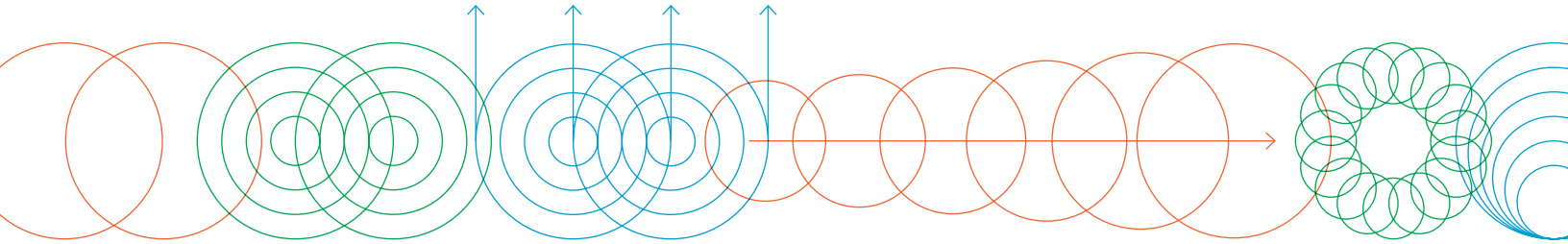

WE-Making

How Arts & Culture Unite People to Work Toward Community Well-Being

Appendices

metris arts consulting
planning | research | evaluation

PolicyLink

Center for ARTS IN MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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Project partners Metris Arts Consulting, PolicyLink, and University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine made invaluable contributions to this set of products. Metris authored the Theory of Change and Case Studies, Conceptual Framework, Literature Review, and Appendices. PolicyLink stewarded the second phase of the project and produced two memoranda expanding upon the implications of the findings for practice in arts, community development and public health, and for future research in those fields. The Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida spear-headed the Lexington convening. The Center produced a thematic analysis and proceedings, the first of which is included as an appendix in this resource suite.

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Technical and Artist Advisors (Phase 1)

- Carol Bebelle, Co-founder, Ashé Cultural Arts Center
- Floyd Jourdain Jr., Bush Fellow 2016–2018
- Jessica Mulcahy, Success Measures
- Gabrielle Uballez (formerly at US Department of Arts and Culture)
- Christopher Walker (formerly at LISC)

Project Partners (Phase 2)

PolicyLink: Victor Rubin, Project Director, and Jeremy Liu, Amanda Navarro, Alexis Stephens, and Kasandra Kachakji, with editorial and production support from Heather Tamir, Jacob Goolkasian, and Mark Jones.

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Contents

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Appendix A: Methodology

Phase 1: June–September 2018

Collaboration with the funders groups and advisors

Throughout the project, Metris worked in close collaboration with the funders group. Some directly funded the research in phase one (The Kresge Foundation, Bush Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation). Some directly funded the project activities in phase two, which is described below (The Kresge Foundation, Bush Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ArtPlace America, and the National Endowment for the Arts). All served as thought-partner collaborators throughout, and all played an instrumental role in framing and initiating the exploration (generating the RFP). They served in consultative roles throughout; they provided detailed feedback on draft versions and offered resources on inclusive meeting facilitation.[1]

Metris began this project by employing its equity reflection questions.[2] These questions help us check our assumptions and make our work accessible to and reflective of the people at the center of each project. Via a kick-off video call with the funders group, we jointly discussed a subset of the equity reflection questions, such as "What are the self-serving purposes of the research to our client," and "Are stakeholders with a stake in this work involved in project design?"

Inspired by the reflection question, "Are stakeholders with a stake in this work involved in the project design?," we assembled a three-member artist/practitioner advisory group of individuals who have direct experience engaging in place-based arts and cultural strategies to strengthen social cohesion. We worked to ensure a

diversity of race/ethnicity, gender, geography, and sought advisors who function as culture bearers and organizers, not just artists with studio practices. Carol Bebelle, Gabrielle Uballez, and Floyd Patrick Jourdain accepted our invitation to serve in this role. Carol Bebelle is the co-founder and former executive director of the Ashé Cultural Arts Center, an organization located in New Orleans that creates and supports programs, activities, and creative works emphasizing the contributions of people of African descent. Floyd Patrick Jourdain, the former chairman of Minnesota's Red Lake Band, was a 2016 Bush Fellow who focuses his work on how the drum can teach and promote healing and unity throughout Indian Country. Gabrielle Uballez is an independent consultant specializing in philanthropy, racial justice, and community arts. She formerly served as the national organizing director of the US Department of Arts and Culture and the executive director of Working Classroom, a grassroots arts organization. To attempt to remove financial barriers to participation, we provided a $1,000 stipend to each artist advisor. We communicated that we hoped the relationship would be reciprocal: we hoped to learn from the artist advisors, and we hoped they could learn from their involvement in the group.

We engaged the artist/practitioner advisors and the funders group via video conference at three key junctures: 1) a presentation of literature review findings and to solicit suggestions of key informant interviewees, 2) an interactive session to help shape the theory of change, and 3) an interactive session to solicit feedback on the draft framing document. The funders group and advisors also had a series of opportunities to review and provide feedback on draft versions of the research synthesis and framing document.

Literature review

Via a literature review, we explored the following research questions:

- What are the predominant existing theories and definitions of social cohesion?
- How does social cohesion relate to similar constructs (e.g., community safety, population health, sense of belonging, civic engagement, collective efficacy, community trust, community identity, neighborhood stability, individual agency, and quality of life)?
- What evidence (positive or negative) exists with respect to the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion?
- To what degree does existing research incorporate equitable evaluation principles?
- What other factors affect the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion, such as the number of activities or percentage of population served; types of programs, venues, or delivery system settings; or socio-demographic variables affecting the relationship?
- Who are the key researchers who have evaluated or explored the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion?

