

“Practice, Entrepreneurship and Subjectivity in Artist Identification with Applications to the Covid-Era”

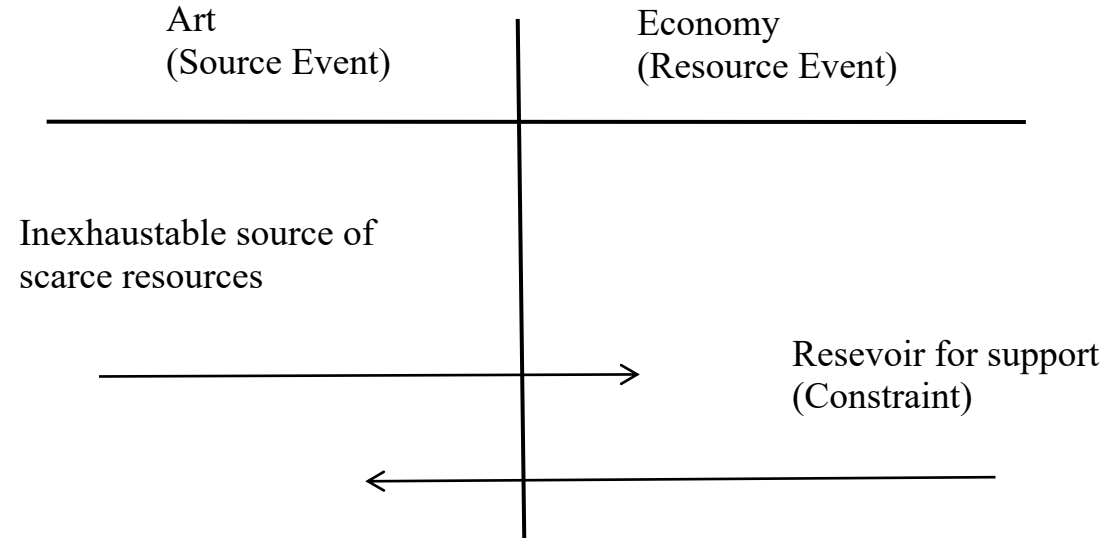
Cameron M. Weber, Ying Zhen and JJ Arias

6th North American Workshop on Cultural Economics



“Practice, Entrepreneurship and Subjectivity in Artist Identification with Applications to the Covid-Era”

Exchange of Value Between Art and the Economy



From Hutter 1996

“Practice, Entrepreneurship and Subjectivity in Artist Identification
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Research is for

*Artists and Markets in Music: The Political Economy of Music During
the Covid-Era and Beyond* (Routledge 2023)

Looking forward to your comments

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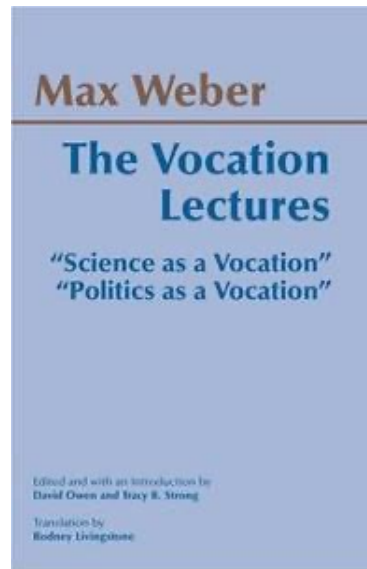
Two main sections of paper

- 1) Preliminary findings from our musician survey based on artist-self-identification to test several propositions in cultural economics
- 2) Critique orthodox economic “science” of experts from *political economy* lens, especially related to the United States

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Art becomes a professional vocation only in the 20th century

