SIAP

Social Impact of the Arts Project

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy & Practice
http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/SIAP

DYNAMICS OF CULTURE
Working Paper #2005-2

Gauging the Informal Arts Sector Metropolitan Philadelphia, 2004

Mark J. Stern, Susan C. Seifert, and Mehreen Zaman
University of Pennsylvania
October 2005

SIAP's *Dynamics of Culture* research has been generously supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Social Impact of the Arts Project
University of Pennsylvania
3701 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214
Tel: (215) 573-7270
E-mail: seifert@sp2.upenn.edu

CONTENTS

Introduction

For the past decade, the cultural policy community has recognized a major shift in the institutional environment of cultural production and participation in the United States. After nearly a half century during which private philanthropy served as the handmaiden for expanding governmental support of the arts, the attack on the National Endowment for the Arts, conservative efforts to 'starve the beast' through rounds of tax and program cuts, and other skirmishes in the 'culture wars' have convinced many commentators that a new era in cultural policy had begun. What John Kreidler called the "Ford era" of cultural policy has given way to a post-Ford world in which 'sustainability' has become the holy grail of cultural policy.[1]

The major victim of the shift in cultural funding has been the nonprofit sector; a sector created in the pre-Ford world of private philanthropy and remade as the instrument of public cultural policy during the last half of the twentieth century. As the authors of a recent Rand Corporation study make clear, nonprofits face the most perils in the new era. Larger nonprofit cultural institutions are forced to play the market game, aggressively selling their products to the public at the same time that they—like the for-profit sector—use their social and political muscle to protect their public-sector support. Most nonprofits, however, have neither the financial or cultural capital to shift to a surplus-maximization strategy and face an uncertain future of declining public support, declining participation, and increasing competition.[2]

The uncertain state of the traditional nonprofit has sparked interest in unincorporated cultural associations to maintain the vitality of the cultural sector. As early as 1993, Paul DiMaggio questioned whether the increased institutionalization of culture might create a conservative bias in which safe and established cultural goods were favored over innovation and controversy.[3] The American Assembly report on the arts and the public purpose suggested that the 'unincorporated' sector should be more closely integrated into nonprofit and for-profit cultural activity.[4] The Rand report appears to confirm this view;

---

[1] John Kreidler, "Leverage Lost: The Nonprofit Arts in the Post-Ford Era," *In Motion Magazine (February 16, 1996).* http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/lost.html.

[2] Kevin F. McCarthy, Arthur Brooks, Julia Lowell and Laura Zakaras, *The Performing Arts in a New Era* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2001).

[3] Paul DiMaggio, "Social Structure, Institutions, and Cultural Goods: The Case of the United States," in Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Colemen, eds, *Social Theory for a Changing Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

[4] The American Assembly, "The Arts and the Public Purpose," in Gigi Bradford, Michael Gary, and Glenn Wallach, *Politics of Culture: Policy Perspectives for Individuals, Institutions, and Communities* (New York: New Press, 2000), 64-70.

it found that voluntary cultural organizations were a growing part of the overall cultural sector. The proliferation of new organizational forms has piqued interest in the nature of cultural activity that occurs outside of official nonprofits.[5] Alaka Wali's study of the informal sector in Chicago currently stands as the most thorough documentation of the role of unincorporated associations and individuals in cultural production and participation. [6]

Despite increasing interest in the idea of informal arts, there are no data that allow us to judge its importance to the overall cultural sector. The bulk of cultural policy data sets focus on established nonprofits and exclude the informal sector. Those studies that have tried to estimate its importance have examined the issue from the standpoint of cultural participation. The Rand study, analyses of the National Endowment for the Arts' surveys of public participation in the arts[7], and Wali's survey of arts in everyday life have all attempted to estimate the scope of informal culture as a proportion of all cultural activities in which individuals participate. Most importantly, this research has identified the variety of individual and folk cultural forms with which many Americans are actively engaged.

Yet, the very success of participation-based studies of the informal sector has been a barrier to their influence. Much of the individual and folk cultural activities documented in this work are unconnected to an 'art world' *per se*; they are embedded in the social world of participants. The policy implications of this body of work, ironically, are quietistic. We can appreciate the importance of, say, hair-braiding in many communities, but this appreciation does not necessarily translate into policy. As Howard Becker has noted, what is 'maverick' or 'folk' art one day can be central to the professional art world the next, but again whether one should or can encourage this movement is open to question.[8]

In this paper, we take an alternative strategy for estimating the informal arts sector. We use a representative sample of artists to ask what proportion of artists' professional activities takes place in the for-profit, nonprofit, and informal sectors. The analysis is based on a sample of 270 artists in the Philadelphia metropolitan area interviewed during 2004. We found that a large share of our sample's professional activities did indeed occur in what might be called the informal cultural sector; and that the importance of this sector varied with the discipline, age, and ethnicity of the artist. This analysis provides a starting point for considering how the American Assembly's proposal for closer coordination of the nonprofit, for-profit, and informal sectors might occur.

---

[5] Joni Maya Cherbo, "The Missing Sector: The Unincorporated Arts," *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 28:2 (Summer 1998).

[6] Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson, and Mario Longoni, "Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity, and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places" (Chicago: Chicago Center for Arts Policy, 2002).

[7] National Endowment for the Arts, *2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, NEA Research Division Report #45. (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 2004).

[8] Howard Becker, *Art Worlds.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984).

Approach and Methodology

Research Strategy

The informal cultural sector poses a conundrum for the researcher. On the one hand, it's everywhere. One can barely get through an entire day without encountering a street musician, a poster for an event sponsored by some group that doesn't show up on GuideStar, or have a friend tell you about a book club or choir that they are a member of. On the other hand, getting a grasp on the scope of the sector is not amenable to standard cultural research methods.

