



# Underground Music: Bottom-up Culture for New York City

Understanding the Value of Music Performances in Subway Stations

## INTRODUCTION

On May 4, 2015, the world-renowned band U2 performed in disguise in one of New York City's subway stations. After gathering a small crowd and some looks for a couple of minutes, they got off their buskers' costumes and played for approximately forty people.

That same year, the band was in third place in the list of highest-grossing tours of 2015, with their Innocence + Experience World Tour taking in \$133.6 million (Forbes, 2016). The thirty-six shows in North America were sold out, with an average ticket price of \$117. That day on Grand Central Subway, people could see them for the price of a subway ride.

As U2 did that time, there are many musicians that busk daily in NYC subway stops to reach a big and diverse audience. They do it as their main source of income, for practice and/or for promotional reasons.

With an average weekday ridership of 5,650,610 passengers in 2015 (MTA, 2016), subway stations have one of the biggest audiences in the world (as a reference, the 36 shows in U2's North American tour accounted for 650,682 tickets sold).

According to the Center for an Urban Future, one of New York City's main comparative advantages is its cultural sector. That being said, its cultural assets are unequally distributed across the city and concentrated in its most affluent neighborhoods. In addition, attendance to artistic performances have been decreasing in the US during last decade, the main barriers being time, cost, accessibility and no one to go with (National Endowment for the Arts, 2012).

The arts are an important component of healthy communities; they improve individual well-being, unify communities, increase academic performance and strengthen the economy, amongst others benefits (American for the Arts, 2017).

Subway busking – playing music in public spaces – has been legal since 1990, when the TA designated subway platforms as public forums for musical expression, protected by the First Amendment. In New York City, their musicians play to one of the largest audiences in the world. The Busking Project, one of the biggest communities, say that “busking is an art form that supports artists in a venue that’s open to people of all backgrounds. Busking also brings people from social and economic exclusion to a place of inclusion”.

*Can subway performances help democratize the arts by bringing culture to under-served communities? Where are musicians playing and who are they reaching? What are the current regulations that restrict or promote their contributions?*

By comparing the cultural offer in New York City with the subway population, in addition to analyzing locations, ridership and current regulations, this paper presents a first approach in understanding subway musician’s contributions to culture in New York City.

## CONTEXT

### **Making the Case for Arts and Culture**

Arts and culture in cities have important benefits for communities. “On an individual level, people point to the transformative experiences that can bring joy and enlightenment while building empathy. Museums connect us to history. Gardens and zoos connect us to nature”, argues New York’s Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. “Live performance connects audiences with each other and the imaginations of the artists, performers, and authors involved. Literature can draw us into experiences that transcend boundaries of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disability” (Art News, 2017).

A new study by the Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania shows positive relations between cultural assets in neighborhoods and reductions in crime, improved outcomes in education and health in New York City. These findings are stronger in low income neighborhoods (Stern, et al., 2017).

In February of 2017, American for the Arts recognized measurable reasons for supporting the arts, recognizing their contribution to healthy communities. The arts improve individual well-being and unify communities. Students present higher standardized test scores and lower drop-out rates when they are involved in arts programs. The arts and culture industry represent 4.2 percent of the nation’s GDP – a larger share of the economy than transportation, tourism and agriculture. Additionally, the arts are good for local businesses, attract tourism, and are an export business that had a \$30 billion international trade surplus in 2014, amongst other benefits.

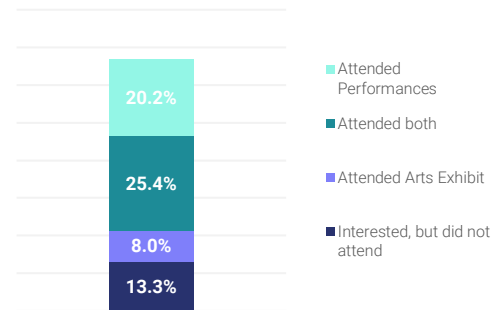
### **Arts Attendance is Decreasing**

Adult attendance rates to arts activities presented an overall decrease in the last decade, according to the National Endowment for the Arts’ Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) released in 2012. Thirty-three percent of adults attended a performing arts event on 2012, 6% less than the past decade. These changes affect different types of activities and music including; live music performances, jazz, classical music, opera, Latin, Spanish or salsa music, and outdoor performing arts festivals. In addition, in 2012 the survey included a new question that referred to any type of “free” music, theater or dance events.

	2002	2008	2012
Music			
Jazz	10.8%	7.8%	8.1%
Classical music	11.6%	9.3%	8.8%
Opera	3.2%	2.1%	2.1%
Latin music	Not asked	4.9%	5.1%
Outdoor performing arts festival	Not asked	20.8%	20.8%
Other types of live performances			
Free music, theater, or dance of any kind	Not asked	Not asked	15.9%
Other music, theater, or dance attendance not referenced in the main survey	Not asked	Not asked	11.6%

Source: National Endowment for the Arts

Figure 1  
US ADULTS ATTENDING A PERFORMING ARTS EVENT IN 2012



Further research was published in 2015 addressing the barriers and motivations of arts attendance. As Figure 1 shows, over half of US adults attended an art exhibit or live music performance in 2012. However, 13% said to be interested, but did not attend.

The main barriers affecting arts attendance are; time (47%), cost (38%), access (37%) and no one to go with (22%). One third of the respondents said the reason for not attending a specific event they were interested in was lack of time. The same amount attributed expensive events to their nonattendance. Demographics, socioeconomic status, class identity and “life stages” (i.e. higher education enrollment, marriage or having small children) affect arts attendance.

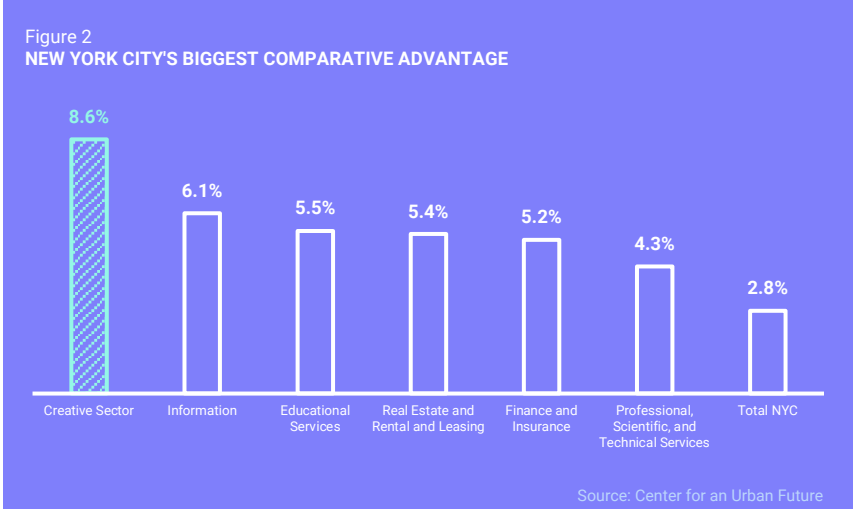
On the other hand, the main reasons for attending the arts performances are; to socialize with friends and family (73%), to learn new things (64%), to experience high-quality art (63%) and to support the community (51%).

