Introduction: The Social Effects of Culture

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In August of 2004, in collaboration with the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) and the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), I organized a workshop of experts in Montréal to discuss the question "What are the social effects of participation in arts and heritage?" (Stanley, 2004). The experts included university scholars, cultural practitioners, policymakers, and researchers from various national arts councils. Participants came from Canada, the United States, Europe, and the Pacific. The workshop was the first stage of a research program called the Initiative to Study the Social Effects of Culture (ISSEC).

As a result of this workshop, and as the next step in ISSEC, the Department of Canadian Heritage commissioned a series of research papers. The aim of the research was to deepen our understanding of the social effects of culture that the experts had identified and to provide, through case studies, some preliminary empirical evidence. At the workshop, culture was deliberately defined broadly and inclusively, so as not to bias any discussion or limit the comprehensiveness at this early stage. Culture included the creative arts (music, literature, painting, etc.) and the industries and organizations that are needed for their existence. It included both professional and amateur creative arts as well as informal keeping of traditions and the formal recognition and preservation of those traditions, which we often call heritage activities. These are typically the areas that receive the kind of intervention we call "cultural policy." It was suggested, however, that you could not discuss the social effects of culture defined in this way unless you also recognized that those activities encompassed something we also call culture, that is, patterns of living and the set of symbolic resources in a society. Culture was defined at the outset to include this perspective.

Initially, we also defined *participation* broadly and inclusively to include audiences and attendees (that is, users of cultural products), artists and producers (people who actually take part in the creation process), and stewards (people who support, enable, and administer cultural production). These general definitions were intended to guide the discussion and get it started, rather than specify the destination we hoped to reach.

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The discussion at the workshop was wide-ranging, covering the whole gamut of benefits that can be ascribed to culture: personal (entertainment, enlightenment, etc.); instrumental (improved educational and medical outcomes, etc.); and social (for a full account of the discussion, see Stanley, 2004). Many of these benefits have been identified elsewhere (see, for example, Cowling, 2004; Matarasso, 1997; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004; Rao & Walton, 2004; Throsby, 2001), but what was novel in the Montréal discussions was the focus on how culture, the arts, and heritage contribute to citizenship capacity, or, as it was sometimes called, "cultural citizenship" (Andrew & Gattinger, 2005), and the realization, more fully explored below, that the social effects of culture and its benefits, are all interrelated.

The participants at the workshop identified six social effects of culture, arts, and heritage:

- enhancing understanding and capacity for action;
- creating and retaining identity;
- modifying values and preferences for collective choice;
- building social cohesion;
- contributing to community development; and
- fostering civic participation.

At first sight, these effects seem esoteric, arbitrary, and unconnected. A careful examination reveals, however, that there is an underlying connection between them. They are really different stages in the appropriation of cultural content into the public life of members of society. In other words, the end result of cultural participation is the improved capacity to take part in the collective life of society: cultural citizenship. A sample of the resulting studies, which explore in detail these issues, are presented in this special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Communication*. This introduction describes, in detail, the six major effects that are addressed within the case studies that comprised this project. Let us examine each of the six social effects in turn to see how the interconnection works.

Enhancing understanding and capacity for collective action

Encounters with arts or heritage expose people to ideas and understandings, new or old, about how to interpret the world around them. This provides people with a greater diversity of options for social action and relationships. This diversity of options is what Swidler has called social repertoire, or the individual's cultural tool kit. It is out of this repertoire of understandings that individuals craft strategies of action to make their way through life (Stanley, 2005a, 2005b; Swidler, 1998, 2003). Being better equipped for social interaction and having more options available can increase the individual's confidence and capacity for collective action, or what Appadurai (2004) has called "the capacity to aspire." How does cultural participation do this?

Both an encounter with the arts and a heritage experience are quintessentially social events. One of the main motives often cited for participation in cultural activities is the opportunity for socialization—the desire to build and maintain

relationships, which seems to have a particular affinity to cultural activities (Jeannotte, 2005). Socializing contributes significantly to the individual's ability to receive and appropriate ideas produced during a cultural activity. Group discussion parses the ideas and group consensus validates them: if nothing else, your friends point out the things you missed and share your enthusiasm for the things you did. This, I would argue, is true whether you just saw a movie or read a novel, are organizing a festival, participating in an historic re-enactment, or taking a drawing class. It is true whether you are an artist or part of the audience.

