

## FIFTEEN

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# Arts and culture policy moving between past and present towards the future

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### INTRODUCTION: THE NECESSITY OF THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

IT IS NECESSARY TO DISCUSS MOVING ARTS AND CULTURE policy forward from what we have inherited towards the future. It is of utmost importance to think about and engage with the future of arts and culture policy as it provides us with the opportunity to reimagine a reality that is different from the current one.

In their paper, 'Local cultural policy in South Africa: A tool for urban regeneration', Nawa and Sirayi (2015: 6) paint a picture of current South African arts and culture policy as being framed primarily around the arts, to the detriment of broader cultural intersectionalities. The current policy on the development of arts and culture seems to be limited to 'the erection and maintenance of facilities' by government (Nawa and Sirayi, 2015: 8). This sentiment is shared by Bardien (2019)

in her article, ‘Really, Tito? We need another theatre and museum?’, in which she observes government’s obsession with erecting physical cultural infrastructure as a yardstick for the implementation and measurement of sector development in South Africa. In my opinion, Nawa and Sirayi’s (2015: 1) observations, corroborated by Bardien (2019), are the result of a fundamental theoretical challenge encountered in the process of defining exactly what cultural policy is.

On the one hand, the term *policy* can be defined as the ‘regularising aspects of politics’ which have an outcome of contingent action. It implies the coordination of acts, measurement and regulation of the inclusion and exclusion of activities (Palonen, in Pyykkönen et al., 2009: 11). In other words, policy indicates a concretising, regularising and organising of things and acts.

*Culture*, on the other hand, is more complex in that it has a variety of definitions that emphasise different tenets. The primary definitions emphasise culture as a way of life, as evidenced by Mulcahy (2006: 319) and his reference to culture’s root, *colere*, a Latin word that means ‘to cultivate’ a field with seed or livestock. Another notable set of definitions is concerned with how culture relates to ‘the arts’. The arts in this case refer to the segmentation of a variety of expressions of culture and cultural elements, with an emphasis on creativity (Fokt, 2017: 406). Finally, there is culture’s relationship with industry and the economy. Here the emphasis is on scoping out the value chain of developing a creative product, which, in turn, extends to the scoping out of the markets in which the product is sold. This refers to the ‘creative economy’, which is made up of ‘cultural and creative industries’ (Wassall et al., 2008: 25). How these definitions intersect in our way of life today is discussed in this chapter.

It is when the terms *culture* and *policy* are placed together, as *cultural policy*, that the theoretical challenge becomes visible. In other words, the concretising, regularising and organising aspects of the term *policy* require the abstract term *culture* to be reified in order for it to be analysed on the same level as policy. There is a great risk, therefore, when developing and implementing *cultural policy*, of truncating and essentialising *culture* to that which is tangible – museums, memorial sites and theatres – versus *culture*’s relationship with patriarchy, for

instance, and its intersection with gender-based violence and femicide as a pervasive *culture* in society today. This is the basis of the frustrations that Nawa and Sirayi (2015) and Bardien (2019) are expressing in terms of South Africa's current arts and culture policy.

The problem with this theoretical challenge, and how it typically manifests in the governance of the sector, is that it limits the sector's engagement with the broader socio-economic and sustainable development discourse, and largely alienates arts and culture policy from its role in addressing societal ills and helping us adapt to the ever-changing world around us. Engaging this present-day condition begs for a reimagining of South African arts and culture policy, what it prioritises and how it is implemented.

To me, this reimagining sees the sector as being more representative of the interests of not just the practice of art, but also the entire ambit of the creative sector, which would enhance its role as an asset to South Africa's democracy. This is particularly pertinent in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed so much of the world we have come to know.

In thinking about the future, however, I believe that it is just as important to acknowledge South Africa's arts and culture policy journey since the advent of democracy in 1994. This signified the country's departure from the apartheid regime, but simultaneously signified its inheritance of the physical structures and ideological constructs of the previous era, which had been created to benefit the white minority. An example of this apartheid inheritance is the geographical displacement of black people into homelands on the basis of ethnicity, language and culture prior to 1994 – the legacy of which is still a reality today. It is within this context that the cultural sector, through the inaugural 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, was given the task of realising social cohesion among a racially and culturally divided people.

Therefore, before discussing the future, it is important to reflect on the policy journey thus far to gain insights into the inherited arts and culture infrastructure, framework and policy challenges, as well as the trajectory and rationale of the policy interventions implemented since democracy. This is necessary to address the question of what South

Africa's arts and culture policy should look like in the future, in light of this history and current global trends.

THE 1996 INAUGURAL WHITE PAPER ON  
ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

To date, South Africa's democratic dispensation has made way for several national arts and culture policy development processes, and produced the following policy documents:

- 4 June 1996 – White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage;
- 17 March 2015 – Draft: Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage;
- 14 November 2016 – Second Draft: Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage;
- 1 June 2017 – Third Draft: Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage; and
- 27 October 2017 – Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (adopted in February 2020).