### The Creative City

New York City is the fourth more diverse city in the United States. Its population comes from all around the world and speak over 200 languages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The city is also rich in human capital and presents the advantages of “density, competition, and an international presence combined with the fire of innovation” (Glaeser, 2009).

Advertising, film and television, broadcasting, publishing, architecture, design, music, visual and performing arts, and independent artists; the creative sector is one of New York City's greatest competitive advantage (Figure 2). The city has 8.6% of all the creative jobs in the country, and 7% of all the jobs in the area in 2013 came from the creative industry. Arts and artists are also the main draw for tourists (Center for an Urban Future, 2015).

"Work aside, we come to New York for the possibility of interaction and inspiration. [...] The city is a body and a mind—a physical structure as well as a repository of ideas and information. Knowledge and creativity are resources. If the physical (and financial) parts are functional, then the flow of ideas, creativity and information are facilitated.", writes singer-songwriter David Byrne in 2013.



**Table 2**  
**WHERE THE CREATIVE JOBS ARE**

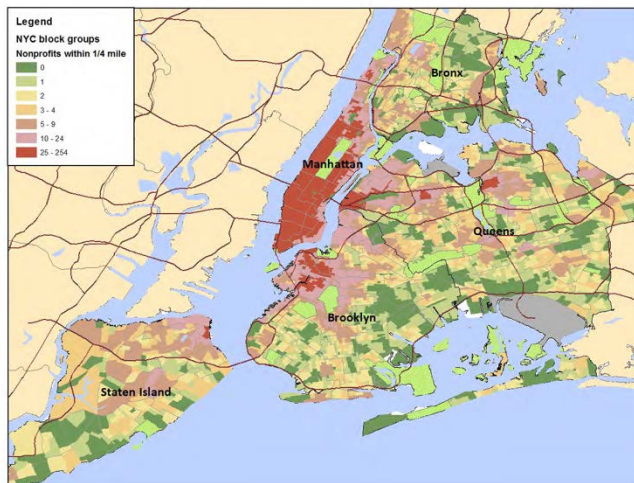
County	Major City	2003	2013	Growth
Travis County, Texas	Austin	8,223	11,547	40%
Multnomah County, Oregon	Portland	8,759	10,657	22%
New York City		188,033	216,110	15%
San Francisco County, California	San Francisco	22,745	25,895	14%
Davidson County, Tennessee	Nashville	10,904	11,841	9%
Harris County, Texas	Houston	19,741	21,053	7%
Los Angeles County, California	Los Angeles	207,233	202,072	-2%
Suffolk County, Massachusetts	Boston	21,125	19,729	-7%
King County, Washington	Seattle	22,306	20,794	-7%
District of Columbia	Washington DC	31,788	28,802	-9%
Cook County, Illinois	Chicago	66,216	58,552	-12%
Miami-Dade County, Florida	Miami	20,671	18,049	-13%

Source: Center for an Urban Future

## Cultural Inequality

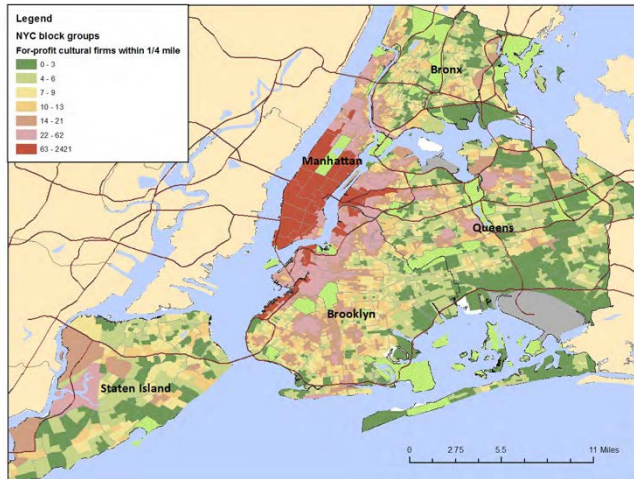
While tourists are benefiting from the wide supply of artistic events in the city, the same cannot be said for all its residents. A new study by the Social Impact of the Arts Project of the University of Pennsylvania shows how cultural assets in New York City are unequally distributed across the city and concentrated in the most affluent 20%.

The uneven distribution is contrasted by the findings that relate benefits of cultural resources to better health, education outcomes and security are stronger in low-income neighborhoods. In these areas, the presence of cultural resources was found to be linked to a 14% decrease in child abuse, 5% decrease in obesity, an 18% of increase in English and math exams and an 18% decrease in serious crime rate (UPenn, 2017).



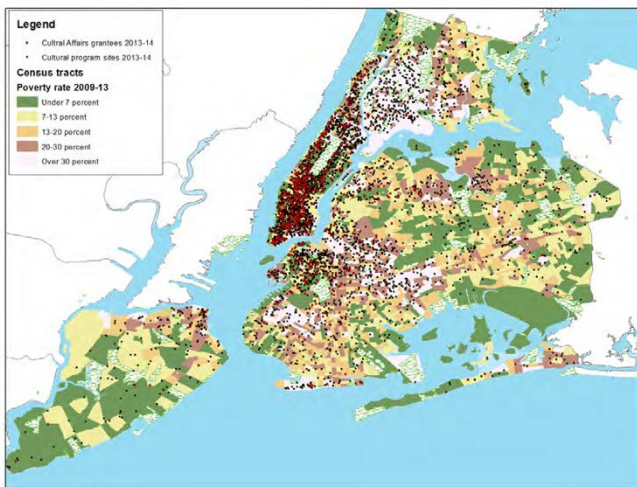
Map 1:  
TOTAL NONPROFIT CULTURAL RESOURCES  
WITHING A QUARTER MILE, NYC BLOCK GROUPS,  
2013-15

Source: Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP)



Map 2:  
TOTAL FORPROFIT CULTURAL RESOURCES  
WITHIN A QUARTER MILE, NYC BLOCK GROUPS,  
2013-15

Source: Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP)



Map 3:  
NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS,  
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANTEES  
AND PROGRAM SITES, BY POVERTY RATE, NYC  
CENSUS TRACTS, 2013-14

Source: Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP)

## Riding the Subway

New York City is the fourth most diverse city in the United States. Its population of 8 million people comes from all over the world and speak more than 200 languages (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). A big part of this population utilizes the subway to commute to and from work; in 2015, subway ridership reached 1.763 billion, the highest since 1948 (MTA, 2016).

