

# Measuring the Social Impact of the Cultural and Creative Sectors: Insights from Lithuanian Experts

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**Abstract.** The article discusses the challenges of social impact assessment in the *Cultural and Creative Sectors* (CCS) in Lithuania. The varying definitions of key concepts, such as ‘cultural and creative sectors’ and ‘impact’, have led the theoretical part of the paper to focus on the clarification of these concepts, reviewing their development and the practice of application. The importance of assessing the social impact of CCS is emphasized, alongside an exploration of diverse research and measurement practices.

The empirical part of the article discusses the findings of a qualitative research with Lithuanian CCS experts and presents the conclusions drawn from it. The research aimed to explore experts’ views on the challenges of measuring the social impact of CCS. The results facilitated the identification of key factors considered essential for ensuring reliable impact measurement: conceptual clarity, accounting for sub-sectoral diversity, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, and focusing on causal links and the long-term nature of change.

**Keywords:** cultural and creative sectors, cultural and creative industries, social impact.

## Kultūros ir kūrybos sektorių socialinio poveikio matavimas: Lietuvos ekspertų įžvalgos

**Santrauka.** Straipsnis skirtas kultūros ir kūrybos sektorių (KKS) socialinio poveikio vertinimo iššūkiams Lietuvoje aptarti. Dėl įvairuojančių sąvokų, tokių kaip „kultūros ir kūrybos sektoriai“, „poveikis“, interpretacijų straipsnio teorinėje dalyje dėmesys skiriamas pagrindinių sampratų tikslinimui, apžvelgiant jų raidą ir taikymo praktiką. Straipsnyje siekiama išryškinti KKS socialinio poveikio vertinimo svarbą, nagrinėjamos įvairios šio poveikio tyrimo ir matavimo praktikos.

Empirinėje straipsnio dalyje aptariami kokybinio tyrimo su Lietuvos KKS ekspertais rezultatai ir pristatomos iš to išplaukiančios išvados. Tyrimu siekta išsiaiškinti ekspertų požiūrį į KKS socialinio poveikio matavimo iššūkius. Gauti rezultatai leido nustatyti pagrindinius veiksnius, laikomus esminiais siekiant užtikrinti poveikio vertinimo patikimumą: sąvokų aiškumas; atsižvelgimas į subsektorių įvairovę; kiekybinių ir kokybinių metodų derinimas bei dėmesys priežastiniams ryšiams ir ilgalaikiam pokyčių pobūdžiui.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** kultūros ir kūrybos sektoriai; kultūros ir kūrybos industrijos; socialinis poveikis.

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## Introduction

Over the past decades, the *Cultural and Creative Sectors* (CCS) have evolved from early critical notions – as exemplified by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s (2002) concept of the ‘culture industry’ – into multifaceted fields that significantly influence art, technology, economics, and social policy (Garnham, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2019). Despite their well-documented economic contributions, the broader social outcomes of CCS, such as an increased civic engagement, enhanced cultural identity, and improved community well-being, remain challenging.

A central problem in this field is the absence of a unified framework for measuring the social impact of CCS. While economic metrics are well established, there is a clear need to systematically capture more elusive social dimensions across the diverse range of sub-sectors present within CCS (Newbigin, 2019; MESOC, 2023). To address this gap, the primary aim of this paper is to contribute to the development of a framework for measuring the social impact of CCS – this is a goal approached here as an exploratory first step.

The article builds on the existing literature by combining an extensive review of theoretical perspectives with empirical insights gathered from Lithuanian CCS experts. The research employs a qualitative methodology, specifically by using semi-structured interviews with cultural policymakers, administrators, and academic experts. This methodology is particularly well-suited to exploring the nuanced and context-sensitive dimensions of the social impact that quantitative methods may overlook (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Dahler-Larsen and Boodhoo, 2019).

The article pursues the following objectives:

1. *To clarify Conceptual Ambiguity:* to critically review and synthesize existing definitions related to CCS and the social impact, by identifying the key areas of overlap and divergence.
2. *To justify the Exploratory Qualitative Approach:* to demonstrate how qualitative inquiry serves as a foundational step in revealing the stakeholder perspectives, thereby providing essential insights into the complexities of social impact measurement.
3. *To examine Stakeholder Perspectives:* to document and analyze the views of Lithuanian CCS experts on measurement challenges, particularly those stemming from sectoral diversity, methodological trade-offs, and attribution of outcomes.
4. *To lay the Groundwork for Future Methodological Development:* to integrate theoretical insights with empirical findings, by offering preliminary guidelines that pave the way for more comprehensive, standardized social impact evaluation frameworks in the subsequent studies.

