AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN BRITAIN
Tensions, contradictions and paradoxes in policy and their implications for cultural management

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This paper attempts to distinguish the different meanings of "audience development" and "social inclusion" – two areas receiving increasing attention in British cultural policy – by discussing their overlap and close relation to "access". These policy areas are fraught with inherent contradictions when examined in the light of sociological theories on culture. Consumption skills, the level of which is determined socio-economically, and the function of culture for distinction suggest problems and paradoxes for audience development and social inclusion. Discussion on representation in culture, which can work to institutionalise inequality, also leads to a call for a "target-driven" approach to these areas. This would be fundamentally different from the dominant "product-led" approach that tries to leave the core product intact whilst making changes in presentation. To become truly inclusive is a most formidable challenge for cultural organisations as it inevitably brings them into a wholesale review of their core products.

KEYWORDS museums; social inclusion; audience development; British cultural policy; access

Introduction

Cultural policy in Britain has increased its call for arts and cultural organisations to make their activities enjoyed by and relevant to as many people as possible in recent years. The need for cultural organisations and projects to reach out into wider communities and involve a range of people in cultural activities now crops up both in the discourse of cultural policy and on the arts and cultural management agenda. Although the policy of diffusion is nothing new in cultural policy and is almost universally seen in official cultural policy statements, the latest emphasis has been given weight to an extent unprecedented, at least in the last ten to fifteen years. This emphasis is manifest in a variety of policy documents published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (e.g. DCMS 1999, 2000) – the ministry of the British government responsible for cultural affairs – and also by its agencies such as the Arts Councils for England and Scotland (Arts Council England 2004; Scottish Arts Council 2004), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and its predecessors (e.g. Dodd & Sandell 1998).

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As for the arts in particular, the creation of the New Audiences Fund in 1998 made a significant impact in practical terms. This fund distributed £20 million during its existence between 1998 and 2003, and enabled a total of 1,157 projects for audience development in various forms (Johnson n.d.). It supported, for example, a concert held in an unusual setting (e.g. in a shopping mall) so as to expose a range of people to classical music in a casual way, in the hope that some of them would become interested and attend a concert held in a more usual venue. In this kind of project, discount tickets were often given out to encourage attendance. Theatre companies went out to deliver the arts into hospitals and prisons where people were confined in their physical settings. The variety of the projects is hard to summarise in the limited space available, but relatively well documented. Johnson's (n.d.) paper summarises the Fund's achievements, whilst the Arts Council England, which administered this funding scheme, still maintains a webpage as a database of these projects in order to help arts managers who wish to embark on an audience development project to get ideas and tips for effective project management.

In parallel to this development, this policy area has given birth to a "sister" policy for "social inclusion". This comes from a larger government social policy on "social exclusion/inclusion" developed since the late 1990s. "Social exclusion" refers to interlinked problems seen in specific communities and neighbourhoods, involving low income, poor health and education as well as high rates of unemployment and crime.[1] Soon after the Labour Party came into power in 1997, it set up a Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet to tackle this issue, and a number of "Policy Action Teams" (PATs) were also established to identify best practice and draw up policies and action plans in their particular areas of responsibility. PAT 10 was a team organised in the DCMS to report on the contributions that the arts, sport and leisure can make in neighbourhood renewal (Policy Action Team 10 1999). With these two policy strands in the background, cultural managers have had to devise and implement audience development projects to increase audience numbers and/or diversify their base, whilst at the same time they have been asked to demonstrate a positive contribution to the problem of social exclusion. This policy area has been causing concern among professionals in the cultural sector as the precise meaning of "social exclusion" and its relevance to what they are doing is still unclear. Also, the speed at which these policy areas have developed and been put into practice has been so rapid that confusion over audience development and social inclusion has emerged and still remains today.

With such a state of confusion and lack of clarity, it seems important to review this policy development and consider its implications for cultural management. The purpose of this paper is to sort out the similarities and differences of these "buzzwords" of cultural policy, to question the assumptions underlying these policy areas and to examine their implications for cultural management in the years to come. The term "culture" is a difficult one to define and I wish to avoid complex discussion on it here. When it refers to a broader anthropological notion, it should be self-explanatory in the context in what follows. Culture with a capital "C" in particular means the "legitimate" culture of a specific community. More often, however, culture in this paper is similar to "the arts", referring to some tangible fruits of intellectual or artistic endeavour. When used in conjunction with organisations and management, culture here refers mainly to museums and art galleries. The geographical scope of the paper is the United Kingdom, but this is also a concern at the European level, seen, for example, in a research report commissioned by the European Commission (Woods *et al*. 2004). Thus, despite the differences in the experiences of Continental European countries, the need of cultural policy to address social policy issues is widely felt.

The Meaning of the Terms

It is important to recognise that there is variety in the activities generally called "audience development". I have elsewhere (Kawashima 2000) discussed four different types of audience development in the arts, identified at the time of writing. They include Extended Marketing, Taste Cultivation, Audience Education and Outreach (previously called "Cultural Inclusion"),[2] each of which is different in terms of target, form and purpose (see Table 1).

