Understanding the role of cultural networks within a creative ecosystem: a Canadian case-study

Mary Blackstone
Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research, University of Regina, Canada
blackstm@uregina.ca

Sam Hage
Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research, University of Regina, Canada
hage2Sam@hotmail.com

Ian McWilliams
Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research, University of Regina, Canada
SPAR@uregina.ca

Submission date: 31.03.2016 • Acceptance date: 22.06.2016 • Publication date: 10.12.2016

ABSTRACT

Despite prevailing theories which presume the importance of networks linking artists and others in their communities, we lack sufficient systematic, artist-centred, primary research for a good understanding of how cultural networks function. To address this lacuna, a project fostered by the three major arts organisations in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan has engaged artists and the public in quantitative and qualitative research to understand their involvement in local and more extended networks. With the first publicly funded agency for arts support in North America, a recently buoyant economy, and a diversifying and increasingly indigenous population, established formal and informal cross-disciplinary networks which created a vibrant cultural ecology in Saskatchewan are in transition. Emerging insights into the current dynamics of these cultural networks and the health of the province's creative ecosystem demonstrate the importance of such primary research as a foundation for cultural policy making in Canada and elsewhere.

Keywords:

Cultural networks

Arts ecology

Cultural ecology

Artist networks

Creative ecology

Introduction

The assumption that artists are interconnected within complex networks that also include other cultural workers and organizations as well as a broad range of individuals and organizations outside the arts sector is central to a host of current theories and studies related to the arts and culture. The extensive and wide-ranging citations concerned with networking in the recent Arts and Humanities Research Council Cultural Value Project[1] report demonstrate the embeddedness of this assumption to the point that the authors talk about "the networked nature of cultural value" (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016: 141). This goes beyond the importance of networking within the arts and culture to the capacity of the arts to foster networking and social cohesion within societies in general. This close interconnection between cultural and social capital, as sug-gested by theorists such as Bourdieu (2001 [1986]) and DiMaggio (1987: 442) explains in part the complex range of typologies that can be constructed by researchers examining such networks depending on their definition of culture and the perspective from which they examine the networks (e.g. Sieck, Rasmussen & Smart, 2010; Lizardo, 2006). This study examines cultural networks from an ecological perspective that closely parallels the work of John Holden, who theorizes that the complex web of networks which form within and around the arts should be approached as ecosystems worthy of more specific studies directed towards "understanding and analyzing local cultural ecologies" (Holden, 2015: 32). However, surprisingly few scholars have undertaken artist-centred, primary studies that contextualize and test these theories against the practical realities of how such networks are formed, how they actually function, who composes them – or even if artists have access to such networks within a cultural ecosystem in a specific place and time.

Networks within culture and the creative economy

In a classic study of networks and relationships at work in Italy – a study that today might be easily framed and interpreted in ecological terms – Robert Putnam derives his influential theories from detailed, place-based, primary research concerning the role of choral societies in building social capital and connectivity through "dense networks of reciprocal social relations", and he concludes that "social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic" (2000: 19 & 412). Numerous studies on the social impact of the arts, though not always grounded in primary research and seldom with a focus on artists, have further demonstrated the cohesive, connective capacity of the arts (e.g. Walker & Scott-Meinyk, 2001; Jeannotte, 2003) to the point that Doug Borwick (2012) positions the social cohesion derived from public engagement with professional arts organisations not as a by-product but as a central mandate essential for the survival of such organisations as well as healthy and sustainable communities and culture. Despite his primary emphasis on arts organisations, his argument presumes a set of interconnections linking arts organisation, artist and public in the construction of social capital, and he identifies artists as essential "for connecting with the community", since: "Ultimately it is the artist that is central to community engagement. Performing arts organisations and museums establish and support frameworks through which any community arts project is based" but "artists (...) are often the face of community engagement" (Borwick, 2012: 350). He assumes that if artists engage in what matters most to their communities this will in turn position artists and arts organisations as indispensable components of those communities.

Despite Borwick's allusion to the important role of artists and the networks they construct, he offers few specifics regarding actual networks and their capacity to encompass and engage the public in a particular place and time. In his initial work on the creative economy Richard Florida (2002) placed more focus on the artist as operating within a creative class of other individuals such as scientists, engineers, designers, architects and creative professionals in high tech, finance, law, health and business. In comparison with other creative economy theorists (e.g. Howkins, 2001), this effected an important shift in focus from creative industries as drivers of this new economy to the productive interaction of a creative class of individuals clustered in large urban centres as economic generators and catalysts of innovation and creativity. In response to vigorous critique, Florida (2012) modified his thinking to recognize the potential for smaller city centres – and virtually any community – to function similarly in providing a place for productive interaction across the creative class, but he further reiterated and extended his emphasis on the importance of networks by redefining the creative class more broadly to include even individuals from working and service classes if given the opportunity to develop their creative potential. Although subsequent researchers working within his theories have begun to fill the gap (see Spencer, 2009 & 2015), Florida failed to provide adequate primary evidence to support his assertions about the nature of creative networks, and the class-based, creative cities orientation drew considerable scholarly critique, but he did help to popularize the importance of creative networks, the centrality of artists within them and the blurring of lines between artists, other professionals, and amateurs.

David Throsby (2001) offers a more comprehensive valuing of culture beyond its impact on the

1 For more information, see http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/culturalvalueproject/

creative economy. He notes that for both economists and cultural theorists "a theory of value is the foundation stone" from which their work evolves and that the relationship between economic and cultural value should occupy economists' attention because "cultural 'ecosystems' underpin the operations of the real economy, much as natural ecosystems do; neglect of cultural capital can lead to the same sorts of problems as we now accept arise if natural capital and natural ecosystems are allowed to fall into disrepair" (2001: 158 & 161-162). His assertions regarding the connectedness of cultural ecosystems are grounded in detailed studies of cultural networks although primarily those formed by specific arts organizations (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2010) or within particular sectors or disciplines (Throsby, 2004) rather than those formed by individuals.

Networks within cultural ecosystems

Throsby's reference to cultural ecosystems highlights the increasing attention paid to the arts and culture as ecosystems or parts of larger ecosystems dependent on interconnections and networks in the same manner as biological ecosystems. Mark Robinson (2010: 25-26) places the artist at the centre of the arts ecosystem, but notes that the connections between the various levels of the system work both ways, so that "what hap-pens in a town or city (...) impacts on the arts sector. What happens in the arts or in an arts venue changes the city". In fact, he relates the relative health of the ecology, its capacity to maintain creativity in the face of change, directly to "connectivity" and "networks of relationships enabling adaptive behaviour and resilience".

Howkins promoted *Creative Ecologies* (2009) as showing "how our ability to develop ideas successfully depends on how we use networks; for example, knowing when to collaborate, when to compete, and when to go it alone". Bill Sharpe (2010: 17 & 39) in *Economies of Life: Patterns of Health and Wealth* also argues that "growth flows from relationships", but he focuses on the arts as an ecosystem in which money is just one currency of exchange and secondary to art itself, the currency of the economy of experience: "the value of art is precisely that it concerns itself with reflecting the experience of a particular life in its own terms and bringing that experience into the infinite conversation of shared culture". In defining cultural ecology as concerned with "the complex interdependencies that shape the demand for and production of arts and cultural offerings", Ann Markusen centred its focus on interconnections and located its strength, like that of environmental ecology, in an integrated and convergent approach (Markusen et al, 2011: 8). From this perspective, John Holden, in *The Ecology of Culture*, calls for an ecological shift from what he sees as a dominant, single-minded model of the arts and culture as economically driven to that of an ecosystem with greater attention to how it functions more broadly – its "relationships and patterns (...) how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and from, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors" (2015: 2).

