Cultural Democracy, Cultural Equity, and Cultural Policy: Perspectives from the UK and USA

Eleonora Belfiore, Steven Hadley, Brea M. Heidelberg & Carole Rosenstein

Published online: 26 Jun 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ☐

Article views: 1721

View related articles ☐

View Crossmark data ☐

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Cultural Democracy, Cultural Equity, and Cultural Policy: Perspectives from the UK and USA

Eleonora Belfiore[a] , Steven Hadley[b] , Brea M. Heidelberg[c]   and Carole Rosenstein[d]

[a]University of Aberdeen, Scotland; [b]Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; [c]Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; [d]George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia

ABSTRACT

This article offers an exploratory discussion of two cultural policy concepts and traditions: cultural democracy in the UK and cultural equity in the US. We explore what the concepts share, how they have been shaped by their cultural policy traditions, and how they yield value for cultural policy makers, scholars, and activists. As scholars from divergent yet mutually Anglo-centric traditions, we articulate how these concepts inform one another with a view to enacting a more democratic form of cultural policy. Though the terms are used imprecisely or interchangeably, differences between concepts speak to the intersectional character of cultural inequality.

Introduction

There remains an ongoing debate about whether and why the state should subsidize the arts. Inasmuch as that debate is currently resolved in favor of public funding and tax expenditure, the fundamental question of which forms of cultural expression should benefit from that support remains. In fact, the perpetual 'balancing act' (Matarasso and Landry 1999) between the 'democratization of culture' and 'cultural democracy' has recently seen a resurgence of attention. The idea that all people have a right to engage in culture – frequently referenced in relation to Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – repeatedly resurfaces as a goal of cultural policy (see, for example, the 2020 Rome Charter). At the same time, the idea that the tastes of whole populations can adequately be represented by the tastes of elites continues to influence how artforms are valued and resources are distributed. Elite tastes are legitimated by the practice of defining art as transcendent over political or social interests, justifying policies and systems that center on supporting artforms that reflect those tastes. However, there is decades of clear evidence that arts attendance remains stratified according to education, income, race and ethnicity (Neelands et al. 2015; Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020). As Mulcahy (2006, 323) notes, "a democratic state cannot be seen as simply indulging the aesthetic preferences of a few, however enlightened".

Democratic states do indulge the tastes of an elite, but pragmatically they must take steps to address the inequality this indulgence entails (Hadley 2021).

This article explores two cultural policy concepts used to talk about and engage in ongoing questions about inequality in the arts: cultural democracy and cultural equity. To better understand these concepts, we examine uses of the term *cultural democracy* in the UK and the term *cultural equity* in the US. Placing the use of these terms in historical and political context, the article maps out a terrain for understanding the two concepts, what they share, how they have been shaped by the cultural policy traditions in which they have developed, and how the concepts may yield value for cultural policymakers, scholars, and activists. We recognize that the debate around the democratization of 'high culture' is not a settled matter. Yet the exigent demands of long-standing and persistent inequality in, and failure to democratize the structures of, the cultural sector require the exploration of other policy orientations. Ultimately, our aim – as scholars from divergent yet mutually Anglocentric traditions – is to better understand how these two concepts might usefully inform and assist in developing one another with a view to articulating and enacting a democratic form of cultural policy. Or, perhaps, a *more* democratic form of cultural policy than that which currently persists.

Some initial observations and caveats regarding the use of these terms are required here. First, we use these terms as placeholders for two distinct yet overlapping fields of practice. Each field has its own intellectual traditions and antecedents, literatures, and internal tensions and disagreements. Literature, discussion, and practice in these fields extends beyond the confines of academia, let alone the narrow margins of the field of cultural policy and administration. In addition, the concepts do not cleanly align with the respective geographies in which we situate them in this discussion. We are conscious, for example, of the influence of the cultural democracy concept on the Works Progress Administration in the US, as well as the work of Adams and Goldbard (1981) on cultural democracy in a US context. We are aware of the resonance between the concept of cultural equity and recent work on cultural diversity in the UK. Equally, much of the foundational thinking about cultural inequality and cultural democracy in the UK tradition came from within international institutions, most notably UNESCO (Girard 1972) and the Council of Europe (Bennett 2001; Simpson 1976).