Artists may treat art more as an avocation than a vocation



Weber 1919

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About our survey method

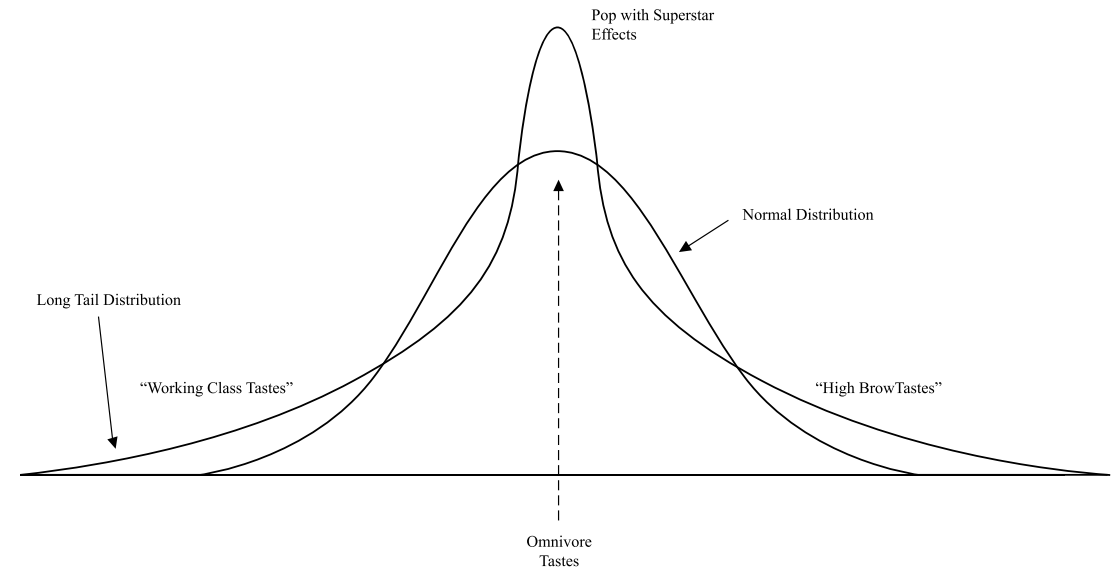
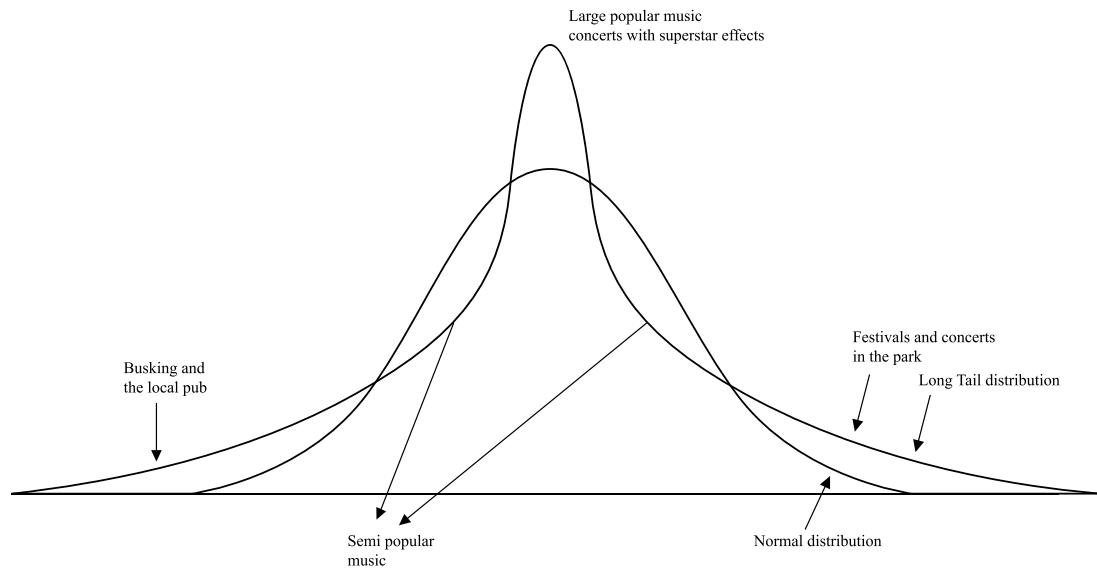
Industrial classification methods can misclassify those who consider themselves artists into non-art occupation categories (see, Alper and Wassall 2006)



Artists tend to see themselves as self-employed entrepreneurs and work for others only to the point needed to subsidize their own art practice (see, Throsby 1994)