Understanding how cultural networks actually work

Holden's work underscores the currency and influence of such theories with their emphasis on both formal and informal networks encompassing artists, cultural workers and their wider communities – and especially the trend towards situating artists within a broad ecosystem of symbiotic relationships. Increasingly practitioners in arts and culture cite and draw from such theories in media releases, reports, programming and policies, and the concept of culture as an ecosystem has slipped into the day-to-day consciousness and discourse of artists, cultural administrators, government bureaucrats, agencies and organisations. However, a fundamental change of perspective needs to accompany the adoption of terminology. The outwardly focused perspective on the benefits of the arts to the economy needs to give way to an inwardly focused attention to the interdependencies within the arts ecosystem – which includes not only artists but also a wide range of other individuals, organizations, business, etc. from inside and outside the arts who together create a range of cultural meanings, economies of exchange and value. Effecting such a shift along with the application of ecological theories through programming and policy making, however, requires an understanding of how in practice formal networks and informal interconnections function in a given place and time. Artists and other creative in-

"THE OUTWARDLY FOCUSED PERSPECTIVE ON THE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS TO THE ECONOMY NEEDS TO GIVE WAY TO AN INWARDLY FOCUSED ATTENTION TO THE INTERDEPENDENCIES WITHIN THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM – WHICH INCLUDES NOT ONLY ARTISTS BUT ALSO OTHER INDIVIDUALS"

dividuals need to understand how such networking functions in order to maximize the benefits of networking to their own creative practice or innovative endeavours, and arts and cultural administrators and policy makers need to consider how policy and program changes will impact such networks and regularly ask how effectively and sustainably the arts and culture are functioning as an ecosystem – and interconnecting within broader ecosystems. Where are the disruptions and gaps? Who is included within existing networks and who is not?

Unfortunately, detailed studies and data relating to artists and their role within cultural networking at the grassroots level are limited – and for good reason. Simply identifying the number of artists in a given location is fraught with definitional complexities as well as the practical challenges of contacting and classifying them. If the ecosystem is broadened to include anyone who facilitates creative work from cultural professionals and technicians to participants – e.g. patrons, consumers, fans and avocational artists –, then the challenge of grassroots studies becomes even clearer. Much more work has been done at the level of arts and cultural organisations where identifying the organisations, contacting them and collecting consistently recorded quantitative data over time is much more manageable. Despite the importance of such research to understanding an arts ecosystem, appreciating the full significance of its organizational infrastructure depends on understanding the basic interactions between individuals, the facilitation of which forms the core of so many organizational mandates.

Scholars like Ann Markusen and Gregory Schrock (2008) through the Leveraging Investments in Creativity program in the US and even Statistics Canada (2014b) and the Department of Canadian Heritage in Canada have led large scale projects to mine existing census data and other sources such as labour statistics for information about artist demographics and work patterns. But in Canada, at least, these efforts have proven less than satisfactory or helpful partly because of a preoccupation with determining the arts' contribution to GDP and partly because criteria used in the original collection of the data excluded significant numbers of artists and failed to address key questions for the arts and culture (Hill, 2014a, 2014b & 2014c). Such studies do contribute to a useful constellation of secondary data sources, but other scholars such as Elizabeth Lingo and Steven Tepper have argued for the importance of primary research focused specifically on:

> *artists as catalysts of change. We need to better understand how artists both create changes in the labour market itself and the way cultural work is done. What is their process of innovation and enterprise? What is the nature of their work and the resources they draw upon? How do different network structures produce different opportunity spaces? How do artistic workers create and manage planned serendipity – the spaces and exchanges that produce unexpected collaborations and opportunities? And how do creative workers broker and synthesize across occupational, genre, geographic, and industry boundaries to create new possibilities? (2013: 348-349)* .

Evidence in their special 2013 issue of *Work and Occupations* addresses some of these questions and other scholars have undertaken "careful detailed empirical work, involving in-depth ethnographies" of clusters and networks which suggest that economic and ecological theories, as they relate to the arts, do not always square with the working realities of artists (e.g. Kong, 2009: 62-63; Di Maggio, 2011; Spencer, 2009; Porter, 2000; Gibson & Robinson, 2004; Markusen, 2006; Van Heur, 2009). While commonalities across such existing studies reveal the collective benefits of increasing this body of data, differences across them also point to the importance of studies which extend beyond economic factors to a broader ecological consideration situated in the specific place, time and disciplines for which programming and policymaking is taking place. While individual creative practice along with whole disciplines and an ever expanding constellation of consumers and audiences may be converging at a global level, for many artists and members of their communities the generative creative experience remains a local one. In a 2010 report produced for the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance in Canada, Canadian/Australian scholar Marnie Badham called for a specific cross-disciplinary, place-based study grounded in the broad and unique arts ecology of Saskatchewan which would yield "better data, both qualitative and quantitative, about the arts and their relationship to our lives and our environment. Over time, this would not only tell us more about the arts, but about how the public feels about the arts, and will help to inform better policy decisions" (Badham, 2010: 19).

Understanding the arts ecosystem in Saskatchewan

In response to this call to action, the three major arts organisations and agencies in Saskatchewan came together in a research partnership to address this gap as it relates to Saskatchewan artists and their com-munities. The Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and SaskCulture formed the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR) in 2012 with the objective of better understanding the role of artists in cultural networking and addressing the dearth of detailed data on how artists in the province work and develop networks in the process. Seeking out the perspective of both artists and mem-

bers of the public as components of an arts ecosystem who together construct cultural meaning, SPAR embraced both the limitations and the potential benefits of such research as articulated by Holden: "There are no parts, only ways of seeing things as parts. The connections, symbiosis, feedback loops, and flows of people, product, ideas and money are as dynamic and intense as to defy complete description. But a deeper understanding of culture can be achieved by applying the multiple perspectives that an ecological approach demands" (2015: 3). The partners had much information and data relating to arts organisations, their audiences and the spaces and programs they controlled, but the partners lacked understanding of the position of the artist in the system and how those artists connected with not only other components but also more complex cultural, social and economic dimensions of the broader ecosystem. Thanks to funding from its partners and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SPAR launched its first research project, Under-standing the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan, in 2013 by developing survey instruments targeted at artists and the public to address three basic questions: (1) What is the nature of professional connections and networks forged by artists among themselves and with their community (broadly defined)? (2) Are these connections contributing to a healthy and sustainable arts ecosystem? (3) How are they related to the cultural, social and economic dynamics of the broader provincial ecosystem?

The findings presented here derive primarily from analysis of these surveys as well as some qualitative follow-up consultations in the next stage of the research, but they need to be understood in the context of the broader provincial climate. As observed by Holden: "culture exists within a wider political, social and economic environment with both proximate and remote connections. No account of the ecology of culture can be complete without recognising the broader context in which culture sits" (2015: 22). Understanding something of the provincial context – both the arts and cultural sector and the extended geographical, social and economic environment – will also help people determine whether our data may be more widely applicable.

The provincial context

Located in the heart of Canada's bread basket in the western prairie region, Saskatchewan has historically placed considerable importance on the arts. In 1948 it established the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the first publicly funded, arms-length arts agency in North America, which later served as a model for the Canada Council. The Board served as a catalyst for training and funding amateur and professional artists as well as supporting arts organisations. The ongoing legacy of this organisation is an arts community which boasts a diverse range of artists, organisations and educational programs encompassing the full array of contemporary art forms, traditional indigenous arts and crafts as well as various electronic media. In SPAR's recent sample survey of the province's professional artists, they classified themselves as pursuing 967 different art forms or combinations of disciplines in all areas of the province.

In 1997 the Arts Board maintained a primary responsibility for professional artists and arts organizations when the Government created SaskCulture, a unique agency in Canada which derives funding through the lotteries to support a wider scope of cultural experience, including not only the arts (community-based, amateurs and students), but also heritage, multiculturalism and cultural industries. In 2013 as an attempt to alleviate the devastating effects on the local film and television industry of the elimination of the film employment tax credit and related film commission, the Government formed a third crown agency, Creative Saskatchewan, devoted exclusively to supporting the marketing of creative work with a particular emphasis on the creative industries of publishing, visual arts and crafts, screen-based and new media, music and sound recording[2]. As each new agency has emerged, programming and policy has shifted to the point where they serve all three spheres of culture outlined by Holden (2008) – publicly funded culture, homemade culture and commercial culture –, but not without challenges in facilitating the overlap and convergence of the three spheres – especially in the flows of creative ideas, cultural workers and audiences.