We recognize that these fields are emerging, complex, largely undocumented, and only recently the subject of sustained academic interest (see Hadley and Belfiore 2018). As such, we offer introductory passages to both concepts by situating them within national policy contexts where they are currently influential. Though often used imprecisely or interchangeably, these two terms are differently oriented and refer to concepts that are worth distinguishing from one another. At the same time, we are keen to understand whether these concepts – and the ways in which they are put to work in the cultural sector – share any similarities in terms of use, history, power, and problematics.

Cultural democracy

Democratization of culture and cultural democracy have both been traditional cultural policy objectives. The first, in Tony Bennett's words (2001, 5), focuses primarily on "striving to equalise conditions of access to an accepted standard of high culture", especially among those groups who tend not to participate, or to participate less than

others. A focus on cultural democracy, on the other hand, means "aiming for dispersed patterns of support based on an acceptance of a parity of esteem for the aesthetic values and tastes of different groups within culturally diverse societies" (5). This focus requires policies that strive for inclusion, diversity and access to the means of both cultural production and distribution, giving the public the possibility of expressing themselves and creating their own culture.

The grand narrative of the democratization of culture is one of the esthetic enlightenment, self-improvement, and educational development of the populace (Mulcahy 2006). In the UK, the first challenge to this idea came from the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s which questioned not only traditional hierarchies between elite and popular taste, but also those between art forms. This challenge also arose in England *via* the Arts Council's reluctant engagement with the community arts movement[1]. Throughout the 1970s, sections of the cultural sector began to believe that traditional arts policies, which had been devoted to 'making excellence accessible' and which the Council of Europe (Simpson 1976) characterized as *the democratization of culture*, should be replaced by *cultural democracy*. Cultural democracy often worked by developing an individual's capacity to make their own art rather than learning to appreciate the art of others.

Cultural democracy proposes support of the cultural preferences and expressions of individuals and communities (Evrard 1997). To facilitate such a pluralist concept of culture, government policy would prioritize the distribution of information and the regulation of the supply infrastructure, as it does in other markets where regulatory policies focus on increasing diversity (Waade 1997). Such policies are grounded in a participatory and people-centred approach to the definition and provision of culture, rather than a tradition-centred one. This represents a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up policy: "that is, the government's responsibility is to provide equal opportunities for citizens to be culturally active on their own terms" (Mulcahy 2006, 324). In appealing to ideas of equality and fairness implicit in the concept of democracy, cultural democracy offers a pluralistic rather than monocultural perspective from a seemingly common sense and egalitarian position.

In essence, cultural democracy represents an attack on the ideology of the 'Great Tradition' of European Art (Kelly 1985). As Kelly wrote, such a position did not seek to dismiss the art of the canon, but rather rejects the 'Great Tradition's' claim to the inalienable right to decide what was and, more importantly, what was not art. Shaw and Shaw (1992, 30) argued that "the mistake of some community artists was to assume that the cultural heritage was not for ordinary people – which was exactly what their opponents, the elitists, had more consistently argued". Writers such as Braden (1978) and Kelly (1984, 1985) were not claiming that 'ordinary' people should lack access to or might not appreciate 'high culture'. Rather, they argued that the culture of one social group should not be labeled as 'Culture' for all. When considering the Great Tradition, Braden (1978, 153-154 emphasis in original) pointedly argued that,

> …the so-called cultural *heritage* which made Europe great – the Bachs and Beethovens, the Shakespeares and Dantes, the Constables and Titians - is no longer communicating anything to the vast majority of Europe's population…. The greatest artistic deception of the twentieth century has been to insist to all people that this was their culture. The Arts Council of Great Britain was established on this premise.

The Arts Council of Great Britain annual report for the year 1960/61 unapologetically declares: "The paramount trusteeship of the arts in Britain to-day is vested in that percentage of the population which rejects the assumption that sessions of bingo and capers on the Costa Brava are the be-all and end-all of our new leisure" (ACGB 1961, 9). The class bias, privilege, and sense of entitlement on display here was not seen, contemporaneously, as something embarrassing or politically unwise (see also Belfiore 2019; Upchurch 2016).

