

Gatekeepers' decision-making in the Dutch Jazz Industry

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Master Thesis

June 8th 2016

ABSTRACT

Jazz performances, as any other cultural goods are experience goods, i.e. quality can only be assessed post-consumption, which create consumption uncertainty. Quality evaluations of cultural goods require knowledge and expertise which can only be achieved through time and interest investments, i.e. taste formation and accumulation of cultural capital. Consumers lack knowledge and expertise to make quality evaluations, thus, they search for experts' quality certification. In this study experts are gatekeepers who occupy decision-making functions within an industry and have control over the supply of cultural goods on the market. Because arts industries are characterised by asymmetric information, i.e. unequal distribution of information, gatekeepers have superior market advantage, and may engage in signalling behaviours, creating principal-agent and supplier-induced demand relations. Both analyses assume that agents, i.e. gatekeepers act in behalf of the principals, i.e. consumers but also artists, and impose their views under the assumption of having superior industry expertise. This study assumed that gatekeepers have power to shape the market by controlling communication channels that influence artists' careers and audiences' consumption, and bear the responsibility of the sectors' functioning. Focusing on the jazz sector in Netherlands, we conducted a qualitative research, interviewing Dutch jazz experts on the subject of: What are the aspects influencing the decision-making process of gatekeepers in the Dutch jazz industry? We adopted a wide approach of investigation aiming to analyse multiple contexts which may influence gatekeepers' decision-making. In the process, we attempted to understand the function of the sector and outline the infrastructure of the jazz industry in the Netherlands. Our hypothesis was confirmed, gatekeepers control the communication channels and have the resources to influence the market, however the responsibility of the sector does not stand entirely on their shoulders. Findings revealed that decision-making is influenced by gatekeepers' taste and preferences, own sense-making and subjective interpretation of artistic characteristics used in selection criteria, the jazz market (i.e. current situation and resources), gatekeepers' for-profit and non-profit character, the bureaucracy of the employer company, and various interrelations taking place in the sector. It was shown that gatekeepers do not actively engage in imposing a market power.

KEYWORDS: gatekeeping, decision-making, quality, taste, expertise

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

The performing arts sector is a unique segment of the cultural industries, characterised by live performances differing according to disciplines or genres – theatre, opera, ballet, and music performances. The general literature attempts to make sense of the complexities surrounding the performing arts by dividing the sector into different stage of production: creation, production, distribution, presentation, and consumption, which are carried out by artists, intermediaries, suppliers, arts organisations, funding agencies, and audiences (Caves, 2000; Langeveld, 2009, 2012; Towse, 2011). Performing arts organisations are distinguished with respect to output, inputs, and the production process depending on whether they are “co-operatively run, profit oriented and private, or non-profit-oriented and public” (Frey & Pommerehne, 1989, p. 46).

Generally in the cultural sector, and particularly in the performing arts, products are experiential, thus quality judgments can be inferred post consumption (Caves, 2000). Judgments about quality are “subjective and shifting, creating an uncertain, dynamic environment” (Maitlis, 2005, p. 24; Caves, 2000). Quality judgments in the arts require a certain extent of knowledge and expertise, and an acquired taste. Cultural economists have stressed that past arts exposure influences future consumption as a matter of habit formation, and it is assumed that habit formation leads to an evolution of taste and cultural capital accumulation (Lévy-Garboua & Montmarquette, 1996; Pollak, 1970). Therefore, as taste, knowledge, and expertise are acquired through time and interest investments, in the short-run, consumers search for signals of quality from representatives that have knowledge and expertise to make decision on their behalf, thus market decisions are left in the hands of experts (Peacock, 1998; Caves, 2000; Towse, 2014; Ginsburg, & Throsby, 2006).

In this study, jazz experts are considered gatekeepers, and are defined as decision-making individuals who have the knowledge, expertise and power to shape the market by controlling the supply of cultural goods that consumers have access to (Peacock, 1994). The arts, known for their experiential nature, are also characterised by an unequal distribution of information between producers and consumers, i.e. asymmetric information (Caves, 2000). As consumers lack knowledge and expertise to make quality judgments, experts with superior market advantage engage in a signalling behaviour. From here, two analyses derive: one based on the

the principal-agent relation and one on the supplier-induced demand. These assume gatekeepers, i.e. agents, impose patrician views under the assumption of having superior industry expertise, and make decisions on behalf of principals, i.e. artists and audiences (Peacock, 1994; Blaug, 1998). The hypothesis of this study assumes that gatekeepers have power to shape the market by controlling communication channels that influence artists' careers and audiences' consumption, and bear the responsibility of the sectors' functioning. Following this assumption a qualitative approach will address the question of: "what are the aspects influencing the decision-making process of gatekeepers in the Dutch jazz industry?" Semi-structured interviews conducted with key experts and professionals within the jazz sector in the Netherlands will provide evidence to substantiate an answer to our research question. We attempt to have a pluralist approach to this subject in order to create a unique perspective of investigation which uses multiple theories, sciences and philosophies to analyse the diversity of circumstance which may have an influence on decision-making. Such a perspective extends as far as considering decision-making as a matter of individual behaviour, the outcome of aesthetic value judgments, and the outcome of contexts and circumstances in which decision-makers gravitate such as the jazz market, art institutions and organisations, and the sectors' infrastructure. We attempt not only to describe the aspects of influence on gatekeepers' decision-making, but also investigate the functioning of the Dutch jazz industry.

1.1 Relevance and motivation

Subjects such as quality in the arts, aesthetic value judgements, and decision-making mechanism for culture are still open in the world of academia, mainly due the difficulties raised by their subjective implications, and the complexities of addressing specific measurement methods. Thus, exploring gatekeepers' decision-making is a relevant topic of investigation addressed by cultural economics, and has practical or applied implications. We suggest that this research could contribute to a healthy functioning of the Dutch jazz sector and may create positive externalities towards other performing art fields.

In this study we acknowledge the unique characteristics of the performing arts by making a specific reference to jazz. "Jazz" comprises vast movements and forms of musical expression of different characteristics which changed and evolved from one decade to another, dating back

to early 1800s (Martin & Waters, 2002). With a complex history of African, European, and Caribbean roots, jazz evolved into various musical elements and different cultures making it difficult to sketch one definition (Sandke, 2010). As a musical form, jazz is “built on the discipline of collective improvisation” allowing “for maximum expression of the individual within the context of the group” (Spellman, 1982-2002, p.2; Bernstein, 1955; Schuyler, 1991; Gridley, Maxham, & Hoff, 1998, p.516; Sanchirico, 2012). Jazz can be considered a peculiar art form due to its improvisational character, which offers the listener the unique opportunity to experience an artistic moment that will never be repeated, at least not identical. Jazz was not an early institutionalised artistic form, and somehow remained a niche in the creative industries. Accordingly, jazz research is considerably missing in the world of academia, especially in the European context rooted in other artistic forms, such as classical music. Accordingly, the circumstances in which jazz was previously defined, together with the researcher’s own interest and expertise in jazz (artist, programmer, member of several artist collectives and initiatives, jazz journalist) stimulated the development of the subject of analysis in this study. Motivation came as a series of personal observations in the Dutch jazz sector which indicated the existence of only few representatives holding access to key industry opportunities, i.e. experts, festivals, venues. Moreover, a significant gap between generations of musicians and performing opportunities was observed, as young jazz artists seem to have very limited access to higher career positions in the field. The observations were inferred also through conversations with young jazz musicians in the Netherlands. Moreover, a research conducted during the past year on “developing new young jazz audiences in Rotterdam” indicated that possible jazz consumers are not informed of their possibilities to encounter jazz in the Netherlands, and were not acquainted with the latest developments of jazz music, as in their opinion jazz was somehow “out-dated”. On the other hand, the same research evidenced a difficult situation with respect to Dutch jazz audiences, characterised mainly by older generations of listeners, situation over which jazz organisations were concerned. This raised questions whether the problem does somehow stand in the communication channels between producers and consumers, and whether producers may have the power to address the gap in services. Developing the investigation also showed the potential to address the question of differences in generation of musicians and the performing opportunities available in the Netherlands.

1.2 Structure

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction into the topic of research and the plan of investigation. The second chapter provides the literature framework on which the investigation was developed, and addresses more general subjects such as an overview on the economics of the performing arts and performing arts organisations, followed by an analysis of expertise and quality in the performing arts, and the economic approach to decision-making and individual rationality. The third chapter presents the qualitative methodological plan followed in the investigation. The resulted findings will be introduced and interpreted in chapter four. The closing chapter of this study will present the general conclusions, suggesting further research possibilities and policy implications.

Chapter 2

2.1 The economics of the performing arts

The economics of the performing arts is seen to comprise a contemporary view of economics as the science of creating values, or the scientific studies of allocating resources that come to satisfy both individual and societal needs; and the performing arts as the form of art implemented live on a stage and experienced at the time of production (Langeveld, 2009, p.7). Focusing on the latter aspect of the definition, the performing arts are distinguished according to disciplines or genres. An early distinction made by DiMaggio (1986), differentiated between orchestra music, opera, theatre and ballet, while later, Brown and Novak (2007) distinguished between music performances, dance performances, musical and stage plays. Preece (2011) refers to the performing arts as the traditional forms of dance, theatre, music and opera, seen also as the early forms of art which provided the grounds for stage performers in the overall art industries – “there training grounds enrich the surrounding society, making it more interesting, more spiritually invigorating, and more “human” (Vogel, 2004, p.429).

“By its nature, a live performance is ephemeral: it is scheduled to take place at a given place and time and at predetermined prices” (Towse, 2014, p.26).

The production of a performance implies certain costs at different levels of the production chain, and requires a certain number of technicians, back stage personnel, and performers to work together in different activities such as directing, staging, and rehearsing. Performances can be presented to an audience immediately after an initial preparation, or repeatedly over different periods of time. The presentation takes place in concert halls or venues, which art organisations may have in private ownership or need to sub rent for each staging (Towse, 2014). The complexities surrounding the production of a live performance imply high costs for producing companies, the reasons why often performing arts companies are in need of governmental support which can ensure supply regardless of a low demand and revenue earnings below the costs of production (Towse, 2014). Governmental support to art organisations is offered as well to create opportunities for individual talent development, artistic innovation, and stimulate educational spillovers by exposing individuals to cultural activities (Vogel, 2004).

Caves (2000), has enriched the economic studies of the arts by introducing the economic properties which characterise the organisation and contracts in creative industries. These properties are:

- “Nobody knows”: the uncertainty of production and consumption of cultural goods and services.
- “Art for art’s sake”: creative workers are highly preoccupied with the quality of their work.
- “Motley crew”: the diverse specialised skills required to produce an artistic work.
- “A/B” list: vertically (product A is better than product B) and horizontally (product A and product B are similar in character and quality but not identical) differentiated creative products and workers.
- “Infinite variety”: the broad range of differentiated creative products.
- “Time flies”: the risks of coordinating creative productions to deliver on time.
- “The ars longa”: the durability and long-term returns of creative works.

(Caves, 2000, p.2)

The uncertainty characterising the production and consumption of cultural goods and services in the creative industries (performing arts) is relevant to the current study for the discourse of information available to producers and consumers on the market. In order for consumers to make rational judgments in regard to the purchase of goods or services (e.g. jazz performances), their choices must be made on a basis of complete knowledge over the product in question, i.e. technical and aesthetic characteristics, the utility generated, and the costs of production. “Knowledge” within this context is also a matter of cultural capital and taste formation: the experiential nature of the arts implies that individuals come to understand and draw benefits from artistic goods through experience and consumption, i.e. “learning by consuming” (Lévy-Garboua & Montmarquette, 1996). Moreover, it is known that past consumption affects future consumption, and tastes develop through time and interest investments, i.e. “habit formation” (Pollak, 1970). Altogether, individuals’ tastes evolve in time through cultural capital accumulated, which explains why in the short-run consumers search for signals of quality from representatives that have knowledge and expertise to make decision on their behalf (Peacock, 1998; Caves, 2000; Towse, 2014; Ginsburg & Throsby, 2006).

According to Caves (2000), the arts industries are characterised by an unequal distribution of information between producers and consumers, property known as “asymmetric information”. The asymmetric distribution of information implies that one party has more information over the other. In the case of the arts, considering that cultural goods are experience good, i.e. quality can only be assessed post-consumption, producers have an information advantage over consumers. Producers and distributors have access to information over the cultural goods and services they provide, however no incentives to share it with the consumers. This assumption can be argued upon various reasons. First, providing consumers with specific information does not imply that the costs of production will be shared as well, but rather continue being covered by producers. Moreover, being aware of consumers’ preferences requires producers to organise regular investigations, however costly and time consuming (Handke, 2010; Peacock, 1994). Second, offering specific information to consumers implies a certain extent of transparency, which has the potential of exposing producers’ working methods and decision-making, and may work in their disadvantage. Caves (2000) argued that the “nobody knows” property is to an extent applicable to both producers and consumers, as the market success of a cultural good cannot be entirely determined even by producers with superior knowledge, i.e. “symmetric ignorance” (Caves, 2000). Another aspect linked to the notion of asymmetric information is the principal-agent analysis. Critiques were brought to the public support for the arts arguing that individuals “lack confidence in their own judgment” with respect to deciding upon the quantity or form of cultural activities they wish to purchase, and “would derive disutility from professional judgments which question their taste” (Peacock, 1994, p.172). On the other hand, strengthening individuals’ “confidence” may be achieved through investments in cultural education and information. Nevertheless, as acquiring information on cultural goods implies high search costs and requires specialised knowledge, consumers search cultural experts’ certification as the guarantee “against being sold lemons”, i.e. a cultural good of a poor quality or unsatisfying (Peacock, 1994, p.172). Within this context, the public choice theory argues that tastes and preferences of suppliers are above those of consumers (Peacock, 1994, p. 208). Considered in a principal-agent analysis, the above discourse shows experts, i.e. agents in advantage over consumers, i.e. principals. Reinforced by the fact that principals search for agents to make decisions in their behalf, this context acts as incentive for producers, i.e. agents, to engage in a “signalling behaviour” intended to promote cultural goods as of high-quality, aiming

to stimulate consumption.

According to Ginsburgh (2003), when providing information on quality becomes such a cumbersome task, the role of experts in the sector is dramatically more significant. Experts reduce search and information costs by undertaking “gatekeeping” functions which intermediate the production-consumption relation. Earlier literature argued that consumers’ search costs have been reduced to some extent by the rise of the internet, which also lowered the need of gatekeepers in the industry. However, in music, this latter assumption is primarily available for recorded music which has become highly available to consumers through live streaming or free access to content on video-sharing websites or social media (Anderson, 2004; Handke, 2010; Ginsburgh & Throsby, 2014). Notwithstanding, in the performing arts, the role of experts and gatekeepers remains significant as they perform functions of selection, production and distribution of artists and cultural works which reflect on the market and individual consumption.