We reviewed 74 books and journal articles from a variety of disciplines that have the longest standing history of work on social cohesion, such as sociology and social psychology, and then also expanded our reach to public health, community development, criminology, urban studies, folklore, and African American/Black studies. We hoped this expansive review would illuminate how people outside sociology and psychology think about social cohesion. We also included "grey literature," such as reports on specific projects.

Consistent with our equity frame, when we read literature, we analyzed whether the researchers/authors expressed thoughts about equity or employed equity-focused practices. For example, we noted whether researchers worked with people involved in the project to create and/or use the evaluation tools or approaches; or whether researchers explored how a project upheld or worked to break down systems of oppression.

Interviews

We augmented the literature review with interviews with 16 key informants, in order to investigate the following research questions:

- Which adjacent constructs are most relevant to place-based arts and cultural strategies?
- What evidence (positive or negative) exists in relationship to place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion?
- How has/could place-based arts and cultural strategies' effectiveness in improving social cohesion be measured (metrics, research methods, and data sources)?
- What opportunities exist for future research to fill critical gaps in terms of equitable evaluation principles?
- What practices hold promise and what common challenges exist in using place-based arts and cultural strategies to achieve social cohesion?
- What other factors affect the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion, such as number of activities or percentage of population served; types of programs, venues, or delivery system settings; or socio-demographic variables affecting the relationship?
- What governmental policies (local, state, and national) foster or impede using arts and cultural strategies to achieve social cohesion?
- Who are the key funders, policymakers, practitioners, and networks who have used place-based arts and cultural strategies to improve social cohesion?

The interviews grounded literature review findings and allowed us to amplify critical perspectives. In consultation with the funders group and advisors, we strove for diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, geography, sector or discipline, and gender. Interviewees ranged from grassroots culture bearers to government officials to funders and spanned the health, community development, arts, philanthropic, and research fields.

Each interview was an hour long, conducted via conference call, and loosely followed a protocol script that was a more conversational, less "jargon-y" interpretation of the interview research questions. A third-party service produced transcriptions of each interview. Metris processed and synthesized these transcriptions; we then integrated this information into this research synthesis.

People Interviewed:

- Ann Heard, Scent from Natchez
- Barbara Schaffer Bacon, Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy
- Elizabeth Hamby
- Heather Devlin, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Jennifer Ybarra, The California Endowment
- Jeremy Houston, Miss-Lou Heritage Group and Tours
- Jill Sonke, University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine
- Josh Miller, IDEAS xLab
- Kelly Cornett, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, formerly McKing Consulting Corporation
- Madeline England
- Micah Gursky, Tamaqua Area Community Partnership
- Ron Ragin
- Sandra Davis, The California Endowment
- Sharon Day, Indigenous Peoples Task Force
- Theo Edmonds, IDEAS xLab
- Theresa Hwang, Department of Places
- WF Umi Hsu, ONE Archives Foundation, formerly L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs

First drafts of working papers

To visually depict the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion, we drafted a theory of change that synthesizes research findings. We wanted to make our research accessible to a variety of audiences: practitioners, funders, policymakers, and researchers. To do so, we attempted to reduce the academic jargon in the Conceptual Framework. We developed a companion Theory of Change and Case Studies piece. Shorter and narrative-driven, we developed it with practitioners as the primary intended audience. We engaged graphic designer Manuel Miranda to clearly and creatively display the theory of change. We included a Literature Review for readers interested in "getting into the weeds" of our research.

Phase 2: December 2018-August 2020

To refine the framework Metris produced in Phase 1 and to ensure the key messages from the research findings reach all of their diverse potential audiences and have the greatest possible impact, the funders group re-convened for a second phase of work. All of the funders returned for this effort with the exception of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The funders group was actively involved in the revision and communications planning processes.

New project partners

For Phase 2, the funders group also invited two project partners to join the team: PolicyLink and the Center for Art in Medicine at the University of Florida.

PolicyLink coordinated Phase 2 efforts, which ran from the end of 2018 through the summer of 2020. PolicyLink has a history of conducting community-driven applied research and designing communications strategies to bring about policy change and to enhance the practice of equitable development. In addition to coordinating and contributing to the process of refinement of the framework, PolicyLink produced two memos of recommendations derived from the research effort and PolicyLink's broader work. The first memo outlines actions for funders and practitioners using place-based arts and cultural strategies working toward community well-being and health equity. The second memo focuses on directions for further research on social cohesion and its relationship to arts, culture, and equitable development. Both memos are available as part of the bundled "WE-making" resources preceding these appendices and separately. In Appendix C, we preserve the early thoughts and recommendations that Metris gathered in Phase 1 as a step in the development of what became PolicyLink's memos.

The University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine and ArtPlace America launched *Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America* in 2018 concurrent with Phase 1 of this effort. The two-year national initiative, one of ArtPlace's many cross-sector research projects, was designed to accelerate collaboration among arts and culture, public health, and community development professionals, organizations and individuals seeking to build stronger and healthier communities in the United States. As part of their initiative, the Center for Arts in Medicine hosted a series of convening sessions around the United States. The Center devoted

their seventh session to convening a group of practitioners and researchers in alignment with Phase 2 of this project. To support the revision of the Metris-authored documents from Phase 1, the Center conducted a thematic analysis of the convening discussions and published a full proceedings document.

