



European research partnership on cultural and creative spillovers

‘Researching SPILLOVER in the creative and cultural industries’

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Note: This is a comment on methodology from one of the project's research partners, and written in response to the many people who have requested that the Spillover project clarify its position on method – specifically, how we understand our research on ‘spillover’ to be categorically different from past attempts to define and investigate the social or economic roles of the arts, culture or creative industries. What I have written below is an individual response, and does not necessarily represent the view of the Partnership as a whole; moreover, the Partnership is currently commissioning four major research projects, which will all contribute to our evolving understanding on spillover research methodology.

There are many ways to investigate the role, function, value or impact of the arts, culture and creative industries. But, how do we define 'role, function, value or impact'? And when we do, are our definitions adequate to contemporary forms of arts, culture and creative industries?

Do our definitions not presuppose epistemological principles that immediately seem ill-fitted when brought to bear on the dynamic and endlessly mutable forms of creativity that characterise contemporary art or creativity in new digital media, for example? The term 'impact' can be understood in many ways, and many synonyms can be used in its place, but they all invariably involve presuppositions involving a concept of *causality*. We can equally refer to 'effects', or 'benefits', or 'added value', which may all involve processes we may define in terms of the 'transfer' or reception or influence of knowledge, skills, and other resources or capabilities, which all too often are understood in terms of causality. This is not to say causality has no role in spillover research – it is difficult to see how it could not. However, an exclusive and linear understanding of ‘cause-and-effect’ – where the arts, culture and creative industries are valued to the extent in which they generate measurable gains for other sectors or social life generally – represents the past narrow, instrumentalist approach we largely reject.

The arts, culture and creative industries possess and generate a complex range of value, and this value is important to culture itself as well as other realms of life. Sometimes this cannot be measured (at least with the tools we currently possess); and sometimes it is not a case of value ‘being generated’, but a power of influence or

enrichment in our everyday life because of the presence of the arts, culture or creative industries.

Our use of the term 'spillover' is not exclusive to all or any of these above concepts -- role, function, value or impact -- and the established strands of research that frame their provenance. The European Research Partnership on Cultural and Creative Spillovers is an attempt to recognise their contribution to an ongoing discourse, but moving forward we want to integrate current, relevant and viable strands of research into a more holistic framework. Given how 'spillover' as a term has its own methodological history, we recognise and do not deny how the historical usage of the term is significant, and not fixed. Today, spillover (sometimes called 'cross-over', and often intimately involve cognate terms like 'value chain' or 'cultural ecology') demands that we resolve the dilemma of multivalent terminology through considering the currently available research data, along with the needs and demands of a variety of agencies (for example, public funders in wanting to know the value of purported 'spillover effects' of culture and creative industries in society and economy and the value of such, lasting or provisional). Moreover, 'value' is changing, along with cultural production itself -- it may now be digital, hybrid, super-complex, and multicultural, as much as socially fragmented and economically unstable, but also innovative. The Partnership is acting on the twin assumptions that spillover is one of the most significant discourses on the value of the arts, culture and creative industries in the present time, and that we need 'post-analogue', flexible, multi-perspectival, fast-moving and focused research as way of defining its coordinates so we can devise new methodologies.

The Partnership emerged from a series of workshops at ecce in Dortmund, where our initial publication included a discussion on the origins of the spillover concept, its many synonyms and cognate terms. (1) The workshops scrutinised the many definitions and uses of impact, benefit, effects, and value, and we found that each of these terms is embedded with assumptions, and so inherent limitations in their use. One notorious and now ubiquitous term, is 'impact'. If something has an 'impact' then that something is a something of which impact is constitutive of its embedded aims, facility or capability in some way (that is, it's understood as a delimited phenomenon, or at least a phenomenon that has a tangible or material constitution subject to a strategic management of its aims, and whose movement or presence pertains to a change in the tangible or material constitution or movement of another phenomenon or contexts of such). Impact causality might seem self-evident, but it is often problematic, particularly in relation to a naturalist understanding of ontology (the constitutive relation between objects, actions and contexts or environments). Understanding the environment in which 'impact' happens also demands more than empirical observation. The 'cause-effect' relations that are assumed to be between an identified phenomenon and something upon which it acts or effects, can appear overly linear and reductive of the variables and multiple forces acting on any one object in the context of a mutable environment. This is particularly true of the arts,

culture, and creative industries in urban and multicultural contexts, where so often creative practice is assumed to serve or produce something discrete and measurable, for some other purpose. It is ironic, that no other form of social or economic practice is placed under a demand to generate something 'for culture' or the sphere of the arts; but the arts are perpetually under scrutiny for their facility to produce value for social and economic spheres.