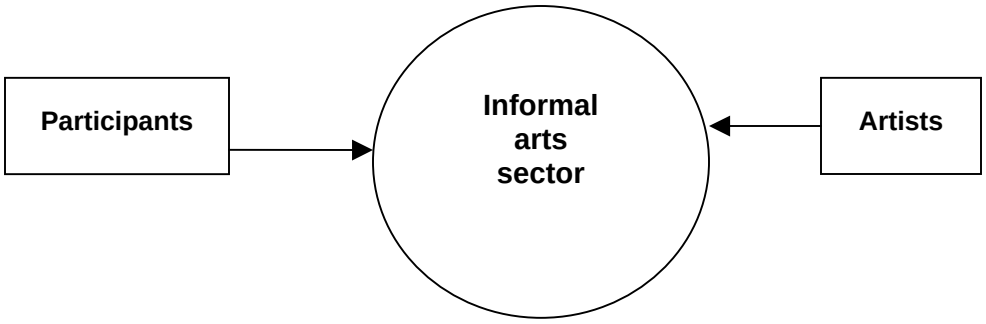
The most common method of studying cultural providers is the inventory. The researcher develops a strategy for gathering the names and addresses of cultural resources and slowly compiles a list. SIAP has employed this strategy several times. For our inventories, we have used a search strategy that includes obtaining directories of cultural organizations and copies of grant applications as well as scanning daily and weekly newspapers and the Internet for additional groups and programs. Using this strategy, SIAP identified nearly 1,500 cultural providers in the five-county Philadelphia region, nearly three times as many as more orthodox listings.

Yet, a list is a fragile tool with which to gauge something as protean as the informal cultural sector. As we noted in a previous report, between 1997 and 2002 nearly a quarter of the metropolitan area's cultural resources disappeared.[9] Fortunately, during this period an equal number and more came into existence. Many of these organizations were small providers who either part of or recently had been part of the informal sector. If we restricted ourselves to organizations without with an IRS number, the death and birth rate would have been much higher. In other words, any attempt to develop an inventory of the informal sector is doomed to be obsolete practically from the moment it is completed. The sector is simply too volatile.

In the absence of an inventory, one can 'get at' the informal sector in two ways. You can begin either with participants or with artists. Because participant surveys are a well-developed method within cultural research, most of the evidence gathered so far has come from this source. The participant survey typically asks respondents whether they have attended this or that type of event. If they answer 'yes,' they are asked a set of questions about that event. The Rand study used this sort of data from the NEA surveys to document the rise of 'volunteer' cultural groups.

Artists, however, provide an alternative way of gauging the informal sector. Because the informal sector tends to be more participatory, artists are more likely to be a larger part of the scene than they are in more formal cultural settings. If we could generate a representative sample of artists and ask them about where they do their work, we could use these data as a gauge of the size of the informal sector.

[9] Mark J. Stern, *SIAP Working Paper #17: Culture and the Changing Urban Landscape, Philadelphia 1997-2002* (University of Pennsylvania, Social Impact of the Arts Project, 2003).



Two caveats are in order. First, the informal sector itself is not uniform. Many forms of informal cultural engagement involve 'amateur' rather than 'professional' artists (that is, those pursuing the arts as a means of livelihood). So the two portraits of the informal sector—participant- and artist-based—would not necessarily match.

The second caveat is that, in the past, it has been nearly impossible to generate a representative sample of artists, because we have had no list of all artists (in the language of sampling, no sampling frame) with which to work. If our artists' sample were non-representative, it would be hard to generalize to the informal sector.

Fortunately, advances in chain-referral sampling have finally provided us with a method that can generate representative samples of artists. The path breaking work of Douglas Heckathorn and Joan Jeffri's study of jazz artists have produced the first representative sample of artists.[10] This study builds on Heckathorn and Jeffri's work by using respondent-driven sampling to generate a representative sample of Philadelphia area artists.

Respondent-Driven Sampling and Population Parameters

The data for this paper derive from a survey of 270 artists living in the Philadelphia metropolitan area during 2004. Respondents were selected by means of *respondent-driven sampling* (RDS), a chain-referral or 'snowball' method that uses a set of initial respondents to recruit additional respondents. Originally developed by Douglas Heckathorn to study stigmatized 'hidden populations,' like intravenous drug-users, RDS can be shown to produce unbiased estimates of population parameters when some very general conditions are met.[11]

The distinctive features of RDS are its methods for recruiting and compensating respondents. Essentially, RDS specifies that when an interview is completed, that both the informant and the person who referred her should receive compensation[12]. The

[10] Joan Jeffri, *Changing the Beat: A Study of the Worklife of Jazz Musicians.* Volume III: Respondent-Driven Sampling, NEA Research Division Report #43. (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 2003).

[11] Douglas D. Heckathorn, "Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations," *Social Problems* 44:2 (May 1997): 174-199.

[12] Our method diverged from that used by Jeffri in her study of jazz artists in two respects. (1) Jeffri followed Heckathorn in using a coupon approach, i.e., 'seeds' and subsequent respondents were given three coupons that they were encouraged to give to other jazz artists who could then redeem them by answering the survey. This method was originally used by Heckathorn in his study of HIV-positive IVD users so that

unbiased character of the sample can be shown to be independent of the initial selection of respondents or 'seeds.'

The second critical element of the method is long chains. Each successive 'wave' in a referral chain introduces new diversity (and more representativeness) into the sample. Therefore, the logic is to begin with relatively few 'seeds' and then to push out to as many waves as possible. Heckathorn concludes that respondent-driven samples tend to converge after as few as two or three waves, but he recommends that samples be carried out to six waves to increase the likelihood for convergence.

One attractive feature of RDS is its fit with ethnographic methods. Ethnographers have long used chain-referral methods to recruit informants, but without a systematic sampling strategy, they have had difficulty assessing the representativeness of their findings. RDS implies that with a few alterations in their strategy, ethnographers could be in a position not only to draw conclusions based on their informants but to use these findings to make claims about the underlying population.