Briefly speaking, Extended Marketing is targeted to tap into the pool of potential or "lapsed" audiences who are basically interested in the arts, but have just not had a chance to attend for a variety of reasons. It is thus mainly about identifying those non-attenders with a high potential for "conversion" and understanding the specific reasons for their failure to attend in the first place. The next measure to be undertaken is to remove tangible and intangible barriers to attendance (e.g. by installing slopes to the venue entrance and creating a welcoming ambience for non-traditional audiences) or to give some specific incentives for attendance. This is called "Extended Marketing" as the skills and techniques employed are largely borrowed from conventional arts marketing and applied to the untapped market. Taste Cultivation and Audience Education are mostly for existing audiences either to broaden their cultural scope (the former) or to enrich their arts experience (the latter). Taste Cultivation and Audience Education start from understanding what else the existing audience might be interested in other than the current offers and giving them some additional or enhanced benefits. Thus, a Taste Cultivation project may take concert audiences to an arts exhibition before the performance, whereas an Audience Education project would provide an opportunity of in-depth study into a specific aspect of the arts.

Outreach refers to various projects to take the arts from their usual venues to places where those with little or no access to the arts live. They thus contribute to social policy in a broad sense through the use of their artistic resources – for example, theatre companies bringing participatory arts projects to a hospital and working with patients. Other targets may include the homeless, people in prisons, on low incomes or living in deprived areas, or asylum seekers and refugees. This all looks very different in nature from the rest of the audience development categories in having a stronger emphasis on social aims, rather than

TABLE 1
Different types of audience development.

	Target	Form	Purpose[a]
Extended Marketing	Potential attendee, Lapsed attendee	The same product offered, but with improvement to cater for the target	Financial, artistic
Taste Cultivation	Existing audience	Introduction to different art forms and genres	Artistic, financial (and educational)
Audience Education	Existing audience	The same product offered with extensive education	Educational (and financial)
Outreach	People unlikely to attend (e.g., in deprived communities)	Bringing arts projects (often participatory) outside	Social

Note: [a]Only refers to the main one(s), but not excluding others.
Source: Adapted from Kawashima (2000, p. 8).

on the expansion of the arts audience market, but, in fact, social inclusion was a "strand" in the New Audiences Fund in its later stage of existence. Johnson (n.d., p. 15) identifies 58 projects in this category in receipt of nearly £1.5 million. Unlike the majority of the projects in the scheme, however, this "social exclusion" strand emphasised the experimental and exploratory nature rather than the delivery of measurable outcome, providing a basis for the development of social inclusion as another area of cultural policy and management. This category leads us to social inclusion.

The term "social inclusion" is ambiguous, and hence contentious. The limited space of this paper does not allow for a lengthy discussion of this political term, and interested readers are recommended to refer to the early part of a paper by Sandell (1998). Briefly, as was mentioned, social inclusion is a multidimensional and dynamic concept that places the problem of poverty as interrelated with other associated problems of social policy. These various problems together contribute to the creation of communities of people disenfranchised from the main political, social and economic arena of society at large. Whereas audience development revolves around the notions of audiences and non-audiences, social inclusion is concerned with excluded people with little regard to whether they consume the arts or not. In practice, those excluded are most likely to have limited opportunities to participate in the arts and culture, but the extent and level of their cultural experience is not an issue here. Although developed as an extension of audience development, social inclusion has thus taken arts and cultural organisations into unfamiliar territory where they are expected to achieve goals of an essentially non-cultural nature. As such, the concept of social inclusion in particular relation to the cultural sector needs more explanation.

Reference to analysis by Sandell (1998) for the museum sector (including art galleries) is helpful. Whereas I approached the task of classification by examining various projects and schemes in the arts from the perspective of audience development, Sandell started by examining the broad concept of social inclusion, identified its four interrelated dimensions (economic, political, social and cultural) and related them to museum management. What is of particular significance about his work, and helpful for our purposes, is that he discusses the "cultural dimension" of social exclusion, whereas most social policy researchers pay scant attention to this area: "In addition to exclusion from economic, social and political systems, individuals can also be excluded from cultural systems" (Sandell 1998, p. 409). This is an important point to which I will return later. This undertaking led him to the identification of three social inclusion strategies for museums (see Table 2): The Inclusive Museum, The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration and The Museum as Vehicle for Broad Social Change (Sandell 1998, p. 416).

Sandell explains that what he calls "The Inclusive Museum" is about the removal of barriers that hinder access to museums to some groups of people. The barriers may be physical, geographical or economic, but there are ways of breaking them down and the appropriate measures should be undertaken. In addition, the psychological and intellectual barriers that deter some people who are unaccustomed to visiting museums should be removed by changing, for example, the ambience of the building, signage and the language used in displays.

Museums have generally been active in this area, supported by guidelines from the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC, and its successor MLA) and a variety of available grants. This reminds us of the practice in access and audience development, and Sandell (1998, p. 410) in fact explains that this area overlaps with audience development (Figure 1). The overlap between audience development and social inclusion is exemplified in the description of a project called START, undertaken at the Walsall Art Gallery in the West

TABLE 2
Different types of social inclusion for museums.