Subway stations in NYC are owned by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) a public-benefit corporation chartered by the New York State Legislature in 1968. Its stations are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. According to the 2008 Customer Travel Survey, subway accounted to 44.5% of the commutes to work, being the most usual mode of transportation. Around half the residents of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens commuted by subway to work.



Mode	Percent of Work Modes	Percent of School Modes
New York City Subway	44.5%	49.4%
Auto Driver	23.1%	13.1%
New York City Transit Bus or MTA Bus	12.6%	16.9%
Walk	9.3%	10.6%
Home Work/School	4.2%	0.3%
Taxi, Limo, Car Service	1.2%	0.2%
Auto Passenger	1.1%	0.9%
Nike	1.0%	1.9%
All Others	3.0%	6.7%
Total	100%	100%

Source: 2008 New York Customer Travel Survey. Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Being the largest rapid transit system in the world, its 469 stations can be easily recognized by its numerous underground passages, dirt, and a couple of friendly rats. Also recognizable are its sounds and noises; an arriving train, the operator on the speakers, and that random busker playing in the midst of it all.

Busking has a long legal history in New York City. In 1938, Mayor La Guardia made all street performances illegal, including those in transit facilities. According to Susie J. Tanenbaum (1995), "... in that period, street musicians were explicitly equated – and outlawed – with beggars". It was not until 1985 that the Transit Authority removed the ban on subway performances. That same year, Music Under New York started as a pilot project. Eventually, in 1990, the TA designated subway platforms as public forums for musical expressions, protected by First Amendment. "What has changed in the past 25 years, is that initially a great deal of time was spent articulating internally why we must do this and justifying the benefits of art in the subway system", said Sandra Bloodworth, director of MTA Arts & Design, in 2014. "Today, I don't have to tell New Yorkers (and haven't for many years) why art is important; they know it, they live in New York".

As long as they don't interfere or obstruct transit; the MTA's rules of conduct allow certain non-transit activities such as "public speaking; campaigning; leafletting or distribution of written noncommercial materials; activities intended to encourage and facilitate voter registration; artistic performances, including the acceptance of donations; solicitation for religious or political causes;" and solicitation for licensed and registered charities that are exempted from Federal income tax (MTA, 2017).

In addition to freelance musicians, the MTA has a program called Music Under New York, which schedules music performances in New York City subway stations. By holding auditions once a year, they select a rooster of musicians that will be granted benefits and special permits, like being able to reserve "prime spots" in stations determined by the MTA.

Misinformation amongst officers and even the same musicians is common. mMany times belonging to the program is confused with having an official permit, and officials wrongfully arrest or fine performers for not having a MUNY recognition. The most mentioned benefit in musicians auditioning for the program is having less problems with the authorities (NY Daily News, 2016).

# SUBWAY PERFORMANCES

Mapping the locations of subway performances in New York City is the first step towards understanding their impact and reach. One of the first findings of this study was that not all musicians prefer the same stations. While Times Square or 14<sup>th</sup> Street – Union Square are some of the favorites and most transited, location preferences depend on the type of music, number of persons in a group, weather, acoustics, amongst others.



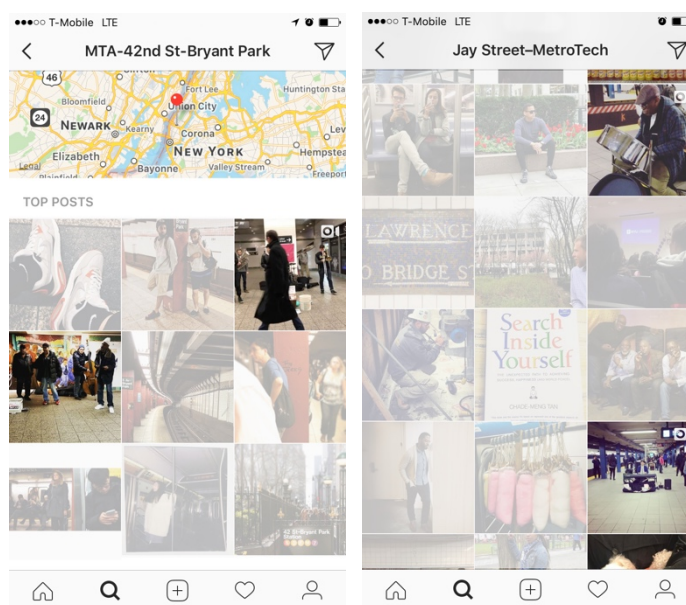
One of the benefits of being selected for the Music Under New York program, is access and to “prime spot” locations, which can be schedule for three hours, two weeks in advance.

Map 4 shows the different stations in which subway musicians can be found in New York City. Even though stations are divided into Music Under New York stations and freelance stations, musicians use these interchangeably. According to Susie J.Tanenbaum (1995), “a number of [MUNY] members ‘double’ as freelancers at times when they are not scheduled to perform” (p. 126). Additionally, any musician can use an empty MUNY location.

When asking directly to musicians and passersby about subway stops where they regularly perform/see performers, people were inclined to respond about the biggest and most touristic ones, leaving out the smaller, local stations.

The final methodology for mapping out locations was looking at photos of each station in Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. At first, the search was conducted with keywords such as “subway”, “music”, and “NYC”. This led to the same problem as the direct interviews; more transited stations have more pictures, making it hard to identify smaller ones. The second, and more successful approach, was to look up station by station. This was possible since the MTA maps out their stations in social media. Stations where musicians performed usually had various photos of them, in addition to a greater quantity of pictures overall. Stations where no musicians could be found still had pictures of the place and people, which implies that the lack of performances photos is not due to a diminished culture of photography taking in the area. This was complemented with literature review, personal observations, comparisons with official MUNY locations and direct contact with musicians.

Figure 3:  
MAPPING METHODOLOGY EXAMPLE.  
MUSICIANS FOUND ON INSTAGRAM PHOTOS  
IN 42<sup>ND</sup> ST-BRYANT PARK AND JAY ST-  
METROTECH STATIONS



In parallel with cultural assets, most musical performances in subway stations are concentrated in Manhattan, and some in Brooklyn. There are very few subway stops where performers can be found in the Bronx or Queens. While the distribution of New York City’s creative workforce may justify part of these differences, as shown in Table 4, more research is needed to understand the implications of these distributions.

