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Cultural policy in Singapore: negotiating economic and socio-cultural agendas

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine the role of cultural policy in a newly industrialised economy, which is at the same time a state with a short history and only nascent beginnings in nation-building and efforts to construct a distinctive cultural identity. Using Singapore as the site of analyses, develop an understanding of the intersection between the economic and socio-cultural agendas behind cultural development policies. I illustrate the hegemony of the economic, supported by the ideology and language of pragmatism and globalisation. At the same time, I explore the reception of and attempts to negotiate (and at times, contest) state policies by “cultural practitioners” artists, dancers, playwrights, actors, directors and so forth, illustrating the disjuncture between state policies and practitioners' ideals. This may be cast as a conflict between social and cultural development priorities as envisaged by the practitioners as opposed to economic development priorities as embodied in the state’s cultural economic

policies.



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Keywords

Cultural policy; Cultural economy; Singapore

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