	Goal	Achieved through:	Exclusion is tackled within:	Social problems associated with exclusion:
The Inclusive Museum	Cultural inclusion	Representational change, access for the excluded	The cultural dimension	Might be addressed indirectly
The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration	To improve individuals' and communities' quality of life[a]	Initiatives that seek to alleviate disadvantage or encourage personal development	The economic, social, political and cultural dimensions	• provide the rationale behind initiatives • might be directly expressed within the museum's goals
The Museum as Vehicle for Broad Social Change	To influence society/instigate positive social change	Providing a forum for public debate, education and persuasion, advocacy[b]	The economic, social, political and cultural dimensions	• provide the rationale behind initiatives • might be directly expressed within the museum's goals

Notes: [a] I have added the word "communities"; [b] this is my addition.
Source: Adapted from Sandell (1998, p. 416).

Midlands region of England. It was a special exhibition programme aimed at young children aged between three and five who the Gallery staff felt had been excluded from art gallery provision for various reasons, including what turned out to be a false assumption that young children could not appreciate "fine art". Young children may have been "excluded" from the mainstream museum provision, but as a generic group they are not usually considered in relation to social exclusion problems. Thus it is easier and more appropriate to regard this as an audience development project.

The Gallery found that, in effect, the carers who accompanied the young children included a large number of people who had very limited experience of the visual arts and felt

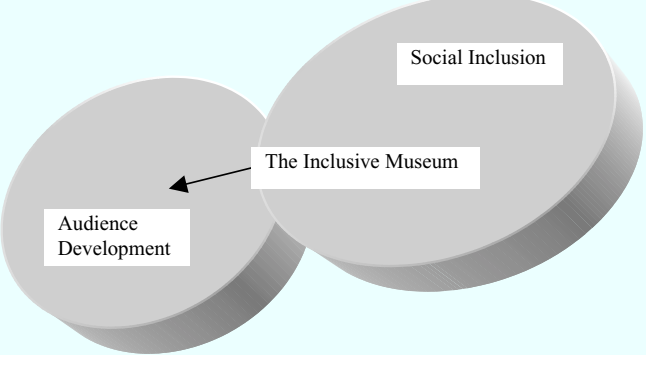


FIGURE 1
The Inclusive Museum Penetrating Audience Development.

intimidated by the atmosphere of art galleries. In such a way, the description of the project hints at a socially inclusive nature. Combined with its claim of audience development, it freely crosses into the two areas. What happens in practice is that proposed projects choose to name themselves according to the availability of funds earmarked for either purpose. This is not to criticise the loose nature of The Inclusive Museum or the funding-led way of labelling, but to prove the similarities between Extended Marketing and The Inclusive Museum and point out the versatility a project in this category tends to have. In fact, SMART is introduced as good practice in audience development literature (Dodd & Sandell 1998, p. 29), but at the same time it appears in references to "inclusiveness" in cultural diversity literature (see Cox with Singh 1997).

The strategy of The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration requires museums to look beyond their own territories and directly enter social, economic and political domains. Abundant examples range from a project involving prostitutes in the area creating an exhibition to raise their self-esteem and public awareness for AIDS, the creation of a football team on a museum site composed of young people who had previously vandalised the museum building, to a training project for young unemployed people in photography (GLLAM 2000). For The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration, practice tends to take the form of "projects" carried out by outreach and/or education workers, often together with agencies outside the museums such as those for youth or personal social services (Sandell 1998, p. 415). This may look like Outreach in audience development (Figure 2), but there is a distinction in the ultimate goals of the projects. In Outreach in audience development, projects will be deemed satisfactory if they emotionally move project participants with cultural resources the museums bring to them. This is not sufficient in The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration in social inclusion. For the latter, it is necessary that the participants become empowered to positively change their lives, or that the problems attributed to the specific communities become less severe. This distinction, it must be hastily added, is arbitrary and elusive, and the two are inter-penetrative. It does not mean, furthermore, that Outreach projects are regarded as self-complacent or The Museum as Agent of Social Regeneration as more altruistic.

The Museum as Vehicle for Broad Social Change takes a more public approach and directly addresses social exclusion problems. The strategy used may well be within the

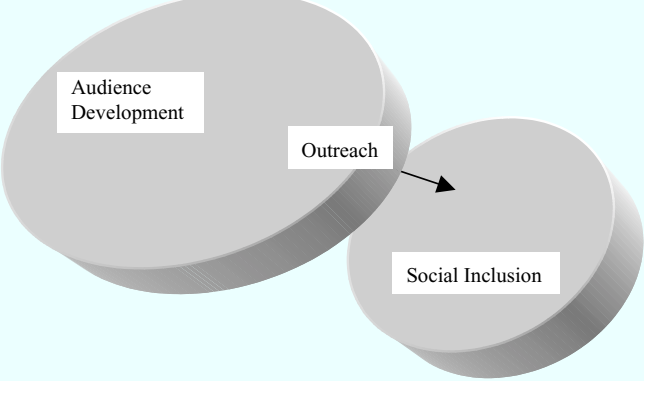


FIGURE 2
Outreach Penetrating Social Inclusion.