The formulation of the inaugural 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage focused on urgent institutional redress, nation-building and social cohesion (Van Graan, 2019). The policy was preceded by extensive consultation and research spanning two years, and was adopted in August 1996. A major development stemming from the inaugural policy was the establishment of the National Arts Council (NAC) as well as several national and provincial arts and culture agencies to support the development of the sector within South Africa's new democratic framework (Tembe, 2013: 1). Notably, the NAC was founded on the 'arms-length' principle, which effectively means that decisions pertaining to grant funding are made by a panel of peers, as opposed to government.

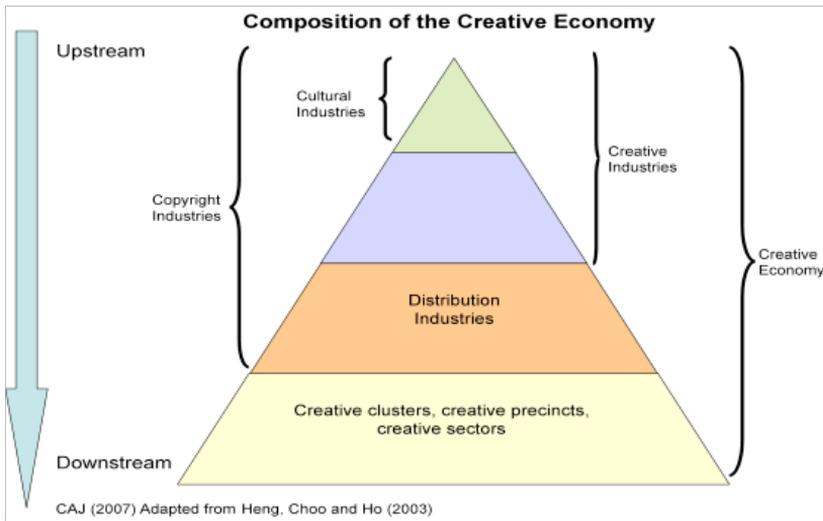
Written within the context of significant socio-economic, political and racial divisions, the inaugural paper set a new trajectory for addressing apartheid legacies that were pervasive in inherited arts infrastructure. In particular, the 1994 democratic dispensation inherited

four Performing Arts Councils (PACs): the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) in Cape Town, which was restructured and renamed Artscape in 2001; the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC) in Durban, which was restructured and renamed The Playhouse Company in 1995; the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFs) in Bloemfontein, which was renamed the Performing Arts Council of the Free State in 1996, thus maintaining its acronym; and the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT), known as the Pretoria State Theatre until 1999 and then renamed the South African State Theatre in the early 2000s (Tembe, 2013: 2). The 1996 White Paper focused on transforming these institutions and opening their doors to black theatre-makers, artists and audiences.

However, the consistent implementation of the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage has been beset with challenges. These have hinged predominantly on the wide range of legislation written and enacted on the White Paper's policy intents, and how this has inadvertently clouded the initial perceived role of the arts, culture and heritage sector in South Africa's development process – particularly in relation to the economic reframing of government priorities and, parallel to this, the rise of the *cultural and creative industries* as the new centre of public arts and culture policy globally.

During the early 1990s, the popular understanding of cultural policy was limited to concepts of national identity, core creative practice, and public funding for the erection and maintenance of cultural infrastructure. By the beginning of the new millennium, however, the advent of digital media and the identification of culture's dynamic intersection with economic markets shifted people's understanding of the sector and paved the way for the introduction of the *creative economy* concept. This went far beyond arts and culture, which was confined in policy to traditional festival and theatre platforms. The cultural and creative industries, therefore, make up the *creative economy*.

Figure 15.1 illustrates the composition of the creative economy, and the *cultural and creative industries* in the context of the sector's greater economic ecosystem (Joffe and Newton, 2007).



**Figure 15.1: Composition of the creative economy (Joffe and Newton, 2007)**

The global shift in people’s understanding of the creative economy and the cultural and creative industries posed a problem for the continued implementation of the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, and its contents and its relevance started being questioned. This was against the backdrop of the government reframing its priorities and alternating between different macroeconomic policies.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), adopted in 1994, and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy, adopted in 1996, were the macroeconomic policy backdrops of the inaugural 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage. Though different in focus, these two policies had as their chief aims to bring about poverty alleviation, with greater black economic participation, access to basic social services for all, and the achievement of GDP growth and stability (Minty, 2018).