However, the *raison d'être* for our interest in spillover is a belief in the social and economic efficacy of arts and culture. Our interest is not driven by the perpetual bureaucratic requirement of a financial statistics-based justification of public spending on culture. It is driven by a conviction that the arts and culture can generate a diversity of value, and do so without succumbing to instrumentality or betraying its fundamental 'autonomy'. The sub-text of our aspiration is the problematic evolution in recent years of methodologies that purport to measure the value of arts and culture, along with the creative industries, all of which are assumed to be in the same business of 'creativity'. Creative activity is often misrepresented, and not 'captured', by isolating part of some of its roles, functions or effects in a given social or economic content. While such evolving methodological intelligence remains useful in some spheres for the on-going demands of advocacy and bureaucratic monitoring, the full range of capabilities and powers in the arts and culture that are in part latent, in part exploited, still demand a fuller investigation. This research task is a challenge, as the arts, culture, and creative industries are characteristically non-linear and have often exceeded the standard social or economic templates of productivity and value. They are ever changing, context-sensitive, emotionally expressive and can 'affect' producers, participants and audiences in very different ways. The arts, culture, and creative industries can change places and spaces, shift our sense and experience, cause us to adapt our language and the terms by which we define them, all having some bearing on what we consider significant, valuable, and constitutive of the world around us. Their excess and unpredictable variation escapes the linear flows of temporality and instrumental rationality that orders the social 'everyday' we spend most of our lives inhabiting.

Spillover therefore, as noted above, is not a term that will stand as a unified methodology; rather, it is intended to generate multiple methodologies, each one attending to specific practices in specific places. Spillover is now an accepted and identified phenomenon; we are committed to a reflexive and philosophically critical examination of this phenomenon in tandem with the methodologies that have identified it. And when we use terms like 'spillover effects', we are not implying an agreed theory, but only using terminology that, by virtue of history and discourse, is understood and is now routinely used across various policy fields. Moreover, the term spillover is particularly significant for Europe and the geo-politics of socio-economic growth, given its early use by neofunctionalists looking at the way industries across the European continent grew more effectively through spillover effects (2). One could observe similar patterns of growth in the history of art and

culture itself: the evolution of Europe's extraordinary national cultures betray significant international influences. One can argue that culture itself emerges from a knowledge of other cultures, a crossing of borders, a breaking of boundaries, and a circulation of peoples, goods and services from region to region and country to country. The same is true of industry, commerce and enterprise. Spillover is a vital inquiry into such dynamic movement, interaction, communication and transport across territorial, political, cognitive and linguistic barriers.

On the methodologies that we are intending to develop and facilitate (in commissioning research by others), the following assumptions will apply:

1: That research on cultural and creative spillover must maintain a critical reflexivity (understanding that method should be a response to context) as well as an interactivity (where our knowledge develops through observation and in dialogue with creative or cultural producers). The arts, culture, and creative industries can indeed generate detached and discrete products, which as objects of analysis can be measured and observed (art works for display and sale, events that attract ticketed participants and improve the profile of a city; creative start ups that generate jobs and lucrative services, and so on). Yet, the products or services themselves cannot define the 'work' of the creative and cultural industries, nor provide a delimited object of measurement. They are also processes, repositories of memory and knowledge, media of developing skills and realms of experience, with a profound 'presence' in the social environments in which they are situated. The arts, culture and creative industries can teach us how to think, and talk, and form new ways of collaborating, managing participation and social interaction in the spaces in which we live and work. And so spillover research can move beyond just defining and analysing its object, but work *with* its object to generate new ways of involving people, citizens, artists, visitors or young people. Spillover research *itself* can become creative and cultural production – a co-creation of value, impact or the power of change.

2: For this reason, we are also interested in how the arts, culture and the creative industries can produce forms of knowledge and experience that are immersive and *generative* -- they cannot be defined in terms of objects and their impacts, but they emerge as catalysts of processes, and sources of empowerment for participants and producers alike. This often cannot be measured or analysed very easily, yet it can be crucial in taking its participants to a sense of place, or to a frame of mind, which allows them to do something else, and be productive. Generative experiences can 'influence' us, or 'facilitate' change, or produce dynamics for growth, or just provide tacit knowledge. (And, of course, as spillover research knows, this presents a challenge to identify specific coordinates and forms of change that can be assessed according to specific criteria or quantified in some way).