TABLE 3
Audience development and social inclusion.

Audience development		Social inclusion
Extended marketing Taste cultivation Audience education	←Inclusive Organisation	
	Outreach→	Culture for Social Regeneration Culture for Social Change

cultural dimension of the museum – for example, by mounting a special exhibition to provoke public debate about a specific political issue (e.g. race). The museum may hold lectures, together with such an exhibition, to encourage the public to engage in further discussions. If this is an example of a "project", Sandell (1998, pp. 414–415) also introduces some examples of a "corporate" style where museums are established with the primary or explicit aim of advocating specific social issues. These include the Migration Museum in Australia and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York, both of which promote humanitarian and democratic values through preserving, interpreting and exhibiting various experiences of immigrants to the countries.

What emerges from the above discussion is Table 3, which has removed the references to museums from Table 2 for the purpose of extending the application of the concepts and somewhat simplified the category names. "Inclusive Organisation" and "Outreach" are irregularly located with arrows in the columns to suggest their proximity to Extended Marketing and Culture for Social Regeneration respectively. To complicate matters further, the issue of access needs to be addressed. Again, it is difficult to separate this as a discrete area of policy concern, as access is closely associated with audience development and, to a degree, with social inclusion as well. The next section explains this concept.

Access

The term "access" is another multifaceted and ambiguous word. Booth (1991) argued that it had not been given in-depth consideration, and not much seems to have changed since then at best, and it may even have become more confusing. Despite its various meanings, however, it essentially suggests that there is something of universal value that everyone is entitled to and should benefit from. To support such a statement, it is necessary to unpack its history. The concept of access and its perceived importance goes back at least to the Victorian era. Cultural policy then was prompted by the state's need to define national identity *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, on the one hand, and to have the means of social control, on the other. To put the latter more mildly, early cultural policy was concerned with the refinement of the population. Culture, including state schools, libraries and museums, was considered effective for civilising these relatively uneducated people, uplifting their morale and thereby achieving social cohesion and harmony (McClellan 2003, pp. 7–8). Ensuring access to culture by the poor was thus deemed important. The establishment of publicly funded cultural institutions (e.g. museums, art galleries, libraries and later the British Broadcasting Corporation) was often justified on the grounds of access.

The post-war development of public arts funding has followed this move. Since the mid-1940s, access has been on the agenda of the Arts Council, albeit to varying degrees and

with fluctuating enthusiasm. The Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), the wartime predecessor to the Arts Council of Great Britain, was greatly concerned with diffusion of the arts and participatory arts, but the Arts Council has become more orientated towards supporting flagship institutions at national and regional levels. Nonetheless, the policy on access was enshrined in the Royal Charter of the Council as an important organisational goal. Thus, in the early years of the Arts Council, public funding for the arts was often applied to reduce the financial barrier to attendance, and access in geographical terms also received attention. The Arts Council supported tours of arts performances and exhibitions around the country and provided transport to arts venues for attenders. The Arts Council also recognised physical, financial and social barriers to arts attendance and funded various projects to remove them.

Policy for the museum sector has also seen the issue of access periodically appearing in public debate. Museums in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite their initial exclusive appeal to the highly educated, soon assumed the role of civilising the masses, including the working class. For this purpose, many of them were open in the evening and free of charge. Most museums in receipt of public funding in Britain thus have had the principle of a free admissions policy, at least to the main permanent collections, except for some years in the 1980s and 1990s when some of the so-called "National Museums" in financial difficulties introduced admission charges. When the Labour Party came into power in 1997, declaring its commitment to access and trying to revert to the pre-Conservative regime of free admissions, the newly created DCMS immediately initiated a review of charges at museums.

In the public debate on and parliamentary enquiry into this issue, the charging museums (e.g. the Victoria and Albert Museum on a "voluntary" basis) defended their position on pragmatic grounds, arguing that not charging would contribute to quality deterioration and making museums less worthy of a visit. In response, non-charging institutions (e.g. the National Gallery) contended that charges would increase staff costs and that fewer bequests would be made to charging museums (Bailey *et al*. 1998), also arguing on pragmatic grounds. However, it was largely their notion of "access", i.e. museums should have no financial barriers for anyone, and their sense of cultural responsibility that bound the advocates for non-charging.

Despite its laudable outlook, this cultural and moral argument for free admission was not without problems. The major one is that museums, particularly non-charging ones, had neither reliable visitor figures nor any socio-economic composition data. Without ticketing facilities, non-charging museums relied on manual counting. Data was collected, in some cases, on certain days and extrapolated for annual figures, whilst some of the figures released by museums were estimates based on the previous years' records. Surveys to obtain the demography and other aspects of visitors were not systematically undertaken. Therefore, the change documented at the museums that introduced charges lacked accuracy, as the "pre-charge" statistics tended to be exaggerated (see Bailey *et al*. (1997) for a more detailed discussion of methodological flaws). In addition, museums were confusing "visitor" and "visit", and what actually might decrease because of charging could be the number of repeat visits by the same kind of (or the same) visitors.

