



© Centrum för kulturpolitisk forskning  
Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidsskrift,  
vol. 18, Nr. 1-2015 s. 101-124  
ISSN Online: 2000-8325

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

# Freelancing: Cool jobs or bad jobs?

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to study the working conditions for freelance jazz musicians and freelance journalists in Norway. The study indicates that freelancing entails both good and bad job characteristics. The overall job satisfaction is reasonably high. Furthermore, the freelancers' turnover intentions in terms of intention to leave the freelance job situation are quite low. The intrinsic motivation is very high and most freelancers perceive self-employment to be a personal choice. They are least satisfied with their wages, even though this does not increase their intentions to quit being freelancers. What may lead to freelancers' turn-over intentions is a tough labor market, job stress, limited career possibilities and social isolation. Cultural policy implications are discussed in the last section of the article.

## Keywords

freelancer, working conditions, job satisfaction, freelancers' turnover intentions

## INTRODUCTION

A career in the cultural industries is a dream for many young people, even though they may receive warnings about the risks involved in choosing such a career. These jobs are certainly very attractive, or «cool jobs in hot industries» (Neff et al. 2005). Based on this perspective, freelancing in the cultural industries implies jobs characterized by flexibility, autonomy, possibility of self-actualization through very interesting work tasks, and high degree of job satisfaction (Bille, Bryld Fjællegaard, Frey, and Steiner 2013, Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2010, Steiner & Schneider 2013). On the other hand, artistic labor is characterized by a permanent excess supply of artists, generally low wages, uncertainty, and challenging career possibilities (Menger 1999, Steiner and Schneider 2013) that may lead to stress, isolation, and serious mental problems (Bille et al. 2013, Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2010). Consequently, many may have turnover intentions and want to leave the freelance working situation and get a permanent job. There are probably many different explanations of the variation of good and bad job characteristics and outcomes for freelance artists. In

this article, I will combine research on artistic work as good or bad jobs to identify important facets of these jobs. Furthermore, it is interesting to compare different cultural sectors that may explain variations in such work as cool or bad jobs. More precisely, the study includes freelance jazz musicians and freelance journalists that differ in terms of occupation history, the ratio of self-employment, and where they work in the cultural industries.

### FREELANCING IN THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

A variety of approaches exists with regard to the definition of the cultural worker or artist in the economy. Such work is spread across a number of industrial activities and different professions (Menger 1999). The definition of the cultural industry will affect the definition of the cultural worker and artist. In Norway the cultural industries includes the following categories: artistic work, printed media, architecture, TV and radio, film, photo, and gaming, advertising, design, music, and cultural heritage (Espelien & Gran 2011, Haraldsen, Hagen & Alnes 2008). According to David Thorsby (2001), the cultural industries can be categorized in three groups – the core arts industries, other cultural industries, and related industries. In this framework most jazz musicians will typically be a part of the core arts industries, whereas most journalists will be a part of other cultural industries. Within each industry there will be different occupations that is more or less «cultural», and you can define the cultural workforce based on a combination of industry and occupational characteristics. The artistic workforce is here distinct from broader categories of cultural workers (Thorsby, 2001). This is the approach in the latest surveys of Norwegian artists (Elstad & Røsvik Pedersen 1996, Heian, Løyland, & Mangset 2008, 2012, Heian, Løyland, & Kleppe 2013). These surveys do not include all sectors from the cultural industries in Norway, but are limited to those that can receive grants from the Norwegian Government Grants for Artists scheme. Another approach is that «artist» and «artistic work» implies a broader group of cultural occupations in the cultural industries (Bille et al. 2013, Steiner & Schneider 2013). Here journalists is included in the definition of artistic occupations. This article will build on the latter approach because important research on «artist satisfaction» use this broader definition.

The next question is who is a professional artist? This determination may be very broad and based on a subjective self-definition as an artist. It can also be limited to one or several criteria in accordance with the particular interest of the researcher (Menger 1999). One approach is to select members of selected labor unions. One major problem with this approach is that we do not obtain information about those who are not members of such an organization (Bille 2012). On the other hand, it provides an effective method to reach a large number of artists. In this study, the artist is defined as a person working in the cultural industries in Norway and who is a member of a labor union connected to their artist occupation.

The artists in this study may be freelancers, self-employed, or a combination of both. These terms are used interchangeably, referring to a situation in which the main work situation is one of self-employment with a variety of different contracts and assigners. To be self-employed is an important part of the workforce. According to the European Working Condition Survey, an average of 15 % of the workforce in 27 European countries is self-employed whereas in Norway 6 % of the workforce is self-employed (Aagestad/STAMI 2012). Furthermore, the cultural industries in Norway include small organizations. In 2004, as much as 90% of the enterprises within the group «performing arts» were self-employed (Haraldsen et al. 2004:27–28). In 2009, the cultural industry in Norway employed 75 000 people in 27 000 enterprises (Espelien & Gran 2011), which implies many small enterprises. Thus, the number of self-employed and freelancers are substantial among artists. Consequently, the cultural policy makers need knowledge about their working conditions in order to make decisions about policy and strategies for these groups.

### ARTISTIC WORK AS COOL JOBS

Artistic work as cool jobs implies a view of this work as unique with its own rules and logic. To be an artist is very important because it fulfills your inner passions or dreams; some may say it is a calling which he or she has to fulfill (Røyseng, Mangset & Borgen 2007). Jeffri and Throsby (1994) labels it as an «inner drive» to create art and as the foremost criterion of professionalism according to US visual artists. Thus, it seems that artists have a very high level of intrinsic motivation, which means engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than from some separable consequence (Ryan & Deci 2000). Consequently, this is a personal choice.