Encounters with the arts and heritage stimulate our thinking in new ways or reaffirm current beliefs. It must be kept in mind here that we are not claiming these effects happen through a single encounter with arts or heritage. Many people sleep through a play or concert, or cannot remember a word that they read. The effects hypothesized in this paper arise from repeated and ongoing engagement with arts and heritage activities.

What makes personal changes in individual repertoire into a social effect is not simply that we talk about the ideas we have been exposed to with our friends, but also that the majority of ideas propagated through the arts and heritage boil down to relationships with others and appropriate behaviour toward others. Even chamber music speaks to a harmony of the listener with the world around her. Therefore, encounters with the arts and heritage change our ideas about social relationships and how to behave toward each other: that is, they are social in their effects.

In this respect, an encounter with the arts, whether as audience member, artist, or curator, challenges our existing ideas about our social relationships and modifies them or reaffirms them. Heritage encounters also modify or reaffirm our ideas about social relationships by confronting us with what the curators think is exceptional, exemplary, and worthy of reverence. By giving us new ways of thinking or reaffirming current beliefs, cultural participation increases our confidence to interact with others around us (the world in general) (Hewitt, 2004; Matarasso, 1997; Muschamp, 2004). Several articles in this volume address the idea that art, heritage, and culture enhance our understanding and capacity for action. Douglas Worts reflects, for example, on the reactions of museum goers to a variety of exhibitions based on his extensive experience and observations as a curator and as a public-arts educator at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Sharon Fernandez recounts how the arts and cultural festival Desh Pardesh launched a wide variety of collective initiatives for social justice by the East Indian and gay communities of Toronto.

Creating and retaining identity
New ideas and understandings about how to interpret the world around us and a greater knowledge of the diversity of options available for social action and relationships necessarily mean a greater understanding of one's own place in the world and of oneself, one's desires, and one's capacities—in other words, one's identity.

Heritage in particular, in dealing with the revered in our past history, tends to be about identity: who we are and who we could and ought to be. The purpose for recognizing and preserving the memory of past exemplary or remarkable human events is to be able to associate and identify those events with oneself and share in the glory of them ("I am part of a group that achieved (or survived) such things!"). Heritage experiences therefore help us to find our roots and enhance our confidence at belonging (Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, 2004; Matarasso, 1997). These roots, of course, may be somewhat or entirely fictive, made up by the leaders of the group in order to create an attractive identity for the group. In any case, the purpose of revering a past through heritage is to give people a sense of belonging to a social group. Whether the interpretation of the past is true or not, the existence of the group and the benefits of belonging to it are real enough.

Perhaps more important, having a group identity means that you believe the group validates your social repertoire. Your repertoire of social understandings, learned mainly (at least initially) from your family and members of your community, and subsequently from community institutions, is basically a copy of the cultural traditions of the group. If you do not feel a sense of belonging to a group, or if you do not believe that the group's traditions are of any value, then you will also regard your repertoire as of little value, and your capacity for social participation, particularly outside your group, will be limited as a result.

If, however, you have confidence in your group and its traditions, if you believe that the group will stand up for you when you put your strategies into action, and if you believe that its standing up for you is worth something, then you are better equipped to take an active role in your society. Group identity therefore is a critical component of citizenship capacity. By demonstrating the social authority and acceptability of a set of ideas about human relationships, a heritage experience can affirm our identity and make us confident in our beliefs about the correctness of our social relationships. It can also throw our identity and beliefs into question. By providing socially authorized and acceptable ideas about human relationships where none existed before, heritage experiences can create cultural identities and give communities confidence to view themselves as valuable and to undertake collective acts. What also must be acknowledged, however, is that the assertion of "heritage" can be threatening to other communities. Brian Osborne's contribution explores these issues, and our understanding of these tensions, by looking at identity construction and the needs and capacities of individuals to turn the spaces they inhabit into "places" in which they can live. Paul Williams presents a case study of how the recognition and restoration of a historically significant but virtually abandoned church in Halifax increased the vitality of the German community of Halifax. He carefully examines the "multivocality" of this site in his discussion of the discovery of the presence of other pasts during the church's renovation.