After GEAR, the government adopted the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) in 2005, the New Growth Path (NGP) policy in 2010 and (most recently) the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2013. The NDP is a 17-year plan that builds on its predecessors by focusing, in greater detail, on key priority areas: enhancing economic and employment conditions, with particular attention given to youth development, climate change

and environmental sustainability; reducing crime and corruption; and professionalising the public sector and driving increased coordination and accountability; among many others (National Planning Commission, 2012).

With government priorities changing over the years, science and technology were separated from the National Arts, Culture and Heritage Department in 2004, while various creative economy stimulation programmes were implemented, the most notable of which was the Mzansi Golden Economy programme, which was launched in 2013. It sought ‘to open the arts, culture and heritage sector to effectively and comprehensively contribute to economic growth and job creation’ (DAC, 2017b). Furthermore, part of the Mzansi Golden Economy strategy was the launch of the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) in 2014, tasked with exploring research and statistical data on the socio-economic impact of the arts, culture and heritage sectors, as well as the cultural and creative industries in South Africa. SACO is hosted by Nelson Mandela University on behalf of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) (previously called the Department of Arts and Culture [DAC]) in partnership with Rhodes University, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Fort Hare. The rollout of the Mzansi Golden Economy and SACO point to the coupling of economic imperatives to benefit the cultural and creative industries.

All the global cultural policy shifts, alongside South Africa’s new macro-economic policy imperatives, put pressure on the cultural sector to more actively align itself to poverty alleviation efforts, job creation and place-making. These intended outcomes of cultural policy, which have nothing to do with the core concerns of culture, are described as ‘policy attachment’ (Gray, 2016). Policy attachment is employed to motivate for increased public funds, legitimacy and political support, but at the same time it heightens the risk of real sector concerns being neglected.

The changing environment exposed how outdated the inaugural 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage was, which prompted its review, beginning in 2013. The review process spanned four years and was concluded in 2017. It then took another three years for the

revised policy to be adopted by parliament. The next section examines the review process implemented during the period 2013–2020.

#### AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2017 REVISION'S CONTENTS AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Policy is a product of its times. Policy responds to conditions as they exist in relation to the subject about which policy is being made, in order to intervene and shift those conditions towards the realisation of a more ideal set of conditions (Van Graan, 2019).

This quotation is from Mike van Graan, former special adviser to Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology from 1994 to 2004. Van Graan played a vital role in the development of the inaugural White Paper and has since left government to take up illustrious positions in the creative NGO space. He is one of the most outspoken cultural activists and policy commentators in South Africa, and his writings provide a significant amount of material on the growing subject of cultural policy review. I will be engaging his writings in interrogating the 2017 revised policy and its prior versions, and the process of policy development since 2015, as well as advancing his findings in positing the future of South Africa's arts and culture policy.

In the quote at the beginning of this section, Van Graan (2019) builds on the established definition of policy and highlights two things. First, it is necessary for *regular* policy reviews to moderate the fluid and changing nature of policy conditions over time. This implies that if policy is under-reviewed, it places (in this case) the arts, culture and heritage sector in the compromising position of having an outdated and irrelevant policy. This, in turn, will result in government responding to the inevitably changing conditions in erratic ways. The fact that there was a 17-year gap between the inaugural White Paper and the start of its review, and then a further seven-year gap between this review and the final draft being adopted by parliament, shows that the sector was compromised for 24 years at the hands of government.

The second thing that Van Graan (2019) highlights is the fundamental question of: Why does a policy review and the process thereof even matter? In the first place, a policy review and its processes matter because South Africa is a democracy, as decreed by the Constitution. Simultaneously, South Africa is 'still becoming democratic' because apartheid structures are still being identified and dismantled in the execution of the Constitution (Van Graan, 2016). In the second place, public representation in processes concerning the public matter too.

It is the democratic right of arts, culture and heritage practitioners to participate actively in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and structures that directly affect their practice and livelihoods (Van Graan, 2016).

To help establish what constitutes a successful policy review process, Chehab (2017), in his piece 'How to conduct a policy review', presents the following guidelines:

1. Establish custodianship – The policy owner [government in this case] is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of the policy at a periodic interval or as required to stay updated.
2. Needs analysis – This should be conducted to identify all issues that trigger a policy review, such as policy gaps, etc.
3. Research – There should be an analysis of relevant information, such as data analysis, literature review and best practice.
4. Drafting – Once the research has been concluded, drafting of the new policy can begin.
5. Stakeholder consultation – Stakeholders need to be consulted on the contents of the draft. Depending on the stakeholder comments, the previous step may need to be repeated.
6. Approval – The final draft of the policy should be submitted for approval by the highest delegated authority [in this case parliament] and should be accompanied by a communication and implementation plan.

With both Van Graan's (2019) and Chehab's (2017) contributions in mind, why did the White Paper policy review process take seven years? Who were the actors and what were the mitigating factors that unfolded between 2013 and 2020? I use Chehab's (2017) guidelines to track the review process.