The unsound basis of visitor/visit data was a problem for pro-charging arguments as well, but it meant a significant blow to the non-charging justification. Charging might not result in a decrease in visits, nor would it change in any major way the socio-economic composition of the visitors: museums have always drawn the relatively well-to-do segment of the population. Also it was suggested that concessions or other sophisticated pricing

policies could be introduced so that museums remained accessible whilst becoming more financially sound. However, free access was firmly held in one corner of the museum sector as a matter of principle in defiance of any compromise, which is why this issue has been age-old, ideological and political, yet the contents of debate repetitive (Bailey *et al*. 1997, p. 356). In the end, additional funding was made available to national museums; in return, they have dropped admission charges for their permanent collections at all their charging sites in England, Scotland and Wales in 2001, and the debate has ceased, at least for the time being.

Thus, although the term "audience development" may not always have been used, its associated concept of access has at least been on the public policy agenda and addressed accordingly in practice. The development of cultural marketing subsequently in the 1980s and 1990s has made more information and knowledge about audiences' demography and "psychography" available, and enabled cultural organisations to tackle psychological barriers to access with sophisticated techniques and skills. The development of information and communications technology in the late 1990s has also stimulated government's interest in access as technology is now considered an effective tool for widening it.

As I have mentioned, unfortunately, these three concepts – access, audience development and social inclusion – cannot be neatly defined and sorted out as discrete areas. They overlap, intermingle and support each other. This state is exemplified in a policy consultative document (DCMS 2000) whose title suggests it is explicitly about social inclusion, but which in fact discusses all three concepts. It is even bizarre to see a recommendation that "catalogues and key documents should be available online via the internet" alongside another that "museums, galleries and archives should develop projects which aim to improve the lives of people at risk from exclusion" (DCMS 2000, p. 5). A large number of responses to the paper pointed out this confusion, and called for clarification of the terms used in the consultative document including "access", "audience development" and "acting as agents of social change" (DCMS 2001, pp. 6, 13). The DCMS, however, has decided to keep these terms in the same policy document, insisting that access is the first step, providing the basis for audience development (the second step) and social inclusion (the third step) (DCMS 2001, p. 8; DCMS 2000, p. 12).

It can be said that the response to policy consultation tends to question definitions of terms in a disguised avoidance of the real need to confront the subject matter and to take action on the part of those consulted. However, for us, it is important to ask why "access" has had such a chequered history, sometimes involving value-laden debate, and whether there can be such a simple linear transition from Stage One to Stage Three for cultural organisations as discussed by the DCMS. It is necessary for us to move on to examine some of the conflicts and tensions inherent in these areas of cultural policy.

Conflicts and Tensions in Access, Audience Development and Social Inclusion

Whose Culture is it Anyway?

The first tension is related to the assumptions that seem to underlie these areas, particularly those of access and audience development. One of the assumptions is that culture should and can be made accessible to all people, and the other is that if only we remove barriers to culture – be they physical, geographical, economic or psychological – culture will become accessible and currently under-represented segments of the public will have proportionate representation in the audience.

These assumptions reflect the Liberal Humanist tradition of British and European cultural policy, insisting on the rights and potential of all individuals to benefit from culture, and placing a faith in a common culture that transcends the social, political and cultural divisions of the nation. Whilst this Enlightenment thinking has an immediate yet profound appeal, it is problematic in that it takes the contents of Culture for granted (Bennett 1997, p. 68; Vestheim 1994, p. 60). As Jordan and Weedon (1995, p. 63) explain: "[T]he idea that art and literature transcend political interests legitimates the practice of defining the culture of particular social groups as representative of the nation as a whole." This was not a position held only by the bourgeoisie. As the historian Waters (1990) shows, British Socialists in the nineteenth century also stressed the need for the working class to aspire to accessing the culture of the middle class, whilst denigrating what they regarded as the inferior, immoral popular culture that was gaining popularity among the working class. Accordingly, the period saw the decline of grassroots and folk culture in the English regions as well (see e.g. Russell 1997).

This ideological aspect of British cultural policy was highlighted as an issue during the 1960s and 1970s in the community arts movement. Some left-wing thinkers of cultural theory (e.g. Braden 1978) contended that the content of the culture publicly funded and publicly authorised, particularly by the Arts Council of Great Britain, had little relevance to the majority of the population; it is the substance of culture that prevents many people from attending the arts, and the cultures of ordinary people should instead receive public money. As the notion of one monolithic culture has been fiercely contested, the priorities of cultural policy have changed and the definition of "culture" worthy of public support has been expanded (Bennett 1997, p. 68). However, the re-definition of what is worthy of public support has not meant a paradigm shift in cultural policy. It might be argued that today's cultural policy is much more open-minded and post-modernistic, but the Liberal Humanist theory of culture is in fact highly capable of accommodating or co-opting different cultures into its mainstream (Jordan & Weedon 1995; Harris 1994). What used to be called "ethnic arts" is a good example of co-optation, being an exotic kind of Culture appropriated, or "domesticated", by the dominant culture. Under such circumstances, the key to improving access to the arts is, as Shaw (1979, pp. 117–128) extensively explains, seen to be education, which would help potential audiences to understand what is otherwise intellectually inaccessible.