By integrating theoretical perspectives with qualitative research, the article aims to contribute meaningful insights to the academic discourse on CCS while also providing a practical foundation for improving the social impact measurement. This approach acknowledges that further refinement and iterative testing will be necessary to develop a robust methodological framework over time.

## Overview of the Development of the CCS Concept

The term ‘culture industry’ was introduced in the 1930s by T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer as part of their broader critique of capitalist society (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002). They argued that, under capitalism, cultural goods – once valued for individual expression and authenticity – had been commodified and mass-produced for profit, thus reducing cultural producers to wage laborers. Their critique centred on the dominance of mass-produced entertainment forms, such as broadcasting, film, and publishing, contrasting these with the subsidized ‘high arts’ like visual arts and theatre. This analysis illuminated the tension between artistic autonomy and market forces, portraying the culture industry as a mechanism of social control within capitalist systems.

By the 1960s, the term ‘cultural industries’ emerged, reflecting a more complex understanding of cultural production. French sociologists and policymakers were instrumental in adopting this term, highlighting cultural activities as contributors to both social cohesion and economic development (Hesmondhalgh, 2016). Bernard Miège expanded this view by emphasizing that industrialization within cultural production not only led to commodification but also spurred innovation, enabling new forms of cultural expression (Miège, 1989). By the 1980s, ‘cultural industries’ gained prominence in the public policy and academic discourse, particularly as governments began to justify cultural investment through its measurable economic benefits. During this period, advocates of traditional arts increasingly adopted the discourse of ‘arts as an industry’, underlining their dual value as both cultural and economic assets (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007).

In the 1990s, the concept of ‘creative industries’ emerged, inspired by policy initiatives such as the UK’s *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (1998). This term expanded the boundaries of cultural activities to include fields dependent on individual creativity, intellectual property, and technological innovation, such as software development, gaming, and digital media. The shift from ‘cultural’ to ‘creative’ industries reflected the transformative impact of the IT revolution, which redefined cultural production and consumption (Garnham, 2005). Additionally, this new framework emphasized inclusivity by democratizing access to cultural creation and participation (Strandberg, 2023). However, the rise of creative industries also sparked debates around the commercialization of creativity, with critics arguing that this emphasis on market-driven outputs risked overshadowing the traditional cultural values and practices (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007, 29; Newbigin, 2019, 21; Strandberg, 2023, 59–60).

This strand of criticism argued that an exclusive focus on market indicators ignores the cultural and social aspects inherent in creative expression and prompted scholars to question whether the term ‘creative industries’ adequately captures the broader spectrum of creative production. Consequently, the term ‘cultural and creative industries’ has emerged as a broader concept, encompassing both market-oriented creative industries and non-market-oriented cultural activities, such as heritage conservation and arts education (European Parliament, 2021). This transition helped more comprehensively reflect the

multidimensional nature of contemporary creative production (Lerro et al., 2022) and unify the traditional cultural practices and the modern creative industries, thus creating a comprehensive policy framework.

Recently, the term *Cultural and Creative Sectors* (CCS) has emerged in the EU-level discourse as a strategic refinement over ‘cultural and creative industries’. In their comprehensive study, M. Vilares et al. argue that the need to transition from ‘industries’ to ‘sectors’ is motivated by several interrelated considerations. First, standardized terminology across the EU Member States ensures consistency and clearer policy communication. Second, the term ‘sectors’ offers greater neutrality, accommodating both market-driven and non-market cultural practices. Finally, the adoption of ‘sectors’ aligns with the EU’s broader policy goals emphasizing inclusivity, sustainability, and cultural diversity (Vilares et al., 2022). The current official EU definition of the cultural and creative sectors is that they are sectors whose activities “are based on cultural values and artistic and other individual or collective creative expressions” (European Parliament, 2021, 43).

It is important to note that, despite this official policy, terminology varies significantly across the EU countries. Member States employ various denominations, such as the ‘cultural sector’, ‘creative industries’, ‘cultural and economic sectors’, ‘culture and media sector’, and others.

