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Cultural revival and social transformation in Ukraine

The role of culture and the arts in supporting post-Euromaidan resilience

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Summary

- In the six years since its Euromaidan revolution, Ukraine has seen a renewal of cultural activity, from theatrical productions to urban regeneration projects to pop-up exhibitions, spurred by a dynamic, energetic grassroots creative community and sustained by funding from new cultural state institutions. The emergence of these institutions marks a shift from a post-Soviet system of cultural management to an approach that today bridges the gap between state and independent cultural actors, and that has solidified a new sense of civic national identity.
- Under pressure from civil society, the Ukrainian state has adopted a more consistent and comprehensive approach towards cultural policy, overcoming decades of official distrust towards cultural activists and the creative community. A broad consensus around key elements of reform has developed, which has included support for the principles of open access to state resources, evidence-based policies, the separation of policymaking from implementation, and the competitive selection of state cultural managers.
- In response to Russia's military interventions in 2014, Ukraine's cultural and creative sectors promoted national unity and sought to counteract the divisive effects of Russian cultural influence in the country. Legislative reforms and policy initiatives included the establishment of state agencies such as the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, the Ukrainian Institute and the Ukrainian Book Institute, as well as the restructuring of pre-existing institutions such as the Ukrainian State Film Agency. These four bodies, in particular, became key providers of funds for the cultural sector. They promoted new management and governance principles, but also created the opportunity for public and media scrutiny, highlighting the extent to which existing financial and legal frameworks were outdated.
- Alongside structural changes, Ukraine's civic identity has become more focused on shared values and pluralistic cultural spaces. Sustained EU funding and engagement via national cultural relations organizations have played a role in Ukraine's gravitation towards European blueprints of cultural policy management. The promotion of inclusivity, openness, transparency, consensus-seeking and partnership-building has also helped efforts to restore trust between societal groups, rebuild communities and heal traumas from the war in Donbas. More broadly, the transition to a values-based identity is enabling liberal democratic principles to be built into the foundations of Ukraine's new political settlement.

- A concurrent process of government decentralization, involving the devolution of power to the municipal level, has been intertwined with Ukraine's cultural revival. While this nationwide process has presented certain policy challenges, the authorities have demonstrated political will to reform and innovate, and an ability to work with a range of stakeholders. This has laid the foundations for further progress in forming community-led cultural development strategies.
- Supported by state funding and Western donors, and drawing on the expertise of external cultural relations organizations such as the British Council and Goethe-Institut, Ukraine's cultural and creative industries are growing and innovating: they are now generating significant revenues, and contributing to the national economy through the expansion of sectors such as film-making and the emergence of new initiatives such as 'creative hubs' where business, education, culture and other fields intersect. As a result, popular perceptions of the importance of culture – previously considered a dispensable luxury – are gradually becoming more positive. That said, attitudes towards culture are still often unreceptive, especially in poorer regions where cultural consumption remains low.
- Despite a complicated Soviet legacy, the revival of arts and cultural production in the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution has allowed Ukraine to push back against Russian attempts to 'weaponize' history and identity. Ukraine has been able to mobilize local communities, support civic engagement and mature citizenship, and strengthen democracy. To build on this start, this paper's recommendations for the government of Ukraine include further reform and restructuring of state cultural institutions, continued vigilance in avoiding political interference in 'arms-length' cultural agencies, and more engagement with NGOs that focus on cultural and creative industries. Recommendations for Western donors include doing more to support grassroots cultural actors outside Kyiv, directing funding to national heritage restoration, and providing more funding to combat ever-present Russian cultural influences.

01 Introduction

Ukraine's cultural and creative sectors have flourished since the Euromaidan revolution, helping the country to counter divisive Russian narratives and develop a greater sense of national identity.

Following Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution of 2013–14 and Russia's subsequent aggression against the country, Ukraine experienced an impressive cultural revival. From publishing to music, film production to theatre, fashion to curated exhibitions, the Ukrainian cultural scene grew in boldness, diversity and scale. The Euromaidan movement spurred a powerful wave of cultural activism, involving among other things the establishment of platforms for debates, the holding of pop-up exhibitions, urban regeneration projects, and initiatives by volunteer groups to protect crumbling national heritage sites around the country.

This revival drew on the dynamism of Ukraine's grassroots creative community. In time, it was further sustained by funding from a network of new state institutions for culture – such as the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF), the Ukrainian Book Institute and the Ukrainian Institute – that emerged in the years following the Euromaidan movement.[1] Institutions with a longer history, such as the Ukrainian State Film Agency, also had their capacity bolstered.

The creation of new institutions signalled a departure from the post-Soviet system of cultural management, and a move towards a consistent and comprehensive cultural policy. Most significantly, the creation of a new ecosystem of culture helped to bridge the gap between the state and independent cultural actors. This research paper will trace the roles played by different groups of actors – grassroots cultural activists, ruling elites, and external cultural relations organizations – in fostering

1 The author of this paper is the former director of the Ukrainian Institute London, a UK-based charity. The Ukrainian Institute London is independent of the Ukrainian Institute mentioned repeatedly in this paper; the Ukrainian Institute is a state institution funded by the Ukrainian government.

this change.[2] While the new institutions made important steps in asserting their independence *vis-à-vis* the respective ministries to which they are attached, they have remained vulnerable to political pressures and external shocks, including the economic and societal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Culture has been central to the state's response to the threat from Russia since 2014. As Russia has continued its hybrid warfare against Ukraine, and has sought to create identity cleavages in society by promoting divisive historical and cultural narratives, Ukraine has demonstrated a high degree of resilience to this threat by pursuing a more robust identity policy through the activities of state institutions in the field of culture and identity. The policies of these institutions, together with the above-mentioned burst of cultural output and grassroots cultural activism, have contributed to the development of a new sense of civic national identity based on shared values of trust, tolerance, open access and pluralism, and relying in part on horizontal networks.

Grassroots cultural activism in Ukraine has helped to mitigate the consequences of the ongoing conflict in Donbas in the east of the country. More broadly, in the context of Ukraine's nationwide process of political decentralization in the past few years, such activism has supported the transfer of decision-making powers from the centre to the periphery. In many cases, cultural initiatives have provided the initial impetus for efforts to strengthen local communities across Ukraine's regions – giving them a voice, shaping the agenda for the regeneration of industrialized areas (especially in Donbas), and building partnerships with local government and business. In the war-torn Donbas region, cultural activism has helped people to overcome conflict-related trauma and has strengthened community resilience.

Rather than being viewed as a drain on state finances, culture is increasingly considered an important contributor to the national economy.

This flourishing of culture has helped to shift popular perceptions about the role and utility of culture in public life. Rather than being viewed as a drain on state finances, culture is increasingly considered an important contributor to the national economy, capable of generating profits, creating employment, and fostering innovation and social inclusion. Creative industries have become prominent in the policy discourse. However, state support to the sector remains weak.

2 The paper's findings are based on more than 30 interviews recorded in Kyiv in February 2020, and online interviews in March–June 2020. Interviews were conducted with, among others: government officials, directors and former officials of leading arm's-length agencies; directors of state museums; managers of regional state cultural institutions; directors and managers at Ukraine's offices of external cultural relations organizations; managers of independent cultural platforms and arts hubs; civil society activists; trainers; curators; artists; creative entrepreneurs; and experts embedded with state institutions. The research was informed by analytical reports by Ukrainian think-tanks, Western academia, Western think-tanks, UNESCO, the EU, the Goethe-Institut, the British Council, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, the Council of Europe and publications in Ukrainian and Western media.

02 Institutional reform: successes and failures

Ukraine's transformation has involved challenging its Soviet-era cultural legacy, forming new state cultural institutions, leveraging grassroots activism, and engaging with Western organizations such as the British Council and Goethe-Institut.

The slow demise of the Soviet model of cultural policies (1990s and 2000s)

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of an independent Ukraine in 1991, the country moved to a market economy system, while newly formed political-industrial groups fought for control over economic assets. In this process, culture became sidelined and expenditure on culture plummeted, resulting in the gradual deterioration of the country's cultural 'infrastructure' and a decline in popular consumption of culture. The extensive system of libraries, theatres, 'houses of culture' and the like, inherited from the Soviet era, dwindled in size. Theatre attendance declined from 17.6 million visits a year in 1990 to 6.9 million in 2013. The number of public libraries decreased from 25,600 in 1990 to 19,100 in 2012. Meanwhile, the number of film-screening venues plunged from 27,200 to 1,600 over the same period, while the number of cinema viewers fell most dramatically – from 552 million to a mere 14 million.[3] Ukraine's state spending on culture in that period lagged behind that of neighbouring Poland

3 National Institute for Strategic Studies (2014), Актуальні проблеми державної підтримки іновацій в культурній політиці [Current issues of fostering innovation in state cultural policies], https://niss.gov.ua/en/node/1561 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).

and Russia.[4] Cultural goods became inaccessible for millions of Ukrainians, especially in small towns and villages.

Despite the financial constraints, the state system of cultural management still resembled the paternalistic Soviet model, with its support for networks of state cultural institutions and so-called 'national artistic unions' for most sectors. Yet with the collapse of the Soviet system, the state's political and ideological grip over culture weakened. A number of independent cultural initiatives sprang up – the state did not interfere with these, though nor did it provide financial support. At the same time, the emerging independent cultural sector resented the lavish support which artistic unions and key state cultural institutions continued to enjoy, benefiting as they did from cosy relationships with the culture ministry (known, since 2020, as the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy).[5]

From being an instrument of communist ideology, culture was now becoming a tool for nation-building as Ukraine emerged from Russia's shadow and tried to forge its own sense of identity. Its state bodies, responsible for 'humanitarian' policies, embarked on a project to construct a new narrative of Ukrainian history and identity. However, this was widely seen as superficial and decorative: for example, it involved, among other things, the replacement of Soviet and Russian cultural figures with Ukrainian ones in the school curriculum. There was little understanding that the task at hand was much more complex: to build an integrated cultural space with well-developed shared symbolic systems communicated through shared platforms.

A number of factors hampered efforts to craft a national cultural identity, including: significant diversity between the regions, complicated by language identities and diverging regional histories; the limited appeal of a Ukrainian-centric narrative (further undermined by the state's unattractive packaging of it); an enduring loyalty to the Soviet identity among a significant share of the population (especially in the east and south of the country); the significant presence of Russian cultural products (films, books, entertainment, historical narratives, all advancing a distinct system of cultural codes) in the Ukrainian cultural space; and insufficient state funding and a lack of affirmative action in support of high-quality Ukrainian cultural output.[6]

The development of the cultural sphere in Ukraine between 1991 and the Euromaidan movement in 2013 could be characterized as a process of transition. The state was largely seen as obsolete, corrupt, out of touch and inefficient. On a positive note, it should be recorded that the state did not interfere

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4 Council of Europe (2007), *European Program for Cultural Policy Reviews – Cultural Policy in Ukraine,* Council of Europe Steering Committee for Culture, p. 27, https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680696418 (accessed 23 Oct. 2020).
5 This paper uses the terms 'culture ministry' and 'Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (MCIP)' more or less interchangeably. The nomenclature is complicated by the fact that the ministry has had different names throughout its history, including the Ministry for Culture and Arts, the Ministy for Culture and Tourism, and the Ministry for Culture, Youth and Sport. Since March 2020 it has been known as the MCIP.
6 The term (national) 'cultural product' is widely used in the Ukrainian cultural policy discourse. It is one of the key terms in Ukraine's Law on Culture and is also used by the UCF, one of whose grant funding programmes is called 'Innovative Cultural Product'. In this context 'cultural product' can be defined as goods and services produced by both commercial and non-commercial cultural actors in the fields of visual and performing arts, literature, national heritage and creative industries. See Ukraine's Law on Culture, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2778-17#Text.

with the development of an independent cultural scene or commercially viable businesses in the cultural and creative industries, nor did it exercise systemic censorship.[7]

Ukraine's independent community of artists and cultural managers grew in strength. Its members saw themselves as liberal and European, articulated their discontent with the authoritarian tendencies and censorship of the Viktor Yanukovych presidency (2010–14), and drove the development of Ukraine's arts scene so that culture intersected with social issues and politics.[8] Yet the artistic and cultural community remained fragmented, starved of funding and craving a bigger role for itself, as demonstrated by years of stalemate over Ukraine's representation at the Venice Biennale of contemporary art.[9] As one commentator put it: 'For years the two cultures – official and informal – successfully ignored each other. If there was any cultural policy before Maidan, that was it.'[10]

Financial constraints were exacerbated by the limited availability of Western donor funding during this period.[11] The gap was partially filled by Ukraine's powerful tycoons: one of them, Victor Pinchuk, established the Pinchuk Art Centre, which consistently promoted the development of contemporary art in Ukraine, supported curators and critics, and funded artistic residencies and scholarships abroad. In addition, a long-term programme to support the development of museums and contemporary artists was funded by another tycoon, Renat Akhmetov.[12]

Enablers of revolutionary change

The Euromaidan revolution of 2013–14, also known as the 'Revolution of Dignity', created the momentum for change in cultural politics. It bolstered the influence of an independent network of cultural activists and artists who could no longer be ignored by the state. A lobby group promoting reforms in cultural policies took shape in Ukraine's parliament; the views of this group were aligned with those of civil society.