There are also empirical studies lately that indicate that self-employed artists enjoy a high level of job satisfaction. Lasse Steiner and Lucian Schneider's (2013) study of German performing and visual artists showed that artists are significantly more satisfied with their work than non-artists. In the «work-preference model» Throsby (1994) argued that artists do not fit the standard economic model of labor supply. This implies that the utility of the artistic work itself compensates for relative lower economic gain. In a study based on surveys from 47 European countries and data at the country level in UK and Switzerland, researchers compared job satisfaction among artists and non-artists (Bille et al. 2013). They found that artists enjoy higher job satisfaction than other employees. Note that in the studies of Steiner and Schneider (2013) and Bille et al. (2013), both musicians and journalists are included in the definition of an artist.

In these studies, the high level of job satisfaction is partly explained by a higher self-employment rate. A study based on the Swedish Level-of-Living survey concludes that self-employment leads to an increase in job satisfaction (Andersson 2008). Another study of the self-employed in 23 countries in

Europe, North America, and a residual group of non-western countries concluded that the self-employed are substantially more satisfied with their work than employed persons (Benz & Frey 2008). More interesting jobs and job autonomy are important explanations for this. Furthermore, the study of Bille et al. (2013) indicates that the possibility to work from home is important to explain artists' job satisfaction.

According to Scott Reinardy (2009), Weaver and colleagues has been studying job satisfaction among journalists for the past 25 years. A study in 2002 indicated that of the 1,149 journalists surveyed, 50 % said they were «fairly satisfied» and 33, 3 % were «very satisfied» with their work (Weaver et al. 2007). However, this involves studies of journalists' satisfaction in general and not just freelance journalists. Kathleen M. Ryan (2009) compared freelance and staff news workers in the USA, and found that freelancers report more satisfaction due to worker autonomy and freedom. Freelancers are most satisfied with job variety, autonomy, and the possibility for self-actualization.

Based on this review, artistic work as cool jobs implies high job satisfaction, high intrinsic motivation, high autonomy in the job situation in terms flexibility of when and where to work, and the possibility of making their own decisions. Artists become self-employed because they want to, and not because they have to do so.

### ARTISTIC WORK AS BAD JOBS

In the late 1960s and early 1970s sociologists introduced the label «bad jobs» (Bluestone 1970, Kalleberg & Sorensen 1979, Kalleberg et al. 2000). In a study of the relationship between non-standard employment relations and jobs qualities, the researcher found that nonstandard jobs, where self-employment is one major subcategory of nonstandard jobs, increases the workers' exposure to bad job characteristics (Kalleberg et al. 2000). One important feature of the cultural sector is tough competition with a persistent excess supply of artists (Heian, Løyland, & Mangset 2012). As Menger (1999) states, «you can hardly find a piece of research where an excess supply of artists is not documented». Concerning the media sector, a number of changes in this sector over the past years includes a significant shift from full-time, permanent, staff work to freelance and contract work (Storey, Salaman, & Platman 2005). A survey in 2005 showed that atypical workers accounted for one-third of the members of 41 unions affiliated with the International Federation of Journalists (Walters et al. 2006). Most of them (71 %) were freelancers. Moreover, freelancers accounted for 50 % of newly recruited journalists in Norway in 2003 (Gynnild 2005). According to Massey and Elmore (2011), previously journalists became freelancers because they wanted to. Now it is far more likely they become freelancers because they have no choice. Many are thus forced to be freelancers and self-employed simply because of the tough labor market.

A broad consensus exists that low wages are a fundamental dimension of job quality (Jencks et al. 1988). It is also well known that artists suffer from significant income penalties (Menger 1999, Throsby 2006, Wassall & Alper 1992,). The latest survey of work and income conditions of Norwegian artists shows that the average artistic income of a self-employed artist in 2013 was NOK 143 000 and total income was NOK 366 000 (Heian, Løyland, and Kleppe 2013). The average income for employees was about NOK 490.000 in 2013 (Statistisk sentralbyrå 2013). Moreover, one of the most extensive studies of the labor market in the USA shows that artists earn significantly less than members of the reference group (Alper and Wassall 2006).

Job insecurity is another feature of non-standard jobs. This implies that a person has no guarantee whether he or she will have paid job assignments in the future. Many freelancers in the cultural sector are faced with an insecure employment situation and an inadequate income (Hausmann 2009). A study of working conditions in the television industry, the recording industry and the magazine industry showed that many experienced a high level of insecurity and uncertainty (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010). Furthermore, a study of jazz musicians in Detroit, New Orleans, New York and San Francisco indicated that uncertainty and income instability was a serious problem for jazz musicians in the US (Jeffri 2003). Alper & Wassall (2006) argue that artistic labor market is a winner-take-all market, also known as a superstar market (Rosen 1981). This implies that a few superstars succeed and a large proportion fail. The high degree of risk-taking is a result of the highly skewed distribution and high variability of earnings (Alper & Wassall 2006).

The excess supply of artistic labors may have consequences for the career possibilities in the sector. There are different career paths for artists that vary greatly with the type of art, with the nature of the occupation and with organizational and market features (Menger 1999). According to Jeffri (2003), US jazz musicians in the largest cities were not satisfied with the realization of their career possibilities. Another study of careers among US jazz musicians in US indicates the importance of a musician's successful introduction in a field, followed by peer recognition at jam sessions, and a series of engagements and recognition among critics (Kirschbaum 2007). It seems that it is important to be able to be included in the inner circle of successful colleagues and that the competition is tough. Furthermore, the study of journalists working in television news in USA, indicated that both freelancers and staff employees chances of advancements were among the factors that they were least satisfied with in both groups. Thus, there is some evidence that the career possibilities for many artists are limited.