Consequently, challenges remain in harmonizing definitions and standardizing the activities covered by these sectors when assessing and measuring the impact of the cultural and creative sectors.

## **Assessing and Measuring CCS impacts: Challenges, Methodologies and Opportunities**

The concept of impact assessment originated as a systematic approach to evaluate the consequences of projects, policies, or interventions. Its foundations were established within the environmental policy through the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA, 1970) in the US. The concept was later adopted in disciplines like management and in research, with RCUK’s *Pathways to Impact* (2009) highlighting societal contributions.

Despite its widespread application, the term ‘impact’ is defined in varied ways across disciplines. In the context of humanitarian and development initiatives, the OECD’s definition of impact is widely recognized for its broad scope. It describes impact as “the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, whether directly or indirectly, planned or unplanned” (OECD, 2002,24).

In the context of the cultural and creative sectors, assessing impact remains a particularly challenging task due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of their effects, which encompass both tangible outcomes and intangible contributions. Moreover, the term ‘impact’ itself lacks unequivocal clarity, thus further complicating assessment frameworks in this sector. The literature on CCS assessment often equates impact with ‘benefits’ or ‘value’, though these terms are not entirely synonymous. According to the UK professor

Ben Walmsley (2013), value is a broader, more holistic concept, usually seen in social or public terms, while benefits are usually perceived as personally derived. The impact of CCS is also discussed in terms of ‘effect’.

While the noted lack of clarity on the attribution of impacts and their application in the assessment framework creates some confusion, the scope of this article does not allow to go into the nuances of the terminology in detail, and therefore the term ‘impact’ shall be used in a generic way further in this text.

Impact measurement within CCS is linked to political trends emphasizing evidence-based policymaking, requiring recipients of public investment to account for their impact (Anzel et al., 2023). This has elevated the importance of economic arguments to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in resource allocation.

The **economic impact** of CCS has traditionally garnered the most attention. John Myerscough’s *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (1988) was one of the first studies to highlight the role of arts in wealth creation, job generation, and urban attractiveness. This work has given rise to a generation of impact studies to justify and argue for the role of CCS as important drivers of economic development.

The relation between culture, creativity and economic growth is the subject of numerous studies. Aggregate data collected at global and EU levels (contribution to GDP, gross value added, employment, exports, etc.) show that the contribution of CCS to national economies is significant and increasing (e.g., UNCTAD, 2024; KEA European Affairs, 2021, and others). Economic indicators underpin the virtually universal assertion that the creative economy is an important driver of global and regional economic growth and one of the world’s fastest growing sectors.

However, it should be noted that although the economic impact of CCS has been the subject of extensive research, it is still debated that the economic contribution of these sectors is still underestimated. This is attributed to instrumental and contextual reasons. The former relates to inconsistencies in national definitions and different classification systems. The latter is attributed to the recognition that the economic impact of CCS extends beyond direct contributions, by generating spill-over effects through innovation, creative skills, and support for a broader economic ecosystem, indirectly boosting employment (OECD, 2022).

While the economic impact of CCS has been widely studied, their **social impact** has only recently gained attention (Sanjuán, 2023; MESOC, 2023). It has been realised that the social impacts of cultural and creative participation are often overlooked as researchers and policy makers focus on economic outcomes, whereas CCS in particular have a socio-cultural dimension which most other sectors of the economy do not (Newbigin, 2019).

Interest in the social impact of CCS emerged partly from governments’ disillusionment with GDP or income as measures of happiness and health, prompting the search for alternative indicators that would highlight the role of cultural and creative practices in national and individual well-being (MESOC, 2023).

In the past decades, a growing number of researchers have argued that cultural and creative activities are denoted by many social benefits. Various studies have examined

the impact of culture on different dimensions of well-being, such as health (Zbranca et al., 2022), education (Knaus, 2021), civic engagement (Campagna et al., 2020), life satisfaction (Wheatley and Bickerton, 2019), social cohesion and cultural identity (Huang and Jia, 2022) and even crime reduction (Taylor et al., 2015). However, most of these studies focus on the impacts of different forms of cultural participation, rather than on the role of CCS as such, which are only implicitly discussed.