2.1.1 The performing arts organisations

“The more definitive externalities generated by the arts usually flow to special-interest groups” – Frey and Pommerehne (1989) noted that “theaters, operas, ballet, and orchestras behave differently with respect to output, inputs, and the production process depending on whether they are co-operatively run, profit oriented and private, or non-profit-oriented and public” (p. 46).

The overall success or performance of an arts organisation, i.e. the “viability” (Preece, 2005), is dependent on each individual mission ranging from revenue maximisation, audience maximisation to artistic maximisation. Within this context, the most fundamental difference between performing arts organisations with a direct effect on mission stands on a non-profit or for-profit seeking character (Throsby & Withers, 1979). The objective of for-profit organisations, as the status itself claims, is to maximise revenues, which defines them as similar to any other commercial enterprise in the market sector of the economy (Langeveld et al., 2014). On the other hand, since non-profit art organisations cannot aim at profit maximisation, the public policy assumes they aim at maximising a “combination of services and aesthetic quality” (DiMaggio, 1984, 1987; Steinberg, 1986, p.57).

“Art organisations are not treated as collective entities with a life and behaviour of their own; rather they are the result of individual action” (Frey, 2003, p.28). The institutional conditions determine the extent to which organisations may be referred to as “artistic” or “cultural”. Accordingly, what constitutes “art” and “culture” is defined as “the outcome of the interactions of a large number of people active in the political sphere”, where results rely heavily on the organisation’s strengths, particularly on the art experts and “devoted art lover” communities (Frey, 2003, p.29). The cultural sector is known for the fact that producers develop a strong intrinsic motivation for creating and producing art, i.e. “art for art’s sake” (Caves, 2000). Frey (2003) referred to the latter assumption as mainly applicable to artists known to be highly concerned with the quality of their work rather than seeking financial rewards. However, it may be argued that such circumstances are applicable as well to other actors within the arts industries, e.g. programmers or organisations. This assumption is considered especially in the non-profit cultural sector as the activities performed aim to support the arts rather than maximise profits. Within this context, the extent to which individuals in the arts are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated becomes an argument of public support, where direct public subsidies can either stimulate creativity or cause damages (Frey, 2003). Accordingly, public funding can either stimulate productivity as more funding implies more artistic supply, or lower productivity as public funding continues to be supplied despite a poor artistic performance within the sector. Within the above discourse, the question that arises is what is meant by organisations’ productivity, aspect which will be addressed in the following section.

2.1.2. Organisational structure and the value chain ecology

The development of the performing arts has been referred to in the general literature as a process of several production stages, also known as “the performing arts cycle” or “the value chain of production”. Preece (2011) divided the production stages as follows: the early idea development of an artistic creation, the planning process, the availability of resources, the rehearsals, marketing and promotion, and the final product – the performance. Langeveld (2009, 2012) divided the cycle between creation and intellectual property, production, distribution and sales, presentation, and consumption. A more in-depth perspective shows that at the first stage of production, or the early artistic creation stage, ideas are transformed into a vision of artistic value

by “creative minds” such as composers, directors, choreographers, etc. Here, creation can be seen as an expression of artistic freedom or autonomy, or as an institutionalised form implemented into creative departments in organisations (Langeveld, 2009). At the second stage of the chain, we find the production of performances as provided by companies, orchestras, independent producers, media and music companies, and so forth (Handke, 2010). The third stage, i.e. distribution of performances, is carried out by companies or agents (impresarios) working on commission payment as a result of a contract between an agent and a musician or a group (Caves, 2000). During the fourth stage, performances are represented on stage in specialised halls, outdoor festivals, arenas, theatres, and other venues. Concert stages vary according to specialisation, or a subsidised or non-subsidised profile. The fifth and final stage, i.e. consumption of performing arts, is realised by a public (audience) categorised according to age, nationality, education, gender, frequency of visit, and artistic genre visited (Caves, 2000; Handke, 2010; Langeveld, 2009).

The stages of production are a means of adding value to an organisation’s planning process, and have been used as a decision-making tool for arts managers to improve the final output and viable functioning of organisations (Porter, 1985). The value chain model of the performing arts was divided by Preece (2005) in two general activities, i.e. primary and support. The primary activities include: programming – the selection and interpretation of artistic works and the artistic vision of an organisation; personnel – the core on which performances are built, e.g. musicians, dancers, actors; production – the availability of physical requirements, e.g. rehearsing spaces, necessary equipment; and promotion – distributing information on performances to potential audiences through various communication channels (Preece, 2005). Each of these activities has an influence on another and the organisation as a whole, and requires support activities to sustain and hold them together. Support activities are: governance – the overall control carried out by a board of directors; administration – the management functions, i.e. human resources, finance, etc.; fundraising – gathering financial resources, i.e. grants, donations, private funding; and outreach – the connection between the art organisation and the surrounding communities (Preece, 2005).

Except for the governance function that deals with the organisation as a whole, carrying out each activity from the value chain varies significantly from one performing arts organisation

to another. Primary and support activities can be carried out in a hierarchical context, a collaborative or partnership relation, or in transactions (market) (Powell, 1990). For example, an arts organisation can have ownership over its stage (hierarchy), maintain a relationship with a particular venue (partnership), or search for a different hall for every performance (market) (Preece, 2005). One aspect of specific interest to this study is the partnership relation. It was argued that if “executed properly, partnerships can enhance strengths and reduce weaknesses” of an organisation (Preece, 2005, p.6). On the other hand, if “done poorly, or for the wrong reasons, partnerships can distract arts groups away from their core vision and potentially weaken the organisation in the long run” (Preece, 2005, p.6). In order to evaluate the potential or existing partnerships, the performing arts value chain is proposed as an analysis tool with a three steps process. First, the specific activities from the value chain, i.e. primary or secondary, involved in the partnership must be defined in order to determine each organisation’s collaborative role. Second, the relation between different activities within the value chain, i.e. “linkages” must be analysed (Preece, 2005, p.6); for example, a partnership over sharing a concert hall (production) may imply joining resources, i.e. time, budget, networks. Third, the impact a partnership has on reputation must be defined (Harvey, 1999; Preece 2005). A partnership to share a venue may change the level of quality promoted, thus it may have a positive or negative impact on presentation and consumption, and the future development of the partner organisations. It is of a great importance how organisations carry out each of these activities, and how decisions revolve around them, as each activity has an impact on the others and the final output. Introducing the production value chain is important for understanding the complexity of processes that influence organisations’ decisions, missions and objectives, and consequently the final output and performance of organisation.

It must be further considered that the final output and performance of arts organisations have an impact on the overall functioning of the sector, thus, the earlier introduced discourse must be considered in a broader context. The value chain approach as earlier introduced assumes a linear relationship between production, distribution, and consumption in a specific sector of the economy, such as the performing arts. Moreover it can be used as a method to locate gaps that might impact the sector’s ultimate productivity (Makeham, et al., 2012, p.2). A “value ecology” approach however, goes beyond the previous assumption and apprehends a complex analysis of multiple relationship between “production infrastructure (training, professional associations,

policy, public funding, equipment, venues), distribution infrastructure (venues, agents, media, markets), and consumption infrastructure (distribution outlets and modes, media, market segments, trends, competition) and how they influence each other within a sector such as the performing arts” (Makeham, et al., 2012, p.2). Such an approach is relevant to this analysis for understanding the complexities surrounding organisations or individual agents’ mission and objectives in the performing arts, and the aspects that influence their decisions. Therefore, this study proposes a combination of the traditional approach and an “ecological thinking”. The traditional approach assumes the “health” of individual elements, i.e. art institutions and organisations, experts, administrators, and individual agents, as a sign of “health” for the sector as a whole (Makeham, et al., 2012). The “ecological thinking” (Makeham, et al., 2012), comprises a complex system of motives and performances that influence both singular elements and the sector as whole, from an individual, and subjective micro-level to an external macro-level of social, cultural, economic, and technological contexts.

The behaviour of certain actors within the performing arts sector and the circumstances of the cultural system in which they act differ, thus, their decisions differ. This justifies the importance of conducting an analysis into decision-making, as it can reveal factors that uphold how choices reflect on the market and implicitly on audiences’ consumption. An ecological approach can help determine different levels of activities and a basis of motivational aspects which may or may not be considered by agents as healthy and sustainable for the local performing arts sector. Further on, approaching motives and objectives as a complex and interdependent “ecosystem” allows a broader perspective of analysis on individual practitioners and organisations. It positions decision-makers within the broader ecology of the performing art sector, analyses their contribution to the health and vitality of the sector, and how they may address the gaps in services and skills. Within this framework, the “ecological thinking” will be considered through the development of this study, while the following sections attempt to analyse more in depth specific aspects which relate to expertise and decision-making in the performing arts.

2.2. Expertise in the performing arts

2.2.1. Artistic judges and quality in the arts

Frey (2003) argued that certain artistic judges solely could not keep arts lively, as it creates monopolistic positions in the arts, whether “final judges of art” are the government and its bureaucracy, or the private actors trying to monopolise the supply of, and trade in, art (Frey, 2003, p. 10). Accordingly, the context of “artistic judges” is analysed from three perspectives: the consumers, the government, and the market. It is generally assumed that the market produces “low quality art”, an argument that gravitates around a long-standing public discussion on “mass culture” and “commercialisation” (Frey, 2003, p.11). This discourse is approached here in an intellectual context that rejects the market as a decision-making mechanism for culture (i.e. produces “low quality art”) in the support of governmental intervention. It is argued that the government can regulate and maintain “high quality” levels of the arts by allocating subsidies to existing arts organisations, and by producing cultural activities itself, e.g. museums, theatres, opera houses, orchestras (Frey, 2003, p.11). However, a contrasting perspective argues that the market is capable of producing high quality culture and art (Frey, 2003). Accordingly, the latter perspective implies looking at the market as “an institution which responds to demand: if low quality art is asked for, it produces low quality arts – but if high quality art is asked for, it produces high quality art” (Frey, 2003, p.12). It is argued that if a high percentage of the commercial produced art is “of low to very low quality”, it is nothing else but a reflection of people’s tastes (Frey, 2003, p.12). The market advantage, as Frey (2003) introduced it, stands in product variety and the unnecessary need for expert’s approval – “an antidote to a monopoly of artistic taste” (Frey, 2003, p.13). However, the same discourse criticises individuals’ tastes as a cultural decision-making mechanism: “...people do not understand what good arts it. It is often claimed that the people’s tastes in arts is terrible...cultural decisions should certainly not be left to the members of the public” (Frey, 2003, p.13).

It is generally assumed that artistic quality does not have identical implications among different individuals, and is a matter of personal tastes and satisfaction (Peacock & Rizzo, 1994). Accordingly, it must be analysed what exactly is meant by “quality in the arts”. The concept of art “starts with preferences or values of the individual” – “art is what people think art it” (Frey, 2003, p.23). Peacock and Rizzo (1994) critically raised the question on whether there is any

objective appreciation of the quality of cultural goods even post-consumption. Art critics often argue that objective quality of a work of art can be drawn from the artist's technical skills. Nevertheless, describing and rating the aesthetic nature of art works in terms of quality can be accomplished through expert evaluation rather than consumer evaluation, i.e. a matter of knowledge and expertise (see section 2.1.), aspect which reinforces gatekeepers' importance and influence in the industry (Ginsburgh, 2003). However, even when judged from a technical point of view, quality is to a great extent a matter of subjective appreciation as there are observed differences among experts' evaluation of a particular art work, aspect which will be further developed in a later section (see section 2.2.3). Thus, it cannot be assumed that experts make "perfect" quality or talent predictions (Ginsburgh, 2003). Nevertheless, if the "majority's decision on cultural issues is feared to inevitably lead to very bad, even hideous art" (Frey, 2003, p.14), it is concluded that when it comes to passing judgement on artistic quality, the élite must decide. Within this context, possible élite representatives were analysed:

1. Elected politicians. According to Frey (2003), politicians are on average better educated, but do not necessarily have better artistic judgements than the population. Moreover, having decision-power on the arts offers incentives to interest groups to influence politicians, who, in return of secured elections may seek to fulfil preferences of certain lobbying groups.
2. Art administrators. Employed in the government as well as in art organisations, art administrators are generally well-educated in the arts. However, they tend to support certain philosophical and ideological artistic visions developed through a long-standing experience in the field. Such behaviour raises barriers to newcomers and introduces conservative biases.
3. The art establishment. This segment of the industry comprises art critics, media, programmers, and private organisations or companies. Art establishments tend to have a conservative approach which reflects through traditional artistic competences and visions that work against innovative art forms.
4. Artists. Arts and culture decisions left in the hands of artists is not necessarily a convincing approach as it cannot be clearly established if artists can have rational judgements with respect to the art produced by others. According to Frey (2003), this is often the result of artists' self-centred thinking. Moreover, it must be established what

exactly certifies artists as artistic judges, i.e. background, education, experience, achievements, etc. (Frey, 2003).

Each of the groups introduced above presents a great extent of disadvantages, thus, a consensus on “who” should draw decision on the arts results difficult to reach. Despite the disadvantages of various decision-making mechanisms (Frey, 2003, p.13), it was argued earlier in this chapter that consumers’ lack of knowledge and expertise leads to allocating decision power over the arts to representative bodies. Experts’ certification provides a guarantee “against being sold lemons” (Peacock, 1994, p.172). Within the context defining arts representatives as experts “who have a superior professional knowledge of the various aspects of artistic activities and therefrom derive the authority to pass judgment on what art is” (Frey, 2003, p.23), we aim to further define art experts’ decision-making.

2.2.2 Gatekeeping

In the cultural sector, gatekeepers are seen as individuals who possess the knowledge and expertise to make well-informed decisions in regard to the cultural goods that enter the market. Gatekeepers are recognised within an industry as decisions-makers who have the power and responsibility to foster and shape the market. Seen as suppliers of goods or services to consumers, or “professional experts whose formation and evolution of artistic tastes complement individual choices” (Peacock, 1994, p.194), gatekeepers’ performance in the industry has an impact on artists’ careers and audiences’ consumption (Caves, 2000; Towse, 2003; Handke, 2010). Gatekeepers perform tasks such as: fostering relationships with external stakeholders, mediating between artists, venues, audiences, and organisations, providing the public with information and critics, and deciding upon the public allocation of funds, e.g. cultural advisers, governmental secretaries. In this study, the term “gatekeeper” will be used alternately with “expert” or “decision-maker”.

Tracing back the terminology of “gatekeeping” lead to Lewin (1943), who applied the concept to individuals’ food habits in the attempt to investigate upon the aspects which trigger people to “eat what they eat” and “which methods can change their food habits” (Lewin, 1943, p.35). This approach explains the psychology of gatekeeping as a method of controlling the

communication channels that have the power to determine individuals' food behaviour. As the gatekeeper governs the food channels, individuals become dependent on the gatekeeper's own ideology of the food. Hence, what determines the choices and decisions taken in regard to food is based on the gatekeepers' system of values. These values are allocated through a channelling process of different phases: the initial phase decides which ingredients and products will be consumed; the second phase determines where ingredients will be purchased from; and in the third phase products are prepared and served (Lewin, 1943). Applying this approach to a cultural context in general and jazz in particular, implies analysing gatekeeping according to the tasks performed, from the initial stage of selection and the type of projects or artists selected, followed by objectives to be achieved and means of achievement, and the final outcome being introduced to the market and the audiences. Moreover, controlling the communication channels implies that besides having control over the products supplied, gatekeepers in the arts also control the means through which artistic works reach consumers, i.e. venues, media, networks.