This backbone of funding agencies began evolving during difficult economic times, but in recent years Saskatchewan's abundance of oil, gas and potash along with its agricultural strength made it one of the few places in North America where the economy grew right through the 2008 crash up to the recent global collapse of oil prices. Although large sections of the province remain sparsely populated, the economic boom brought ongoing population increases in rural and urban centres and pushed the provincial population to 1,134,000. With metropolitan populations of just around 300,000, its two major cities, Regina and Saskatoon, have until very recently been among the fastest growing cities in Canada. This influx led to escalating rental and property prices as well as a shortage of housing in some locations – something that

2 Creative Saskatchewan works closely with the six creative industry associations: SaskGalleries, SaskMusic, Saskatchewan Crafts Council, Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA), Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association and SaskBooks.

has had a particular impact on people in low income brackets like students and emerging professional artists.

The province's economic boom also contributed to the diversification of the population. Despite an active immigration policy the province's share of immigrants to Canada remains comparatively low (3.5% in 2011), but 85% of the province's immigrants in this period came from Asia, Africa and the Middle East to a culture where established residents identify overwhelmingly with European ancestry (Government of Saskatchewan-Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Government of Saskatchewan-Ministry of the Economy 2011: 14). Further contributing to diversification, the rapidly increasing indigenous population comprised 16% of the provincial population in the 2011 census and will become the largest in Canada's provinces at 21-24% by 2031 (Government of Saskatchewan-Bureau of Statistics, 2014; Malenfant & Morency, 2011).

Not surprisingly, given this context, Florida singled out Saskatoon, one of the province's two major cities, as a smaller creative city (Florida, 2009: xvii, 95). Open responses to our artist survey corroborated this perception. As one respondent put it, "Specific to Saskatoon, the creative energy is high. Artists from other jurisdictions have moved (...) here. This is a mixture of opportunity, activity, and energy, and a good mix of artistic experience"[3]. Another respondent noted: "There is a growing younger artistic community in Saskatoon which is invigorating and essential to the breadth of a broader artistic community". The design of our surveys facilitated feedback like this on the health of the ecosystem as personally experienced by our respondents so that SPAR could determine the impact of the province's new wealth and diversity on the health and sustainability of the entire arts ecosystem — including the experience of professional artists and the public outside urban centres. Prior to this first comprehensive survey of local artists, no one really knew how many professional artists lived in the province. Through surveys which came just at the beginning of the recent downturn in the oil and gas industry, SPAR wanted to know how the shifting economic, social and cultural dynamics of the province had affected artist networks and relationships; how newcomer and emerging artists as well as those not of European ancestry were functioning within the arts ecosystem; how artists were connected with their broader communities; and how artists had benefitted from or been affected by fluctuations in the province's wealth.

SPAR methodology and approach

Although conceived and launched well before Holden's 2015 report calling for such detailed studies, SPAR's research on Saskatchewan's arts ecosystem has involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches closely related to the research approach Holden advocates. This case study focuses primarily on results from the first stage of the research. Artist surveys were made possible by an artist registry set up by SPAR partner, the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, as well as names provided by other arts organizations, all of which contributed to a database of more than 3,200 artists from whom SPAR invited just over 1,300 to be surveyed in spring 2014. Nearly a quarter (348) of those artists responded and many completed the lengthy survey in detail, often providing extended answers to open questions. Simultaneously, SPAR also administered an open online survey of the Saskatchewan public in order to compare the perceptions of artists and others in their communities regarding the relative embeddedness and connectedness of artists in wider provincial ecosystems. Because of the openness of the public survey as well as uncertainty as to how well the database of artists captured the entire artist population, further qualitative research is being undertaken to confirm the extent to which the survey results reflect the perceptions of provincial artists and the public. Observations and analyses of the data are leading to hypotheses and questions as well as identification of gaps for follow up through qualitative consultations. Although aware of the challenges of identifying and accessing verifiable artist populations, the SPAR partners felt it important to push beyond those perceived obstacles to primary studies, and they felt that this two-part approach taken in conjunction with other pre-existing studies and data would provide stronger evidence for programming and policy making.

Importance of informal and formal networking

Perceptions of importance

For ecological thinking and research to inform such policymaking, however, the surveys had to first determine whether respondents saw themselves as part of such a system of interdependent relationships. When asked to rank the relative importance of informal or formal networking to both their evolutions as artists and their ability to create or interpret work, artists ranked

3 Apart from the theoretical studies already cited, SPAR's approach to our research and the analysis of our data have been informed by an amalgamation of theory and methodology drawn from sociology and ecology as well as the cross-disciplinary field of sustainability studies. Unless otherwise noted, the data described herein are from the SPAR Artist Survey Dataset. For more information regarding SPAR's process and methodology, see Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a: 3-5), its datasets and reports; visit www2.uregina.ca/spar, or send an e-mail to spar@uregina.ca

"THE YOUNGER THE ARTIST THE MORE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACED ON NETWORKING, BUT THE RESPONDENT'S LOCATION WHETHER IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN OR IN ONE OF ITS TWO MAJOR CITIES SEEMED TO MAKE NO DIFFERENCE TO THE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACED ON NETWORKING"

it highly, although they tended to rank networking as more important to their evolution as an artist than their ability to create or interpret work. Not surprisingly, respondents found connections with other artists in their specific arts discipline most important, although connections with other artists still ranked as important. Despite indicating a substantial use of electronic communication, two-thirds of respondents placed the greatest importance on connections with artists, arts organisations and/or businesses in the arts or culture at the level of their local geographical neighbourhood or municipality with steeply declining importance assigned to regional, national and global connections in that order (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 23). An important exception to this ranking came from indigenous artists who also placed a high importance on networking at the national and international levels as well as within their extended cultural community (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 8-11). Only approximately 50% of respondents ranked connections outside the arts in their immediate locale or region as important although 71% placed a high degree of importance on their local context (e.g. their immediate natural environment, particular community or neighbourhood) as facilitating their creativity and art practice (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 20 & 23). Generally speaking, the younger the artist the more importance they placed on networking, but the respondent's location whether in rural Saskatchewan or in one of its two major cities seemed to make no difference to the importance they placed on networking despite a slightly lower ranking of outright collaboration by rural artists.

Importance as correlated with network density

Although the survey asked artists to overtly rank the importance of networking to the evolution of their careers and realization of their creative work, it also asked them to provide specific information about the individuals, organisations, spaces, events, means of communication, etc. that helped to facilitate those connections. SPAR then analysed these responses to determine the respondent's *network density* with respect to relationships within and beyond the arts. This variable was compared with other responses relating to income, grants, public and peer recognition, types of employment inside and outside the arts, etc. to facilitate a more complex analysis of the relative correlation between the degree of networking density and other factors addressed in their responses. For instance, there was a nearly perfect correlation between high networking density and the receipt of a publicly funded grant in the previous two years (figure 1). Similarly, both higher incomes and residence in one of the two urban centres were associated with stronger networking density (figure 2). While impossible to ascribe a cause and effect relationship between networking and grant success, income or an urban environment, there clearly is a correlation and a suggestion that the importance of networking overtly registered by survey respondents may be further supported by their responses to other questions

The nature and facilitation of artist networks

Disciplinary and cross-disciplinary connections

Apart from confirming that they saw themselves as interconnected within a complex web, artists provided considerable detail regarding the nature of the networks. One of the most striking discoveries with important programming implications was the overwhelmingly cross-disciplinary character of creative practice in the province. Nearly 75% of respondents indicated that they were engaged in two or more out of nine general areas of creative work (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 11). While the Canada Council has recently revised the disciplinary structure of its grant programs to better facilitate cross-disciplinary work, Saskatchewan's Arts Board, the primary funding agency for professional artists, currently retains a structure which according to some artists presents numerous obstacles to emerging cross-disciplinary practices as well as traditional indigenous art making, but senior artists in more conventional fields which straddle more than one discipline (e.g. playwriting which straddles literary arts and theatre) also reported long standing challenges of this nature. Despite these hurdles with funding agencies, however, art-

