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PROJECT

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FUTURE TRENDS SERIES

THE *FUTURE TRENDS* SERIES—published as part of the *Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project*—discusses ways of thinking about the value of culture. culture. It explores the importance of research for understanding the place of culture in everyday lives, its impact on local people, society, the eonomy, wellbeing, and prosperity at large. It does so through a research-informed approach that connects with the needs of policy making.

The intended audiences for the series include cultural workers, organisers of cultural events, funders, policymakers at the national level and in local government, as well as academics. The series aims to provide accessible, research-led accounts of issues related and relevant to the development of the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme and connected initiatives supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Arts Council England and others.

The papers are expected to inform, provoke and engage with place-based ambitions and planning for cultural growth and vitality at all levels. They also offer a practical guide to understanding the range of concepts, methods, data, and evidence that can inform the planning and preparation of proposals and programming.

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The AHRC-commissioned Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project is led by the University of Warwick and highlights the importance of universities and of research in the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme: from the bidding process for the title, through to delivery, evaluation, and legacy of the programme.

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ADDRESSING CULTURAL AND OTHER INEQUALITIES AT SCALE

Dr Orian Brook – UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
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SOCIAL AND SPATIAL INEQUALITIES ARE INTRINSICALLY LINKED. COVENTRY UK CoC 2021 WAS UNIQUE IN RECOGNISING THIS WHEN IT PUT HYPER-LOCAL CO-CREATION FRONT AND CENTRE

ART FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW:

ADDRESSING CULTURAL & OTHER INEQUALITIES AT SCALE

ORIAN BROOK & MARK SCOTT

A summary of evidence that inequalities in access and opportunities for cultural production and consumption are socially stratified and systemic.

There is currently keen interest in the social inequalities in the creative economy.

Publicly funded arts organisations are seeking new ways of engaging with communities to ensure art can be for the many and not the few. While the UK City of Culture programme has, like similar cultural mega-events rooted within place, and the priority area funding programmes from Arts Council England, reduced spatial inequalities, they do not seek to reduce social inequalities as a priority. However, social and spatial inequalities are intrinsically linked, something that Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 was unique in recognising when it put hyper-local co-creation front and centre.

By focusing on hyper-local offerings, the programme offered local proximity (important to people who do not often engage with culture or who are in lower economic groups) and the potential for a sense of ownership by the kinds of people who are most often missing from cultural spaces.

INTRODUCTION

Social inequalities in the creative economy are currently of keen interest to academics, policymakers, and cultural sector practitioners.

This is supplemented by a more recent but potentially even more impactful policy focus on spatial inequalities in the sector.

The UK City of Culture Programme explicitly targets spatial inequalities, drawing investment to an area and raising its visibility on a national and international stage. While addressing social inequalities is not an explicit aim of the programme, social and spatial inequalities are inextricably linked, and the enormous potential of the UK CoC programme to address both has been seen in Coventry's approach to its CoC year, and the results generated by it.

Recent interventions on social inequalities have been made by actors such as Julie Hesmondhalgh, who expresses concerns about the lack of young working class actors, and Lenny Henry, who has spearheaded on-and off-screen campaigning to increase ethnic diversity in the television industry. The UK Parliament launched an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Creative Diversity,[1] working to identify and tackle obstacles to diversity in the creative sector, and the Social Mobility Commission[2] created a toolkit for the creative sector.

[1] Tamsyn Dent, Natalie Wreyford, and Dave O'Brien, *Creative Majority: An APPG for Creative Diversity Report on "What Works" to Support, Encourage and Improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Creative Sector.: A Report for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity* (London: 2021).

BOTH PEOPLE AND AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE UNEQUALLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE UK

The toolkit builds on sociological debates that draw on Bourdieu's[3] theorising on the social construction of cultural tastes. This literature acknowledges that the high status of—or value attributed to—certain cultural genres or objects is not naturally occurring or based on objective artistic merit, but is rather a socially stratified choice.

Socially differentiated knowledge of this elite culture helps to reproduce social class inequalities. Research has latterly focused on social inequalities in cultural employment, and the relationship between who works in culture in terms of representation, commissioning, and cultural consumption.[4]

Spatial inequalities in the creative economy have received less attention although this has changed in recent years. In part, this has been prompted by the

Rebalancing our Cultural Capital report[5] which drew attention to the enormous and increasing disparity between funding for culture within and outside London; not only DCMS funding but also sponsorship, charitable funding, and lottery grants.

The UK government's Levelling Up Agenda has triggered two UK APPGs: Reimagining where we live: Cultural Placemaking and the Levelling Up Agenda and Northern Culture.

But culture at a local level has long been of interest, whether this is in the economic contribution that culture might make through tourism, job creation, regeneration, and more, or for understanding different perspectives on what counts as culture.[6]

The social and spatial inequalities in the creative economy are not independent of one another. Both people and cultural opportunities are

unequally distributed across the UK, and a lack of proximity to cultural amenities is more of a deterrent to the least advantaged in society.[7]

[2] Social Mobility Commission, *Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit: Creative Industries* (London, 2021) https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SMC-Creative_Industries-Toolkit_Sept2021.pdf [accessed 29 September 2022]

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984).

[4] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Culture Is Bad for You: Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

[5] Peter Stark, Christopher Gordon, and David Powell, 'Rebalancing Our Cultural Capital', *GPS Culture*, 2013, 1–64.

[6] Andrew Miles and Lisanne Gibson, 'Everyday Participation and Cultural Value. Part 1', *Cultural Trends*, 25.3 (2016).

[7] Orian Brook, 'Explaining Cultural Participation in the UK: A Geographical Approach' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 2015).

Rather than being a problem just for those interested in cultural policy or sociological theory, inequality in the cultural sector is becoming understood as an issue of social justice[8].

This is not simply because we all pay for publicly funded culture, whether through local or national taxes, or lottery tickets. Rather, it is a matter of principle and of distributive justice: everyone should have access to the benefits that publicly funded culture provide.

These may be economic: access to cultural work or to the amenities that cultural assets offer, or the placemaking value of culture that attracts other employers, their workers, and customers. Or they may be social, psychological, or otherwise less tangible: recent reports on cultural value have highlighted improvements to empathy and social cohesion from engaging with culture[9] and there is a strong belief in the contribution of cultural

participation to health and wellbeing. The commitment of Coventry as a Marmot City, and the ensuing holistic/multi-dimensional approach to addressing health inequalities,[10] including consideration of the contribution that culture can make,[11] is important in addressing the social and spatial inequalities in culture.

Health inequalities are often linked to 'diseases of despair', and public health researchers often consider neighbourhoods as 'opportunity structures', offering 'socially constructed and socially patterned features of the physical and social environment' that can affect the lives of residents.[12]

THERE IS A STRONG BELIEF IN THE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURAL PARTICIPATION TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

8   Mark Banks, *Creative Justice: Cultural Industries, Work and Inequality* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017); Mark Banks, 'Cultural Work and Contributive Justice', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 0.0 (2022), 1–15 https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2022.2058059

9   Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska, *Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture* (Swindon: AHRC, 2016) http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/

10 Alice Munro, *Coventry - A Marmot City* (Institute of Health Equity, 2020).

11 Daisy Fancourt and others, 'How Leisure Activities Affect Health: A Narrative Review and Multi-Level Theoretical Framework of Mechanisms of Action', *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 8.4 (2021), 329–39.

12 Sally Macintyre, Anne Ellaway, and Steven Cummins, 'Place Effects on Health: How Can We Conceptualise, Operationalise and Measure Them?', *Social Science & Medicine*, 55.1 (2002), 125–39.

EVIDENCE BASE, SOCIAL AND SPATIAL INEQUALITIES IN CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Social inequalities in cultural consumption

The social inequalities in cultural consumption are well-evidenced and relatively stable over time. In *Figure 1*, we can see two aspects of this. First, of the kinds of culture listed, only film is attended by a majority of the population in a year, with a few others being attended by a large minority. Most of these artforms are relatively minority pursuits.