The recent engagement of Arts Council England (ACE) with ideas of cultural democracy has seen a shift in its cultural policy approach, at least at the rhetorical level. This was partly a response to pressures to recognize and support forms of everyday cultural creation and consumption that fall outside the scope of the professional activities and art forms traditionally supported. Recent academic work in this field has rigorously and systematically mapped, investigated, and interpreted the 'everyday' forms of cultural participation and engagement which the longstanding policies had left neglected and hidden from view. Projects like *Understanding Everyday Participation*: *Understanding Cultural Values* (see Miles and Gibson 2016), the somewhat a-historical resurgence of interest in 'cultural democracy' in policy-focused reports (Hadley 2018; Gross and Wilson 2020; Gross 2021; Wilson, Gross, and Bull 2017), and the manifesto published by the Movement for Cultural Democracy (2018) all are manifestations of the 'rediscovery' of the concept of cultural democracy. A new emphasis on everyday creativity and participation echoes those calls for cultural self-determination from previous decades.

Arts Council England's (2020) strategy document for the period 2020-30, *Let's Create,* showcases this new mood in the national conversation. In the opening statement, Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of ACE, notes that the new strategy, "… will value the creative potential in each of us, provide communities in every corner of the country with more opportunities to enjoy culture, and celebrate greatness of every kind" (3). Serota acknowledges that this shift in emphasis from excellence to the creative potential of all "marks a significant change", but argues that it is "an evolutionary one" (3) which builds on what ACE has achieved in the preceding seventy years.

But there remains a significant challenge in furthering or achieving cultural democracy when the mechanism of government funding for the arts in the UK continues to employ implicit but elitist value judgements in its decision-making. Whether a shift toward cultural democracy within ACE will remain rhetorical or translate into a more radical redistribution of financial resources is currently a live question. The National Portfolio Organizations funding allocations for 2023 and onwards have been newly announced in a context significantly complicated by a wider national Conservative government policy called 'Leveling Up'. Leveling Up involves an explicit rebalancing of funding away from London toward 'the regions'. The introduction of this approach, coming at the same time as a reduction of funding, has caused a significant backlash. Tensions are particulary clear in the case of opera, which has endured both significant funding cuts and the suggestion that English National Opera should leave the capital. In the current context, there may be little room for shifts in the entrenched direction of arts funding and development.

Cultural equity

In the US tradition, the notion of cultural democracy is fundamentally pluralistic, rooted in the principle that esthetic excellence and cultural significance can be found

within any and every kind of artistic and cultural form. To adopt this principle entails an expectation that collections, presentations, exhibitions, and prizes will reflect the entire population in its cultural, artistic, racial, ethnic, class, gender, sexual, and geographical diversity. So, cultural democracy encompasses both a credo and a call to action to diversify cultural offerings and institutions. Kernels of the cultural democracy concept are present throughout the history of US cultural policy. The term is closely associated with the New Deal Works Progress Administration (WPA) arts and cultural programs of the 1930s and their commitment to identify, conserve, and develop the expressive forms of the 'common' people and of underrepresented and underserved racial and ethnic groups across the nation (Mathews and De 1975). Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, the term came to be used to signal a commitment to multiculturalism (Adams and Goldbard 1981).

In the 1970s, Livingston Biddle was lauded as the first NEA Chair to diversify the types of art that received agency funding, but his leadership remained focused on 'access to excellence,' with the understanding that 'excellence' meant 'high culture' as represented by white, legacy arts institutions operating within the 'Great Tradition' of a Western European esthetic (Heidelberg 2019a). This system continued to presuppose who it was that made up the 'arts public' (U.S. Committee on Government Operations and House Report No. 678 678 1990). Concerns about elitism in arts funding, the focus on large arts organizations, and the lack of cultural diversity among funded artists and organizations (White House Conference on the Arts 1978) led to incremental change in the 1970s and 1980s. But, by the 1990s, Republican culture warriors in Congress had intentionally dismantled what infrastructure for cultural pluralism had been built over the preceding decades (see Reiser 1980; Heidelberg 2019a). For example, the influential Expansion Arts Program, established at the NEA in 1971 to fund arts in underserved communities, was dissolved in 1996 as a result of the Culture Wars.

The cultural democracy concept presupposed that the material conditions necessary to achieve equality had yet to be established. The cultural equity concept makes that assumption explicit. Cultural equity is the principle that resources must be distributed in ways that ensure the diversity of cultural representation and the acknowledgement that diversity will not be achieved without the equitable distribution of resources (Rosenstein 2018). The resources relevant to cultural equity are multiple and include: individual patronage, public funding, and private philanthropy as well as educational resources, information, professional expertise, access to networks, organizational capacity, and authority. In practice, cultural equity would mean equitable funding from public and private sources, as well as equitable arts education, arts-based career training, and equal opportunity to work within cultural institutions at all levels.