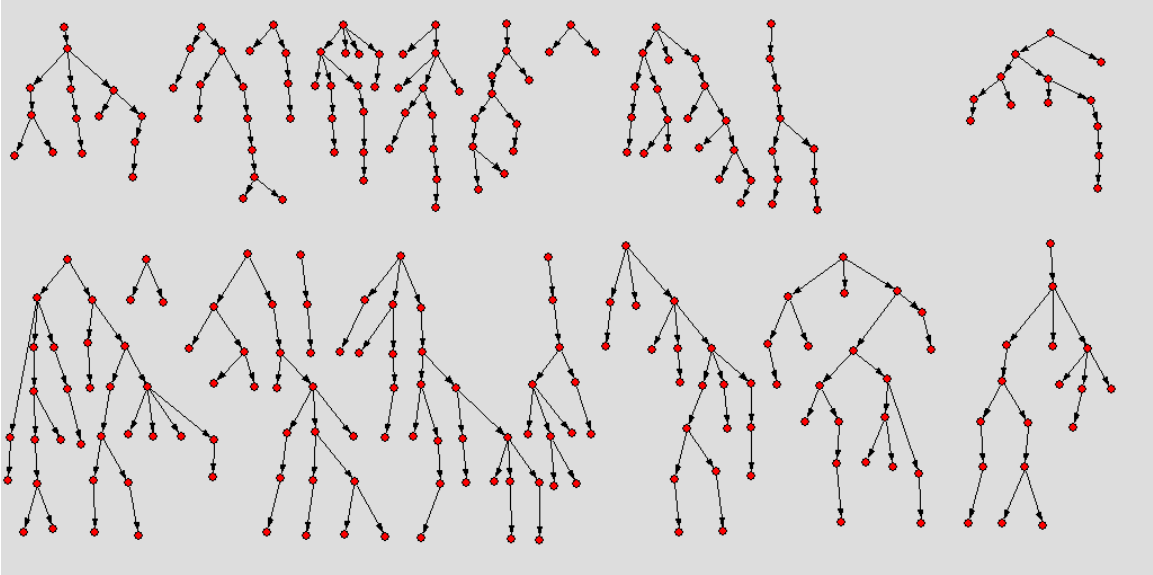


Figure 1. This diagram shows the chain of respondents that came from each of our 'seeds.' (Philadelphia Area Artist Survey 2004).

---

respondents did not have to 'give up' names of other addicts. However, 'giving up' artists did not seem as significant of a hurdle as 'giving up' drug addicts, so we asked the artists directly for three names. (2) We used an alternative method of calculating the size of respondents' social networks. Jeffri asked her respondents to estimate the number of jazz musicians they knew in the metropolitan area. This question produced a very uneven distribution that suggests that the respondents did not have a very precise sense of the size of their network. (The data clumped at 50, 100, 200, etc.) Because our survey's primary purpose was to study artists' networks, we asked a battery of questions about whether artists had had contact with other artists for specific purposes (technical support, critical review, economic issues, etc.). However, because these data do not provide a single number for size of network, we used a composite index of network activity that ranged from 0 to 11 and fit it to Jeffri's distribution. In retrospect, the absence of the social network size question was a mistake, although we still believe that reliance on a question that is answered so imprecisely is a problem that RDS practitioners will need to address in the future.

If the process works properly, in fact, one should observe a very rapid convergence between estimates of sample statistics and population parameters as in moving to successive waves in the sample. This is certainly the case in our sample. Take the case of ethnicity.

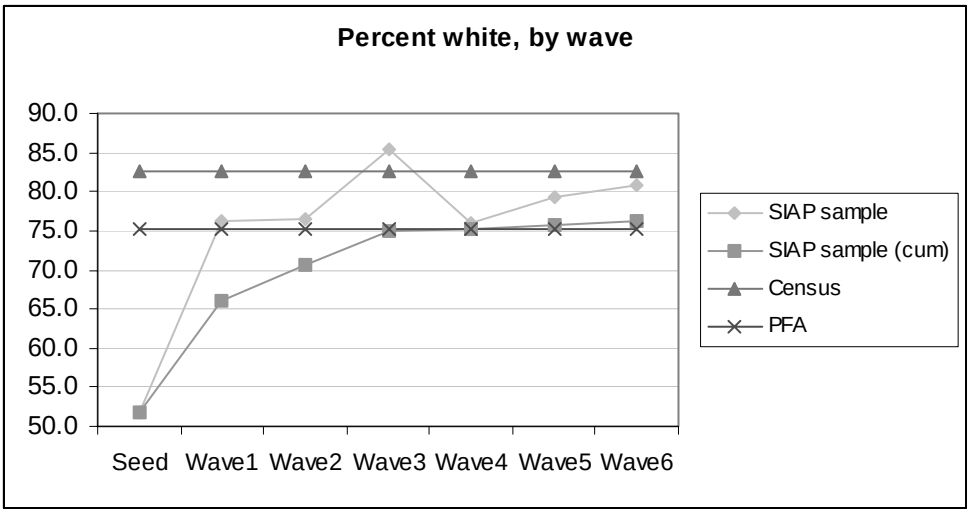


Figure 2. Comparison of ethnicity of SIAP sample artists with estimates based on the 2000 U.S. census and Pew Fellowships in the Arts.