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Industrial Classification methods may under report long tail distributions in the Supply and Demand for music



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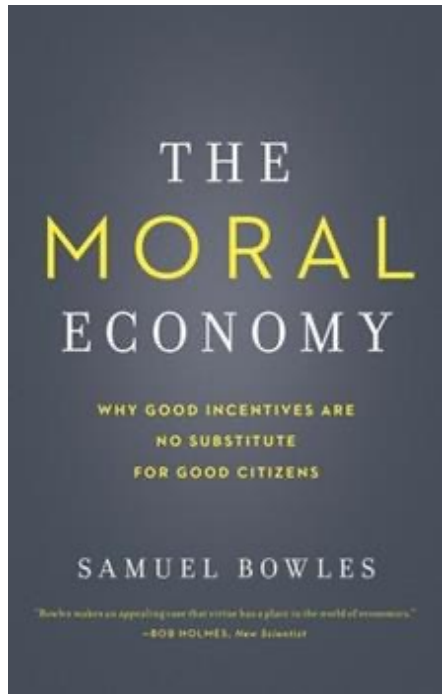
About our survey method

Surveys may use databases of arts organizations [Recording Association] and/or paid list-providers [American List Council (ALC) now Adstra]

This creates pre-selection problems as tend to capture only more established artists (in the normal distribution)

Understates competition and avocation

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Bowles 2016

To help correct for potential errors in orthodox data-collection

We use artist self-identification as sole-criteria for determining who is or is not an artist (musician)

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About Our Survey Method:

‘Snowball sampling’ method, using [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)

We didn’t use social media, e.g. distributed by word of mouth

Respondents were unpaid

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Cultural Economics Musician's Survey

Welcome to Our Survey

Thank you for your interest. This is part of research we are doing on the lives and well-being of musicians, especially during the last two years of the covid-era. The survey should take about 5 minutes. We will not share your personal responses with anyone and all questions are voluntary.

The survey results will be part of our book *Artists and Markets in Music: The Political Economy of Music During the Covid-Era and Beyond*, by Ying Zhen, JJ Arias and Cameron Weber (Routledge 2023). We would be happy to share the summary survey results with you.

Open from January – August 2022
(studentsoftheworld.info)

34 questions

99% completion rate

Ave time to complete 7.5 mins

115 respondents

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Research questions and preliminary findings

The sample (115 respondents) is not large enough to make general claims

We can only give a ‘first look’ of insights

Madden (2004, Pew Research Center) finds musician a particularly difficult “class” of people from which to gain information

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Research questions and preliminary findings

Cultural Economics Musician's Survey

1. How long have you considered yourself a musician? 

0 Number of Years 75 

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The SAD production function for music (Cameron 2015, 2016)



$$Q = f(K, L, S, A, D)$$

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Testing the SAD production function for music

	Do you think <i>serendipity</i> plays a role in the success of a musical artist?	Do you think <i>authenticity</i> plays a role in the success of a musical artist?
# of Respondents	115	114
Extremely Important	17%	22%
Very Important	35%	44%
Somewhat Important	37%	25%
Not So Important	9%	6%
Not at all Important	3%	2%

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Testing the SAD production function for music

	Do you use stimulants (tea, coffee, marijuana, wine, liquor, etc.) as part of the creative process?
# of Respondents	115
A great deal	9%
A lot	18%
A moderate amount	23%
A little	22%
None at all	22%

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Proxy for entrepreneurial-orientation of practice

	How much do you agree with this statement, "Good art can come from bad times"?	
		Those who find union membership is extremely or very important for success
	All Respondents	
# of Respondents	114	8
Strongly agree	38%	38%
Agree	41%	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	25%
Disagree	1%	0%
Strongly disagree	2%	12%

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Insights into the covid-era

10. How have you been doing *creatively* during the last two years of the covid-era?

Better than before covid-era Worse than before covid-era

11. How have you been doing *economically* during the covid-era?

Better than before covid-era Worse than before covid-era

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Insights into the covid-era

	Better or Worse <i>Creatively</i> During Covid-Era?	Better or Worse <i>Economically</i> During Covid-Era?
All Respondents		
Ordinal response ("0" = Better, "100"=Worse)	52	56
(# of respondents)	(115)	(115)
Serendipity	56 (59)	56 (59)
Authenticity	52 (75)	57 (74)
Drugs	49 (30)	55 (30)
Entrepreneurship	52 (77)	57 (77)
Union	58 (8)	77 (8)