Table 4 NYC’s CREATIVE WORKFORCE BY BOROUGH: 2003-2013			
	2003	2013	Percent Change
Bronx	3,598	3,691	3%
Brooklyn	18,851	30,140	60%
Manhattan	220,185	242,496	10%
Queens	15,282	16,735	10%
Staten Island	2,853	2,694	-6%
NYC	260,770	295,755	13%

Source: Center for an Urban Future, 2015

## PERFORMERS

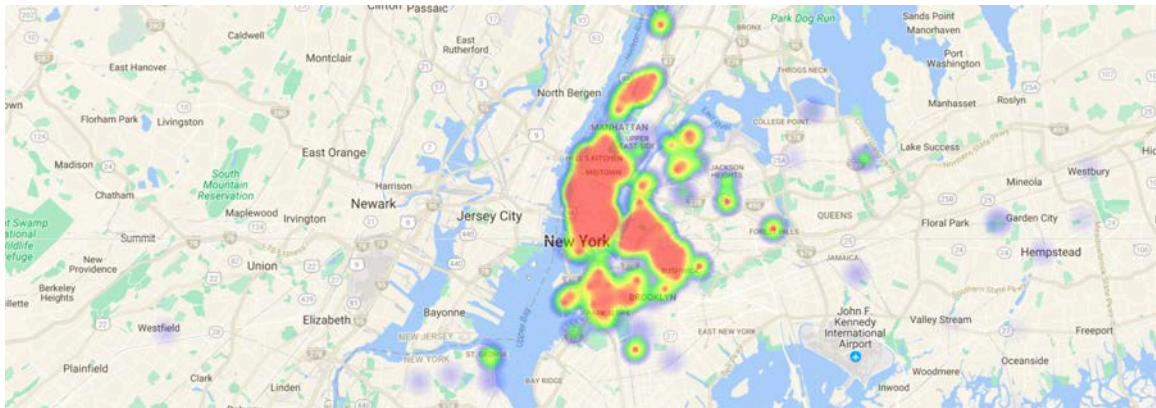
### New York City's Musical Workforce

New York City is widely known for its musical influence. As Frank Sinatra sings, "if I can make it there, I'm gonna make it anywhere". According to the Center for Urban Future, the total employment of Musicians and Singers increased from 10,592 in 2003 to 12,088 in 2013.

Seventy-two percent of live music venues are in Manhattan (1,841), but Brooklyn (467) and Queens (227) also present some dedicated places. Map 2 shows a heatmap created by Richard Tolley and Alex Jefferies, which reflecting the distribution of live music shows in New York City.

#### Map 5

#### LIVE MUSIC HEATMAP



Source: GIGBLOC

### Subway Musicians

For musicians, there is great value in performing in New York City subway stations. Different styles of musicians can find their fans amongst the around 1.8 million passengers that enter the subway each year. They have a free spot to practice, perform and earn revenues, in addition to the promotional value of being exposed to such large population.

Subway musicians' revenue can vary widely every day. Musician Geo Suquillo says that it "depends on many factors like the weather, the mood of people, sometimes police officers ask to lower the volume, or the musicians are not in the mood with the best energy" (Geo Suquillo, personal communication, April 4, 2017).

According to a survey done by Hopes & Fears, an online publication dedicated to cultural issues, an average busker makes approximately \$107 in three hours; which accounts to \$35 per hour. This corresponds to personal interviews where musicians referred to earning between “\$150-\$250 in three hours on a good day”. Additionally, a New Yorker publication defines a range from \$30 to \$50 per hour (2013). These estimations show a higher median wage than the one estimated for musicians playing in formal venues, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 THE REAL WAGE GAP				
	USA Median Wage	NYC Median Wage	Wage w/NYC COLA	NYC Wage Gap
All Creative Occupations	\$22.41	\$32.30	\$18.96	-\$3.45
Musicians & Singers	\$20.05	\$24.36	\$14.35	-\$5.71

Source: Center for an Urban Future, 2015

Earnings seem to be located with the amount of people in the station. However, not all locations are good for everyone. “It really depends on the kind of music that you do,” reflects Federico Ausbury, better known by his alter-ego “Clouidi”, lead singer of Pinc Louds who earns his whole living by busking in New York City Subways. “I think that in Times Square station there would be so much happening that I might get lost in it”. Other characteristics musicians describe when choosing a station to play in are; acoustics and noise, time between trains and police intervention as characteristics for a good station.

Some of these challenges are diminished when musicians belong to the Music Under New York program. Performers reduce their time looking for a space by being able to reserve locations and having less trouble with the police.

14<sup>th</sup> Street-Union Square is one of the most common places where subway musicians can be found. Its main mezzanine is a MUNY “prime location”, but freelance musicians also take advantage of the station’s size and structure that allow multiple musicians to play simultaneously. Table 6 shows how, in two months of observation, the main mezzanine was mainly occupied by reservations, but also shared with freelancers in some situations.

Table 6 MUSICIANS OBSERVED IN 14 <sup>th</sup> STREET – UNION SQUARE STATION				
#	Date	Time	Identified MUNY	No Identification - Freelance
1	02/08/2017	9:34 AM	1	
2	02/10/2017	5:53 PM	1	
3	02/13/2017	2:39 PM	1	
4	02/27/2017	6:26 PM	1	
5	02/28/2017	10:38 PM	1	
6	03/02/2017	9:35 AM		1
7	03/02/2017	2:29 PM	1	
8	03/03/2017	4:36 PM	1	
9	03/06/2017	4:22 PM		1
10	03/06/2017	9:31 PM	1	
11	03/18/2017	4:28 PM	1	
12	03/19/2017	6:57 PM	1	
13	03/22/2017	2:50 PM		1
14	04/07/2017	9:13 AM	1	
15	04/10/2017	8:22 PM		1
16	04/14/2017	9:11 AM		1
Total: 16			11	5

Interviewed freelancers said they could take around an hour to find a location to play in. If they arrive at a station that is already taken, they would wait or look for a different station, depending on how long the other musician was playing and the number of instruments or members the band has.