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7 Sporadic incidents of arts censorship in pre-Euromaidan Ukraine were recorded, but these were neither systemic nor state-sponsored. One of the most telling examples occurred during Viktor Yanukovych's presidency, when a painting with a critical political message on display at Ukraine's main gallery, the Mystetskyi Arsenal, was painted over by the gallery's director just before the exhibition was about to be inaugurated by the president. See Maksymenko, O. (2013), 'Новітні традиції «аполітичного мистецтва»' [Novel traditions of apolitical art], Tyzhden, 31 July 2013, https://tyzhden.ua/Culture/85912 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
8 The curators' collective known as Khudrada and the Visual Culture Research Centre were the most significant examples.
9 Ukraine's representation in the Venice Biennale has for many years been an area over which the culture ministry – recently renamed the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (MCIP) – and the independent cultural community have clashed. The ministry often lacked the expertise and financial resources to fund Ukraine's pavilion, and repeatedly outsourced it to the Pinchuk Art Centre, funded by the Ukrainian tycoon Victor Pinchuk, who also provided curatorial expertise. In 2015, the artists representing Ukraine at the Biennale signed a letter of complaint to the ministry, stating that its absence from the project 'had a beneficial impact on its outcomes'. See *Ukrainska Pravda* (2015), 'Художники подякували Мінкульту за його повну відсутність на Венеційському б'єнале' [Artists thanked the Culture Ministry for its complete absence at Venice Bienale], 11 May 2015, https://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2015/05/11/193778 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
10 Botanova, K. (2016), 'Back to the Future in Ukraine. Cultural policies two years after Maidan', Eurozine, 10 March 2016, https://www.eurozine.com/back-to-the-future-in-ukraine (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
11 One of the few exceptions has been the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), part of the Open Society Foundations' international networks, funded by George Soros. The IRF has operated in Ukraine since 1990, and has funded a range of programmes to support Ukrainian civil society. It ran a programme in support of culture between 1995 and 2003.
12 The Development of Ukraine [Розвиток України] Foundation, later renamed the Renat Akhmetov Foundation, opened in 2006. Its i3 programme to support Ukrainian artists was launched in 2010. Despite the contribution of these organizations to the development of Ukraine's cultural ecosystem, they have often been seen as an extension of the PR machines of their benefactors.

Ukraine started to feature more prominently in the foreign policy of its European partners, which markedly increased their funding and unrolled numerous new cultural and educational programmes, administered by Western cultural relations organizations such as the British Council, the Goethe-Institut, the Polish Institute and others.

These three groups of actors – grassroots activists, the parliamentary lobby group and external cultural relations organizations – proved to be key in pushing reforms of Ukrainian state cultural policy.

Grassroots cultural activism

The political revolution served as a massive catalyst for artistic expression, and was also a symbolic milestone for civil society organizations advocating their right 'to be the citizen, to lay claim to power and to initiate change'.[13] A number of civic cultural initiatives sprang up: experimental artistic and curatorial projects, crowdfunded film festivals and experimental theatre working with war trauma through art, platforms to revitalize the post-industrial landscapes of Ukraine's east, groups working to preserve endangered national heritage, and various platforms for discussions on identity.

This broad movement shared similar features with a number of other civil society initiatives in Ukraine at that time. It benefited from active citizenship, a horizontal structure, broad dialogue and consensus-building, and a resourceful approach to funding (for example, initiatives often utilized grant funding from Western donors as well as domestic crowdfunding). The movement inaugurated a new understanding of culture as a tool for development and social contribution,[14] as cultural techniques were also used for non-cultural ends to contribute to social cohesion, resilience, community capacity-building, the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and urban regeneration.

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While many emerging cultural initiatives steered clear of the government, others attempted to galvanize the authorities into action. A group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[15] even resorted to staging a provocative sit-in on the premises of the culture ministry in 2014. The action evolved into a two-month, open discussion between cultural activists, practitioners

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13 Botanova, K. (2016), 'Culture and Art in Transforming Societies', in Goethe-Institut (2016), *Culture and Education Academy 2016: Encouragement and Guidance*, p. 75.
14 Matarasso, F. and Landry, C. (1999), *Balancing Act: Twenty-one Strategic Dilemmas in Cultural Policy,* Cultural Policies Research and Development Unit, Policy Note No. 4, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, p. 15.
15 The grouping named itself the Assembly of Culture.

and ministry officials – including the culture minister himself – on reform of Ukraine's cultural sector.[16] In 2014, an alliance of NGOs[17] also embarked on the design of a strategic document ('Culture 2025') for the sustainable development of culture in Ukraine. They collaborated with the ministry to formulate the strategy's key pillars. Cooperation was possible thanks to the appointment of experienced cultural managers in leading positions at the ministry, such as Olesya Ostrovska-Lyuta, appointed deputy culture minister in 2014. Eight regional strategic sessions followed, spanning nine cultural sectors and involving some 700 activists nationwide.

The document argued for a new understanding of the role of culture: that it should be treated not as a 'luxury good' but as a tool for setting the societal agenda and driving societal change, as a source of creativity and innovation, and as an integral part of the economy. A priority was the principle of open access: ensuring that all stakeholders were engaged in mapping the course for reform, and that all had equal access to policymaking and state resources. 'Culture 2025' also advocated a move away from the short-termism that plagued policymaking. It emphasized the need for long-term planning, a functional restructuring of the culture ministry, a competitive appointments procedure for leading public sector cultural jobs, and the establishment of arm's-length bodies tasked with rolling out a programme of state grant funding for arts and creative industries.[18] A number of these principles became state policy and were enshrined in law.

In this way, cultural activism and a network of civil society organizations created parallel structures to fill the gap created by an incompetent state. Active engagement by these groups defined what would become the cultural policy model for Ukraine for years to come. It was a model that was participatory and consensual rather than decided internally by civil servants; culturally diverse rather than monocultural; responsive to the needs of different groups rather than one; and informed by a perception of culture as a means of developing and bettering society rather than as a luxury.[19]

Political backing for cultural policy reform

Russia's aggression against Ukraine post-2013 and its 'weaponization' of cultural identity strengthened the political case for a revamp of cultural policy, resulting in the formation of a lobby in the Ukrainian parliament pushing a pro-reform agenda. Over time, members of this lobby achieved the promulgation of a number of key legislative initiatives, including overseeing the creation of two brand new institutions which received the status of arm's-length agencies. One was the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF), a vehicle providing state grant funding for arts and culture subordinated to the culture ministry; the other

16 Online interview with a civil society activist, April 2020.
17 The alliance was formalized in 2015 and included the following grassroots organizations: Culture 2025, RPR Culture and Congress of Cultural Activists. See Radio Svoboda (2015), 'В Україні зявився «Альянс культури» який лобіюватиме культуру в політиці' [A new 'Alliance for Culture' will lobby for culture in politics], 2 September 2015, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/27222458.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
18 Alliance of Culture (undated), Довгострокова стратегія розвитку культури в Україні до *2025* року [Long-term strategy for the development of culture in Ukraine], https://metodist.libnadvirna.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%8F-2025-20022016.pdf (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
19 Matarasso and Landry (1999), *Balancing act*, pp. 21, 33, 35.

was the Ukrainian Institute, designed to promote 'a positive image of Ukraine internationally', which was subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[20]

The 2017 legislation that established the UCF, the Law on Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, was in part the product of lobbying by Maryna Poroshenko, Ukraine's then first lady. She went on to chair the UCF's board, although her appointment provoked mixed reactions.[21] The Ukrainian Institute, meanwhile, came into existence as a result of efforts by the pro-reform part of Ukraine's diplomatic core; these efforts were led first by Andriy Deshchytsya (acting foreign minister, 2014) and then by his successor, Pavlo Klimkin (foreign minister, 2014–19), and drew on advice from foreign cultural relations organizations and similar arm's-length bodies.[22]

In 2016, Ukraine's parliament also approved a new law on the competitive selection of managers for state cultural institutions.[23] The law's introduction was a response to the demands of civil society to end decades of feudal-style management practices. It led to the appointment of a new generation of cultural managers at some institutions; however, in some cases the move was resisted or sabotaged by the old cohort of managers.[24]

The newly founded institutions initiated further legislative improvements: for example, in 2020 the UCF, the culture ministry and a parliamentary committee jointly prepared changes to Ukraine's tax and budget codes to facilitate the use of state grant funding for culture. At the time of writing, however, the changes were yet to be voted on by parliament.[25]

External cultural relations organizations

Cultural policy reform in Ukraine received powerful backing from a number of Western donors and partners. The EU proved to be the main driver of this process, coordinating its efforts with national cultural institutes such as – most prominently – the UK's British Council and Germany's Goethe-Institut. The EU's move towards an extensive programme of financial support for culture in

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20 Ukrainian Institute (undated), http://ui.org.ua/mission/en (accessed 21 Oct. 2020).
21 Maryna Poroshenko has never been an elected MP to the Ukrainian parliament, but her influence was seen as decisive in lobbying for the law on the UCF and securing significant budget funding. This testifies to the persistent power of informal political networks in Ukrainian politics. Her subsequent appointment as UCF chair was criticized by many as undemocratic and undermining the UCF's independence. Multiple interviews conducted as part of this research showed that these fears were overblown. The interviewees perceived Maryna Poroshenko's presence on the UCF board as balancing the interests of different stakeholders, and her withdrawal from the board in 2019, following the election of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, as detrimental to the UCF's stability.
22 The ministry consulted with the British Council, the Polish Institute and the American Council for International Education on this issue.
23 Ukrainian Parliament (2016), Закон України про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо запровадження контрактної форми роботи у сфері культури та конкурсної процедури призначення керівників державних та комунальних закладів культури [Law of Ukraine on changes to legislative acts regarding introduction of contract-based employment in culture and competitive hiring procedure for the positions of the state and municipal cultural organizations], https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/955-19 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
24 The directors of three state-sponsored performing arts collectives published an open letter protesting against the new law. See Avdievsky, A. T., Vantukh, M. M. and Reznikovich, M. Y. (2016), 'Авдиевский, Вантух и Резникович: новый закон о театрах приведет к катастрофическому разрушению театральной деятельности в Украине' [Avdiyevsly, Vantukh and Reznikovich: new theatre law will result in total destruction of theatre in Ukraine], https://www.rusdram.com.ua/rus/articles/126 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
25 Interview with Yulia Fediv, executive director of the UCF, October 2020.

non-member states started in 2007 with the European Agenda for Culture.[26] This was followed by the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, which included provisions for cultural cooperation between EU member states and third countries.

In 2011, the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme was launched to promote 'culture policy reform' and capacity-building among 'cultural operators' in the six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.[27] The programme was designed to run to 2015 and was worth €12 million. It contained a grant component – as this was the first time that EU grants for culture had been made available in Ukraine, the programme generated tremendous interest.[28] These developments were followed in 2015 by the establishment of the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme,[29] which had a budget of €4.3 million and served as a networking and debating platform for cultural operators in Eastern Partnership countries. The programme included further investment in capacity-building and initiatives to encourage understanding of the concept of a 'creative economy'.

In 2014, Ukraine and the EU ratified the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement, a milestone document for bilateral cooperation. One of the agreement's chapters was dedicated to culture, stating: 'The Parties shall undertake to promote cultural cooperation in order to enhance mutual understanding and foster cultural exchanges, as well as to boost the mobility of art and artists from the EU and Ukraine.'[30] The document paved the way for an ambitious programme of cultural mobility, 'Culture Bridges', which had a budget of €1.3 million for Ukraine and operated from 2017 to 2020. Implemented by the British Council,[31] the programme offered opportunities for people working in the Ukrainian cultural sector to engage with their counterparts in the EU. Demand to participate was enormous. In parallel, in 2016 Ukraine joined Creative Europe, the European Commission's framework programme for support to the cultural and audiovisual sectors.

The European Commission's commitment to people-to-people contacts and support for civil society culminated in 2019 in the most ambitious undertaking to date: the establishment of the House of Europe. This €12.2 million project involves a consortium led and funded by the EU, with the Goethe-Institut as an

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26 EUR-Lex (2007), 'Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture', *Official Journal of the European Union*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32007G1129%2801%29 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
27 EU Neighbours portal (undated), 'Eastern Partnership Culture Programme', https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/projects/eastern-partnership-culture-programme (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
28 Interview with Tetyana Shulha, sector manager, culture, Delegation of the EU to Ukraine, February 2020, Kyiv.
29 EU Neighbours portal (undated), 'EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme', https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/projects/eu-eastern-partnership-culture-and-creativity-programme?fbclid=IwAR3jmhu4mSfYCfqWY962wxxyD1q3UcOSk4kUz3S7dXdERf0LitxMB9qYPzw (accessed 21 Oct. 2020).
30 EUR-Lex (2014), 'Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States and Ukraine', *Official Journal of the European Union*, 29 May 2014, Chapter 24, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0529(01)&from=EN (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
31 The European Commission's joint communication 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations' for non-EU countries calls for a 'concerted approach' and the 'pulling together' of resources of different EU actors, including the EUNIC (EU National Institutes for Cultures) cluster, national cultural institutes and EU delegations in these countries. The British Council, as a EUNIC member, became a delivery partner for the Culture Bridges programme. See EUR-Lex (2016), 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council', *Official Journal of the European Union*, 8 June 2016, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN (accessed 21 Oct. 2020).

implementing partner.[32] Covering 'creative industries, education, health, social entrepreneurship, media, and youth', the House of Europe 'encompasses 20+ separate programme lines enabling [participants] to go for conferences, professional events, internships, and networking in the EU, or to enrol in study tours, residencies, trainings, and other forms of support'.[33] The programme is scheduled to run until 2023.

The impact of EU support has been substantial. Not only have Ukrainian cultural professionals gained experience in developing partnerships with their EU counterparts, they have learnt how to obtain grant funding and have improved project management skills.

The impact of all this EU support has been substantial. Not only have Ukrainian cultural professionals gained experience in developing partnerships with their EU counterparts, they have learnt how to obtain grant funding and have improved project management skills. A more systemic approach towards cultural management has developed among civil society actors. Above all, external support has boosted domestic capacity, as evidenced in the successful roll-out in 2018 of the UCF's own grant-funding programme, which emulated many features of its EU-funded counterparts.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, the House of Europe rolled out an emergency package for cultural organizations and individual professionals, worth €0.8 million, aimed at supporting the invention of new business models, the creation of digital projects, and the purchase of office equipment to help creative enterprises whose business activities have come under pressure as a result of COVID-19. Local experts estimate that the package could help as many as 2,000 cultural activists.[34]

Both the British Council and the Goethe-Institut have played significant roles in implementing EU-formulated policy towards Ukraine in the cultural sector. Both organizations fund extensive programmes in support of civil society, education, culture and youth, funded by their respective national governments. These programmes were scaled up after the Euromaidan movement.[35] The British Council's highest-impact programme, Active Citizens, promotes civic activism among young people across Ukraine's regions and has helped to create fertile ground for future cultural activism platforms.