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Insights into the covid-era

	Streaming More or Less During Covid-Era?	More or Less Time for Creativity During Covid-Era?
All Respondents		
Ordinal response ("0" = More, "100"=Less)	45	38
(# of respondents)	(104)	(113)
Serendipity	43 (52)	40 (58)
Authenticity	46 (70)	38 (73)
Drugs	39 (26)	46 (29)
Entrepreneurship	44 (71)	39 (76)
Union	47 (7)	53 (8)

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On education and longevity in the arts (see, Bille and Jensen 2018)

	All Respondents	<15 Years as Musician	>14 Years as Musician
# of Respondents	114	24	88
Ave. Years as Musician	28	6	35
<i>Do you think formal education is important in the success of a musical artist?</i>			
Extremely Important	5%	4%	4%
Very Important	13%	17%	13%
Somewhat Important	43%	33%	43%
Not So Important	30%	33%	29%
Not at all Important	10%	13%	10%

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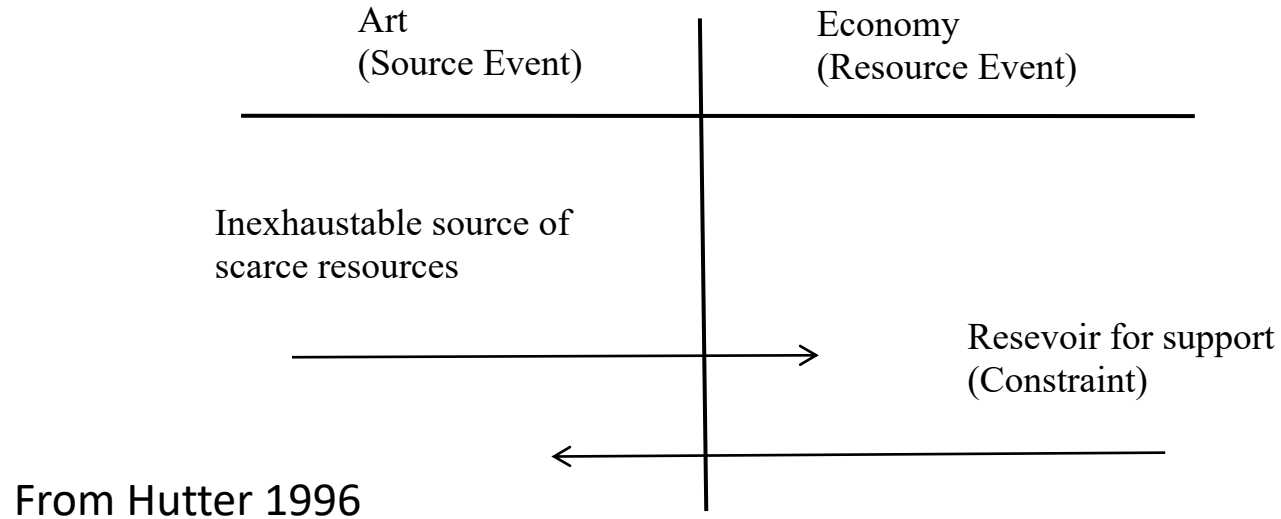
On education and non-art income (see, Throsby 1994 and Alper & Vassal 2006)

	Respondents Declaring that Education is Not Extremely or Very Important in Success	Respondents Declaring that Education is Extremely or Very Important in Success
# of Respondents	93	21
1. Average Income	\$55,000	\$38,000
2. Music Income Only	\$8,000	\$8,000
3. Non-Music Income (1-2)	\$47,000	\$30,000
% of Income which is Non-Music Income (3/1)	86%	79%