*A false start and shift in leadership under the cloud of the Marikana massacre*

Under the leadership of former Minister Paul Mashatile (2010–2014), the DAC drafted the 2013 Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage in-house. It is unclear whether this work was outsourced to a consultancy group under a tender arrangement or whether the DAC was authorised to draft this policy, as there are accounts of the department being reluctant to reveal the identities of the drafters. This caused a great deal of concern and mistrust of the department among stakeholders (Van Graan, 2016). The mistrust intensified when it was learnt that the department intended to simply rubber-stamp the draft document at an *indaba*<sup>30</sup> later that year, thus side-stepping the consultation stage in the policy review process. The pushback from the sector caused this revised draft policy to fall through and Paul Mashatile to hand over the reins to the new incumbent minister, Nathi Mthethwa, in 2014.

Minister Mthethwa's (2014–the present) appointment was met with mixed reactions because he had occupied the position of Minister of Police during the Marikana massacre, which had occurred two years earlier, on 16 August 2012 (Bell, 2017). Marikana is a small mining town located outside Rustenburg in the North West province. Lonmin, a British-owned platinum mining company, owned the ground on which the mine workers were protesting against low wages. The protesters were confronted by the South African Police, which led to the massacre of 34 mine workers and 78 sustaining serious injuries. This event was comparable to Sharpeville (1960) and the Soweto Uprising (1976) – both of which were massacres during apartheid (Higginbottom, 2017: 1).

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30 Indaba is a Xhosa and Zulu word directly translated as 'business' or 'matter', but is largely understood to be a conference or an official gathering in the South African context.

Although Mthethwa took full responsibility for the events of 16 August 2012 during the Farlam Commission's two-year investigation, this cloud continued to hang over him as he took up his new appointment as Minister of Arts and Culture, prompting critics in the cultural and creative sector to question the government's motives for moving him to the DAC (*Mail & Guardian*, 2014). In other words, Mthethwa's appointment confirmed some people's view that culture was slowly being regarded as a lesser priority (Nawa, 2012: 242; Minty, 2018). Nevertheless, it was during Mthethwa's tenure that the policy review initiative was restarted in 2015 under then DAC acting director-general, Vuyo Jack.

According to Van Graan (2016), the 2015 process felt more inclusive than the 2013 one, in that the DAC invited inputs from the creative sector at its next *indaba*. A nine-person panel was set up to be the custodians of the policy development process. It comprised some individuals<sup>31</sup> who had been part of the original Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), such as Andries Oliphant, who played a key role in drafting the 1996 White Paper; Tony Kgoroge, Chairperson of the Creative and Cultural Industries Federation of South Africa (CCIFSA); and a youth representative (DAC, 2017a). There is no doubt that the initial lack of sector buy-in, together with the leadership shift from Mashatile to Mthethwa, contributed to the protracted nature of the overall policy revision process.

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31 The review panel comprised Prof A Oliphant (Unisa literary scholar), Dr S Fikeni (heritage practitioner), Prof M Nkondo (policy development expert), Ms A Joffe (Wits Arts and Cultural Policy HOD), Father S Mkhathshwa (ANC stalwart and former MP), Dr A Beukes (arts and culture expert), Mr T Kgoroge (CCIFSA chairperson), Ms L Mashile (arts activist and poet) and Ms T Goso (youth representative).

*A staggered and unclear policy development process*

The restarted revision process produced four drafts (DAC, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b), with the fourth draft being the final version that was tabled in parliament and then finally adopted. In the process of drafting the second iteration of the Revised White Paper (2016), several panel members were unable to attend all the consultations around the country, involving stakeholder submissions and policy-writing sessions. Only Prof Oliphant, Prof Nkondo and Avril Joffe were able to do so, out of the nine on the panel. The custodianship of the process was thrown into question when the DAC went ahead and submitted the second draft to the Portfolio Committee at the end of 2016. In other words, it was unclear whether the draft was the work of the three remaining panel members or the result of the DAC summarising and consolidating snippets from previous versions.

According to Van Graan (2016), the 2016 version referenced several reports, but there was no list of links in the appendix that would allow sector stakeholders to interrogate the research on which the draft policy was basing its assumptions.<sup>32</sup> Van Graan further points out a distinct lack of transparency by the DAC in the stakeholder consultation stage of the policy development process, as the sharing of information referenced in the policy was curtailed. In other words, proposed policy changes were introduced stealthily, with several policy review steps, according to the established guidelines (including transparent research and stakeholder consultation), being skipped in favour of unilateral DAC decision-making. According to Van Graan (2016), this was the opposite of what took place with the development of the 1996 policy.