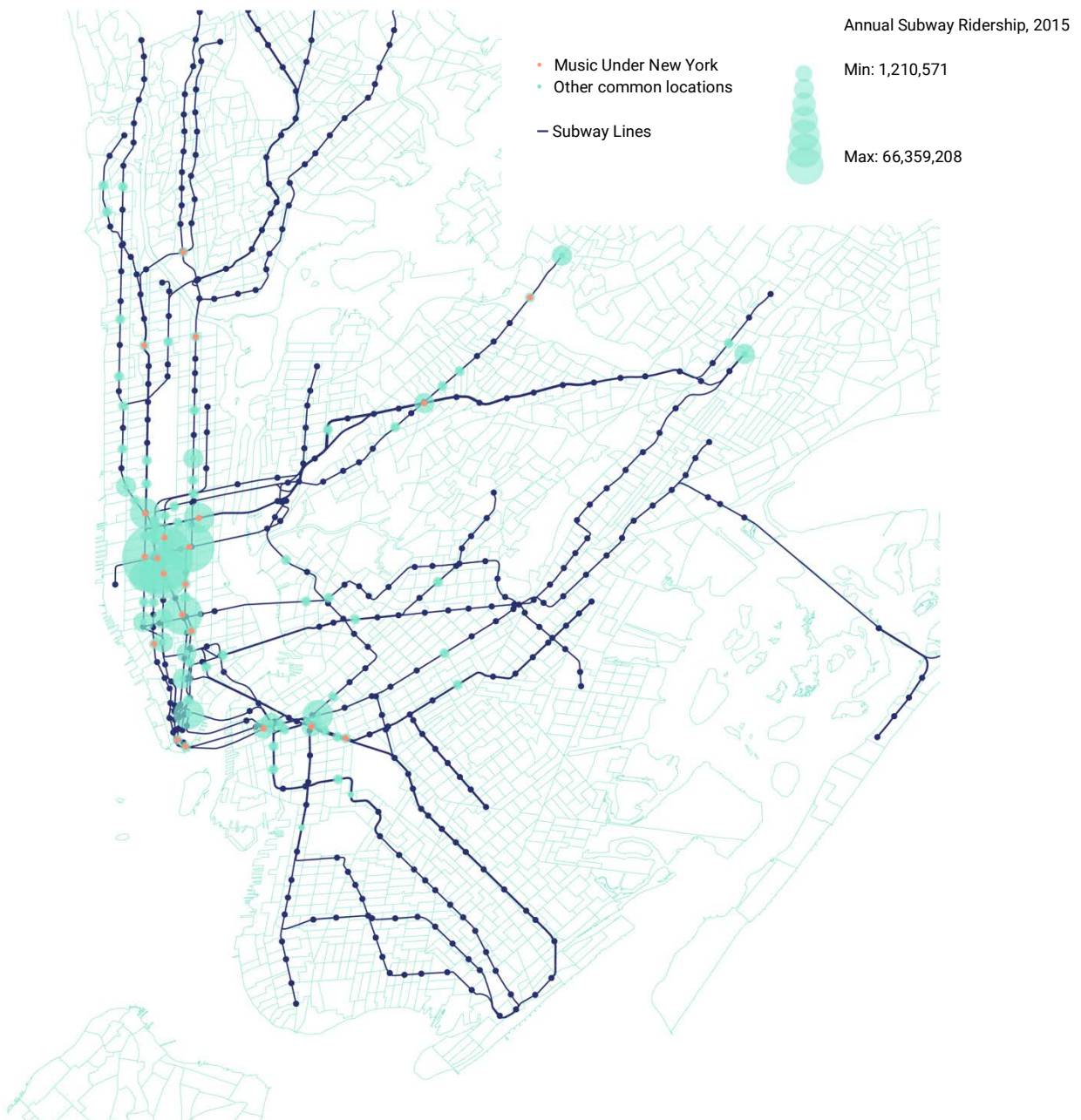
Performers also refer to the promotional value of playing in subway stations. Federico exemplifies this by saying; “the biggest reason why we’ve done this well is because a lot of people get to know us in the subway. [...] 150 people came to our most recent show, and I’d say around 60% of the crowd got to know us through busking”.



## PASSERSBY: THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE IN THE WORLD

With subway ridership at its highest, New York City subway stations provide a stage for one of the biggest and most diverse audience in the world. Map 6 shows the common location of subway musical performances, in additions to their annual subway ridership in 2015. The station with greatest ridership where buskers can be found is Times Square, with 66,359,208 passengers in 2015. On the other hand, the station with the lowest ridership, but where can sometimes be seen, is Bergen St, with 1,210,517 riders on the same year.

Map 6  
COMMON LOCATIONS OF MUSICIANS IN NYC SUBWAY STATIONS AND ANNUAL SUBWAY RIDERSHIP, 2015



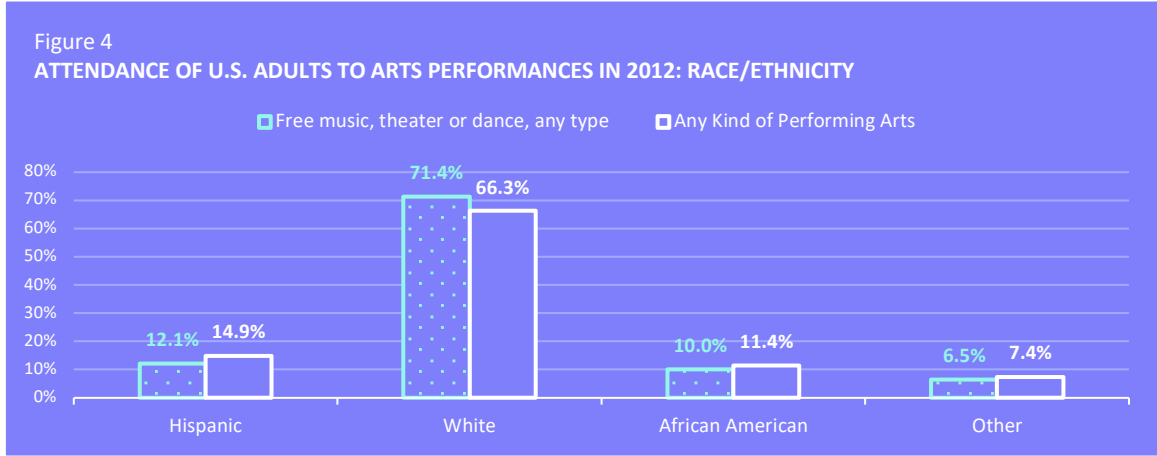
According to the 2008 New York Customer Travel Survey done by the Metropolitan Transit Authority, most commuters come from Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn. More importantly, the subway population seemed to be evenly distributed according to their Households Income, accounting for a diverse audience.

**Table 7**  
MTA WEEKDAY TRAVEL SAMPLE

HH Income	Manhattan	Queens	Bronx	Brooklyn	Staten Island	NYC
Less than \$25,000	5.38%	4.29%	6.39%	8.26%	0.67%	25.00%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	5.47%	6.22%	5.13%	7.92%	0.80%	25.54%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	6.99%	8.41%	3.39%	7.89%	1.79%	28.47%
\$100,000+	8.34%	5.24%	1.20%	4.68%	1.52%	20.99%
All Incomes	26.18%	24.15%	16.11%	28.76%	4.79%	100%