This is in contrast to activities described as 'free time' in the Taking Part Survey, the DCMS monitor of cultural participation, where watching TV, listening to music, and reading a book for pleasure were all undertaken by at least 70% of people.
This reflects the construction of

some pastimes as legitimate 'culture', and others as not,[13] with the legitimated activities being relatively less popular. Second, *Figure 1* shows a clear difference in the rates of attendance at each type of event according to the occupational (social) class of the respondent. These differences are also found in Scotland (Scottish Household Survey), and in other international surveys.[14]

[13] Mark Taylor, 'Nonparticipation or Different Styles of Participation? Alternative Interpretations from Taking Part', *Cultural Trends*, 25.3 (2016), 169–81.

[14] Orian Brook, *International Comparisons of Public Engagement in Culture and Sport* (DCMS, 2011).

[15] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Culture Is Bad for You: Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 85.

[16] Orian Brook, 'Spatial Equity and Cultural Participation: How Access Influences Attendance at Museums and Galleries in London', *Cultural Trends*, 25.1 (2016), 21–34.

Figure 1: Attendance at cultural events in England and Wales, by occupational class
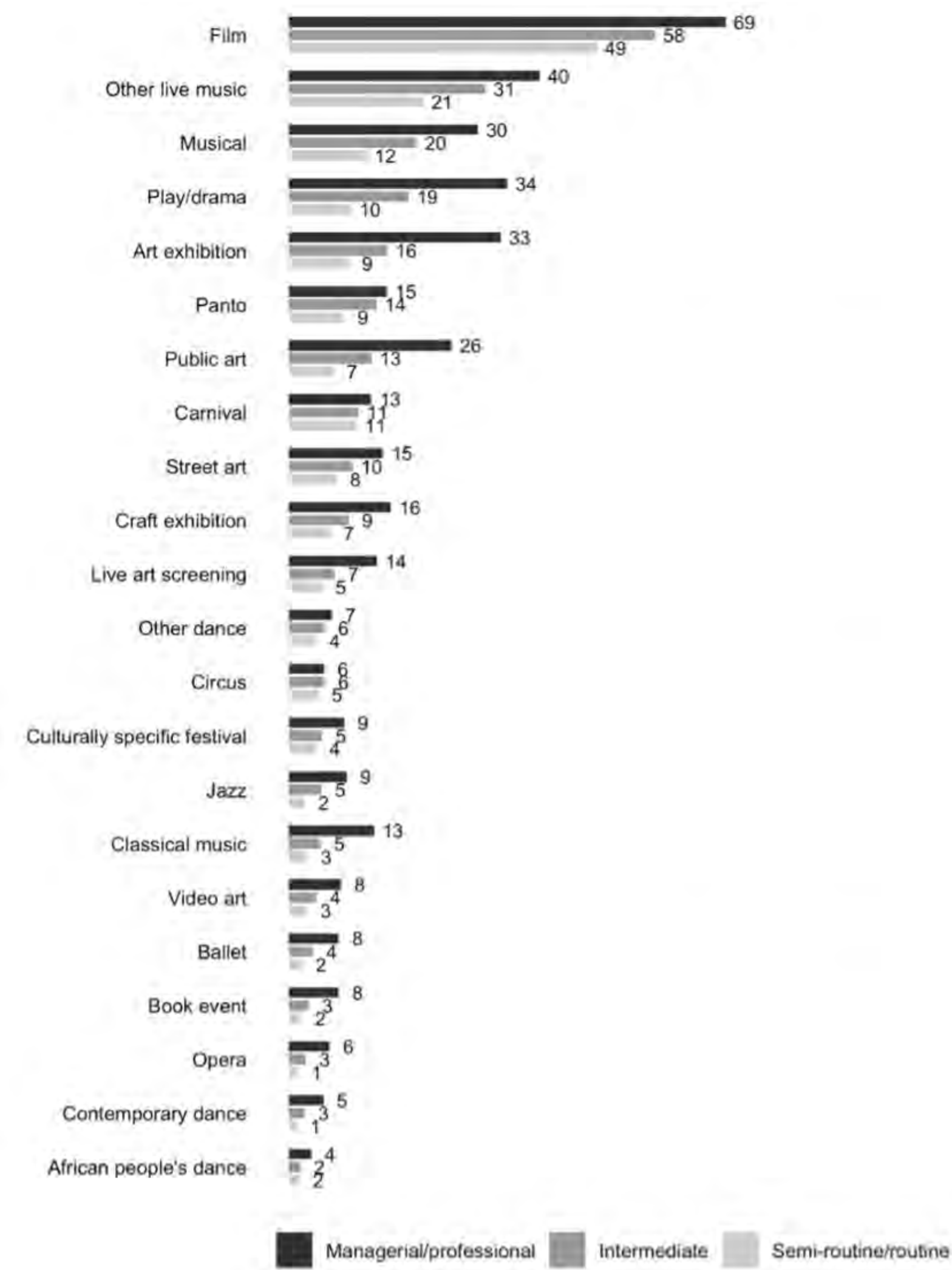
Source: Taking Part Survey 2017–2018 [15]

Spatial inequalities in cultural consumption

When spatial inequalities in cultural consumption have been analysed regionally, there are often not substantial differences (contrasting with the stark differences in funding for culture), especially when we account for socio-economic differences. However, regions are large, and include areas with excellent access to cultural assets and others with very poor access.

Taking a nuanced approach to both places and population groups shows that geographic access to cultural opportunities matters a great deal. Research has found that, even within London where all residents might be considered to have easy access to museums and galleries, access has been found to be strongly associated with attendance, along with ethnicity, education, and area deprivation; however, access is the only factor associated with attending more than once a year.[16]

In Scotland a similar picture emerges, supplemented by the finding that while University graduates were likely to attend even if they live in areas with the worst access, those with less education were more affected by the poorest levels of access: access was as strong a predictor of attendance as other socio economic factors.[17]

Access to cultural opportunities, along with socio-economic factors, has been found to be important for other types of activities too, from opera[18] to street festivals.[19] This is likely to become even more important post-pandemic; not only are more people working from home (and we know that commuting patterns are strongly associated with cultural attendance),[20] but in surveys 1/3 of respondents say that they expect to attend closer to home than pre-pandemic. And even without considering access to cultural opportunities, the nature of an area, including its deprivation levels, is just as predictive of cultural participation as individual characteristics. [21]

In conclusion, it is clear that both social and spatial inequalities are strongly associated with cultural participation. They need to be understood together as influential in people's cultural lives. As we have seen, people have different preferences for whether they participate locally or prefer to travel further for cultural experiences. People with a low likelihood of attending can be offered a greater sense of ownership through co-creation, by creating differentiated programming (such as Theatre Royal Stratford East in London,[22] or Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool).[23] But neither co-creation/ differentiated programming from afar nor local proximity of cultural opportunities are sufficient in themselves for alienated communities to feel that cultural amenities are intended for them. In short, in order to address social inequalities it is necessary to address spatial inequalities at the hyper-local level. And while the research in this paper addresses cultural participation by adults, the same factors will be in play for cultural participation by children, especially that undertaken outside school.[24]

[17] Orian Brook, 'Explaining Cultural Participation in the UK: A Geographical Approach' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 2015).

[18] Orian Brook, 'Reframing Models of Arts Attendance: Understanding the Role of Access to a Venue, The Case of Opera in London' *Cultural Trends*, 22.2 (2013), 97–107.