In September 2019, the Center also published the *Creating Healthy Communities through Cross-sector Collaboration* white paper.[3] The group writing the white paper was led by Center Director Jill Sonke and included Jamie Hand of ArtPlace, Victor Rubin of PolicyLink, Maria Rosario Jackson of Kresge, and eight other co-authors. They had access to the first drafts of the literature review and theory of change model and incorporated some of the insights from Phase 1 into their white paper. With the public health sector as a primary intended audience, the white paper frames the value of arts and culture for advancing health and well-being in communities. It offers examples and recommendations for expanding cross-sector collaboration and innovation, with the following goals:

- Advance collaboration among those working at the intersections of arts and culture, public health, and community development
- Stimulate upstream interventions—aimed at systems, cultures, and policies—that reduce barriers to achieving good health and well-being
- Assert the value of arts and culture for increasing health, well-being, and equity in communities
- Foster transformative social change that advances health and well-being

The white paper is also intended to offer value and guidance to community development, arts and culture, and other allied health sectors by providing examples to address five critical public health issues: collective trauma, racism, social isolation and exclusion, mental health, and chronic disease. These concrete examples inform the paper's recommendations and call to action, which assert the value of the arts and culture for community health transformation, and for advancing the culture of health being envisioned today.

Convening

The convening for our project on social cohesion, arts, and health equity was held in Lexington, Kentucky, on September 9 and 10, 2019. The project partners and funders group created a list of potential participants for the convening, starting with

the list of people and organizations Metris gathered during the key informant interviews in Phase 1. While the group of participants included a diverse array of practitioners and stakeholders, an intentional effort was made to curate the working group to include scholars with a commitment to promoting equitable health outcomes and social connection for health. Among other activities, the working group explored the conceptual framework developed by Metris in Phase 1, including the definitions of social cohesion and the draft theory of change diagram.

The full convening proceedings, including the list of participants, is available at the University of Florida's Center for Arts in Medicine website.[4] The Center for Arts in Medicine's thematic analysis of the convening discussions is reproduced in Appendix B.

Revisions to create final resource documents

Metris revised the Theory of Change and Case Studies, the Conceptual Framework, and Literature Review to incorporate the feedback received at the convening in Lexington, Kentucky. We also incorporated some of the examples and research evidence included in the *Creating Healthy Communities through Cross-sector Collaboration* white paper, particularly in relation to potential well-being outcomes.

Finally, the project partners conducted new interviews with key people related to the case studies to update and align the stories to the new theory of change. Metris re-interviewed individuals related to the HEAL Community Natchez and "Dear Tamaqua" projects. PolicyLink staff updated the Black Cultural Zone case study based on their ongoing familiarity with and participation in equitable development efforts in Oakland.

Apart from presentation on the respective websites of Metris and the University of Florida, a description of the social cohesion project and links to its final products from all three Phase 2 partners will be featured in a new section of the website www.communitydevelopment.art, which was created in 2019 to feature research and documentation of the ArtPlace Community Development Investments initiative and expanded in 2020 to cover other research about arts, culture, and equitable development.

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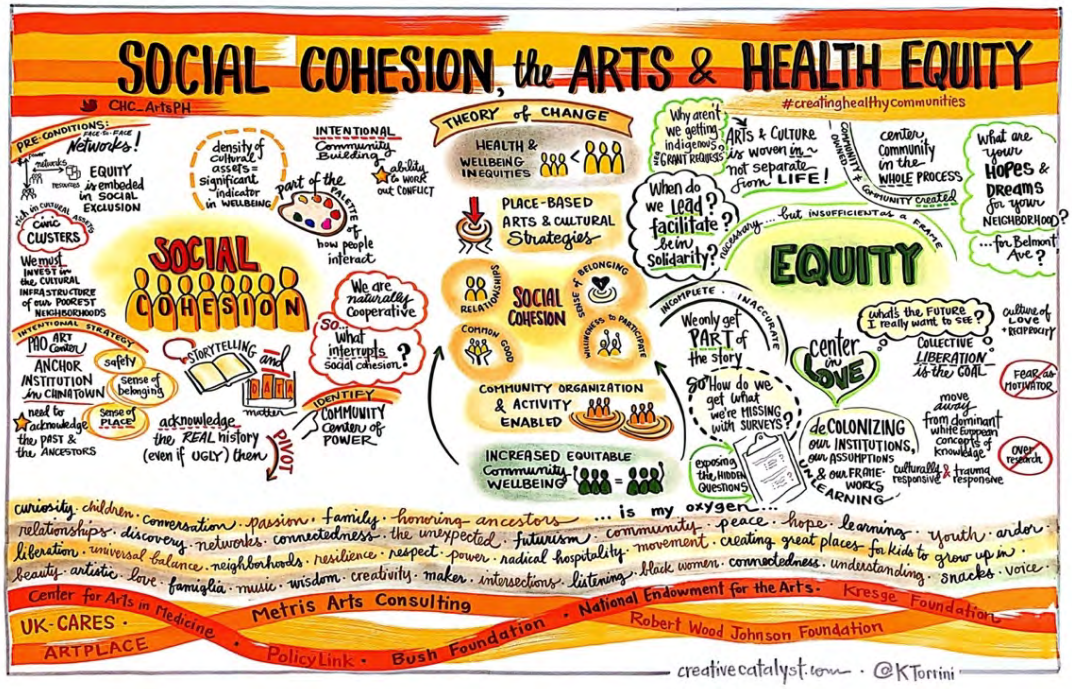
Appendix B: Convening Themes

The Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida prepared this thematic analysis of the convening as part of their *Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America* initiative. The full proceedings, including the list of participants, is available here: https://arts.ufl.edu/sites/creating-healthy-communities/collaboration/lexington-ky/.

Metris Arts Consulting used the insights from the convening to revise the Theory of Change and Case Studies, Conceptual Framework, and Literature Review.