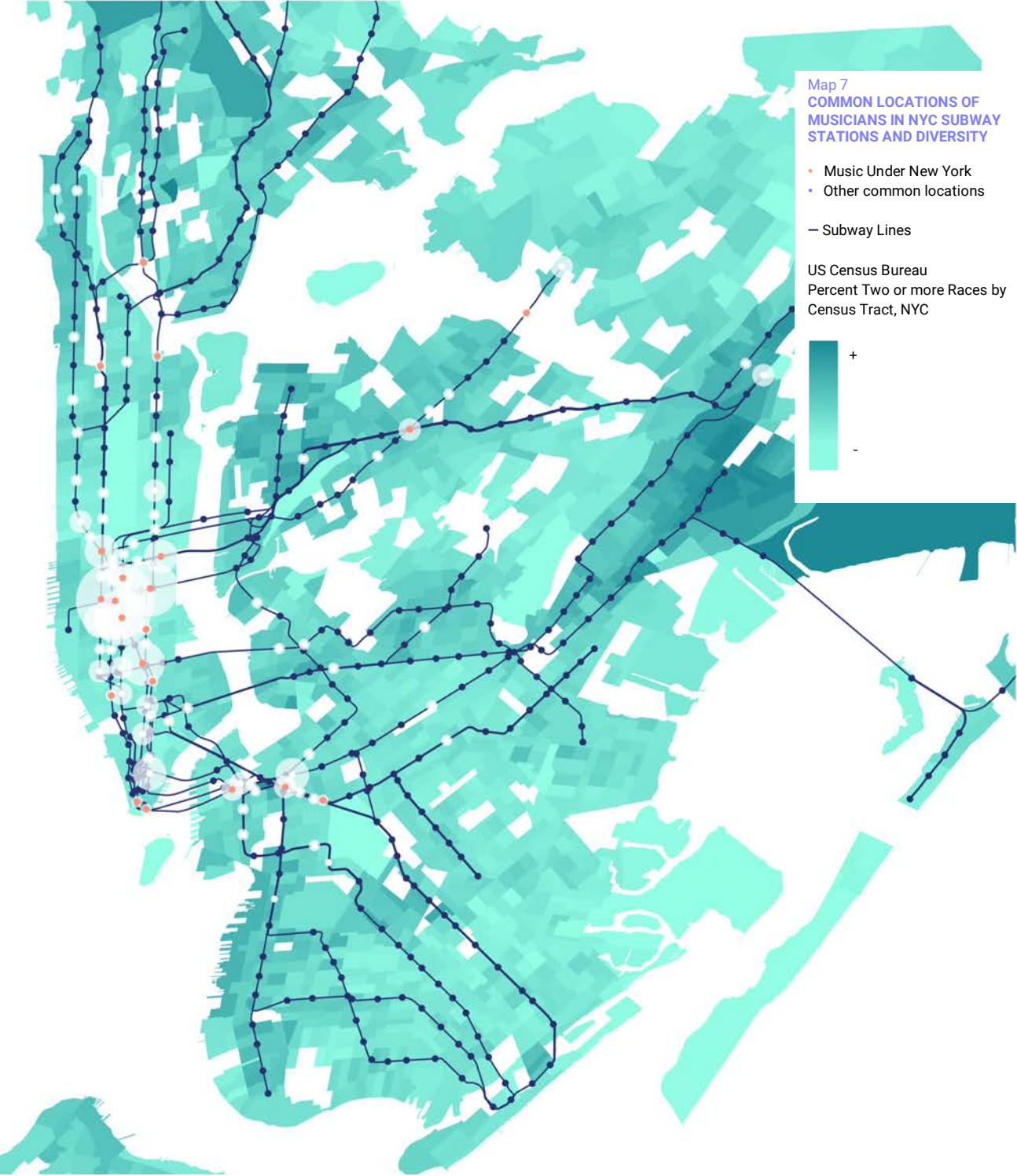
Source: 2008 New York Customer Travel Survey. Metropolitan Transit Authority.

The National Endowment for the Arts' Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) show inverse results in terms of the people who attended arts performances; with variations depending on race, age, education and income level. Figure 4 show that non-Hispanic white adults are the racial/ethnic group most likely to attend any kind of performing arts. This is even higher for free music, theater or dance events of any type.

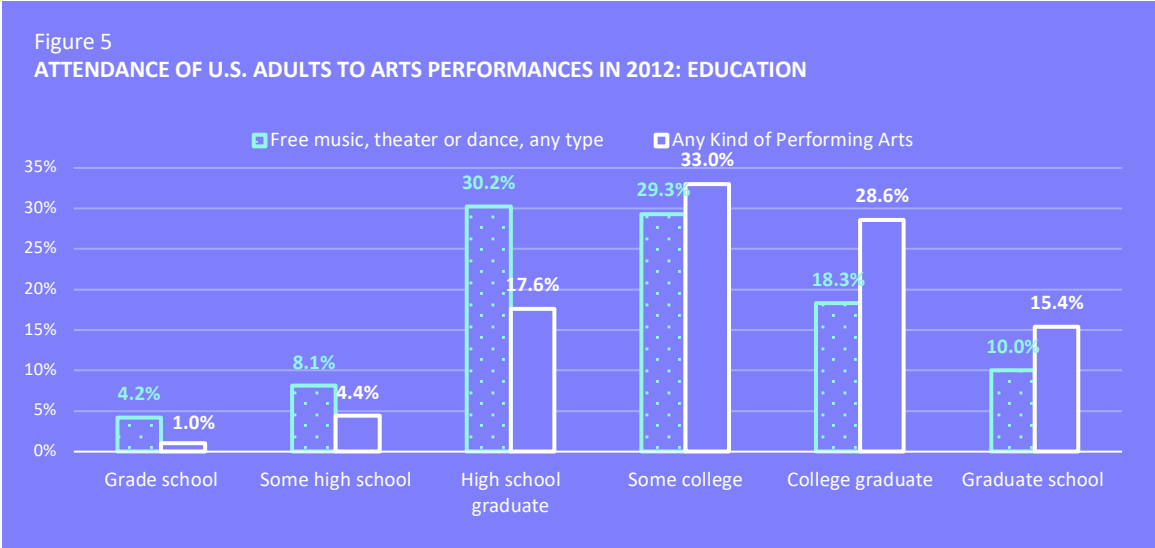


Source: National Endowment for the Arts

Map 7 shows the common locations of musicians in NYC subway stations, in addition to a diversity analysis by census tracts. Locations are concentrated in Manhattan, in less diverse neighborhoods, with few mapped in parts of the city that present a more ethnically varied population.