[19] Eun Jin Shin, 'Neighborhood Disparities in Access to Street Arts Festivals: Evidence from Chicago', *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 2020, 1–22.
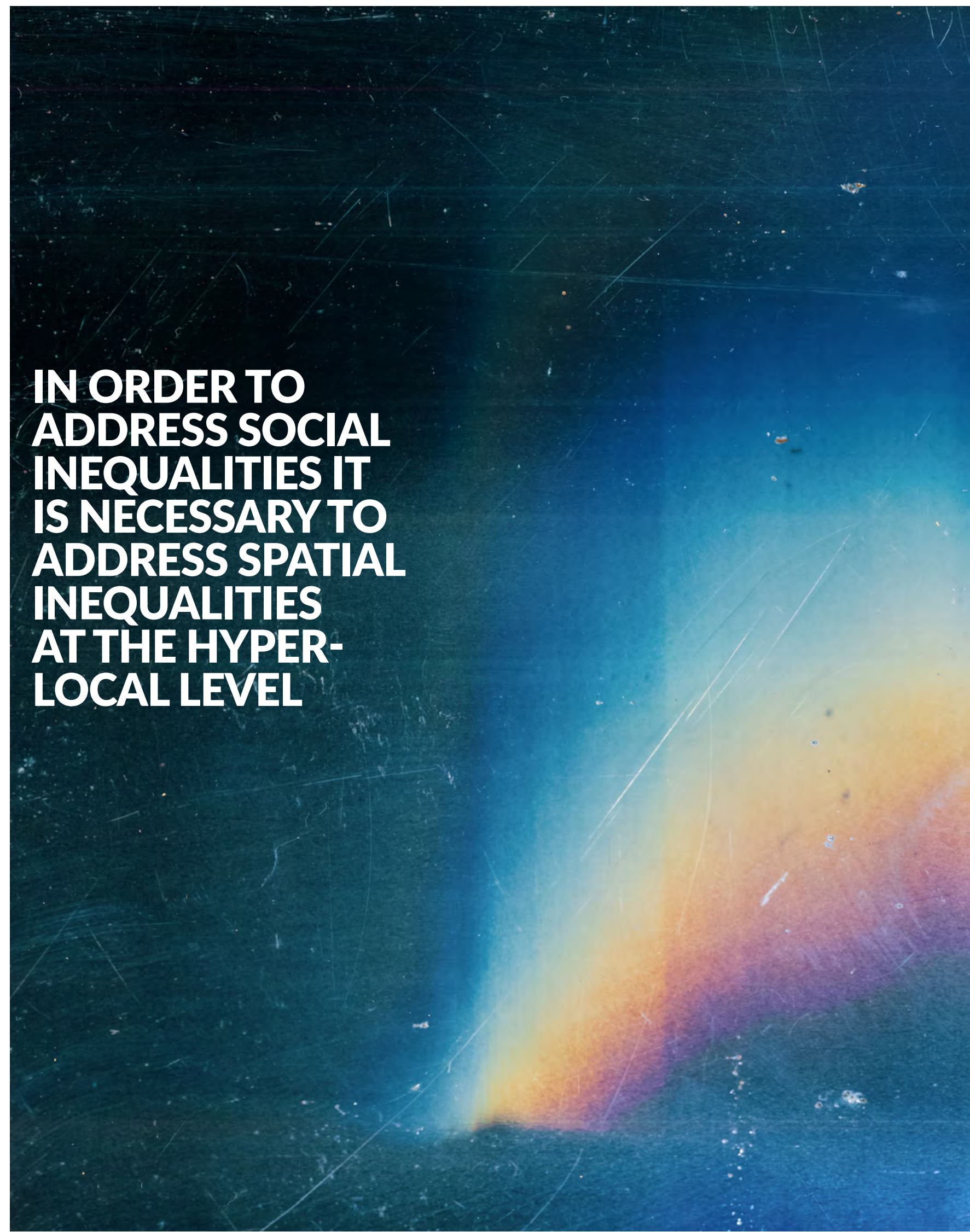
[20] Orian Brook, Paul Boyle, and Robin Flowerdew, 'Demographic Indicators of Cultural Consumption' in *Understanding Population Trends and Processes*, Vol.2, ed. by John Stillwell and others (Springer, 2011), pp. 67-82.

[21] Hei Wan Mak, Rory Coulter, and Daisy Fancourt, 'Associations between Neighbourhood Deprivation and Engagement in Arts, Culture and Heritage: Evidence from Two Nationally-Representative Samples', *BMC Public Health*, 21.1 (2021), 1–10.

[22] Orian Brook, Paul Boyle, and Robin Flowerdew, 'Demographic Indicators of Cultural Consumption' in Understanding Population Trends and Processes, Vol. 2, ed. by John Stillwell and others (Springer, 2011), pp. 67-82.

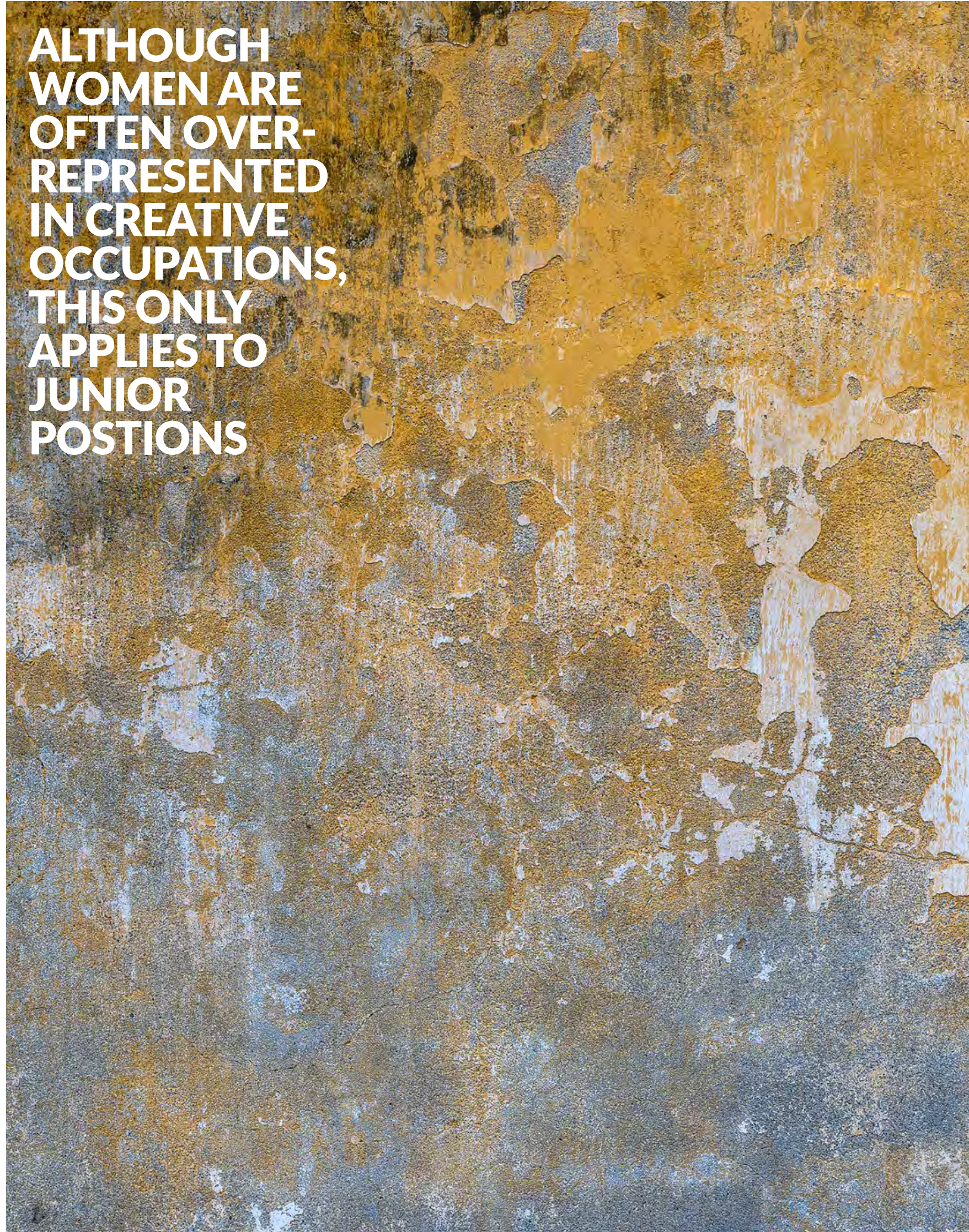[23] Maria Barrett, 'At What Cost?: Working Class Audiences and the Price of Culture', in *Routledge Companion to Audiences and the Performing Arts*, ed. by Matthew Reason and others (Routledge, 2022), pp. 159–76.