Graphic recording by Katherine Torrini for sessions: "Key Terms & Theory of Change," "Social Cohesion," and "Equity," September 9, 2019, Lexington, KY.

The working Group on Social Cohesion, Arts and Culture, and Health Equity took place in Lexington, Kentucky, September 9-10, 2019. Fifty invited individuals from a range of disciplines, backgrounds and roles participated in the working group. Research scholars and members of the Center for Arts in Medicine Interdisciplinary Research Lab conducted thematic analyses of narratives generated within the working group. These analyses encompassed several steps:

- Note-taking and real-time theming by three researchers during the event
- Theming undertaken through graphic recording on site
- Coding and theming of audio recordings of presentations and discussions, led by a research scholar with members of the Interdisciplinary Research Lab
- Coding and theming of transcripts of presentations and discussions, led by a research scholar with members of the Interdisciplinary Research Lab
- Examination of the visual boards created by the graphic recorder

These distinct sets of themes were synthesized to create the categories, themes and suggestions outlined below.

Background

The Theory of Change developed by Metris Arts Consulting suggests that:

- Placed-based arts and cultural strategies drive social cohesion, which enables coordinated community organization and activity and leads to equitable community well-being
- Social cohesion is "when individuals feel and act as part of a group that is oriented toward working together"
- Social cohesion comprises four different dimensions; all four must be present for cohesion to be achieved:
  — an orientation toward the common good
  — willingness to participate
  — sense of belonging
  — relationships

During the two-day working group, discussion emerged around the value and application of social cohesion, as well as how the theory of change could be adapted as a more meaningful framework to leverage arts and culture to improve health equity.

Overarching Issues, Through-lines and Themes

Several key **issues** emerged from the dialogue:

- Power—the need for disruption, sharing, shifting and building
- Language—complexity, jargon, shifting meanings and impacts
- Systems—the need for policy and institutional practice transformation
- Inclusion—rampant exclusion, need to challenge assumptions and build trust

Several key **through-lines** also emerged:

- History and context matter
- Current power imbalances must be shifted
- Stories and narratives—individual and collective—are real and powerful data
- Strategies must be community-created and -owned, and will move at the "speed of trust"

Driven by discussion in response to a set of guiding questions, several **overarching key themes** emerged from the working group's activities and dialogues:

- The notion of "place-based" is problematic in relation to social cohesion; online communities, displacement, migration and power issues make it a difficult concept to build around
- Social cohesion can be either a mediator or a moderator for health equity
- An anti-racist frame is critical to social cohesion, health equity and to the theory of change
- Systems and power must be a focus of work related to social cohesion and health equity
- The term "arts and cultural strategies" narrows the meaning of "arts and culture"
- Change happens at the "speed of trust"

Themes: Arts and Cultural Strategies, Social Cohesion, and Health Equity

The themes were organized into five categories: 1) connections between social cohesion and equity; 2) relationships between arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion and health equity; 3) language; 4) equity; and 5) suggestions for changes to the theory of change.

Connections between social cohesion and health equity

- Social cohesion can be either a mediator or a moderator for health equity
  - — "Within-group" social cohesion can perpetuate inequities
  - — Social cohesion can perpetuate inequality, as the social cohesion of a dominant culture can lead to inequities; cohesion across groups, particularly marginalized groups, is needed to bolster change
  - — The influence of social cohesion is dependent on power and collective liberation
  - — Social cohesion can help communities resist oppression, segregation or de-segregation
  - — Desegregation can disrupt social cohesion
  - — Resilience rises out of social cohesion

- Social cohesion can be a positive and mobilizing force for equity
  - — A community cannot achieve transformation without social cohesion
  - — Policy change is needed to enable institutional and systems change

- Aspects of social cohesion can be precursors to effective community organizing
  - — Social cohesion can build collective efficacy
  - — Difficulty in accessing resources leads to challenges in building collective action
  - — Social cohesion can build relationships, trust and accountability
  - — People cannot organize effectively without trust and willingness to work together
  - — Social cohesion can generate tactical and social change ideas
  - — Social cohesion happens when people feel safe

- Social cohesion can help leverage power to change systems and institutions
  - Institutional disinvestment causes inequities
  - Institutional policies and systems often do not align with community cultural values and needs
  - The oppressed should not be solely responsible for shaping change; institutions must also take responsibility
  - Social cohesion can enable ideas to be handed down to create a new generation of leaders and build the power to make policy change

- Social cohesion can contribute to policy change, which is in turn necessary for building social cohesion
  - Media can be a driver of policy; it democratizes whose stories are being told and who tells those stories
  - Gentrification is a major impediment to social cohesion

Relationships between arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion and health equity

- Arts and cultural strategies offer ways for communities to heal from trauma and to organize
  - Arts and culture have the capacity to generate cultural pride, a sense of belonging, platforms for voices to be heard, and experiences of beauty and joy
  - They create safe spaces for connection, healing, celebration, commemoration, and community organizing
  - Investment must be made in local cultural resources

- Arts and cultural strategies do not necessarily lead to social cohesion
  - Arts-based activities and programs function as groundwork to enable change rather than huge transformation
  - They are stepping-stones, but permanent change requires regular interventions at the policy level
  - Social cohesion can be ephemeral—building during engagements and then dissipating once the activity or event is finished
  - Arts and culture should be sustained and woven organically into the fabric of a community (as opposed to pop-up events or activities)
  - Dominant cultural practices can denigrate certain cultural practices and privilege others

Language

- Language has power
- The meaning of words needs to be consciously considered and applied in relation to history and power
- Social cohesion is itself a difficult term and may not be useful in this work
- “Communities at risk” should be reframed as “communities with which the dominant culture does not share power,” “oppressed communities,” or “communities targeted by oppressive, anti-cultural strategies”