Demands for cultural equity have resulted in an increase in equity training and pipeline programming such as paid internships for college students from historically marginalized communities (Heidelberg 2020). A range of newly emerged questions about the cultural workforce shifts the focus away from funding and audiences, asking: who works in culture? (Cuyler 2015; Schonfeld and Westermann 2015; Schonfeld and Sweeney 2016; DataArts 2017, 2019); who has access to professional training? (Cuyler 2013); what are the demographic characteristics of leadership in the sector? (Voss et al. 2014). Such attention is rooted in an understanding that the cultural workforce and cultural leaders are decisionmakers for the sector, and unless they are diverse,

decision-making will not be influenced by a diversity of experience and points of view. Further, positions within the cultural workforce are themselves a resource for under-served people and communities, enabling expert learning and social networking (Heidelberg 2019b).

Additionally, cultural equity activism is on the rise. Cultural equity work has always been about grassroots collective action (Artzner and Leonino 2017), and is today being helped by new uses of technology. There is more visible collaboration among artists and cultural managers from traditionally marginalized communities, with technology helping individuals forced to endure inequitable practices to overcome their isolation. Groups such as the Arts Administrators of Color Network (aacnetwork.org), Women of Color in the Arts (woca.org), and Americans for the Arts' Arts and Culture Leaders of Color Network provide valuable feedback to one another about organizations that are toxically inequitable.

While they are closely associated, the notion of cultural diversity can come into tension with the notion of cultural equity. In the US today, diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, packaged together and collapsed into the DEIA (or similar) initialism, are a very familiar part of the rhetoric of arts and cultural institutions, funders, and service organizations[2]. Often used as one broad concept, DEIA has provided the foundation for cultural equity statements, grant-funded initiatives designed to diversify the arts leadership pipeline, and calls for increased accountability and transparency (Heidelberg 2017). For many historically marginalized people, this is an old conversation with a new name. Regardless of the particular configuration of letters, DEIA and related actions have been established by a sector created and reified in white, male, heteronormative privilege. This has, lamentably, resulted in a significant amount of performative rather than substantive action, or '*fakequity*' (Okuno 2015). Further, most discussions about diversity in the sector focus on how high arts institutions with primarily white audiences might reach new and more diverse audiences and so they often turn into marketing schemes rather than frameworks for organizational and sectoral change.[3] Predatory inclusion tactics, where people of color are invited into cultural organizations that are unprepared to nurture and support them only to be exploited and further marginalized, have also emerged (Heidelberg 2022).

Nonetheless, cultural equity is emerging as a term rhetorically situated to both encompass and move beyond DEIA by focusing on 'historical and continuing unequal access' to 'full cultural expression' for all (Matlon, Van Haastrecht, and Mengüç 2014, 43), making the connection between material conditions and ongoing cultural inequality explicit. For example, the *LA County Arts Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) Report* (2017) is ground-breaking in using the concept of cultural equity in a way that both links up with and adds to notions of cultural diversity through its commitment to the guiding principles that: "Every individual participates in creative thinking and expression [and] has the right to engage in arts and culture that celebrate their highest potential. Our community's diversity is an asset to our arts and cultural environment and our economy" (31).

Calls for cultural equity indicate the need to further identify, diagnose, and remedy the root causes and material conditions of inequalities. Cultural equity calls for equitable resources to be targeted to the creation and maintenance of artistic products and creative processes from non-Western traditions and voices that allow the full spectrum of lived

experiences to be both reflected and respected (U.S. National Council on the Arts 1978; Sidford 2011). Moving forward on cultural equity also will require acknowledging and examining the distinct role of government in the arts and cultural sector. In the US, the role of the private, nonprofit sector and especially institutional philanthropy tends to be highlighted and the public sector tends to disappear in most discussions about the arts and culture (Kammen 1996). However, the roles and responsibilities of the public sector and the nonprofit sector are not necessarily the same. The public sector is accountable to the public in ways that are different from institutional philanthropy and nonprofits, and public sector policymakers have distinct, entailed roles and responsibilities regarding democracy and equity, including cultural democracy and cultural equity (Rosenstein 2018). A commitment to equity is fundamental to the public sector in a way that is distinctive and that makes the actions of public sector funders and policymakers more consequential in questions of cultural equity (Cole 2021).

