

LOCALLY EMBEDDED ARTISTIC CAREERS:
CAREER SATISFACTION AND INTRINSIC REWARDS IN CREATIVE CORE CITIES

By

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1. Introduction

Artistic activity has historically exhibited a high degree of spatial concentration in a few core cultural centers (Menger, 1999), and artists have long shaped the economic and cultural destinies of cities such as New York and Los Angeles (Zukin, 1995; Currid-Halkett, 2008). In return, such cities confer various social, symbolic, and economic resources to artists (Lloyd, 2002, 2004; Pinheiro and Dowd, 2009; Dowd and Pinheiro, 2013). Aspiring artists move to these cities as a rite of passage, for formal arts training, or as an informal occupational credential (Blau, 1992; Hall 1998). However, despite the appeal of major cultural centers, most artists live outside of major cultural centers, in “second cities” and non-metropolitan areas (Markusen, 2013). Researchers in the sociology of creative work have begun to emphasize geographic variation in artistic careers (Oakley, Laurison, O’Brien, & Friedman, 2017).

Cultural hubs offer certain opportunities and resources to artists. However, it is unclear how technological advancements in communication and the increasing cost of urban living—which forces artists to secure precarious side jobs—have altered this dynamic (Lingo and Tepper, 2013; Markusen, 2013). How does the artist’s relationship to place impact self-reported job satisfaction?

Digitization, rising urban rents, and globalization have called into question the role of place in knowledge-based fields, especially those involving creative production. Such trends open new opportunities for deeper and democratized artistic exchange (Walmsley, 2016). However, artists, whose careers are typically precarious (Menger, 1999; Lingo and Tepper, 2013) face isolation from peers (Barley and Kunda, 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010; Lingo and Tepper, 2013) and professional networks that are more informal and entrepreneurial (Cornfield, 2015).

This article investigates the relationship between artists, place, and work satisfaction in the digital era. By analyzing 24,437 responses from the 2015 – 2017 edition of the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)—the largest survey of American arts alumni ever conducted—this article bridges the literatures on artistic careers and job satisfaction. These data are significant because, unlike the majority of datasets concerning artistic work, the SNAAP dataset is able to for self-employed artists by sampling on alumni institutions, rather than by current employment. Research on artistic ideals and work (Kalleberg, 1977; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010; Gerber, 2017) guides this article in operationalizing detailed work satisfaction measures as indicators of artistic success. This research provides insight into satisfaction metrics of non-metropolitan artists, a highly understudied population, and thereby gives clearer insight into the divide between urban and rural cultures and informs our understanding of project-based and precarious labor.

2. Literature Review

Artistic labor markets and job satisfaction

Artistic labor markets are well-documented as having abnormal logics of labor supply. Artists are motivated by the intrinsic rewards of their work, such as creative expression and autonomy, (Bourdieu, 1984; Menger, 1999; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2013; Oakley et al., 2017; Gerber, 2017) but they tend to earn less, on average, relative to other similarly educated occupations (Alper and Wassall, 1992; Throsby, 1994). Furthermore, although artistic careers are remarkably uncertain, the astonishing success of a few lucky and talented individuals lures aspiring creatives into these fields (Menger, 1999; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2013). The ever-increasing pool of artist aspirants outpaces the demand for artists, creating an oversupply of artists and rising employment as well as unemployment (Menger, 1999).

Given these perils, why would someone choose a career in the arts? Artists are motivated by non-monetary “psychic” rewards that offset the meager financial prospects of artistic careers (Menger, 1999; Frenette, 2016). “Cool” jobs in the arts draw large pools of aspirants, who are quickly churned out by typically precarious working conditions (Frenette and Ocejó, 2019). Whereas most jobs tend to be motivated by extrinsic qualities—steady incomes and career advancement (Kalleberg, 1977)—artists tend to be motivated by intrinsic qualities, such as heightened freedom of expression, variation of work routines, a high level of personal autonomy and self-actualization, idiosyncratic ways of life, a strong sense of occupational community, and the prospect of artistic success that would confer uncommon social and economic benefits (Menger, 1999; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2013).