Equity

- As a frame, equity is important, but insufficient
- “Every system is perfectly developed to get the results that it gets.” Systems must be disrupted at the top.
- The people who have been the most affected by the injustices have had the least power to change the systems that cause it
- Until the ‘I’ becomes the ‘we’, the ‘we’ will always be sick
- There is a need for radical imagination to move beyond the current state
- We must simultaneously attend to past, present and future
- People who are Black, Indigenous, and queer must be centered
- We must see people as their whole selves
- We must move away from the dominant white European concept of knowledge
- Institutions, along with minds and approaches, must be decolonized

Suggestions for Changes to the Theory of Change:

- Power and power sharing must be included
- Foreground collective liberation, love and well-being
- Social cohesion may be an indicator, rather than the central focus
- Must address institutional accountability to the needs of communities
  - Community-led, grassroots approaches are more effective than institution-led approaches
- Must include an anti-racist frame
  - With an anti-racism frame, social cohesion would be part of the theory of change, not the center
- Segregation, marginalization, assimilation and resiliency should be included

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Appendix C: Phase 1 Discussion and Recommendations for the Field

In the first phase of this effort, we highlighted key opportunities and challenges based on our literature review and interviews with practitioners, funders, and policymakers. These interested groups have opportunities to strengthen their work by articulating for whom social cohesion is important, at what scale, and toward what specific goals, and by understanding that social cohesion takes a long time to grow. In this section, we make recommendations to strengthen and operationalize the connections between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion, and equitable community well-being. We brought these considerations into the convening discussion, where the working group took up and refined these issues. PolicyLink produced memos in Phase 2 of this project that combine our recommendations here with the input from convening participants along with PolicyLink's insights from their own work in this area, as well as from responses by arts groups, artists, and their community allies in the Covid-19 pandemic and protests on behalf of Black lives.

Discussion: Funding and partnerships

Who funds this work? At what level are funding, organizations, and partnerships the most fruitful? At the most basic level, who is involved in work that does or could explore the intersection of place-based arts and cultural activities, social cohesion, and positive community outcomes? Key themes emerged from this line of questioning in our interviews.

Connecting the dots, sometimes across sectors

Several interview subjects expressed excitement about "de-siloing" and building bridges at a variety of scales, and both at an institutional and individual level. Interview subjects advocated for federal and state level organizations to find common purpose to support both collaborative research and community work. Hamby suggested that funders identify and fund emergent "bridge-builders" in communities who can facilitate and organize among community members, between the community and organizations, and between organizations with overlapping goals.

Interviewees suggested "getting outside the box" and exploring a wide array of funding opportunities outside of explicit arts and cultural funding. They expressed interest and success working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to fund community arts and cultural work through a community health and well-being lens. Hamby suggested that practitioners explore grants for projects with a "communication" component, as she has had success funding place-based arts and cultural projects with "communications" funding.

Interviewees reported mixed results procuring funding and interest from traditional arts and cultural funding sources. Davis reports that in California, some funders of "traditional arts" are interested in supporting social justice movement art and exploring the linkages between these two worlds. In contrast, in Minnesota, Day expressed frustration that the vast majority of the state's arts funding goes to just five established art organizations. She argues that her organization, the Indigenous Peoples Task Force, is not seen as an arts organization, even though their work involves the use of theater to involve youth in community. She states that, "these are all topical issues of the day and we have to beg and plead for funding, and we still don't get it." Instead, her organization has turned to the state health department.

Partnering strategically for increased capacity

Interviewee Gursky considers the importance of relationships and exchange of ideas and information between rural towns. He suggests that community organizations "create a concept of what [they] want to accomplish" prior to fostering partnerships, rather than when they are already in them. "We try to develop what we want to accomplish in every battle [and then assess] what partnership and relationship is going to work best." He warns that in these partnerships it is important to make sure that at least one partner is able to provide some leadership and direction.

Interviewees suggested exploring measurement and evaluation partnerships. Hsu expressed enthusiasm for "discovery processes" of sharing data and collection methods from community to community and from organization to organization. Nearly across the board, interviewees pointed to funding and financial constraints as a looming prohibitor of project evaluation. Hamby suggested that measurement should be done by partners—for instance, academic researchers or municipal departments with overlapping agendas—rather than practitioners themselves. From her perspective, practitioners have enough on their plate without having to organize project evaluation. She suggests teaming up with academic researchers like those involved in the Social Impact of the Arts project, or city departments, if they have evaluation expertise and resources.

Recommendations

For those who want to support building social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies...

- Invest in anchor spaces and organizations grounded in communities that can build on their relationships and achievements over time
- Identify and fund emergent "bridge-builders" in communities
- Understand, and act consistent with that understanding, that building social cohesion takes time
- Fund longitudinal studies that explore how place-based arts and cultural strategies foster and maintain it
- Provide resources (e.g., funding, connections to local researchers, adequate time) for practitioners to evaluate their work
- Consider community organizers working toward desired goals as partners

- Community organizations interested in achieving community well-being should consider place-based arts and cultural organizations and anchor spaces as partners for pooling resources

Discussion: (Equitable) measurement of place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion

In this section, we discuss how researchers have measured social cohesion, in general, and then its connection to place-based arts and cultural strategies. We provide background on how researchers have measured social cohesion, including areas of tension in measurement strategies. Phase 1 technical advisor Jessica Mulcahy of Success Measures provided significant material for this section. She drew on her over 10 years of experience working with communities on evaluation and measurement, specifically related to health equity.