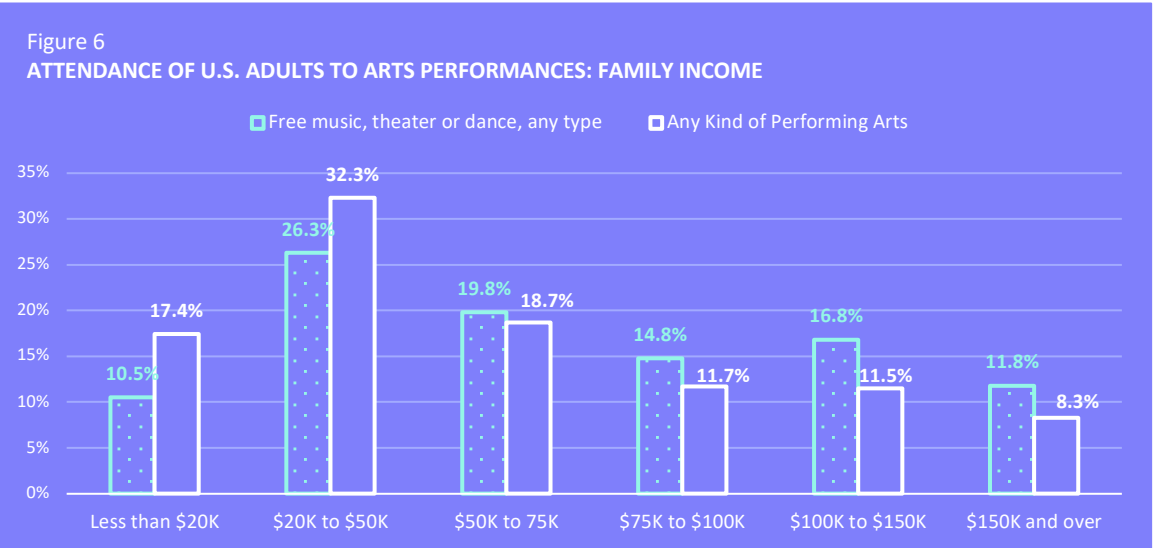


When analyzed by level of education, attendance to free music, theater or dance events is higher in the U.S. Adult population that have grade school, some high school and are high school graduates. People with some college are also likely to attend a free event.



Source: National Endowment for the Arts

There seems to be a slight negative relation between income level and free events. U.S. Adults of lower-income levels are more likely to attend any kind of performance, than free music, theater or dance events. Further research may analyze the supply of free-events in these neighborhoods to see if there is a problem of accessibility.



Source: National Endowment for the Arts

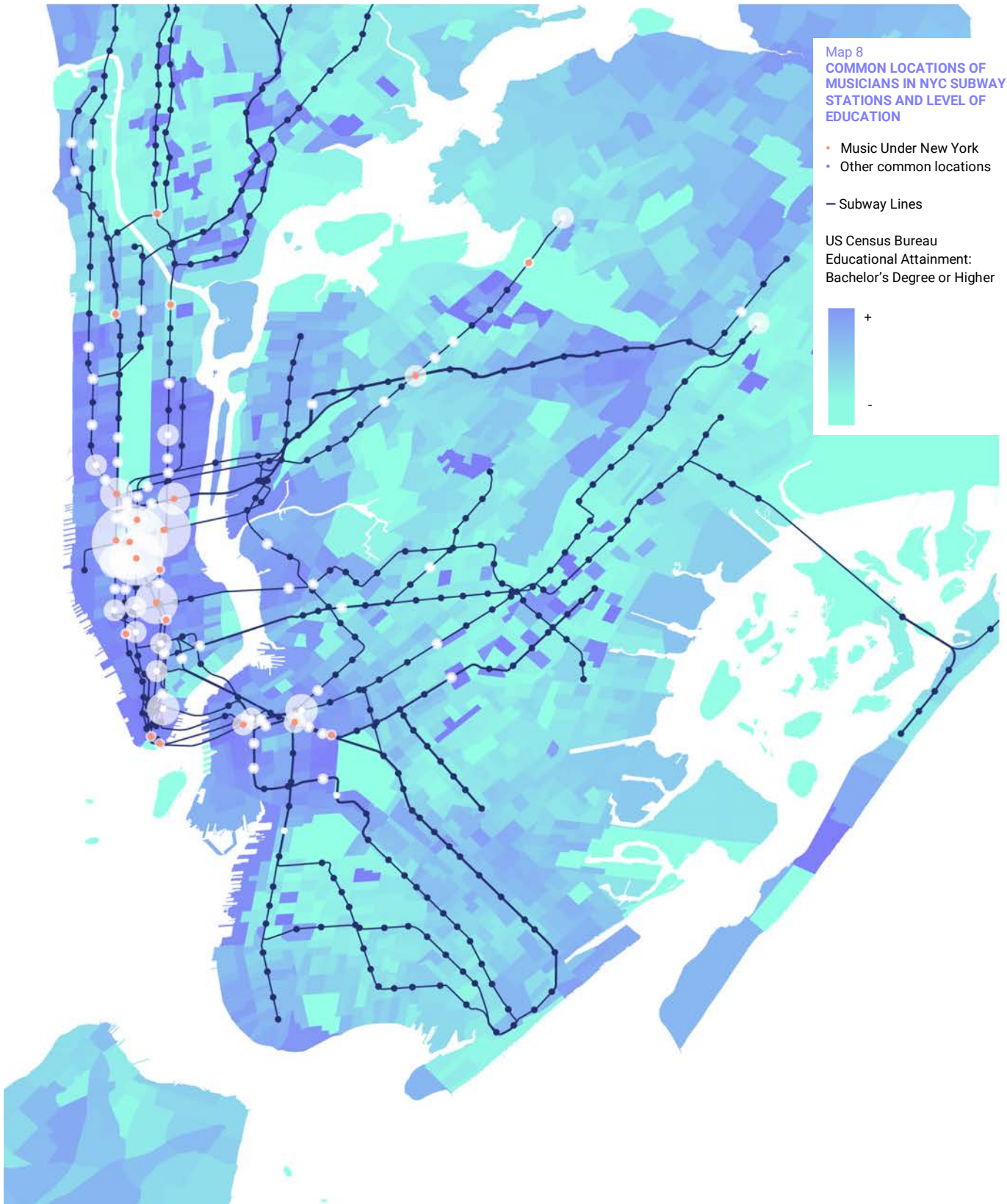
Current subway performances are located almost exclusively in neighborhoods that present high-educational levels (Map 8, p. 20) and higher household income (Map 9, p. 21).