[24] Hei Wan Mak and Daisy Fancourt, 'Do Socio-Demographic Factors Predict Children's Engagement in Arts and Culture? Comparisons of in-School and out-of-School Participation in the Taking Part Survey', *PloS One*, 16.2 (2021), e0246936.

IN ORDER TO ADDRESS SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IT IS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS SPATIAL INEQUALITIES AT THE HYPER-LOCAL LEVEL

ALTHOUGH WOMEN ARE OFTEN OVER-REPRESENTED IN CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS, THIS ONLY APPLIES TO JUNIOR POSTIONS

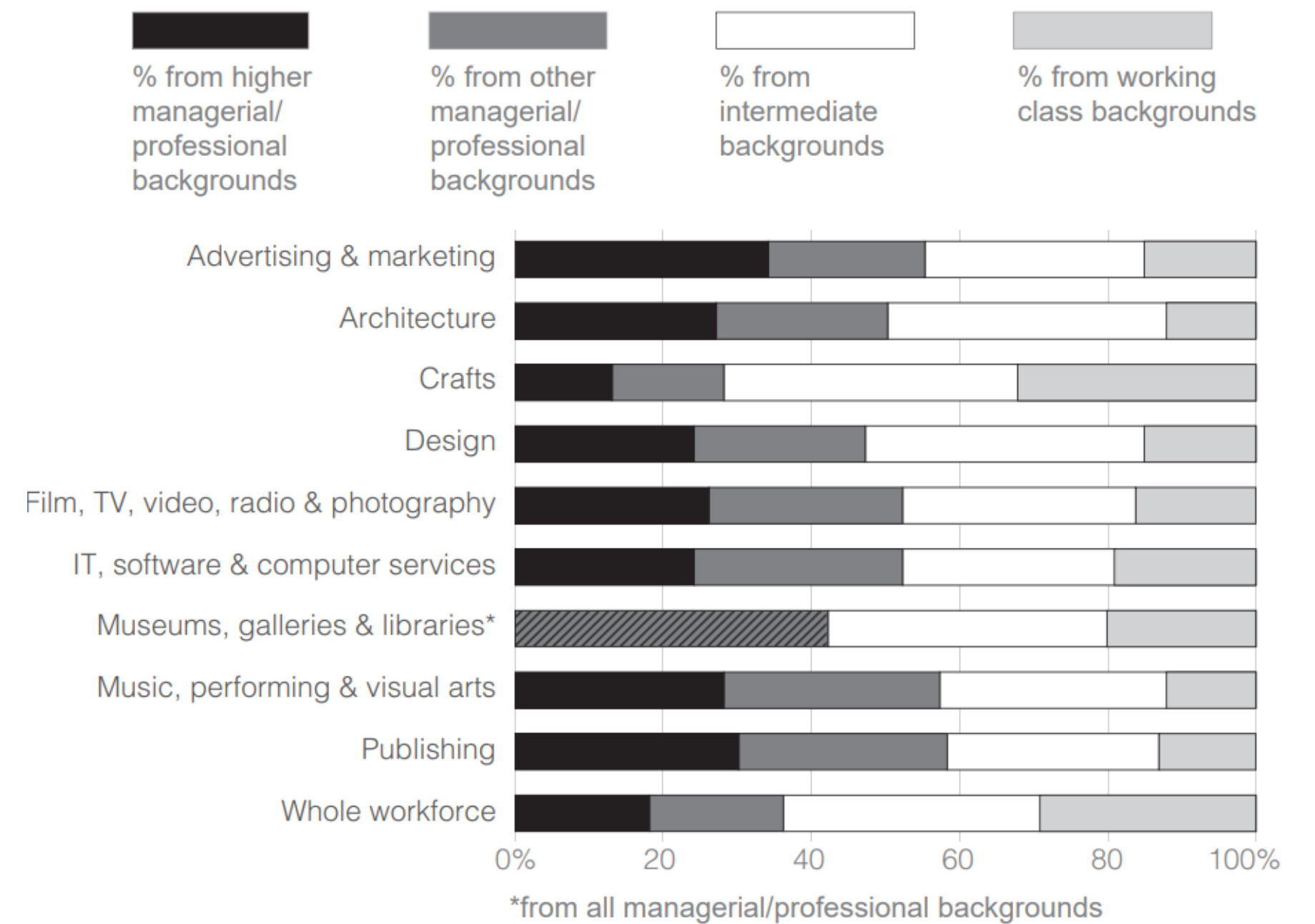## Social inequalities in cultural production

We have known for a long time about social inequalities in cultural consumption. More recent research finds these same inequalities in creative work.

Figure 2 shows the social class background (based on the occupation of the higher earning parent when the respondent was aged 14) for people working in creative occupations. For most types of creative work the proportion of people from managerial and professional backgrounds is markedly higher than that of the working population as a whole. The same is true for racial inequalities. Moreover, although women are often over represented in creative occupations, this only applies to junior positions.[25]

The chances of someone from a working-class background entering creative work have not changed over many decades (although there has been an increase in the proportion of people from middle class backgrounds in all occupations, including creative jobs).[26]

[25] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Culture Is Bad for You: Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

[26] Orian Brook and others, 'Social Mobility and "Openness" in Creative Occupations since the 1970s', *Sociology*, 2022 https://doi.org/10.1177/00380385221129953

[27] Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Culture Is Bad for You: Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

Figure 2: Composition of the creative workforce, by social class background.

% from higher managerial/professional backgrounds

% from other managerial/professional backgrounds

% from intermediate backgrounds

% from working class backgrounds

*from all managerial/professional backgrounds

Source: Labour Force Survey 2019 [27]

Spatial inequalities in cultural production

Economists have shown that the Cultural and Creative Industries sector is one of the most geographically clustered, even more so than Finance,[28] being predominantly found in London and a few major cities outside the capital.

This is a problem in itself, being one of distributive justice. Who has access to creative employment (which is often publicly funded)? Whose culture is accorded status or portrayed from a position of authenticity? But this clustering also has implications for social inequalities in the sector.

Mobility If it is necessary for many people to move in order to access creative work, this will be easier for people from more advantaged social backgrounds.

Thus, less advantaged people outside these creative cities are excluded from opportunities for creative work by being less mobile, while those already resident in such cities face competition not only from more privileged people within it, but also from those arriving from elsewhere in the UK.[29]

Affordability The places where creative jobs are most available, such as London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Bristol, are the least affordable in terms of accommodation. This affects not only the beginning of someone's career (when they are quite probably not being paid for their work)[30] but also later when (if) they decide to start a family.

Interviews with women in creative work refer to the need to leave London to find family accommodation, and the resulting rupturing of professional networks.

Thus, it is essential to address spatial inequalities in the distribution of cultural work if we are serious about addressing social inequalities in who holds these jobs.

These inequalities are intertwined, and Coventry UK CoC 2021 was well-placed to address both forms of inequality. Through co-creation and working hyper-locally, it encouraged participation beyond social class barriers through its focus on celebrating the culture of people and places that are often overlooked.

28 Sandra Bernick and others, 'Industry in Britain: An Atlas', *CEP Special Paper*, 34, 2017.

29 Sam Friedman and Lindsey Macmillan, 'Is London Really the Engine-Room? Migration, Opportunity Hoarding and Regional Social Mobility in the UK', *National Institute Economic Review*, 240 (2017), R58–72.

30 Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, '"There's No Way That You Get Paid to Do the Arts": Unpaid Labour across the Cultural and Creative Life Course', *Sociological Research Online*, 25.4 (2020), 571–88.