In Figure 2, we compare estimates of the ethnic composition of our sample by wave with independent estimates of the artist population for metropolitan Philadelphia drawn from the 2000 U.S. census and a database maintained by the Pew Fellowships in the Arts (PFA). Eighty-three (83) percent of artists in the census were listed as white, and approximately 75 percent of those in the PFA database are white. In our original set of 'seeds,' we made an effort to have a broadly diverse set of informants. As a result, just over half of our seeds listed their ethnicity as white. Yet, successive waves came much closer to the figures in the independent samples. Indeed, with the exception of wave #3 (which included a higher proportion of whites than the census would lead us to expect), every wave after the seeds were between the census and PFA estimates. If we use the *cumulative percentage* (percent for a particular wave and all previous waves), the convergence is slower, but the results are more stable.

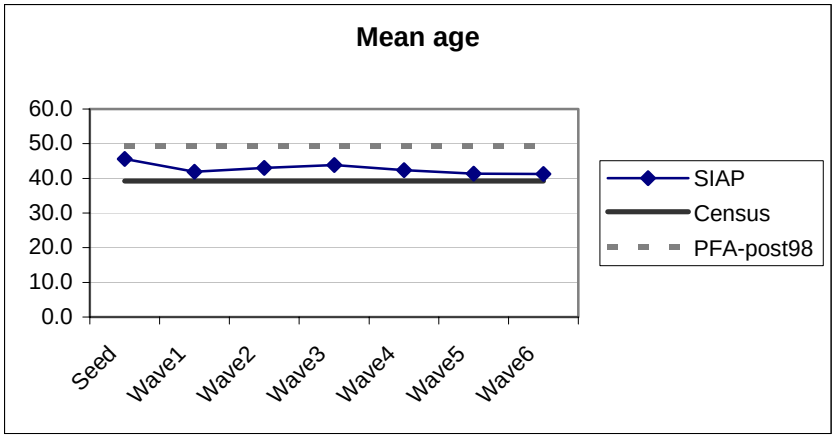


Figure 3. Comparison of age of SIAP sample artists with estimates based on the 2000 U.S. census and Pew Fellowships in the Arts.

A similar trend can be seen in estimates of the average age of artists shown in Figure 3. The average age of our seeds was 48 years of age, closer to the PFA figure than to the census figure. By wave #2, however, the difference between the census figure and our figure was quite small and remained so during the remaining waves.

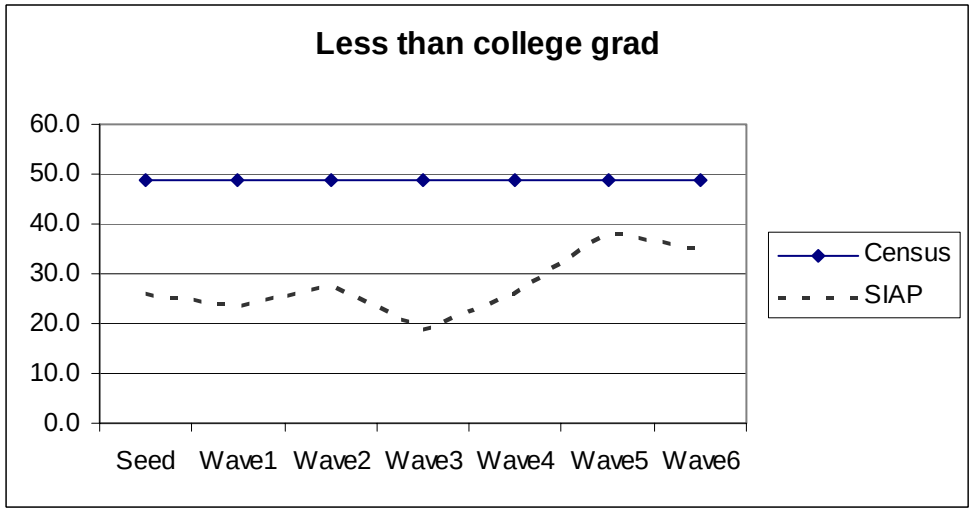


Figure 4. Comparison of educational attainment of SIAP sample artists with estimates based on the 2000 U.S. census and Pew Fellowships in the Arts.

One difference between our data and the census was the estimate of educational attainment. As shown in Figure 4, just less than one half of census artists did not graduate from college. Among our seeds, only about a quarter had not graduated from college. In contrast to evidence on ethnicity and age, however, our estimates and those from the census did not converge quickly. It was only in wave #5 that the difference between the two was reduced sharply.

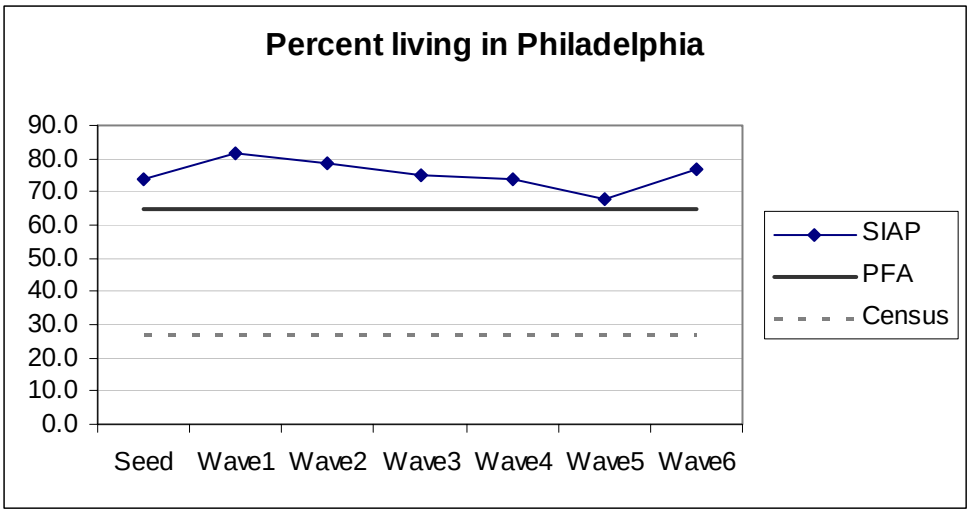


Figure 5. Comparison of metropolitan location of SIAP sample artists with estimates based on the 2000 U.S. census and Pew Fellowships in the Arts.