Beyond semantics: concepts for different contexts

Both cultural democracy and cultural equity respond to historical contexts in which cultural policy focused on expanding audiences for culture narrowly defined in reference to a white European canon. This focus resulted in resources being directed to organizations that catered to the taste of socio-cultural elites. The guiding ethos of both cultural democracy and cultural equity is the promotion of cultural opportunities of a diverse nature. Yet how this ethos is understood and meant to be achieved varies between the two concepts. In the UK, under the rubric of *cultural democracy,* the focus is on cultural value and attendant questions of cultural authority, power, voice, and representation. Historically, calls for change have emphasized dismantling the class and metropolitan bias of publicly funded arts provision (Belfiore 2020). In the US, under the rubric of *cultural equity,* the focus is on fairness and the bureaucratic logics that govern the distribution of dollars and other resources. Calls for change have emphasized representativeness, equality, and diversity in arts funding and provision. Whilst the trajectory of US discourse has been to become politicized and to embrace political economy in the movement towars cultural equity, UK discourse has become relatively de-politicized (from a radically political moment in the 70s and 80s).

Cultural democracy sits in opposition to the structural modus operandi of the sector, the democratization of culture. Within that structure, the ouroboric logic of cultural authority drives judgments of cultural value which in turn provide the rationale for funding decisions whose performative conferral of money and status guarantee cultural authority. In this context, cultural democracy seeks not to alter but to overturn that structure by delegitimising its attendant ideology. Its ultimate goal is to contest established forms of cultural authority predicated on privilege, wealth, and tradition, in favor of new, more democratic and distributed forms of cultural legitimacy and authority. Cultural democracy does this by aiming for a mechanism of cultural participation which is unmediated by expertise *via* processes of cultural disintermediation.

Cultural equity, on the other hand, seeks to redistribute resources within the cultural infrastructure. It does not necessarily focus on altering the structure of that system. The central idea here is that, in time, a more balanced and representative distribution of resources will translate into more culturally diverse and representative outputs,

broader consumption of diverse expressions, and the eventual acknowledgment of the diversity of cultural value. A particular focus of cultural equity is achieving equality in the operationalization of the structures of arts funding and administration, rather than aspiring to do away with them. Cultural equity might, then, comport with expressions of elitism within racial and ethnic groups or with a hierarchical and mediated form of cosmopolitanism that would be antithetical to a populist cultural democracy.

The trajectory of the relation between authority and distribution is, then, framed differently across the cultural democracy and cultural equity concepts. This leads to priorities that share some common traits, but also vary significantly. In the UK tradition, the consideration of cultural authority in shaping the national cultural landscape has historically tended to focus on class, whereas in the US, the consideration of cultural inequality gives race and ethnicity greater prominence. This evidently frames how the concepts are understood across national contexts. From the point of view of cultural democracy, it might appear that cultural equity is a call for race equality within the logic of the democratization of culture. As such, it might be considered less politically radical and subversive in its demands. From the point of view of cultural equity, calls for disintermediation might appear to focus too narrowly on the redistribution of cultural authority and value. From that perspective, the realized ideal of cultural democracy might fall short of counteracting white power and the hegemony of white cultural experience. These differences point to the fact that cultural inequality is *intersectional* (Crenshaw 1991), that people whose right to fully engage in culture is not adequately being addressed may be having that right denied as consequence of multiple and intersecting structures of unequal power (including those having to do with gender and sexuality as well).

Finally, we can see differences between cultural democracy and cultural equity by considering how these orientations might be expressed in cultural policy. Policies guided by a cultural democracy perspective might move away from peer review based on esthetic expertise as embodied cultural authority. For example, funding schemes might instead consider whether an organization seeks to fulfill a mission focused on the arts or creative expression, whether it has proven to be a trusted steward of public monies, and whether it has strong and long-lived partnerships that represent the community where it sits. In the US, we see many state and local general operating support programs that function in this way. On the other hand, policies guided by a cultural equity perspective might insist that funded organizations demonstrate that their programming, collections or repertoire, staff, boards, partners, and donors, as well as their audiences reflect the demographic characteristics of the communities where they sit. In the US, we see movement in this direction as well. For example, new reporting requirements outlined in the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' Diversity and Equity Initiative ask funded organizations to report just such data.[4]