From the above mentioned can also be inferred that gatekeepers have a "leading behaviour", aspect which justifies the importance of considering the circumstances in which different kind of behaviours are shaped. One such circumstance gravitates around the discourse of "supplier-induced demand" (SID) (Blaug, 1998, 2001). SID has been used by health economics to explain the behaviour of doctors in the health-care system as they made use of the power to shift the demand curve for their services (Blaug, 1998). The hypothesis of SID has as background in the "asymmetric information" between physicians and their patients, where the physician has a greater advantage over patients who lack the necessary expertise to make a "proper" evaluation of the extent and quality of the services provided to them (Rossiter & Wilensky, 1987; Blaug, 1998, 2001; Grytten & Sørensen, 2001). Individuals' behaviour as characterised by SID makes a reference to the earlier introduced principal-agent analysis. Accordingly, gatekeepers, i.e. the agents, reflect their influence by imposing patrician views under the assumption of having superior industry expertise over consumers, i.e. principals (Peacock, 1994). Frey (2003) argued that there is limited knowledge with respect to "how experts' opinions influence what "ordinary people" think about art – if they are influenced at all" (p. 23). Nevertheless, it must be specified that an analysis on gatekeepers' behaviour is not relevant only with respect to consumers, but it regards artists and works introduced on the market. Thus, artists become dependent on gatekeepers' ideology, selection and presentation

process. Within this framework, the next section attempts to define decision-making criteria in the arts.

2.2.3. Decision-making criteria

In the context of the arts, decision-making criteria are developed based on aesthetic judgment (Throsby, 1990, p.67). It is considered that quality judgments in decisions relating the production and consumption of the arts are of a high importance in the attempt to investigate how decisions are taken, and in the context of achieving certain objectives. These arguments become especially relevant in assuming supply functions of goods and services as of “subjective or qualitative considerations” (Throsby, 1990, p. 66). Under this perspective, the focus stands on a research into components of individual or organisational choice on artistic matters as a means of explaining why decision-makers behave as they do. Components of choice here refer to the criteria of evaluating art used by experts in undertaking decision. The criteria suggested by Throsby (1990) have been divided into several elements of quality judgement, such as: “the source of the material (repertoire classification, cast, etc.), technical factors (standard of performance, production and overall image), benefits to audiences, benefits to society, and benefits to the art form” (p.68-69). Particularly in music, values that have been generally identified by researchers are: musical, artistic, aesthetic, symbolic, economic, practical, social, entertainment, therapeutic, functioning-enhancement, and self-affirmation (Ginsburgh & Throsby, 2014; Hirsch 1972; Markusen et al. 2008; Bourdieu, 1984; Scott, 1999a). These values are generally distinguished into three categories: first, intrinsic and instrumental values, where intrinsic refers to the value of engaging with music for the sake of music as an art, and instrumental refers to music as a utility mean; second, artistic and non-artistic values; and third, the values of music to an individual or a community. Artistic components are unlikely to be measured, thus, it must be considered that quality features in the arts, even though may contain elements of objective determination (e.g. stylistic period of compositions, artists’ skills), rest upon a subjective individual interpretation. Determining this approach is relevant for understanding the subjective implications of decision-making, as gatekeepers might not only have intrinsic motivation for their choices, but can make decisions based on arts’ instrumental values as a means to justify different ends, or based on purely artistic reasons, or to benefit stakeholders. It is argued that the relation between cultural

inputs and how their quality is reflected on the market implies some forms of measurement that could assess the relation between aims and methods of achievement. However, earlier literature argued that “cultural producers groups and their professional allies” (Peacock, 1994, p.171) often reject the use of performance indicators, and resume to the evaluation of the vitality of the artistic scene and the public reaction.

Artistic criteria represent also a basis for decision-makers constructing arguments on “good or bad quality” of art works. However, such arguments do not accurately stand credible as an “objective truth”, but rather as a subjective matter of individual value judgment. The “revealed preference theory” argues that an indication of individual preferences can be inferred from their choices. Individual’s preference for particular artists, or particular characteristics of artists serves as an indication on decision-makers’ judgments as to artistic quality without having to specifically provide a definition of why some artists are judged better or worse than others (Throsby, 1990, p. 65-66). The same discourse provides also a context to explain why certain cultural products reach the market while others do no. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that there is a diversity of circumstance in which decision-making may be formulated, not only as a matter of individual behaviour, or the outcome of aesthetic value judgments, but also as the outcome of contexts in which decision-makers gravitate. Moreover, arguing expertise as a matter of taste requires gatekeepers’ decision-making to be analysed in the context of formulating “objective judgements” or subjective reactions to isolated and hypothetical scenarios (Peacock, 1994; Stigler & Becker, 1997; Noonan, 2003).

2.3 Individual rationality and the economic approach to arts

2.3.1 Decision-making and individual rationality

Simon (1985) was concerned with “human nature in politics”, and a short introduction of his theory results relevant to this study to provide a framework for understanding individuals with respect to how rational decision-making behaviour is defined (p.293).

“Rationality denotes behaviour that is appropriate to specified goals in the context of a given situation” (Simon,1985, p.294). The distance between rationality and behaviour is seen as “decisions”. “Decision” as a term denotes choices which are the result of a selection process

among various behavioural alternatives, where the selection process can be done consciously or unconsciously. As individuals are supposed to be rationally intended, that is to value rationality as a characteristic of choice, rationality becomes a criterion of decision-making. Rationality can be either “substantive” or “objective” according to the constraints of an external situation to which the behaviour optimally adapts. Distinguishing whether rational choice in a given case is substantive or objective may be achieved through an analysis into a person’s goals and objectives characteristic to that particular situation, i.e. individual’s goals, his knowledge of the situation in terms of the information possessed, and his capacity to conceptualise and deduce theories from the available information (Simon, 1985, p.294). Furthermore, when referring to methods of choice such as decision-making and problem-solving, individuals have an adaptable behaviour to both external situations and own computing capacities, i.e. “procedural or bounded rationality” (Simon, 1985, p.294). Here procedural rationality refers to behaviour that is “the outcome of appropriate deliberation”, while bounded rationality refers to decision-making as a rational action limited by information or time constraints, as well as the cognitive limitations of individuals’ minds¹. According to Simon (1985), a person can be judged rational either through his capacity of using a reasonable process of choosing, or by his capacity to arrive to reasonable choices (Simon, 1985, p.294). Formulating a discourse on “rationality” is relevant and important in the context of decision-makers’ expected normative behaviour (i.e. what may be considered as behaviour correctness). Such theory provides the basis in a framework of understanding decision-making processes, subject further developed in the following section.

2.3.2 The economic approach to arts

The economic approach is seen here as a “new kind of inter-disciplinarity” used to study a broad range of problems and issues by applying a model of human behaviour which distinguished preferences: “what people desire, and constraints imposed by social institutions, income, prices and the amount of time available”, or the “so-called rational choice framework” (Frey, 2003, p.1). Within this structure, investigating individual behaviour in regard to decision-making implies an analysis on “human behaviour” theories. Frey (2003) suggested analysing instances of psychological-rooted influences on human behaviour. Here, a reference was made to

¹ “Cognition” refers to “human thought processes” and distinguished them from “the processes of sensation and emotion” (Simon, 1985, p.295).

“behavioural anomalies” explaining that “human beings deviate from what is predicted by rational choice analysis, i.e. by subjective expected utility maximisation, under identifiable conditions” (Frey, 2003, p.6). This theory refers to “the endowment effect” which explains individuals allocating important values to certain objects or matters because of a direct involvement, e.g. managing ownership over a music group. Such kind of behaviour has a potential to influence market prices, as individuals tend to rise the market value of, in this example, music groups, merely for having some kind of ownership (Frey, 2003, p.6-7). A reference was made as well to “human motivation”, explaining that artistic producers respond to monetary, i.e. extrinsic, incentives, as any other individuals (Frey, 2003, p.7). The latter perspective comes as a continuation of Becker’s (1976) theory “seeking to understand human behaviour in a variety of contexts and situations” (p.3). A relevant aspect to this study is the assumption that individuals only “choose to follow scholarly or other intellectual or artistic pursuit” if they expect to gain greater benefits (e.g. monetary and psychic) than those found available in other occupations (Becker, 1976, p. 11). While the criteria of choice is similar or identical to the one found in “more commonplace occupations”, “there is no obvious reason why intellectuals would be less concerned with personal rewards, more concerned with social well-being, or more intrinsically honest than others” (Stigler, 1976 in Becker, 1976, p. 11). Therefore, it can be inferred that experts or gatekeepers in the jazz industry, in their intellectual or artistic pursuit can be equally concerned with personal benefits and rewards, and it should not be expected of them to have particular concerns for the well-being of those who they may represent, i.e. the artists, the audiences, or the overall industry.

Another aspect of the economic theory relevant to this study is the definition of economics as the science which studies human behaviour, where scarcity and choice characterise the allocation of resources (Becker, 1976, p. 4). Within this framework, individuals’ scope or objectives can be defined as “tradition and duty, impulsive behaviour, maximising behaviour, or any other behaviour in analysing the market sector or the allocation of scarce means to competing ends” (Becker, 1976, p.3-4). Moreover, the economic approach recognises the existence of the market as coordinating the actions of its participants (individuals, firms, ministries, etc.) to certain degrees. Within this context, the coordination of participant’s actions as well as their aspirations can be seen as constrained by allocation of scarce resources through prices and other market instruments. This can serve as a basis for understanding individuals’

behaviour in an external context of market influences. A relevant argument here follows the production and supply side of industries, applicable as well to the jazz industry. The economic approach assumes that “an increased demand by different interest groups or constituency for particular intellectual arguments and conclusions would stimulate an increased supply of these arguments” (Becker, 1976, p.11). This theorem assumes a demand-driven approach to production. Accordingly, an increase in audiences’ demand for a particular style of jazz, group, or musician, offers incentives to those controlling the supply channels to provide more of what is demanded for maximising revenues and satisfying consumer wants. However, the economic approach does not assume that all market participants have complete information as the “optimal or rational accumulation” of information is costly to acquire (Becker, 1976, p.6-7). Moreover, it is not assumed as well that individuals are necessarily undertaking conscious actions, but rather it is presented as a matter of explaining “systematic patterns” in their behaviour (Merton, 1989, in Becker, 1976, p.7). Becker (1976) explained as well that some actors in the market have an “irrational behaviour” as they undertake decisions based on “ad hoc” choices which may not necessarily be in accordance with what is considered to be a rational choice decision. Such discourse assumes that the overall circumstances of a particular context are not examined during decision-making, i.e. the externalities that may be reflected in forms of benefits and pitfalls – “...almost any conceivable behaviour is alleged to be dominated by ignorance and irrationality, values and their frequent unexplained shifts, custom and tradition, the compliance somehow induces by social norms, or the ego and the id” (Becker, 1976, p.13).

The rational choice approach to the arts was also applied by Frey (2003) in a broader context which looks at the economics of arts based on the interaction between the behaviour of individuals and institutions existing in the society (Frey, 2003, p.1). Such an approach extends as far as taking into account the institutions, the difference between public and private supply of arts, incentive problems resulting from principal-agent relationships with theatres, opera house, and other art suppliers. Here, Frey’s (2003) approach to decision-making and human behaviour is built upon two main assumptions. First, there is the economic and political influence in which governments play an important role in supporting the arts either directly via subsidies, or indirectly via regulations. In both of the cases however, decision-making is influenced by political and bureaucratic considerations (Frey, 2003, p.8). Second, there is the matter of how institutions come to shape culture, as according to Frey (2003) “it matters greatly how the

fundamental decisions about art are taken, i.e. the role accorded to politics, the market, and bureaucracy” (p.9). Accordingly, there is a significant difference between decisions on the art when no market constraints are imposed, and those that are the result of bureaucratic rules, as government intervention tends to “regulate and codify” the market (Frey, 2003, p.9). The relevance to this study stands in understanding the independence of, or on the contrary, the dependence of decision-makers on the institutions they work for; and similarly, for the dependence or independence of companies or organisations from the market (private sector) or the government (public sector), as well as the overall extent of freedom that can be exercised from the government. Here we will be distinguishing as well between independent producers, thus individuals who act independently of an organisation, and those who act in the framework of an organisation. Altogether, the aspects influencing gatekeepers’ decision-making process revolve around a very thin line of judgment that must consider the interrelation between elements and not necessarily take them as isolated circumstances. Understanding decision-making behaviours imply a specific analysis on what certifies individuals’ expertise in undertaking decisions, objectives and the means of achievement, division of labour and working structures, and the overall infrastructure or ecology of the industry.

2.4 Conclusion

It was established that due to the experiential nature of cultural goods (jazz performances) and lack of knowledge and expertise to make proper quality evaluations, consumers seek art experts’ certification as signals of quality. However, a need for certification does not justify a right to monopolistic value judgments, but asks for gatekeepers as agents capable to safeguard the welfare of principals within the industry in which they act. Nevertheless, as inferred from the literature, despite artists or audiences being supposed to benefit from experts’ decisions, the final judges in setting the jazz agenda are the experts, thus, audiences and artists have no direct influence. Therefore, the questions that arise here are whether gatekeepers are aware of the influence their actions may have on the industry and on individuals’ tastes and preferences, whether they act within full conscience of circumstances, and which aspects influence decisions, aspects which will be investigated by this study.

The literature framework introduced as well general knowledge on what individuals “want, know, and can compute” (Simon, 1985; Becker, 1976; Frey, 2003). However, the reader must be aware of the fact that theoretical assumptions of rationality are only used in this study with the purpose of providing an analysing framework of individual behaviour, i.e. rational, irrational, subjective, and objective. Within a framework that considers such “conditionalities”, the assumptions deducted from theory provide a basis for understanding the factors that have an influence on gatekeepers’ decision-making. Therefore, while tentatively dealing with such theory, complementary empirical knowledge will attempt to clarify, confirm or deny, as well as bring new insights over the matters discussed in this chapter. Adopting a pluralist approach to arts, i.e. “the value chain ecology”, “ecological thinking”, and behavioural economics, creates a unique perspective of investigation by using multiple theories to analyse the diversity of circumstance in which decision-making may be formulated. Such a perspective extends as far as considering decision-making as a matter of individual behaviour, the outcome of aesthetic value judgments, and the outcome of contexts and circumstances in which decision-makers gravitate.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research method and design

This study defines Dutch jazz gatekeepers as having an influential impact on the functioning of the jazz sector in The Netherlands. The hypothesis assumes gatekeepers as holding key intermediary functions through which they have the power to shape the market according to their knowledge and expertise, their objectives, intrinsic motivations, working on behalf of the employer's organisations, or simply as a matter of a sense-making capacity. Within this framework, gatekeepers are assumed to hold a part of the responsibility of the overall functioning of the jazz sector in the Netherlands. Moreover, because of the experiential nature of jazz as an art form, and consumers' limited resources with respect to undertaking well-informed purchase decisions, a filtering system is required. Such filtering system resumes to the artistic expertise of individuals or cultural entities consumers search as references, i.e. governmental bodies, programmers, specialised media, festival producers, and so forth. Within this framework, the study aims to investigate what are the aspects influencing gatekeepers' decision-making process in the Dutch jazz industry. Following a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key experts and professionals within the jazz sector in Netherlands.