A similar issue arose concerning the metropolitan location of artists. According to the census, less than 30 percent of the region's artists live in the city of Philadelphia. This figure stands in stark contrast to the PFA figure of 65 percent. Over successive waves, our sample estimates converged with the PFA estimates but never approached the census figure.

These data suggest that our sample is consistent with one of the potential biases of RDS; because the method is based on social network connections, there is a tendency to sample well-connected potential respondents. Well-connected artists, one would assume, would be more likely than the average artists to be connected to a prestigious fellowship program like PFA. In contrast, the U.S. census, which contacts a random sample of residents, is as likely to contact poorly connected artists, including people who call themselves artists in the absence of either external validation or credentials. A well-connected artist, these figures suggest, is more likely to be a college graduate and more likely to live in the city.

These empirical data on convergence between our sample and the artist population are backed up by analytical methods as well. Heckathorn has developed a program that uses the "Markov chain process implicit in the calculated transition probabilities to check how many waves would be required for the sample population proportions to reach equilibrium."[13] Using our data, this calculation suggested that six waves would be required to converge on estimates of ethnicity and three waves to converge on estimates of gender. In short, both the empirical and analytical data suggest that our six-wave design provides an ample basis for studying the underlying population of artists.

[13] Douglas D. Heckathorn, Respondent-Driven Sampling II: Deriving Valid Population Estimates from Chain-Referral Samples of Hidden Populations," *Social Problems* 49:1 (February 2002): 11-34.

Correcting Estimates for Homophily and Network Size

Respondent-driven samples reach *equilibrium*, that is, the population statistics tend to converge and become stable over successive waves. They are *biased*, however, in that those sample statistics do not necessarily reflect the underlying population statistics. The strength of the method is that it has ways of estimating and correcting for this bias. The two sources of bias are *network size* and *homophily*. The bias introduced by network size is straightforward. Because respondents are recruited to the survey through social networks, those with larger social networks are more likely to be recruited. By limiting the number of recruits per respondent to three, this effect is reduced but not eliminated.

The second source of bias is homophily, the tendency of members of a group to recruit members of the same group. Most of the attention to homophily in respondent-driven sampling has been directed at ethnicity and gender, that is, the tendency of whites to recruit other whites or women to recruit other women. Take, for example, the transition probabilities for different ethnic groups in our sample, as shown in Figure 6.

	Recruitee			
Recruiter	White	African American	Latin American	Other
White	**.88**	.07	.01	.04
African American	.38	**.57**	.0	.05
Latin American	.6	.1	.3	.0
Other	.88	.06	0	.06

Figure 6. Probability of members of a particular ethnic group to recruit members of other ethnic groups, SIAP sample artists.

The table on Figure 6 shows the probability of members of a particular group to recruit members of other ethnic groups. For example, in our sample, 88 percent of the time whites recruited whites, seven percent of the time they recruited black artists, and five percent of the time they recruited Latin American or other artists. African American artists recruited other African American artists about 57 percent of the time.

Obviously, homophily is operating in this population. However, these data do not give an accurate sense of its magnitude. After all, when 80 percent of artists are white, if artists recruited people without regard to ethnicity, we would expect 80 percent of all recruits to be white. In other words, we need to correct these figures for population size.

	White	*Af Am*	*Latin Am*	*Other*
White	**0.485**	-0.601	-0.492	-0.086
Af American	-0.501	**0.476**	-1.0	0.0020
Latin American	-0.222	-0.408	**0.292**	-1.0
Other	0.454	-0.63	-1.0	**0.014**

Figure 7. Affiliation matrix, SIAP sample artists.

By correcting for these 'expected' values, we arrive at a homophily estimate and an affiliation matrix. The homophily measure reports the proportion of in-group ties beyond what is expected by random recruitment from the population. In our data, both white and black artists recruited artists from the same ethnic group about 50 percent *more* than we would expect if it were random. Similarly, the affiliation matrix gives the same proportions for each ethnic combination. These data suggest that whites and black artists recruited artists from the other group about 50 percent *less* often than we would expect under random conditions. Latin American and Other artists were less homophilous.

Heckathorn has shown that homophily, especially in a two-group model, tends to cancel itself out. That is, if men recruit more men and women recruit more women, then the final sample will have enough men and women. Therefore, the equal homophily displayed by black and white artists is good news for our sample. The small number of other ethnic groups in the sample combined with their lower homophily means that these groups ended up so small that it is difficult to analyze them as a separate category.

Generally, then, the corrections for network size and homophily are simple in these data. We corrected the data for network size by weighting it by the inverse of estimated network size. We then corrected for homophily among ethnic and gender groups by using the sample weights computed by the RDS program. This required us to increase slightly the weights for Latin American and Other artists and for men.[14]

Although ethnic and gender homophily did not have a particularly strong effect on our sample, artistic discipline did. As shown on the table below (Figure 8), the raw sample data indicated that musicians were the most numerous discipline.

[14] In procedural terms, for our SPSS analyses, this required us to first weight the sample by the inverse of network size. We then adjusted these weights so that our population proportions for ethnic groups and genders matched the estimates from the RDS program. This required slight adjustments.

Discipline	Raw frequency	Raw percent	Estimated population percent	Estimated network size	Homophily
Other visual artists	67	24.8	40.1	92	0.101
Drawing and painting	35	13.0	19.3	98	0.296
Music	91	33.7	20.4	140	0.740
Other performing arts	31	11.5	7.6	176	0.581
Literary arts	7	2.6	1.7	204	0.212
Artisanry	19	7.0	3.3	110	0.226
Media arts	20	7.4	7.7	107	0.256
Total sample	270	100	100		

Figure 8. Discipline homophily among SIAP sample artists

Musicians, however, reported larger than average estimated network size and had higher than average homophily. As a result, although musicians composed a third of our sample, their estimated share of the population was less than 20 percent. The second largest group in our sample—visual artists—accounted for 36 percent of the sample but had much smaller networks and lower levels of homophily. As a result, their estimated share of the population was nearly 60 percent.