Despite the argument for cultural democracy of the 1970s (e.g. Simpson 1976), or the importance of not regarding one culture as superior to others, the struggle for cultural democracy has seemingly waned over the years, or at least the activists have become less visible. In the museum sector, the representation of cultures is still a much-debated issue among the professionals and museum studies academics, but the advantages of making Culture more accessible attract more attention in policy discourse: improved access to the arts and culture will bring more money to cultural organisations to enable their artistic or social ambitions; or the arts and culture consumed by the social underclass may contribute to the moral improvement of these people and result in social cohesion.

Consumption Skills and Class Distinction

Although the assumption of one Culture for all remains powerful in access and audience development in particular, possibly permeating social inclusion as well, the relationship between culture and social inequality is far more complicated. Firstly, whether barrier

removal *per se* is effective for developing audiences should be examined in the light of the theories in the sociology of culture. According to sociologists, unequal participation in the arts and culture has a more deep-rooted origin and cannot be easily rectified by the removal of barriers. Sociologists such as Bourdieu in his numerous works (e.g. Bourdieu 1984) and cultural economists (e.g. Scitovsky 1976) have argued that cultural consumption is, in essence, a result of an acquired and trained capacity. In order to enjoy the arts and culture, particularly those in the publicly supported domain, one needs consumption skills with which to decode the messages inscribed in the artistic products. Decoding is taught informally by parents and formally in (particularly higher) education. Arts consumption can be fun for those who have already understood how to do it, and the more one gets used to it, the easier and the more pleasurable it becomes (Colbert *et al*. 1998, p. 14; Throsby 1994, pp. 3–4). In addition, access to information on arts events through social networks is an influential factor in determining attendance patterns. People in a privileged social class tend to be more exposed to a variety of information on the arts and culture and more capable of using a vast amount of information than their counterparts in a different class who inhabit a different sphere (DiMaggio & Useem 1978, p. 151).

The theory seems to be powerful at least in explaining the mechanism through which arts attendees and museum visitors continue to be over-represented by well-educated, well-to-do people. The Audience Education projects provide pre- or post-performance talks to further improve the appreciation skills of those who already possess some. In the case of Taste Cultivation, mere exposure often suffices to make people aware of the range of the arts on offer. A Taste Cultivation project can also help the existing audience to acquire consumption skills in specific art areas and to apply them to other areas. At any rate, the beneficiaries have a basis on which to build something new, the way in which most adults effectively learn. However, the acquisition and accumulation of cultural competence by those without any in the first place is such a long-term enterprise that the majority of audience development projects cannot tackle the root of this issue.

Secondly, as an extension of the above reasoning, Bourdieu and other sociologists have argued that culture is strategically used by the privileged classes to make a clear distinction between themselves and others, and also more subtle differentiations among themselves. This is done not only for the sake of cultural identity, but also to protect their advantage in economic terms. To put it a different way, culture helps a group of people form a sense of identity, which can be converted into economic capital. This indeed is a theory supporting Culture for Social Regeneration. It has been said that "Cultural activities can be pivotal to social cohesion and social change, helping to generate community identity and pride, … and improve educational attainment" (DCMS 2000, p. 9), which then strengthens the position of those people when they enter the labour market. However, in the context of sociology and cultural studies, it is argued that culture is a social construct which mirrors "Us" in opposition to "Others". Distinction by culture is an inevitable social force, and when a new group catches up with the culture that has so far been the domain of an established class, the previous owners of that culture move on to generate another culture so as to freshen up its identity and solidarity (Bouder-Pailler 1999, p. 8). The prospect of social cohesion using culture works insofar as it is a disguised form of social control that promises access to the culture of the ruling class, but the permit is always half-hearted and tokenistic, and by the time the access becomes substantial, the privileged class will have established another culture with which to identify themselves and exclude others.

Therefore, once museums start to make efforts to undermine the middle-class strategy of distinction, strong retaliation from the "intellectual" quarter comes to the fore. O'Neill (2002, p. 31), the Head of the Museums and Galleries in Glasgow, was the subject of bitter criticism when the Gallery of Modern Art, one of the sites under his directorship, showed works of naïve and self-taught artists alongside works by more established painters. In a separate exhibition, the Gallery used videos and manikins to evoke the atmosphere of the landscapes and scenes of the paintings on display (O'Neill 2002, pp. 31–32); art critics were furious. They cried, in O'Neill's view, in terror that that kind of exhibition was no longer for them, who belonged there, but for the others, who did not (2002, p. 32).