LESS ADVANTAGED PEOPLE OUTSIDE THESE 'CREATIVE CITIES' ARE OFTEN EXCLUDED FROM OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE WORK BY BEING LESS MOBILE
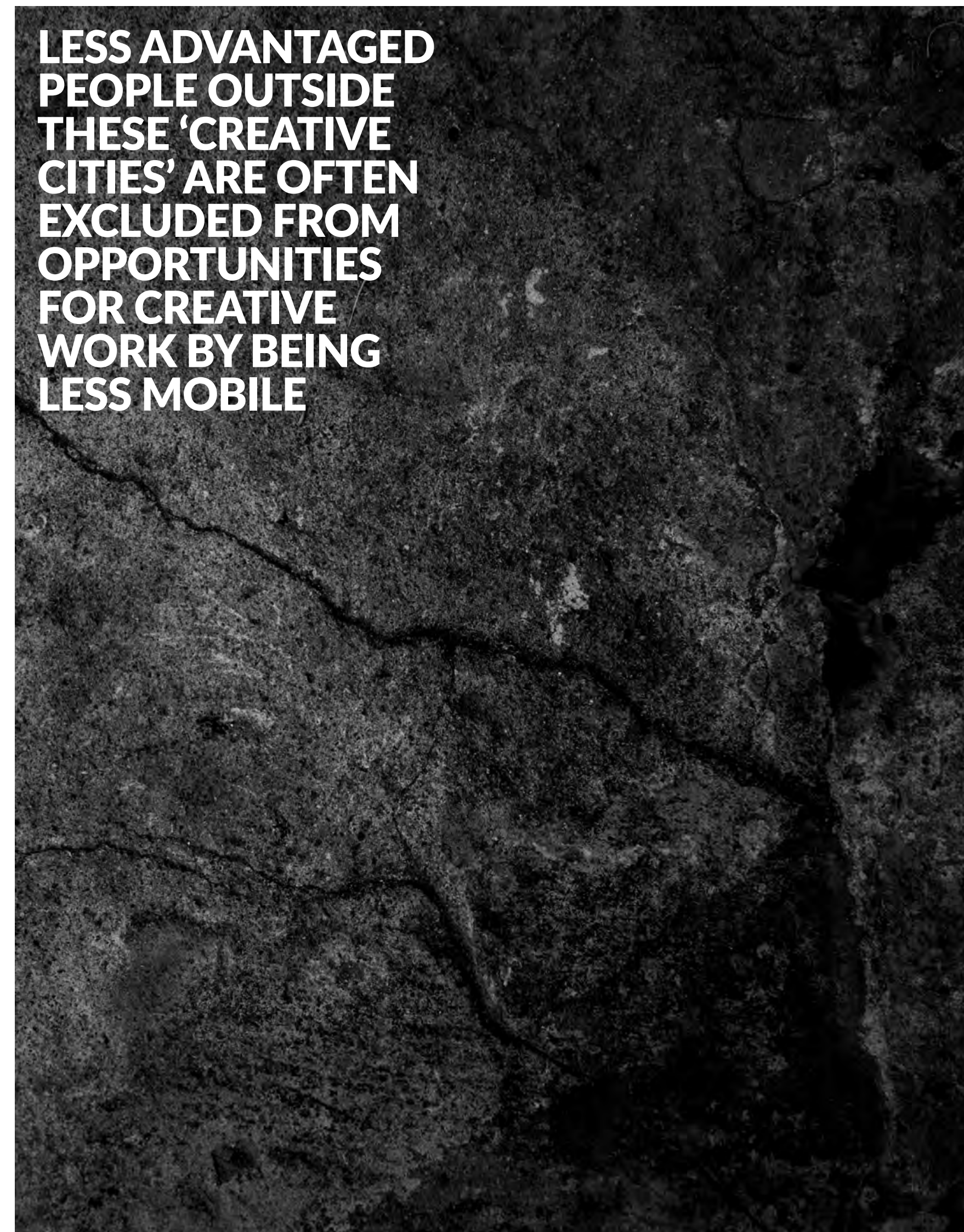
FUTURE TRENDS

Levelling up agenda

As discussed, the Levelling Up agenda has become an explicit part of cultural policy. Given the volatility of politics, and the urgency of emerging crises, it may be that it drops down the political agenda. However, as we have seen, crises can also heighten awareness of social and spatial inequalities, prompting government to prioritise the need to address them. Both DCMS and Arts Council England have identified priority areas for investment via a combination of statistics on deprivation and population, the current cultural spending in the area, and the levels of cultural participation; together, these identify need and current supply. ACE will invest all of the £43.5 million of additional investment they will receive for 2022-25 to benefit creativity and culture outside of London.

This can be seen as an acknowledgement that areas have missed out on investment in culture, and some lack basic cultural infrastructure. There has also, through evidence to the APPGs, been an increased understanding of the specificity of local characteristics and the need to work with local actors to co-create support networks.[31] This has been reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the precariousness of creative workers and businesses, and the need for involvement in local policymaking related, for example, to housing and workshop space.[32]

These are substantial new policy interventions, with the potential to offer huge opportunities to cultural organisations based outside London. Other likely beneficiaries are communities that have historically been poorly served by the legitimated cultural provision, and whose own cultural interests lack funding or recognition.

By diversifying the places and communities where culture is created and invested in, and devolving decision-making locally, different kinds of communities may be given voice, lowering the social and spatial barriers to places where cultural opportunities are available. While the differences are enormous and deeply entrenched, the Coventry case study gives powerful examples of how change can be effected at a hyper-local level. However, if such programmes are to have impact nationally, they will need to be large and sustained.

[31] Philip B Whyman and others, *Supporting the Creative Industries: The Impact of the 'Preston Model' in Lancashire* (Nesta, 2022).

[32] Lauren England and others, *Creative Work: Possible Futures after Covid-19* (Bolzano/Bozen: franzLAB, 2022), p. 139 https://doi.org/10.18742/pub01-080

COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic had an enormous impact on the creative sector. Clearly, it was not alone but performing arts and museums and galleries in particular experienced more long-lasting impacts than many other sectors.

Thousands lost work, many of whom did not qualify for government support, and the crisis only reinforced existing social inequalities in the sector's consumption and employment.

Many organisations pivoted quickly to digital, overcoming barriers of distance and mobility, but this channel was swiftly withdrawn in many cases.

The distribution of COVID recovery funding largely replicated existing spatial inequalities in funding.

This brief analysis of the spatial and social inequalities in the creative sector following the pandemic must be continued and extended if we are to understand the long-term impacts of

- *the pandemic,*
- *the cost of living crisis, and*
- *the levelling up agenda.*

Furthermore, research needs to identify the changes over time in

- *cultural provision,*
- *who has access to cultural consumption and cultural work in their local area, and*
- *how does this affect social inequalities?*

The work undertaken by Coventry UK CoC 2021 has strong potential to address the creative sector's social and spatial inequalities. By focusing on hyper-local offerings, the programme offers both local proximity[33] and the potential for a sense of ownership by the kinds of people who are most often missing from (excluded by) cultural spaces.[34] Coventry UK CoC 2021's impact on social and spatial inequalities is analysed in the case study on the following page, which identifies strong indicators for future research in the topic.

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID RECOVERY FUNDING LARGELY REPLICATED EXISTING SPATIAL INEQUALITIES IN FUNDING

[33] Orian Brook, Spatial Equity and Cultural Participation: How Access Influences Attendance at Museums and Galleries in London', *Cultural Trends*, 25.1 (2016), 21–34; Katy Raines, *Identity, Confidence, Connection. Rethinking Audience Engagement for Arts & Culture in the West Midlands* (West Midlands Combined Authority, 2021), pp. 1–64 https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/pbcjoztf/audience-report-web.pdf [accessed 31 August 2022].

[34] Maria Barrett, 'At What Cost?: Working Class Audiences and the Price of Culture', in *Routledge Companion to Audiences and the Performing Arts*, ed. by Matthew Reason and others (Routledge, 2022), pp. 159–76.

CASE STUDY:

HOW DID COVENTRY UK CoC 2021 CHALLENGE INEQUALITIES?