Investigating the historically precarious work of artists has fruitful implications for studying other groups. As the modern economy increasingly shifts toward a post-Fordist standard of precarious working conditions (Standing, 1999; Kalleberg, 2009), scholars have begun to refer to artists as a “canary in the coal mine.” (Lingo and Tepper, 2013; Skaggs, 2019). As the US further transitions into a knowledge-based, creative economy, workers are increasingly called on to become more “artistic”—that is, engage in occupations more creative, more expressive, and more autonomous, but far more precarious and less tied to a certain locale (Florida, 2002). For this reason, artists are an instructive case for understanding the effect of place on the job satisfaction of creatives.

Job satisfaction refers to the affective orientation of a worker to his or her present job roles (Kalleberg, 1977). Because of the characteristics of artistic careers mentioned above, traditional indicators of job satisfaction such as high incomes and stability are rare. Despite this, artists report unusually high levels of job satisfaction relative to non-artists (Steiner and Schneider, 2012). Throsby (1994) finds that artists have different criteria for job satisfaction; they receive utility from their work, rather than disutility, which is assumed in most economic

models of job satisfaction. Rather than finding fulfillment in the extrinsic qualities of labor, like money, security, and work-life balance, artists find satisfaction in the intrinsic qualities of their employment, like creative self-expression and having a positive effect in the community. In this way, artists may resemble other low-paying “passion jobs” like teaching or care work (England, 2005; Frenette, 2013).

The artist in the city

Why do artists move to core cultural hubs (Menger, 1999)? Artists have a symbiotic relationship to such locales: they drive local economies and benefit from their location. Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) are more likely to be found in cities (Hall, 1998), and artistic activity has historically shown a high level of spatial concentration in these areas. Cultural workers co-locate for community, communication, and increased economic opportunity (Currid-Halkett, 2008).

Research on artistic careers notes a variety of reasons for moving to major cultural centers. Many of these reasons rest upon the assumption that that large population centers with robust arts economies—notably New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago—provide numerous opportunities for networking and production (Becker, 1984; Lloyd, 2004; Currid-Halkett, 2008; Dowd and Pinheiro, 2013). Famously, Becker (1984) highlights the complex infrastructure underlying artistic creation, emphasizing the importance of support personnel, or the web of non-artistic roles that aid in the creation of art. As well, cities provide artists close access to the art world required for production and thick labor markets, where there is an excess of potential employers relative to places without cultural hubs (Florida, 2002). Such rich arts centers give artists a greater potential to amass social capital, economic capital, and critical success (Pinheiro and Dowd, 2007; Dowd and Pinheiro, 2013) Certain neighborhoods within cities are, in effect, quasi-institutional bodies which confer symbolic capital and material resources to

burgeoning artists (Lloyd, 2004). Cities play a central role in the idealized myth of the artist. Simply identifying with a prominent arts center imbues an artist and their product with symbolic value. For example, it is common for country artists across the US to invoke Nashville's Music Row, an area well-known and respected among musicians, in promotional material.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (2019) reports there are 2.5 million professional artists in the US, as well as over 5 million workers in the arts and creative industries. Although New York and California have the highest numbers of artists, many other states surpass the national average, indicating the existence of robust arts economies outside of cultural hubs like New York City and Los Angeles (NEA, 2019; Shaw, 2014).

What factors might predispose artists to live outside major urban cultural cores? Markusen (2013) shows us that the majority of American artists work outside Los Angeles and New York City. Individuals often leave cultural centers for smaller cities or rural areas after completing an education or "burning out" in the intense, expensive conditions of cultural centers (Markusen, 2013; Ocejo, 2017). Furthermore, as residents perceive their city as becoming less gritty and gentrified, and thus inauthentic, they may lose their attachment to place (Zukin, 2009). Second cities like Boston, Seattle, Miami, and Nashville also boast high concentrations of artists due to the presence of magnet industries like music or film (Shaw, 2014). As well, these second cities offer reduced competition, more affordable costs of living, and a higher quality of life for many artists (Lingo and Tepper, 2013).