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32 The consortium is 95 per cent funded by the EU, and includes the Goethe-Institut, the British Council, the Institut français and Czech Centres. Source: interview with Christian Diemer, head of programme, House of Europe, February 2020, Kyiv.
33 House of Europe (undated), 'Our strategy', https://houseofeurope.org.ua/en/our-strategy (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
34 Online interview with a civil society activist, April 2020.
35 Since 2016, the UK has provided £1 million annually in support of education and culture in Ukraine, up from £300,000 before the Euromaidan revolution. Since 2014, Germany has provided €17 million annually in support to civil society programmes in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) plus Russia. This allocation includes coverage of culture and education, and is up from €5 million in 2014. Ukraine is the biggest beneficiary of this aid. Sources: email interviews with the British Council Ukraine and the Goethe-Institut Ukraine, April–May 2020.

The Goethe-Institut's flagship programme in Ukraine, the Cultural Leadership Academy,[36] is designed to plug the gap in professional competencies among those working in the cultural sector in Ukraine's regions. Operating in partnership with what is now the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (MCIP), the Goethe-Institut has sought to strike a balance between accommodating the ministry's vision for cultural leadership in Ukraine and introducing new ideas and thinking that leverage the competencies of the German cultural experts who act as facilitators. This has involved developing and adjusting content for the unreformed institutional environment of provincial Ukraine.[37]

Seventy culture professionals from Ukraine's regions graduated from the academy in 2018–19, and 200 more are expected to graduate in 2021. A separate strand of the programme has focused on the training of trainers – again, the programme has been adjusted to the local environment.[38] In many cases the academy's graduates, many of whom come from small provincial towns, have subsequently embarked on their own projects and have secured grants from the UCF to produce cultural content – a testament to the programme's multiplier effect. However, the supply of support available through the programme remains dwarfed by demand for training in culture and the arts.[39]

A collaborative component has become central to the cultural programmes run by the British Council and Goethe-Institut: in both cases, projects have showcased British or German artists but have also promoted joint productions with domestic artists/producers or have provided training for arts professionals in Ukraine. In the British Council's case, this is a direct consequence of the UK's international aid policy, which has a mandatory development component.[40] As an example, the British Council's 'Taking the Stage' programme resulted in 13 new productions in Ukrainian theatres, with each production delivered in creative collaboration with British theatre directors.

While these organizations have been credited with contributing to capacity-building and networking opportunities in Ukraine, their work has sometimes been criticized for repeatedly engaging the same people. Research has suggested that both organizations have focused too much on catering to well-educated elites in big cities.[41] The Cultural Leadership Academy addressed this by conducting training in many Ukrainian cities, while the House of Europe announced that it would travel around the country using mobile pavilions to reach audiences in regional Ukraine.[42]

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36 Goethe-Institut Ukraine (undated), 'Cultural Leadership Academy', https://www.goethe.de/ins/ua/de/kul/sup/cva.html.
37 Online research interviews in April–May 2020 found that graduates of the Cultural Leadership Academy praised the quality of training they had received and its high added value, while professional trainers pointed to the culture ministry's controlling attitude.
38 The programme is now embedded in the House of Europe but continues to be implemented by the Goethe-Institut. See House of Europe (undated), 'Академія культурного лідера // завершено' [Cultural Leader Academy // completed], https://houseofeurope.org.ua/opportunity/24 (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).
39 Ukraine needs to train about 10,000 cultural managers to work in communities across the country, according to culture ministry estimates. Source: interview with ministry official, February 2020, London.
40 In the UK, official development assistance (ODA) is defined as promoting development.
41 Goethe-Institut and British Council (2018), *Culture in an Age of Uncertainty: The Value of Cultural Relations in Societies in Transition,* November 2018, p. 21, https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/insight-articles/culture-age-uncertainty (accessed 29 Oct 2020).
42 Research interview with Christian Diemer, head of programme, House of Europe, February 2020, Kyiv.

A number of other countries have provided funding and expertise for culture and cultural policy in Ukraine. The most systematic contribution has come from Poland: its Polish Institute set up a Malevich Award for Ukrainian artists,[43] has provided training to the culture ministry, and has engaged with signature cultural events in Ukraine. Other countries have focused on supporting specific events, such as documentary film festivals, or have promoted reforms in a particular area of cultural policy, such as libraries. Other major cultural relations players, such as the Institut français, continue to focus on showcasing their own national arts and culture, although their work in Ukraine also includes some collaborative projects with, and training of, local cultural producers.[44]

Overall, the cultural development templates promoted by Western cultural relations organizations have anchored Ukraine's cultural practitioners and activities to European practices. Implicit in this are a competition-based approach to funding, reliance on multi-stakeholder engagement, collaboration and consensus-seeking, and support for active citizenship. These principles became firmly embedded in the public discourse in Ukraine, and eventually institutionalized: the UCF strategy developed in 2018 stated that the 'UCF is an instrument created by the state for civil society with a view to shaping the common European future through culture', with 'equal access to cultural resources' among its priorities.[45]

Building new state 'infrastructure' for culture: key lessons

New state institutions for culture: strengthening agency and sustainability

The convergence of the above-mentioned factors – grassroots activism, political backing for reform, and support from Western cultural relations organizations – created a unique window of opportunity for the development of a qualitatively new state cultural architecture in Ukraine. Not only did three brand new institutions appear on the scene, in the form of the UCF, the Ukrainian Institute and the Ukrainian Book Institute, but pre-existing institutions also saw reforms. The Ukrainian State Film Agency, which had been created prior to the Revolution of Dignity, underwent major restructuring. Several state museums and art platforms, such as the Dovzhenko Centre, the Mystetskyi Arsenal, the National Art Museum of Ukraine and others, were transformed into hubs for curatorial projects and debate.

As the UCF, the Ukrainian Institute, the Ukrainian Book Institute and the Ukrainian State Film Agency became the providers of state funds for the cultural sector, they aspired to new principles of management and governance, which entailed:

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43 The award provides the winners with opportunities for artistic residencies in Poland. Research interview with Bartosz Musialowicz, director of Polish Institute in Kyiv, February 2020, Kyiv.
44 The Institut français hosts Frantsuzka Vesna [French Spring], a major annual festival of French culture in Ukraine, across up to 10 Ukrainian cities.
45 Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (2019), 'Ukrainian Cultural Foundation Strategy 2019-21', https://ucf.in.ua/storage/docs/03052019/Стратегія_ENG.pdf, 15 March 2019, pp. 4, 7 (accessed 29 Oct. 2020).

- Seeking consensus between civil society and the state;
- Establishing clear-cut and transparent rules for fund disbursement;
- Legitimizing and raising the status of sectoral expertise;
- Introducing long-term planning, strategy development and reporting;
- Promoting stakeholder engagement;
- Striving to maintain arm's-length distance from their parent ministries;
- Separating their supervisory from their executive functions; and
- Understanding the importance of communications.

The adoption of these practices was facilitated in some cases by the fact that senior managers at the new institutions came from backgrounds deeply rooted in the experience of Western donors operating in Ukraine. In the case of the UCF, this link was made explicit: Yulia Fediv, the director of Ukraine's National Bureau of Creative Europe (the EU's dedicated programme for culture and the creative sectors), was selected to lead the new institution. Her appointment followed a joint decision by the European Commission, the EU Representative Office in Ukraine and Ukraine's culture ministry to fold the bureau into the UCF in order 'to mutually reinforce the state institution and the European programme'.[46] Similarly, Volodymyr Sheiko was appointed executive director of the Ukrainian Institute after previously leading the arts department at the British Council Ukraine.

The appointment of supervisory boards and senior management at the new institutions attracted considerable public scrutiny. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursued a lengthy process in nominating and confirming the supervisory board of the Ukrainian Institute, its arm's-length agency, with the board subsequently selecting a new director in an open competition. A similar procedure was followed at other arm's-length agencies.

Managers at the new institutions demonstrated courage and political skill in navigating the minefield of political patronage, parent ministry relationships, bureaucratic and financial obstacles, and demands for transparency from civil society. The UCF was a case in point: it rolled out its operational capacity, achieving maximum impact, transparency and expert engagement, in the space of just two years. The new institution adroitly walked a fine line between adhering to its formal governance requirements and exploiting high-level political patronage to chart its own course. As a result, the UCF was able to assert its independence in setting programme priorities, distributing internal resources and establishing proper evaluation procedures, among other things.[47]

The UCF's position was bolstered by the firm legislative basis on which it operated. Whereas other institutions had been established by government decree, rendering them vulnerable to abolition on the whim of any subsequent government, the UCF's status was enshrined in a dedicated piece of legislation.[48] Moreover, as part of this legislation, the UCF for the first time secured a legal definition of state grant funding.

Independence and modern, accountable governance also brought challenges, however. The high degree of transparency under which the new institutions

46 Email interview with Yulia Fediv, executive director of the UCF, April 2020.
47 Interview with culture ministry official, February 2020, London.
48 Ukrainian Parliament (2017), Закон України ро Український культурний фонд [Law on Ukrainian Cultural Foundation], 16 July 2020, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1976-19#Text (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).

operated exposed them to intense public, expert and media scrutiny. In some instances, the UCF attracted criticism for awarding grants to projects perceived as offering insufficient impact; in addition, the quality of its newly formed expert councils was questioned in some quarters.[49] Elaborate application procedures for grant funding were seen as deterring project proposals from the regions, which lacked the cultural management competencies of the big urban centres. Some experts expressed doubts about the cultural sector's capacity to absorb the amount of grant funding available. In 2019, the UCF reported that 20 per cent of its grant funding had been returned to the state budget unused.[50]

A further problem was that various government ministries, doubtless feeling pressure to launch new institutions and show rapid progress under the new system, were often insufficiently compliant with important legal and financial requirements in respect of budgets, tax, employment and other aspects of their operations – the fact that many such regulations were outdated, and largely incompatible with cultural innovation and rapid institutional growth, added to the impediments facing the new agencies. One illustration of the challenges can be seen in the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which initially tasked the Ukrainian Institute with opening a network of branches abroad. This was despite the fact that Ukrainian legislation contained numerous constraints on activities outside Ukraine, including the hiring of staff, the disbursement of grant funding and even the issue of invoices – the latter of which would have required amendments to Ukraine's infamously rigid tax code.

Independence and modern, accountable governance also brought challenges, however. The high degree of transparency under which the new institutions operated exposed them to intense public, expert and media scrutiny.

The Ukrainian Book Institute, launched by the culture ministry in 2016, faced similar challenges as well as its own unique difficulties. Among other challenges, it had to refurbish its premises and renegotiate its legal status and renumeration packages while launching a programme of cultural activities.[51]

Moreover, as new institutions started rolling out their activities, ministries were increasingly unwilling to uphold the principle of arm's-length status. For example, although the culture ministry delegated some state programmes for book publishing and purchasing to the Ukrainian Book Institute, it fought to maintain control over how these programmes should be administered and also favoured close relationships with chosen publishers.[52] Despite this, the Ukrainian Book

49 Multiple interviews with experts, cultural managers and artists from Kyiv in February–June 2020.
50 The UCF's executive director, Yulia Fediv, attributes funding going unused to applicants' lack of maturity rather than to lack of competence. See also UCF (2020), *Annual Report 2019, Short Version*, p. 6, ucf.in.ua/storage/docs/13022020/Коротка%20версія%20звіту%202019%20eng.pdf (accessed 13 Nov. 2020).
51 Such pressures led to staff burnout. The Ukrainian Book Institute's first director, Tetyana Teren, resigned six months after taking up the position. Source: research interview with Tetyana Teren, February 2020, Kyiv.
52 Platonova, A. (2018), 'Біг на місці. Що не так з Українським Інститутом Книги?' [Running on the same spot. What's wrong with the Ukrainian Book Institute?], *Livy Bereh,* 17 July 2018, https://ukr.lb.ua/culture/2018/07/17/402990_big_mistsi_shcho_z_ukrainskim.html (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).

Institute successfully resisted these pressures. It quickly established an open and transparent tender process for commercial publishers wishing to apply for state procurement contracts, paving the way for the purchase of their books for municipal libraries across the country.

Cultural diplomacy remained a difficult area. Ukraine's diplomatic corps has yet to universally recognize the authority of the Ukrainian Institute in driving foreign cultural outreach or projects involving cooperation with foreign partners. The institute's flagship project in 2019, 'Bilateral Cultural Year Ukraine-Austria 2019', lacked a clear modus operandi for interaction between the embassy and the Ukrainian Institute.[53] It also highlighted the need for better internal communication within ministries in matters concerning their newly formed arm's-length bodies.

As mentioned, older institutions, such as the Ukrainian State Film Agency, which had existed before the Revolution of Dignity, also went through major restructuring following the change of political leadership in 2014.[54] In the Ukrainian State Film Agency's case, this resulted in greater transparency in the process for managing and assessing film funding pitches, the engagement of independent sectoral expertise, and a consensual approach to working with sectoral business associations. In 2019, the agency added another layer to its governance by setting up the Council for Cinematography, which was granted powers to decide the disbursement of state funding to film projects, allocate funding between different types of film production, and appoint expert councils.