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 (UK CoC 2021) had the vision statement of 'reimagining the role of culture in a diverse, modern Britain, demonstrating that culture is a force that changes lives, moving Coventry and the region forward'

In the planning of the programme, Creative Director Chenine Bhathena stated, 'we will use this year to improve access to arts, creativity and cultural activities for all citizens wherever they live'.[35] With this ethos, the design of the cultural programme was purposeful in ensuring that activity was accessible to all, regardless of social class. Early evaluation findings released in September 2022 highlight three key statistics:[36]

- *Activity took place in all 42 neighbourhoods within Coventry,*

- *43% of tickets issued to Coventry postcodes went to those in lower economic groups, and*

- *77% of the programme, excluding commercial activity, was co-created with local residents.*

These statistics sound impressive, but what do they mean? Are they good or bad? And how do they relate to tackling social inequality? More importantly, what is the story that these statistics tell us? We suggest that they demonstrate that by taking a model of working hyper-locally in all neighbourhoods, and co-creating with the community free or close-to-free activities, structural inequalities can start to be broken down.

Cultural participation before Coventry UK CoC 2021

To understand the impact of Coventry UK CoC 2021 and to what extent it addressed social inequalities, we need to consider the baseline data. Using the standard measure of inequalities, the Index of Multiple Deprivation Score (IMD), and data collected by The Audience Agency (TAA), we can see there is a correlation between deprivation and engagement with publicly funded culture.[37] The April 2018 to March 2019 TAA Area Profile report for Coventry provides the total number of tickets issued to bookers who have a full and valid Coventry postcode for all venues that supply data to TAA, and a figure for venues just in Coventry. Many of the venues providing data to TAA are Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisations (NPO), or similar organisations funded through National Lottery Funders.

[35] Chenine Bhathena, *Moving with joy, heart and conscience...* (27 July 2020) https://coventry2021.co.uk/blogs/moving-with-joy-heart-and-conscience-chenine-bhathena-blog/ [accessed 26 September 2022].

[36] Neelands, Jonothan, Nick Henry, Valerie De Souza, Mark Scott, Haley Beer, Ila Bharatan, Tim Hammerton, Richard Tomlins, Tim Healey, and Si Chun Lam, *Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 Performance Measurement & Evaluation – Supplementary Report.* Coventry: Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/169625 [accessed 27 September 2022].

[37] The Index of Multiple Deprivation Score is derived from the Indices of Deprivation. Deprivation is measured in a broad way to encompass a wide range of aspects of an individual's living conditions, namely Income Deprivation, Employment Deprivation, Education/Skills & Training Deprivation, Health Deprivation & Disability, Crime, Barriers to Housing & Services, and Living Environment Deprivation. The higher the score, the more deprived an area. The lower the score, the less deprived an area.

The data, therefore, gives us a strong indication of engagement with publicly funded culture.

For tickets issued to Coventry venues, there is a clear correlation between low levels of deprivation and higher cultural participation. As deprivation increases, the likelihood of participating in arts and culture decreases.

The UK CoC 2021 programme sought to address this imbalance through hyper-local programming in the most deprived areas of the city and with seldom-heard groups, including refugees, migrant populations, and the homeless.

Figure 3: Correlation of Tickets Issued to Coventry Venues Against IMD Score.

% of Tickets Issued to Coventry Venues 2018/19 vs IMD

$R^2 = 0.5092$

Sources: The Audience Agency and Office for National Statistics
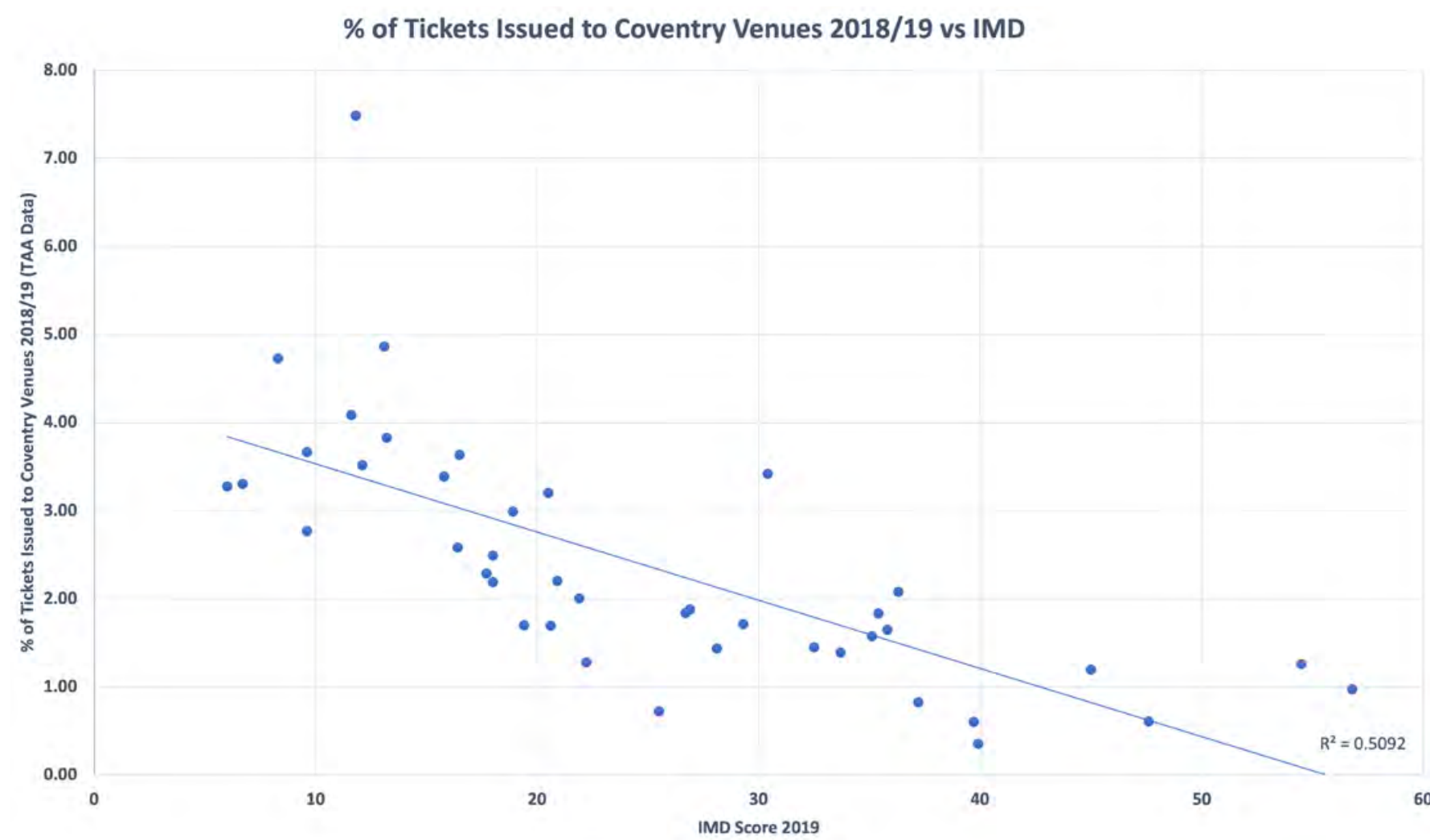
Proximity to events

Analysis of ticketing data and the collection of postcodes through post-event surveys indicates that events which were free and held within communities across the city were successful at attracting local audiences, notably so in areas of deprivation and low cultural participation.