Although the high costs of living and congestion in all these urban areas present a real problem to creatives, the rise of the internet and digital technologies provides a partial solution. As cultural entrepreneurs, artists are often tasked with mobilizing alternative forms of capital for conversion into cultural intermediary interest and economic capital (Scott, 2012). Because it is no longer necessary to live close to collaborators and employers (Markusen and Schrock, 2006), artists are increasingly able to create and share their art with collaborators and

consumers in isolation (Lingo and Tepper, 2013). Walmsley (2016) finds that digital engagement helps artists by facilitating audience engagement, better contextualizing artistic creation, and developing new audiences. The increasing digitization of artistic tools and networks allows artists to practice their craft outside of traditional spaces. For example, thirty years ago, a musician might have paid thousands of dollars to book time at a studio, hire other musicians, and record their work. Today, musicians are able to create digital recordings for a fraction of the price. As well, modern musicians can bypass industry gatekeepers by streaming their music on platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and Tidal. Digitization also provides new platforms like Facebook and Soundcloud that allow for informal networking, risk socialization, and collaboration (Cornfield, 2015; Gilbert, 2018; Skaggs, 2019), as well as for the creation of emergent DIY genres like “bedroom pop” or “Soundcloud rap.”

The benefits of this technology, however, are not limited to musicians. The tattoo artistry has been radically changed by the emergence of the internet (Kosut, 2014). Tattoo artists increasingly rely on Instagram, a photo-centered social media website, as a space to publish their digital portfolio, find clients, and network with other artists. Likewise, poets often share and network on Instagram, which some credit for reviving the moribund poetry industry (Hill and Yuan, 2018).

Given the changing creative environment, it makes sense that individuals would increasingly use internet technology as a new alternative access point to social, symbolic, and cultural capitals. The internet and digital technologies have the potential to break the city’s monopoly of creative community and artistic resources. It is no longer necessary for an artist to live in proximity to an art supply shop if they can order supplies online. As many artists struggle to find balance between making a living and making art, the internet has revolutionized the ability of artists to manage their careers.

Drawing on data from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 waves of the SNAAP dataset, I test the relationship between artists' job satisfaction and perceptions of place, thus contributing to the literatures on job satisfaction and the role of place in creative production. After outlining hypotheses, data, and methods, I present descriptive statistics of my sample (table 1) and artist characteristics, stratified by location (table 2), to illustrate the socio-demographic variation between artists in cultural cores, second cities, and non-metropolitan locations. Next, through regression analysis, I examine artists' location as a predictor of positive place perception, finding, as we might expect, that artists in cities view their location as an exemplary place to pursue their craft. Once again utilizing a regression model, I show how artists in cultural cores are less likely to positively rate the intrinsic qualities of their work, which the literature would suggest are the main drivers of artistic labor. Finally, I discuss the implications of these findings in the context of the existing literatures on artistic labor and job satisfaction and conclude with policy implications and directions for future research.

Hypotheses

There is a strong cultural narrative of the artist in the city in part because, historically, cities have represented the dominant access point to resources and capitals necessary to pursue a career in the arts. Cities are alluring for aspiring artists. However, major arts centers like LA and NYC possess exceptional reputations among artists as places to practice art.

Therefore:

H1 – Artists in cities will be more likely than non-metropolitan artists to positively self-rate their area as a place to pursue their careers.

H2 – Artists in NYC and LA will be more likely than artists in non-central urban locations to positively self-rate their area as a place to pursue their careers.

Given (1) the abnormal logics of supply for artists and (2) the dominant narrative of city centers as being ideal access points for resources and capitals necessary to pursue an artistic career, we might think that artists in cities would be more likely to positively self-rate satisfaction with the intrinsic rewards of artistic labor. However, this effect is not clear because of the recent rise of digital access points to similar resources and capitals and the high costs of living in cities.

H3 - Artists living in cities will be less likely than non-urban artists to positively self-rate satisfaction with intrinsic rewards.

H4 – Artists living in NYC and LA will be less likely than artists in non-central major cities to positively self-rate satisfaction with intrinsic rewards.