According to Bryman (2008), the main and strongest difference between quantitative or qualitative research strategies stands in their focus. While **quantitative** research is mainly oriented towards numbers and measuring instruments in the forms of scales, **qualitative** research allows for a more flexible operationalization by focusing on words, meanings, and interpretations. The general definition of the qualitative research states that such studies follow an **inductive approach**, i.e. theory is generated from the findings revealed during field research. Nevertheless, this research shows that also a **deductive approach** can be followed in qualitative studies, as already formulated theory helps to create a frame for qualitative analysis. Further on, the **grounded theory** was applied as it allows conclusions to be generated from the observations and examination of patterns and behaviours, as well as a constant comparison between the aspects revealed. The qualitative interview approach allows the researcher to observe unspoken gestures, reactions, and intents of the interviews which add valuable insights to the subjects

under discussion. The current research is to a great extent explorative as it aims to uncover aspects that form decision-making rationales, which may imply a great extent of subjectivity.

3.2 The qualitative interview

The research tool used in this study was the qualitative, semi-structured face-to-face interviewing, approached with an open-ended strategy. The semi-structured approach implies that a general interview guide was developed by the researcher. The general themes and questions developed are based on the relevant literature presented in this study and the researcher's own judgement. Together with the key general points considered during the interviews, an open-ended strategy allowed discussion points to be inferred from data as a means of contextualising the significance of the findings as they emerged from conversations. Further on, this method allowed the researcher to substantiate and zoom on specific concepts or phrases by formulating instant questions which could reveal more in depth the significance of certain findings. As discussed in Bryman (2008), a main aspect to consider in qualitative interviewing is a greater interest in the interviewee's point of view, as well as what he or she sees as relevant and important with respect to the phenomenon under study. These perspectives justify the method used as the most appropriate and relevant for the current study, as it allows for in depth insights to be collected with a greater degree of flexibility in comparison with a structured interview (Bryman, 2008).

The general framework of topics covered in this research is: individuals' background (education and work experience), current role and responsibilities, working structure and independence of decision-making (also in the context of individuals being freelance workers or employed by an organisation). These categories help determine the extent to which the individuals in question can be considered jazz gatekeepers in the Netherlands, and their importance as references in the sector. The second reason to follow this approach was to determine the extent to which individuals act independently of the organisation they work for. This helped to distinguish between motivations and behaviours as the outcome of individuals acting independently or in behalf of their employer. Further topic were: individual and organisational objectives; typology of artists, groups or projects selected; selection criteria and reasons which motivate selections; methods of evaluating individual and organisational

performance, if any; perspectives on the Dutch jazz industry; stakeholders and rankings; individual perception of jazz and the reasons for choosing to work in the jazz sector; individuals' own sense-making of gatekeeping as a term and the associations made in this regard, e.g. feelings of responsibility and assumed industry role. Each of these categories and topics were covered by all interviewees, as specific sets of question, sub-questions and probes were developed and adapted according to each particular case. Further explicatory questions were used as a means of reformulating questions based on the interviewees' answers in order to probe what the respondent intended to say (Bryman, 2008). For a more complete list of topics see Appendix A.

Investigating these aspects through a qualitative method allowed the flexibility of an in depth analysis which could substantiate decision-making behaviours. Moreover, it provided the researcher with a stronger understanding on the aspects that have an influence on decision-making. Following the subject of study, the qualitative approach resulted to be the most appropriate procedure of data collection. In order to assure the validity and reliability of the data collected, the researcher adopted the interviewer's position in order to safeguard the collection of the most relevant data. This decision was made based on the researcher's own knowledge and expertise as an active member of the Dutch jazz sector (artist, programmer, member of several artist collectives and initiatives, jazz journalist), which provided the means to collect specific information, it helped maintain a relevant connection between the concepts used by respondents and the aim of the research, and observations could be also inferred from the use of specialised jazz-related terminology. In order to prevent the context of the conversation from moving away from the initial focus, specific aspects of interest were pointed out, as well as the next point of discussion was introduced. These techniques also prevent the researcher from formulating biased remarks.

3.3 Research population and sampling

According to the literature review, gatekeepers occupy functions recognised within the industry as "experts" and "professionals" in the field (Peacock, 1994). Following this assumption, a purposive, also known as judgment sampling method was implemented on the basis of the

literature introduced in this study, and the researcher's judgment and investigation over the jazz sector in The Netherlands. The units of analysis were selected according to the function occupied within the Dutch jazz industry, and the recognition and representative power as experts in the field (independent actors and organisations). Accordingly, in order to assure the representativeness of the population sample, eight professionals within the jazz sector in the Netherlands were selected and interviewed during the period of 1st to 21st of April 2016. The length of each interview varies between 71 to 130 minutes. In total, 11 hours of interview were gathered on the subject of: "What are the aspects influencing the decision-making process of gatekeepers in the Dutch Jazz Industry?"

3.3.1 Who, where and why

The interviews were conducted in five cities in The Netherlands, selected according to the respondents working place, respectively Amsterdam, Delft, Rotterdam, Almere, and The Hague. However, the range of geographical coverage of this study is broader due to some of the interviewees being active within more than one city in the Netherlands such as Nijmegen, Utrecht, and Eindhoven, while some respondents cover even more countries in, and outside Europe. From the sample selected, we mention: the programmer and artistic director of Bimhuis, one of the three programmers of North Sea Jazz Festival (the one with the longest experience in the company), the founder and director of Good Music Agency – music label, an independent programmer and governmental adviser on performing arts projects, the music secretary of the Dutch Performing Arts Fund, the chief editor of Jazzism Magazine, the chief creative officer of Djazz TV, and the channel manager of Djazz TV. Both respondents and the organisations they represent are highly recognised within the jazz industry.

A founding member of the Europe Jazz Network², Bimhuis Amsterdam provides over 300 Dutch and international jazz, world, and improvised music concerts per year. Was founded in 1974 and quickly became internationally renowned, achieving the "status as the premiere Dutch venue for improvised music". The artistic director interviewed has over 41 years of

² Europe Jazz Network is the association of European producers and presenters who specialise in contemporary jazz and improvised music (<http://www.europejazz.net/brief-history#sthash.kQZ7gVEQ.dpuf>)

experience and has worked with Bimhuis since the beginning of the organisation and the venue³. North Sea Jazz Festival (NSJ) is recognised as one of the biggest jazz and jazz-related music festivals in the world, nowadays hosting approximately 150 performances spread over thirteen different stage, with over 65.000 – 70.000 annual visitors. The interviewee started working closely with the founder of NSJ - Paul Acker, in 1992, and continued his work after his death, currently having 24 years of experience. Besides NSJ, under the same programming coordination we found: Curaçao NSJ, Transition jazz festival Utrecht, and “So what’s next” jazz festival Eindhoven⁴.

The director of Good Music Company is also the artistic manager in his company, currently representing 25 international jazz artists in Europe and especially in The Netherlands and Belgium⁵. Further on, the independent music programmer selected in this study has over 20 years of experience working as a freelance programmer for the Jazz International Rotterdam foundation, and programmes annual concerts in several concert venues such as De Doelen and LantarenVenster in Rotterdam, and Lux in Nijmegen. The respondent is a former member of the Arts and Culture Rotterdam council, currently a music advisor for the Dutch Performing Arts Fund, and the manager of the New Rotterdam Jazz Orchestra. Together with the music secretary of the Dutch Performing Arts Fund, these two respondents are the governmental representative bodies selected in this study. The latter respondent is also a former advisor for the Arts Council of the city of Groningen, and a recognised jazz musician.

Jazzism Magazine has a history of 10 years in jazz, soul, latin, world, and blues publications. It is currently the only Dutch jazz magazine found on the market, with seven issues per year and an approximate number of 10.000 readers and subscribers per issue⁶. Besides the printed format, Jazzism is an active online media platform. The magazine is part of the BCM publishing house, producing magazines of different market interests. The current chief editor has approximately 40 years of experience in music journalism, and is a former journalist and editor of OOR Magazine, one of the oldest music magazines in the Netherlands.

³ <http://bimhuis.com/history>

⁴ NSJ is owned by Mojo Concerts, one of the Dutch market leaders with approximately 45 year of experience in concert and festival production. Mojo Concerts is part of the American global player Live Nations which according to their website, is the world’s leading live entertainment and eCommerce company, composed of four market leaders: Ticketmaster.com, Live Nation Concerts, Front Line Management Group and Live Nation Network. Live Nation Concerts produces over 20,000 shows annually for more than 2,000 artists globally <http://www.livenation.nl/about>

⁵ <http://www.goodmusiccompany.com/info>

⁶ This information was provided by the chief editor of the magazine.

The other media entity in this study is Djazz Tv, the only 24/7 television channel entirely dedicated to jazz, broadcasting in about 40 countries in Europe, Africa, Middle East, Caribbean, and North America, and reaching approximately 20 million households each year. DjazzTv is part of the world-leading music products and service provider, Stingray⁷. The artistic director of Djazztv is as well the artistic director of Brava group holding several TV channels specialised in opera, ballet, classical music, as well as pop. Among other activities performed by the artistic director, we count: former commission member of the Dutch National Council for Culture, former managing director of several Dutch symphony orchestras (Rotterdam Philharmonic, Netherlands Philharmonic, Radio Philharmonic), and a professionally trained musicologist and conductor with approximately 35 years of experience in the cultural sector. The other representative interviewed is the channel manager, who has one and a half year of experience working with Djazz TV and is in charge of the overall functioning of the channel. The reason for interviewing the channel manager was to prove the reliability of the information provided by the artistic director.

All the information provided on interviewees and their organisations or companies was inferred from the websites of the companies, the professional online profile of each of the respondent, the researcher's own network, and the interviewees themselves.

3.4 The coding system

The data collected from the interview recordings⁸ was analysed in three phases. First, the interviews recorded were transcribed. Second, the data collected, i.e. interview transcriptions, was analysed through an open coding method, where codes and categories were created by the use of qualitative analysis software – Atlas.ti. Third, findings were interpreted through various software techniques such as code networks, and specific output of code families. The codes, categories and code families were elaborated on the basis of the literature review, researcher's personal observations and hypotheses, as well as new findings resulted from interviews. See Appendix B for an example of the coding index used in the analysis.

⁷ According to their website, Stingray reaches an estimated 400 million paid-TV subscribers (or households) in 152 countries <http://www.stingray.com/>

⁸ The original interview recordings as well as the transcripts are archived in the researcher's database and can be made available upon request.

3.5 Ethical issues

No sensitive matters were discussed during interviews, and no ethical issues were raised. The interviews were conducted in the most objective and professional way, and avoided any type of abuse, force, or cause of shame to respondents. All interviewees were provided with information regarding the subject of investigation, and the interviews were conducted and recorded only with the consent of respondents. In order to respect the right to anonymity and confidentiality of participants, references to conversations will be made according to numbers allocated to each interview: the interviewee will be marked with “I”, followed by a number from 1 to 8 (e.g. I.5)⁹.

⁹ A list of references containing interviewees' names can be made available upon request.

Chapter 4

4.1 What is jazz?

Following the research's main focus, i.e. jazz, the term itself has resulted to stand upon a world of ideologies and visions, in which each of those interviewed in this study formulated his own interpretation of what "jazz" represents and of its evolutionary path. It has to be noted that their own definition of the music triggers a chain of actions and behaviours.

"Jazz has such a mix, that people will have totally different associations just by hearing the word" (I.4).

Respondents often avoided clear definitions and used terms such as "creative or improvisational music"¹⁰ to illustrate a contemporary context. Common characteristics were found to be: an improvisational value, a cross-over capacity of mixing different musical styles and cultures, an open and revolutionary character based on a musical freedom in which "jazz tradition is constantly renewing itself" (I.4). The improvisational character here relates to an artist's musical investigation and experimentation. Seen as one of the "highest forms of art", jazz challenges the listeners to open towards certain emotions as they become real time witnesses of a unique moment (I.2). Further on, its cross-over character allows for a back and forth travel between tradition, history, and influences, where its more "traditional" nuances may be rooted in the American forms of blues or swing, or the more avant-garde, eclectic styles drawn from European classical music. "Adventurous and forward looking" (I.4), in post-modern times the stylistic borders disappear, and jazz continues to renew itself through fusions with classical, soul, funk, hip-hop, blues, world music, pop, electronic, R&B, folk, and much more. Contemporary jazz musicians of different cultures mix tradition with their cultural identity into a modern vision, pushing stylistic and cultural boundaries to an extent which keeps the music always on development and looking for new directions. As different jazz worlds come together for the "audiences' appeal", more and younger generations are experiencing jazz as it is "becoming hip again" – "Jazz music is at the moment the most inventive and adventurous music style there is" (I.8).

¹⁰Considering the findings, through the text, the term "jazz" will be alternately used with "creative and improvisational music".

4.2 The Dutch Jazz Industry

“The jazz field is diverse. It is a matter of definition, and I have been saying, if jazz is handicapped by anything, is the jazz world” (I.4).

Findings revealed signs of concern among respondents in regard to the functioning of the Dutch jazz market, the opportunities available to artists, the key actors in the industry, audiences, media, and the jazz education. To beginning with, the jazz scene in The Netherlands has been described as internationally oriented, good, active, and on a very high level, however, small in terms of a limited amount of performing jazz venues, a lack of audiences, and in terms of mentality – “if you look at the quality, the creativity, and how original our jazz scene is, and how broad in fact, why are we not bigger internationally that we are now?” (I.6). Described as poor and still a niche, jazz in The Netherlands is believed not to survive without sponsorship or governmental support, seen as a positive intervention to stimulate the national scene. Previously we argued that public funding can either stimulate creativity or cause damages (Frey, 2003). This aspect is confirmed by empirical data, as the institution allocating funds takes into consideration if applicants have other sources of financing besides the funds they are about to receive. This measure was implemented in order to prevent artists from relying heavily on subsidies, and stimulate them in finding their own means of income and audiences, thus, stimulate their productivity. In the Netherlands, public funding had an influence on the overall productivity of the market. The last years’ decrease in governmental support reduced the number of performing venues, public cultural media, and consequently the number of opportunities for artists to perform and gain exposure. These findings reinforce the important role governments play in supporting the arts (Frey, 2003). This aspect is furthermore relevant as findings revealed that the development of Dutch jazz artists’ career is to a great extent dependent on subsidies. It was mentioned that in order for artists to benefit from subsidies, certain conditions must be met. These conditions also refer to artists’ plan of development, e.g. the number of concerts that will be performed in the coming year. However, it was emphasised that often artist cannot comply with the initial conditions, because they are being rejected by venues and producers who are not willing to take financial risks. To producers, presenting emerging artists is equal to a low ticket sale power, thus, low revenues.