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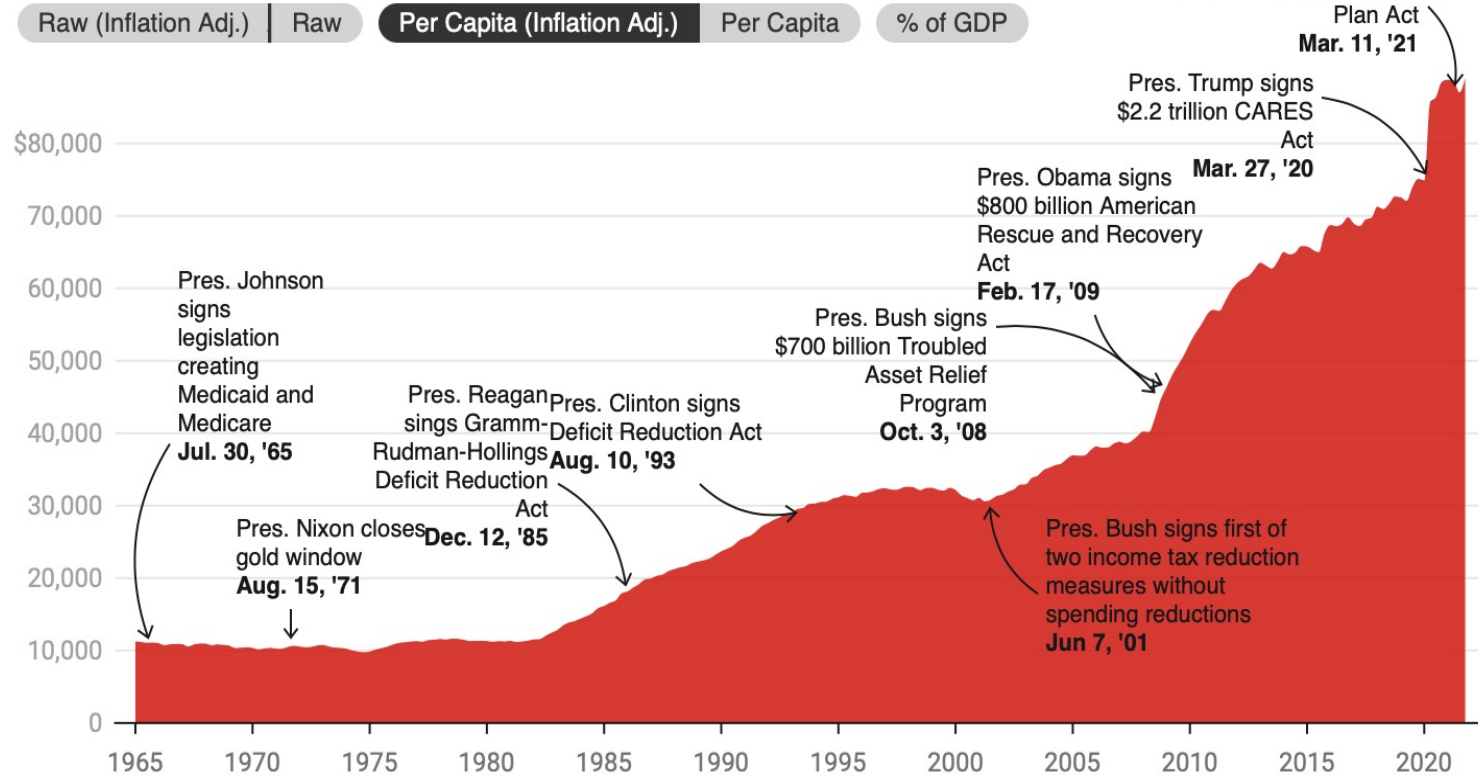
We propose that orthodox economic practice is problematic for the future flourishing of arts & culture.