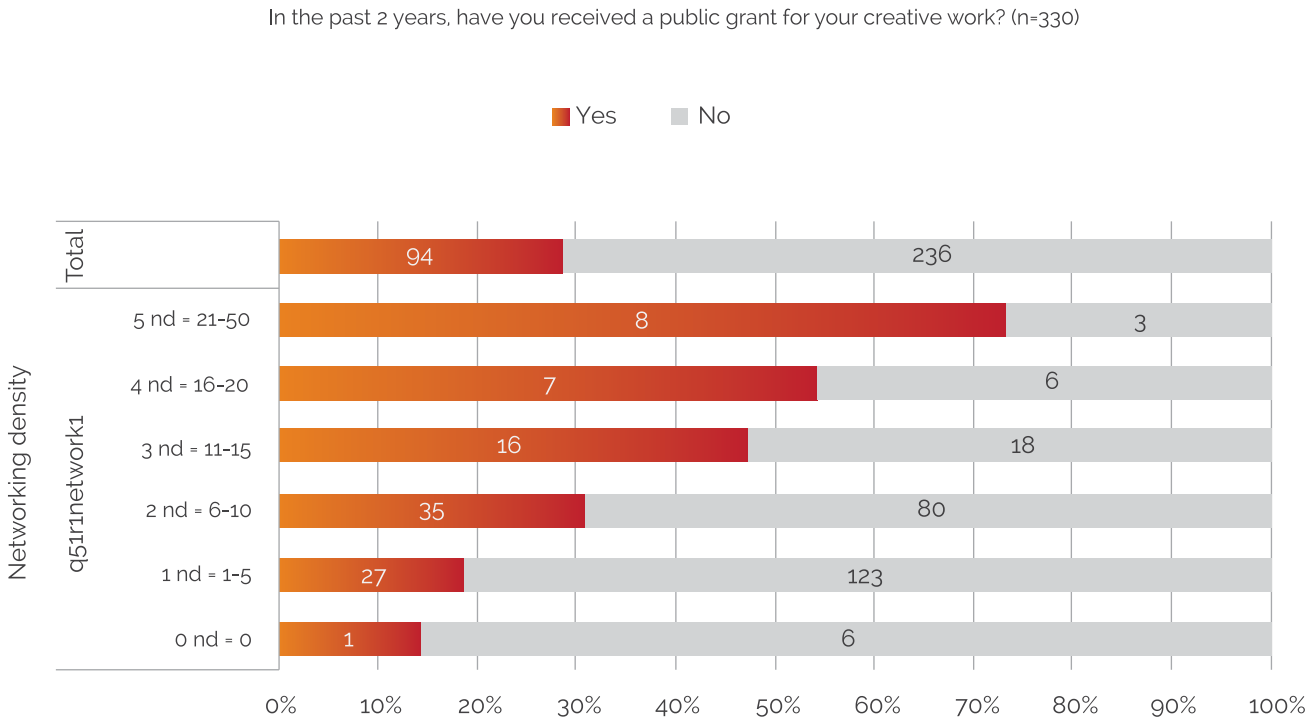

FIGURE 1. A PERFECT INVERSE RELATIONSHIP, THE LESS NETWORKING, THE MORE "NO" FOR RECEIVING A PUBLIC GRANT
Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

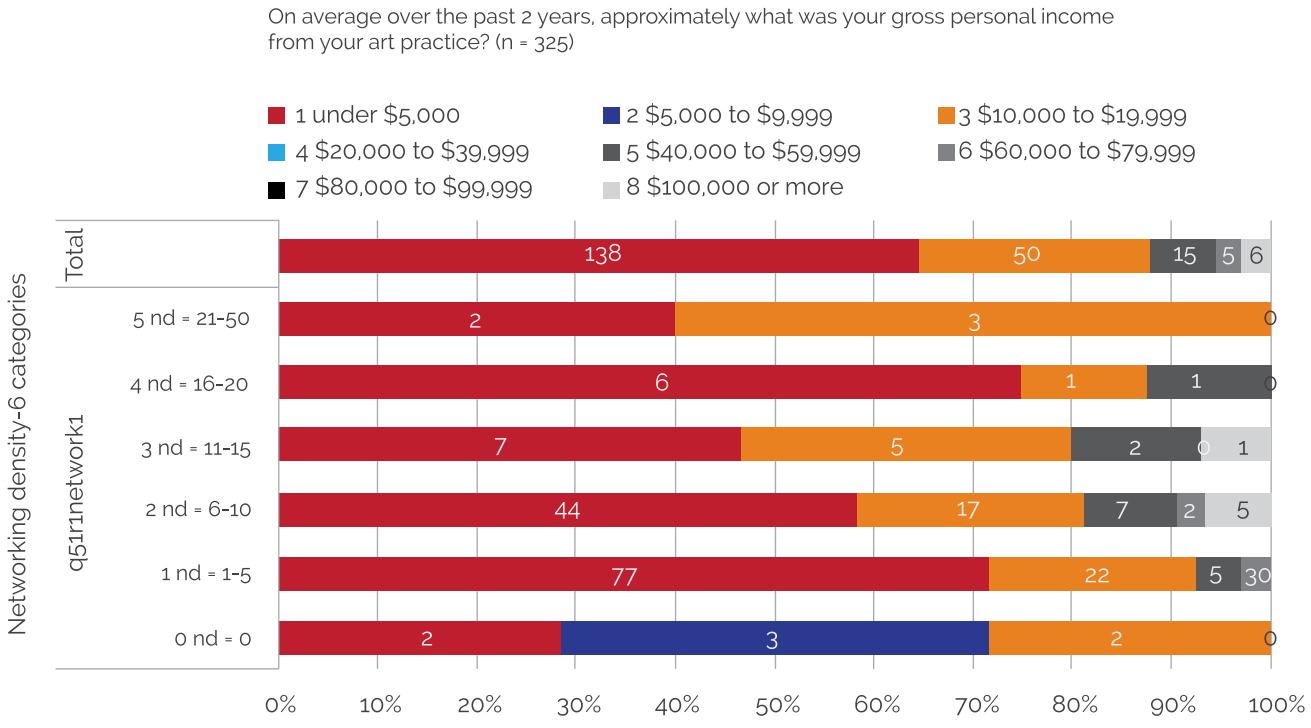

FIGURE 2. HIGHER INCOMES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH MORE NETWORKING
Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

ists demonstrated their capacity to create and navigate networks whose disciplinary breadth was more than matched by the range of organisations, agencies, educational institutions and/or businesses (inside and outside the arts) that had contributed to their creative evolution. In three open questions, respondents could identify as many relationships as they wished ranging from formal, membership-based organisations in the arts; to other arts or cultural organisations and agencies engaged in programming, production, training or funding; to any kind of entity outside the arts. Not all artists responded to these open questions, but those that did gave more than 1,300 specific names which provided both a window into the networks formed by some individual artists as well as a small indication of the broader complexity of the networks which contribute to the ecosystem of the arts in the province (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 19).

Organisations and agencies

While the artists were frequently fuzzy on the exact nature of the relationship (e.g. sometimes citing funding agencies as membership-based organisations) and the particular organisational connections varied according to the disciplinary orientation of the artist, some relationships figured consistently in the responses to these questions. Not surprisingly, the Saskatchewan Arts Board was a constant with over 140 references in this initial section (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 19). Later in the survey when specifically prompted to rank the role of the Arts Board as a direct source of income over their entire career as an artist, approximately 45% identified it as important despite the fact that less than 30% of respondents reported receiving a publicly funded grant in the past two years (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 16). Of course, with reference to the Arts Board respondents would also have recognized that its funding of arts organisations had constituted important if indirect support for their creative work. In another question, 57% of respondents identified arts organisations and festivals along with arts-related businesses as their most important direct source of creative income followed closely by 56% who saw sales to individuals, galleries and collections as important. In the public survey a large number of respondents credited arts organisations, arts-related businesses or related activities and events as the reason they came to know both professional and emerging artists (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 16-17).