Modifying values and preferences for collective choice

The new ways of thinking about the world around us necessarily imply evaluating the world anew (Matarasso, 1997). If the encounter with a new idea is a fleeting or one-time experience, it may not have a very profound effect. It is easy to ignore or forget a single encounter. However, if the individual is frequently, or as a matter of habit, exposed to new ideas and habitually interacts with others who are similarly exposed, it will be hard to maintain previous attitudes and values completely unchanged. The validation and reinforcement of friends is known to be a strong motivation for the adoption and retention of values (Asch, 1951, 1955; Bond & Smith, 1996). This makes the socializing dimension of cultural participation mentioned above particularly important for encouraging and indeed making possible attitudinal and value change.

There is no guarantee, of course, that the new values will be "better" than the old ones. We may emerge from the theatre wiser and more tolerant, or greater bigots than ever before. The Montréal workshop participants did warn that not all social effects of art, culture, or heritage were positive: we also find violence, racism, and sexism in the arts. However, there is reason to believe that in the long run and in the aggregate, socially dysfunctional and exclusionary ideas (for example, the twentieth-century racial theories of the Nazis, nineteenth-century American ideas of racial inferiority and slavery, sixteenth-century ideas about heresy and witchcraft) will be weeded out of the tradition and the repertoire (Jeannotte, Stanley, Pendakur, Jamieson, Williams, & Aizlewood, 2002; Stanley, 2003a).

The long-term aggregate trend of both arts and heritage is to foster more sustainable social values. More sustainable social values are the kind of values described in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The superior sustainability of societies that embrace and reinforce these values has been argued in the social cohesion literature (Jeannotte et al., 2002; Stanley, 2003a). I would argue that continued exposure to a diversity of ideas from cultural experiences of all kinds will, over time, change attitudes and values. Gayle Broad, Stephanie Boyer, and Cynthia Chataway describe how the reinstitution of traditional arts practices in the Bachewana First Nation helped them create pride in their identity as Aniishnaabe people. At the same time, their analysis of this community's cultural activities unravels value changes both within and without the Bachewana First Nation community as a result of their engagement. Their efforts to strengthen and reclaim their culture and heritage, for example, were integral to the Bachewana First Nation's successful appeal to the Supreme Court for recognition of treaty rights long denied to them.

Building social cohesion

Social cohesion means the willingness of people in a society to cooperate with each other in common enterprises to achieve collective goals (Stanley, 2003a). It is often manifest in networks of social connections, and this is one of the things that has been used to try to measure it. In this guise, social cohesion is often referred to as social capital, although there are important differences (Stanley,

2003b). Social networks are only one aspect of social cohesion. More important is the underlying confidence and trust in other people (Putnam, 1993, 2000), which enables people to form the myriad of partnerships characteristic of a society, from marriages to business contracts to the purchase of television sets on credit. The kind of network that helps get a person a job or provides support to the excluded is only a part of the picture. Shared understanding or repertoire and sustainable social values obviously help people to recognize opportunities for cooperation. They enable people to predict the outcomes of cooperation and therefore reduce the risk. The net result is the creation and sustaining of trust, and hence the willingness to continue to cooperate: social cohesion.

We have already seen that there is an affinity between the reception of ideas and socializing, and have recognized socializing as one of the motives for cultural participation. The cultural activity gives us an entertaining excuse to be there and something to talk about that many social gatherings do not. Cultural participation in all forms therefore tends to promote group interaction and cooperation. On a different and more significant level, if the attitudes and values of a society with a vital cultural life are shifting toward the more tolerant, just, democratic, humane, and inclusive, through the influence of a diversity of artists and curators, then cooperation between groups and individuals in society is going to be made easier (Jeannotte et al., 2002; Matarasso, 1997; Stanley, 2003a). As the arts increase our awareness of alternative patterns of living, the options for cooperation with others (both in ways to cooperate and potential new partners) are increased.

Heritage experience may have an even more direct effect on social cohesion than the arts. By helping to reaffirm a group's identity, it helps groups gain pride and confidence in their abilities. It therefore better equips collectivities and communities to enter into relationships and cooperate with others as equals. Of course, heritage activities could also reinforce an insular or exclusionary identity, where you confine your relationship to others of "your kind," however defined. Here we have the classic contradiction between bridging and bonding social capital. I have, however, argued that bridging and bonding are not characteristics of social capital but of the motivations of the social group that is exploiting the capital (Stanley, 2003b). If a group is secure and confident in society, then they will use the social capital to bridge, to reach out. If they are beleaguered, excluded, marginalized, or threatened, then they will use the same social capital to reinforce their identity and to protect themselves from outside relationships, which they believe are likely to be harmful. The use of heritage, or for that matter the arts, for bonding purposes may be an attempt by the group to maintain what social cohesion they can in the face of the unwillingness of the rest of society to cooperate with them. Arts and heritage participation does not, in such a case, increase social cohesion, but keeps it from deteriorating even further.