However, a further change of political leadership in 2019, when Volodymyr Zelenskyy replaced Petro Poroshenko as Ukraine's president, demonstrated that the arm's-length status of cultural institutions remains fragile, and susceptible to political pressure. A new head was appointed to the Ukrainian State Film Agency in January 2020, but critics contend that the recruitment process was marred by procedural violations and interference from vested interests.[55] The agency imposed a temporary freeze on funding disbursements, wreaking havoc on film production companies and pushing leading museums, such as the Dovzhenko Centre, into bankruptcy. The most recent round of funding allocation for film projects has been marred by accusations of opacity and bureaucratic interference.[56]

The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the inconsistency of MCIP policies. Initially, the ministry announced dramatic cuts – of up to 75 per cent – in the budgets of leading cultural institutions, although the austerity measures were

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53 Interviews with cultural activists, Ukrainian and Austrian diplomats, April–May 2020.
54 In 2014, the Ukrainian State Film Agency's board elected Pylyp Illenko, a film director and producer, as its head. Illenko was credited with lobbying for a bigger budget for film-making and improving governance. Source: research interview with an industry activist, February 2020, Kyiv.
55 Interview with industry expert. See also Zakharchenko, S. (2020), 'Кіно і люди. Хто така Марина Кудерчук і що про її призначеняя кажуть кіношники' [Cinema and people. Who is Maryna Kuderchuk and what industry players say], *Hromadske*, 30 January 2020, https://hromadske.ua/posts/derzhkino-i-lyudi-hto-taka-marina-kuderchuk-i-sho-pro-yiyi-priznachennya-kazhut-kinoshniki (accessed 21 Oct. 2020).
56 Radio Svododa (2020),'гроші на кіно: думки експертів та Ради розділилися, кінодіячі обурені' [State funds for film-making: opinions of experts and of the Council differ, film producers are angry], 8 October 2020, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/derzhavni-hroshi-na-kino/30880820.html?fbclid=IwAR3XyOi3VbKlP5FFRynjHak7eTSvfIyXjrf69LsmQG-_wNTxpQaafQtg85k (accessed 26 Oct. 2020).

reduced following an outcry by cultural managers.[57] Subsequently, the ministry provided generous additional funding of UAH 590 million (£16.0 million)[58] to the UCF for 'institutional support' to parts of the creative sector affected by COVID-19. However, the terms and conditions attached to the disbursement of these funds proved to be a poor fit for the needs of the sector, resulting in insufficient demand for these funds.[59]

Box 1. New and reformed cultural institutions in Ukraine

Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF)

Established in 2017 following promulgation of the Law on Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, the UCF is Ukraine's biggest grant-funding body in the field of arts and culture, running a broad range of programmes. The foundation has supported a number of signature cultural events, and has awarded grants with a focus on local history, tourism promotion, the development of cultural strategiwes for regions and cities, and the consolidation of a sensibility of shared cultural space. It has also funded a number of cultural education projects, supported the institutional capacity of newly established creative enterprises, commissioned long-overdue sectoral analytical research and promoted inclusivity through the arts.

The UCF has scaled up its capacity quickly. Within two years of its formation, it had awarded funding to over 700 projects in all of Ukraine's 24 regions. In the process, the foundation drew on nearly 500 sectoral experts – from civil society, local government and academia – to evaluate funding applications. This strengthened its position as a bridge between the state and Ukraine's cultural and creative industries. The UCF also established a partially automated funding application process to minimize conflicts of interest among experts and to increase efficiency. Compared with the situation of permanent turbulence at the culture ministry, the UCF was widely seen as a beacon of stability and an essential pillar of the country's cultural ecosystem.

- Budget in 2019: UAH 572 million (£15.5 million).
- Budget in 2020: UAH 697 million (£18.9 million), reduced to UAH 400 million (£10.8 million) following COVID-19-related budget cuts.

Ukrainian Institute

The Ukrainian Institute became operational in 2017, following a decree by the Cabinet of Ministers. Created to promote 'opportunities for Ukraine to interact and cooperate with the rest of the world', the institute promotes the participation of Ukrainian artists on international platforms. It also develops the capacity of the local creative sector through international collaborations, and supports Ukrainian studies and Ukrainian language teaching worldwide. The majority of the institute's 2019 activities were linked to the 'Bilateral Cultural Year Ukraine-Austria 2019' programme, which included collaborative

57 Ukrainian Book Institute (2020), 'Звернення до Кабінету Міністрів України' [Open Letter to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine], 27 March 2020, https://book-institute.org.ua/news/zvernennya-kulturnih-instituciy-do-prem-yer-ministra (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
58 Based on an exchange rate of UAH 1:£0.027 from xe.com on 30 October 2020, https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=GBP&To=UAH (accessed 30 Oct. 2020).
59 Interview with industry expert, Kyiv, September 2020.

projects with Austrian museums and universities, arts exhibitions and festivals, and a campaign in the Austrian media.[60]

- Budget in 2019: UAH 60.4 million (£1.6 million).
- Budget in 2020: UAH 78.4 million (£2.1 million), reduced to UAH 49.5 million (£1.4 million) following COVID-19-related budget cuts.

Ukrainian Book Institute

Established in 2016, the Ukrainian Book Institute supports selected publishing projects, promotes reading, replenishes libraries, runs Ukrainian stands at international book fairs and is building a free digital library of Ukrainian literature. In early 2020, the institute launched a call for applications for translators to address an acute lack of translated Ukrainian literature. Library reform remains a major challenge, as librarians require retraining and repositories need to be digitalized.[61]

- Budget in 2020 before and after COVID-19 outbreak: UAH 151 million (£4.1 million) and UAH 100 million (£2.7 million).

Ukrainian State Film Agency

Founded in 2006, the Ukrainian State Film Agency went through a period of rapid growth starting in 2014. A new law on state support for cinematography, passed in 2016, secured budget funding equivalent to 0.2 per cent of GDP for film-making and production of TV series. Under the law, film-makers gain the opportunity to have up to 80 per cent of their production costs covered by the state.

The impact of these measures has been dramatic. Between 2014 and 2019, the agency's budget for the co-funding of film production increased by 700 per cent, from UAH 63 million to UAH 505 million. No fewer than 173 films were put on the market over the same period – an increase of several multiples from previous years. The share of made-in-Ukraine films shown in the country's cinemas increased sharply over the same period, from 1.7 per cent of all films shown to 8 per cent.[62] A number of Ukrainian films received prizes at international film festivals. The Ukrainian State Film Agency also supported domestic film festivals, industry participation in international film markets, promotion and distribution – all of which contributed to the creation of a dynamic and fully functioning national film-making industry.

However, as mentioned, the sector suffered a reversal of fortunes in 2020 following the appointment of a new head of the agency. The last round of funds disbursement was seen as lacking transparency, and undermined trust between the agency and industry players.

- Budget in 2020 before and after the COVID-19 outbreak: UAH 750 million (£20.3 million) and UAH 450 million (£12.2 million).

Note: All exchange rate conversions in this box are based on a rate of UAH 1:£0.027 from xe.com on 30 October 2020, https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=GBP&To=UAH (accessed 30 Oct. 2020).

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60 The top five countries in terms of the focus of the Ukrainian Institute's activities were Austria, Poland, Ukraine, France and Germany. See Ukrainian Institute (2020), *Український Інститут. Річний Звіт 2019* [Ukrainian Institute. Annual Report 2019], https://ui.org.ua/annual-report-2019?fbclid=IwAR1zXQ7vqm64SHzqpIb8i69_hq74zAPcvbBtDYOy6UcbmnwxWV0jfSA9YeQ (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
61 Interview with Oleksandra Koval, director of Ukrainian Book Institute, *Livy Bereh* (2020), 'Упродовж багатьох років в Україні була повністю проігнорована тема читання' [For years the issue of reading in Ukraine has been ignored], 3 March 2020, https://lb.ua/culture/2020/03/03/451564_oleksandra_koval_vprodovzh.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
62 Video report by Pylyp Illenko, head of the Ukrainian State Film Agency in 2014–19, 20 August 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=214&v=uMxtkOlcHRY&feature=emb_logo (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Unfinished reform: Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Information Policy

As new cultural institutions burst on to the scene with new standards of governance and management, their parent organization – Ukraine's culture ministry – proved to be more resistant to change, demonstrating that building new institutions from scratch can be easier than reforming old structures. The ministry – which has changed names several times over the years and is currently known as the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy (MCIP) – preserved a number of obsolete Soviet-era practices, such as support for officially sanctioned artistic unions. It also failed to provide incentives for government-funded cultural institutions to improve their performance.

As new cultural institutions burst on to the scene with new standards of governance and management, their parent organization – Ukraine's culture ministry – proved to be more resistant to change.

Added to this were problems associated with the opaque and corrupt practices of the post-Soviet era, as vested interests gained control of lucrative activities that fell within the ministry's portfolio – such as securing permits to run construction projects in conservation areas, or to sell or demolish listed buildings nominally protected as national heritage sites.[63] The ministry was locked in an endless cycle of micromanagement, and lacked the strategic vision and analytical capacity to formulate evidence-based policy. The ministry's staff spent only 9 per cent of its time on policy development.[64] Like the rest of the Ukrainian government machine, the ministry suffered from political turbulence – most recently, in early 2020 when it became the MCIP, the ministry was the subject of a botched restructuring involving the merger of its culture, media and sport functions with a media regulation role, to resemble the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.[65]

A 2017 audit, commissioned by the EU, observed that 'the Ministry should shift from a command-and-control management system of cultural institutions to a more policy-based approach', 'build monitoring and evidence-based policy-making capacity', and 're-orient towards better engagement and wider communications'.[66]

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63 Culture & Creativity (2017), 'Доповідь Про Розвиток Сектору Культурної Спадщини В Україні' [Report on the progress of the national heritage sector], Culture and Creativity Programme, p. 12, https://www.culturepartnership.eu/upload/editor/2017/Subsector_report_Ua_ukrainian_Fin.pdf (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
64 Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (2019), 'Виконання програми уряду та подальші заплановані дії' [Implementation of the government programme and further plans], internal government document.
65 The idea was supported by Ukraine's previous culture minister, Volodymyr Borodyansky, and later abandoned following his resignation in early 2020. The new minister, Olexandr Tkachenko, was appointed in June 2020. The ministry's mandate currently includes culture and media.
66 Kern, P. and Vorobei, V. (2017), *Functional Review of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine*, KEA European Affairs, PPV Knowledge Networks, Culture & Creativity Programme, EU-Eastern Partnership, p. 9.

Responding to this advice and pressure from civil society, the ministry moved to separate policymaking from implementation in order to minimize conflicts of interest and corruption. A decision was taken to form a number of separate agencies, each of which was tasked with a specific area of responsibility. However, by early 2020 only one such agency, the State Agency for Arts and Arts Education, had become operational (its managers were appointed through open competition).[67]

An action plan created by the Cabinet of Ministers, approved in late 2019, for the first time included performance indicators for the ministry. However, the plan did not provide specifics on how these targets should be achieved.[68] The plan contained no reference to the internal restructuring of the ministry, nor to the role of the new agencies in attaining the performance indicators. These discrepancies revealed a lack of coordination between branches of the state machine, and the absence of a unified plan.

In short, although the ministry has initiated restructuring and facilitated the work of its arm's-length agencies, a number of its policy areas remain unreformed. Among them are museums and national heritage. Only 7 per cent of Ukraine's 130,000 national heritage sites are included in the national registry,[69] while local governments have no qualified personnel to manage these assets. No legislation exists offering tax incentives for cultural investments. The situation is aggravated by the domination of vested interests in this policy area, as conservation areas or historic buildings are often exploited for commercial gain. State museums remain crippled by limited finances, red tape and a lack of incentives from the state to improve their efficiency.

Completion of the ministry's restructuring remains an important task, necessary if the MCIP is to be insulated from political storms and potential policy rollbacks. It is essential that arts and culture funding is maintained or increased, so that policy momentum can be maintained.[70] However, this is a challenge in the context of the economic difficulties Ukraine faces as a result of COVID-19, and given persisting (if diminishing) societal attitudes towards expenditure on culture, still considered a luxury to be sacrificed in times of financial hardship.[71]

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67 Ukrinform (2020), 'Кабмін призначив голів Держкіно, Держспорту та ще двох відомств' [Cabinet of Ministers appointed head of State Film Agency, head of port and two more agencies], 19 February 2020, https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/2879655-kabmin-priznaciv-goliv-derzkino-derzsportu-ta-se-dvoh-vidomstv.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
68 Government of Ukraine (2019), 'Action Programme for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine', p. 26. This internal government document contains a performance indicator: 'twice as many people attend cultural events'.
69 National Institute for Strategic Studies (2019), 'Інституційні і правові проблеми збереження культурної спадщини' [Institutional and legal issues of national heritage conservation], 19 April 2019, https://niss.gov.ua/doslidzhennya/gumanitarniy-rozvitok/instituciyni-ta-pravovi-problemi-zberezhennya-kulturnoi (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
70 Neighbouring Poland spends considerably more on culture than Ukraine: in 2018 such spending accounted for 1.9 per cent of the state budget, compared with 0.6 per cent in Ukraine in 2019. Poland's GDP is four times higher than that of Ukraine, however, and local communities also have access to EU funds. Sources: Ministry of Finance (2020), 'Видатки \держбюджету України в 2019 р.' [Expenditures of the state budget of Ukraine in 2019], 25 October 2020, https://index.minfin.com.ua/ua/finance/budget/gov/expense/2019 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020); Eurostat (2020), 'Culture statistics – government expenditure on culture', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture_statistics_-_government_expenditure_on_culture (accessed 4 November 2020).
71 The survey showed that 31 per cent of Ukrainians saw culture as the most appropriate area in which COVID-19-related cuts in government spending should be made, compared with 0.8 per cent who supported cuts to pensions and 9 per cent who believed cuts should be made to state subsidies for mining and other heavy industries. See Hale, H., Kulyk, V., Onuch, O. and Sasse, G. (2020), *Identity and Borders in Flux (IBIF): The Case of Ukraine*, IBIF Project Report: National Representative Survey of the Ukrainian Population April 2020, https://ibifukraine.com/2020/04/30/april-2020-survey (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Despite significant gaps in certain cultural policy areas, the MCIP – under whatever name – nonetheless has made a significant contribution to the decentralization of cultural policy and to reform of the state cultural infrastructure network.