Educational institutions and facilities

A more unexpected discovery with respect to artist networks was the prominence of educational institutions, particularly universities (either cited generally or with reference to a specific institution). In open responses they were by far the most frequently cited organisations with over 200 references (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 18-19), and it became clear that their policies regarding access to facilities as well as the events and programs they offered accounted for these references. The importance of universities should not be that surprising given that over 70% of the respondents reported having at least one university degree – a statistic that is consistent with the high level of education reported in a national survey of visual artists (Maranda, 2009). However, respondents with the highest levels of networking density placed considerable importance on arts facilities in educational institutions as helping to make connections necessary to their creative work. Although not necessarily related to a university or institutional context – or involving remuneration, over 50% of respondents reported devoting up to nine hours per week to teaching or mentoring in their creative discipline(s) – something that underscores the importance of students whether avocational or emerging professionals in the creative networks constructed by a majority of our artist respondents (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015: 12). In fact, greater network density correlated with a higher number of hours devoted to teaching and mentoring (figure 3). The educational orientation of artist networks was also reflected in artist responses to another question – the relative importance they ascribed to the contribution of artists to 10 areas of leadership in their communities. The three most highly ranked areas involved overt roles in levels of education – K-12 (primary and secondary education) through post-secondary, the professional development of other artists, and contributing to the understanding and appreciation of the arts among the general public. Over 85% of artists and 90% of public survey respondents ranked artist contributions in these areas as important, and just over 50% of artists reported actually contributing in all three areas themselves (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25-26, & 2015b: 9). The SPAR survey data, therefore suggested that the arts and education are inextri-

"RESPONDENTS WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF NETWORKING DENSITY PLACED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE ON ARTS FACILITIES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS HELPING TO MAKE CONNECTIONS NECESSARY TO THEIR CREATIVE WORK"

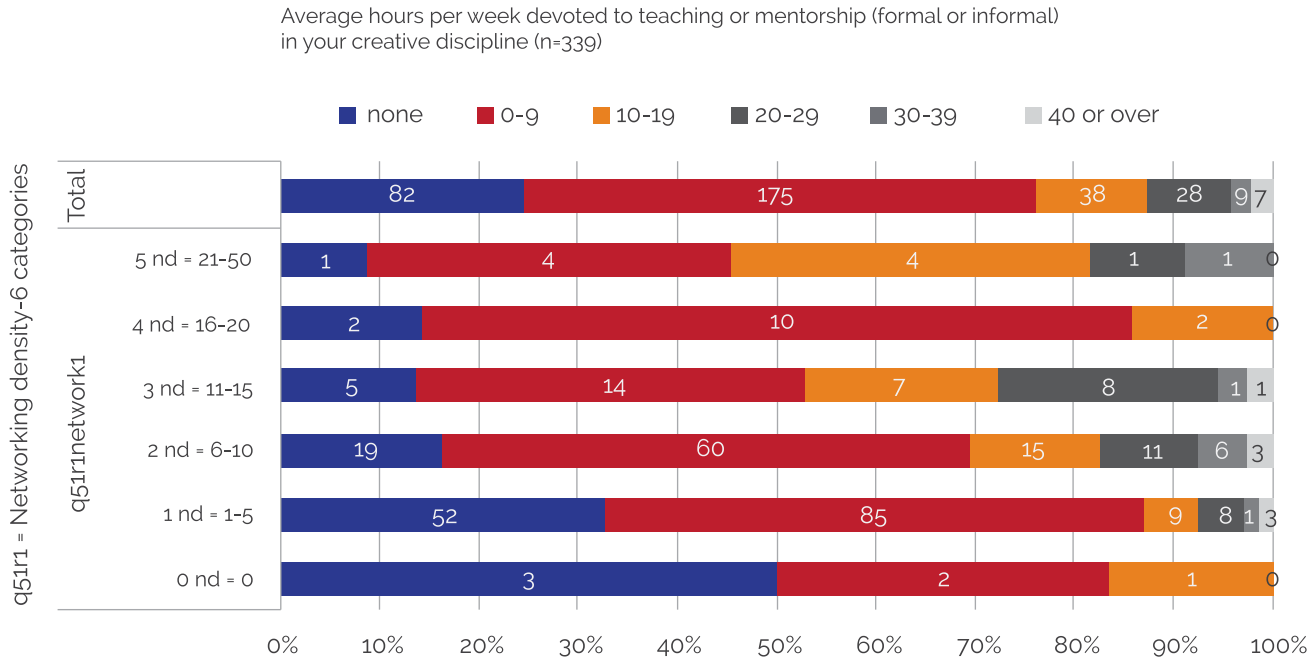

FIGURE 3. GREATER NETWORKING DENSITY CORRELATES WITH HIGHER NUMBER OF HOURS DEVOTED TO TEACHING AND MENTORING
Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

cably linked with educational policy and programming directly affecting the arts ecosystem and arts policy and programming directly affecting education.

Work outside the arts and contributions to the creative economy

A similar insight evolved out of both artist and public surveys regarding the networks artists form by working outside the arts. 38% of artist respondents worked 20 hours or more a week outside their creative practice, and 55% derived some kind of income from such employment (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 12 & 15). These facts do not come as a surprise to most people involved in the arts. However, because data derived from Statistics Canada's labour force surveys and national household survey have been the primary source for artist income and work-related data, the information provided by our artist-specific survey reveals important insights that Statistics Canada criteria and procedures obscure. Statistics Canada categorizes the occupations of its household survey respondents on the basis of the work they spent the most time doing during a specified one-week period. If they spent 15 hours working as an actor, another 15 hours working as a singer and 16 hours working as a computer programmer they are classified as a computer programmer. If they were employed full-time as an IT manager during that one-week but given flexible hours and working conditions so they could also be a member of one of the most prestigious string quartets in Canada, they would still be classified exclusively as an IT manager. If they were employed full-time as a professor of music but expected to be actively engage as a professional musician as part of their duties, even to the extent of being a principal musician in a symphony orchestra, they would be categorized as a teacher – not an artist.

Because our survey respondents could give details about their work outside the arts as well as the nature of their education and degrees both inside and outside the arts they revealed new insights into networking. Artists who work outside the arts may possibly be functioning as free radicals as they move back and forth between the broad range of businesses and occupations outside the arts associated with the creative economy. We should not assume that they are engaging in only blue collar or service class jobs such as plumbing, waiting tables, or driving taxis. For many artists their highest level of education was not in the Fine Arts but rather in fields such as agriculture, commerce, education, humanities, journalism, law, nurs-

ing, psychology, and various sciences. Respondents reported a variety of advanced/professional degrees and certifications, and the occupations they pursued outside the arts reflected this diversity in fields such as secondary and postsecondary education, research, agriculture, communications, business and consulting, administration and management. At least in some instances, they not only demonstrated a connection with other creative professionals such as scientists and information technology experts but also revealed that they themselves also worked as one of those creative professionals.

Over 70% of artists as well as public survey respondents thought that artists make important contributions to the economy and the development of the creative and innovative capacity of businesses or other professionals (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25, & 2015b: 9). Yet just 39% of artists thought that they personally were making an important contribution to the provincial economy and just over 30% thought they were making an important contribution to creative or innovative capacity (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 26). These low percentages may have something to do with the low levels of income artists reported receiving from their creative work (figure 2). However, the fixation on the low levels of creative income for artists has possibly overshadowed attention to their gross person income. While a quarter of the respondents earned less than $20,000 – Canadian dollars – and nearly 30% were in the $20,000-$39,999 range, 15% earned $40,000-$59,999 and 22% earned $60,000 or more for an overall average gross income of $44,335[4].

This demonstrates that artists are engaged within the wider economy. However, important questions with critical policy implications arise as to whether this integration is by choice or necessity and whether artists as well as the public feel they are making the best use of their creativity under such circumstances or sacrificing creative or family time and energy in order to earn enough to support their creative practice. While many artists have so far situated themselves in the latter category, we cannot assume that the extension of an artist's network outside their immediate creative practice – as in the case of the professor or the IT manager already mentioned – does not provide a personal creative return in the form of social and cultural as well as economic capital. In open questions and follow up consultations, some credited work outside their creative discipline as productively contributing to their creative work in the form of enhanced expertise and contacts. As well, when asked how they had come to know an artist or artists, a significant number of public survey respondents identified work-related contexts: as a work colleague, a client or customer, an employee or employer.

Other community connections and broader contributions to social and cultural capital

Artists' work-related connections outside the arts are just one component of artist networks that artist and public survey respondents depicted as extending broadly and deeply into communities. Two-thirds of public survey respondents reported knowing 10 or more professional artists as friends, neighbours, family members, fans, patrons, customers, community leaders or through involvement in an arts organisation, arts-related business or other volunteer activity. 85% also knew an emerging artist and over 90% knew an avocational artist (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015b: 19). In reporting their contribution of volunteer time and charitable donations to not only the arts but also a wide range of other non-profit sectors, artists displayed lower levels of donations than the public, but they closely paralleled their public counterparts in the areas and amount of volunteer time given thereby further reinforcing their community connectedness (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 24, & 2015b: 13-14).

