participated in forums and discussions with the orchestras' musicians, trustees, and administrators to encourage learning within and among the orchestras.

Think Tanks

Finally, think tanks play a major role in knowledge production and the research they disseminate caters to a wide range of audience.

Think tanks are private research organizations devoted to collecting information and data to support policy decisions. When it comes to policy research, few think tanks actually address the arts and culture. Two think tanks that do explore arts and culture policy, however, are the Pew Charitable Trusts and the RAND Corporation. The Pew Charitable Trusts is a public policy research organization whose aim is to prepare evidence-based research to solve the challenges of the world today. The Pew Charitable Trusts' reports on arts and culture have helped to better understand the overall arts sector. For example, in 2011 they published the report, *The State of the Arts: A Summary Overview of New York City's Nonprofit Cultural Organizations, their Strengths and Challenges* (PDF File). The Trusts' also created the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to support arts organizations in the Philadelphia area and to create a hub for research on issues crucial to cultural practices. For the field of arts management and cultural policy, the most influential think tank to date has been the Urban Institute. The institute studies the issues faced by American cities and develops research to collect data and evaluate programs and policies such as the *Art and Culture Indicators in Communities Project*.

Conclusions

Academia, government, arts organizations, and a collection of private organizations are all very active in writing about cultural policy and arts management. We underscored that awareness of the multiple actors of the field can transform a fragmented field in a rich and polyphonic conversation. Moreover, this awareness allows to embrace the reality that art managers are "bricouleurs" and adapt what they learn to fit their artistic reality. Still much more could

be done for a better understanding of the research each produces in order to create polyphonic conversations that make one line of work resonate into the other. And once again the aim is to bring attention to a multiplicity that is in place so the synergy of the field can be exploited at its full potential.

This investigation in the dynamics of knowledge production allowed us to articulate the variegated landscape of institutional settings that shape the field of arts management and cultural policy. These findings suggest an ethics of research for the field based on the idea of a community of practice led by an inclusive view of research that overcomes hierarchies among institutional settings. The more we proceed in mapping the institutional settings of the field, the more we realize how the polyphonic nature of the research produced deserves to be highlighted so every voice can be acknowledged for the benefit of the overall harmony of the field.

In order to begin to highlight this harmony, we would like to conclude offering a chart with the institutions described in our brief paper to help arts manager have a snapshot of the field. Our hope is that this tool will help them navigate their quest for information and, perhaps most importantly, for making sense of their complex reality through different sources of knowledge.

Academia	-Disciplines: arts and cultural management, geography, urban studies, marketing, public policy, political science, art education -Students' thesis, dissertations, and professional projects -Academic centers: Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Princeton, Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago, The National Center for Arts Research at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Lawrence and Isabel Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise at Ohio State University
Arts Organizations	-Memoirs: *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Toughest Show on Earth: My Rise and Reign at the Metropolitan Opera* -Reports -Professional conferences
Government	-State agencies: Evaluation reports -Federal agencies: National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Museums and Library Services, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Smithsonian Institution

Private Organizations	
-Consultancy firms	-Lord Cultural Resources, WolfBrown
	-American for the Arts, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
-Service organizations	-Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Wallace Foundation
-Foundations	-Pew Charitable Trust, RAND Corporation, Urban Institute
-Think tanks	

[Editors' Note: This writing synthesizes the main points found in Jonathan Paquette and Eleonora Redaelli's 2015 Palgrave Macmillan publication, *Arts Management and Cultural Policy Research*.]

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Endnote

1. This concept is found to Habermas's own work. The vast majority of his writing focuses on arts and culture.

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