Furthermore, being self-employed implies not going to work every day and meeting colleagues and thus facing a risk of social isolation. In the study of three cultural industries, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) found that many freelancers reported a strong sense of isolation. Furthermore, according to Reinegard's (2009) study of journalists indicated that those intending to leave jour-

nalism had less social support than those not intending to leave. Even though there is a variation concerning the importance of social relations for different artists, social support is a major feature of healthy jobs (Karasek 1979, 1998). Consequently, social isolation can be a problem in terms of stress and health for artistic workers.

Studies of artists and self-employed workers indicate that job satisfaction is not the only outcome of such a work situation. Bille et al. (2013) reviewed such studies, which indicated that there has been a tradition in art history and philosophy to view artists as mentally ill and unhappy in their lives. Findings from medical and psychiatric research support this view where artists may suffer from mental illness and stress. According to Pernilla Andersson (2008), there is some evidence in Sweden that self-employment leads to more mental health problems. Furthermore, in a study of freelance journalists they found that a stressful work situation was associated with poor reported health (Ertel et al. 2005). Also in Reinardy's (2009) study of journalists' working conditions, salary and stress/burnout indicated important reasons for journalists' intention to leave the profession.

A possible outcome of such a bad work situation is that freelance musicians and journalists quit rather than continuing as freelancers. Turnover intention is a well-established construct in organizational behavior research (Kuvaas, 2008). Turnover intention refers to an employees' intention to leave the job in the future. In our study, freelancers' turnover intention refers to the intention leaving the freelance work situation. An assumption is that considering artistic work as bad jobs implies increased turnover intentions among freelancers.

In Table 1, the discussion of freelancing as cool jobs or bad jobs is summarized.

TABLE 1. FREELANCING AS COOL JOBS OR BAD JOBS

SELF-EMPLOYED	COOL JOBS	BAD JOBS
<i>Why be self-employed?</i>	An individual choice	Determined by labor market
<i>Working conditions</i>	High intrinsic job motivation Flexibility – balance work/leisure time	Low wages, limited career possibilities, social isolation Uncertainty Stress and burnout
<i>Work outcome</i>	Overall job satisfaction	Freelancers' turnover intention

### WHY STUDY FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND JAZZ MUSICIANS

The literature review indicates that there is much research on artistic labor and their working conditions. There is some research on freelance journalists' and jazz musicians working conditions, but still a need for more research on both groups. Furthermore, it is common to include both jazz musicians and journalists when studying artistic labor in the cultural industries (Bille et al. 2013,

Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2010, Steiner & Schneider 2013,) even though not all jazz musicians and journalist will identify themselves as artists. They have in common a solid tradition for being freelancers. Still there are certain differences that make it interesting to compare those two groups.

Whereas jazz musicians work is in the core arts industries, journalists will often work in other cultural industries such as printed media, TV and radio, and film. This implies a possibility to compare freelance workers in two main groups in the cultural industries. Furthermore, almost every jazz musician is freelancing and has always done so. The proportion of freelance journalists is not that large even though it is increasing. About 9 % of the members in NJ (Norwegian Union of Journalists) are freelance members ([www.nj.no](http://www.nj.no)). There are no such statistics in NJF (Norwegian Jazz Forum) concerning the proportion of the jazz musicians that are freelancers versus those employed – probably because there are almost no full time, regular jobs for performance jazz musician in Norway. Important criteria to become a member is that you mainly is self-employed as a performing jazz musician, and that you are performing at a professional level with continuous activity (<http://jazzforum.jazzinorge.no>). Another difference between the two groups is that they probably have somewhat different working conditions. Whereas many freelance journalists work alone at home, jazz musicians work together in bands with rehearsals and concerts. Studies of freelance journalists indicate that some of them suffer from isolation and low social support (Baines 2002, Reinardy 2009). On the other hand, jazz musicians work evenings/nights and travel around touring which may imply challenges in their work-family life. Furthermore, freelance journalists probably do not have such a precarious economic situation as freelance jazz musicians. The median artistic income of freelance jazz musicians was between NOK 100 000–199 000, and 47.5 % did not have more than NOK 100 000 in non-artistic income in 2014 (Norsk jazzforum 2015). There are no statistics available for freelance journalists, but among journalists in general, the average income was NOK 560 000 (Tretterud/Norsk journalistlag, 2015). Even though we do not have statistics of high quality to compare those groups, these findings indicate that jazz musicians belong to a low-income group and that the freelance journalists probably have higher income.

## SAMPLING AND DATA

There are different strategies to select a sample such as subjective self-definition, artistic educational background, time spent at artistic work, amount of income derived from artistic activities, the quality of artistic work, and membership in a union (Bille 2012, Frey & Pommerehne 1989, Heian et al. 2008, Jeffri 2003, Menger 1999). In Norway, many are members of a union. The survey was conducted using the members of the main union for jazz musicians (Norwegian Jazz Forum) and journalists (Norwegian Union of Journalists – Freelancers).

A survey was conducted by two master students, where a questionnaire was sent out digitally to 320 members of the Norwegian Jazz Forum and 722 members of the Norwegian Union of Journalists – Freelance journalists (Haglund & Smerkerud 2009). 379 questionnaires were satisfactorily completed with a response rate of 38%. Of these, 143 (37 %) were members of the Norwegian Jazz Forum and 236 (63 %) were members of the Norwegian Union of Journalists – Freelance Journalists.

In the data analyses, we included only those who devoted at least 50 % of their working time as freelancers or self-employed. Joan Jeffri (2003) mentions this as one possible definition of jazz musicians. Furthermore, in the study of artists in Germany it was limited to individuals with principal occupation as artist (Steiner and Schneider, 2013). Thus, we wanted to include only professional freelance workers where this is their main job. This implied that the final sample consisted of 314 informants, where 67 (21 %) were jazz musicians and 243 (79 %) were journalists. Consequently, more jazz musicians than journalists were excluded from the final sample. When comparing the two samples, the gender distribution and average age are almost the same in both samples. Thus, it seems that the main effect is that we obtained relatively fewer jazz musicians in the final sample.

