Understanding everyday participation
articulating cultural values
1. Premise & research aims
• ‘official’ model of participation – product of particular history and constellation of interests
• legitimates certain ‘cultural’ activities and their value while marginalising others
• not just about practices but people and places – cultural participation is socially defining and divisive
• Probe mundane and obscured domain of ‘everyday participation to show:
  • new perspectives on the dynamics and stakes of participation
  • fresh articulations of cultural value
  • more nuanced appreciation of ‘creative economies’
  • how communities are enacted, negotiated, divided and connected
  • potential transformation of cultural policy and practice
2. The method
Outline project workmap

Work Package 1
Histories of participation, value, policy and place

Work Package 2
Macro-participation & time-use data

Work Package 3
Ecosystem case studies

Work Package 4
Application projects

Work Package 5
Research-policy-practice nexus
Focus on participation as a ‘situated’ process

- ‘community’ and ‘place’ as central logics in the governance of culture
- critical engagement with and a renarrativisation of ideas of Pierre Bourdieu
- operationalising ‘cultural eco-systems’: six comparative case study locations with contrasting histories, economies, social structures and cultural geographies
A ‘mixed methods’ approach to empirical work

– working interdisciplinarity through an unusually diverse team of arts and humanities, social science and cultural policy specialists

– combining historical and archival work and the re-use of existing datasets with new data on participation to reach historically and theoretically grounded understandings

– bringing a range of qualitative and quantitative data into dialogue

– capturing dimensions of participation and value overlooked by methodologies that dominate current cultural policy
3. Partnerships

The partnership – close collaboration with a range of organisations and communities to affect change.
Project partners and local communities as research agents

– live, experimental application projects, shaped by and co-produced with stakeholders
– creating real-world test-beds for translating research findings into policy and community initiatives
– ongoing reflexive exchange of perspectives, experience and expertise between researchers, cultural professionals and policy makers to reconfigure the research-policy-practice nexus
4. Impacts
Developing more democratic notions of culture
– giving voice to people and practices outside the scope of official models
– developing articulations of value that more fully reflect how people live today
– enabling communities to make decisions about their cultural provision
Reconnecting policy and practice with the everyday

– stimulating new ways of working with communities to encourage and enrich participation

– revealing hidden assets and resources that can be mobilised to help develop local ‘creative economies’

– helping organisations to target investment in cultural opportunities more equitably and efficiently