If this is the case, then there is a paradox in audience development. As more new audiences are brought into the mainstream arts venues and museums, the core, existing audiences will have to move to a different sphere where they can be exclusive. Hayes and Slater (2002) warn of the risk of alienating core audiences by engaging in Outreach and Culture for Social Regeneration activities. At present, the danger of undertaking these activities is considered to be in resource diversion into a less cost-effective area of activity, when focusing on frequent attendees would bring greater financial return. Yet in the long term, if audience development efforts continue and make a difference, they may result in a loss of an important section of the customer base. The loss is probably large to the extent that it cannot be offset by the income obtained from new customers. Cultural and arts organisations are perhaps well aware of this risk, but have not determined whether to positively accept the change of audience demographics at the expense of decline in financial terms.

Culture's Contribution to Social Exclusion

Thirdly, again as an extension of the above arguments, it should be noted that it is actually one of the functions of culture to legitimise and enhance social inequality (Jordan & Weedon 1995). A malign role played by museums and art galleries to institutionalise inequality has been openly noted, not only by academics, but also by museum professionals. Museums are far from neutral in value judgment. What they choose to preserve and the ways in which selected objects and art works are displayed are the very site for cultural politics. If this sounds typical of "the intellectual nihilism of the cultural left" as depicted in a polemic by Appleton (2001, p. 16), it is instructive to refer to Hooper-Greenhill, an academic specialist in museum education:

> Culture is not an autonomous realm of words, things, beliefs and values. It is not an objective body of facts to be transmitted to passive receivers. It is lived and experienced; it is about producing representations, creating versions, taking a position, and arguing a point of view. (Hooper-Greenhill 2000, p. 19)

She goes on to relate this argument to museum displays capable of constructing frameworks for social understanding (Hooper-Greenhill 2000, p. 20).[3]

This line of argument leads us to a radical proposition that the cultural sector is partly responsible for the cause of social exclusion. In the public discussion on social inclusion and exclusion, cultural organisations have been asked to make a positive contribution to *combating* the problems of poverty, crime, unemployment, poor housing and so on. A number of practitioners in the cultural sector have resented such a policy pressure, arguing that culture should not be used for social purposes *per se* and wondering why they need to divert their resources to the problems they did not create in the first place. They have also pointed out

that these problems can be solved more efficiently by other agencies specifically created for that purpose. However, the statement by Sandell (1998, p. 406) that self-worth, dignity and community identity, if damaged, can lead to social disintegration suggests that indeed cultural organisations are not as innocent as they want us to believe: if the problem of social exclusion is inter-related between the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions, then it is possible to argue that the cultural dimension contributes to the *perpetuation* and *exacerbation*, if not generation, of social exclusion. Museums or theatres have not caused poverty, but by being culturally exclusive, they have helped to institutionalise the socially excluded in a pernicious way.

It turns out then that the most formidable challenge for cultural organisations is to become Inclusive Organisations. This would mean arts and cultural organisations need to undertake a wholesale review of their histories in society and every aspect of their past and current practice, not to categorically exclude any social problem as irrelevant, and to take any action necessary to rectify the situation. It would involve a sea change for cultural organisations and require a fundamentally different approach from that to audience development alone. In order to explain the different approaches, it is useful to refer to two theoretical methods of marketing for cultural organisations. One method, which may be called "product-led" marketing, is to make a product first and then find the segment of the population that would be interested in it. The other is to determine a segmented target and find the right products for the group. It is not that the organisation needs to compromise on artistic quality in the second, "target-led" approach, but that it has to identify the kinds of benefit these non-regular attendees seek and determine if it can offer it to them. In the case where there is no existing product suitable for this purpose, the cultural organisation may have to invent a new, suitable one. It must be noted that arts and cultural marketing in theory and practice have advanced to integrate these two approaches, seeing the limitations of both and based on post-modernistic aesthetics (Boorsma 2006). For the purposes of discussion, however, it is useful to refer to these "ideal", extreme types of marketing.

It can be said that cultural marketing usually takes the "product-led" approach (Colbert 2001, p. 15; Kolb 2000, p. 183) for the preservation of its artistic or scholarly autonomy. Lee (2005) argues that the root of this approach is the Romantic perspective of the arts, hence longstanding and deeply embedded in the development of non-commercial arts. This is fine as long as marketing is concentrated on existing customers: the target (the existing audience) and the offered products match, and which one comes first does not matter. When appealing to a slightly different group of people, changes in presentation and packaging becomes necessary, but such modification of "product surround" works to protect the "core product". Taste Cultivation projects – for example, those that have taken contemporary dance performances to a club – employ this strategy. As a result, they appeal to those who are generally accustomed to the arts, even if not to the particular art form or the company to which they have, by chance, been exposed this time. There is a point in Hill *et al.*'s (2003, p. 3) argument that the two approaches are not contradictory or mutually exclusive (see also Boorsma 2006), and cultural marketing, particularly by large organisations and by those drawing on repertoires (such as orchestras), has taken some element of the "target-led" marketing. It is common to see concert series in a season with some nights of "serious" music and some others with "popular and user-friendly" pieces targeting different taste publics. However, this "mix and match" approach aims to protect the core of the product by adding a new strand to attract new audiences.