## MEASUREMENT

The questionnaire was based on existing measurement scales and then adjusted to this specific context. Because many measurement instruments are developed for employees in organizations, we had to adjust some measures to this context. Intrinsic motivation was measured by three questions based on the Bård Kuvaas scale (Kuvaas 2008), with a reliability and Cronbach's alpha of .81. Typical questions was such as «My work tasks are by themselves a strong motivating force» with a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Three questions based on questions from the Norwegian Survey on Work Environment and Health and two questions from the «Overall Job Satisfaction» (Aryee et al. 1999, Fields 2002), measured overall job satisfaction. The scale had good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .79. A typical question was «All in all I am satisfied with my overall work situation» with a scale from 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Balance work / leisure time was measured by 4 questions taken from the QPS Nordic (Skogstad et al. 2001), items from the Norwegian Survey on Work Environment and Health (Tynes et al. 2008) and items from «Work Interference With Family and Family Interference with Work» (Fields 2002). This scale had a satisfactory reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .74. A typical question was «Does it happen that your job responsibilities disturb your family life» with a scale from 1 to 5 (1=never/very seldom; 5 = very often/always). Measurement of facets satisfaction with selected aspects of the job was based on questions from the Job Descriptive Index (Fields 2002), such as «I am satisfied with my career possibilities», «I am satisfied with my social relations in my work situation», and



«I am satisfied with the wage from my work». The scale was 1 to 5 (1=disagree; 5 agree). Uncertainty was measured by a question based on the measurement of predictability in the job in the QPS Nordic (Skogstad et al. 2001), where they were asked «Do you know what kind of work/tasks you will work on one month ahead of time» with a scale from 1 to 5 (1=never/very seldom; 5 = very often/always). Freelancers' turnover intention was measured by three questions partly based on the Bård Kuvaas scale (Kuvaas 2008), asking if they considered quitting as a freelancer and looking for a permanent job. A typical question here was: «I often consider quitting as a freelancer/being self-employed» and «I will probably look for a permanent job next year» (1=disagree; 5 agree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .82 Why respondents choose to be self-employed was measured by questions where respondents were asked whether they were freelancer /self-employed because of an individual choice, or because it was difficult to obtain permanent employment as a jazz musician /journalist. Finally, stress was measured based on three items from the Job Stress Scale (Fields 2002). An example of question was «I have too much work and too little time to do it» (1= disagree; 5 = agree). This scale also had a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha of .70.

The survey also included two questions where the respondents could freely write their opinions and evaluation of their working conditions. We thus received a pool of qualitative data, which will illustrate some of the findings in the discussion section.

## FINDINGS

Table 2 shows description of important characteristics of the whole sample and differences between freelance journalists and jazz musicians.

TABLE 2. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR ALL SAMPLE, FREELANCER JAZZ MUSICIANS AND FREELANCE JOURNALISTS – BACKGROUND VARIABLES

BACKGROUND VARIABLES	Mean (SD) all sample (n=305–313)	Mean (SD) journalists (n = 240–247)	Mean (SD) jazz musicians (n = 65–67)
Age	42.18 (11.06)	43.64 (10.90)	36.76** (9.76)
Educational level (1=low;6=high)	4.66 (1.14)	4.58 (1.13)	4.95† (1.16)
Gender (1=man; 0=woman)	0.62 (0.49)	0.56 (0.50)	0.85** (0.36)
Working hours a week	39.63 (13.00)	38.55 (12.45)	43.60** (14.25)
Number of assigners pr. year	12.56 (12.45)	8.90 (8.08)	26.06** (16.04)

† p<=.10 \* p<=.05 \*\* p<=.01; (2-tailed test)  
Educational level: 1=elementary school, 2= 1–2 years high school, 3 = 3 year high school, 4= 1–2 years university/college, 5 = 3–4 years university/college, 6 = 5 years or more university/college

The average age is 42 years with education at college/university level. They work on average 40 working hours a week, and the average number of assigners

pr. year is about 13. The jazz musicians work significantly with larger numbers of assigners and larger numbers if working hours pr. week compared to the journalists. The jazz musicians are also younger with a slightly higher educational level, and the sample is very male dominated with 85 % men compared to 56 % among the journalist. If we compare with characteristics of all of members in the NJF in 2014, the proportion of men is 82 % (NJF, 2015) whereas among the freelance journalist in NJ the proportion of men is 49 % in 2015 (NJ, 2015). Furthermore, the mode age among members in NJF is 30–39 years in 2014, whereas the mode age of freelance journalists in NJ is 40–49 years in 2015. Thus, at least in terms of age and gender distribution, it seems that our sample does not differ significantly from the member characteristics of NJF and NJ today.

The list of all the job characteristics in the study is reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR ALL SAMPLE, FREELANCE JAZZ MUSICIANS AND JOURNALISTS. VARIABLES DESCRIBING COOL AND BAD JOB CHARACTERISTICS