"ARTISTS ARE ENGAGED WITHIN THE WIDER ECONOMY, BUT IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ARISE AS TO WHETHER THIS INTEGRATION IS BY CHOICE OR NECESSITY AND WHETHER ARTISTS AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC FEEL THEY ARE MAKING THE BEST USE OF THEIR CREATIVITY UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES"

While these figures may be influenced by our comparatively rural and small population even in our largest urban centres, it may also derive from the long established priority placed on the arts by provincial residents as well as an often celebrated, if contested, cooperative tradition stemming from pioneer era collective place-making. In small-town Saskatchewan, artists would find it difficult to hold themselves apart from the rest of the community, and artist and public respondents alike define creative networks broadly as intersecting and blurring with larger community agendas. Well over 75% of respondents to both surveys

4 The remaining artists did not respond to this question. The average Canadian income in 2010 was $40,650 – in Saskatchewan it was $40,798 (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 15).

thought that artists and arts organisations in general make important contributions to the knowledge and understanding of human behaviour; the formation of personal identity, values and beliefs; the exploration of social, economic and/or political issues; social cohesiveness; and a community's shared sense of place, health, well-being and sustainability (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25, & 2015b: 9). At this point, it should be acknowledged that many of the interests and demographics of our public survey respondents closely mirrored those of our artist respondents and were not representative of the demographics of the general public. Even in targeted telephone surveys of the public, willing respondents may often have more interest in or connection with the topic of study than the general public, so responses to our open online survey, which was promoted heavily by the arts sector as well as public media, may be most useful if interpreted as providing a profile of those members of the public who feel most closely associated with the arts ecosystem. Interestingly, however, our public survey respondents' perceptions about the importance of particular social, cultural and economic contributions by artists closely paralleled the results of two national surveys regarding similar contributions (Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2012: 17; Strategic Counsel, 2015: 23). Of course as recently argued by Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska, for claims regarding the benefits of the arts to society to contribute to effective cultural policymaking and advocacy, artist and public perceptions on the value of the arts need to be tested in the context of specific experience (2016). SPAR is proposing further research using these public perceptions as a point of departure for exploring ways the impacts of the arts ecology on society can be credibly measured through longitudinal studies.

The health and sustainability of the arts ecosystem

Rather than defining the components of the arts ecosystem *a priori*, SPAR encouraged artists and the public to provide their own experience and vision. They provided a picture of an open and fluid system in which the collectively devised and shifting web of relationships regularly blurs the lines between arts disciplines and a host of contested dichotomies still embedded in current policy making: e.g. the artist and the public; professional and avocational; fine art and popular culture; innovative and conventional; creative practice and cultural entrepreneurship. Although some artists invoked one or more of these dichotomies and called for a return to greater clarity of distinction, many artists appeared to be navigating around and through them with more attention to developing the relationships and opportunities that will facilitate the realization of creative work than conforming to particular labels. Through both its surveys and follow-up consultations SPAR's focus has been less on trying to devise fixed boundaries, models or helicopter perspectives out of this dynamic ecosystem and more on determining its health and sustainability as well as best practices for policymakers and artists to foster adaptive resilience.

Ultimately comprehensively assessing the vitality of the provincial arts ecosystem requires the contextualization of SPAR primary research findings within the substantial data and studies annually produced by its partners. Organizations regularly report to the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture on the nature of arts and cultural offerings and enumerate the numbers of individuals involved – professional, emerging and/or avocation artists, other cultural workers, community participants, audience members, patrons and volunteers – as well as financial inputs and returns including funding sources and amounts, capital expenditures and liabilities relating to infrastructure and equipment. Recent reports independently commissioned by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance also have a bearing on SPAR's findings, particularly two reports on arts and education in the province one of which details critical statistics regarding numbers of post-secondary students, programs and graduates along with resource allocation over the past 20 years (Gingrich, 2015). Review of this data is beyond the scope of this article. However, some potentially key indicators have already emerged out of SPAR's grassroots surveys and consultations.

The degree of connectedness within the system can be taken as a sign of systemic strength. The high level of importance placed on artists' cultural, economic and social contributions to society along with the level of public engagement in the arts revealed by public survey respondents are positive signs. 48% had made charitable donations to the arts and culture, and 79% had spent $500 or more annually on the arts. Participation rates were generally high with 76% of respondents having accessed live performance often in the past five years. Over 70% accessed music or theatre during that period and this kind of participation also extended to children. The great majority of respondents who had children 25 or younger reported that those children had also participated in the arts (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015b: 6). Artists displayed a corresponding degree of connectedness within the provincial arts ecology and the wider provincial ecology, and the array of arts disciplines represented along with the surprisingly high degree of cross-disciplinary activity and the robustness of artist networks all suggest in their complexity and intensity that these may be important adaptive traits which artists have developed in a comparatively isolated and rural province, much like particular species within natural ecosystems. As one respondent observed, "Our relative isolation as compared to larger metropolitan centres has made the Saskatchewan arts community more innovative".

"THE HIGH LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE PLACED ON ARTISTS' CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY ALONG WITH THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE ARTS REVEALED BY PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE POSITIVE SIGNS"

Although nearly all artists had access to the Internet, face to face contact slightly edged out electronic communication as their preferred mechanism for networking with 70% of artists in each of the top two levels of networking density identifying informal social gatherings as important in helping them to make connections necessary to their creative work" (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015c: 17). Despite strengths in connectedness, however, artists still expressed the need for improvement. Only 56% of artists reported adequate access to mechanisms or opportunities for collaboration or networking within the arts and only 40% reported adequate access to such mechanisms or opportunities outside the arts (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 20). These concerns appeared to apply to individuals regardless of their networking density or their urban or rural location. As well, 40% of artist respondents reported that neither they nor an agent, dealer, publisher, etc. actively promoted their creative work or skills (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 10), and otherwise limited evidence of networking, grant applications to federal agencies or foundations and other connections at the national level suggest that programs facilitating access to resources from outside the province could strengthen the ecosystem.

The high level of education reported by artists is another sign of systemic strength, and the related level of importance they placed on educational institutions, their facilities, programs and students within their creative networks would also appear to be strengths as well as another potential sign of adaptive strategies. In larger metropolitan areas educational facilities may not figure as prominently within artist networks, but in a province with a low population density and less concentrated access to both arts organisations and cultural infrastructure, it makes sense that artists have gravitated towards publicly funded and adaptable spaces like those professionally equipped spaces found in post-secondary institutions and K-12 facilities. However, if as some artist and public respondents as well as the recently commissioned Arts Alliance reports on K-12 and post-secondary arts education suggest, educational institutions are reconsidering their commitment to training and facilities associated with the arts, this strength could be transformed into a weakness without policy interventions (Gingrich, 2015).

The relative connectedness and adaptability of species within an ecosystem clearly contribute to more fundamental criteria in determining the health of any ecosystem – its capacity to sustain the needs of those symbiotically linked within the system. When it comes to artists, this is one of the major questions regarding the vitality of the system. Much effort has gone towards demonstrating the economic impact of the arts on the provincial and national GDP, but given the public's perceptions regarding the importance of the arts' social and cultural as well as economic impact, what is the economic return to individual artists? Although nearly all artist respondents reported receiving income from their art practice, over the past two years 43% received less than $5,000 from their art; 60% received less than $10,000. During the same period, Saskatchewan wages rose nearly 5%, the highest increase in the country, but artists whose level of education far exceeds the provincial average appear not to have benefitted like other provincial workers as wages in art, culture, recreation and sport had just dropped by 2.6% when the artist survey was released in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2014a & 2014c). It was the only wage sector to experience a decrease during that period. Additional concerns arise from artist workweeks. Only 57% of artists devoted 20 hours or more to their creative practice and when all their working hours from both inside and outside the arts were combined they were working an average of 49 hours a week, nearly 8 more than the provincial average. Artists went into detail not only about the challenges of finding affordable housing and work space, but also about their inability to support or even contemplate a family, to purchase insurance or pay for dental care and/or to save money for retirement. Others reported a high level of stress and anxiety derived from working a full-time job outside the arts while trying to maintain a creative career and family commitments. Younger artists reported burnout when trying to support themselves exclusively through their creative practice and a more experienced artist noted that "I still earn less per engagement now, 30 years later, as a more senior artist than I did at age 20 in a different city". Although little of this basic information is surprising to people in the arts, this new data focuses attention on a critical issue that is seldom discussed or specifically addressed through programming and policy. Is the ecosystem sustainable if it cannot sustain a healthy cohort of artists? What is the essential critical mass of artists generally and in the various disciplines and what needs to be done to sustain this critical mass?