Conclusion

In both the UK and US, the notion of 'excellence' has been weaponized in ways that continue to plague thinking and action around these concepts. In the US, the notion of 'excellence' assumed 'whiteness'; in the UK, 'excellence' was a proxy for 'upper class.' In the US, this intellectual legacy of 'excellence' has led to the presumption that

organizations led by and serving racially diverse communities should compete for acceptance among white elite funders or conform to white cultural norms in order to be perceived worthy of public and private support (DeVos Institute of Arts Management 2015). Such approaches perpetueate a false equivalance between equity of access to 'high culture' and cultural equity per se. In the UK, questions around middle class anti-elitism are challenging longstanding presumptions about the links between 'populism' and 'poor' people (Goodwin 2020). It is important for both analysts and activists to be aware of which orientation they are operating in, and to see how that orientation highlights particular pathways and interventions while obscuring others. At the same time, both cultural democracy and cultural equity would benefit by decoupling from their associated identity markers. Instead, those working toward more democratic cultural policies would do better to recognize that cultural democracy's focus on dis-intermediation and cultural equity's demand for representation are complementary pathways to dismantling the supremacy of the Western canon and its institutions.

Where these two traditions fundamentally align is in the recognition of the need for redistributive actions to work along and across multiple structures of power. The scope of cultural inequality in the United States can be traced along the intersections championed by Americans for the Arts (2018) in their longstanding mantra, 'arts and…', as in: arts and economy, arts and education, arts and health. Because arts and culture are delivered through a whole range of structurally inequitable societal systems and practices in industry, public and higher education, healthcare and public health, technology, housing, and transportation, achieving greater cultural equity will require corrections to those systems and practices. For example, simply increasing resources to arts education will not necessarily address educational inequities in cultural resources if those resources are funneled through a fundamentally inequitable educational system. As such, calls for cultural equity signal the need for restorative considerations to be embedded within all sorts of processes of resource distribution. In the UK, it was a tenet of the community arts and cultural democracy movements that the demand for cultural democracy was "a revolutionary demand" to overthrow structures of cultural production which were "systematically oppressive" (Kelly 1984, 133). Community artists aspired to change the nature of democracy in capitalist societies such that the struggle for cultural democracy was part of a broader attempt at democratization across all aspects of political, economic and institutional life (Bennett 2017). Ideas about the role of cultural production in political and social change grounded the political vision of cultural democracy, which saw demands for economic democracy, industrial democracy and political democracy as a corollary of cultural democracy (Kelly 1984; Kelly, Lock, and Merkel 1986).

The current situation, in which established social and political approaches have failed to combat inequality and discrimination in sectors of society far beyond the realm of cultural institutions, suggests that cultural democracy must re-discover itself as a *political* demand, at one with a demand for social and economic democracy (Kelly 1984). At the same time, cultural equity must guard against its potential to coopt elite people of color into the perpetuation of systems of oppression and disenfranchisement. In both cases, intersectional considerations are underdeveloped. To function as a progressive critique of existing cultural policy, cultural democracy and cultural equity must first and foremost be concerned with understanding how cultural sector institutions and practices are embedded in socio-economic and political relations which

reproduce inequality. This exploration of the use and extension of two related but distinct terms in two different national contexts highlights the need for a set of analytical tools to develop intersectionality's capability to theorize the inequalities of the cultural sector – in other words, to develop an intersectional cultural policy. The exigent demands of our cultural policy moment require scholars on both sides of the Atlantic to look at these issues afresh in their pursuit of social justice.

Notes

1. For more on this movement see Matarasso 2018
2. See, for example, the Americans for the Arts *Statement on Cultural Equity*. https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/about/cultural_equity/ARTS_CulturalEquity_updated.pdf
3. Other examples of fakequity include tokenism and other forms of subversive othering that find Black and Brown stories showcased only during Black or Latinx History Month, or prescriptively femme-identified stories only championed during Women's Month (Bourke, Smith, Stockton and Wakefield 2014).
4. See https://createnyc.cityofnewyork.us/the-cultural-plan/issue-areas/eq/

Disclosure statement

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

ORCID

Eleonora Belfiore 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7825-4615
Steven Hadley 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2240-7808
Brea M. Heidelberg 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8805-2424
Carole Rosenstein 🔵 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9366-687X

References

Arts Council England. 2020. "Let's Create." Accessed November 22, 2020. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate

Arts Council of Great Britain. 1961. "Partners in Patronage: The 16th Annual Report of the Arts Council of Great Britain 1960–61."