The process that ultimately resulted in the 2017 draft seemed promising when it was re-established in 2015 (indeed when compared to 2013), but the lack of accountability and clarity as to why the 2016 panel disintegrated sowed seeds of doubt about whether the process had been executed in a democratic way (Minty, 2018).

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32 References in the report include the DAC 'National Mapping Study' (2014) and the VANSAs 'Report on the Visual Arts' (2013).

*Salient issues from the contents of the 2017 revision*

The 2017 Revised White Paper (DAC, 2017b) consists of 11 chapters, in contrast to seven in the 1996 White Paper. Notable changes include dedicated chapters given to: creative and cultural industries; the status and rights of arts, culture and heritage practitioners; a new national arts, culture and heritage dispensation for South Africa; and chapters on finance, policy implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Below I highlight six welcome additions to the revised policy.

First, in examining ‘Chapter Two: Vision, Mission, Principles and Values’ in the 2017 revision, I am pleased to see that the policy recognises that arts, culture and heritage have different types of value (DAC, 2017b):

1. Intrinsic value
2. Creative value
3. Social value
4. Economic value
5. Educational value
6. Recreational value
7. Therapeutic value
8. Environmental value

In recognising and supporting these multiple, mutual and interdependent values, the policy is informed by the understanding that their combination enhances the range, reach and impact of arts, culture and heritage (DAC, 2017b: 10). This builds on the 1996 policy which stated (DAC, 1996: 4):

[H]umans are holistic beings. They not only need improved material conditions in order that they have a better quality of life. Individuals have psychological, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual expression ...

Second, the sector-specific proposals to enhance the following sub-sectors are welcome additions: 1) performing arts: theatre, dance and music; 2) visual arts, crafts and design; 3) audio-visual media; 4)

heritage; 5) library and information services; 6) languages, literature, books and publishing; 7) community arts, culture and heritage; and 8) events, technical and production. These were largely absent from previous versions (DAC, 2017b: 17–40; Van Graan, 2019). Having a sector-specific approach is advantageous as each sub-sector has its individual needs; catering to them allows for more detailed and effective policy implementation.

Third, also welcomed are the intentions of the 2017 Revised White Paper to effectively ‘contribute to the elimination of poverty, inequality, unemployment and the building of a cohesive and united society in which the diverse artistic, cultural and heritage traditions of the society flourish’ (DAC, 2017b: 6), and to extend ‘art, culture and heritage infrastructure, facilities and resources beyond the colonial urban centres into peri-urban and rural communities’ (DAC, 2017b: 7). This affirms the 1996 White Paper’s premise that ‘everyone shall have the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts’ (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the Freedom Charter principle, ‘The doors of learning and culture shall be open’ (Van Graan, 2019).

Fourth, the revised policy speaks of ‘transforming South Africa into an inclusive society based on actual equality’ (DAC, 2017b: 7), which recognises that ‘rainbow-ism’ as a concept is mythical and only works for people of the middle to upper classes, and that the poor and disenfranchised are generally excluded in our society (Gachago and Ngoasheng, 2016; Van Graan, 2019).

Fifth, the policy promotes human resource development by ‘redistributing resources and opportunities for historical redress and inclusive access’ (DAC, 2017b: 11). This is to include the upskilling of education and training practitioners, administrators and technicians. Although this was also a recommendation of the 1996 White Paper, it is good to see the revised policy still focuses on human resource development (Van Graan, 2019).

Finally, it envisages the expansion of local creative products and services into regional, continental and global markets (DAC, 2017b: 49). In addition, the emphasis on digital aspects of the creative sector, both in its production and distribution, as well as archiving are to be

welcomed.

There is no doubt that the 2017 Revised White Paper – amidst doubts about the government’s ability, in view of its poor track record, to successfully implement it – is a great improvement on the original 1996 one. Salient issues arising from the policy improvements include culture’s intersection with new markets, education and youth development, and the ongoing disruption caused by digital technologies – over and above general concerns about the need to alleviate poverty and inequality. These all allude somewhat to government beginning to engage and think about the rise of digital applications as a staple in our everyday lives and how this links to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

However, since this policy was adopted, the world has undergone a remarkable shift in how it has reacted to and dealt with the most significant and aggressive global pandemic in over a century. What do these salient policy issues mean in the light of COVID-19? How have we seen the sector react? How do we envision a future beyond global pandemics and health crises on such a catastrophic scale? These questions, ideas and concepts are discussed in the next section.

#### COVID-19 AND OBSERVATIONS THAT SHAPE ARTS AND CULTURE POLICY MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

On 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa joined leaders from several countries around the world in declaring a national state of disaster, prohibiting gatherings of more than 100 people, and implementing domestic and international travel restrictions. This escalated into a full 21-day lockdown from 26 March 2020, in which gatherings of any kind were prohibited and movement was restricted to obtaining food and medical treatment, or collecting a social grant (Morkel, 2020). The lockdown was then extended by a further two weeks, with the introduction of a phased reopening of economic activity from 1 May 2020.