Activity took place in all 42 neighbourhoods of the city, meaning all citizens had access to events and performances. For example, Party on the Green was a free family-friendly event featuring performances, music, dance, circus, and theatre that took place across three local parks in the city. The geographic distribution of the issued tickets shows that audiences were local to the events, with the majority residing in or next to the MSOA[38] in which the event took place.
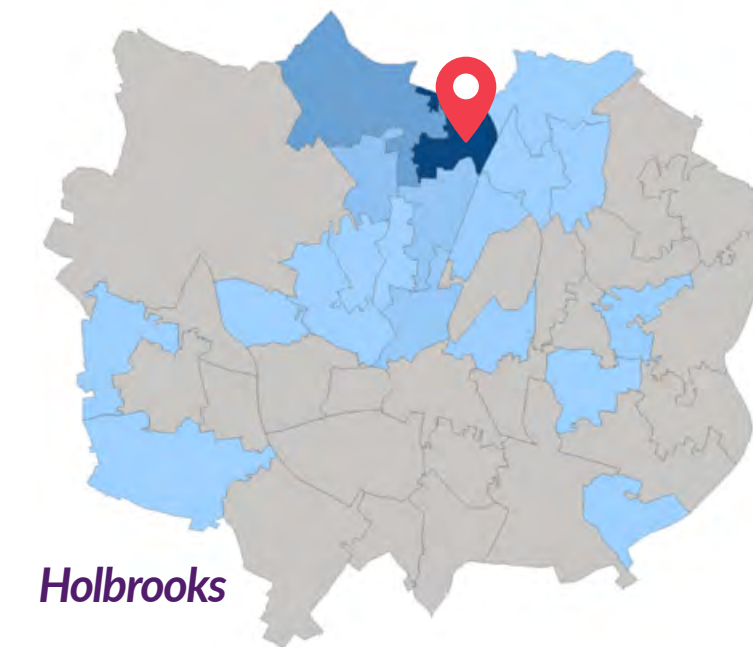
[38] Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) is a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales, allowing data to be presented in more granular detail. An MSOA generally represents between 5000-7000 residents.
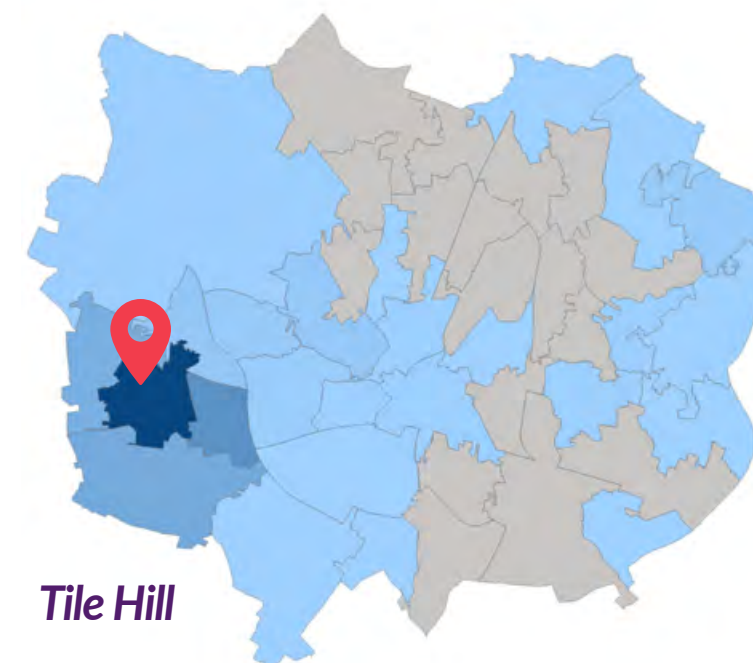
Figure 4: Density map demonstrating hyper-local attendance at Party on the Green events.

Holbrooks
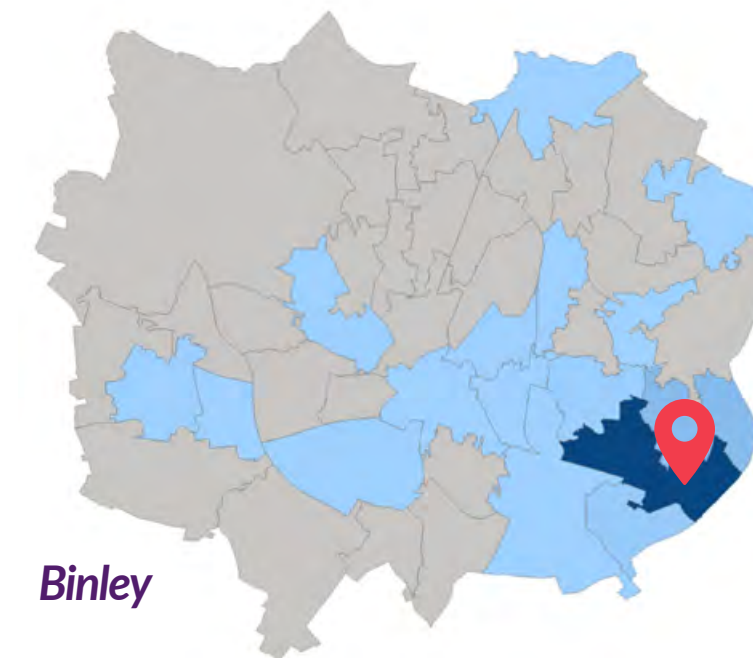
Binley

Tile Hill

The Coventry City of Culture Trust (the Trust) and partners developed the Coventry Cultural Place Profiler to assess demand and need. Understanding multiple geo-spatial inequalities enabled hyper-local programming. The parks where the events took place were specifically chosen because the immediate vicinity lacked cultural venues and facilities. The areas have a combined average IMD score of 33.2 (24.9 city average), and 20% of the population identify as disabled (18% city average).[39] Other events in the UK CoC 2021 programme, such as Beneath the Trees and Wildlife Gathering, showcased local talent through community groups and community leaders within their neighbourhoods.

[39] Coventry Citywide Intelligence Hub https://www.coventry.gov.uk/facts-coventry/citywide-intelligence-hub [accessed 27 September 2022].

Reaching lower economic groups

We know that cost can be a barrier to cultural participation; hence, 63% of the UK CoC 2021 programme was free of charge at entry point. Of the 37% that was charged, many of the tickets were priced at £5 or less through a pay-what-you-wish scheme. However, even with these relatively low prices, ticketing data shows that once an entry cost was in place, audiences tended to be those with higher disposable incomes.

The Trust's strategy of making sure events were hyper-local and free or close-to-free was successful. When we look at the tickets issued during the UK CoC 2021 year by the Trust's ticketing platform to valid and complete Coventry postcodes, we see that 42.8% of them went to citizens in the lower economic groups based on ACORN segmentation.[40] While this percentage is still under-representative of the general Coventry population (58.7% fall into these groups),

it nevertheless demonstrates engagement with publicly funded culture by citizens who have historically participated in and benefited least from publicly funded culture and who are from majority-minority ethnic neighbourhoods. This success in reaching low income and majority-minority ethnic citizens contrasts with the 2020-2021 audience data from ACE, which suggests that 8% of attendees for publicly funded cultural organisations in England identified as non-white and 31% were from the lowest income groups.[41]

Breaking down the ACORN segmentation of tickets, 4,208 tickets—equivalent to 4% of the overall tickets issued to Coventry postcodes—were issued to postcodes classified as Not Private Households.

The reason the percentage is 2.9% higher than the profile for the general Coventry population is that tickets were issued directly to community centres and those

staying in hotels and care homes, thus reaching groups who typically would not engage directly.[42]

Theatre Next Door was a project that served two purposes. Firstly, it was a skills development programme for leaders/managers of community centres across the city; secondly, it created an opportunity to develop new audiences for cultural activity by taking arts and culture to their doorstep.[43] A challenge for community centres was getting tickets to their users. 60% of the community centres that hosted live performances are in MSOAs associated with higher levels of deprivation, being characterised as neighbourhoods of less affluent white British individuals and/or areas of high ethnic diversity, with the highest rate of unemployment and social housing among all other social grades. They contain the LSOAs (a more granular geographic breakdown than the MSOA) that are the most digitally deprived in Coventry.[44]

This means citizens in those areas do not have regular access to the internet or smart phones. Access to tickets for UK CoC 2021 events was through an online box office, a premium telephone line, or from the UK CoC 2021 shop in the city centre.

These methods were access barriers for those in digital deprivation, which is often linked to wider measures of deprivation. Issuing tickets directly to community centres allowed the centre to pass them to their users.

Using existing organisations and infrastructure in the city to reach participants and audiences, the Trust's Caring City programme saw producers being embedded within third sector and charitable organisations, often working with and engaging the most seldom heard, vulnerable, and deprived citizens.