Recent studies confirm that the development of standardized frameworks for measuring the social impact of CCS remains fragmented and underdeveloped. Existing frameworks for assessing the social impact of CCS, such as UNESCO's **Culture 2030 Indicators**, **European Capitals of Culture Evaluation Framework**, and **Cultural Satellite Accounts**, utilize diverse indicators to capture both tangible and intangible contributions of CCS. These frameworks measure various aspects addressing the multifaceted impacts of CCS. However, achieving standardization remains a challenge due to the complexity and context-specific nature of the impacts of CCS (Feor et al., 2023).

This lack of standardization has led to diverse methodologies for measuring the social impact of CCS. According to MESOC's (2023) review, common methodologies include:

- *Social Return on Investment*: it monetizes social value relative to resources invested.
- *Participatory Impact Assessment*: it engages stakeholders to identify a wide range of impacts.
- *Randomized Controlled Trials*: they establish causal relationships by assigning participants to treatment or control groups.
- *Impact Frameworks*: they use tailored indicators and metrics for structured evaluation.
- *Theory of Change*: it maps pathways linking inputs, activities, and outcomes.

The cultural sector employs various tools to gain insights in their performances, however, the lack of a unified framework for measuring the social impact limits the generalizability of findings (Feor et al., 2023).

In conclusion, this section has highlighted the complexity of measuring the impacts of CCS. While significant advancements have been made in understanding their economic contributions, the assessment of their social impacts remains insufficiently explored. Current methodologies face challenges in addressing the multifaceted and intangible dimensions of CCS contributions. Consequently, empirical studies on local contexts and attitudes toward the social impact of CCS are necessary for the development of comprehensive and standardized assessment frameworks.

## **Attitudes towards Social Impact Measurement – Qualitative Research Findings**

This section analyses qualitative data on Lithuanian stakeholders' perspectives regarding the assessment and measurement of CCS social impacts by focusing on the challenges they identify in this process. The section is organized into two main parts: the research methodology and the thematic findings.

## Research methodology

To explore the nuanced understandings of social impact among CCS stakeholders in Lithuania, a qualitative research design was adopted. This approach is well-suited for examining complex, subjective phenomena where contextual specificity and detailed accounts are crucial (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The study aimed to capture diverse attitudes from experts who operate within a dynamic field marked by theoretical ambiguity and practical challenges.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives was represented. Our key informants included:

- Representatives from various CCS sub-sectors;
- Cultural policymakers and administrators;
- Researchers specializing in CCS and social impact evaluation.

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. An interview guide was developed based on the literature review. The guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses on:

- The definition and understanding of ‘impact’;
- The perceived importance of social versus economic impacts;
- Challenges related to measuring outputs, outcomes, and long-term effects;
- Views on differing methodological approaches (monetary/quantitative vs. qualitative).

A total of 14 interviews were conducted via video conferencing, each lasting approximately 60–90 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure their accuracy.

The transcribed interviews were analyzed by using thematic analysis, following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved:

- *Familiarization*: reading and re-reading transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding;
- *Coding*: identifying recurring patterns and assigning codes to segments of text;
- *Theme Development*: organizing codes into broader themes that reflected key areas of discussion;
- *Review and Refinement*: themes were reviewed for consistency and refined iteratively;
- *Reporting*: the findings were summarized in a report with supporting quotes from the data.

## Qualitative research findings

The qualitative data are presented by capturing the diversity of the opinions expressed, which in some cases were supported with direct quotations from the informants<sup>1</sup>. This approach adheres to the fundamental principles of qualitative research, which prioritize the exploration of diverse views and the contextual understanding of phenomena over numerical representation, as quantifying responses or reporting frequencies is methodologically

<sup>1</sup> In the context of research methodologies, *informant* refers to participants in qualitative studies providing contextual insights, while *respondent* applies to those in quantitative studies answering structured questions.



irrelevant in qualitative inquiry (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Key problem areas for the social impact assessment of CCS, identified through analysis of the interview material, are systematically outlined below.