The still-unfolding global pandemic has had a profound impact on the public health sector. But perhaps most pertinent are the economic ripple effects and how these have affected social life as we knew it.

How does the COVID-19 outbreak affect our view of the future – particularly through an arts and culture lens?

I argue that, although every industry has been impacted by this global pandemic, the cultural and creative industries, in particular, have taken a substantial knock. Notably, the cultural schedule of the world has succumbed to the realities of forced cancellations and suspensions of societies' biggest cultural events (FutureLearn, 2020). International concerts such as the Glastonbury Festival in England, scheduled to take place in June 2020 with a projected turnout of over 200,000 people, was cancelled. Premières of major films – such as *No Time To Die*, the latest instalment of the James Bond franchise, which was scheduled for release in April 2020 – have been delayed.

In South Africa, major cultural festivals and events, such as the Cape Town International Jazz Festival and over 1200 other live music events, had been cancelled by 24 March 2020, according to an online survey conducted by Akum Agency (Gedye, 2020). Art galleries and theatre production houses the world over have had to close, and artists and creative practitioners have had to absorb the loss of income, with no real sense of when things will reopen.

Without a doubt, it is fair to say that all the creative industries, particularly those in the freelance economy, have felt abandoned. There have been no clear and effective plans to support the creative sector's economic sustainability during these unprecedented times. Although government relief has been earmarked for the sector, there seems to be a lack of understanding of how informality still plagues business transactions in the sector, which makes it difficult for artists to prove that they have been negatively affected by the economic ripple effects of COVID-19 and, as a result, they are unable to access relief. The lesson learnt in this regard is that the DSAC must educate the sector on the importance of formalising business agreements in some form, thereby protecting individuals operating in the creative sector against loss of income if faced with similar circumstances in the future.

Although the situation has remained dire, artists have continued to display much resilience during this time, using the internet as a tool for collaboration and continued creativity (Morkel, 2020). Through the power of social media, we have witnessed artists hosting both pre-

recorded ‘virtual concerts’ and live performances from their homes. The world of virtual reality has never before brought the world together in the ways we are witnessing today.

What does this mean for the future of the cultural sector and, particularly, that of arts and culture policy? Below I highlight three ideas and concepts in the context of the coronavirus outbreak, which can inform the future of arts and culture policy.

### *Digital disruption*

With society changing at a rapid rate and having to adjust to new social norms, digital disruption can no longer be referred to as a market disruptor, as was once said. Rather, it has become a market necessity. Access to high-speed internet during COVID-19 has proven to be crucial in enabling a vast number of non-essential businesses to continue to operate, through their employees adopting a remote work style (Jones, 2020). This has manifested in conference-calling service providers, such as Zoom, Google Meet and TeamLink, all seeing tremendous growth in numbers of users, not only for business purposes but for personal use as well. In other words, the world is seeing information communication technology (ICT) platforms become our primary form of social interaction, on a scale that is unprecedented.

Globally, amidst the cancellations and suspensions of traditional forms of cultural production and distribution, we are seeing the rise of virtual gallery spaces, and gaming and other forms of streamed entertainment (Jones, 2020). Even locally, bold decisions are being made with regard to the digital transmission of arts and culture. For instance, the South African National Arts Festival geared up for a completely online festival experience in 2020 (Morkel, 2020):

As many festivals and visual media production schedules have been postponed due to the growing number of reported coronavirus cases ... the National Arts Festival goes completely digital as COVID-19 continues to restrict the arts industry.

In other words, restrictions on travel and public gatherings have forced the festival to resort to a non-traditional manner of engagement for the

benefit of the greater cultural and creative arts sector. By going virtual, the festival was able to continue to support artists and the arts in 2020 (Morkel, 2020):

Artists depend on festivals like ours to generate an income through selling tickets, getting their work seen and talked about locally and internationally, and networking with their peers. Rather than cancel, we aim to create a new opportunity for artists and audiences alike to celebrate the arts, and to create an accessible platform for artists to share their work.

This is the power of artists and the creative sector to adapt to new realities, making use of existing technologies and centring the innovation of new ones, which is, in effect, what the world has been anticipating for some time now. This has been dubbed the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and although COVID-19 has perhaps changed our understanding of this phenomenon, the internet and the digitalisation of the industry have been consistent topics of discussion for a few years.