“Also has to do with the fact that all the cultural subsidies last years have been cut down, so a lot of stages are in bad economic situation. The whole cultural climate in the Netherlands at the moment, besides the freedom that we have and the unique positions that we cherish, remains difficult, also for jazz music” (I.7).

Dutch jazz artists being rejected on the market comes also as a consequence of Netherlands’ lack of performing jazz venues. The experimental concert halls were emphasised as almost inexistent (I.4, 5), and the private companies were described to have a stronger preference for international jazz artists rather than the Dutch (argument developed later in this chapter). Altogether, this resumes the stage opportunities of Dutch jazz artists mainly to public funded halls. However, these stages were described to have an approximate capacity of 300-400 seats, reason why producers may reject artists who do not show potential to reach a number of audiences close to the capacity of the concert halls. While a budget is equally spent on producing the concert of a younger artist as of a more known artist, the latter presents increased chances of bringing in more audiences. This phenomenon, to which respondents referred as “safe programming” or “programming on the safe side”, was recalled as a growing consequence of the economic crisis.

Having to face such limited opportunities, musicians became increasingly interested in creating their own performing spaces. Accordingly, this phenomenon lead to a growing number of small performing venues, mainly concentrated in Amsterdam. These spaces were characterised as having “laboratory” functions and low entrance barriers, which allow artists and the more experimental music to develop. Respondents believed that the growing number of such venues creates a “strange competition” to the subsidised concert halls. Nevertheless, while the artistic level of the musicians is regarded as high, and the “lab venues” as a positive development, the income earning possibilities for artists remain, according to the respondents, on a very low level – “so many musicians are totally poor” (I.4); “at times I would wish to have like smaller room and lower costs to be able to do more (I.4).

Moreover, the contemporary times are revealed as a difficult period for jazz, due to a difference in stylistic approach to music among generations of musicians. The older and more established names who have been active in the industry for many years represent “art forms that are really holding on to their tradition” (I.5). On the other hand, “the new generation of talents”

“mix more” in terms of genres, styles, and therefore are performing in clubs, bars, or even pop concert halls, but they encounter difficulties in entering the scene of traditional jazz venues. The transition period of stylistic fusion of genres, and the interconnection of different music scenes was also referred as the new direction in which jazz is heading, and to some extent, both musicians and producers seem to be following it. This path of development was also mentioned to represent a means to the sectors’ viable functioning, which according to the respondents stands on a matter of definition and approach:

“When you define jazz as the traditional jazz, up to bebop, and hard bop, then the market is not bigger than 2, 3, 4 % of the total music market. If you include as well what all the big festivals are doing, include soul, funk, latin, blues, gospel, all the jazz related music, we are then talking about 30-40% of the market. Then it is suddenly the big music industry we are talking about” (I.6; I.8).

These findings are important to consider in the literature discourse of the market and the consumers as “decision-making mechanisms” for culture (Frey, 2003). According to respondents, the contemporary stylistic transition of jazz made it more “easy to listen too”, thus, it is becoming more popular among audiences – “you wonder if jazz is still a good name for this music” (I.2). The growing audience phenomenon is considered a positive market sign, one interviewee mentioning to be following the current market trend as a mean of investment in the future of his company (I.7). This sustains the literature argument on the market being an institution which responds to demand (Frey, 2003). Furthermore, respondents mentioned that programming jazz requires following “a certain mentality rather than a definition” (I.4), and stylistically described jazz as demanding and challenging to listen, technically on a very high level, and requiring an acquired taste. These findings make a first reference to the literature argument on tastes formation as the outcome of time and interest investments, which places tastes and preferences of suppliers above those of consumers, and explains why describing art works aesthetics can be accomplished through expert evaluation (Pollak, 1970; Peacock, 1994; Ginsburgh, 2003). The need of expert evaluation is further sustained by the fact that certain stylistic jazz forms are found “complicated” or “very difficult to many ears” – “the younger, the newer, and the most experimental, unfortunately the fewer audiences you can expect” (I.3). On the other hand, if the music is more “easy going”, the number of audiences were reported by

respondents as significantly higher. Nevertheless, on a general level it was reported a lack of jazz audiences in the Netherlands, where even the more established artists are mainly known among a specialised, small audience – “the inner crowd of the improvised music scene” (I.3).

“You can tell a difference in audience when we have big names...a nice audience, but a little bit less of the spark in the eye than the adventurous audience” (I.4).

Not only regarded as small, the Dutch jazz market was also described as being led by few representative actors with long standing “names” in the industry and high marker power. Here respondents referred to “people in their 50’s”, such as festival and venue programmers or even musicians, i.e. the old and more established names. This corresponds to some of Frey’s (2003) characteristics of elite representatives, with a particular reference to the rise of industry barriers for other market participants, young or new artists. Moreover, it was revealed that such actors have an influence on the market as their artistic choices are being followed by the rest of participants – “picked up as the next big thing” (I.5).

4.2.1. Dutch jazz education

“I’ve been having the feeling that jazz education has put us back in way that we will never recover from. Luckily things are changing, little bit, but slowly” (I.4).

According to one interviewee, the education system in The Netherlands had “a mix role in the development of jazz for the past 30 years” (I.4). Respondents’ shared perspective describe Dutch conservatories as more focused on developing artists’ technical abilities to play an instrument, rather than developing their understanding of jazz as an art form. This aspect was mentioned to be the consequence of educators’ approach to teaching reflected by their own vision as traditional musicians. Such arguments were sustained by respondents who have professional music training, or have been working in the industry for more than 25 years: “I was more interested in experimental and artistic music and in Rotterdam they were really on the safe side of teaching, so I did not feel myself really an artist there” (I.2).

“Out of a certain number of musicians coming from the conservatory every year, only few will draw on the artistic side and will make a living from it. It is not only about technical ability and concept, but also the creativity they bring into the music” (I.3).

Criticism was especially brought to young student musicians who tend to either have a “too mainstream” approach to music, or limit themselves to imitating a certain typology of artists from the jazz history, mostly iconic – “the big American names”. The education and musicians’ approach also have an influence on decision-making, as we will see later. Nevertheless, despite the previously reported “limitations” of the Dutch jazz sector, findings revealed a shared feeling of responsibility among respondents in terms of stimulating and supporting the development of the national scene.

4.2.2 Dutch cultural ministry

In terms of development, it has been revealed that the main responsibilities over the sector fall on the Dutch ministry. Respondents emphasised that jazz without governmental support would not survive. It has been equally mentioned by respondents on the private side as well as the governmental side of the industry, that a focus is needed on supporting and developing the more experimental jazz music – “it’s art that needs to be presented” (I.1). Even though seen as “qualitatively fantastic music” (I.3), it represents a risky programme and is often avoided by programmers and venues: the “really edgy creative jazz music, which does not sell 400 tickets, but only 150 tickets” (I.1). It was also mentioned that the government should focus on providing music educational programmes in schools from early ages as it will help people get acquainted with the music and stimulate their consumption. Such educational programmes have the potential to increase audience participation which is much needed in the Dutch jazz sector. These arguments substantiate the earlier notions of evolution of tastes and cultural capital accumulated as the outcome of time and interest investments, i.e. “learning by consuming” and “habit formation” (Lévy-Garboua & Montmarquette, 1996; Pollak, 1970).

Another argument relevant in the context of governmental intervention regards the international presence of Dutch artists, which is quite limited. It was pointed out that the government should intervene in “opening up the market and making it easier for Dutch artists to

tour outside of The Netherlands” (I.1). Moreover, respondents believe that the public and private sectors should collaborate in creating a flourishing jazz industry, which sustains Frey’s (2003) argument that certain artistic judges solely cannot keep arts lively. It was mentioned that those actors in the industry who have international market experience could bring new insights to the current governmental strategies, which may contribute to a healthy functioning of the sector. The healthy functioning of the jazz sector was also mentioned with a reference to a viable specialised jazz media. However, in the Netherlands, the current media situation is rather difficult.

4.2.3 Dutch jazz media

“The media are not active enough. The jazz broadcast it’s totally failing for radio and TV, on the internet we do not have enough platforms” (I.8); “people don’t know jazz exists” (I.4); “If it comes to spreading the word through media, it is very poor” (I.3).

The specialised or jazz-related media in the Netherlands corresponds to few online blogs, independent journalists, the national jazz archives, one specialised TV channel, and one printed jazz magazine. Respondents mentioned a lack of a qualified Dutch cultural media that has an equal and objective interest spread over the national scene, and reports critically on artists and performances. Some respondents criticised certain media platforms to be operating in a closed circuit of market relations rather than reporting objectively on the overall activities in jazz sector. The lack of media platforms stimulated respondents to take initiative and implement their own means of broadcasting. Examples are the radio station of a venue which broadcasts their concert worldwide. The only existent jazz channel was also reported as an initiative created out of the lack of public broadcasters: “What we do is in fact what the public broadcasters should do – bring culture to TV. We are in fact a reaction to the lack of content that the public broadcasters are bringing to consumers” (I.6). It was also emphasised that because jazz is still a niche within the Dutch society, the more artistic and specialised jazz media would not survive economically. “I always tend to look at our local and Dutch artists, but sometimes it just happens that there’s not that much to be reported and more from other parts of the world” (I.7).

Despite the critics brought, respondents showed feelings of appreciation towards the existent jazz media platforms, and expressed that such initiatives should be supported and encouraged. Respondents found radio and online media promotion as important means to get the attention of audiences, particularly the young generations who get most of their information online. This latter aspect confirms the literature argument on consumers' search costs being reduced to some extent by the raise of the internet (Anderson, 2004; Handke, 2010). However, the lack of media attention in the Netherlands reflects heavily on the sector, i.e. it excludes the possibility of broadening artists' exposure, and consequently the possibility of finding new jazz audiences. All being considered, respondents showed a dual, controversial way of considering the jazz media in the Netherlands: the existent media platforms are appreciated, however, they are not enough and not entirely objective.

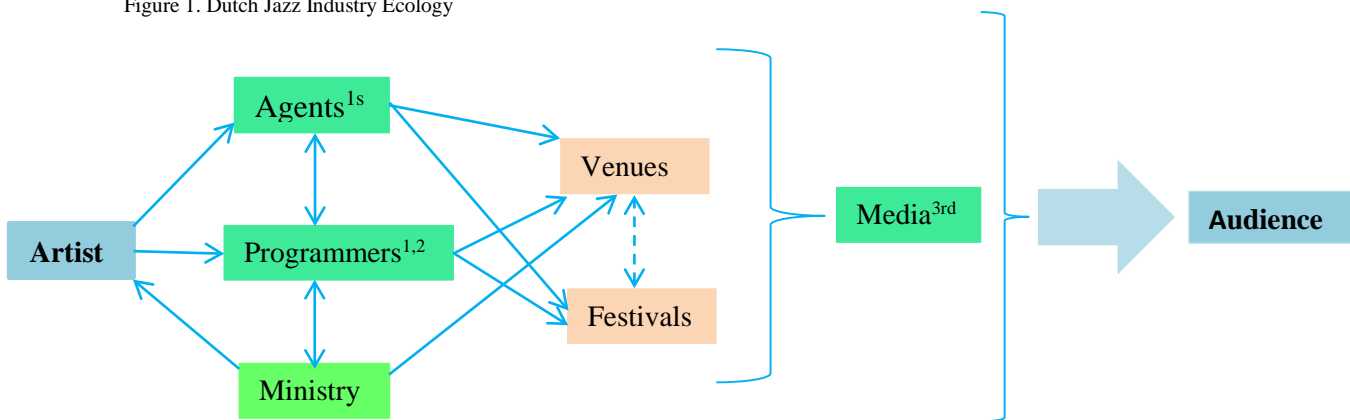
“For a country like the Netherlands that always said about itself to be one of the top players in the jazz world, well, without media you don't activate your own market. So we are not happy with the jazz media here” (I.6)

4.2.4 The ecology of the Dutch Jazz Industry

The jazz sector in the Netherlands comprises individuals and organisations that shape the market by formulating various decision-making criteria, set at different production stages. In this study, the traditional division of the production stages was developed into a broader perspective, i.e. “ecological thinking”, which considers as well the multiple relation system of the performing Dutch jazz sector. The literature introduced this perspective as the “value chain ecology” (see section 2.1.2), generally dividing production stages into: early artistic creation; production; distribution and presentation; and consumption; each stage involving specific actors (Preece, 2011; Langeveld; 2009, 2012; Handke, 2010; Caves, 2000; Makeham, et al., 2012). The “ecology approach” was intended to understand aspects that influence decision-making from a broader perspective. Accordingly, decision-making was analysed not only as an isolated set of criteria implemented at certain production stages, but also in relation with the sector's “ecosystem” and how different elements influence each other. Such an approach eliminates the risks of a narrow perspective which excludes important findings.

Within the above framework, a graphic illustration of the Dutch jazz industry ecology was developed (see fig.1). Accordingly, the figure illustrates the two ends of the market: the artists, i.e. the early artistic creation stage, and the audiences, i.e. the final consumption stage. Between the two, there are several steps of production and respectively actors, which form the internal ecosystem of the industry. The respondents interviewed in this study, i.e. the gatekeepers, have been differentiated by degree of importance in relation to the first stage of production – the artistic work, and implicitly the artists. As the figure reveals, the 1st degree gatekeeper is represented by the agent, performing tasks of selection and promotion of artists to programmers, venues, and festivals. Also a 1st, and simultaneously 2nd degree gatekeeper is the programmer who makes an initial selection, but also has the means (budget and access to performing stages) to offer artists performing opportunities. Programmers are linked to the cultural ministry through direct employment or collaborations with subsidised concert halls. Besides the concert halls, the cultural ministry also allocates funds to artists¹¹. The allocating funds committee consists of governmental employees and independent advisors selected according to their experience and field of expertise. Here it must be noted that the link between the ministry and the subsidised sector cannot be assumed to take place only in a non-profit context. A form of indirect funding was revealed by collaborations between for-profit companies and subsidised venues.