Adams, D., and A. Goldbard. 1981. "Cultural Democracy versus the Democratization of High Culture." *Social Policy* (May/June) 12 (1):52–6.

Americans for the Arts. 2018. "Arts and Social Impact Explorer." Accessed November 22, 2020. https://www.americansforthearts.org/socialimpact.

Artzner, G., and T. Leonino. 2017. "They Were All Leaders: The IWW and Songs for Revolution." In *Leadership and the Arts for Social Change*, edited by Susan J. Erenrich and Jon F. Wergin. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Belfiore, E. 2019. "From CEMA to the Arts Council: Cultural Authority, Participation and the Question of 'Value'in Early Post-War Britain." In *Histories of Cultural Participation, Values and Governance*, edited by Belfiore, E. and Gibson L., 67–96. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belfiore, E. 2020. "Whose Cultural Value? Representation, Power and Creative Industries." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 26 (3):383–97. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2018.1495713

Bennett, O. 2017. "Memories, Dreams, Reflections: Community Arts as Cultural Policy – the 1970s." In *Culture, Democracy and the Right to Make Art*, edited by A. Jeffers & G. Moriarty, 161–81. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Bennett, T. 2001. *Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity: Mapping the Policy Domain*. Vol. 7. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe.

Bourke, J., C. Smith, H. Stockton, and N. Wakefield. 2014. "From Diversity to Inclusion: Moving from Compliance to Diversity as a Business Strategy." Global Human Capital Trends 2014: Engaging the 21st Century Workforce. Accessed November 22, 2020. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2014/hc-trends-2014-diversity-to-inclusion.html.

Braden, S. 1978. *Artists and People*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul PLC.

Brook, O., D. O'Brien, and M. Taylor. 2020. *Culture is Bad for You*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Cole, J. 2021. *Opportunities at the Intersection: Advancing Racial Equity via Arts and Culture in the Public Sector*. NY: Grantmakers in the Arts.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6):1241–99. doi: 10.2307/1229039

Cuyler, A. 2013. "Affirmative Action and Diversity: Implications for Arts Management." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 43 (2):98–105.doi: 10.1080/10632921.2013.786009

Cuyler, A. 2015. "An Exploratory Study of Demographic Diversity in the Arts Management Workforce." *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader* 26 (3):16–9.

DataArts. 2017. *The Demographics of the Arts and Cultural Workforce in Los Angeles County*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

DataArts. 2019. *Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture 2019 Workforce Demographics Study Results*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

DeVos Institute of Arts Management. 2015. *Diversity in the Arts: The past, Present, and Future of African American and Latino Musuems, Dance Companies, and Theater Companies*. Washington, DC: University of Maryland.

Evrard, Y. 1997. "Democratizing Culture or Cultural Democracy?" *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 27 (3):167–75. doi: 10.1080/10632929709596961

Girard, A. 1972. *Cultural Development: Experiences and Policies*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

Goodwin, M. 2020. "Populism isn't About Class." Accessed April 5, 2022. https://unherd.com/2020/02/populism-isnt-about-class/

Gross, J. 2021. "Practices of Hope: Care, Narrative and Cultural Democracy." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27 (1):1–15. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2019.1702032

Gross, J., and N. Wilson. 2020. "Cultural Democracy: An Ecological and Capabilities Approach." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 26 (3):328–43. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2018.1538363

Hadley, S. 2018. "Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for Everyone." *Cultural Trends* 27 (1):52–5. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2018.1415417

Hadley, S. 2021. *Audience Development and Cultural Policy*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Hadley, S., and E. Belfiore. 2018. "Cultural Democracy and Cultural Policy." *Cultural Trends* 27 (3):218–23. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2018.1474009

Heidelberg, B. 2017. "Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts: A Literature Snapshot." *American Journal of Arts Management* 5 (1):1–8.