### *The role of culture in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

Through creativity, innovation and design, we are able to leapfrog the shortcomings of current technologies and engage scenarios for the future. As is the case with the engineering and design industries, the practice of researching and developing prototypes of new ideas and concepts helps society to imagine a future different from the current one. Art and design are at the heart of conversations about long-term global systems – from food production and sustainability of the environment, to health issues and medical research, among others. As Bandelli (2018) says:

Being prepared to deal with the controversial technologies developed now is the only way to make sure we can fully engage in the conversations that shape the future of our societies. The technological breakthroughs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution can make our society more sustainable and inclusive, or they can exacerbate the fractures in our world.

In line with Bandelli's (2018) assertion, tackling inequality is perhaps the greatest challenge associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Of particular significance is the prevalence of the digital divide, including inequitable participation in and ownership of the new digital means of production. Seifert (2017: 1) describes the digital divide as the 'gap' between those who have access to ICT and those who do not. This gap exists fundamentally because of racialised socio-economic inequality in society – a stark reality in the South African context.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the *Global Information Technology Report of 2015*, covering research conducted in 143 countries on affordability and readiness for mass internet accessibility. South Africa scored 107th in affordability and 102nd in ICT readiness (Seifert, 2017: 2). There is no doubt that the digital divide will widen if measures are not taken to address South Africa's low rankings – the main challenge being affordable and equitable access to ICT services.

In terms of future arts and culture policy, aspects such as ownership of content, and the regulation and protection of artists' rights and royalties are critical. As of March 2019, South Africa's Copyright Amendment Bill No. 13 of 2017 was awaiting President Ramaphosa's signature (Nicholson, 2020). This Bill is an amendment to the Copyright Act of 1978, with significant changes (particularly in light of digital distribution) to its fair usage and fair dealing clauses – what the CEO of Juta and Company, Kamal Patel, considered 'the broadest changes we have ever seen' in an interview conducted by eNCA<sup>33</sup> on 23 March 2019. The delay has come about as a result of the Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA) and others pushing back, seeking a re-evaluation of the Bill. PASA claims that the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition had drafted the Bill without conducting an economic impact assessment of its proposed provisions on the creative publishing sector, which would effectively reduce the remuneration of rights owners.

PASA engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct an economic impact assessment, focusing on 'provisions relating to "fair use" and exceptions for educational and academic activities' (PwC, 2017: 1).

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33 South African local news channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGGs4EY3Abs>, accessed 6 April 2020.

The exercise reported substantial negative impacts on the creative publishing sector if the new Bill was passed, including:

- A weighted average decline in sales of 33 per cent – equating to R2.1 billion;
- An increase in the relative share of imports in domestic sales;
- A reduction in the relative share of exports in total sales of the sector; and
- A weighted decline in employment of 30 per cent – equating to 1250 full-time jobs.

It would seem, then, that the role of future arts and culture policy is not only to help society successfully adapt to new forms of cultural distribution, but also to protect the rights of artists and creatives as copyright owners. This is achieved by cultural considerations being included in the process of updating Bills, such as the Copyright Amendment Bill, as digital innovation becomes more pervasive. Future arts and culture policy should address the digital divide by advocating for equitable access to ICT infrastructure, particularly for artists and creatives as digital becomes the sector's main platform.

In thinking about what industries will look like in the next 10–25 years, one has to ask: What workforce will be needed to chart this journey and what role does the future of arts and culture policy play in educating them for this future?

### *Generation Z and STEAM versus STEM education*

A 2007 study examined the characteristics and social nuances of a group of millennial generation students, also known as Generation Y. Millennials are defined as those born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s (Schwieger and Ladwig, 2018: 45). They are said to possess characteristics such as a sense of entitlement, and a desire for customisation and the availability of on-demand services. Millennials are said to be far more technologically savvy than xennials are (the generation before millennials), and have a preference for hands-on activities. Although millennials may be sceptical of perceived 'order'

and ‘governance’, they value peer opinions, show confidence in decision-making and possess a desire to make a difference in the world (Schwieger and Ladwig, 2018: 45).

In 2017, almost a decade after the start of this fascination for millennials, universities around the world faced a different type of student with even more unique characteristics than the generation before them. They have been dubbed Generation Z – individuals born between 1996 and 2012. Just like their millennial predecessors, Generation Z are said to have been raised with technology easily accessible.

Although the above generalisations affect the entire world, its universality is undercut by existing deprivations experienced in developing economies, such as South Africa, where a large number of Generation-Z individuals have been structurally excluded from participating in education that would enable them to behave in the manner and possess the demeanour described by global scholars. In South Africa, Generation Z comprises over 15 million young people, which equates to more than half the total youth segment and over a quarter of the country’s population (Dos Santos and Rossum, 2019: 3). The reality is that we do not know the specificities of Generation Z in the developing world, or in South Africa in particular, because the research in this area remains vague and generalised. However, work has been done in the education space to assist us in better understanding the importance of including culture when educating the next generation, particularly in light of the innovative skills needed by this generation as the Fourth Industrial Revolution shifts industries. According to Ma (2018):

It’s not enough to outsource culture to the artists and musicians, and receive it as a passive audience. We must engage the full spectrum of human understanding, and every one of us needs to participate in strengthening our cultural resources, all the time.

