

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Edinburgh		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 (Art & Design: History, Practice and Theory)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Challenging Inequality in the Creative and Cultural Industries		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2016 – 31 December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Dave O'Brien	Chancellor's Fellow	O'Brien (November 2016–ongoing)
Dr Orian Brook	Research Fellow	Brook (March 2019 – ongoing)
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016 – 31 December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>O'Brien's research into British creative and cultural industries (CCIs) demonstrated the extent of class inequalities within the creative and cultural workforce and in cultural participation. This research catalysed culture changes within six leading cultural institutions including British Film Institute (BFI), the Barbican, Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries Scheme (WJCB), Arts Emergency, Create London and the Young Vic Theatre, leading to transformations in hiring practices, programming and commissioning. The research directly influenced Arts Council England's 2020 10-year strategy, <i>Let's Create</i>.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>O'Brien and his collaborators (Brook, Friedman, Oakley, Laurison, Taylor, Campbell, McAndrew) have pioneered research on CCIs, focused on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social class inequality and low levels of social mobility.</li> <li>2. Institutional structures and mechanisms through which inequalities operate and are reproduced.</li> <li>3. Relationships between policy and inequalities.</li> </ol> <p>This research used statistical evidence drawn from the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey and Longitudinal Study, British Social Attitudes Survey, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part Survey, The Audience Agency's Audience Finder dataset, The British Election Study and bespoke interview and web-survey datasets.</p> <p>The research generated the following insights:</p> <p><b>1. Under-representation of working-class people within CCIs is a longstanding problem, intersecting with other forms of discrimination</b></p> <p>O'Brien's research revealed that low levels of social mobility in the CCI workforce result from over-representation of individuals from middle class origin and under-representation of those from working class origins [3.1]. The worsening of this problem dates to the early 1980s [3.2].</p>		

Investigation into the intersection of class with other demographic characteristics revealed the systematic exclusion of working-class origin women of colour from cultural and creative institutions and workforces.

## 2. Normative structures and values reproduce workforce inequality within CCIs

O'Brien's research revealed the unwritten norms that govern hiring and how they lead to reduced opportunities for people of colour, women, and those from working-class origins as compared to their white, male, middle-class peers [3.3].

The research interrogated how these norms relate to workers' values and suggested that although CCI workers are ostensibly the most liberal, left-wing, and pro-meritocratic occupational group in the UK [3.4] they are unlikely to challenge inequalities and instead uphold a distinctive set of tastes by which they cohere as a social group. This leads to the reproduction of existing patterns of exclusion and barriers to entry [3.5].

The findings of the above research outputs informed O'Brien's report, *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* [3.6], which offers a practical toolkit for CCIs on achieving sustainable institutional change. Produced in collaboration with Create London, Arts Emergency and The Barbican, it involved 110 UK organisations and almost 300 hours of interviews with creative professionals. The report brought together large-scale national datasets on social mobility alongside industry-specific information to offer new insights into the tastes, values and engagement of cultural workers, including:

1. Barriers to entry are intensified by the prevalence of unpaid work in the sector.
2. The best paid workers (usually middle-upper class) believe success in CCIs is determined by talent and effort.
3. The scale of social inequalities in the sector is not recognised in current debate.
4. The CCI workforce has lower representations of working class and BAME employees than other sectors.
5. Inequalities have worsened since the 1980s.

The report concluded with the following recommendations:

1. Socio-economic (SE) background should be given same consideration as ethnicity, disability, gender in recruitment and career development.
2. Institutions should measure and report on SE diversity, stop offering unpaid and unadvertised job opportunities and create more inclusive work culture and recruitment processes.

## 3. References to the research

- 3.1. Oakley, K., Laurison, D., O'Brien, D. and Friedman, S. (2017). 'Cultural Capital: Arts Graduates, Spatial Inequality, and London's Impact on Cultural Labor Markets'. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(12), 1510-1531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217734274>
- 3.2. Brook, O., O'Brien, D., and Taylor, M. (2020). *Culture is bad for you: Inequality in the cultural and creative industries*. Manchester University Press. ISBN: 978-1-5261-4416-4 (Submitted in REF2)

- 3.3. Friedman, S. and O'Brien, D. (2017). 'Resistance and Resignation: Responses to Typecasting in British Acting'. *Cultural Sociology*, 11(3), 359-376. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975517710156>
- 3.4. O'Brien, D. and Taylor, M. (2017). 'Culture is a meritocracy: Why creative workers' attitudes may reinforce social inequality'. *Sociological Research Online* 22(4), 27-47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780417726732> (nominated for the SAGE Prize for Innovation and Excellence)
- 3.5. Campbell, P., O'Brien, D. and Taylor, M. (2019). 'Cultural Engagement and the Economic Performance of the Cultural and Creative Industries: An Occupational Critique'. *Sociology* 53(2), 347-367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518772737>
- 3.6. Brook, O., O'Brien, D. and Taylor, M. (2018). *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries*. London. Available at <https://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf>

#### 4. Details of the impact

O'Brien's research has transformed perceptions and led to new practices and policies within the following CCIs:

##### Create London

As a result of O'Brien's research, Create London confirm that they have become more aware of class and socio-economic backgrounds of the artists they work with and the makeup of their team and board. They have initiated culture and policy change including a rewritten E&D policy addressing issues including auditing, recruitment, training and promotion. Consequently, their advertising of a Senior curator position in autumn 2019 resulted in an all-female shortlist of 6, 4 of whom were BAME, and the subsequent appointment of a working-class British Asian woman. Create also sought out new trustees from under-represented backgrounds, leading to the recruitment of a BAME female trustee in 2019. They stated that the *Panic! Report* 'will continue to be a touchstone and resource to turn to' as they reshape their team [5.1].