Cultural participation enhances social cohesion because it creates occasions for socialization that are particularly attractive. I further propose that societies that have dynamic and diverse cultures will evolve toward greater tolerance and respect for human rights, the individual, and the diversity of ideas, thereby

increasing a willingness to cooperate. Heritage activities thus increase a net willingness to cooperate through the creation of stronger group identities and confidence. Sharon Jeannotte's examination of the data from the Community Foundations of Canada Our Millennium project, which invited Canadians to make "gifts" to their communities during the 2000 millennium year, looks at the nature of the "gifts" and finds that a disproportionate number of projects featured various aspects of arts and heritage, a testament to the value of culture and to its centrality in the lives of citizens. Jeannotte's analysis of these gifts indicates how communities across Canada can build social capital through heritage projects and how such projects may foster social cohesion and identity.

Contributing to community development and fostering civic participation
We have seen that culture equips people with the social repertoire necessary to understand and interpret other people's actions and motivations, and gives people the confidence necessary to act socially. We have seen that culture increases confidence in people's identity and group, and changes values. We have seen that culture contributes to people's willingness to cooperate both directly and through increased understanding and strengthened identity.

If people come to share understandings, gain a greater sense of belonging together and are proud if it, and increase their willingness to cooperate, then it would not be surprising for them to find that their community has increased its capacity to act together to achieve mutual goals. This increased citizenship capacity is not a direct effect of an encounter with arts or heritage, but is a consequence of the other changes that arts and heritage experiences have effected. When the group as a whole acts, of course, it is still individuals who act in concert. They might undertake volunteering, political protesting or voting, organizing activities in the community, even charitable giving. Viewed from this individual perspective, these things are often called civic participation. Civic participation is then merely the reverse side of the coin to community development. As such, it too is fostered indirectly by individual encounters with arts and heritage. By fostering a sense of collective identity, by increasing community confidence and the willingness of individuals to cooperate, a dynamic and diverse culture will be a significant contributor to community development. Increased civic participation is a consequence of a dynamic and diverse cultural scene in the community. Lon Dubinsky vividly describes the liveliness and importance of the arts scene in Kamloops, BC, showing how the arts have created a civic spirit leading to a self-sustaining capacity for community action.

Conclusion: Cultural citizenship
Swidler (2003) showed that an individual's cultural repertoire provides the models from which she fashions her actions. The Montréal workshop concluded that arts and heritage participation enhances social understanding, promotes identity formation, modifies values, builds social cohesion, and fosters community development and civic participation. These are the mechanisms by which cultural participation provides the models to fashion the individual's public action. An

individual's cultural participation influences how she behaves toward others in society, and their cultural participation influences how they treat her. Culture permeates social, economic, and political action.

Culture is a source of power. If it is left to an elite to determine culture for a society, the elite will have profound influence over social action (Bourdieu, 1989). This is not an acceptable condition in a democracy, where it is the right of all citizens, more or less equally, to determine appropriate action. It follows then that citizens must have the right and capacity to shape culture and influence the interpretation and creation of meaning. In a democracy, we must be not only citizens, but cultural citizens.

Cultural participation increases the diversity of ideas available to society as a whole and the capacity of citizens to make wise judgments about public issues. As a result, society is more democratic and so, by definition, better at meeting its citizens' needs. We will all benefit in the long term from these better decisions, whether we as individuals participate in cultural activities or not. As a consequence, we cannot rely on market forces to produce cultural "goods" at a socially optimum level. It is therefore the responsibility of governments to promote domestic culture to ensure that a socially optimal amount of it is produced.

Culture is important both to the individual and to the health of the nation. The case studies presented in this volume show just how important culture is. It is hoped that the publication of these articles will inspire both further research efforts in this important field of inquiry and active policy development at all levels of government responsible for culture.

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