Figure 1. Dutch Jazz Industry Ecology



Bearing in mind the four stages of productions, the agents, programmers, and members of the allocating funds committee intervene in the second and third stages of production. The link

¹¹ To be considered that the governmental body investigated in this study only allocates funds to artistic projects, whereas the national and local governments are responsible for the subsidised concert halls.

between the third and fourth production stages is represented by venues, festivals and media. Media is considered here a 3rd degree gatekeeper as it takes over information from the sector and transmits it directly to the consumer. Although present at a later stage in the production chain, it does perform its own selection process and was revealed to have a significant importance for the overall functioning of the industry (see section 4.2.3). In addition to media, each of the other “elements” of the sector has an influence on consumption and the overall functioning of the sector. Therefore, gatekeepers do not only select and produce, but also present, which creates a direct link from production to consumption. Gatekeepers’ presence in every production stage justifies the importance of analysing their decision-making process. As revealed by this scheme, gatekeepers’ actions reflect on the overall sector, with direct implications on the two ends of the market, i.e. artists and audiences.

The system of interrelations among different actors and production stages represents the infrastructure of the Dutch jazz industry which will be considered during the analysis of findings. Presenting the current situation of the jazz industry in The Netherlands it is relevant not only to provide an overview, but also to consider the complexity of aspects influencing gatekeepers’ decision-making. Both industry infrastructure and current market situation are important elements to be considered by experts in the sector. Within this framework, the following sections will introduce findings on expertise, selection criteria, working structures, roles and responsibilities, objectives, and implicitly decision-making processes.

4.3 Expertise and gatekeeping in the Dutch jazz industry

“Our opinion is needed in the jazz field. So, it is very important that we do that. We form an opinion and we try to give signals to our audience, and try to improve the jazz climate in the Netherlands as well by doing that” (I.7)

This study assumes that jazz experts, i.e. gatekeepers, possess the knowledge and expertise in order to make well-informed decisions in the jazz industry (Peacock, 1994). While some general findings were briefly introduced earlier, the next section is intended to go more in depth into specific aspects on interviewees’ expertise. The topics will consider interviewees’ education, years of experience in the field and what the experience consists of, relevant cultural

background, knowledge of music and technical related terms, the reason for working in the jazz field, current role and responsibilities, and any other information which may be accounted as relevant for the matter.

4.3.1 Establishing respondents' expertise

Findings reveal that from eight of the respondents interviewed in this study, three have resulted to be professionally trained musicians and practitioners in musicology, music conducting, composing, and performing, from which two have professional jazz studies. One other respondent has studied liberal arts and sciences, management and policy of fine arts and jazz history. The other respondents have either professional training in the career they followed, such as journalism, or other backgrounds. Interviewees have between 8 to 41 years of experience, with the exception of one young respondent who was employed in his current function for approximately 1.5 years. Even though his experience is not substantial, this respondent's position in the company implies great responsibilities as he oversees and has the last word in decisions regarding "what and how" is presented to consumers. Further on, five out of the eight respondents played a music instrument, from which three professionally and recognised by the industry – "our first album got nominated for an Edison prize" (I.1). These findings substantiate the literature argument explaining that the élite must decide on the arts as they may be on average better educated than the rest of the population, and particularly well-educated in the arts (Frey, 2003) – "Here in the Netherlands we have the elite, that is the top, sort of speak" (I.8).

In terms of cultural background, respondents mentioned to have been listening to music since they were very young. This came either due to parents' influences – "in my parent's house there was a lot of classical music going on" (I.3), or due to respondents' own music discoveries which led to developing an interest and passion for the music. Overall, respondents' cultural consumption behaviour eventually translated into their careers – "I was quite fanatic about Stravinsky, but jazz was the main thing" (I.4). Besides showing evidence of relevant cultural background and a significant number of years working in the jazz or cultural field, respondents' expertise was substantiated through their knowledge of jazz history, the use of specific music and technical related terms, and their capacity to understand and explain particular jazz-related characteristics. The literature argued that the objective quality of an art work may be drawn from

its technical characteristics (Peacock & Rizzo, 1994). It was mentioned that experts in the field are more likely to have the capacity to draw such judgments as it requires specific knowledge, experience, and skills. Following this argument, findings shows that respondents possess the knowledge and capacity to identify technical terms, which qualifies them as judges of whether an artistic work consists of certain technical elements or not. Consequently, interviewees can infer quality judgements. These findings confirm respondents' evolution of taste as based on the literature definition of past consumption affecting future consumption, taste developments taking place through time and interest investments, and cultural capital accumulated (Lévy-Garboua & Montmarquette, 1996; Pollak, 1970). Further on, the literature also argued that tastes and preferences of suppliers are above those of consumers (Peacock, 1994), aspect which is confirmed by respondents who see themselves with "enough experience", superior market knowledge, music knowledge, and skills which allow them to recognise specific characteristics of jazz which may not be otherwise "common to other ears".

"I'm extremely passionate for jazz music. Classical and jazz have been all my life, I'm a musicologist and I've been in the music industry all my life, I cannot do anything else" (I.6).

The common aspect found among all respondents is the passion for jazz music, often the main reason for choosing to work in the field - "I had the luck in my life to combine my passion for music generally and make a profession out of it" (I.7). These findings confirm the earlier introduced notion of "art for art's sake", explaining that producers in the arts sector develop a strong intrinsic motivation for creating and producing art (Caves, 2000; Frey, 2003). Other reasons for working in the jazz industry were found to be the gradual accumulation of experience and development of skills, which lead to achieving high results in their field of performance – "At a certain point you do realise that you are basically very good in squatting international groups to get them to Europe and develop their life careers" (I.1). Consequently, by achieving high results respondents gained field recognition which positioned them among the most representative actors in the sector. Respondents' recognition in the field was revealed by their collaborations with other established actors and venues within the industry, and the recognition of respondents among each other – "it owns the 3 big Jazz Festival here in the Netherlands" (I.1); "first and former, a very big brand in the Dutch jazz industry, also world-wide, everybody plays

there” (I.7); “it’s seen by the whole world as an unique place” (I.7). Furthermore, findings show respondents to be occupying unique functions in the field:

“That’s the biggest advantage that we have, that we are the only jazz TV channel in the world” (I.6); “In general, most people will confirm that this is the most important venue in the Netherlands... even called it one of the most important venues world-wide, an international example, there is an entire list of quotes” (I.4).

Another reason for working in the jazz field is interviewees’ concern towards the problems of the jazz sector, where some mentioned trying to make use of their current functions to “fix” some of these problems – “this way I can try to change it more subtle, and try to focus on getting the field working again, because there is a big problem on what people are producing” (I.5).

As findings indicate, the activities performed by respondents have a broad geographical coverage. This aspect was evidenced by collaborations with other industry actors and venues, and a high mobility in the field, i.e. some interviewees activate in multiple cities both nationally and internationally. Among the activities performed, we count: artist management, promotion and booking; development of marketing strategies; programming, producing and curating artistic programmes; company management and administration of budget; evaluation and allocation of funds to artistic projects, and much more. Some respondents are in charge of programing and producing from 60 up to more than 150 concerts per year. These findings substantiate the earlier introduced argument on gatekeepers activating in multiple stages of the production chain (Preece, 2005), and controlling the industry’s communication channels which have an impact on artists’ careers and audiences’ consumption¹² (Lewin, 1943).

Findings indicate that respondents are artistically educated, have knowledge and experience in the jazz field, have industry recognition and perform decision-making activities in regard to production and supply of artistic goods to consumers. Furthermore, evidence showed that interviewees have developed specialised skills and tastes from which they can derive authority to pass judgment on jazz as an art form. Accordingly, it can be concluded that respondents are experts in the Dutch jazz industry based on the evidence shown in this section and the relevant literature (Pollak, 1970; Lévy-Garboua & Montmarquette, 1996; Peacock,

¹² See sections 2.2.2 and 4.2.4

1994; Caves, 2000; Frey, 2003; Preece, 2005; Lewin, 1943). The next section attempts to identify how expertise is related to the context of developing and implementing selection criteria in decision-making.

4.3.2 Selection criteria

“I like this scene so much. I do have a lot experience in other areas as well, but this is where my hart lies” (I.7).

In the arts sector, producers are intrinsically motivated by art for the sake of art (Caves, 2000). Findings confirms that respondents are intrinsically motivated to work in the jazz field due to passion, love, engagement, emotions and interest for jazz music – “Extremely passionate for jazz music. Classical and jazz have been all my life. I’m a musicologist and I’ve been in the music industry all my life. I cannot do anything else” (I.6). Interviewees often mentioned a certain closeness to artists and the music which translates their activities not as a job, but as something they are very passionate about, and a means to reach people through “great art” – “It is my passion, and classical and jazz are my core, but it can also be sculpture, or literature, because I am an art lover” (I.7). Moreover, jazz music is seen by respondents’ as the most interesting, challenging, and worth-while presenting music – “for me it’s the most challenging thing” (I.3). Other related aspects mentioned were having “a close hart to jazz”, having an artistic purpose, and being very enthusiastic about the music and the artists. These characteristics not only represent respondent’s intrinsic motivation for working in the field, but are also a very important part of the criteria on which interviewees’ judgments are based when undertaking decisions.

“Music for me has to have some sort of emotional value. I have to feel something with it, which it’s very personal...I find it really hard to sell a group which doesn’t do something to me personally; that makes me a really bad salesman, but on the other hand, it just makes me an honest guy” (I.1).

Decisions are to a great extent dependent on respondents experience, individual judgment, intuition, taste, preferences, and vision. These aspects represent the basis on which all arguments are constructed – “I am always in between, I’m always in charge, I always decide. I

decide what's in the magazine, every word, every page, every picture, everything" (I.7). Accordingly, findings confirm that the concept of art "starts with preferences or values of the individual" (Frey, 2003, p.23), and quality is a matter of personal tastes and satisfaction (Peacock & Rizzo, 1994). Some interviewees mentioned that artists and the music must have first and foremost an effect on them personally. Other respondents however do not feel that programming should be a matter of personal taste, but the outcome of well-informed and rational decisions. Following the earlier introduced "ecological thinking" (Makeham, et al., 2012), data reveals that if decisions were to be considered in isolated contexts, i.e. a subjective micro-level, some factors may have a stronger influence than others. An example is respondents' personal reaction to music as a criterion in deciding if an artist will be presented on stage – "artists have to bring in something that make me to really be into the music, and maybe even surprise, or move, or do something that challenges me" (I.3). On the other hand, if decisions were to be considered on an external macro-level, they are often the outcome of a balance between several aspects – "you need contrasts in the programme, you need to take care of various areas, and you need to take care of numbers. It is a mix that largely comes about by intuition rather than a system" (I.4). Even if decisions are not always the outcome of a defined system, respondent do make artistic selections based on certain criteria. The most important and often mentioned were creativity; artistic quality; authenticity and identity; relevance; innovation; being meaningful and interesting, challenging, forward looking, adventurous, and appealing. According to data, while some criteria characteristics are commonly considered by respondents, i.e. artistic quality, authenticity, relevance, innovation, being meaningful and interesting, there are however differences between the non-profit and for-profit sides of the sector. In the non-profit sector were found to be more important the artists' vision, open mindness, authenticity, creative power, capacity to connect through their art with audiences, as well as having curious and experimental attitudes. Respondents showed to be highly appreciative of artists who are not afraid of taking risks on stage and investigate, who show a certain mentality that reflects a continuous reevaluation and reinvention of themselves as artists, which also keeps them away from the self-limitations brought by imitation¹³. On the other hand, interviewees' in the for-profit market sector make selections also based on artists' online appearance, market value, selling power and potential audience appeal – "their brand as an artist, and their art need to be recognised more and

¹³ Here it was made a reference to the education, where students tend to imitate the big music legends instead of searching for their own voices.

more, and that translates into tickets sales, more album sales, more media attention” (I.1).

“Appeal” here is described as for the taste of larger groups of people within a certain scene.

Artists’ biographies were also mentioned as important sources of information in regard to artists’ educators, or collaborations with other musicians which may add weight in decisions.

“If a group is qualitatively very good, it must be in all aspects: musical aspects, originality, authenticity, technical quality, and marketability. All these facets come together, and that makes a group very appealing” (I.1).

According to findings, from all the criteria mentioned, quality has resulted to be the strongest factor to influence decisions in both non-profit and for-profit sectors –“the quality certificate I have to stamp” (I.2). “Quality” has been found to have different signification among respondents, confirming Peacock and Rizzo’s (1994) assumption on the matter. In technical terms, quality is judged in regard to artists’ level of craftsmanship, i.e. having his own voice, an original sound, how he uses his instrument, the technical level, and maturity. Respondents also analyse the music compositions, i.e. the harmonies, the type of music played, and the overall sound of the band (homogeneous or not). These criteria confirm that the objective quality of an art work can be drawn from the artist’s technical skills (Peacock & Rizzo,1994). However, findings reveal that objective quality can also be judged on other aspects besides the technical abilities of the musicians, i.e. innovation, originality or authenticity, and marketability. Moreover, depending on respondents’ profile, quality is also determined in the context of technical aspects regarding the audio and video recording of the content to be presented, or the outcome of an interview and the pictures taken.

“His album is being dropped here in the Netherlands, reactions are very favourable, he’s doing one show and everybody’s going crazy, so he’s coming back, and he’s hotter than hot” (I.7).

Recognition is seen by respondents as a sign of “good quality”, and is assessed according to artists’ record label, i.e. good and well-known, and whether audiences consume their music (listen, buy, and attend concerts). It was mentioned a preconception in which experts tend to “look down upon” more “commercial” artists, and judge their works as of low-quality, or not interesting. One respondent found this to be irrelevant especially with respect to artists who may have to take on different jobs in order to survive, which may not always imply the “higher

artistic quality”. Another respondent recalled: “in the past, if your artistic quality was not high enough, then we did not even go through the other criteria, because that was the main thing. If your artistic product was not good enough, then you were out” (I.5). A reference was also made to jazz being selected according to interviewees’ judgement on whether the work in question is “art that needs and deserves to be presented”. These findings confirm Throsby’s (1990) argument that artistic criteria represent a basis for decision-makers constructing arguments on “good or bad quality” of art works, where an indication of individual preferences can be inferred from their choices – “if I already know what is going to happen next, I don’t think that for me it is outstanding quality” (I.3). All being considered, evidence of this study confirms that even though objective conclusions on artistic quality can be inferred, evaluation rests on subjective individual interpretation (Ginsburgh, 2003).

“The smaller venues definitely have an artistic purpose for me, so, the most challenging new artist you will find there, which is also logic of course, because the younger, the newer, the most experimental, unfortunately the fewer audiences you can expect (I.3).