Even the commercial end of the creative industries (which operate at some distance from the publicly-funded arts or cultural spheres) function creatively only by virtue of a series of stable social conditions. These conditions have recently (popularly) been identified in terms of (among others) talent, mobility, place/space, technology/communications, available finance, education, pervasive cultural expression and popular culture. These conditions allow for a social recognition and institutional facilitation of methods of critical and analytical thinking, social and cultural freedoms, a heightened ethical consciousness and sense of public debate on ethical issues, a recognition of difference, an intensity of dialogue on specialised problems within industry, medicine, law and technology, open networks of social interaction and intercultural communication, and the rapid increases in sensory awareness across a social populace that emerges from such. The arts, culture and creative industries possess a facility for generating some of these conditions themselves, but also require social institutions, urban culture and a public life to provide other conditions. Altogether, they equip us to comprehend the growing complexity of the world -- not just through data, but through experience, shared spaces, collaborative production and meaningful aspirations.

3: That we are often told how 'advanced' economies (call them 'knowledge economies') require above all things talent and talented people; however, this is often defined narrowly as university graduates (of specialist, established, subjects of scholarly research). However, talent and talented people cannot be defined in terms of a spectrum of fixed capabilities, or defined through a model of skills and knowledge components. There are talent and talented people the world over who achieve little (in, for example, corrupt or poverty-stricken countries). Talent and talented people need -- as much as certain aptitudes or skills or knowledge -- particular kinds of space, institutional support or freedoms, political empowerment and protections, finance and budgetary management facilities, planning and development frameworks, networks and professional peers, knowledge flows and information route ways, and many other active dimensions to their working lives.

A cursory survey of the global economy will support the presupposition that advance economic development requires the facility for generating new languages of personal expression, innovations in terminology, modifications, elaborations or radical shifts in methods and methodologies, all emerging from the professional freedom to challenge received tradition and the embedded structures of authority in the workplace or industry. Moreover, all these components -- people, positions and hierarchies, spaces and places, abilities and talents, language and expression, and so on -- are configured differently in different places and cultures, which means that popular attempts at generating 'models' of impactful creative practices (which generate spillover effects, for example) presuppose a uniformity or universality of the above conditions, people and processes, which manifestly does not exist. The arts, culture and the creative industries are not 'place-specific' (like certain forms of heritage, intangible cultural heritages, or arts and crafts of the built environment)

but they are indeed 'place-based', in that they do not simply produce things or actions, but they form the people, capabilities, processes, environments and the relations between things, which enable us to produce new things, which have impact (or perhaps multiple, dispersed or delayed impacts).

4: The arts, culture and creative industries do not remain the same. There is something intrinsic to the creative that requires a relevance, or current participation in the production of value. Creatively, their appeal to both connoisseur or consumer alike is in large part because of their sensory qualities of difference, differentiation, development or perceived change. They situate themselves on the boundaries between norms, conventions and the sphere of identifiable value – as experiences they are often celebrated for inhabiting the 'edge' of reality.

Within the arts, culture and the creative industries we find echoing the meaning of *enlightenment modernity*. We define this as critical thinking, and a persistent investigation into the nature of reality -- which involves a perpetual questioning and redefinition of conventional notions of truth, a robust challenging of current realities, and a demand for participation and the realisation of the full powers of the citizen. It also involves an understanding of common needs and common humanity, a recognition of civil society apart from the State, and an understand that 'change' is a precondition of human existence. Change, or the process of transformation, is not a teleological principle as it was in so much enlightenment thought. It is a dynamic that can uncover the current conditions for human progress -- justice, fairness and equality. This may seem high-flown political rhetoric, but for us remains the intellectual heart of European society.

5: As an object of research, the experience of culture and creativity informs our understanding of what we mean by research. Before all, research is not just the acquisition of information or ready-made data. It is the location of 'sources' of research 'material' (which might be anything) and the construction of knowledge. Our experience of culture and creativity demands that research does not attempt to find timeless or universal truth, but to create or co-create specific, place-based, and relevant knowledge formations. Research does not only issue from solitary individuals, but groups – and even if solitary individuals do generate outstanding research, the knowledge it promises is only made substantive by its recognition, understanding and use by a community of users, publishers, institutions, a public.