	Mean (SD) all sample (n=305–313)	Mean (SD) journalists (n = 240–247)	Mean (SD) jazz musicians (n = 65–67)
<b>COOL JOB</b>			
WHY FREELANCING Personal choice (1=disagree; 5=agree)	4.07 (1.26)	4.02 (1.33)	4.24 (0.97)
WORKING CONDITIONS Intrinsic motivation (1=low; 5=high)	4.16 (0.72)	4.10 (0.75)	4.38** (0.52)
Balance work/leisure (1= imbalance; 5 = balance)	3.21 (0.75)	3.24 (0.73)	3.11 (0.81)
WORK OUTCOME Overall Job satisfaction (1=low; 5=high)	3.84 (0.92)	3.84 (0.94)	3.85 (0.84)
<b>BAD JOB</b>			
WHY FREELANCING Labor market – cannot get a permanent job (1=disagree; 5=agree)	2.75 (1.50)	2.74 (1.54)	2.81 (1.36)
WORKING CONDITIONS Satisfaction wage (1=low;5=high)	2.81 (1.24)	2.87 (1.26)	2.59 (1.14)
Satisfaction career possibilities (1=low;5=high)	3.07 (1.18)	3.01 (1.20)	3.32† (1.01)
Satisfaction social relations (1=low;5=high)	3.24 (1.24)	3.09 (1.26)	3.82** (0.98)
Uncertainty – job 1 month ahead (1= low ; 5 = high)	2.77 (1.30)	2.90 (1.37)	2.31** (0.87)
Job Stress (1=low; 5 = high)	2.89 (1.07)	2.79 (1.06)	3.27 ** (1.02)
WORK OUTCOME Freelance turnover intention (1=low;5=high)	2.21 (1.17)	2.32 (1.23)	1.79** (0.78)
† p<=.10 * p<=.05 ** p<=.01; (2-tailed test)			

Overall, the freelancers perceive their jobs as more cool than bad. The average scores of cool job facets are between 3.21 and 4.14. In contrast, the average of bad job facets varies between 2.21–3.24. Moreover, the freelance jazz musicians perceive that they have somewhat better working conditions with higher intrinsic motivation, satisfaction with their career possibilities and social relations, and lower uncertainty and turnover intention. Only job stress indicates significant worse job condition for jazz musicians than freelance journalists.

### COOL JOB CHARACTERISTICS

We find that the sample as a whole perceives that they are self-employed because it is their own choice (mean = 4.07). As one of the freelance journalist reports:

«I have fulfilled a dream by starting my own enterprise and working with journalism.»

Why do jazz musicians report to such a large degree that being a freelancer is a personal choice (mean = 4.24) as long as permanent jobs barely exists for jazz musicians in Norway? A possible explanation for this is that jazz musicians know before they start an education and career, that there are virtually no permanent jobs. Those who do not want such working conditions would not choose such a career path, and thus self-select themselves away from such a career. To some extent, the same logic may apply for journalists, a profession which also includes a long tradition for freelancing. It may be an expected part of a boundaryless career, where you are self-employed in a phase and have a permanent job in other phases of your career (Hytti, 2010). Based on this perspective, to be self-employed is a personal choice as a part of your own career development.

The intrinsic job motivation is very high for the whole sample (average = 4.16). Thus, they perceive the jobs as providing very interesting possibilities with a potentially high degree of self-actualization and self-fulfillment. This is consistent with the view of artistic work as exciting and that individuals choose this because the work in itself is so fulfilling (Jeffri 2003, Throsby 1996:9, Menger 1996:776, Røyseng, Mangset & Borgen 2007). As one freelance journalist says:

«I love my job. I do what I love to do, and at the same time I make money on it.»

We find that jazz musicians perceive significantly higher intrinsic motivation than the freelance journalists. One possible reason may be that to a higher degree jazz musicians can decide their job content. Freelance journalists are more likely to deliver products based on orders from an editor, whereas the jazz musicians to a larger degree generate their own projects.

Because of the high intrinsic work motivation, it may be a challenge for freelancers to balance their work/leisure time. Our findings show that only to some degree do they have problems in balancing this (mean = 3.21). Still, 27 % in our sample experienced that work related demands often interfered with family life, while 4 % experienced that very often. Still this is not a serious problem for members of our sample. This may be because of the flexibility to decide when and where to work:

«Freelancing is very satisfying if you want a less busy family life. You work much, maybe more than before, but the freedom is invaluable.»

The journalists are somewhat more satisfied with the balance of work/leisure time compared to the jazz musicians, even though this difference is not significant. The jazz musicians work more pr. week, have more assigners, and is often playing gigs at nights and go on touring with their projects. We should therefore maybe expect the difference between jazz musicians and journalists to be larger. One explanation of this is that the journalists are in job modus much of the time, and not only when writing on a manuscript:

«... you can never relax, you always look for good stories, exciting approaches and interesting themes. As such freelancing is not an ordinary job – you work basically all the time.»

In general, the respondents are relatively satisfied with their overall work situation (mean = 3.84) and there is virtually no difference between journalists and jazz musicians. How important are different factors to explain overall satisfaction with the work situation?

TABLE 4. MULTIPLE REGRESSION: OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION, ALL SAMPLE (N= 300)

	$\beta$
<b>VARIABLES</b>	
Personal choice	.355**
Intrinsic motivation	.405**
Balance work/family	.157**
<b>CONTROL VARIABLES</b>	
Age	-.014
Educational level	.034
Gender (1=man; 0=woman)	.029
Average working hours pr. week	-.047
Number of assigners	.040
Sector (1=journalist; 0 = jazz musician)	-.079
Adj. R2= .384; ** p< .001; * p< .01; † p< .05	

The model explains 38.3 % of the variance in overall job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation and freelancing as a personal choice are the most important factors to explain overall satisfaction among freelancers. It is also important balancing the time between work and family. Neither of the controlling variables explains the level of overall job satisfaction.

### BAD JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 shows a number of many potential bad job characteristics. To a limited degree freelancers perceive that they are forced to be freelancer because it is hard to get a permanent job (mean=2.74) compared with that they freelance because they want to (mean=4.07). This is quite surprising because it is hard to get a permanent job in the media sector, while permanent jobs among jazz performers are almost non-existent in Norway. As two freelance journalists report:

«To be a freelancer is an individual choice for many, but not for me. It is almost impossible to be employed as a photographer in a newspaper/magazine.»

«For freelance photographers/journalists it is a problem that the media corporations increasingly use freelance workers. It is hard, almost impossible, to get permanent employment.»