Both the academic and grey literature contain gaps in terms of directly considering and measuring the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion, and equitable community well-being. The literature that observes this relationship directly, with conceptual or empirical rigor, is relatively narrow. Enormous opportunity exists to expand this area of research.

Multiple interviewees also pointed to opportunities for improvement in the ways that practitioners measure these relationships in the field. “Measurement is often a gap,” says Cornett as she reflected on strategies for empirically assessing the relationship between arts and cultural activities and community well-being. We see additional qualitative and quantitative data collection on these linkages and outcomes—especially longitudinal studies[5]—as critical to better conceptual understanding and practitioner application.

We discuss opportunities for more rigorous and equitable measurement of the connections between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion, and community well-being. We explore ways in which place-based arts and cultural strategies’ contributions to social cohesion had been evaluated and, specifically, to what extent measurement and evaluation efforts incorporate an equity lens. We considered, who is asking the measurement/evaluation questions and what questions are they asking? Funders may ask practitioners to measure their work,

but what if practitioners and funders have different ideas of what social cohesion is and how to foster it? And what if the usual questions we ask and the usual ways we ask them are unhelpful or even harmful? What if practitioners feel that they lack the knowledge, capacity, financial resources, and time to do evaluation effectively?

Definitional challenges

Further challenging these efforts, researchers and practitioners have lacked consensus on the definition of social cohesion and how to measure it. Matarasso's work employs a dimensional definition of social cohesion and defines clear parameters of place and outcomes, and measures participant feelings about these aspects, such as the sense of being able to cooperate with a group or trust a group.[6] Others, such as Wali et al. and (separately) Lee, take a more intuitive approach to the concept of social cohesion, which tends to allow higher flexibility and lower specificity when identifying cohesion and related outcomes.[7] Interviewee Hwang identified a need for more exposure in the field to a best practice definition of social cohesion, in order to assess whether projects foster it.

Complicating matters, when measuring social cohesion, researchers tend to conflate what we identify as drivers and dimensions of social cohesion, which results in measurement inconsistencies. We see tensions around these challenges play out in the literature. Prewitt and Mackie argue that social cohesion is "broad and malleably-defined," therefore "not amenable to direct statistical measurement.[8] They continue that we can define *dimensions* of social cohesion more "narrowly and tangibly," which we can then more easily measure separately.[9] Chan et al. argue that a "narrow definition" of social cohesion allows researchers to test correlations by separating its dimensions from its pre-conditions and outcomes.[10] A narrow definition, they continue, makes cross-cultural comparison possible because culture-specific values are absent. They critique research that conflates the "content with the causes of social cohesion."[11] However, Bollen and Hoyle offer the critique that some researchers fail to evaluate every dimension of social cohesion and only measure one aspect.[12]

Outside of academia, researchers in the context of the community development field often evaluate social cohesion as a component of a larger program or set of activities rather than a stand-alone concept. These programs or activities usually reflect one or more dimensions of social cohesion as part of their larger strategy or intended outcomes. Such areas include quality of life in a community, resident satisfaction, leadership and collective action, and community development programs. Within each area, social cohesion represents either an existing condition (e.g., social cohesion as a part of quality of life) or an aspect of an intended outcome (e.g., leadership). In all cases, social cohesion is only one part of several dimensions within the measurement tool. For example, a survey that intends to measure in quality of life also addresses access to services and green space, and other qualities of living in a community that relate to overall quality of life.

Social cohesion is often evaluated as a condition that serves as an indicator within a larger issue within community development program areas, such as health and safety. For the purposes of this appendix, health is related to the physical and mental health status and feeling of overall well-being of people in a community. Examples of programs that might examine social cohesion as an aspect of health include exercise programs to promote fitness, community gardening, or other ways to promote healthier eating and more social interaction, as well as parenting classes or other programs to develop life skills for healthier living. The aspect of social cohesion most often addressed in the health space relates to social connections—their existence, characteristics, and strength; a sense of belonging; overall satisfaction with the nature of social interactions; and one's satisfaction with a network of people to depend on when needed.

Like health, safety is a very broad topic and a survey on community safety addresses many other factors beyond connections to others. However, connections to neighbors and a feeling that there are others who one can call on if needed has been an important component of the feelings of safety among community residents. These connections and feelings relate to the ability for a group of residents to put together collective action to improve safety, if the need arises. Survey questions about safety look at both direct connections to others with a focus on "people who understand me" and the ability to call on someone for assistance, and actual feelings of safety in a place at different times of day. Understanding these in concert with other aspects of safety (e.g., the presence of crime or violence, direct experience of crime or violence) can help a community organization understand the relationships among community residents and try to build on them as a part of any safety effort.

As we discuss in the section on dimensions of social cohesion in the Literature Review, we understand behavior as a reflection of, rather than a dimension of, social cohesion. And that behavioral manifestation, in line with feelings and attitudes, should be present when social cohesion is present. Therefore, to measure social cohesion, we understand that researchers can measure it subjectively (feelings) and objectively (behavior). Capturing information about attitudes is often a leading indicator of future action, so gathering information on both attitudes and actions is important. The vast majority of sources we reviewed measure social cohesion through perceived attitudes.

Attitude questions ask the respondent to share feelings about their community and what they would be willing to do. These answers help us understand the appetite and bandwidth for participation in community efforts. The questions allow the respondent to express what they would like to do even if they have not done anything yet. Questions that gauge people's perception of their own power help plan appropriate engagement toward leadership development or collective action.