Create went on to develop several positive action traineeships including:

1. *A House for Artists*, providing affordable community housing for working-class and BAME artists between 23 – 70 years old.
2. The *Artist development residency*, creating new opportunities for under-represented groups.
3. *Interchange*, a youth-led innovation lab for young people wanting to start a career in the cultural and creative sector.
4. *Space for the Self-Made*, a podcast addressing adversities felt by people of colour in the arts and creative industries.
5. Rethinking the *Create Jobs* scheme, a training and recruitment programme for young Londoners from diverse backgrounds aiming to start careers in the creative and cultural industries.

The *Panic!* report has also been 'an invaluable tool' in Create's establishment of ongoing relationships with arts organisations 'to bring the findings of [the *Panic!*] report to a wider audience in the sector.' *Panic!* partners - Create, the Barbican, Goldsmiths University and The

Guardian - offered work placements for twenty young people to 'demonstrate the huge positive impact young people from a range of backgrounds can have on organisations.' The Barbican organised an InFocus day of talks, seminars and workshops as part of its *Art of Change* season in June 2018. 'The day was well attended and widely shared and discussed' [5.1].

### **Arts Emergency**

The CEO of the charity Arts Emergency confirms that the *Panic!* Report influenced mentoring schemes run in London, Liverpool and Manchester in 'fundamental ways', leading them 'to redevelop our eligibility criteria' and widen access for young people to creative careers. The 'regional data and demonstration of need outside of London' supported expansion to a nationwide project, 'informing our strategy for many years to come. We have a list of 12 towns and cities thanks to this project' [5.2.]

### **Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries (WJCBS)**

The Director of WJCBS commented that O'Brien's research 'has educated me and my team on some of the details and nuance behind headline data on inequalities in the arts, and allowed us to feel empowered and supported by evidence to make changes to the way we work as an organization day to day, but crucially also make changes to how we design and deliver our programs' [5.3].

A report authored by O'Brien, commissioned by WJCBS [5.4], highlighted the importance of understanding how 'structural and institutional inequalities and barriers play out at an individual level' and of culture change within the organisation towards more inclusive working practices. This led the organisation to develop a new 'dual' model of targeted intervention to improve socio-economic diversity and inclusion in the arts and cultural sector. It also underpinned a unique set of national partnerships involving 50 arts and cultural organisations and 200 people in a £1.5m 24-month training programme. It was a 'strong influence' on WJCB's 2019 socio-economic diversity toolkit, which 90% of applicants to the programme cited as an important resource and which has become the blueprint for all 50 host organisations taking part in the WJCB programme [5.3].

O'Brien's research also influenced WJCB's design of two new pilot programmes for curators, artists and creatives from lower socio-economic backgrounds, changing the organisational development support and tailoring funding to produce a more aligned and connected journey for people on the programme [5.3].

### **Young Vic**

The Associate Artistic Director of the Young Vic writes that O'Brien's ongoing industry-wide research has contributed to the theatre's reputation as sector leaders in equal opportunities data gathering and recruitment practices. It 'influenced, inspired, challenged our thinking' and 'changed the questions we asked.' 'Without the impact of his knowledge we would not have moved so resolutely or quickly to make change.' It has also proved useful in light of COVID-19 crisis by supporting thinking about a salary support fund, helping them 'to chart a [...] way forward that has proved successful.' [5.5]

### **Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee**

Appointed first in 2018 and subsequently during 2019-2020, as a POST Parliamentary Academic Fellow, funded by the ESRC Impact Accelerator Account, O'Brien's work shaped the Select Committee's inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport. I: 'His evidence stood out because it addressed an issue that wasn't really explored in many other submissions

and contributed to the Committee's conclusion [that] the Covid-19 crisis presents the biggest threat to the UK's cultural infrastructure, institutions and workforce in a generation' [5.6].

### **Arts Council England (ACE)**

The Director of Research for Arts Council England noted that, 'O'Brien's research has been significant in shaping ACE's ten-year strategy *Let's Create* (2020-2030). In response to O'Brien's research, 'we will ensure that our programmes meet the needs of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who have traditionally had least access to our resources'. This will involve, from 2019, surveying socio economic backgrounds of employees within ACEs national portfolio organisations. The report has strongly influenced the way in which ACE now collects data on class and socio-economic origins of its employees. Arts Council England committed to sharing the WJCB report with their National Portfolio Organisations to introduce measurement of socio-economic background in equal opportunities monitoring forms. This measure is being introduced for all their funded organisations (over 800 in England) over the course of 2020 and will be mandatory for NPOs from 2021 [5.7].

O'Brien's research also fed into ACE's 2019 report 'Equality, Diversity and the creative Case', which marks a milestone in the drive to establish socio-economic background as a key criterion for measuring sector diversity' [5.7].

## **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

5.1. Testimonial from Create London

5.2. Testimonial from Arts Emergency

5.3. Testimonial from Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries, including references to resulting report and toolkit

5.4. Thinking about Social Mobility: A briefing paper for the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries Programme

5.5. Testimonial from Young Vic Theatre

5.6. Testimonial from DCMS Select Committee

5.7. Testimonial from Arts Council England