Other technical criteria considered in decisions are linked to production factors. This comes to reinforce the value chain ecology which considers the relation between artists, producers or promoters and the stages where works are presented. Findings reveal that technical characteristic of venues are of a high importance in decision-making. Interviewees find the size of the concert halls, the artists’ stylistic approach and selling power to be connected. Accordingly, experimental or progressive jazz music is considered less known by audiences, thus, it requires to be presented in smaller concert halls. On the other hand, more “commercial jazz” has bigger market recognition and stronger audience appeal, thus, it is programmed in bigger halls. Moreover, some styles of jazz require audiences’ full attention, thus require a “sitting down” setting, while other music has a more “entertainment” value and can be presented on an open-air stage, where people can also walk around, interact, or eat. The setting of the halls has also the capacity of facilitating artists’ interaction with the audience, and is considered an important tool in engaging audiences, i.e. the acoustics, lights, or being able to walk inside with a drink – “total concentration and total relaxation, on stage and for the audience” (I.4). Moreover, the profile of the venue is important in itself, as it may attract younger or older audiences, aspect which also has to be considered in decision-making. According to one respondent, the venue

“should be a tool more than a goal in itself, but a tool for a larger idea. It has to be functional for the development of the music, otherwise is pointless, it is only a building” (I.4).

“Every venue has its own restrictions, where is a logical place to put someone. Moreover, you also have to present artists in the right circumstances, when you know there is the highest possible chance that they will have a dedicated audience” (I.3).

The importance of venues and their characteristics was also revealed by respondents undertaking decisions that assure access to specific features. One interviewee mentioned having to build the halls of their festival in order to have a distribution that also makes sense for the audiences. All these characteristics are then matched with the programming vision of each interviewee. According to respondents, a balance in programming must be achieved in order to have a “rational” distribution of artists in concert halls. The latter is considered an important aspect of influence on audiences’ engagement with the music, thus, reflects a part of the overall experience. These findings explain Simon’s (1985) definition of “rationality” as “behaviour that is appropriate to specified goals in the context of a given situation”, where in the context of decision-making and problem-solving, individuals have an adaptable behaviour to both external situations and own computing capacities (p.294). These arguments were revealed by respondents’ capacity to match and adapt the setting and characteristics of concert halls according to their own judgment, in order to create the best experience for both artists and audiences. Consequently, findings contradict Becker’s (1976) theory on “irrational behaviour” which assumes that the overall circumstances of a particular context are not examined when undertaking decisions. As findings reveal, respondents undertake rational decisions with a reference to matching the technical characteristics and profile of the concert halls with the artists’ stylistic approach and the capacity of building audiences. Therefore, interviewees do take into consideration the possible benefits and pitfalls of externalities reflected by their decisions. Accordingly, following Simon’s (1985) theory with respect to this particular case, interviewees can be judged rational as revealed by their capacity of using a reasonable process of choosing, and their capacity to arrive to reasonable choices.

Besides the already mentioned criteria, other aspects have resulted to have an influence or be considered in decision-making. Such aspects are: the scarcity of resources, i.e. time and physical space, which limits respondents to work only with a certain number of artists.

Respondents' own limitations in terms of physical and psychical abilities also set certain constraints— "I do a little bit less, as it's quite an effort, because I have to produce a lot of the concerts myself, and it's a lot of work" (I.2); "I became a parent and I wanted to work less" (I.3). These findings are consistent with Frey's (2003) rational choice framework which considers as well individuals' desires and amount of time available. Other aspects considered are maintaining an equal geographic distribution of performances, and a particular connection with the city where the programming is made (e.g. local based groups trigger local audiences).

"The city is changing, and the population is changing to an extent that needs to be reflected in programmes. You have to have your eyes open to all that" (I.4).

According to findings in this sections, it can be concluded that interviewees make decisions based on objective criteria inferred from musicians' artistry, as well as undertake rational decisions which combine technical criteria of venues with artists' characteristics and respondents' programming vision, all aiming to create the best circumstances for artists to perform and consequently contribute to audiences' experience. Here, decisions are formulated as well by considering the benefits and pitfalls of undertaking every action. Moreover, it can also be concluded that assessing different criteria, even when containing objective characteristics, is subject to respondents' subjective interpretation as it rests upon respondents' personal tastes, experience and judgments. Evidence also showed that respondents are to some extent constrained by scarce resources such as time, physical space, and respondent's own individual capacities and necessitates, i.e. working abilities, parenting, etc. Considering the findings introduced up to this point, it is important to define how interviewees' expertise and selection criteria are related to gatekeeping.

4.3.3 Gatekeeping

"Very often we are the only ones, or maybe among the 2 or 3 in Europe to book them" (I.3); "all artists want attention, so we have to make choices... it's only a few which I can handle" (I.7).

It was earlier explained that respondents' hold unique positions in the jazz field and perform a broad range of activities which gives them control over "communication channels" and access to key resources in the sector, i.e. venues, finances, networks, exposure. This confirms Lewin's

(1941) argument on gatekeepers' capacity to govern channels that have the power to determine individuals' consumption behaviour as they become dependent on the gatekeepers' own ideology. This aspect is further reinforced as evidence shows the Dutch jazz industry to be represented by few important actors, the majority of them being interviewed in this study. Interviewees mentioned to be "overflowed by many artists" trying to make contact, however choices must be made. As a consequence of their choices, respondents mentioned coming across disappointed artists looking for possibilities to perform. Even though interviewees showed feelings of responsibility towards supporting those artists, and mentioned to be influenced to some extent by their reactions, eventually not all of them can be given an opportunity. This information shows respondents as having superior market advantage over artists due to the power of controlling the opportunities artists have access too. This shows the latter as dependent on experts' decisions – "it makes a difference for the career of that artist, it does" (I.1). This argument is further reinforced by interviewees showing awareness in regard to how certain positions in the sector imply "power" – "they can really decide on how the market looks like, and I also find that especially in jazz music, they have a very big moral responsibility, because they can make or break the careers of artists" (I.1). Accordingly, the behaviour of certain respondents, who are highly looked upon in the sector, has an impact on artists' careers. However, the nature of activities performed is not always and necessarily focused on developing artists' career. This is substantiated by interviewees booking artists not more than few times over the years, and only because those artists are considered to be relevant at the moment they are booked. Relevant here stands for being generally recognised by the market, media, and audiences. This behaviour may result misleading to artists who are offered the opportunity to perform on a big stage – "the artists should not trust me in the sense that: I'm performing on their stage, my career has started" (I.3). Interviewees mentioned that artists are always the ones responsible for their career, while the interviewees' job is to "support it and present it in the best possible way" (I.3). However, it was revealed a potential mishandling of artists' best interest, as evidenced in the following answer: "Sometimes they take a young artist, because they think he's hot, and they think they can use him to get attention from the radio, from the newspaper, and get a lot of audiences. Then, after a year, they take somebody else...I don't believe in this kind of support" (I.5). These findings substantiate the "supplier-induced demand" notion introduced by Blaug (1998, 2001). Due to an unequal distribution of information (Caves, 2000), experts have a greater advantage

over consumers. The literature argued that in a “supplier-induced” context, consumers lack knowledge and expertise to make a proper evaluation of the services provided to them (Blaug, 1998).

“The majors are very different. They can make and break an artist, and they have enormous influence on the artist’s success, where they play, how much they play, which festivals they play in” (I.6).

According to findings, interviewees do not impose their view on those they represent, but rather use their expertise as a means to offer artists or audiences what respondents consider being the best of their services. With a reference to this particular context, findings seem to contradict the principal-agent analysis introduced in the literature, which explains agents, i.e. the experts, to influence the principals, i.e. artists, by imposing their view under the assumption of having superior industry expertise (Peacock, 1994). However, the wider notion of principal-agent is confirmed by data revealing that interviewees are often sought as representatives, and while they may not be imposing their market advantage directly, such behaviour is considered under the assumption of respondents representing or acting in behalf of both artists and audiences – “I represent my clients. I am the front door of all my clients here in the Netherlands at least” (I.1); “you know the profile of your customers and you know what the offer is and then you try to make a nice programming that follows” (I.6).

Moreover, respondents show awareness in regards to being seen as references by audiences – “I can imagine from the point of view of the audience that they trust me when I say this is quality, on the other hand, I am not God, so I do make mistakes”(I.2). This confirms the literature that consumers search for signals of quality from experts in the field (Peacock, 1998). One respondent referred to himself as the “artist”, here seen as the label which justifies any decisions taken. However, according to the literature, being an artist it is not necessarily a convincing approach in undertaking decision on arts and culture, and the arguments sustaining this affirmation are various. First, it must be verified what exactly defines individuals as artists, i.e. artistic background (Frey, 2003), while in this study we established respondents’ expertise in the Dutch jazz sector, thus, we do not have sufficient arguments to prove their level of artistry. Second, it cannot be clearly established if artists have a rational judgement with respect to the art produced by others (Frey, 2003). The latter aspect is especially relevant to be considered with

reference to a 3rd degree gatekeeper who selects content that has been already produced (see section 4.2.4). Moreover, earlier in the literature it was argued that describing and rating the aesthetic nature of art works in terms of quality can be accomplished through expert evaluation rather than consumer evaluation, i.e. a matter of knowledge and expertise (Ginsburgh, 2003). Even though it was explained earlier, this aspect is further relevant to consider in the context of respondents showing to have a strong belief in their capacity and experience of making choices in regard to jazz. Respondents consider that decisions and choices are very personal, and that everything is based “of course” on their own opinion on what is good and what is not – “That’s how everything starts” (I.6). These findings confirm the literature arguing that even when judged from a technical point of view, quality is to a great extent a matter of subjective appreciation (Ginsburgh, 2003).

“I have a really extensive experience in listening too, and I know what I like, and I know what’s boring, and I know when something is exciting. I just have to go by my ear, or see that it doesn’t work because of x,y,z , or because it sounds rubbish, the drums and the bass are out of sink or something” (I.8).

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that respondents in this study are experts in the field and perform a gatekeeping function. Respondents are aware of the fact that they are being seen as references in the industry and exercise their positions in the field. It was revealed that gatekeepers in this study can infer artistic quality judgements. It was confirmed as well that quality is assessed through gatekeepers’ taste and preferences, thus, quality is a matter of subjective appreciation. Therefore, these findings justify the need of an in depth analysis which questions decision-making practices and the rationale that motivates it.

4.4 Decision-making

The literature introduced the “ecological thinking” (Makeham, et al., 2012) of a complex system of motives and performances that influence both individual actors and the sector as whole. This approach was closely followed in the interpretation of the empirical data which determines respondents’ behaviour within the performing Dutch jazz sector and the circumstances in which they act. The following sections analyse respondents’ behaviour as based on the interaction between individuals and institutions existing in the industry, and investigated upon respondents’

objectives, while taking into account the current market situation and the difference between public and private supply of arts.

4.4.1 Decision-making and the market influence

Gatekeeping resulted to have different implications in terms of industry roles, with differences depending on the non-profit or for-profit character of the company. This confirms the literature arguing that the most fundamental difference between performing arts organisations with a direct effect on mission stands on the non-profit or for-profit seeking character (Throsby & Withers, 1979; Frey & Pommerehne 1989). Findings reveal that respondents who represent the for-profit sector of the Dutch jazz market have an increased focus on the international market which often implies taking over artists who have already passed “several stages of gatekeeping”.

Accordingly, respondents’ role in the industry is seen as “presenting audiences what they do know and want to see most” (I.3), “promoting the best jazz that is around” and “making it available to as much people as possible” (I.3). This behaviour implies a demand-driven approach which requires bringing on stage artists already recognised by the market and implicitly by the audiences – “I am not sure that I would perform in the best interest of the scene if always put in only names that nobody has heard of” (I.3). This confirms Becker’s (1976) assumption that increased demand by different interest groups, i.e. audiences, stimulates an increase supply in return of satisfying consumer wants and maximising revenues. Moreover, the artists who are being referred here are more than often international rather than Dutch. Even though respondents recognised Dutch artists as having high musical skills, “their export value or the value they have to break through on the international market it’s limited” (I.1). Interviewees motivate their international artistic focus and “the export value” on several aspects. Respondents from both the non-profit and the for-profit sector find a lot of the music of young Dutch artists to be produced just for marketing, composed by “very superficial fusions of this and that” (I.4). This makes the music to sound “quite the same night after night, all over the world” (I.4). Here, the answer is made with a reference to artists’ originality and artistry, also linked to the jazz education in the Netherlands (4.2.1). Nevertheless, often being a Dutch based company triggers respondents to have a certain extent of responsibility towards their own scene. In the for-profit sector, “export value” has to do also with interviewees being concern with the capacity of Dutch jazz musicians

to attract an international audience – “it’s not interesting for us to just do the Dutch market...I’m just honest! (I.1). These findings make again a reference to the earlier introduced demand-driven approach to production, as lack of export value implies as well a lack of revenues, thus interviewees do not have sufficient incentives to promote such artists (Becker, 1976).

Decisions on promoting “bigger” artistic names, rather than emerging artists are based on financial and implicitly marketing incentives. World-known artists are recognised by the audiences and the field, thus, programming such artists is the equivalent of sold out concerts, media attention, and revenue earnings – “the younger audience is more interested in icons” (I.7). In this particular case, interviewees’ objectives are characterised by a maximising behaviour, i.e. responsive to extrinsic incentives, which confirms Becker (1976) and Frey’s (2003) theories on intellectuals in the arts being concerned with personal reward as any other individual in other industries. Nevertheless, the financial incentives to book “icons” have resulted equally available for both non-profit and for-profit sectors – “high fees, and big names should take care of themselves (produce enough income to cover production expenses), and subsidies are for the risk taken” (I.4). Programming international icons provides on one hand a financial safety net due to a higher demand, while on the other hand requires higher expenses. Well-known artists are very expensive and require higher costs, thus, are “more and more difficult to programme” – “those old ones who have legendary status, they don’t come for a low fee” (I.3). Hence, there is also less interest from other market actors to collaborate in sharing costs – “I am trying to find another gig still, even if it’s an interesting name, it’s not that easy to find people when it comes to bringing money on the table, even if everybody knows is of very high quality” (I.3). Following the line of arguments with respect to financial constraints, jazz has been referred to as “expensive”, i.e. jazz musicians as “well educated” and in “need of certain fees”. This acts as incentive for respondents to set targets such as “bringing in a large number of people”.

“I do need to sell tickets; I cannot do very interesting programming in all the venues, and all names that nobody knows. I do need names that people know, especially in the venues for which I want to sell tickets” (I.3).

Especially for the for-profit companies who cannot afford to bear losses, decisions are influenced to a greater extent by revenue maximisation incentives. This approach implies for example that an agent may set long-term goals for the artists he represents in terms of ticket

sales. Here the artist may start by selling “soft tickets” i.e. tickets which include more than one name, often sold at festivals or concerts with more than one performing group, and gradually build to higher numbers of “hard tickets” sold, i.e. tickets sold solely for one particular artist (the artists is on high demand). Within this context, there is a higher incentive in discovering emerging artists with high market potential and introduce them to the industry. It resulted difficult to measure the extent to which respondents’ incentives are to support artists or seek financial rewards; data revealed indications of both. Nevertheless, in some particular cases it was revealed an interest in the long-term career development of artists –“it’s about developing and making the right choices in certain people’s careers to let them grow” (I.1). This implies also setting certain financial goals to be achieved with those artists, such as a growth in tickets sold, online and media appearance, and a growth in audiences.