Artists in cities face far more competition, higher costs of living, and higher rents than artists in non-metropolitan locations, meaning that they often have to take second jobs and sacrifice creative or expressive work (i.e. personal or community-centered projects) for more lucrative work (i.e. contract work, advertising, corporate design projects, etc...) (Currid, 2007; Zukin, 1989) . For artists in LA and NYC, competition, costs of living, and rents are even higher than other large cities. This increased attention to non-creative activity may force artists to act more traditionally entrepreneurial and emphasize extrinsic rewards, like income and opportunity for career advancement. Therefore:

H5 – Artists living in cities will be more likely than non-metropolitan artists to positively self-rate satisfaction with extrinsic rewards.

H6 – Artists living in NYC and LA will be more likely than artists in non-central major cities to positively self-rate satisfaction with extrinsic rewards.

3. Data and Methods

Sample and data

The data for this study came from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 waves of the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey, which were augmented with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2017 zip code to county crosswalk data set. Between 2015 and 2017, SNAAP partnered with arts high schools, art and design colleges and conservatories, and arts schools and departments within comprehensive colleges and universities to administer the survey to graduates. Participating institutions provided SNAAP with alumni contact information, and SNAAP sent survey links and up to four reminders by email. The average institutional response rate was 18%.

The target population of this study is currently employed, professional artists from undergraduate institutions. First, I removed any respondents who were currently living outside of the US at the time of the survey or who had incomplete or missing zip code information (N = 18,246; 22.32% of total). Then, I removed all non-active artists (N = 42,383; 51.75% of total). Finally, I restricted the sample to undergraduate alumni who completed a bachelor's degree in an arts-related field from 1976 to 2017, removing high school alumni and graduate students (N = 23,121; 28.23% of total). Once cleaned, the sample comprised 24,396 arts alumni from 110 undergraduate institutions (N = 24,396; 29.79% of total).¹

Variables

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for the variables in this study. The SNAAP survey asks respondents to "rate the current area where you live and/or work as a place to pursue your artistic career." This variable was then binarized (1 = good or very good, 0 = fair, poor, or very

¹ Many of these sample restrictions overlapped with other omitted groups. Therefore, the percent of total for each omitted group is not additive.

poor). As well, the SNAAP survey asked arts alumni to indicate their level of satisfaction with eight aspects of their current work. For the purpose of this study, I selected job satisfaction variables from survey questions that reflected the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of artists, as discussed earlier in this paper. To avoid mono-operation bias, I included two operationalizations of each intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are operationalized as “opportunity to be creative” and “opportunity to contribute to the greater good” (0 = very and somewhat dissatisfied, 1 = very and somewhat satisfied). Extrinsic rewards are operationalized as “Income satisfaction” and opportunity for career advancement” (0 = very and somewhat dissatisfied, 1 = very and somewhat satisfied). As well, a measure of general job satisfaction (0 = very and somewhat dissatisfied, 1 = very and somewhat satisfied) was included as a control variable in table 3.

To measure the location of respondents, the author created binary residency variables for New York City, Los Angeles, and non-arts center metropolitan areas from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2017 zip code to county crosswalk data set and the US Department of Agriculture’s 2013 Urban-Rural Continuum data set. New York City and Los Angeles are widely regarded as international culture centers. The non-arts center metropolitan area variable, which follows the Department of Agriculture’s definition for metropolitan areas, allows for the model to control out potentially conflating population or resource factors that are available in all large cities from the specific effects of living in creative core cities.

To account for demographic variation, the model includes variables for gender (1 = woman, 0 = man), racial diversity ((1 = Person of color, 0 = White), parental education (1 = first-generation college graduate, 0 = at least one parent with a college degree), and whether alumni had a parent or close relative who worked as a professional artist (1 = yes, 0 = no). Institutional measures included college major, special focus school attendance (1 = art or design school, 0 =

“traditional” college or university), and private school attendance (1 = private school, 0 = public school).