In summary, the diagnostic data suggest that the *Philadelphia Area Artist Survey 2004* was a successful implementation of respondent-driven sampling. Our sample statistics appear to converge toward what we know of the demography of the artist population of metropolitan Philadelphia. In addition, the number of waves and recruitment patterns lead to analytic and simulation results that suggest that these data give reliable estimates of population parameters. Finally, we have made appropriate adjustments of our data for network size and homophily.

We are left with one final caution. The population from which we recruited appears to be that of recognizable artists in the metropolitan Philadelphia area. The sample assessment indicates that there is another group of artists—that might be termed 'census artists'—who report their occupation as artist but have less education, are more likely to live in the suburbs, and are less connected to artists' networks than the recognizable artists.

The Informal Sector and the Artist

Artists' Informal Worksites

The data used in this paper were gathered with the purpose of analyzing how artists use social networks. The study grew out of SIAP's conclusion that, especially in urban neighborhoods, a clear understanding of informal social networks is critical to assessing a cultural ecosystem. The bulk of the questionnaire used for the survey focused on the types of activities for which artists use their social networks. In order to reduce the problems introduced by retrospective questions, we restricted our attention to the previous week and asked about eight specific reasons an artist might contact someone: technical information (equipment, supplies), professional development, critical feedback, future projects, new audiences, conflicts with a colleague, economic issues (housing, space, employers), or emotional support. In addition, we gathered information on the respondent's contact with mentors or with someone whom they mentored.

Finally, we gathered information on the different professional projects and positions—either paid or unpaid—in which the respondent had worked during the previous year. We specifically asked about the entire range of settings in which an artist might work, including "nonprofit cultural organizations, community centers or schools, as well as commercial enterprises such as clubs, stores, or galleries." Our primary intention was to use this information to understand how artists used their social networks to get work and professional experience.

After we completed implementation of the survey, however, we realized that the information could be used for a related purpose. Our interest in social networks grew out of our realization that formal institutional relationships are only part of the work of artists. It dawned on us that, in addition to analyzing how artists use their networks, the information on professional projects and positions could be used to construct an artist-eye-view of Philadelphia's arts world. If our respondent-driven sample when properly adjusted was representative of the population, we could then ask questions about the types of settings in which artists do their work.

The actual responses to the project questions gave us great detail on these work settings. For the purposes of this paper, however, we have grouped them into five basic categories:

- official nonprofit organizations—cultural providers that appear on the IRS master list of chartered 501c3 tax-exempt organizations;
- informal sector—nonprofit or public settings not included in formal categories;
- private, unincorporated settings—including artists' live/work spaces and settings (like private social events) not open the public;
- commercial settings—for-profit entities including commercial cultural facilities and non-arts businesses, like restaurants and bars; and
- governmental settings—government or public facilities, like schools or recreation centers.

The discussion below of artists' work sites by sector represents the one-year experience of the 270 artists in the SIAP survey sample, a total of 1,051 different work sites or

settings, and a total of 1,198 unique artist-site links. Bear in mind that the figures per sector will vary due to weighting (see methodological discussion above) and to missing data.

As we might expect, official nonprofit organizations were the most frequent single setting in which the artists undertook professional projects or positions. About one-third of all projects involved an official nonprofit. Still, the importance of other sectors—which in fact constituted nearly two-thirds of reported projects—was notable. First, commercial or business settings represented one-quarter of the work sites reported by artists during the previous year. Second, taken together private unincorporated settings and other informal venues were as numerous as official nonprofit sites.

Sector	Percent of settings
Official nonprofit	34
Informal nonprofit	16
Private, unincorporated	19
For-profit, commercial	24
Government, public	7
All work sites	100

Figure 9. Artists' professional work sites by sector

Of all the year's professional work sites reported by the respondent artists, 24 percent were commercial cultural settings. Within the for-profit sector, galleries, restaurants and bars, and bookstores were the most common type of venue.

For-profit, commercial sector	Percent of settings
Gallery	33
Restaurant, bar	21
Publisher, bookstore	13
Performance facility	9
Design, graphic design firm	8
Film, video	6
Music production	6
Media production	4
Total for-profit sites	100

Figure 10. Artists' for-profit work sites by type

The third most common site (19 percent) was a private, unincorporated setting. By and large, these were artists' live/work spaces. Private social events—for example, musicians hired for a wedding or party—comprised a minority of these settings.

Private, unincorporated sector	Percent of settings
Artist's live/work space	91
Private social event	9
Total private, unincorporated	100

Figure 11. Artists' private, unincorporated work sites by type

The informal sector represents essentially a residual category, that is, settings that are not easily classifiable into one of the other categories. As a result, it includes a more diverse set of sites. The most common informal setting, 44 percent of the sites in this category, was a performance given by an individual artist or group. Fairs and festivals were the second most common setting, representing 20 percent of the informal venues.

A significant portion of informal settings identified by our sample artists were associated with the production or arts or engagement of creative activity rather than interaction with audiences or other participants. Collective (non-residential) work space represented 18 percent of the informal sector sites. Artists' communities and residencies, just over one percent of all work sites, comprised an additional 12 percent of informal settings. Taken together these communal artist settings represented 30 percent of artists' use of the informal sector.