Box 2. Case study – the Dovzhenko Centre

The Dovzhenko Centre[72] is a Kyiv-based state cultural institution, named after Ukraine's legendary filmmaker of the 1920s, Olexandr Dovzhenko. From being a mere film-copying facility in Soviet days, the centre has reinvented itself as a versatile cultural hub: it now hosts a depository of 6,000 film tapes, a museum of cinema, a film research centre, a publishing house, a platform for public events and performances, and a shop and café. The centre has reignited interest in Ukraine's golden era of film from 1920 to 1930, and has reaffirmed its own agency in showcasing national heritage.

Among other initiatives, the centre has digitally remastered old silent films and added specially commissioned contemporary soundtracks to them, often in collaboration with European composers. It has held 'Silent Nights' outdoor screenings of these films – the events have doubled up as rave parties, and have become a feature of the cultural scene in Kyiv and Odesa. This remarkable turnaround has occurred thanks to the vision and skills of the team running the initiative, led by its director, Ivan Kozlenko, and reflects a determination to extract renewed sense and value from dusty reels of old film.[73]

Unlike other state museums in Ukraine, the Dovzhenko Centre was fortunate to acquire a solid initial financial base for its activities by renting out premises that it owns, but it soon also began to generate funds from culture-related activities. Although the centre is obliged, for now, to return most of what it earns to the state, it has lobbied for legislation that would allow state cultural bodies to reinvest profits in further development.

Despite its high cultural added value, the centre went bankrupt after funding from the Ukrainian State Film Agency stopped in early 2020. This caused an outcry in Ukraine's creative community: the International Federation of Film Archives, of which the Dovzhenko Centre is a member, published a letter of support calling on the Ukrainian authorities to reinstate its funding.[74] The story illustrated the fragility of Ukraine's innovative cultural institutions in the face of political uncertainty.

72 Dovzhenko Centre (undated), 'About the Centre', http://www.dovzhenkocentre.org/eng/about/ (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
73 Interview with Ivan Kozlenko, director of Dovzhenko Centre, February 2020, Kyiv.
74 The letter, addressed to Ukraine's prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, stated: 'The lack of state funding of this important Eastern European film archive directly threatens the country's unique cultural heritage,' 2 June 2020. See https://www.facebook.com/dovzhenko.centre/photos/pcb.3277932335627993/3277915462296347/?type=3&theater (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

03
The transformative power of culture in Ukraine

Culture has been a key part of the response to Russian aggression. However, culture sector reform remains a work in progress, with Ukraine's uneven distribution of cultural resources presenting a particular challenge.

Unprecedented levels of cultural production and cultural activism over recent years have contributed to a wider societal transformation in Ukraine in several areas. Notably, the country's shift towards a civic identity based on shared values has benefited from the efforts of its creative class to promote a pluralistic and inclusive cultural space. This cultural pluralism continues to play an important role in helping Ukraine to withstand the ongoing soft power offensive by Russia, which is actively promoting divisive historical and cultural narratives about Ukraine.

As millions of Ukrainians remain exposed to the consequences of the war in Donbas, arts and culture have proven to be important tools for restoring trust between different segments of society, healing traumas and rebuilding communities. This dynamic is consistent with the findings of research on other conflict-hit countries – a recent British Council report that draws on case studies from Syria and Rwanda argues that arts and culture can have a positive impact in fragile states.[75]

Cultural activism has also had an important, and often overlooked, impact on the state's nationwide project of political decentralization. The spread of cultural activity to peripheral regions of Ukraine, and into war-affected areas and beyond,

75 Baily, A. (2019), *The art of peace: The value of culture in post-conflict recovery*, British Council, https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/insight-articles/art-of-peace (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

has accompanied (and facilitated) the granting of more powers to devolved communities, thereby strengthening the social fabric and social cohesion and helping to shape the local development agenda.

Culture is becoming an increasingly important factor in economic development. The country's growing creative industries sector not only creates employment and contributes to GDP, but often drives innovation and blends profitmaking with social entrepreneurship and education initiatives. This further strengthens social capital and resilience.

Consolidating the identity shift

The events of 2013–14 served as a powerful trigger for a gradual shift in Ukraine's national identity away from the dualistic cultural status quo that had hitherto prevailed. An extensive scholarly literature describes the split identity, or 'two Ukraines'[76] within one country, that was a feature of society before the 2014 revolution (and that, to a reduced extent, exists today). Although its nuances are often missed in media commentary, this identity clash can broadly be characterized as a contest between European and Eurasian modes of development, and in effect between anti-Soviet and neo-Soviet sensibilities. It reflected the juxtaposition of a distinctive Ukrainian historical and cultural narrative with an 'eastern Slavic' identity associated with the Russia-centric idea of 'brotherhood'. In Ukraine's post-Soviet history, this dichotomy came to be reduced to a West vs East cliché, instrumentalized for political ends.

There has been a growing societal consensus around making liberal democratic values and horizontal networks rather than vertical hierarchy the building blocks of a new political nation.

After the Euromaidan revolution, a new trend began to emerge. The discourse increasingly emphasized a values-based identity, shared by diverse groups across the country regardless of their ethnic origin, linguistic preferences or cultural loyalty. There has since been a growing societal consensus around making liberal democratic values – respect for the rule of law, individual rights, etc. – and horizontal networks rather than vertical hierarchy the building blocks of a new political nation.[77] Inevitably, this identity choice has slowly strengthened Ukraine's Western orientation and signified a drift away from its eastern Slavic identity.

Russian aggression has been one motivating factor, prompting a growing number of Ukrainians to support the national cultural identity project. By 2017, some 77 per cent of Ukrainians from the predominantly Russian-speaking east and

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76 Mykola Ryabchuk, a leading scholar on Ukrainian identity, introduced the concept of 'two Ukraines'. See Pen Ukraine (2019), '"Two Ukraines" reconsidered', 22 February 2019, https://pen.org.ua/en/publications/pereprochytannya-dvoh-ukrayin (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
77 Zaxid.Net (2011), 'Проблем з ідентичністю в Україні немає – Ярослав Грицак' [We don't have an identity issue – Yaroslav Hrytsak], 12 February 2011, https://zaxid.net/problem_z_identichnistyu_v_ukrayini_nemaye__yaroslav_gritsak_n1123092 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

south identified themselves as Ukrainian by nationality, compared with 66 per cent in 2012.[78] The share of the population expressing loyalty to the Ukrainian language in these regions increased from 23 per cent to 39 per cent in the same period. Intellectuals from these regions embarked on a radical rethink of their personal identities and the identities of the regions they represented.[79]

These two features – Russia's external aggression and Ukraine's domestic identity shift – sparked a moment of intense creativity, manifest in a flowering of the arts and public debate, including the prolific production of new literary works, theatre productions, films, curatorial visual work, music and large-scale cultural events. In turn, these developments stimulated an appetite for cultural consumption previously unseen in Ukraine.

Cultural output and policy over this period also focused on reappropriating Ukraine's forgotten cultural heritage, such as its rich interwar avant garde theatre and film.[80] The trend was informed by a post-colonial drive to shake off the discourse of Russian cultural superiority, and to recast this heritage as part of the European cultural movement. In parallel, efforts were made to deepen appreciation of the role of other cultures and languages in the mosaic of Ukraine's cultural identity, such as Russophone literature, and Ukrainian Jewish and Crimean Tatar histories and cultures.

This outpouring of creativity would not have been possible without the systemic efforts of state institutions. All of the new cultural institutions – as well as some other institutions with a longer history, such as the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory – contributed to it, but the toolkits they utilized for the identity-building project varied significantly.

The new state cultural institutions that had emerged after the Euromaidan movement adopted an inclusive approach towards articulating the new civic identity. The UCF – as mentioned, the main grant-giving body for arts and culture – declared its support for an 'innovative cultural product', 'cultural diversity' and 'intercultural dialogue',[81] rather than taking a prescriptive line favouring any particular ideology or ethnic group.[82] UCF-funded projects worked towards consolidating Ukraine's civic national identity by focusing on local histories, developing the networks and capacity of cultural workers across all regions, supporting projects of national significance, and boosting a sense of a shared cultural space, such as through the Biennale of Young Art, the Lviv Book Forum, the Gogolfest theatre festival and others.

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78 Kulyk, V. (2018), 'Shedding Russianness, recasting Ukrainianness: the post-Euromaidan dynamics of ethnonational identifications in Ukraine', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Volume 34, Issue 2–3, p. 126.
79 Russophone writers Vladimir Rafeyenko, from Donetsk, and Boris Khersonsky, from Odesa, spoke publicly about adopting Ukrainian identity and language.
80 The Dovzhenko Centre hosted an exhibition on 1920s avant garde cinema entitled 'VUFKU. Lost and Found', http://www.dovzhenkocentre.org/project/10 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020). The Mystetskyi Arsenal hosted an exhibition dedicated to the legacy of Les Kurbas, the avant garde theatre director of the 1930s, along with the premiere of the opera 'Gas', based on Kurbas's original production. See Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (undated), '«Опера-антиутопія GAZ»' ["Opera-anti-utopia GAZ"], https://ucf.in.ua/archive/5eeb58a4b0ed3a3eb6492f13 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
81 Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (2019), *Culture and Creativity for Understanding and Development. The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation Strategy, 2019-2021*, p. 4, https://ucf.in.ua/storage/docs/03052019/%D0%A1%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%8F_ENG.pdf (accessed 5 Nov. 2020).
82 However, research interviews exposed criticism of the UCF for allegedly limiting opportunities for international partnerships on its projects by soliciting applications in Ukrainian only.

The Ukrainian Institute, responsible for the promotion of Ukrainian culture abroad, stressed in its strategy that it understood Ukraine through 'inclusivity', and 'as a multinational community and a multitude of identities'.[83] It indicated that, similar to its counterparts in Europe and North America, it is moving away from a traditional understanding of 'soft power' and towards international cultural relations, predicated on cooperation and co-production.

These approaches were deeply anchored in European cultural management principles: open access, inclusivity, transparency and partnership-building. The institutions further strengthened civic identity-building by promoting this approach more widely among the country's creative classes, reinforced with a pro-European orientation.

The discourse of inclusive identity in Ukraine broadened to include disadvantaged groups: women, the LGBTIQ+ community and people with disabilities. In 2019, the UCF launched its own dedicated programme for inclusion through arts,[84] and adapted digital museum content for disabled people.[85] Western donors played a significant role in promoting public awareness of LGBTIQ+ issues,[86] although these topics remained outside the scope of activities supported by the state cultural institutions.

In contrast to these approaches was a set of more prescriptive and rigidly enforced post-Euromaidan measures aimed at 'securitizing'[87] Ukraine's identity in response to Russia's attacks on it.[88] This was a calculated response to Russia's systematic and long-standing promotion of themes and narratives denying Ukraine's cultural distinctiveness. Russia had used proxy groups in Ukraine,[89] including the media, the Russian Orthodox Church and public diplomacy organizations such as Rossotrudnichestvo, to disseminate these narratives. The prevalence of Russian cultural products in Ukraine was also an important factor: films and books promoting Russian worldviews, and Moscow-aligned narratives on everything from the Second World War to Russia's imperial history, had all enjoyed unfettered access to the Ukrainian market under President Yanukovych. These tools and approaches had all aimed to support an eastern Slavic identity of brotherhood, wrapped into the concept of 'Russkiy Mir' ('Russian world'), and based on shared linguistic, cultural and religious loyalty and history.

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83 Ukrainian Institute (2020), *Stratehiya Ukrayinskoho Instytutu* [Ukrainian Institute Strategy], May 2020, p. 24, https://ui.org.ua/strategy2020-2024 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
84 The programme was developed with the assistance of a UK consultant within the partnership between the UCF and the British Council. See Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (undated), 'Інклюзивне мистецтво' [Inclusive Art], https://ucf.in.ua/programs/20/lots (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
85 Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (2020), 'Справжня інклюзія: not wrong, just different' [True inclusion: not wrong, just different], 30 April 2020, https://uaculture.org/texts/spravzhnya-inklyuziya-not-wrong-just-different (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
86 A range of Western donors support Kyiv Pride, the key annual event of Ukraine's LGBTIQ+ community. See Kyiv Pride (undated), 'Партнери' [partners], https://kyivpride.org/nashi-partneri (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
87 This paper understands the term 'securitization' within the framework developed by the Copenhagen school of security studies as a discursive process of framing a particular issue as an existential threat to the referent object's survival, and therefore requiring extraordinarity measures to neutralize the threat. Gaufman, Y. (2016), 'Політичні і правові аспекти образу ворога' [Political and legal aspects of framing an enemy], 'Filosofiya prava i zahal'na teoriya prava', Issue 1–2, p. 76.
88 Woolley, U. (2020), 'Ukrainian De-Communisation: A Political and a Policy Response to Russian Securitisation of Identity', PhD candidate thesis, UCL, 2020, p. 11.
89 Lutsevych, O. (2016), *Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 4, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2016/04/agents-russian-world-proxy-groups-contested-neighbourhood (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Following Russia's military interventions against Ukraine in 2014, the Ukrainian authorities responded by banning a range of Russian TV channels, TV series, books and more.[90] To counter the deluge of Russian material, Ukraine made concerted efforts to boost the production of its own patriotic films, with dedicated funding approved and disbursed by the Ukrainian State Film Agency. To be eligible for funding, films had to 'develop national consciousness' and 'patriotic sentiments'.[91] A policy of radio production quotas – with a mandatory proportion of programming and songs in Ukrainian – limited Russia-produced content and encouraged the production of music in the Ukrainian language.[92]

Ukrainian artists and intellectuals challenged Russia-backed historical narratives about Ukrainian identity as a subset of the 'Russian world'.