Heidelberg, B. 2019a. "Learning from Negative Space: Categorizing Success in Arts Policy Entrepreneurship." *Artivate* 8 (1):23–44. doi: 10.1353/artv.2019.0011

Heidelberg, B. 2019b. "Evaluating Equity: Assessing Diversity Efforts through a Social Justice Lens." *Cultural Trends* 28 (5):391–403. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2019.1680002

Heidelberg, B. 2020. "Artful Avoidance: Initial Considerations for Measuring Diversity Resistance in Cultural Organizations." In *Diversity Resistance in Organizations*, edited by K. M. Thomas, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Heidelberg, B. 2022. "Theorizing Street Cred: Exploring the Impact of Barriers to Entry and Advancement of (Hopeful) Black Arts Administrators." In *Arts Management, Cultural Policy, & the African Diaspora*, edited by A. C. Cuyler. New York: Springer.

Kammen, M. 1996. "Culture and the State in America." *The Journal of American History* 83 (3):791–814. doi: 10.2307/2945640.

Kelly, O. 1984. *Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels*. London: Comedia.

Kelly, O. 1985. "In Search of Cultural Democracy." Arts Express, October.

Kelly, O., J. Lock, and K. Merkel. 1986. *Culture and Democracy: The Manifesto*. London: Comedia.

LA County Arts Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) Report. 2017. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture.

Matarasso, F. 2018. "A (very short) History of the British Community Arts Movement" https://arestlessart.com/2018/03/08/a-very-short-history-of-the-british-community-arts-movement/

Matarasso, F., and C. Landry. 1999. *Balancing Act: Twenty-One Strategic Dilemmas in Cultural Policy*. Cultural Policies Research and Development Unit Policy Note No. 4. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing

Matlon, M. P., I. Van Haastrecht, and KWittig Mengüç. 2014. *Figuring the Plural: Needs and Supports of Canadian and US Ethnocultural Arts Organizations*. Chicago, IL: School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Mathews, J., and H. De. 1975. "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy." *The Journal of American History* 62 (2):316–39. doi: 10.2307/1903257

Miles, A., and L. Gibson. 2016. "Everyday Participation and Cultural Value." *Cultural Trends* 25 (3):151–7. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2016.1204043

Movement for Cultural Democracy. 2018. "Manifesto for Cultural Democracy." Accessed November 22, 2020. http://culturaldemocracy.uk/.

Mulcahy, K. V. 2006. "Cultural Policy: Definitions and Theoretical Approaches." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 35 (4):319–30. doi: 10.3200/JAML.35.4.319-330

Neelands, J., E. Belfiore, C. Firth, N. Hart, L. Perrin, S. Brock, and J. Woddis. 2015. *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth*. Coventry: University of Warwick.

Okuno, E. 2015. "Equity Matters." Accessed November 22, 2020. https://fakequity.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/fakiequit5.jpg.

Reiser, M. 1980. "The Arts and the Community: An Exploration of Community Arts Councils in Their American Cultural Context." Unpublished diss., Brandeis University.

Rosenstein, C. 2018. *Understanding Cultural Policy*. London: Routledge.

Schonfeld, R., and M. Westermann. 2015. *Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey*. New York: The Mellon Foundation.

Schonfeld, R., and L. Sweeney. 2016. *Diversity in the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Community*. New York: The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Community.

Shaw, R., and G. Shaw. 1992. "The Cultural and Social Setting." In *Modern Britain: The Cambridge Cultural History*, edited by B. Ford. CUP: Cambridge.

Sidford, H. 2011. "Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change: High Impact Strategies for Philanthropy." In *Philanthropy at Its Best: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*, 1–44.

Simpson, J. A. 1976. *Towards Cultural Democracy*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Upchurch, A. 2016. *The Origins of the Arts Council Movement*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

U.S. Committee on Government Operations, House Report No. 678. 1990. *Pluralism in Cultural Institutions Receiving Federal Funds*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

U.S. National Council on the Arts. 1978. *Hispanic Americans and the Arts: Report of the Task Force on Hispanic American Arts*. Washington, DC: National Council on the Arts.

Voss, Z., A. M. Gan, L. Phillips, C. Anagnos, and A. D. Wade. 2014. *The Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships*. Washington, DC: Association of Art Museum Directors.

Waade, A. M. 1997. "Cultural Project Management and Cultural Democracy in a Nordic Context." In *From Maestro to Manager: Critical Issues in Arts and Culture Management*, edited by M. Fitzgibbon and A. Kelly. Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

Wilson, N., J. Gross, and A. Bull. 2017. "Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for Everyone." King's College, London. Accessed November 22, 2020. https://www.kcl.ac.uk/Cultural/-/Projects/Towards-cultural-democracy.aspx