By shifting the power dynamics, the Trust increased the willingness to participate, tackling inequality.
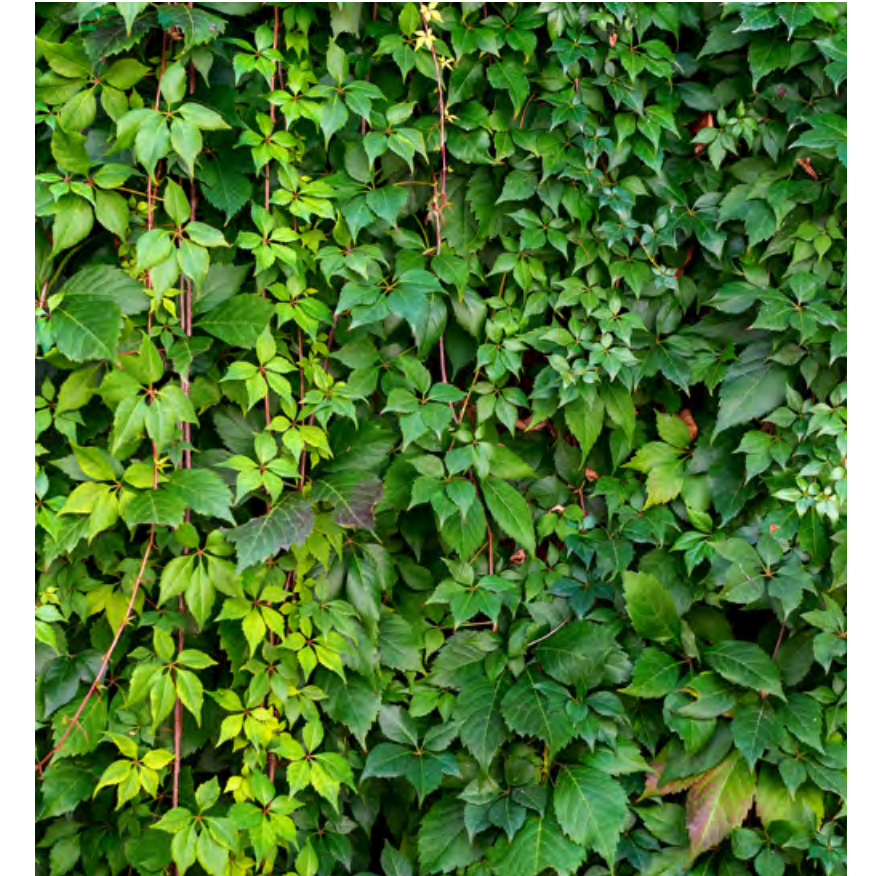
[40] ACORN is a powerful consumer classification that segments the population into 6 categories comprising 62 different types, providing a detailed understanding of the consumer characteristics of people and places across the UK. The final three categories, Financially Stretched, Urban Adversity, and Not Private Households are categories that relate to lower economic status.

[41] Arts Council England, *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – A Data Report* (23 June 2022) https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-data-report-2020-2021 [accessed 3 October 2022].

[42] Hotel residents were citizens who had lived experience of homelessness, or newly arrived refugees and migrants.

[43] See the Co-creation and Value Creation paper for further details of this project.

[44] Based on Internet User Classification data from 2018. IUC data is an economic metric which looks at access to and ability to use different forms of technology. Those who are 'e-withdrawn' have extremely limited/no access to technology.

THE YEAR WAS SEEN AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE INEQUALITY, WORK LOCALLY WITH THE COMMUNITY, AND CO-CREATE, GIVING THEM POWER.

Co-creating the programme

To ensure the events were relevant to the communities in which they were taking place, co-creation was key. Excluding commercial activities, 77% of the UK CoC 2021 programme was co-created with communities; when commercial activities are included, the percentage is 64%. This is noteworthy as much of this work took place in the neighbourhoods where citizens lived, reducing the spatial inequalities and barriers linked to cultural participation.

In looking at social equalities, the Trust departed from ACE's deficit model opting instead for a programme akin to Creative People and Places. It extended Marmot City thinking (all citizens, regardless of where they live, are entitled to excellent health outcomes) to cultural provision and participation. Presenting opportunities to those who would typically be unengaged and putting co-creation on a large scale at a hyper-local level

was the basis of The Coventry Model of programming and production.[45] Although the focus was on engaging with under-represented communities on their doorstep, regular cultural consumers were not overlooked. Events such as Faith, This Is The City, and Our Wilder Family were all major events that were free of charge to those willing to travel.

The public consultation for the UK CoC 2021 bid made it clear that citizens wanted their communities and their collective stories to be highlighted in the UK CoC 2021 programme. Local citizens were to be at the heart of the year. Research also showed they wanted this to be in their neighbourhoods. The year was seen as an opportunity to reduce inequality, work locally with the community, and co-create, giving them power.

As demonstrated in the main report from which these Future Trends stem, Upper Foleshill and Torrington & Canley are MSOAs

that the 2018 Coventry Household Survey identified as having the lowest levels of estimated cultural participation.[46] Targeted interventions saw a rise in cultural participation in both MSOAs between 2018 and 2021. This was achieved through working with the existing local infrastructure (e.g., community centres) and the citizenry, to co-create events relevant to them. For Upper Foleshill this focused on creating events based on faith and religion: participation in publicly funded culture in this neighbourhood rose from 2% in 2018 to 80% in 2022.

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[45] See the Co-creation and Value Creation paper for a deeper definition of co-creation. However, for Coventry UK CoC 2021, co-creation refers to the engagement and participation by residents in the design and delivery of a project or event.

[46] Jonothan Neelands, Jacqueline Hodgson, Mark Scott, Patrycja Kaszynska, , and Andrew Dixon (2022) *The Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project: Towards a Research-Informed Approach*. Coventry: University of Warwick https://warwick.ac.uk/about/cityofculture/our-research/ahrc-uk-cities-of-culture-project/warwick_uk_cities_of_culture_-_towards_a_research-informed_approach_web.pdf [accessed 27 September 2022], p. 20.

Moving forward

Underlying the design of the programme was career development. Pathways were established through skills development and training to aid the sustaining of activity once the party had left town. One such example, The City of Culture Leadership Programme, saw fifteen cultural leaders undertake a two-year training and development programme. The cohort selected was representative of the city and region in terms of ethnicity and other protected characteristics, but also in relation to social class (33% of the cohort identified as coming from a working-class background). This is higher than many categories in the creative workforce as per the Labour Force Survey 2019.

The programme focus on leadership is significant because working-class backgrounds are not represented in cultural sector leadership roles. Also, the Belgrade Theatre—through funding from the Trust— diversified their leadership for their UK CoC 2021 programming, appointing three Co-Artistic Directors from under-represented backgrounds. This ultimately led to a diversification of the theatre's leadership when a new Chief Executive and Creative Director were appointed in January 2022. The Trust also used targeted recruitment to diversify its board of trustees to represent and reflect the citizens of the city.

Monthly training sessions were delivered to over 200 community groups, community champions, and partners. These focused on event management, fundraising, and audience development. Being hyper-local, the emphasis was on enabling communities to have the skills and knowledge locally to produce and put on events relevant to their community, breaking down power structures and encouraging participation across all aspects of social grade.

THE SCALE OF INVESTMENT OFFERED TO UK CoC'S CAN ALLOW THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE CITIZENS FROM THE ENTIRE SOCIAL SPECTRUM.

The three statistics we highlighted in the introduction to this case study are good. The scale of investment offered to UK CoC's can allow them the opportunity to engage citizens from the entire social spectrum. But reducing spatial inequalities and class barriers requires careful and considered planning, utilising data to target work at a hyper-local level is key to reducing spatial inequalities and class barriers. Looking to the future, it is important that CoCs, including Bradford 2025, work in the heart of communities on socially engaged art, while supporting communities and new cultural leaders in gaining new skills that they can use locally.

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