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics of Primary Variables (N = 24411)

	Mean/Prop.
Dependent variables	
Satisfaction with place for career	.75
Intrinsic: Opportunity to be creative	.88
Intrinsic: Income satisfaction	.68
Extrinsic: Opportunity to do contribute to the greater good	.82
Extrinsic: Opportunity for career advancement	.73
Independent Variables	
Non-metropolitan	.38
Non-central, major city	.45
LA or NYC	.17
Control Variables	
Person of color	.12
Woman	.57
Artist parent(s)	.22
Parents did not complete bachelors	.33
Age	43.46
Private school	.50
Special Focus school	.35
General job satisfaction	.91
<i>College major</i>	
Architecture and design	.43
Performing arts	.21
Fine and studio arts	.17
Media arts	.11
Arts education	.07

Analytic Strategy

The analysis of these data proceeded in two steps. First, I considered how socio-demographic characteristics, institutional characteristics, artistic field, and geographic location predicted respondents’ perceptions of their current area as a place to pursue their careers.

Next, I considered how those same characteristics affected respondents’ job satisfaction across

the mentioned above. Because respondents are nested in post-secondary institutions, the SNAAP data set violates the assumption of independence across institutions. Therefore, I used mixed effects logistic regression with robust standard errors to account for unmeasured institutional characteristics.

4. Results

This paper is principally concerned with two outcomes: artists' satisfaction with place and with characteristics of their job. Table 2 represents the demographic makeup of artists in NYC and LA versus other locations. It is immediately apparent that artists in these core locations tend to be more ethnically diverse, male, and young than sample averages. It is also remarkable that artists in our two major culture centers tend to be more privileged, as only 25.9% report having parents without a bachelor's degree relative to non-central urban (33.3%) and non-urban artists (34.8%). These findings are consistent with previous studies of urban artists (Oakley et al, 2017) Furthermore, artist training seems to deviate significantly based on location. Among NYC and LA artists, college majors in architecture and design (35.9%), fine and studio (11.7%), and arts education (1.4%) represent significantly smaller proportions of artists in the total population (43.5%, 17.1%, and 7.1%, respectively). Meanwhile, performing arts (29.3%) and media arts (21.6%) college majors represent higher proportions relative to the total population (21.0% and 11.3%, respectively).

Table 4.1. Artist Characteristics in NYC and LA vs. Elsewhere (in percentages)

	NYC and LA	Non-central urban	Non-urban	Total
Person of color	19.4%	12.7%	8.3%	12.1%
Woman	51.4%	58.6%	58.9%	57.7%
Artist parent(s)	21.9%	21.8%	23.1%	22.3%
Parents did not complete bachelors	25.9%	33.3%	34.8%	32.6%
Age (average)	39.1	42.9	46.1	43.5
Private school	65.8%	49.1%	45.0%	50.4%
Special focus school	46.1%	34.7%	30.7%	35.1%
<i>College major</i>				
Architecture and design	35.9%	46.9%	42.7%	43.5%
Performing arts	29.3%	19.3%	19.5%	21.0%
Fine and studio arts	11.7%	17.5%	19.0%	17.1%
Media arts	21.6%	9.5%	8.75%	11.3%
Arts education	1.4%	6.7%	10.2%	7.1%

Source. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (n = 22,425 at 101 institutions)

Table 3 predicts how artists perceive their environment as a place to pursue their careers. The results of table 3 are consistent with research that suggests artists in cities are more likely to perceive cities as being a good place to pursue their career. Relative to non-metropolitan artists, artists in NYC and LA are far more likely to self-rate their location as a good place to pursue their career. However, the large differences in effect size between artists living in non-central, major cities (OR: 2.08) versus artists in LA and NYC (OR: 8.11) indicates a significant effect of living in these cultural centers that is independent from the effect of living in any city. The literature would suggest that artists who live in NYC or LA are aware of the strong associational effect of living in an arts center, and that the narrative of NYC or LA as an arts center is a strong factor in artists' place satisfaction. Therefore, we have support for hypotheses 1 and 2, indicating that artists in NYC and LA are more likely to positively self-rate their location

as a place to pursue their careers than artists in both non-central urban and non-urban locations.