This cultural counteroffensive against Russia was expanded in 2015, when the state body responsible for formulating policies of remembrance, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, drafted and moved to implement a set of 'de-communization laws' and monitor adherence to them. The laws, which were approved by the Rada, were designed to prompt a nationwide re-evaluation of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes and expose the 'inhuman and anti-democratic nature' of such regimes – it was noted that the process acquired 'a new urgency as neo-Soviet Russian policies of aggression infringed on the very existence of independent Ukraine'.[93] The new laws mandated the opening of all archives, the removal of Soviet-related place names, symbols and monuments from public spaces, and the promotion of a new discourse of national history with an emphasis on heroism and the struggle for liberation.

Although the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory was not a new institution, having been set up in 2006 by the then president, Viktor Yushchenko, its role was strengthened after the Euromaidan revolution when it was granted executive powers to enforce the official line on national memory. Unlike other state institutions in the field of identity and culture, the institute had a single-tier executive structure (with no supervisory board) and reported directly to the Cabinet of Ministers.

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90 Zerkalo Nedeli (2016), 'В Україні вже заборонили 73 російські телеканали' [73 Russian TV channels have already been banned in Ukraine], 7 September 2016, https://zn.ua/ukr/UKRAINE/v-ukrayini-vzhe-zaboronili-73-rosiyski-telekanali-218142_.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
91 Sixty-five film projects were funded as part of the patriotic film programme in 2018–19. Ukrainian State Film Agency (2018), '65 кінопроектів патріотичного спрямування отримають державну фінансову підтримку' [65 cinema projects of patriotic orientation received state support], 5 September 2018, http://mincult.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=245410205&cat_id=244913751 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020). While some of them received awards at international film festivals (such as 'Homeward', by Nariman Aliyev, which received a special prize at the Cannes Film Festival), many proved to be flops.
92 Radio Svoboda (2020), 'Від Джамали до Мотанки: як мовні квоти на радіо вплинули на українську музику' [From Jamala to Motanka: how language quotas on the radio impacted Ukrainian music], 20 February 2020, https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/jak-kvoty-na-radio-vplynuly-na-ukrainsku-muzyku/30430947.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
93 Kulyk, V. (2015), 'On Shoddy Laws and Insensitive Critics', Krytyka, May 2015, https://krytyka.com/en/solutions/opinions/shoddy-laws-and-insensitive-critics (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

De-communization policies received a very mixed reception. Many viewed these as polarizing the public discourse and limiting freedom of expression.[94] But the policies also enabled wide access to archival materials and were an integral part of a wider societal effort to reappraise Ukraine's history during the Soviet period. Ukrainian artists and intellectuals challenged Russia-backed historical narratives about Ukrainian identity as a subset of the 'Russian world'. They also increasingly engaged in more nuanced treatment of their country's own history, willing to explore some of its darker chapters, such as collaboration with the Nazis during the Second World War or Ukraine's participation in the Soviet project.

A contrasting consequence of the new laws was the inspiration of a wave of grassroots cultural initiatives to preserve and study Soviet monumental art. Such art had came under attack as a result of the introduction of a ban on public displays of totalitarianism, including Soviet symbols.[95] The Ukrainian Institute further highlighted the importance of this layer of Ukraine's cultural history during the 'Bilateral Cultural Year Ukraine-Austria 2019': images of Ukraine's Soviet mosaics were woven into an animated show, projected on to the walls of Vienna's MuseumsQuartier.[96]

While the securitization of identity was an explicit feature of Petro Poroshenko's presidency (2014–19), his successor, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has adopted a less demonstrative approach to the identity debate: his public pronouncements have consisted of generalized appeals for national unity, eschewing specific allegiance to language or national heroes.[97] Critics have argued that, by failing to articulate which values this unity should be based upon,[98] Zelenskyy's rhetoric is slowing the consolidation of Ukraine's civic identity. Moreover, his focus on popular entertainment, which has become a trademark of public holiday celebrations under his presidency, is very much at odds with the understanding of culture as a form of activism, and as a transformative and democratizing force, that became widespread in post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

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94 A number of Ukrainian and Western scholars signed an open letter: Marples, D. (2015), 'Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. the So-Called "Anti-Communist Law"', April 2015, https://krytyka.com/en/articles/open-letter-scholars-and-experts-ukraine-re-so-called-anti-communist-law (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
95 Many pieces of Soviet monumental art in urban centres were defaced as a result of unlawful activities by real estate developers. However, in some instances, managers of public buildings instigated removal of the pieces, referring to the new law. See the case of Ukraine House in Kyiv: Balashova, O. (2016), 'Як з «Українського Дому» знімали шкіру. Невиліковна хвороба декомунізації' [How Ukrainian House got skinned. The incurable disease of de-communication], *Ukrainska Pravda,* 19 August 2016, https://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2016/08/19/216764 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
96 Ukrainian Institute (undated), 'Українська ніч' [Ukrainian Night], http://ui.org.ua/ukrainiannight (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
97 President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 2019 Christmas address to the nation included a populist appeal to national unity: 'No matter who is the street named after. It is more important that it has been properly paved and lit.' See Karmodi, O. (2020), 'На голову выше Путина. Россияне смотрят обращение Зеленского' [A cut above Putin. Russians watch Zelenskyy's address], Radio Svoboda, 6 January 2020, https://www.svoboda.org/a/30361391.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
98 Zbruc (2020), "Етика байдужості': Зеленського критикують за новорічну промову' ['Ethics of indifference': Zelenskyy's under fire for his New Year's address], 2 January 2020, https://zbruc.eu/node/94624 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Culture in conflict

Russia skilfully manipulated identity and history narratives in fomenting unrest in Donbas in 2014. The subsequent war split the Donetsk and Luhansk regions into areas controlled, respectively, by Russia-backed militants and the Ukrainian government. On the Ukrainian side, a broad move began to shake off the propaganda tropes deployed in regard to the region, and to reappraise the region's identity and history. Cultural activism took centre stage in this process.

A number of previously little-known intellectuals from Donbas, who had had to flee the region because of the conflict, led this nationwide discussion. The themes of war trauma, displacement, and local and family histories became prominent in many artworks. These themes fed into synthetic projects, combining performances, citizen engagement and initiatives to overcome traumas. One such project, the Theatre of Displaced People,[99] involves a touring theatre production company in which the actors themselves are internally displaced persons reflecting on their traumatic war experiences (such as being in captivity or surviving shelling). The group is run by an international team of theatre directors and assisted by a psychologist, who helps the actors work with their trauma and gain empowerment through production and community-building.

Numerous platforms for discussing and documenting local histories and building them into the national narrative also emerged.[100] Bleak industrial cities in the parts of war-torn Donetsk and Luhansk that had stayed under Ukrainian government control – notably Severodonetsk, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, Slavyansk, Pokrovsk and Dobropillya – suddenly found themselves the focus of a surge of cultural activism as local volunteers, often refugees from the war zone, set up platforms combining arts with civic activism (the latter focusing on regeneration, sustainable development, overcoming trauma and fighting propaganda).[101]

Cultural exchanges between Ukraine's regions have become another feature of the cultural landscape in recent years. Volunteers have driven this movement, showcasing western Ukrainian culture in the east of Ukraine and vice-versa; in the latter case, they have helped artists from Donbas to be received in Lviv.[102] These region-to-region contacts have helped to promote a sense of shared civic and cultural identity, as activists have worked to narrow geographical cleavages in social and political attitudes.

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99 Theatre.Love (undated), 'Театр переселенця' [Migrant Theatre], https://theatre.love/theatres/teatr-pereselencya (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
100 A number of grassroots cultural platforms have made cultural and anthropological studies the focus of their activities. The 'Metamisto Skhid' (part of 'Kod Mista') initiative, the Donbas studies at Izolyatsiya, and research at the Lviv Centre of Urban History are examples.
101 Worschech, S. (2020), 'The Role of Arts in a War-ravaged Society: Ukraine's Re-invention of Culture Since Euromaidan', *EuropeNow*, 28 April 2020, https://www.europenowjournal.org/2020/04/27/the-role-of-arts-in-a-war-ravaged-society-ukraines-re-invention-of-culture-since-euromaidan (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
102 Artists from Ukraine's western regions, who had distinct links to the history of Central Europe, travelled to Kharkiv in the east. Conversely, the arts and culture of Donbas were showcased in Lviv, the cultural capital of western Ukraine. See Sahaidak, O. (2018), 'Перш ніж руйнувати стереотипи, треба переконатися, що вони є' [Before ruining stereotypes, make sure they exist], *Livy Bereh,* 15 February 2018, https://lb.ua/culture/2018/02/15/390237_olga_sagaydak_persh_nizh_ruynuvati.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

The effects of this process have been underlined by events in the major urban centres of Lviv in the west and Kharkiv in the east.[103] In both cities, there has been a reconstruction of complex local identities, as new cultural spaces have opened up and as cultural legacies have been re-evaluated. In the case of Kharkiv, with its proximity to the Russian border and the war zone in Donbas, these discussions have had additional resonance in strengthening the pro-Ukrainian identity of the city and its resilience to Russian propaganda.[104]

In Odesa, a city in the south, this battle of narratives manifested itself in a stand-off between the pro-Russian lobby in the local government and the new, pro-Ukrainian director of a major museum. Olexander Roitburd, the director of the Odesa Fine Arts Museum, transformed the museum into a prominent space for exhibitions and debate, weaving its offering into the national cultural context and creating a viable alternative to Russia's traditionally strong cultural grip over the city. However, Roitburd's clash with the local authorities ultimately led to his being ousted as museum director.[105]

Box 3. Case studies – culture and conflict

Mariupol: a cultural awakening

The city of Mariupol, a heavily industrialized and polluted port on the Sea of Azov with a population of 400,000, has became a cultural trendsetter for towns along the frontline of the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Prior to the conflict, the city would have seemed an unlikely location for a cultural revival: it was the site of a major steel-making plant and had a conservative culture. The war in Donbas changed that. Refugees from the war zone set up independent cultural platforms for debate and performances in the city. One of these platforms, TYU,[106] played a central role in discussions of the future vision for Mariupol, the meaning of the Soviet past and de-communization laws. Initially supported by the Azov Battalion, a Ukrainian nationalist volunteer militia stationed in the area, the platform later was the focus of confrontation with nationalist groups over TYU's LGBTIQ+ agenda[107] – a situation that reflected a separate cultural war between liberals and conservatives across Ukraine.

Despite such turbulence, the city continued to host major theatre festivals[108] and became a magnet for artists and intellectuals from across Ukraine. Audiences at the Gogolfest theatre festival were treated to a special ballet routine performed by cranes in Mariupol's

103 In Lviv a number of initiatives to revive the city's rich Jewish history were set up in partnership between the Lviv City Council and the Lviv Centre for Urban History, an independent think-tank. Kharkiv, the largest city in the east of Ukraine, saw a revival of interest in its past as a capital of Ukrainian cultural renaissance during the 1930s.
104 Kharkiv now features a growing number of cultural platforms, such as the Yermilov Centre of Contemporary Arts and Fabrica.Space. The city has a lively literary scene, boosted by Ukraine's iconic writer Serhiy Zhadan.
105 Source: *Livy Bereh* (2019), 'Перемога могильників культури. Одеська облрада vs Олександр Ройтбурд' [Grave-diggers of culture winning: Odesa regional council vs Olexander Roitburd], 4 September 2019, https://lb.ua/culture/2019/09/04/436403_pobeda_mogilshchikov_kulturi.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
106 Платформа ТЮ [TYU Plaftorm], https://www.facebook.com/tumariupol/ (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
107 Volchek, D. (2018), 'Слезы Дианы Берг и два вида украинского патриотизма' [Diana Berg tears and two types of Ukrainian patriotism], Radio Svoboda, 25 August 2018, https://www.svoboda.org/a/29450965.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
108 Gogolfest, one of Ukraine's most innovative and longest-standing theatre festivals, was held in Mariupol in 2018 and 2020.

ship-repairing yard. A specially decorated 'art train' featuring on-board intellectuals and artists travelled to Mariupol from Kyiv.[109]

The experience of Mariupol reflected a growing trend of multifunctional cultural hubs establishing themselves across Ukraine. The city launched a competition to build a cultural centre, the Port of Cultures, designed to explore local histories, link these to innovative projects and provide a visionary 'look into the future'.[110] With Mariupol's economy heavily dominated by a privately owned metallurgical plant, however, it remains to be seen if the new platform will be able to stay free of corporate influence.[111]

Izolyatsiya: kicked out of Donetsk, reinvented in Kyiv

Izolyatsiya,[112] one of Ukraine's most innovative and vocal cultural platforms, was founded in Donetsk on a former Soviet insulation materials production site (hence the name, which is also an allusion to the isolation of Ukraine's east). It was the first centre of its kind for contemporary arts in this part of Ukraine. The original centre, along with its artworks, was violently seized by militants in 2014 and now serves as a prison and interrogation centre in the separatist-controlled so-called Donetsk People's Republic.

Izolyatsiya subsequently moved to Kyiv and reinvented itself as a platform for arts and debate. Located on a former ship-repair yard in downtown Kyiv, it features exhibition and co-working spaces and workshops for artists. The centre offers residencies for artists, undertakes research,[113] and develops international partnerships and grant funding. Izolyatsiya combines its curatorial activities with political advocacy in relation to the war in Donbas. The centre is critical of what it sees as a simplistic narrative of reconciliation with the Russia-backed militants in Donbas, as promoted by some Western donors. Like many other cultural platforms in Ukraine, it is on the cutting edge of an uneasy discussion about the fragile state of Ukrainian society, as it grapples with external aggression and the growing influence of right-wing groups. Its public events debating the militarization of Ukrainian society have been disrupted by members of far-right groups.[114] In 2020, Izolyatsiya surprised Ukraine's creative community by announcing a decision to move to Soledar, an industrialized town in Donbas, to focus on the impact of culture on post-industrial revitalization.