Beyond sustainability

These may be baseline questions relating to the arts ecology, but as Holden has observed, a healthy system needs to go beyond sustainability. It requires "increasing complexity; a healthy ecology should be generative (...) The ecology should be getting more complex not only in terms of the numbers of people involved but in the diversity of their involvement. Variety is [a] source of ecological strength" (2015: 33). Despite the signs of complex and evolving combinations of art forms and robust networks, the system's relative capacity to sustain artists casts particular attention on the age dynamic of artist respondents, 47% of which were 55 and over while only 18% were in the 18-34 age range. This compares with 35%, 55 and older in the general provincial population, and 30%, in the 18-34 range (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 12-13). This may be indicative of a decline in younger artists choosing to pursue a career in the province. Alternatively, it may also be indicative of the lack of connection some younger artists have with others in the arts ecosystem as a whole and/or their lack of knowledge of existing agencies and organizations. One successful 35 year old artist told us that prior to the age of 30 he felt no connection to any arts ecosystem and had no knowledge at all of funding agencies, an experience further corroborated by other young artists not included in the original database created with input from the partner arts organizations. They suggest that a more concerted effort be made to reach, nurture and involve emerging artists.

With respect to diversity, the inclusion of youth is of particular importance for the indigenous community, which is substantially younger on average than the general population, but more generally for this community and others lack of inclusion and access are clearly limiting the strength and potential of the arts ecosystem. The 9% of artist respondents and 4% of public respondents reporting indigenous ancestry compares with 16% in the overall provincial population with indigenous background (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 28, & 2015b: 19). The very low response rate from indigenous people on reserves in both surveys raises questions about their level of engagement with others in the provincial ecosystem versus isolated cultural systems. Further to the point of diversity, respondents to both surveys were disproportionately female, and newcomers to the province as well as individuals of non-European ancestry (apart from indigenous respondents) were virtually invisible in both surveys. One newcomer who did respond to the survey complained that "the arts community in Saskatchewan is very much a word-of-mouth, networking community. It is very hard for newcomers to Saskatchewan to break into the arts community successfully without a strong network in place. There is no cohesive place to find opportunities and access to auditions and artist related information. It is very hard to get 'in'". Although they acknowledged that newcomers may have similar experiences in other sectors, a newcomer focus group further confirmed this perception as well as the results of a 2014 SaskCulture report, "Engaging Saskatchewan's Emerging Demographics", noting the inability of the arts and cultural communities to adapt quickly enough to the changing cultural dynamics arising from recent population increases and shifts in cultural demographics.

"THE INCLUSION OF YOUTH IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE FOR THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, BUT MORE GENERALLY FOR THIS COMMUNITY AND OTHERS LACK OF INCLUSION AND ACCESS ARE CLEARLY LIMITING THE POTENTIAL OF THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM"

Another factor which suggests that lack of diversity is sapping the potential of the arts ecosystem relates to a precipitating factor behind our study – the major disruption of the film industry due to the elimination of the film employment tax credit and the resulting exodus of film professionals since documented through declining local memberships in organisations like the Directors Guild and Equity. As a classic example of policymaking without sufficient evidence and consultation, the Government's decision generated copious responses to open survey questions which confirmed the findings of a film industry study following the decision. Respondents argued that irreparable damage had been done to the media sector because the province could no longer compete with other better funded provinces, that networks needed to be completely rebuilt and that the individuals who had not left the province needed to adapt what they do to the new limited opportunities available to them. As indicated in the earlier report, the departure of production companies and industry professionals (Lederman, 2012) led to "a lack of community" – a sense of "isolation (...) as industry activities and awareness decline and people leave". Employers complained "that they no longer knew who was left and available to hire". Workers in the industry complained about the collapse of personal and professional networks for "collaboration and friendship, and students specifically indicated that lack of this com-munity would be a motivating factor to relocate" (Alberts, 2014: 27). From an ecological perspective, our

survey respondents saw the effects radiating out beyond individuals directly associated with that industry:

> *There is no film industry. This has hurt almost every sector of the arts community. Not many other art disciplines on the local level can provide a high wage like the film industry. (...) Many of these artists would take that money and invest it into other personal projects, which bring an additional unmeasured benefit to the economy and culture of Saskatchewan – sound department being musicians, art department being painters, camera operators being photographers, directors writing local stories, etc.*

The suggestion here is that the former film industry with its complex and broad scope occupied a position at the top of the supply chain and because of that contributed to networks and support systems as well as good paying jobs that could then feed other creative work outside of film. The conclusion of several respondents was that Saskatchewan had become "a less sustainable arts community" because of what happened to film and that until adequately corrective policies and programs reverse the situation the ecosystem will lack the connectedness, diversity and complexity as well as the innovative and generative capacity of which it was previously capable.

Conclusion

Although research on the arts ecosystem of Saskatchewan so far completed has revealed some important areas that will need to be strengthened through cultural policy and programming, neat conclusions and specific policy recommendations would be premature at this point. We can say that the provincial arts ecosystem is composed of a highly cross-disciplinary and complex web of connections – but one to which emerging, newcomer, and indigenous artists on reserves appear less connected than others. As well, despite long workweeks and high levels of education among artists and the high level of importance placed on them by the public, the ecosystem is not sustaining its artists very well financially through their creative practice alone. More generally, however, beyond the immediate provincial context, this case study has demonstrated the benefits of ecologically informed research questions and approaches to not only the immediate arts ecosystem but also arts administrators, policy makers, theorists and scholars further afield. While its research questions and data may be particularly useful to individuals working in the under-researched field of cultural policy making for artists in comparatively rural settings like Saskatchewan, its approach offers more broadly applicable benefits. First, simply undertaking primary research that is informed by familiarity with the arts community and the particular questions that most need to be addressed in that community has revealed the serious drawbacks of secondary research data often framed by unhelpful criteria. Second, consulting directly with artists and the public to get a substantial perspective on the arts community from two under-researched components of the creative process may be challenging and messy from a statistical standpoint, but artists and members of the public have critically important insights and are eager to share them. Third, the study has demonstrated the value of the emerging trend of examining the arts and culture as ecosystems in a given place and time and, in particular, the networking taken as a given by scholars who talk about the creative economy as well as the creative or cultural ecology. Trying to understand what and how players in an ecosystem are connected can further inform and interrogate such theories while also giving us new ways of seeing arts ecosystems, assessing their health and sustainability and developing an action plan to foster adaptive resilience that will ensure the ecosystem's long term vitality. In a recent provincial Arts Congress convened to focus on SPAR's findings, it became clear that engaging the entire arts community in such a process was feeding and energizing the arts ecosystem – in fact enhancing the very connectivity we were studying in a way that previous research solely for lobbying purposes had not done. SPAR is now moving forward to broaden this work into the entire Prairie region of Canada over the next 8 years, I invite colleagues interested in similar ecological studies to partner with us in comparing data and developing further methodology for what promises to be a productive field of research.

REFERENCES

ALBERTS, N. (2014) *Saskatchewan Media Production Industry: 2014 Consultation Report*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association.

BADHAM, M. (2010) *The Menace of Measurement: A Discussion about Arts Indicators*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Arts Alliance.

BAKHSHI, H.; THROSBY, D. (2010) *Culture of Innovation. An Economic Analysis of Innovation in Arts and Cultural Organisations*. London: Nesta.

BLACKSTONE, M.; HAGE, S.; MCWILLIAMS, I. (2015a) *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR)

BLACKSTONE, M.; HAGE, S.; MCWILLIAMS, I. (2015b) *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the*

Grassroots: Results of the SPAR Survey of the Public. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR).

BLACKSTONE, M.; HAGE, S.; MCWILLIAMS, I. (2015c) *Reports on SPAR Artist Survey Data, No. 3: Indigenous Respondents*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR).