*Conceptual Ambiguity – Diversity in Understanding the Social Impact of CCS*

- Informants, in many instances, initially emphasized the economic contributions of the CCS, necessitating the application of deliberate redirection strategies by the interviewer to refocus the discussion on the social impact. This inclination to prioritize economic metrics parallels Adorno and Horkheimer's (2002) early critiques of art's commodification, reflecting a deeply ingrained institutional logic that privileges quantifiable outcomes. Consequently, this reveals that the social impact of CCS remains conceptually underdeveloped and inadequately articulated, even within expert discourse.
- The social impact of CCS is predominantly perceived at the individual level (*"the cultural and creative sector makes a person more empathetic and open-minded"*), or at the level of a specific group (*"creative cultural participation is most important for the older age groups or for the children's age groups, because the former need to learn, while the latter are already in need of realisation"*).
- Conversely, some informants perceived CCS as one of the two essential pillars of societal life, alongside the economy, by emphasizing their broad and foundational influence. In this perspective, the influence of culture permeates all domains of social life. As one informant observed, *"Cultural and creative industries are probably significant as a horizontal sphere that influences security, education, health, etc."* This viewpoint underscores the pervasive and integrative role of culture in shaping and enhancing diverse societal sectors.
- Typically, experts emphasized only the positive impacts of CCS; when asked about the possible negative impacts, many had no idea what they might be.

*Diversity of Sectors – Sub-Sectors of CCS and the Variety of Their Social Impacts*

Assessing and measuring the societal impact of the CCS poses significant methodological challenges due to their intrinsic heterogeneity. Organizations within these sectors often pursue multifaceted objectives that defy straightforward analysis at an aggregate level, even within a single sub-sector. Consequently, this complexity prompts critical deliberation on whether societal impact should be conceptualized as an overarching cumulative phenomenon or examined within the context of specific sub-sectors. It is, therefore, unsurprising that informants articulated divergent perspectives on this issue, reflecting the varied and nuanced understandings of impact within the field:

- Experts frequently argued that the inherent diversity among sub-sectors within the CCS necessitates assessing their social impact while accounting for the unique characteristics of each sub-sector. They advocated for the development of tailored methodologies incorporating sub-sector-specific indicators to enable more precise and context-sensitive assessment. As one expert articulated, *"my understanding is that certain areas of CCIs encourage people to come together, such as the performing arts,*



*which are more important in terms of social impact than, for example, architecture, which has a greater environmental impact*". This perspective highlights the importance of customized assessment frameworks that reflect the distinctive contributions of each sub-sector.

- Several informants contended that assessing the impact of CCS at the level of individual sub-sectors is overly complex. Instead, they advocated for employing broader categories, such as those outlined by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>2</sup>. As one informant remarked, *"If we talk about the whole of Lithuania and all areas of CCS, then we are talking about nothing"*, thus highlighting the perceived lack of specificity and practical relevance inherent in excessively generalized assessments.
- On the other hand, some informants argued for a holistic assessment of the CCS to demonstrate their overall social value and support lobbying efforts at the national level. They noted that such an approach is essential for demonstrating the overarching value of the sector, as fragmented assessments based on disparate methodologies risk producing results that are difficult to harmonize, and which would fail to reflect the collective impact of CCS. An example of such an opinion is the following statement: *"It is challenging, but I understand that the social value of the whole creative sector needs to be assessed and measured at a national level, because when different sub-sectors are assessed using different methodologies or criteria, the results will be very different and hard to harmonise"*.

These differing opinions highlight the theoretical tension between specialization and aggregated evaluation (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007). The need for both distinct and consolidated approaches indicates that the theoretical framework must accommodate the intrinsic diversity of cultural activities without sacrificing comparability.

#### *Monetized vs. Content-Based, Quantitative vs. Qualitative Evaluation*

The literature review has established the diversity of methodologies employed in CCS impact assessment, including quantitative, qualitative, and monetary approaches. Our research has demonstrated that, as well as with other debated issues, no consensus exists among experts, thus highlighting the persistent discussions and varying perspectives on the most appropriate and effective methods for capturing the complexity of social impacts in CCS.

- Several informants, particularly policymakers, emphasized the significance of monetizing social impact. This approach, as they argued, enables a comprehensive measurement of the overall economic and social contributions of CCS and facilitates the justification and promotion of cultural investment. However, the monetization of social impact in cultural and creative sectors is a debated topic. Critics caution that this approach risks oversimplifying the intrinsic and intangible value of cultural activities, which may not be fully captured through financial metrics (Roy and Teasdale, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (LRKM, 2015) provides a structured classification of CCS into 4 categories: (1) Cultural heritage, (2) Arts, (3) Media, and (4) Applied creativity.