Table 4.2. Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Model Predicting Place Satisfaction (Odds Ratios and Standard Errors Reported)

	Place satisfaction
Person of color	0.78 (.04)***
Woman	1.06 (.03)
Artist parent(s)	1.05 (.04)
Parental education (less than BA)	0.93 (.03)*
Age	1.01 (.01)
Age ²	1.00 (.00)
Private	1.04 (.08)
Special focus	.85 (.07)*
Self-employed	.93 (.03)*
Major field area ^a	
Performing arts	1.06 (.05)
Fine and studio arts	.74 (.03)***
Media	.84 (.84)***
Arts education and admin	1.24 (.09)***
Location ^a	
Non-central urban	2.08 (.07)***
NYC and LA	8.11 (.55)***

Source. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (n = 22,425 at 101 institutions)

^aReference categories: Architecture and design and Non-metropolitan

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Below, Table 4 predicts artists' satisfaction with intrinsic and extrinsic motivations with regard to location. In these models, general job satisfaction is added as a control. Among intrinsic motivations, we immediately see a trend: artists in LA and NYC have moderately lower odds of positively self-rating their opportunity to be creative (OR: .78) and much lower odds of positively self-rating the opportunity to contribute to the greater good (OR: .52) relative to non-metropolitan artists. Interestingly, the effects for non-central cities is either not significant (opportunity to be creative) or muted, relative to the effect size of the major cultural centers (opportunity to contribute to the greater good). This indicates that artists in NYC and LA are

relatively unsatisfied in the intrinsic motivations of their careers, which the literature suggests are some of the central motivations for pursuing a career in the arts. Therefore, we see support for hypotheses 3 and 4, indicating that artists living in NYC and LA will be less likely than artists in non-central major cities and non-urban locations to positively self-rate satisfaction with intrinsic rewards.

However, that is not to say that NYC and LA artists are without rewards. Among extrinsic rewards, we see the opposite effect. Relative to non-metropolitan artists, NYC and LA artists are more likely to positively rate their income (OR: 1.25). However, this may be due to the concentration of higher status and higher compensation jobs in major cities (Oakley et al., 2017). Artists in noncentral cities are slightly more likely to positively rate their opportunity for career advancement. Therefore, we find support for hypothesis 5 as artists living in cities are more likely than non-metropolitan artists to positively self-rate satisfaction with extrinsic rewards. However, artists in NYC and LA are not significantly more likely to positively self-rate their opportunity for career advancement. Therefore, I do not find support for hypothesis 6.

Table 4.3. Mixed Effects Logistic Regression Model Predicting Extrinsic and Intrinsic Job Satisfaction by Location (Odds Ratios and Standard Errors Reported)

	Intrinsic rewards		Extrinsic rewards	
	Opportunity to be creative	Opportunity to contribute to greater good	Income satisfaction	Opportunity for career advancement
Person of color	1.01 (.07)	1.13 (.07)*	1.06 (.05)	1.11 (.05)*
Woman	.94 (.05)	1.11 (.04)**	.74 (.02)***	.79 (.03)***
Artist parent(s)	1.01 (.06)	1.08 (.05)	1.05 (.03)	1.13 (.05)**
Parental education (less than BA)	.91 (.05)	1.03 (.04)	1.08 (.04)*	.99 (.04)
Age	1.06 (.01)***	1.01 (.01)	1.04 (.01)***	.96 (.01)***
Age ²	1.00 (.00)**	1.00 (.00)	1.00 (.00)***	1.00 (.00)***
Private	.99 (.06)	.92 (.07)	.97 (.05)	.96 (.05)
Special focus	1.13 (.08)	.78 (.06)**	.95 (.06)	1.05 (.06)
General job satisfaction	16.09 (.87)***	9.77 (.51)***	5.28 (.27)***	15.37 (.90)***
Self-employed	1.28 (.06)***	1.22 (.05)***	.55 (.02)***	.87 (.04)***
Major field area ^a				
Performing arts	.83 (.05)**	1.78 (.11)***	.81 (.04)***	.87 (.04)**
Fine and studio arts	.95 (.06)	1.17 (.06)**	.63 (.03)***	.79 (.04)***
Media	.81 (.06)**	.88 (.05)*	.95 (.05)	.88 (.05)*
Arts education and admin	1.45 (.18)**	3.48 (.46)***	.75 (.05)***	.93 (.07)
Location ^a				
Non-central, major cities	.96 (.05)	.88 (.04)**	1.15 (.04)***	1.08 (.04)**
NYC and LA	.78 (.05)***	.52 (.03)***	1.25 (.06)***	1.06 (.07)