When more concern is given to the diversity of the customer base (to which part of audience development is related) and to wider societal issues (i.e., social inclusion), it is imperative that cultural marketing turns to the "target-led" approach. This is where a challenge starts to loom large that few cultural organisations have really confronted. The majority have taken the "product-led" approach where missing groups of people may well be identified, but the Culture that many arts organisations are keen to deliver overshadows the cultures of the under-represented groups. If "product-led" marketing is about how best to communicate with the market (which may involve changes in product surround, but not in the core product), "product-led" audience development is about barrier removal. In the social inclusion context for museums, O'Neill despises this "product-led" attitude for social inclusion and aptly calls it a welfare provision model:

> The pragmatic approach [to social inclusion] is thus not really about developing the museums so that they work for all citizens, but is about making small adjustments to avoid any fundamental change. It provides add-on services that pose no real challenge to the aesthetic traditions of the museum. (O'Neill 2002, p. 36)

My argument that audience development has on the whole been based on the Liberal Humanist idea of culture can now be paraphrased by saying that audience development and even social inclusion have largely employed the product-led approach. Here the technique of segmentation is used mainly in identifying who is absent in the current audience base. The belief in Culture and the core product embodying it is strong, and access is widened to an extent that Culture becomes "available". Audience development tends to concentrate on barrier removal, whilst social inclusion provides an additional service, leaving the core product intact.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the complex meanings and relationships between access, audience development and social inclusion, and pointed out some of the contradictions and paradoxes in these areas. The cultural dimension in social exclusion/inclusion should not be overlooked, and in tackling this, the "target-led" approach is important. At the moment, what concerns museum professionals, arts managers, artists and public bodies involved in cultural policy making the most seems to be the area of Culture for Social Regeneration. Practical issues raised so far in this regard include the difficulty of measuring the impact of specific projects on individuals, communities and society in a long-term context, the sustainability of these activities with limited resources available, and the development of relevant skills and methods for projects in an area that has largely been unfamiliar to many cultural organisations. Whilst these pragmatic issues are pertinent and need to be tackled, it is equally important for cultural organisations to realise that Inclusive Organisation strategies, which may at first sight look familiar (recall its closeness to Extended Marketing), reasonably manageable and unthreatening, may well have far more painful effects on their very existence.

Indeed in the museum sector, a fundamental review is recommended, involving exhibits, collection and even conservation policies (Dodd & Sandell 2001). The recommendation is very radical as it goes far beyond a change in the presentation of an exhibition to the very heart of the museum, namely the area of traditional curatorial activity such as acquisition, research and exhibition. It is acknowledged that "collecting policies have evolved in an insular way, shaped largely by personal, curatorial bias often with little regard

to potential users' needs … or to wider social issues", and more "proactive" collecting – meaning collecting in consultation with education and outreach colleagues on its objectives in the light of wider social issues – is suggested by a museum professional (Wallace 2001, p. 82). This suggestion sounds extreme considering that the input of education and access staff even into exhibition design is still unusual at least at national level in the United Kingdom (see comments by Anderson 2005). Museums funded by local authorities in Britain, however, have admitted their need to change on a more provocative note:

> For a long time museums reflected a society largely white, middle class, male, imperialist, straight and dead. Reflecting current diversity was never going to be a matter of labels and décor. Changes in collection policies, curatorial practices, displays, facilities, staff attitudes, training, activities, governing body attitudes, programmes and events have required new skills, courage and risk-taking. A few museums have achieved the greater part of this list; most have changed some. It is far from easy. (GLLAM 2000, p. 17)

Looking back, museums were under pressure to demonstrate their contribution to the economy and managerial efficiency and effectiveness during the 1980s and 1990s, and they still are. Now they also have to prove their social utility. I would argue that the current emphasis on a social agenda has far more profound implications than the previous economic arguments because what is being questioned today on the basis of social relevance is the integrity of collection, exhibition and other services as well as the culture of the whole organisation.

Repeated reference has been made to the transformation starting to happen in the museum sector, whilst it is hard to assess the extent to which other domains in the cultural sector such as the performing arts are faced with this challenge and whether they have responded in the same or a similar manner. It can only be speculated that while specialist companies for social inclusion continue to be committed and their approach is, first and foremost, target-led, many of the mainstream arts organisations probably take a product-led approach and have social inclusion projects as an addition. The heavy reliance on income from ticket sales for performing arts organisations in Britain makes a major difference from publicly supported museums. Whilst it continues to be important to denounce the instrumental nature of cultural policy for its flaws and to doubt its sustainability (Belfiore 2002), it is important for all cultural organisations to critically self-examine the extent to which they have been committed to becoming Inclusive Organisations.

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NOTES

1. The government has defined social exclusion as "a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment,

poor skills, low incomes, unfair discrimination, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown" (Policy Action Team 10 1999, p. 4).

2. The name has been changed for the purpose of avoiding confusion with the complex concepts of social inclusion.
3. On a more popular front, the way in which women, ethnic groups and other minorities are depicted in soap operas and other entertainment shows on television has had a profound impact on the perception of the general public towards these groups. See Geraghty and Lusted (1998), particularly essays in Section II, for reviews of this strand of research.

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