BORWICK, D. (2012) *Building Communities Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: ArtsEngaged.

BOURDIEU, P. (2001 [1986]) The Forms of Capital. In Swedberg, R.; Granovetter, M. (eds.). *The Sociology of Economic Life* (pp. 96-111). Boulder, CO: Westview.

CROSSICK, G.; KASZYNSKA, P. (2016) *Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project.* Swindon, Wiltshire: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

DI MAGGIO, P. (1987) Classification in Art. *American Sociological Review*, 52 (4), 440-55.

DI MAGGIO, P. (2011) Cultural Networks. In Scott, J.; Carrington, P. (eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis* (pp. 286-300) London: Sage Publications.

FLORIDA, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.

FLORIDA, R. (2009) *Who's Your City: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

FLORIDA, R. (2012) *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited*. New York: Basic Books.

GIBSON, C.; ROBINSON, D. (2004) Creative Networks in Regional Australia. *Media International Australia*, 112, 83-100.

GINGRICH, P. (2015) *Fine Arts Resources at Saskatchewan Universities: An Analysis of Trends 1995-2013*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. Available at: http://www.artsalliance.sk.ca/resources-and-tools/studies-and-facts/2015/1614 (accessed 1 December 2015).

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN-BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2013) *Saskatchewan Ethnic Origins, Visible Minorities & Immigration: 2011 Household Survey*, Regina, 8 May 2013. Available at: http://www.stats.gov.sk.ca/stats/pop/2011Ethnic%20Origin.pdf (accessed 18 November 2014).

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN-BUREAU OF STATISTICS (2014) *Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples: 2011 National Household Survey*, Regina, 2014. Available at: http://www.stats.gov.sk.ca/pop/ (accessed 18 November 2014).

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN-MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY (2011) *Saskatchewan Statistical Immigration Report: 2009-2011*, Regina, 2011.Available at: http://www.economy.gov.sk.ca/immigration/sk-immigration-statistical-report-2011 (accessed 12 November 2014).

HILL, K. (2014a) *Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada's Provinces and Territories Based on the 2011 Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey*. Hill Strategies, 22 Oct. 2014. Available at: http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/artists-and-cultural-workers-canada's-provinces-and-territories (accessed 15 November 2014).

HILL, K. (2014b) *Data Sources on Artists in Canada: Methodological Details Regarding the National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey*. Hill Strategies, 28 May 2014. Available at: http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/data-sources-artists-canada (accessed 4 October 2014).

HILL, K. (2014c) *A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey*. Hill Strategies, 7 Oct. 2014. Available at: http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/statistical-profile-artists-and-cultural-workers-canada (accessed 25 November 2014).

HOLDEN, J. (2008) *Democratic Culture*. London: Demos.

HOLDEN, J. (2015) *The Ecology of Culture*. Swinden: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

HOWKINS, J. (2001) *The Creative Economy*. New York: Allen Lane, Penguin Press.

HOWKINS, J. (2009) *Creative Ecologies: Where Thinking Is a Proper Job*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

JEANNOTTE, M. (2003) Singing Alone? The Contribution of Cultural Capital to Social Cohesion and Sustainable Communities. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9 (1), 35-49.

KONG, L. (2009) Beyond Networks and Relations: Towards Rethinking Creative Cluster Theory. In Kong, L.; O'Connor, J. (eds.). *Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives* (pp. 61-76). New York: Springer.

LEDERMAN, M. (2012) Producers Abandoning Saskatchewan as Tax Credit Ends. *The Globe and Mail*, June 27. Available at: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/producers-abandoning-saskatchewan-as-tax-credit-ends/article4374797/

LINGO, E.; TEPPER, S. (2013) Looking Back, Looking Forward:

Arts-Based Careers and Creative Work. *Work & Occupations*, 40 (4), 337-363.

LIZARDO, O. (2006) How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks. *American Sociological Review*, 71 (5), 778-807.

MALENFANT, E.; MORENCY, J. (2011) *Population Projections by Aboriginal Identity in Canada, 2006 to 2031*. Ottawa, Statistics Canada. Available at: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-552-x/91-552-x2011001-eng.htm (accessed 18 November 2014).

MARANDA, M. (2009) *Waging Culture: A Report on the Socio-economic Status of Canadian Visual Artists*. Toronto, Ont.: Art Gallery of York University.

MARKUSEN, A. (2006) Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from a Study of Artists. *Environment and Planning*, 38 (10), 1921-1940.

MARKUSEN, A.; GADWA, A.; BARBOUR, E.; BEYERS, W.; JACKSON, M.R.; KITCHENER, A.; WONG, D.; SARMIENTO, C.; ALEXANDER, K.; SANCHEZ, T. (2011) *California's Arts and Cultural Ecology.* San Francisco: James Irvine Foundation.

MARKUSEN, A.; SCHROCK, G. (2008) *Creative Communities: Artist Data User Guide*. Companion to Data Sets created by Leveraging Investments in Creativity.

PHOENIX STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES, INC. (2012) *Arts and Heritage in Canada: Access and Availability Survey 2012.* Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage.

PORTER, M. (2000) Location, Competition and Economic Development: Local Clusters in a Global Economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 14 (1), 15-34.

PUTNAM, R. (2000) Bowling Alone: *The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon Schuster.

ROBINSON, M. (2010) *Making Adaptive Resilience Real*. London: Arts Council England.

SASKCULTURE (2014) *Engaging Saskatchewan's Emerging Demographics*. Prepared by R. Anderson & Associates in partnership with Terry Schwalm & Associates. Regina, April.

SHARPE, B. (2010) *Economies of Life: Patterns of Health and Wealth*. Axminster, Devon: Triarchy Press.

SIECK, W.; RASMUSSEN, L.; SMART, P. (2010). Cultural Network Analysis: A Cognitive Approach to Cultural Modeling. In Verma, D. (eds.). *Network Science for Military Coalition Operations: Information Exchange and Interaction* (pp. 237-255). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

SPENCER, G. (2009) *The Creative Advantage of Diverse City-Regions: Local Context and Social Networks*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

SPENCER, G. (2015) Great Minds Do Not Think Alike: Contrasting Creative and Cultural Occupations with Science and Technology Occupations. *International Journal of Cultural and Creative Industries*, 1 (3), 4-21.

STATISTICS CANADA (2014a) *Average Hourly wages of employees by selected characteristics and occupation, unadjusted data, by province (monthly) (Saskatchewan)*. Periods: August 2013 and 2014. Available at: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/labr69a-eng.htm (accessed 4 October 2014).

STATISTICS CANADA (2014b) *Income and Expenditure Accounts Technical Series.* Canadian Culture Satellite Account, 2010, 13-604-M, No. 75. Available at: www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/13-604-m/13-604-m2014075-eng.htm (accessed 17 September 2015).

STATISTICS CANADA (2014c) *CANSIM tables 282-0069*. Available at: http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/search-recherche?lang=eng&searchTypeByBalue=1&pattern=2820069&p2=37 (accessed 12 February 2015).

STATISTICS CANADA (2014d) *CANSIM tables 282-0073*. Available at: http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/search-recherche?lang=eng&searchTypeByBalue=1&pattern=2820073&p2=37 (accessed 12 February 2015).

STRATEGIC COUNSEL (2015) *Building the Case for Business Support of the Arts: A Study Commissioned by Business for the Arts.* Toronto: Business for the Arts.

THROSBY, D. (2001) *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

THROSBY, D. (2004) Assessing the Impact of a Cultural Industry. *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 34 (3), 188-204.

THROSBY, D. (2010) *The Economics of Cultural Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

VAN HEUR, B. (2009) The Clustering of Creative Networks: Between Myth and Reality. *Urban Studies*, 46 (8), 1531-1532.

WALKER, C.; SCOTT-MEINYK, S. (2001) *Reggae to Rachmaninoff: How and Why People Participate in Arts and Culture. Building Arts Participation. New Findings from the Field.* Washington, DC.: Urban Institute.

To cite this article:

BLACKSTONE, M.; HAGE, S; MCWILLIAMS, I. (2016). Understanding the role of cultural networks within a creative ecosystem: a Canadian case-study. *ENCATC Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, 6 (1), pp. 13-29,