

Call for Papers
Special Issue on “Inequities in the Arts”
American Behavioral Scientist

The arts are a celebrated, yet contested, sector of society. On the one hand, fierce advocates for the arts argue that artistic activity adds to the GDP of regions, invigorates places and spaces, and contributes to the health and well-being of society. On the other hand, critics of the arts argue that the arts are ‘elitist’ in that most organizations serve wealthy and white audiences and artists predominantly come from privileged backgrounds. A slew of recent research has focused on the apparent benefits of the arts, and less so on the ways that current systems in the arts can divide people. There is a substantial literature in sociology and economics on inequalities among arts audiences, organizations, and artists, but most studies are now fairly outdated and lack relevance to artistic activity in contemporary society and debates. Moreover, there is very little empirical research on the kinds of systems that can help alleviate inequities in the arts, especially at the institutional level. As a result of this gap, between what we know about the benefits of the arts and the ways in which current systems can perpetuate inequality, foundations and government agencies lack targeted guidance for how to equitably engage people and organizations in the arts. Those innovating new institutions and systems find scant evidence to draw upon in assessing how alternative designs mitigate or exacerbate inequality.

This special issue will highlight new research that explores inequities in the arts in contemporary contexts. We welcome research from around the globe; however, the focus and expectation is that all research will ultimately have lessons for the American context given the intensity of the current climate in the U.S. around racial, gender, and socioeconomic inequities and social justice. We are seeking papers that focus specifically on equity related to race, ethnicity, geography, gender, and socioeconomic status, as well as creative talent and just compensation, and how systems for engaging organizations and people in artistic activity perpetuate or ameliorate inequities in these realms.

We anticipate publishing empirical and theoretical studies on activities of artists, audiences, organizations, and others engaged in the arts that encompass the following:

- Theoretical discussions of approaches to equity in the arts, including definitional issues, tensions between various approaches, goals of arts policy and programs with respect to equity and/or social justice, and alternatives to current practice.
- Inherent inequities of the arts sector, including “winner-takes-all” and superstar markets, rational addiction to consumption behavior in the arts, and cultural and social capital theories and relation to taste.
- Organizational management issues, including those concerning content production and audience development, board and staff diversity and representation, as well as donor relations.
- Analysis of systems for allocating funding to the arts, including grant panel peer-review, current practices with government, foundation, and individual funding for the arts, and decision-making around artistic “excellence” and the types of art receiving public funding.

- Artist labor market dynamics, such as distributional consequences of market structures related to areas of inequity, definitional issues concerning professional versus amateur artists, and social capital and networking effects on artist career development.
- Arts audience development and engagement trends, including goals for access and participation for arts programs, the urban versus rural divide of arts funding, participation and conceptual definitions of the arts and culture, and other socio-economic and -demographic tendencies for engaging arts audiences.
- Emerging trends associated with new technologies and markets, such as mechanisms for reducing uncertainties (in talent, quality) and their implications for inequities in arts, shifts in market power in platform and gig economies, and evolving gatekeeper functions in curating diversity.

This call for proposals is part of the Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation (AEI) Lab at the [Center for Cultural Affairs](#) (CCA). The AEI Lab is a research lab sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, directed by Professors Joanna Woronkowitz and Doug Noonan. We invite proposals for papers to be written during the coming year as part of the AEI Lab and its symposium, which will take place on June 7-8, 2022. Selected authors will be invited to attend the symposium (with funding) in Indianapolis where they will present their work.

Submission and Selection:

Please submit an extended abstract (two pages max. double-spaced) as a PDF to Joanna Woronkowitz (jworonko@indiana.edu) and Doug Noonan (noonand@iupui.edu) with a subject line ‘ABS Special Issue’ by ~~January 30, 2022~~ **February 15, 2022**. The extended abstract should detail the research question, methods and data, and expected contribution.

Authors of selected papers will be asked to submit a draft manuscript by June 1, 2022 in preparation for the AEI Lab symposium, and a final manuscript by August 30, 2022.

Paper proposals will be evaluated based on their expected scholarly contributions, relevance to the themes of the AEI Lab, and potential interest of the findings to policymakers or practitioners.

Interested authors can contact Joanna and Doug with questions or refer to the [ABS website](#) for information on the kinds of research the journal typically publishes.