How have researchers attempted to measure attitudes related to social cohesion? Bollen and Hoyle offer a Perceived Cohesion Scale to gauge sense of belonging (e.g., "I see myself as part of the community") and feelings of morale (e.g., "I'm happy to live in my community").[13] And Sampson et al. use a five-point scale heavy on attitude questions to assess social cohesion and trust in their study of the connection between collective efficacy and violence (e.g., "people in this neighborhood can be trusted").[14] Chan et al. offer an analytical framework for empirical research on social cohesion and also advocate for questions that address people's sense of belonging, trust, and willingness to cooperate.[15] For example, understanding how people in a community feel about who else might join them in an effort to change something or start a new activity has turned out to be a relevant indicator for how easy it is for a new program or activity to begin in an apartment building. A potential survey question would be, "How likely do you think neighbors would identify an issue in this apartment community and figure out how to address it?" This relates directly to the importance of social cohesion as a condition for collective action.

Much of the literature that we reviewed did not measure behavior. Chan et al. argue that researchers who measure social cohesion should measure the "depth of participation" as well as the type and frequency; they suggest turning to the World Value Survey for sample questions to measure behavior.[16] Behavior questions would focus on direct participation in community efforts and help us better understand an individual respondent's actions on a scale of leadership development.

Considerations around the scale at which social cohesion operates and different definitional interpretations further complicate the tensions around measuring attitudes and not behavior. We previously argue that one must consider the individual and collective when we discuss social cohesion. To better understand social cohesion, then, we would want to measure attitudes and behavior at the individual and group levels. Our literature review shows that most of the research on social cohesion measures perceptions about social cohesion among individuals in a neighborhood or community and then analyzes the extent and impacts of those individual perceptions in aggregate. The research rarely examines attitudes and behaviors related to social cohesion at the group level. Exceptions include Bollen and Hoyle who write about researcher Daily who, in the late 1970s, created an instrument to measure social cohesion that only asked about the team, requesting comparison of their group to other teams in terms of "how the team sticks together" and "the extent of 'oneness' in my team."[17] Chan et al. also offer up a potential survey question that aims to determine how a group does or would cooperate with *other* groups as a way to measure group behavior.[18]

Opportunities for mixed methods

Much of the social cohesion research we reviewed is empirical: researchers form a hypothesis and then conduct observation or an experiment to test the hypothesis. Many of these studies rely on surveys that produce quantitative data, which researchers often use in chi-square analysis or linear regression modeling. For instance, in order to understand how neighborhood social cohesion influences residents' mental and physical health, Rios et al. surveyed just over 3,000 Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents across nearly 600 census tracts in metropolitan Phoenix. To see if levels of cohesion differed between students at a small college (n=102) and residents of a midsized city (n=119), Bollen and Hoyle tested their Perceived Cohesion Scale via a survey of these two random samples. To study the relationship between perceived stress and neighborhood characteristics, such as social cohesion, Henderson et al. conducted a survey of residents (n=394) in eight historically disadvantaged neighborhoods in a mid-sized city in the Southeast United States.[19] In these surveys, respondents tended to answer questions on a Likert scale (e.g., on a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you feel proud of being a member of this community?). None of the research we reviewed on social cohesion conducted longitudinal data collection. These types of analyses or models can result in pages of dense tables and figures with dozens of numbers and footnotes.

In other words, researchers have placed great value on testable hypotheses that can be proved or disproved and often inaccessible quantitative analysis. How can the field broaden its understanding of social cohesion research?

Interestingly, whereas social cohesion research, in general, typically relies on quantitative analysis, the slim existing research specifically on the effects of *arts and cultural activities* on dimensions of social cohesion tends more toward qualitative data. This most often takes the forms of individual participant or community member self-reporting about feelings and impressions[20] such as observing how projects make participants feel about their community, civic pride, social connectedness, and community strengths. Our interviewees corroborated this tendency toward qualitative analysis. Multiple interviewees reported relying on anecdotal observation, sometimes due to lack of funding. Other interviewees reported using qualitative measurement techniques such as participant interviews and intercept surveys.

Multiple scholars and practitioners point to the value of mixed-method approaches, using both qualitative and quantitative data sources in a study.[21] While quantitative data strengthens hypothesis testing, qualitative data collection, such as ethnography, may require more resources, but also produces valuable and robust data important for understanding a project and its social impacts.[22] The cultural activist, thought leader, and municipal arts official Bedoya says, "quantitative data, the usual fare of arts evaluation, cannot be the privileged source of knowledge for this kind of work; when it comes to making a case for art-based civic engagement data needs to be supplemented by arguments that reach people's hearts and minds."[23]

Interviewees also discussed an array of methods that exist outside of standard academic measurement techniques. These include considering ways to measure social media data (for instance, monitoring public Instagram posts at the project activity), content analysis of YouTube comments, and having participants fill in "mad-libs" poems in lieu of surveys. Interviewee Schaffer Bacon pointed to James Nesbitt, author of Megatrends, who used content analysis to observe change over time and identify trends by the number of column inches in newspapers and content of stories about a study subject.

Opportunities to increase multicultural validity

Increasing the multicultural validity of social cohesion research and evaluation efforts could greatly benefit the field. Ensuring that evaluations are multiculturally valid is a core principle of equitable evaluation.[24] Whereas our literature review, admittedly, draws from a Western context (that of the United States and European Union, principally), two interviewees suggested looking at international frameworks, such as European, Asian, and African measurement techniques, for new ideas around measurement and evaluation. Interviewee Hwang also wondered if a place exists for alternative ways of knowing in arts, culture, and social cohesion assessment: "Something like cohesion is so emotion-based. … When we cook, the Western way of doing recipe is like 'half a teaspoon of salt,' but in other cultures it's 'just enough.' You just have to feel it. So with evaluation, culturally, is there a way that we can kind of intuit things and have that be enough?" The opportunities to increase the multicultural validity of research and evaluation also extend to the communication of findings. Interviewee Sonke referenced the need for researchers to make results accessible and engaging to people across demographics.