This quote by Ma is corroborated by Bonet and Negrier (2018), who unpack and reflect on cultural participation and consumption in relation to cultural policy. Within the paradigms of cultural democratisation,

excellence, creative economy and cultural democracy, this work brings to the fore the importance of audience development and participation within the dimension of technology as a new communication tool. In other words, not only is *culture* vital to the process of managing the technological changes in our world, but *culture* is, indeed, the key ingredient in such a process. The arts and humanities have the power to enlighten, guide and support dialogues at the core of technological processes (Jaaniste, 2009: 216).

It seems that the tide has turned on the view that marketable skills and economic impact place the humanities ‘under attack’, when the very skills that are growing in marketability in the wake of technological advancement will ultimately be the arts. The World Economic Forum (WEF) agrees that the arts and humanities components are fundamental to the education systems of the future (Bandelli, 2018). Although science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are pre-eminent skills to impart within our education system, it can be argued that the requirements for entering and re-entering the job market today are increasingly skills like empathy, imagination and creativity. In other words, an education system that is interdisciplinary, cross-functional and cross-cultural is what is required to prepare the next generation for the changing job market. This system has been termed STEAM – with the ‘A’ standing for the Arts. It is viewed as a necessary strategy to reduce the skills gap evident in the current system, which, if unaddressed, may put future generations in a position where their skills become irrelevant in the market.

*Localised policy development and implementation is key*

Having established salient policy issues stemming from the 2017 Revised White Paper, and having fleshed out the role of culture both in future trends and in preparing the next generation through STEAM education, the question is: How does policy implementation reach the average citizen? How can policy implementation be balanced across a country that has urban, peri-urban and rural contexts?

These questions point to the importance of the process of democratising cultural policy implementation, particularly in the developing world. Nawa’s doctoral thesis, ‘Municipal cultural policy

and development in South Africa: A study of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality' (2012), reflects on the lack of a relationship between cultural policy development at the national and local levels. He presents findings related to the socio-economic and political factors at play in the City of Tshwane and how pockets of cultural exclusivity continue to exist in the city. He asserts that the city is racially polarised and argues that the national arts and culture policy's social cohesion project has failed to reach those at the grassroots level in the country's capital city, which illustrates what is happening across South Africa. He argues that culture and localised cultural policy is best placed to drive localised social cohesion. Nawa's work emphasises the importance of thinking through the implementation of arts and culture policy that is designed for the future.

Each geographical location has a contextual history which, if ignored, may render policy interventions unable to achieve any meaningful impact. This extends to being able to support sub-sectors that may be more prevalent in some provinces than others. A cultural and creative industries mapping study, conducted by the South African Cultural Observatory (2020: 15), confirmed different creative sub-sectors' GDP and provincial contributions (such as visual arts and crafts, and design and creative services). Although Gauteng comes out on top across the board, it is clear that each province has a unique cultural and creative signature in the mix of contributions. This translates into a diversity of cultural infrastructure across the country, such as theatres, museums and heritage sites. It is therefore critical to develop localised cultural policy in tandem with national policy.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a critical discussion of South Africa's cultural policy development journey, both in process as well as content. The goal was to identify the most salient issues relating to the future of arts and culture policy. The chapter highlighted the definitional and theoretical challenges of *cultural policy*, as well as the tendency to steer policy development and implementation away from broader societal intersectionalities. Also provided was a critical overview of South

Africa's cultural policy journey, observed shifts in global cultural policy trends, and contextualised economic policy approaches and how these have affected arts and culture policy.

Although policy improvements in the 2017 revisions to the White Paper are to be welcomed, I have been concerned about how the DAC (now DSAC) has behaved since 1996 and the general state of the sector following various disappointments and doubts about the department's ministerial appointment – which call into question the policy development process leading up to the 2017 Revised White Paper.

The creative solutions that have been emerging, aimed at negotiating the inevitable ongoing change (particularly in the face of COVID-19), have given us some hope for the future. A good example of this is the way in which digital solutions have brought the world closer together in innovative ways, while still accommodating necessary physical distancing. Although the harsh socio-economic realities in South Africa have created gaps in the accessibility of various technologies, one hopes that the creative sector and the next generation of creatives will play an important part in addressing socio-economic, racial and gender inequality.

Will the government successfully implement its new policy and take advantage of future cultural attitudes and trends? Will it commit to consistently developing and revising sector policy, both at the national and local levels? Only time will tell whether the DSAC will be able to change the current narrative and take full advantage of the opportunities that are beckoning in the near and more distant future.

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