Informal sector	Percent of settings
Performance group	44
Fair, festival	20
Collective work space	18
Artists' community, residency, guild	12
Performance facility	3
Participatory group	2
Religious org or community group	1
Total informal work sites	100

Figure 12. Artists' informal work sites by type

Informal Involvement by Arts Discipline

Artists' involvement with the informal sector is influenced by their discipline. While only 16 percent of all projects cited in the artists' survey were classified as informal sector activities, 22 percent of musicians and 26 percent of other performing artists reported activities that were classified as informal. In contrast, visual artists' involvement with the informal sector was very low.

Indeed, in a wider context, different disciplines were concentrated in different sectors. For example, the activities of literary artists were much more likely to occur in the for-profit sector, while performing artists except musicians more frequently used official nonprofits as well as the informal sector.

	Other visual	drawing and painting	music	other perf arts	lit arts	artisanry	media arts
Official nonprofit	33	35	23	47	11	26	29
Informal	7	4	22	27	0	3	17
Private, uninc	23	24	18	8	26	26	26
For-profit	28	28	32	11	63	35	24
Government	9	9	5	7	0	10	4
All settings	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 13. Sector involvement, percentage by discipline

The data presented in Figure 13 tell us what percentage of all settings identified in our survey fell into each sector. Another way to examine the data, however, is to look at the artists and ask what proportion were involved at some point during the year in any particular sector.

Artist by discipline	for-profit	nonprofit	Priv, uninc	govt	informal
Other visual	51	81	80	29	21
Drawing and painting	83	88	89	13	15
Music	67	61	78	23	51
Other performing arts	33	87	39	31	78
Literary arts	90	12	100	2	1
Artisanry	73	49	72	15	15
Media arts	55	55	79	14	40
Percent all artists	61%	74%	79%	23%	31%

Figure 14. Artists' involvement in sector during previous year, by discipline

Because few of our respondents worked exclusively in any one sector, the proportions in this table are considerably higher. For example, although only about a third of all projects took place in the nonprofit sector, in our sample three-fourths of respondents had done at least one project in the nonprofit sector in the previous year. Along similar lines, at least 60 percent of respondents were involved with a commercial enterprise and 23 percent with a governmental project.

Individual artists mixed and matched sectors. For example, 70 of our respondents—just over a quarter—were active in for-profit, nonprofit, and private unincorporated settings during the previous year. Another 35 (13 percent) used only the private, unincorporated and nonprofit sectors, while 30 other artists were active in nonprofit and governmental settings only. Only 20 of the artists (seven percent) were active in only one sector.

Thirty percent of our sample artists were involved in an informal setting at least once during the previous year. As with our venue-specific data, musicians and other performing artists were the most likely to do so; half of the musicians and three-fourths of the other performing artists had at least one informal sector project in the previous year. But even among the visual artists, who had a very low overall rate of involvement in the informal sector, about one in five reported at least one informal-sector project during the year.

Thus, although from an organizational perspective the different sectors of the cultural world line up clearly, for artists these differences are not particularly important. The vast majority of artists cross the lines regularly between the nonprofit, for-profit, and informal sectors, often cobbling together careers from these disparate parts.

Informal Involvement by Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

Next we asked whether gender, ethnicity, or age influenced the likelihood that an artist would work in a particular sector. In order to make this assessment, we completed a general linear model analysis with use of the informal sector as the dependent variable. This allowed us to control statistically for discipline to see if any of the demographic variables influenced use of the informal sector.

As expected, discipline was strongly related to the likelihood that an artist would have had a project in the informal sector in the previous year; it explained 14 percent of the variance. The influence of other variables was more muted; ethnicity explained six percent of the variance, and age and gender had no significant impact on informal sector involvement.

When other factors were controlled, the notable ethnic feature was the low involvement of African Americans in the informal sector. Controlling for other variables, only 11 percent of African Americans were involved in the informal sector during the previous year. At the other extreme, virtually all Latin American artists were involved in informal cultural activities. (See Figure 16.) Upon closer examination, we see that all of the informal activities with which the Latin American artists were involved were associated with fairs and festivals. Clearly, the frequent festivals characteristic of Philadelphia's Latin American communities influences the working lives of Latin American artists.

Ethnicity	Mean
White	0.299944
African American	0.105042
Latin American	0.952464
Other	0.222730

Figure 16. Informal sector involvement during previous year by ethnicity, general linear model analysis

Involvement in the For-profit Sector

We completed a similar multivariate analysis of the likelihood that during a given year an artist would be engaged in the for-profit sector. The independent variables included discipline, ethnicity, age, and gender. Of these variables, age was the strongest predictor, explaining ten percent of the variance in for-profit involvement. When other variables were controlled, ethnicity and gender also were significantly related to involvement in the for-profit sector.

The youngest and the oldest artists among our respondents were the most likely to be involved in commercial culture. Nearly three-fourths of artists in their twenties were involved in commercial art—often musicians playing in bars and restaurants. At the other extreme, nearly 70 percent of artists over the age of 60 were involved in commercial culture. This group, however, were typically visual artists showing their work in galleries.

Ethnicity too was clearly related to use of the for-profit sector, although the differences were less sharp than with age. While more than three-fourths of white respondents used the for-profit sector, only about half of non-white artists did so. The benefit of the for-profit sector for 'majority' groups appears to have carried over to gender as well. Nearly 70 percent of male artists were involved with the commercial sector compared to only 43 percent of the female artists in the survey.

In summary, the analysis of the informal sector and its relationship to other parts of the arts world provides a level of detail not provided by previous studies of the unincorporated sector. First, we have discovered that nonprofit and governmental settings accounted for only about two-in-five (41 percent) of the cultural venues in which the artists were involved. Commercial cultural establishments, live/work spaces, and other informal cultural venues accounted for the other three-fifths (59 percent). Second, musicians and other performing artists were more likely than visual artists or artisans to be involved in the informal sector. However, musicians were also likely to be involved in commercial settings, while other performing artists were well represented in official nonprofits. Visual artists and artisans were more likely to concentrate in official nonprofit settings as well as private, unincorporated settings. Third, although there were relationships between demographic characteristics and cultural sector, for the most part, use of sectors other than official nonprofit organizations cut across ethnic, age, and gender lines**.**

Conclusion

This paper began with two purposes: to provide an explication of the use of respondent-driven sampling to study artists and to use these data to make a first approximation of the extent of the unincorporated cultural sector in metropolitan Philadelphia.