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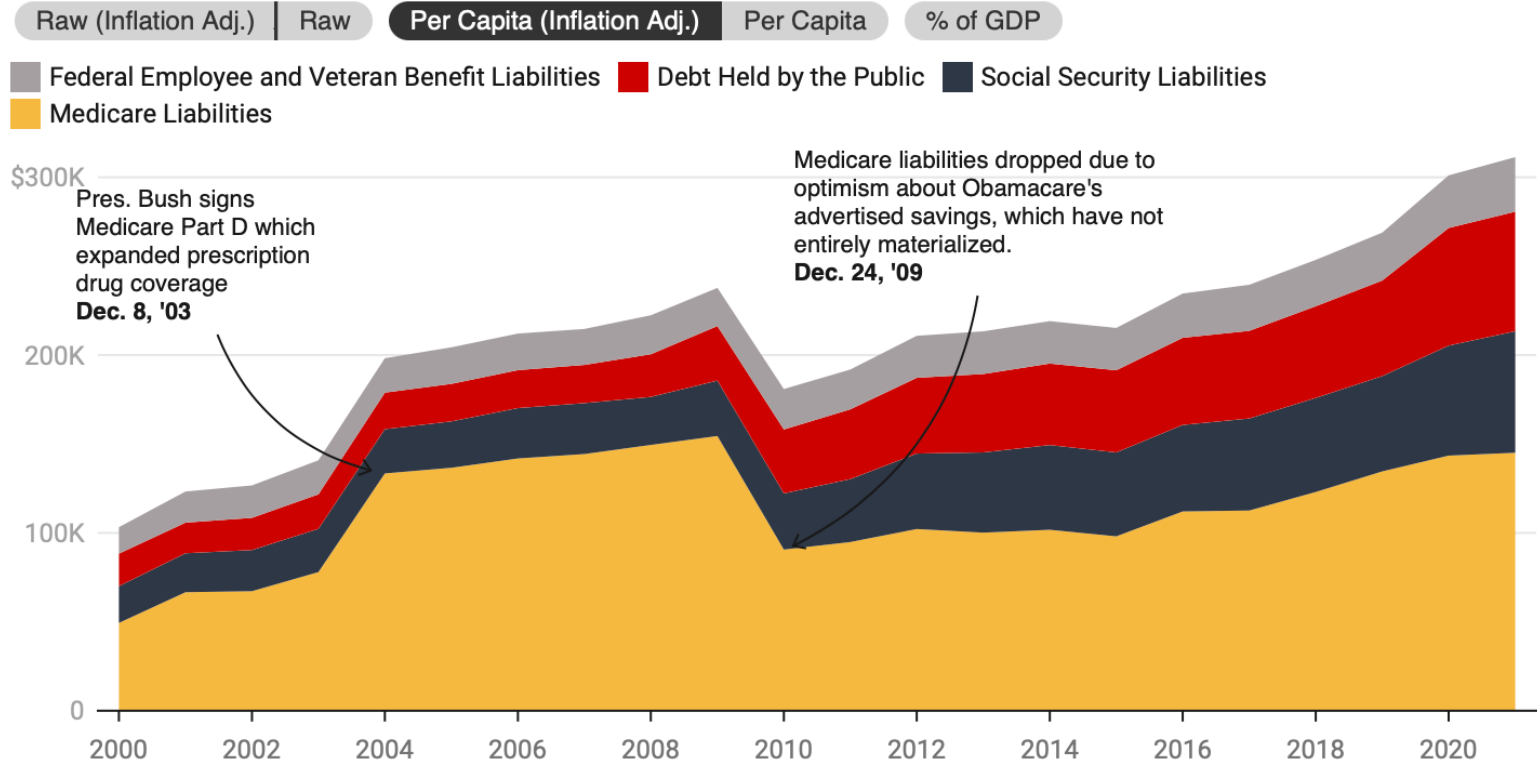
National Debt (Per Capita, Inflation Adjusted)



Source: Reason Foundation • Embed

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Overall Federal Liabilities (Per Capita, Inflation Adjusted)



Source: [Reason Foundation](#) • [Embed](#)

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Conclusion

Our preliminary survey results imply that serendipity, free-association, is valued by artists (musicians) and that artists (musicians) are entrepreneurial-oriented and intrinsically self-motivated

A thriving economy allows thriving arts

“Serendipity is problematic in an organized market” (Samuel Cameron 2016, 6).

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Thank you !

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and Beyond* (Routledge 2023)

cameroneconomics.com