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109 Bida, O. (2019), 'Из Киева в Мариуполь на Гогольfest поедет специльный поезд' [From Kyiv to Mariupol a special train will set off to Gogolfest], *Hromadske*, 18 April 2019, https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/iz-kieva-v-mariupol-na-gogolfest-poedet-specialnyj-art-poezd (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
110 http://en-port-of-cultures.com.
111 Romanenko, A. (2017), 'Как Метинвест влияет на городскую власть в Мариуполе. В цифрах и фактах' [How Metinvest impacts Mariupol municipal authorities. In Numbers and facts], *0629,* 8 April 2017, https://www.0629.com.ua/news/1611211/kak-metinvest-vliaet-na-gorodskuu-vlast-v-mariupole-v-cifrah-i-faktah (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
112 https://izolyatsia.org/en.
113 Donbas Studies (undated), 'Donbas Studies Summer School', https://donbasstudies.org (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
114 Izolyatsiya (2019), 'Causes of Militarization: How does the War Appear in the Minds of Ukrainians?', 31 January 2019, https://izolyatsia.org/en/project/armed_dangerous/armed_dangerous-pp-zaborona (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Is there culture outside Kyiv? The decentralization of cultural policy

Ukraine is characterized by a highly uneven distribution of cultural resources and cultural consumption. Big cities with developed creative infrastructure enjoy rich cultural offerings and absorb the lion's share of resources available for cultural projects.[115] Higher levels of education and purchasing power among residents make these cities a natural base for cultural and creative industries.

Ukraine's provinces, and its rural areas in particular, offer a stark contrast. Efforts to produce or promote culture face the challenges of crumbling infrastructure and underpaid, low-skilled staff. The situation is aggravated by low or zero levels of cultural consumption due to poverty.[116] Although Ukraine inherited a rudimentary network of cultural institutions from the Soviet times – as every village and town featured a library or community centre that provided basic cultural services[117] – this network has been in decline as local populations have aged and grown poorer, and as funding has dwindled. Today, many such institutions exist in name only.

A contributing factor has been the national project of administrative decentralization under way in recent years, in which powers have been devolved from central to municipal level. This has resulted in funding from the national budget, which previously provided a financial lifeline for provincial or rural cultural services, being cut. At the same time, Ukraine's newly formed local-level administrative communities have received no powers to shut them down, pending approval from the culture ministry.

Ukraine is characterized by a highly uneven distribution of cultural resources and cultural consumption. Big cities with developed creative infrastructure enjoy rich cultural offerings and absorb the lion's share of resources available for cultural projects.

In 2018, the culture ministry embarked on an ambitious programme to reform this vast network of cultural institutions. It commissioned an inventory of all assets, including the services provided, their effectiveness, maintenance costs and audiences. The ministry aspired to promote best practice. It proposed tailored restructuring templates for each community, including plans to close unused clubs or libraries while maintaining public access to services in higher demand.

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115 In the second quarter of 2020, more than half of all applications received by the UCF came from the city of Kyiv, the Kyiv region and the Lviv region. Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (2020), 'Звіт за другий квартал 2020' [Second quarter report, 2020], ст. 11, ucf.in.ua/storage/docs/06082020/Звіт%20за%202%20квартал%20 2020.pdf (accessed 15 Nov. 2020).
116 One-third of Ukraine's households have an income lower than the cost of living. Source: Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2019), 'Концепція формування системи забезпечення населення культурними послугами' [Reform Draft of the System of Cultural Services Provision], decree by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 23 January 2019, p. 4, https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/uploads/public/5c5/07e/3e4/5c507e3e4cb9a636612876.doc (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
117 The network includes 16,800 libraries, 17,100 community clubs and 1,280 community art centres. Ibid.

The prospects for success in this ambitious endeavour are linked to those of decentralization. The latter process has involved the formation of 'amalgamated territorial communities' (ATCs)[118] granted powers to establish models for cultural provision independently of the centre, along with responsibilities to generate funds to this end. This major administrative change has produced mixed results, however: many municipal managers have remained poorly informed about the variety of funding instruments available for culture, or about the scope for cooperation between ATCs that is now possible as a result of new decentralization laws.[119]

Despite the challenges, a number of communities, both ATCs and old-style administrative units, have succeeded in restructuring their cultural assets: scrapping decrepit village clubs; and launching multifunctional municipal cultural centres and arts, sports and leisure centres covering a wider geographic area. Leadership and the quality of human capital, rather than the type of community organization involved, have been the keys to this process. Political will, and the ability both to build broad coalitions with local stakeholders and generate funds from a variety of sources, have also been crucial.

One of Ukraine's biggest and culturally most dynamic cities, Lviv, went a step further than other municipalities in 2020 with its Focus on Culture grant programme, which administered funding worth UAH 15 million (£405,000)[120] for 20 local projects covering topics from education to urban history. The city also established the Lviv City Culture Fund, a vehicle to support culture projects via funding from a variety of sources, including municipal budgets and local business as well national bodies such as the UCF. This initiative set a precedent for other Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv.[121]

However, the low quality of human capital at the municipal level continues to be an impediment to effective use of the growing range of funding opportunities for culture that are available at national and municipal levels, as well as from Western donors.[122] Municipalities lag behind other groups in terms of the number of applications to bodies such as the UCF for state funds.[123] Demand for skills upgrades remains significant. Further coordination of efforts between national players, local players and external donors is needed to boost capacity. Initiatives such as the Cultural Leadership Academy, funded and administered by the MCIP and the Goethe-Institut, need to be scaled up further.

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118 As of July 2019, 39 per cent of Ukraine's previous local communities have been amalgamated into ATCs. The decentralization process remains unfinished. Source: Romanova, V. and Umland, A. (2019), *Ukraine's Decentralization Reforms Since 2014*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 13, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/09/ukraines-decentralization-reforms-2014 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
119 New financial instruments include grants from the Regional Development Fund, the UCF and Western donors. Source: online interview with MCIP official and a cultural activist from the Zhytomyr region, May 2020.
120 Based on an exchange rate of UAH 1:£0.027 from xe.com on 30 October 2020, https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=GBP&To=UAH (accessed 30 Oct. 2020).
121 Galinfo (2020), 'У Львові презентували проект міського фонду культури' [In Lviv, a new project for City Culture Fund unveiled], 18 July 2020, https://galinfo.com.ua/news/u_lvovi_prezentuvaly_proiekt_modeli_miskogo_fondu_kultury_347322.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
122 Funding for cultural infrastructure projects became available from the newly opened House of Europe. See House of Europe (undated), 'Infrastructure grants #2 // expired', https://houseofeurope.org.ua/en/opportunity/59 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
123 To remedy the problem, the UCF is launching a network of regional offices to disseminate information about grant funding opportunities among cultural actors in the provinces. See Ukrinform (2019), 'Український Культурний Фонд планує запустити програми для громад' [Ukrainian Cultural Foundation plans to launch community programmes], 4 June 2019, https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/2714491-ukrainskij-kulturnij-fond-planue-zapustiti-programi-dla-gromad.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

Notwithstanding isolated instances of successful cultural provision in Ukraine's regions, the great bulk of communities remain underserviced. Many Ukrainians living below the poverty line limit their cultural consumption to free products such as TV entertainment or free concerts subsidized by local politicians. The latter often provide patronage to cultural organizations in exchange for loyalty. This hampers the development of local grassroots arts scenes and cultural activism. By contrast, large urban centres in Ukraine benefit from the active involvement of civil society in local development, with civil society groups often serving as mediators between city inhabitants and authorities.

Research on grassroots initiatives in five Ukrainian cities has demonstrated that, together with educational projects, NGOs representing arts and culture constitute the biggest share of civil society activism and are important drivers of urban development.[124] If more can be done to spread the capacity-building and skills development associated with such organizations across Ukraine's provinces, it would help to balance out the power of regional political and business clans. It would also contribute to more effective efforts to formulate cultural development strategies in communities.

The untapped potential of Ukraine's creative economy

Ukraine boasts a number of sectors in which creative arts generate significant revenue and contribute to the national economy. According to UNESCO's cultural development methodology, in 2014 Ukraine's cultural and creative industries contributed 4 per cent of Ukraine's GDP. These industries generated 3.2 per cent of jobs, in sectors including film-making, broadcasting, information and communications technology, fashion, design, photography, advertising and public relations.[125]

A new approach to cultural and economic planning has taken hold in Ukraine, informed by Western expertise such as that available through the EU-funded Culture and Creativity Programme. The programme has started building a network of creative entrepreneurs, and articulating policy planning around cultural and creative industries in Eastern Partnership countries. In 2018, Ukraine's Law on Culture defined such industries as 'a type of economic activity … generating added value through artistic expression'.[126] The concept of a 'national

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124 Podnos, V. and Gryshchenko, M. (2017), 'The development of urban grass-roots initiatives' network in Kyiv, Kharkiv, L'viv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Odesa', MistoSite, 27 September 2017, https://mistosite.org.ua/en/articles/the-development-of-urban-grass-roots-initiatives-network-in-5-ukrainian-cities-kyiv-kharkiv-lviv-ivano-frankivsk-and-odesa (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

125 The contribution of Ukraine's cultural and creative industries to GDP is comparable to sectors such as mining (5.7 per cent) and construction (2.6 per cent). See Culture & Creativity EU-Eastern Partnership Programme (2017), *UNESCO Culture for Creativity Indicators. Ukraine's Analytical Brief*, March 2017, p. 7, https://www.culturepartnership.eu/upload/editor/2017/2017/CDIS%20_%20Analytical%20Brief%20_%20ENG%20(1).pdf (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

126 Parliament of Ukraine (2018), 'До внесення змін до Закону України «Про культуру» щодо визначення поняття «креативні індустрії»' [On amendments to the Law of Ukraine About Culture in regard to the definition of "creative industries"'], 19 June 2018 , https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2458-19 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

cultural product',[127] defined as the totality of 'goods and services' produced 'to cater to citizens' cultural needs', has gained traction in the national cultural policy discourse. This has been accompanied by growing consumption of Ukraine-made clothes, furniture, souvenirs, books and films, as well as by increased popular attendance at cultural events.

Experts believe that industry associations across all of Ukraine's cultural and creative sectors remain weak at coordination, and at articulating their policy demands.

Ukraine's Export Strategy for 2017–21, drafted by the Ministry of Economic Development, listed cultural and creative industries as a priority area for development. The document identified the sector's high innovative potential and its need for 'comprehensive institutional support'.[128] It was followed up by a more comprehensive analysis of the bottlenecks in the sector's production chain, as part of the government economic programme to 2030, published in late 2020. The programme also voiced the idea of discounted loans for cultural and creative industries, with intellectual property rights used as loan collateral.[129] Although a dedicated department for creative industries was set up at the culture ministry in 2016, its impact on policy formulation and the exchange of ideas has been limited to date.[130]

The dispersed nature of cultural and creative industries – and the wide scope of issues they impact, including innovation, regional development, education, and small and medium-sized enterprise development – presents a particular challenge for government institutions. As a result, there has been little synchronization of policies between ministries,[131] no follow-up on the most promising projects, and little adaptation of European experience to Ukraine's environment or promotion of international business partnerships. The tentative steps made by parliament to alleviate the tax burden on creative industries have been criticized as haphazard.[132]

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127 See Ukraine's Law on Culture, Parliament of Ukraine (2020), 'Закон України Про Культуру' [Law of Ukraine on Culture], 16 July 2020, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2778-17#Text (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
128 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2017), 'Про схвалення Експортної стратегії України ("дорожньої карти" стратегічного розвитку торгівлі) на 2017–2021 років' [On approval of the Export Strategy of Ukraine ("road map" of strategic trade development) for 2017-2021], 27 December 2017, https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-shvalennya-eksportnoyi-strategiyi-ukrayini-dorozhnoyi-karti-strategichnogo-rozvitku-torgivli-na-20172021-roki (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
129 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2020), 'Вектори економічного розвитку' ['Vectors of economic development], pp. 231–36, https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/20402477/doc-vector.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1FNao2MIlcoblTMQBD5HgzQJFqX7Ka3B5bNpekxOX6a-n0d4WW2FjkFaE.
130 A dedicated forum, Creative Ukraine, funded by the British Council and organized by the culture ministry in 2019, failed to become a platform for debate and policymaking. Source: online interview with industry expert, June 2020.
131 British Council (2020), 'Ukraine Creative Spark Policy Forum 2020: summaries of key statements', http://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/sites/default/files/ukraine_creative_spark_policy_forum_2020_-_key_statements_summary.pdf (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
132 The new law on a lower value-added tax rate of 7 per cent for creative industries was seen by experts as ineffective, as it is not applicable to privately owned creative enterprises. See post by Volodymyr Vorobey, PPV Knowledge Networks, https://www.facebook.com/vorobey/posts/10157553181037525 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

demands. Many companies do not self-identify as part of the creative industries, nor do they understand the benefits of collective action. Some sectors are poorly mapped and have no access to analytical studies to underpin potential policy.

Nevertheless, some sectors, such as film-making, have demonstrated a high degree of coordination in lobbying the state to secure better funding and a preferential operating regime.[133] In the case of film, the result has been a flowering of Ukrainian film-making and international co-productions. There have also been cases of successful public–private partnerships in Ukraine's cultural and creative industries, as the state has provided funding for flagship annual events such as the Odesa International Film Festival.[134] These developments have demonstrated the multiple societal dividends – increased budget revenues, skills transfer, community development and partnership-building – that comprehensive development of such industries can bring.