A possible explanation why many still say it is their own personal choice is the phenomenon that individuals adapt their preferences to the context (Elster 1983). If it is too painful to live with a gap between your own preferences and the world as it is, individuals adapt their preferences to narrow the gap. Instead of being constantly frustrated because you are not getting permanent employment, you may adapt your preferences where being a freelancer is something that you really want to be. Another possible explanation is that being a freelancer is perceived as a natural part of a career path for journalists and musicians. They may expect to be a freelancer for certain period of time and employed in other periods of working life (Hytti 2005, 2010). The freelancers in our study may therefore consider freelancing as a phase in their career that they have chosen themselves.

How satisfied are freelancers in terms of salary? They are not very satisfied with the wages they receive (mean = 2,81), and as one journalist stated:

«The negative issue is that I do not have money.»

The jazz musicians are less satisfied than journalists with their wages, even though the difference is not significant. In our sample the total income from self-employment was 362 017 NKr for the freelance journalists and 188 585 NKr for the freelance jazz musicians. The low wages of jazz musicians is consistent with Joan Jeffri's (2003) study of jazz musicians in United States, where

she finds that many musicians have serious problems due to economic uncertainty. This may explain why journalists are slightly more satisfied with their wages (mean = 2.87) compared to jazz musicians (mean = 2.59). We may expect that the difference in the satisfaction level should be larger, but it seems that the jazz musicians expect lower pay and therefore only to some degree are less satisfied than journalists. As one jazz musician stated:

«It is hard to be a jazz musician in Norway. I have never received any financial support, even though I have applied. So I have to say yes to every gig that comes my way.»

Will the tough job market affect their perceptions of career opportunities? Table 1 indicates that they are moderately satisfied with their career opportunities (mean = 3.07), and that jazz musicians are significantly more satisfied with career possibilities than journalists are. What can explain these differences? One hypothesis is that from the start of their career jazz musicians expect to be freelancers their whole life, and that they are making good progress in their career as freelancers. In contrast, there are numbers of permanent jobs as a journalist and therefore they may perceive they are making a significant progress in their career once they get a permanent job.

«From a career point of view, it has been a disappointment to be a freelancer.»

Other important aspects of the quality of the work situation is the social dimension. The freelancers in our sample are somewhat satisfied with the social dimension (mean = 3.24), but the journalists are less satisfied (mean = 3.09) than the jazz musicians (mean = 3.82). While the jazz musicians play together in bands and ensembles, to a larger degree freelance journalists may work alone while producing texts. As two journalists reported:

«You can get lonesome when you are a freelancer. I miss someone to discuss my work with.»

«It is a little ‘lonesome wolf’ – situation in your home office.»

This finding is consistent with studies of freelance journalists, indicating that some of them suffer from isolation and low social support (Baines 2002, Reinardy 2009).

One important aspect about freelancing is that it is a very uncertain job situation. The respondents in our study report a relatively low degree of short-term uncertainty (mean = 2.77). But there are also many of the respondents which say that uncertainty is a negative aspect of being a freelancer:

«My security is very low. All my principals can drop me without any further warning.»

Finally, it seems that job stress is not a severe problem (mean = 2.89) even though jazz musicians experience significant higher level of job stress. This may be due to lower wages, more assigners and that they also work more hours pr. week.

The most important indication of freelancing as bad jobs in this study is their wish to quit as a freelancer. We find that freelancers' turnover intention is low for the whole sample (mean = 2.21), and significantly lower for jazz musicians compared with journalists. Based on this indicator, being a freelancer is not a very bad job situation. Which factors are important to explain their turnover intentions?

TABLE 5. MULTIPLE REGRESSION: FREELANCERS' TURNOVER INTENTION (N=310)

	$\beta$
<b>VARIABLES</b>	
Labor market	.510**
Satisfaction wage	.009
Satisfaction career	-.121 †
Satisfaction social relations	-.119 †
Uncertainty – 1 month	-.055
Job stress	.120†
<b>CONTROL VARIABLES</b>	
Age	-.114†
Educational level	-.037
Gender (1=man; 0=woman)	-.028
Working hours pr.week	-.119*
Number of assigners	-.065
Sector (1=journalist; 0=jazz musician)	.160*
Adj. R2= .435; ** p< .001; * p< .01; † p< .05	

A tough labor market is the single most important factor to explain the freelancers' turnover intentions. This is as expected because those who report that they are freelancers because they cannot get a permanent job are probably looking for a permanent job all the time and consequently develop high turnover intentions. Furthermore, satisfaction with career possibilities and social relations and job stress is, as expected, predictors of intention to quit as a freelancer. It is interesting that satisfaction with wages and short-term uncertainty is not an important factor when they decide whether they should continue as a freelancer or not. Among the control variables, age and more working hours pr. week is negatively related to turnover intentions. According to the correla-

tion matrix (see Table A1 in the Appendix), older freelancers experience less job stress and this may lower their turnover intentions. Furthermore, many working hours may indicate that they have enough to do and this lowers their turnover intentions. Finally, journalists experience higher turnover intentions than jazz musicians. Table 3 and the correlation matrix indicates that freelance journalists report less working hours pr. week and less satisfaction with career possibilities and social relations which may explain some of these differences.