- However, the vast majority of experts argued to the contrary, pointing to the danger of “*economising social impacts*” and claiming that some impacts, such as an increased self-esteem, “*cannot be easily associated with a monetary value*”. This finding aligns with critiques from social theorists who argue that not all social change can or should be monetized (Walmsley, 2013). Assigning financial value to impacts without a market price has been criticized as inherently controversial and subjective, as it relies on proxies and assumptions that may fail to accurately reflect the true value or significance of these impacts (Bonner, 2022).
- The informants’ opinions also differed regarding the relevance of qualitative and quantitative methods of assessing social impact. The proponents of quantitative measurements emphasised that quantitative methods are useful for assessing the extent and significance of changes and allow comparisons and monitoring of progress over time; therefore, “*quantitative measurement is essential*”. Meanwhile, other experts considered that “*numbers alone cannot fully capture the social impact*”, and that “*only qualitative methods can provide insight into the context and experience of the impact of CCS*”. This divergence highlights the need for an integrated assessment framework that would combine the clarity of quantitative data with the depth and context provided by qualitative insights, thus echoing the integrative approaches recommended by Relou and Hubers (2021).

### *Empirical Measurement Issues*

Informants recognized notable obstacles pertaining to attribution and the temporal scope, which may impede the empirical assessment of social impact within the framework of CCS.

- One of the difficulties identified was that measuring social impact requires a long-term timeframe, as “*changes in society do not happen quickly*”. It was considered that, in order to register social change, “*a period of at least five to seven years is needed*”, which is too long for the accountability of an organization or a project/programme. This challenge is consistent with the insights of L. Feor et al. (2023), who emphasize the necessity of adopting extended temporal frameworks in social impact assessment, by highlighting that societal transformations often require prolonged periods to fully manifest.
- Another challenge that may arise in the CCS measurement process has been identified as the problem of attribution of social impacts or the difficulty on justifying the causality of the observed changes. One of the informants, while highlighting the complexity of isolating the CCS impacts, provided an example suggesting that increased cultural and creative activities may reduce crime; however, other factors, such as educational programs or improved policing, might also significantly contribute to this impact. It should be noted that attribution is widely recognized as a significant challenge in measuring social impacts within CCS due to the difficulty of isolating the sector’s contributions from broader societal changes. To address this, researchers have proposed strategies, such as stakeholder engagement and mixed-methods approaches, to capture

the nuanced interplay of various influencing factors, thereby enhancing the reliability of social impact assessments (Feor et al., 2021). These methodological solutions provide valuable insights into overcoming attribution challenges and promoting more robust assessment of the social impacts of CCS.

**To summarize the section:** This section synthesizes the qualitative research findings with established theoretical frameworks to underscore the intricate conceptual, methodological, and empirical challenges associated with measuring the social impact of CCS. The evidence derived from the Lithuanian context not only substantiates theoretical assertions regarding ambiguities, sectoral heterogeneity, and measurement complexities but also reveals nuanced dimensions that warrant further inquiry.

## Conclusions

The article highlights the evolving concept of CCS, shaped by socio-economic and political contexts across different periods. Discrepancies in interpretation and mismatched classifications of CCS activities pose considerable challenges to their assessment, emphasizing the need for harmonized definitions. Additionally, the conceptual uncertainty surrounding ‘impact’ further compounds these challenges, particularly as the societal value of CCS increasingly extends beyond economic metrics. While the growing recognition of their social contributions has prompted a demand for systematic measurement methodologies, a lack of consensus on frameworks and approaches has resulted in inconsistent assessments. This has made the social impacts of CCS inadequately understood and insufficiently articulated.

The qualitative research conducted in the Lithuanian context has revealed a broad spectrum of expert perspectives on the social impact assessment, ranging from divergent to fundamentally opposing views. This diversity highlights the lack of conceptual clarity surrounding the social impact of CCS and identifies critical areas for improvement, namely, reducing conceptual ambiguity, addressing sub-sectoral diversity, balancing quantitative and qualitative methods, and devising robust approaches for long-term and causal measurement. The findings provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive framework tailored to assess the multifaceted societal impacts of the cultural and creative sectors, as well as addressing the currently existing gaps in both theoretical understanding and practical application.

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