The collective production of knowledge defines the spirit of the European Research Partnership on Cultural and Creative Spillovers. This therefore entails the following principles, on which this project is based:

1: **Spillover research is creative:** as a term, 'research' has migrated from the natural sciences into the humanities and arts, bringing with it an unfortunate implication that research is invested primarily in observations of phenomenon,

which we find, categorise and measure, then compare and evaluate, and so generate data. However, this notion is outmoded even in the natural sciences, but a lot of old fashioned scientific thinking (naturalism, positivism, empiricism) persists in cultural research. Against this, we believe that (a) knowledge is ‘created’ by research, not just found or ‘constructed’ with measurable data; and (b) the arts, culture and creative industries as objects of knowledge are also repositories of knowledge, and are also reflexive forms of thought, analysis, research and information in themselves.

In doing research on the arts, culture and creative industries, we must invite them to co-create the knowledge that results and contributes to research themselves. Through partnerships and creative enterprise, with new forms of knowledge production, we can generate more relevant powerful research results. We do not believe in a ‘practitioner-scholar’ professional dichotomy, for it may be the practitioners (the entrepreneurs, activists, artists, designers, arts managers, and so on) might be best placed to conduct the necessary research, and moreover can use ‘local’ knowledge, ‘tacit’ knowledge and aesthetic knowledge of the processes of production. We therefore support practitioners and organisations in developing research capabilities.

2: Spillover research is interdisciplinary: it does not adhere to strict orthodoxies, scientific dogmas or single-method research routines. Spillover research is pragmatic as well as critical, and so may use mixed methods, or improvise combinations of methods and use methods differently for different tasks. It can combine quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary data, theoretical, critical and empirical research. Interdisciplinary is also a *social* disposition -- Spillover research is cooperative and based around dialogue, sharing and critical interchange.

3: Spillover research is collaborative: we are a growing network, and are actively inviting collaborators and partners from across Europe. We want to stimulate a new intellectual movement -- and build a new knowledge substrate, where knowledge from the arts, culture and creative industries can be used within the development of social-community, educational and economic life.

4: Spillover research is motivated: it is motivated by its funding partners, who are motivated primarily by the public good. Most of the European Research Partnership on Cultural and Creative Spillovers is funded by agencies or organisations that are interested in the nature and value of *public investment*, and the ways that we can make a case for public investment (to local or national government, funding agencies, and the European Parliament). Spillover research questions the ‘public-private’ dichotomy, particularly in the digital age, but is not blind to the increasing erosion of public culture, the impact of economic globalisation and neoliberal economics -- and the enduring need for public investment in culture.

5: Spillover research is advocacy: we want to *advocate* for the arts, culture and creative industries as activities, organisations, people and events, that are inherently valuable and demand our collective commitment as a society. We believe that they are an essential component of a developing, humane and free democratic society, and advance enlightened modernity in productive ways. We believe that they are central to genuine European integration, outside (but also through) political and economic spheres, and also essential to our understanding of the role and potential of Europe in the global economy. We therefore use our research and knowledge to lobby government and funding agencies throughout Europe, and pursue the value of culture as a form of international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy globally.

(1). The workshop was part of the EU-funded project 'CATALYSE' conducted in collaboration with the Forum d'Avignon and Forum d'Avignon Bilbao, and directed at ecce in Dortmund by Bernd Fesel; it took place in May 2014, and generated the first of the ecce 'to be debated' publications: Vickery, J.P. (2015) 'to be debated: SPILLOVER', Dortmund: european centre for creative economy. http://www.e-c-c-e.de/fileadmin/content_bilder/Aktivitaeten/Europa/Entwurf_EN_RZ.pdf
See also: Bryman, A. (2004) 'Qualitative Data Analysis', in *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, pp. 398-416; Finley, S. (2005) 'Arts-Based Inquiry: performing revolutionary pedagogy', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: Sage: pp. 681-694.

(2) Haas, E. B. (2004), Introduction: Institutionalism or constructivism? in *The Uniting of Europe: Politics, Social and Economic Forces, 1950–1957*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press; Rosamond, B. (2005), The uniting of Europe and the foundation of EU studies: Revisiting the neofunctionalism of Ernst B. Haas, *Journal of European Public Policy* 12(2): 237–254

Relevant EU publications

European Commission, Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU [COM (2012)537]; European Commission, Europe 2020: Europe's growth strategy, Brussels: EU [COM (2010)2020]; European Commission, An integrated industrial policy for the globalisation era [COM (2010)614]; European Commission, Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries [COM (2010)183]; European Commission, The European Report on Competitiveness 2010 [COM (2010)614]; European Commission, Towards world-class clusters in the European Union [COM (2008)652]; European Commission, European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World [COM (2007)242].

If you would like to get in touch with the Cultural and Creative Spillovers partnership, please contact us at: cc_spillover@gmail.com



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