If we conduct sub-group analyses (see Table A2 in Appendix), the same overall pattern exists for freelance jazz musicians and journalists with regard to labor market and satisfaction with career and social relations. A difference is that job stress, age and the number of working hours predict turnover intention only for journalists whereas the number of assigners reduces jazz musicians turnover intentions. Because the number of informants is rather small for jazz musicians, these results should be interpreted with caution.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, the study shows that freelancers experience a higher level of cool than bad work characteristics. The overall job satisfaction is high which is consistent with other research on artistic job satisfaction (Bille et al. 2013, Reinardy 2009, Ryan 2009, Steiner and Schneider 2013). But it is not as exceptionally high as some researchers on artistic satisfaction may argue (Steiner and Schneider, 2013). It is well known from research on job satisfaction in general, that overall 85 % of employees report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their work (Berge Matthiesen 2005). In our sample 69% partly agree or highly agree that they are satisfied with their work situation. Furthermore, the intrinsic motivation is very high and artists are very motivated by the work in itself. This is consistent with the view of the artist as a person with a strong «inner drive» (Jeffri 2003, Menger 1996:776, Throsby 1996:9)

It is interesting that even though satisfaction with wages is highly correlated with overall job satisfaction ( $r = .40^{**}$ ), it does not predict freelancers' turnover intentions. There is a need for more research to try to explain why people become artists even though they appear to suffer from income penalties (Alper & Wassall 2006, Throsby 2006.). One explanation in the work-preference model is that artists derive less utility from income than other workers and that high job satisfaction compensates for low wages (Alper and Wassall 2006, Bille et al. 2013, Throsby 2006, Steiner and Schneider 2013). There is a high negative correlation between overall job satisfaction and turnover intention in our study ( $r = -.56^{**}$ ). At the same time, satisfaction with wages does not predict turnover intention. Thus, it seems that the wage versus job satisfaction argument is supported in the study and that overall job satisfaction may compensate for low wages.



The statistically strongest finding is the importance of why these artists are freelancers in the first place. If they perceive it as their own choice, there is a strong predictor of overall job satisfaction ( $\beta = .355^{**}$ ). If they perceive that they freelance because it is hard to get permanent employment, this strongly predicts turnover intentions ( $\beta = .510^{**}$ ). Even though this is not very surprising, it is interesting that the effects are so strong. Furthermore, it is shown in the correlation matrix that the perception of why they freelance (personal choice vs. to labor market) to a large degree is correlated with other good or bad job characteristics. Freelancing as a personal choice is significant and positive correlated with satisfaction with career ( $r = .24^{**}$ ), and significant and negative correlated with turnover intention ( $r = -.55^{**}$ ), uncertainty ( $r = -.20^{**}$ ), and job stress ( $r = -.14^*$ ). In contrast, freelancing because it is hard to get permanent employment is significant and negative correlated with intrinsic motivation ( $r = -.21^{**}$ ), overall job satisfaction ( $r = -.48^{**}$ ), satisfaction with wage ( $r = -.14^*$ ), satisfaction with career possibilities ( $r = -.31^{**}$ ), and significant and positive correlated with uncertainty ( $r = .32^{**}$ ), and job stress ( $r = .14^*$ ).

There are certain differences between freelance journalists and jazz musicians that are of interest. Jazz musicians are younger and the gender distribution among the jazz musicians is skewed where the majority are men (85 %). Among the freelance journalists, 56 % are men. With regard to good and bad job characteristics, freelance jazz musicians perceive their job situation in general as better than freelance journalists. Even though there are no differences in overall satisfaction, jazz musicians are more intrinsically motivated, are more satisfied with career possibilities and social relations, perceive less uncertainty and have lower turnover intentions. In contrast, they experience more job stress and somewhat less balance family/work. This can be explained by significantly more working hours pr. week and a much larger number of assigners. Thus, even though freelance jazz musicians do experience some kind of time pressure, work/family conflict and stress, they seem to cope with this and that they generally experience better job characteristics with lower turnover intention. One reasonable explanation is that jazz musicians are younger and mostly men and traditionally have less responsibilities in the family and work more hours pr. week (Massey and Elmore 2011). Another explanation of these differences may be due to the different history and reasons for a choosing career in these fields. When you choose an education and career as a jazz musician, it is obvious that you choose a career as a freelancer. This implies that people with risk-aversion will not choose such a career in the first place. Thus, those recruited to a career as a jazz musician are probably motivated for a freelance career. This can be somewhat different for journalists, where many fulltime paid jobs exists. Recently, there has been a significant shift from full-time, permanent, staff work to freelance and contract work (Storey, Salaman, and Platman 2005). This implies that the career paths of journalists have changed, and that there are journalists which have been forced into a freelance career.

## CULTURAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It seems that the excess supply in the art field is stable, even though to some degree it may be adjusted with a control of the recruitment to the sector including the number of students domestically and abroad, and other mechanisms to restrict the entrance to the field (Heian, Løyland, & Mangset 2012). At the same time, the government wants to stimulate entrepreneurship, which may lead to even more self-employment. This study indicates that many freelance because they want such a career. This implies a responsibility to provide valid and reliable information to prospective freelancer artists, which includes both research on their working conditions and effective communication strategies. This is also one of the conclusions in the report «Kunstens autonomi og kunstens økonomi» (Skarstein/ Kulturdepartementet 2015).

The differences between freelance jazz musicians and journalists may imply somewhat different challenges with regard to cultural policy. Freelance jazz musicians are reasonably satisfied with their conditions even though their wages in general are lower than that of freelance journalists. The implication of this is a trickier one. It may be positive that jazz musicians adjust their preferences and way of working, which makes freelancing for them as an overall good working situation. On the other hand, this may imply that the over-recruitment of artists will continue as long as they accept a low income situation. In addition to providing realistic information about welfare issues, it is important to initiate and support research on which entrepreneurial skills artists need to improve their income possibilities and to be more professional in running their firms.

The finding that journalists are somewhat less satisfied may be due to a large change in the media sector with new business models. This implies an increase number of freelance journalists, and a risk that more journalists will be freelancers even though they prefer to have permanent employment. This study clearly shows that being forced into freelancing implies an overall bad working situation. Ideological differences exist whether the policy makers perceive governmental support as a good thing and how they should respond to the increasing competition in the media sector. Policy makers should at least be aware of the fact that being forced into self-employment is not a good working situation according to findings in this study.