The first purpose required an unaccustomed level of fortitude for the reader, as we wound our way through 'seeds,' 'waves,' and the terrors of homophily. Still, given the previous work of Jeffri on jazz artists using a similar method and the promise of respondent-driven sampling to serve as a bridge between traditional quantitative and qualitative methods, we can only be optimistic about the use of this approach for future studies.[15]

The actual results of the analysis of sector affiliation provide us with some basic data on the commercial and informal sectors that we have not previously possessed. It appears that commercial cultural venues like restaurants, bars, and galleries were almost as important as nonprofit organizations in the work lives of our respondents. Furthermore, live/work spaces and other informal venues, especially single performances and fairs and festivals, also represent important elements of the cultural ecosystem of Philadelphia area artists. It is clear that—if we had anticipated using the survey for this purpose—this method could provide even more detail on the character of the informal sector.

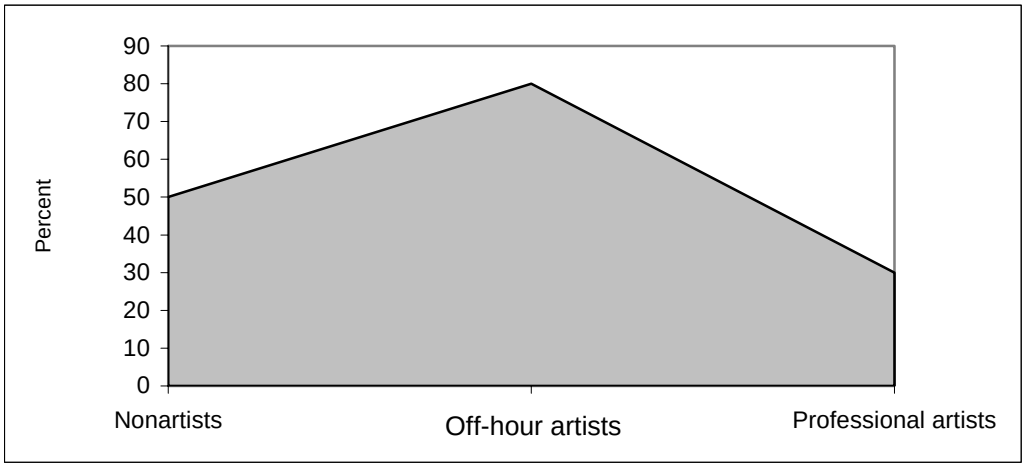
Probably the most important implication of this analysis is a sense of the relative importance of the informal sector for artists and for non-artists. As noted in the comparison of the SIAP sample's characteristics with those of the Pew Fellowships in the Arts data base and the census, our sample appears to have focused primarily on professional artists, missing the 'census artists' and those 'off-hours' artists who do not earn a living based on their art.

For professional artists, the informal sector appears to be a significant sector, but one that is smaller than the traditional nonprofit and commercial cultural sectors; about 30 percent of artists had at least one informal-sector project during the previous year. One hypothesis is that, for the professional artist involvement in the informal sector presents a tension: it increases opportunities for exposure, audience, and participation but decreases availability for income-earning projects. On the other hand, if we look at the survey of public participation in the arts to estimate participants' involvement in making art, we come up with estimates for non-artists that range from seven percent—who actually performed in public in the previous year—to 50 percent—who were actively engaged in

[15] The only cloud on the horizon that emerged from this study is the question of network size. As we have noted, network size introduces a bias into our estimates because the well-connected are more likely to be included in a RDS study than those less-connected. However, *if we know* the size of network, this is a bias that RDS has developed methods for correcting. The evidence from arts studies suggests that the estimate of network size continues to be a source of concern. It is unclear that respondents actually know the size of their network, particularly when it is restricted to a subcategory like artists. The heaping evident in previous work suggests that respondents' knowledge is, at best, inexact, and given this inexactitude, we should be concerned about the reliability of these estimates. As an alternative to relying on a direct question on network size, this study asked a battery of questions about our respondents' use of social networks and the prominence of artists within those networks. By restricting ourselves to data on the previous week, we were able to get more exact and reliable information about the frequency of contacts. This required us to use an indirect method of estimating network size in order to develop weighting for the sample. Clearly, the issue of network size will be an important consideration in future uses of this method.

the creative process, for example, by making a pot, singing a song, or playing an instrument.

In between these amateur artists and the professional artists in our survey, we have the off-hours artists who see themselves as artists but do not do art professionally. Although we have no data to estimate the role of informal settings for off-hours artists, it seems likely that they would be the group *most likely* to be involved in informal settings, because their active cultural engagement would be higher than that of the general population, but their access to formal nonprofit and for-profit settings would be lower than that of professional artists. Although the scale should be taken with a grain of salt, our analysis—combined with what we know about other sub-sectors of the informal cultural world—might lead us to the conclusion illustrated below.



So, our empirical conclusion has a tinge of irony. On the one hand, about 30 percent of Philadelphia area artists have contact with the informal sector at least once during the year. On the other hand, professional artists are probably the sector of the population that is *least* involved in the informal sector.

The study of the informal cultural sector will continue to be a major agenda item for cultural research in the years to come. If nothing else, this paper demonstrates that researchers *can* use quantitative methods to add to our understanding of the informal sector. It holds out the promise that when that research is done, we will have gained a more complex and variegated portrait of informal cultural engagement and its place in the ecology of urban culture.