Prioritizing participant ownership

Who is doing the measurement and evaluation, and who is it for? The equitable evaluation framework calls for evaluation to be oriented toward participant ownership.[25] Interviewees Edmonds and Hsu suggest that finding ways to make data, outcomes, and evaluation more accessible to directly impacted people is paramount:

There is so much good information in the academy, so much incredible data in private sector…but that research and that data is not finding its way out of the academy [and into] the government and the people's hands in ways that are immediately relevant and meaningful to them and solving the problems that are important to them first.
—Theo Edmonds, IDEAS xLab

Research, as a field, is often expert opinions derived from expert opinions, and expertise derived from expertise; we should be listening deeper to people to have them inform our categories of endeavors and research inquiries.
—WF Umi Hsu, ONE Archives Foundation

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach anchors researchers "in the insights and lived experiences of community residents, involving residents in all aspects of study design and analysis."[26] PAR, like other approaches under the "participatory epidemiology practices" umbrella, holds at its core "equitable research partnerships, often comprising academic, community-based, public agency, non-profit, and other traditionally silent stakeholders … that integrate diverse perspectives on health and its determinants."[27] The vast majority of the literature we reviewed did not use an equity lens, including a PAR approach. In one notable exception, Arcaya et al. worked with nine community organizations in nine neighborhoods in Boston to evaluate the connection between neighborhood change in population health.[28] One variable they measured was "connectedness to neighborhoods" and did so by asking respondents to respond on a Likert scale to the question, "I feel like I belong in my neighborhood." The nine organizations each managed a group of "Resident Researchers;" these Residents Researchers provided valuable insight throughout the research. They helped develop the theory of change, received data collection and analysis training, and then conducted collection and analysis. This study by Arcaya et al. is the only social cohesion-related research we reviewed that embraced equitable research or evaluation methodologies.

Interviewees' and artist advisors' experiences with equitable research or evaluation varied. Some interviewees have not folded equity into their measurement and evaluation efforts, due to resource constraints affecting their evaluation capacity writ large. Many, however, considered equitable evaluation in their own practice and also speculated about how they and others might incorporate it into future practice. Artist advisor Uballez, for instance, encouraged researchers, funders, and practitioners to learn from how communities of color and historically underrepresented communities have evaluated their arts programming, especially focusing on asset-based measurement. For some interviewees, equitable evaluation begins with asking people in communities what they want evaluated and inviting them into the process of setting their own project goals and formulating research questions.

At the other end of the evaluation, interviewees stressed the importance of debriefing with a community after a project and reporting back evaluation findings. Schaffer Bacon points to the power of providing measurements and outcomes results directly to the community, which "allows the community to reflect on the reporting and make clarifications or catch nuance that we might have missed." Interviewee Jeremy Houston, of Miss-Lou Heritage Group and Tours, recalls that at the end of a weekend-long cultural heritage event in Natchez, MS, Project HEAL

facilitated a dialogue with project participants and community stakeholders, concerning "what we had done, how good it was [and can we] grow it to something bigger; we talked about how to be able to keep that momentum going from what we had that weekend."

Recommendations

For those who want to evaluate building social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies...

- Clearly articulate social cohesion *for whom* and *to what ends*.
- Directly explore the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion, and equitable community well-being impacts.
- Prioritize participant ownership of the process—involve impacted community members in evaluation design, data collection, and analysis.
- Engage practitioners in developing innovative data collection tools.
- Understand that building social cohesion takes time. Design and support realistic project timelines and fund/conduct longitudinal studies.
- Link practitioners to evaluation resources (e.g., funding, connections to local researchers, adequate time).
- Integrate mixed-method approaches, using qualitative and quantitative data sources.
- Strive for multicultural validity, including challenging Western culture's understanding and worship of empirical studies and quantitative evidence.

4

Notes

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9 Ibid.

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11 Ibid., 293.

12 Kenneth A. Bollen and Rick H. Hoyle, "Perceived Cohesion: A Conceptual and Empirical Examination," *Social Forces* 69, no. 2 (1990): 479–504, https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/69.2.479.

13 Ibid., 485. To measure feelings belonging, they ask: I feel a sense of belonging to my community; I feel that I'm a member of the community; and I see myself as part of the community. To measure feelings of morale, they ask: I am enthusiastic about my community and I'm happy to live in my community. In their research, Boessen et al. adapted Bollen and Hoyle's scale. Their wording of the morale questions varies slightly: "I am happy to live in my neighborhood" and "being in this neighborhood give me a lot of pleasure," 452.

14 Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy.," *Science* 277, no. 5328 (August 15, 1997): 920. Henderson et al. also used these questions to explore the connection between social cohesion and perceived stress. Heather Henderson et al., "The Influence of Neighborhood Aesthetics, Safety, and Social Cohesion on Perceived Stress in Disadvantaged Communities," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 58 (2016): 80–88, https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12081.

15 Chan, To, and Chan, "Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research," 295.

16 Ibid., 296. Sample questions include "Are you a member of community groups, political parties, pressure groups, trade unions, professional societies, churches, clubs, etc.? If so, how often do you usually participate in their activities?" And "Could you describe your depth of participation in the above organization(s)? – Mere members? Regular event helpers? Or chief organizers?"

17 Bollen and Hoyle, "Perceived Cohesion: A Conceptual and Empirical Examination," 487.

18 Chan, To, and Chan, "Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research," 296. "If you are a chief organizer of the above organization(s), could you please tell us if there are any other groups in society that your organization(s) will a) regularly cooperate with? (please specify) [and] b) be unwilling to collaborate with? (please specify)".

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