Source. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (n = 22,425 at 101 institutions)

^aReference categories: Architecture and design and Non-metropolitan

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Discussion

Why do NYC and LA artists negatively self-rate the qualities that the literature would suggest are the main attractions to the profession? Potentially, artists in these highly competitive cities are more likely to perform extended periods of unpaid or underpaid labor as they work toward a career in the arts, during which they may have to work multiple jobs in and out of the arts. Many scholars have theorized this form of work as aspirational labor (Duffy, 2015), hope labor (Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013), provisional labor (Frenette, 2013), or venture

labor (Neff, 2012). New research into cultural workers indicates that aspiring artists may reinforce their career aspirations through the “bad jobs” taken in the aspirational phases of a career (Adler, 2020). Therefore, it may be that, despite a lack of intrinsic rewards, artists in cultural cores are occupied with precarious work that emphasizes extrinsic rewards.

Artists are likely well aware of the costs of living and practicing in major arts centers. However, due to the narratives associated with these cities, NYC and LA artists may be taking a calculated risk by bearing the economic and creative hardship for the chance to “make it big” in their industry. It may be the case that artists in NYC and LA tend to be more ambitious, seeing the high costs of living as a necessary price to pay for proximity to highly valuable social networks that don’t exist in other, smaller cities and non-urban locations. However, it is more likely that these artists seek the reputational capital embedded in these cities, regardless of their ambition. Simply put, being an NYC artist is more attractive than being a Cleveland artist.

Since living in a major cultural center is a symbolic boon for an artistic career, which artists get to live in cultural cores? Considering the results of table 2, artists living in NYC or LA may possess relatively high socio-economic status relative to non-metropolitan artists. They may possess higher financial capacity and social support. As well, given the high concentration of special focus and private schools in NYC and LA, graduates from these programs may have made the decision to become a New York or Los Angeles artist before even leaving their parents’ homes.

It is possible that individuals in non-urban locations are more motivated by the intrinsic rewards of making art than cultural core artists. These individuals may be willing to sacrifice diverse professional networks and the potential for high economic and reputational gain for economic and creative freedom stemming from low rents and heightened digital connectivity in non-metropolitan areas. Artists have new avenues for selling their work, purchasing supplies and services, and networking. Particularly in the age of Etsy, Instagram, and a plethora of other

digital artistic marketplaces, it may be more feasible than ever to make a living on the arts alone. For many, the allure of mass success associated with living in NYC or LA may be relatively unimportant compared to the social benefits of living close to family or other hometown social networks. After all, artists live everywhere, and arts careers are highly embedded in place.

Conclusion

This article explores the connection between artists' perceptions of job satisfaction and place. By highlighting a gap in job satisfaction with intrinsic rewards across disparate geographic domains, I have shown a core difference in the embedded qualities of creative core artists, second city artists, and non-metropolitan artists.

This paper notes an important observation; however, it has its shortcomings. The sample is only comprised of college graduates from SNAAP member institutions. Since a large proportion of artists do not have an undergraduate degree, this sample is not ideally descriptive. However, for the purposes of this article, there is a benefit of looking at this privileged group. As a highly educated sample, these artists maintain a relatively equal footing in terms of their educational attainment. Therefore, variation within this subgroup presents conservative estimates for the broader arena of artists.

Due to the shortcomings of the data, this paper does not test a causal relationship between location and satisfaction. Rather, it makes an observation. Future studies may probe into specific causes of difference in intrinsic rewards among artists. Specifically, promising avenues of research include the effects of digital technologies or precarious side jobs.

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