Being self-employed also implies a limitation of welfare rights. In the Nordic countries, a substantial part of the welfare system such as pension, maternity leave, insurance, sick pay, unemployment benefits and bank loans is based on full-time employment. Many of the negative comments from the freelancers in this study focus on such welfare issues. As one freelance journalist says:

«Yes, it is great to be a freelancer when you are young and stupid, but now I have a permanent job. It means a stop in my career, but at least I do not lose sleep at night just by hearing the word ‘the flu’.»

Welfare issues regarding artists include more than just the cultural sector, and it is important to ensure cross-departmental cooperation in planning welfare policy among artistic labor.

## LIMITATIONS

There are limitations related to research design and strategy. We chose to include only those who were members of two main labor unions of jazz musicians and freelance journalists in Norway. This implies that we do not have information about those outside the labor unions and whether these findings apply to them. Furthermore, the overall response rate was 38 %. Including only those working at least 50 % as freelancers, only 30 % of the original sample remained in the final sample. The gender and age distribution is almost the same in the two labor unions (NJF and NJ) today, and the informants included in the analysis in the study. This indicates that our final sample at least with regard to different characteristics such as gender and age, does not differ much from the distribution of these characteristics in the two unions today. Another challenge related to sample, is that we did not reach those who actually have quit as freelancers and obtained a permanent job. They could provide valuable information about why they decided to leave the freelance work situation. Furthermore, it would be interesting to include other groups of artistic labor. We may also include a reference-group outside the cultural industries to study whether working conditions for artistic labor differs from other freelancers and self-employed in other sectors.

This study is based on a cross-sectional design at one point in time, which means that there is not a strong test of causality. Furthermore, there may be systematic differences with regard to personality traits in the recruitment to the freelance jazz musicians and journalist occupations. For example, those who are recruited to be jazz musicians may be systematically more risk lovers than journalists. As long as we have not measured and controlled for such stable, individual traits, we will not be able to separate occupational effects (jazz musicians vs. journalists) from individual traits effects (such as risk aversion).

This is just a relatively small study of two groups of freelance artistic work, and we need more in-depth studies and surveys to broaden our knowledge about freelancers, self-employed and small business to be able to develop policy and education that is based on research about their working conditions. This is also important with regard to young people in the decision making phase of their future education and career. If they consider becoming self-employed in the cultural industries, they need realistic and reliable information about the positive and negative consequences of choosing such a career.

## APPENDIX A1. CORRELATION MATRIX

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.
1. Freelance –personal choice	4.07	1.26	---																
2. Intrinsic motivation	4.16	.72	.25**	---															
3. Balance work/leisure	3.21	.75	.08	.07	---														
4. Overall job satisfaction	3.84	.92	.47**	.49**	.23**	---													
5. Freelance – labor market	2.75	1.50	-.56**	-.21**	-.07	-.48**	---												
6. Satisfaction wage	2.81	1.24	.08	.17**	.12*	.40**	-.14*	---											
7. Satisfaction career	3.07	1.18	.24**	.34**	.07	.48**	-.31**	.23**	---										
8. Satisfaction social relations	3.24	1.24	.03	.27**	-.02	.23**	-.06	.13*	.29**	---									
9. Uncertainty	2.77	1.30	-.20**	-.19**	-.01	-.26**	.32**	-.22**	-.29**	-.23**	---								
10. Job Stress	2.89	1.07	-.14*	-.11*	-.50**	-.26**	.14*	-.18**	-.00	-.03	-.03	---							
11. Freelance turnover intention	2.21	1.17	-.55**	-.32**	-.09	-.56**	.60**	-.09	-.34**	-.22**	.25**	.11*	---						
12. Age	42.18	11.06	.21**	-.00	.06	.08	-.26**	-.00	.01	-.05	-.18**	-.13*	-.19**	---					
13. Educational level	4.66	1.14	-.00	.13*	.02	.09	.03	.05	-.03	-.07	-.14**	.10†	-.01	-.12*	---				
14. Gender (1=man;0=woman)	0.62	.49	-.06	-.06	-.05	-.06	.13*	-.05	-.07	.13*	-.05	.07	.03	-.03	-.17**	---			
15. Working hours pr. week	39.63	13.00	.07	.04	-.24**	-.04	-.08	-.10†	.14*	.07	-.12*	.49**	-.15**	-.04	-.00	.16**	---		
16. Number assigners pr. year	12.56	12.45	.19**	.13*	-.00	.12*	-.08	-.02	.14*	.18**	-.11*	.12*	-.22**	-.15**	.12*	.24**	.18**	---	
17. Sector (1=journalist;0=Jazz)	.77	.41	-.07	-.16**	.06	-.00	-.02	.09	-.11†	-.24**	.19**	-.18**	.19**	.26**	-.13*	-.25**	-.16**	-.57**	---

† p&lt;=.10 \* p&lt;=.05 \*\* p&lt;=.01 (2-tailed test)

N=308–313

## APPENDIX A2. MULTIPLE REGRESSION: FREELANCERS' TURNOVER INTENTION – SUB-GROUP ANALYSES

VARIABLES	$\beta$	
	Journalists (N=245)	Jazz musicians (N=64)
Labor market	.537**	.325†
Satisfaction wage	-.008	.107
Satisfaction career	-.124 †	-.226
Satisfaction social relations	-.124 †	-.164
Uncertainty – 1 month	-.075	.005
Job stress	.136†	.017
CONTROL VARIABLES		
Age	-.147*	.005
Educational level	-.028	-.091
Gender (1=man; 0=woman)	.016	.272†
Working hours pr.week	-.150*	.070
Number of assigners	-.002	-.252†
Adj. R2	.446	.323

\*\* p< .001; \* p< .01; † p< .05

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