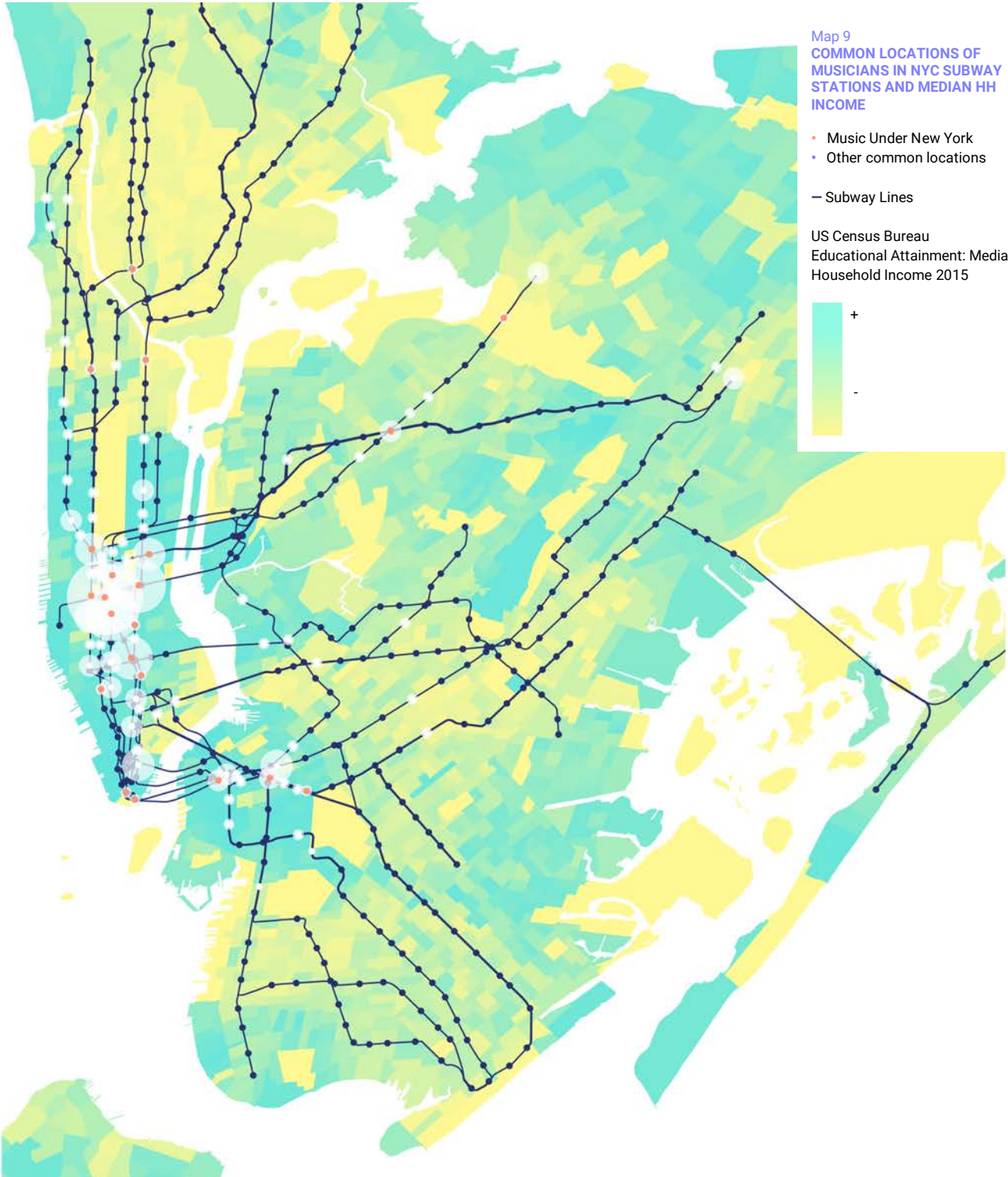
Map 8  
COMMON LOCATIONS OF  
MUSICIANS IN NYC SUBWAY  
STATIONS AND LEVEL OF  
EDUCATION

- Music Under New York
- Other common locations

— Subway Lines

US Census Bureau  
Educational Attainment:  
Bachelor's Degree or Higher





## GENERAL OVERVIEW & RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The subway audience can be observed in two ways; the actual location of the performances and their demographics of their surrounding neighborhoods, and the people who ride the subway and may be exposed to these cultural performances away from their place of residence. Right now, culture is only promoted to passersby. Future studies must analyze the different benefits obtained from having musicians in the same neighborhoods versus in high-transited stations.

Subway performances follow the same concentration trend as cultural assets in New York City; most of them being concentrated in Manhattan, followed by some in Brooklyn. Music Under New York, the official MTA program that schedules musicians in subway stations, also contributes to these concentration, by having most of their “prime spots” located in Manhattan and high-income areas.

Nevertheless, subway stations are places that concentrate people from all around the city. It’s density and diversity, in a large city like New York, facilitates the cultural spillover that occurs in transit facilities.

Musical performances in subway stations impact all the riders of the station; with no discrimination of age, income or education. One of the main functions of public spaces is to generate social interactions amongst strangers (Kohn, 2004) and subway buskers facilitate these connections in transit facilities. “Musicians and entertainers draw people together”, wrote William H. Whyte in 1980. “When people form a crowd around an entertainer – it happens very quickly, in 40 or 50 seconds – they look much like children who have come upon a treat; some will be smiling in simple delight. [...] The multiplier effect is tremendous. It is not just the number of people using them [the spaces], but the larger number who pass by and enjoy them vicariously, or even the larger number who feel better about the city center for knowledge of them” (p.96-97, 101).

Susie J. Tanenbaum exemplifies these interactions in 1995,

Culture is a source of knowledge, and subway music circles around with teachers. Ricardo Silva of Antara del Barrio motions to his audience to clap with him, and some riders learn a new rhythm. During Evelyn Blakely’s “Café Subway,” some riders learn to applaud in the middle of a piece. Riders ask each other questions, including: “What country are they from?” and: “What is that instrument made of?”. One evening,

while Andinos played on Grand Central Terminal’s main concourse, an Ecuadorian man named César traced the origins of Andean music for an elderly white couple in the audience. [...] In addition to being cross-cultural, the lesson became intergenerational when César called his young daughter over to help him with his English (p.109).

Subway stations in NYC are owned by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), a public-benefit corporation chartered by the New York State Legislature in 1968. Unlike parks, where the main objective is recreation, airports, subway stations and other transit facilities have a utilitarian purpose. Their main function is to provide mobility by allowing passengers to access transportation. However, that does not mean it cannot serve other purposes as well. As Zick describes it, “That a public place facilitates one function does not mean it cannot serve other. Further, whether or not a place was originally built for expressive or some other purpose tells us little or nothing about the place’s role on the contemporary expressive topography” (p. 165).

Figure 7 shows how social media can help track the, mainly, positive reactions in passersby. While subway stations may help promote culture in New York City, their main objective is transportation. Policy measures should address the issue in a way that does prevents performances from obstructing traffic; analyzing peak hours, ridership, amongst other.

Figure 7  
REACTIONS TO SUBWAY MUSICIANS IN SOCIAL MEDIA; TWITTER POSTS





The first impression for this study is that subway musicians follow implicit and explicit rules when distributing locations in the city and in the same stations, without reaching levels of overcrowding. In two months of observations in 14<sup>th</sup> Street – Union Square, one of the most popular stations, there were times when no musician was playing. While subway performances are allowed in transit facilities if they follow the MTA's rules and regulations, there is misinformation amongst officers and musicians. Part of the "implicit order" found in this study may be attributed to these regulations applied in a harder way than necessary.

Additionally, observations obtained from this study indicate that subway performers play stations with different characteristics, locations and ridership. Moreover, music in subway stations can help break the four main barriers preventing people for attending arts performances; time, cost, accessibility and no one to go with.

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