A significant number of Ukraine's creative entrepreneurs are geared towards social change and innovation. As in many other countries, Ukraine has witnessed a proliferation of 'creative hubs': synthetic spaces, both physical and virtual communities, serving as intersections between business, education, culture, civic activism, innovation promotion, skills transfer and learning.[135] Many such hubs blend cultural projects and social entrepreneurship into their activities, redevelop former industrial sites, and thus contribute to urban regeneration.[136] Like many civic initiatives in Ukraine, these are horizontal networks, skilled in sourcing funding via a variety of mechanisms and partners, including Western donors and crowdfunding tools.[137]

Cultural and creative industries in Ukraine have enjoyed sustained support from Western donors since the Euromaidan revolution, mainly through capacity-building instruments. The UK's vast expertise in this field is applied through its Creative Enterprise Ukraine programme, which offers comprehensive training for creative entrepreneurs.[138] More than 600 creative entrepreneurs have graduated from this programme, forming a community driving further change. Other

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133 Approved in parliament in 2016, the new Law in Support of Cinematography secured funding of 0.2 per cent of Ukraine's GDP for film-making and TV series production, covering 80 per cent of production costs. The change happened thanks to joint lobbying by the Ukrainian State Film Agency and an industry association, Kinokraina, which represents producers of privately owned TV networks. The gains from the increased funding were widely shared across the whole film-making industry. Detector Media (2016), 'Верховна Рада ухвалила лобійованикй Кінокраїною закон про підтримку кінематографії' [Verkhovna Rada voted the law on support for film-making, lobbied by Kinokraina], 22 September 2016, https://detector.media/rinok/article/119015/2016-09-22-verkhovna-rada-ukhvalila-lobiiovanii-kinokrainoyu-zakon-pro-derzhavnu-pidtrimku-kinematografii (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
134 Online research interview with an industry activist April 2020. Out of the festival's budget of UAH 50 million, UAH 12 million was provided by the state.
135 The cities of Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Ivano-Frankivsk have growing creative hubs scenes. Source: Farinha, C. (2017), 'Developing cultural and creative industries in Ukraine', Culture and Creativity EU-Eastern Partnership Programme, December 2017, https://www.culturepartnership.eu/upload/editor/2017/Research/171205%20Creative%20Industries%20Report%20for%20Ukraine.pdf (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
136 Promprylad Renovatsia in Ivano-Frankivsk, JamFactory in Lviv, IZone in Kyiv, I Cultural Business Hub in Dnipro.
137 Inspired by the Euromaidan movement, Ukraine's civic activists promoted crowdfunding as an important tool to support socially important projects. The NGO Garage Gang is one of Ukraine's oldest and most effective crowdfunding platforms for supporting media, creative and educational projects. See Garage Gang (undated), 'Activity', http://www.gggg.org.ua/en/activity (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
138 The programme is administered by the British Council and uses methodology developed by Nesta, the UK agency for innovation. See British Council (undated), 'Creative Enterprise Ukraine', http://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/creativeenterprise (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

examples of Western support include the Startup Kultur Forum,[139] supported by the Goethe-Institut, which was held in Kyiv in 2017 and featured training, networking and the incubation of business ideas. Support for cultural and creative industries also features in the EU's House of Europe programme.[140]

Despite significant achievements, the sector remains fragile. All key elements of the cultural and creative industries ecosystem – including the development of human capital (training), the structuring and mobilization of the creative community (i.e. networking and the formation of sectoral associations), and funding instruments – need to be strengthened and maintained. Given that Ukraine's cultural and creative industries have no direct access to EU-level funding (as current external funding comes from individual Western governments), provision of sector-specific funding in Ukraine would be beneficial.[141]

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139 Goethe-Institut Ukraine (undated), 'Фестиваль Startup Kultur' [Startup Kultur Festival], https://www.goethe.de/ins/ua/uk/kul/sup/pdn/kud/tob.html (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
140 EU Neighbours east (2019), 'Opportunity for creative industry: House of Europe in Ukraine – new EU-supported programme', 31 October 2019, https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/opportunity-creative-industry-house-europe-ukraine-new-eu-supported (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
141 At present, apart from Western donor funding, Ukraine's cultural and creative industries have access to state loans for small and medium-sized enterprises, funding from the Ukrainian StartUp Fund, UCF grants, and a dedicated programme for social entrepreneurs run by the state OshchadBank and Western NIS Enterprise Fund.

04 Conclusions and recommendations

To build on progress, the government should continue structural reform and be vigilant in supporting the independence of state cultural agencies. Foreign donors could do more to promote culture outside Kyiv and fund national heritage restoration.

In the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution, Ukraine experienced a significant revival of arts and cultural production, as well as unprecedented levels of civic engagement through culture, all of which consolidated a sense of shared identity and cultural space. Through state cultural policy interventions and the enthusiasm of its creative community, Ukraine started building a 'firewall' against Russia's coercive narratives by creating its own distinct cultural space while preserving a plurality of views and cultural diversity.

Looking to the future, it is important that the development of Ukraine's civic identity continue to be compatible with the inclusive approach of institutions such as the UCF, and that de-communization laws serve as a trigger for an open discussion about history rather than promoting a prescriptive view of the past. It appears that a number of policies aimed at limiting access to the Ukrainian market for Russian media and cultural products have proven effective, not only functioning as steps towards the securitization of identity but also encouraging the development of a distinctly Ukrainian cultural product.

Cultural activism across Ukraine's regions has proven to be a starting point for the mobilization of local communities. It has helped them to chart a path for viable development, has established a basis for further civic engagement and mature citizenship, and has strengthened democracy. It has also helped individual members of communities to overcome personal war traumas, challenge entrenched stereotypes and move towards reconciliation.

In spite of resistance and inconsistencies, the Ukrainian state has made significant progress in reforming its cultural policies. It has established a number of new institutions for culture, based on the idea of open access and stakeholder engagement. The culture ministry – rebranded as the MCIP – has taken important steps towards restructuring, but its reforms are incomplete and the danger of a rollback remains real.

Ukraine's experience has shown that reforms are possible when an alliance of civil society activists and key figures in positions of power in the creative and political elites supports change. External cultural relations organizations have been catalysts in this process, investing in human capital and opening venues for new partnerships and skills development.

Ukraine's experience has shown that reforms are possible when an alliance of civil society activists and key figures in positions of power in the creative and political elites supports change.

The EU's continuous funding and engagement of national cultural relations organizations has ensured Ukraine's gravitation towards European blueprints of cultural policy management. It has also instilled important values around inclusivity, openness, transparency, consensus-seeking and partnership-building in the Ukrainian cultural policy scene.

Although many of the changes in cultural management in Ukraine have been revolutionary, they continue to coexist with obsolete Soviet-style practices, such as state support for loyal artistic unions and corrupt exploitation of cultural heritage for personal gain.

Although Ukraine has received significant assistance from Western partners, the success or failure of cultural reform will largely be determined by domestic factors and political will. Ukraine's cultural sector has demonstrated a high degree of coordination between different groups of players – NGOs, managers of state cultural institutions, reform-minded politicians – in pushing for legislation or lobbying for funding. This coordination has also helped the sector to negotiate less severe COVID-19-related budget cuts. Despite this, state institutions for culture remain vulnerable to political interference and external shocks such as global health crises.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the government of Ukraine

The restructuring of the MCIP needs to be completed, and the new State Agency for Arts and Arts Education must reach full functionality.

It is essential that state expenditure on culture is maintained at the level established in previous years, as envisaged by the draft budget for 2021, submitted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.[142]

There should be no political interference in the work of arm's-length cultural institutions such as the Ukrainian State Film Agency. Funds should be disbursed in a timely manner. The independence of bodies providing additional checks and balances – such as the Council for Cinematography and external experts' committees – needs to be upheld.

Government ministries need to ensure that new arm's-length bodies enjoy meaningful agency in their decision-making, as stipulated in their funding documents. In the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its arm's-length agency, the Ukrainian Institute, the latter's priorities and content-selection criteria need to be better communicated among the ministry's network of diplomatic missions abroad. The institute should be allowed to reaffirm its status as Ukraine's leading state institution for cultural diplomacy.[143]

The MCIP needs to complete by 2022 its evaluation of the cultural needs of local communities across Ukraine (as envisaged in its strategy), come up with a plan for restructuring the country's basic network of state cultural institutions, and develop new uniform standards for cultural services provision.

With assistance from donors, reform of the state system of arts education needs to proceed swiftly, with cultural management skills being integrated into curriculums. The State Agency for Arts and Arts Education should take the lead in this process.

NGOs that focus on the cultural and creative industries are already actively involved in shaping the development agenda in Ukraine's cities. Both the MCIP and the Ministry of Regional Development should coordinate their efforts to develop a programme of support for such NGOs, especially in smaller towns and rural communities. This would allow for the goals of political decentralization to be aligned with those of cultural infrastructure reform, thereby empowering local communities.

The allocation of UAH 3.5 billion for the restoration of national heritage, approved at the first reading of the 2021 draft state budget, is an important milestone. The allocations of funds go hand in hand with a comprehensive heritage policy, folded

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142 The draft budget for 2021, released by the Cabinet of Ministers, envisages expenditure on culture equivalent to 0.9 per cent of GDP, compared with 0.8 per cent in 2020. The budget is due to be voted on by the Ukrainian parliament. See Centre for Economic Strategy (2020), 'Огляд проекту бюджету 2021. Перше читання' [Overview of the 2021 draft budget. First reading], October 2020, https://ces.org.ua/review-of-the-draft-budget-2021 (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).
143 Email interview with Volodymyr Sheiko, executive director of the Ukrainian Institute, May 2020.

into which are tourism, the empowerment of communities and efforts to generate opportunities for cultural and creative industries (such as through handicrafts and festivals). The Agency for National Heritage created at the end of 2019 needs to be staffed and made operational. Closer collaboration between the Ministry of Regional Development, the MCIP, local governments and civil society would help to ensure that culture and heritage development are seen as important factors in regional development. Reintegration of Donbas remains an important policy priority for the government of Ukraine. As cultural activism has proven an effective tool for post-conflict reconciliation, dealing with trauma, and reinventing and revitalizing old industrial spaces, these objectives could be included in a dedicated state grant programme to be developed and run by the state.

A number of regulations should be introduced to reduce red tape and streamline the use of state funds, including changes to the tax and labour codes. The government needs to allow state cultural institutions, such as museums, to retain their profits and reinvest them in future development. The government also needs to promote the idea of cultural investment among business. It needs to create an environment conducive to corporate sponsorship of museums, investment in regional cultural projects, and redevelopment of abandoned heritage sites.

A communications campaign is needed to combat entrenched attitudes among the public and some of the political elite. Although attitudes are gradually changing, in many cases culture continues to be regarded as a luxury good or residual budget item that is expendable in times of crisis. It is important to articulate the idea that culture creates economic growth and employment, and that culture contributes to strengthening a sense of shared identity, developing local communities, overcoming trauma and helping reconciliation.

Consistent state policy and sustained funding are needed to support media outlets with a focus on culture. The first successful steps in this direction, such as the launch of Radio Kultura,[144] a public radio station, are commendable. The creative community in Ukraine remains in a bubble, and the majority of the public is unaware of the myriad cultural products that have been developed or come on to the market in recent years. More effective promotion and awareness-raising around cultural products and activities would also prepare the ground for involving Ukrainian businesses in philanthropic support for cultural production.

Recommendations for donors

Donors should consider providing support for grassroots cultural actors outside Kyiv, as such NGOs have the potential to influence local development and regeneration agendas and strengthen social capital through culture.

The disparity between the cultural offering at the centre and on the periphery, and between the competencies of cultural managers in these respective contexts, needs to be addressed. Donors should continue expanding training opportunities for cultural managers in Ukraine's regions, where demand remains high. It is essential that a cultural component be worked into existing donor assistance

144 Ukrainian Radio (undated), 'Третій канал "Культура"' [The Third Channel "Culture"], http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/3channel_about (accessed 27 Oct. 2020).

programmes which focus on decentralization and the empowerment of local communities.[145]

As considerable funds are likely to be allocated to national heritage restoration projects next year, donors should facilitate the transfer of expertise and provide funds, in order to turn these projects into important vehicles for regional development.

Much-needed donor infrastructure grants for the refurbishment of cultural centres in Ukraine's provinces are now available through the EU-funded House of Europe programme.[146] However, fund-seekers are not required to build consensus with local stakeholders or present a long-term vision for the role of such centres in their communities. It is essential that donors make funding contingent on improvements in human capital and cultural management competencies. It is also essential that they introduce a co-funding requirement, which would encourage communities to mobilize funding from multiple sources. The volume of funding available needs to increase significantly.

Donors have invested considerable efforts and funds into strengthening the competencies of Ukraine's creative entrepreneurs. Further efforts should be made to develop these networks, so that they can become catalysts for the formation of sectoral associations and for lobbying before state authorities.

Donors should continue and expand funding opportunities for the development of content to help Ukraine strengthen its cultural agency against ever-present Russian cultural influence. This should include systemic support for established cultural events and platforms, which should promote the notion of a culturally diverse and inclusive Ukraine.

145 ULead, a multi-donor programme funded by the EU and five EU member states, is worth €102 million, and supports decentralization in Ukraine. However, culture is not part of its mandate.
146 The House of Europe in Ukraine launched infrastructure grants to this end in 2019.

About the author

Marina Pesenti is a former director of the Ukrainian Institute London (2015–20), an independent charity, where she pioneered a number of public and cultural diplomacy projects and collaborations between Ukrainian and British cultural and educational institutions. She is a regular commentator on the issues of soft power, identity and informational warfare for the British and Ukrainian media. She also writes for the Atlantic Council. Her previous analytical work focused on Ukraine's response to Russia's information warfare (Pomerantsev, P. and Pesenti, M. (2016), 'How to Stop Disinformation: Lessons from Ukraine for the Wider World', Legatum Institute) and the Ukrainian community's cultural diplomacy efforts in the UK (*Agora* journal, published by the Kennan Institute Kyiv Office, 2016). Prior to that, Marina produced and presented programmes at the BBC World Service in London and organized investment promotion conferences with Adam Smith Conferences.

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Cover image: The 2018 premiere of the opera 'Gaz' by Nova Opera, a contemporary take on the 1930s avant garde theatre production by Les Kurbas, at Mystetskyi Arsenal. Director: Virlana Tkacz.
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