“We are a commercial company, so we need to be profitable, but profitable not in the sense that we need to make profit at whatever cost. We do have a very social responsibility to build art, to bring art to people, and the responsibility to bring people together” (I.1).

Findings also reveal respondents to be deciding on what is according to them “the best” for their consumers, as evidenced in the following answer: “We are a platform, a window from the jazz world to the consumer, the bigger and the better the window is, then we reach our targets. We want to be in every household in the world, adjusting to the needs of our consumers...what we broadcast is good enough for them, and interesting enough” (I.6). This reveals interviewees’ leading behaviour and superior market advantage and confirms their control over communication channels that reach consumers (Lewin, 1943). Furthermore, the evidence shows interviewees as acting in the behalf of the audiences, thus confirming gatekeepers’ “supplier-induced demand” behaviour to consumers (Blaug, 1998, 2001). Nevertheless, interviewees do not assume audiences to be “totally ignorant” as they are already informed through other different gatekeepers, e.g. media, venues, etc. Therefore, the previous introduced literature (Lewin, 1943; Blaug, 1998, 2001) is only confirmed as relevant to a certain extent. Respondents do not have complete influence over their consumers, as the latters can look for information through other means or gatekeepers. Thus, audiences’ jazz consumption does not depend solely on the interviewees in this study. At this stage, respondents’ gatekeeping role is resumed to being aware of current market trends and bringing in their artistic vision and “things

that are actually going on” (I.3). According to this perspective, interviewees represent the means through which certain artists reach audiences, and here we make again a reference to the value chain ecology (see section 4.2.4).

It was revealed that generally, programming is a mix of various discourses, where both audiences and artists are considered. According to interviewees, if their decisions would only be based on consumers’ wants, mostly big and iconic names would have to be considered, and not the “most artistically challenging artists” – “if I would programme on what they would tell me, I think I will not have a very interesting programme” (I.3). These findings come to sustain the literature discourse on mass culture and commercialisation which rejects the market and individuals’ taste as decision-making mechanisms for culture (Frey, 2003). On the other hand, being influenced only by artists and personal taste would not result the most appropriate sources of creating relevant programmes. This comes to sustain again the literature on artistic decisions based solely on artists’ judgment as not a convincing decision-making approach (Frey, 2003). Besides the fact that it must be established what exactly certifies artists as judges on the arts, it cannot be clearly established if they can have rational judgement with respect to the art produced by others (Frey, 2003).

With reference to the non-profit sector as presented by the interviewees in this study, data reveals a focus on development, which includes artists, audiences, and the overall sector. It was common among respondents of the non-profit sector to talk about the overall functioning of the industry, education, collaborations among different industry actors, venues and so forth, which could lead to a more prosperous jazz market.

“Trying to give the stage to young musicians for example, give them the possibility to create something new, something which we don’t know yet, i.e. collaborations between different musicians from different styles, cultures, countries; create new audiences, look for possibilities to get out of the ordinary and trigger people to do new things” (I.2).

Respondents mentioned to have a priority in stimulating new and young artists, as well as new music which implies more risk-taking, and together with that a growth in audience numbers – “just facilitating a landscape where adventurous music can happen, where risk-taking can be rewarded and accommodated... encourage more than confirm” (I.4). Data reveals that in the

non-profit sector, the focus on Dutch artists is higher than the for-profit segment of the market. A reference was also made to certain budget constraints, while programming Dutch artists is important and results cheaper than international artists. Further on, according to data, in the non-profit sector, interviewees lean more towards creating and building up long-term bonds with artists, and supporting them by creating programmes which offer possibilities to stimulate their creative process. These findings complement the literature arguing that subsidies are also allocated to support the creation of opportunities for individual talent development and artistic innovation (Vogel, 2004). The reason why we mention to complement this specific literature is because it could not be measured the extent to which respondents' decision-making of supporting artists is purely the outcome of intrinsic motivations or interviewees being influenced by the subsidised profile of the organisation. Frey (2003) argued that it matters greatly how the fundamental decisions about art are taken, as decision-making may be influenced by political and bureaucratic considerations. Even though not specifically measured in this study, findings lean more towards decision-making of non-profit respondents being the outcome of interviewees' intrinsic motivation to support the arts, which confirms once more Caves's (2000) concept of "art for arts' sake". The programmes mentioned to be created in this regard are meetings of big groups of artists who are offered the possibility to spend several consecutive days together on stage, and create new works which are introduced to an audience (often young artists are a priority in these programmes). "Carte blanche" programmes were mentioned as well, which imply giving artists the freedom of creating their own stage presentation without any type of intervention from the artistic director. Creating such programmes imply higher risks for organisations due to a bigger uncertainty with respect to the number of attending audiences. This confirms the literature defining cultural goods as experience goods and the uncertainty surrounding production and demand, i.e. "nobody knows", "symmetric ignorance" (Caves, 2000).

"Sometimes it's difficult to predict, because I am also disappointed by the amount of people showing up, and sometimes I am really surprised by how people react, because they are very positive about something that I am a bit shaky" (I.2).

Nevertheless, the different in organisations' profile is not to be neglected. Empirical evidence shows that non-profit organisations are often subsidised for taking high risks, argument

also sustained by earlier literature arguing that performing arts are state subsidised to ensure supply regardless of demand or revenue earnings (Towse, 2014). This aspect is confirmed as well by the interviewees representing the governmental side in this study, who argued that the funds allocations have a priority towards stimulating the less developed segments of the sector, e.g. example experimental jazz. Here findings also confirm the literature describing non-profit organisations' behaviour aimed at maximising a "combination of services and aesthetic quality", i.e. artistic development, functioning of the sector, etc. (Preece, 2011; DiMaggio, 1984, 1987; Steinberg, 1986; Hansmann, 1981). On the other hand, for-profit companies must consider earning a certain amount of income which can assure production and supply and generally sustain the company. This confirms the literature assumption on for-profit companies adapting their behaviour and mission to contexts similar of other commercial enterprises in the market (Langeveld et al., 2014) – "It is commercial! We have to make a certain kind of profit, stability. If we don't sell any copies, we have to close our shop. This is reality" (I.7).

"On one hand, it is either the Dutch tax payers, paying for that challenging artistic, high level programme, or something commercial (mass culture) has to come in to draw the numbers and make it work" (I.3).

To some extent all respondents, i.e. non-profit and for-profit, referred to the Netherlands as a very international jazz scene, thus, programming is composed by a mix of artists – "the philosophy is to take care of both local and international artists" (I.4). Respondents believe that a strong presentation is formed by a combination of international and local content, also referred to as a business model which would not survive without the international mix – "there is an overall balance, and the balance it's not on artistic taste only, but on how can we make the numbers work" (I.3).

"That's a bit the role you have as an agent, you are always dependent on the market, on what artists are there to work with, and also dependent on the venues and the festivals" (I.1).

Findings reveal respondents to depend on "what is on offer on the market", in terms of what are the current and future market trends, who are the emerging and most appreciated artists at the moment, what is their current status in terms of new albums coming out or upcoming promotional tours. Furthermore, it was mentioned that decisions are also taken based on a

necessity to fill the programme with certain content, or part of strategies to break through the international market – “over the last year we have been looking for more Latin concerts because we did not have that much of it, and we wanted more, especially with the opening to the Latin American market” (I.8). Moreover, it was also revealed a diversification in offer to provide different genres (e.g. pop, or soul, funk) and please different tastes, which will assure the programmes’ success. Following Becker’s (1976) “economic approach”, findings confirm the assumption that the market coordinates to some extent the actions of its participants. According to findings in this section, we can conclude that decision-making is to a great extent influenced by the market, where a significant distinction stands between individual and organisations’ non-profit and for-profit characters. An argument in this section made also a reference towards decision-making behaviour as possibly influenced by complying with organisations’ and governmental rules rather than the outcome of individual choice. Therefore, the next section will attempt to develop this matter further.

4.4.2 Working structure

Following the perspective of art organisations seen not as collective entities but rather as the result of individual action (Frey, 2003, p.28), this section attempt to analyse the extent of respondents’ independence as decision-makers. Distinctions will be made according to independent producers and those acting in the framework of an organisation, respondents’ working structures, and organisations’ profiles, i.e. for-profit or non-profit.

“We are part of the family, and we do not run it independently. But since we are the specialist, we almost have 90% of freedom in everything we want to do” (I.6).

Data revealed that often, respondents have the independence of decision-making to an extent constrained by financial restrictions – “they give me a budget, I make my own programmes, and I decide how to do it, and when to do it” (I.2). In the for-profit sector, even though not being influenced by the owning company in terms of artistic decisions, interviewees do have to report in terms of earnings. Moreover, independence of undertaking decisions may also be determined by market recognition. Findings show that if respondents’ performance raises positive market

reactions, i.e. media attention, audience growth, or recognition from other actors in the field, this serves as incentive to the owning company to allow gatekeepers the freedom of taking decisions independently. Here recognition is seen as a sign of prosperity and good image which has a positive impact for the producing company as well. In what regards the internal working structure of organisations or companies, all respondents have the independence of decision-making. Even though organisational structures imply working in boards and committees, respondents' long-standing experience and achievements in the field grant a stronger position among other members of the same company. In one case, the committee has been mentioned to be composed of a mix of jazz experts and experts in other genres, such as pop, from another division within the same company. This decision was described as a strategy to be always "on top" of the latest music developments, which includes other music scenes outside jazz as well. These findings confirm Preece's (2005) argument that if "executed properly, partnerships can enhance strengths and reduce weaknesses" of an organisation (Preece, 2005, p.6). Moreover, findings explain Preece's (2005) model of value chain activities being carried out in a collaborative or partnership relation. This model was also evidenced to be carried out in the non-profit sector. Here, findings reveal that non-profit organisations which have ownership over their stages, i.e. hierarchy structure (Preece, 2005), produce revenues through rentals. Venues can rent out their halls through cultural or commercial rents, the latter being implicitly more expensive. However, these venues are subsidised, thus, asking for commercial rents implies collaborations taking place between the two sectors of the market, i.e. the for-profit and non-profit. Therefore, to some extent, there is an indirect allocation of funds to commercial companies, i.e. the relation can be seen in the industry's ecology graphic (see section 4.2.4.).

"It's essentially me, I'm the only one responsible for the programming, but it involves lots of collaborations, e.g. series with individuals, organisations, partial delegations, guest programming, etc. It's a variety of levels of cooperation and co-production" (I.4).

On the non-profit side of the sector, interviewees have shown to have a great extent of freedom in undertaking decisions. The exception to this case is brought by one respondent working in a system based on a committee of specialised professionals selected from within the sector and maintaining an advising position through the year. Decisions are taken according to a very clear and defined system of allocating points, which evaluates projects according to pre-

established criteria. These points are summed up, and decisions are formulated based on the score each project received. The method is intended to provide a transparent decision-making system. Nevertheless, biases do exist to some extent, as selected experts are competitors in the outside market, which offers incentives to influence decisions according to their interest – “we are the people from the field, also in commissions judging others” (I.2). Experts may either allocate fewer points to competing projects in order to influence their final score and reduce their chances of receiving funds, or on the contrary, allocate higher scores to projects in which they are involved. Frey (2003) defined such practices as “behavioural anomalies”, and explained that individuals become subject of an “endowment effect”, thus, allocate important values to certain objects or matters because of ownership, i.e. managing ownership over certain music groups. Findings confirm Frey’s (2003) theory on the matter. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that such behavioural biases are prevented by creating committees of members who are not directly involved with any of the projects under evaluation. Moreover, these findings further substantiate the literature argument on the importance of how institutions come to shape culture, i.e. the context in which fundamental decisions are taken (Frey, 2003). The argument here is that individuals may shape their role according to politics, the market, or the bureaucracy of their own organisation, assumption evidenced in this study by the following answers:

“I can move independently but it has to be in line with the whole structure of the company of course” (I.5); “I try to keep as objective as I can, because I don’t think it’s good for me if I put my own opinion too much on the table” (I.5).

Besides the previous arguments, this discourse comes as well as a continuance of the earlier introduced notions of artistic judges and decision-making mechanisms. The literature argued that the government is in charge of regulating and maintaining “high quality” levels of the arts (Frey, 2003). Nonetheless, respondents showed preferences towards independence from the government, often disagreeing with the planning regulations. It was argued that the governmental plan to regulate the sector influences the behaviour of subsidised organisations as they have to comply with rules in order to receive funds – “you write your plans to the rules of the government, or of the city committee, and that is not freedom” (I.6). Respondents mentioned that under such regulations they cannot fully exercise their own artistic vision. After an experience of over 25 years of working in the subsidised sector, and currently being part of the

private market, one respondent argued that institutions should all be fully independent from the government, and this would lead to a much healthier sector.

Findings until this point introduced the complex system that surrounds individuals and may have an influence on their choices. These findings have created a framework of different contexts in which decisions are taken by gatekeepers. We referred to the value chain ecology of production and market infrastructure, market influence on decisions which also implies that financial aspects have to be considered, the working structures of respondents, and implicitly the independence of decision-making. Moreover, it was concluded that respondents have freedom and independence of undertaking decisions despite the context in which are taken. All being considered, the next section aims to introduce decision-making factors which focus more on individual behaviour, such as vision, selection criteria, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, individual rationality and judgment, and any other aspect which result relevant to the matter.

“It’s the criteria of the company, but the actually judging it’s done by me and our music editor. Our creative officer is the final control; he is responsible for everything we do” (I.8).

4.4.3 Decision-making, individual rationality and judgment

“Mostly I think it’s about intuition, just feeling, just listening to something and thinking that’s nice, new, that’s touching, beautiful, or ugly, whatever, but it’s important, urgent is also important, relevant. It’s really adding something to what we already know” (I.2)

Empirical data revealed that decision-making is to a great extent influenced by, and based on respondents’ personal judgments, tastes, and preferences, all with subjective implications. As previously argued, decisions were not revealed as the outcome of an irrational or interest seeking behaviour, but rather based on respondents’ intrinsic motivation as art lovers, knowledge and experience in the field, collaborations with different actors, and their interest in keeping informed through difference sources. In isolated cases, findings show that respondent’s subjective judgement prevails. These aspects are revealed in terms of artist or music that respondents like, appreciate, find interesting, meaningful and worthwhile presenting –“this is what interesting is, I know that, I feel that, I see that, I see all the signals” (I.7). Other subjective

factors are: what is considered special and new for respondents, challenges their intellect and triggers their emotions, or what according to respondents' taste and vision is considered good, fantastic, outstanding or simply bad art – “Everything it's based of course on your own opinion on what's good and what's not good. That's how everything starts” (I.6). These findings confirm music's intrinsic and instrumental values, as well as the values of music to an individual (Throsby, 1990). Moreover, findings also confirm the importance of quality judgments in decisions relating the production and consumption of jazz, i.e. supply functions of goods and services as of “subjective or qualitative considerations” (Throsby, 1990, p. 66). It was also substantiated by empirical evidence of this study that artistic criteria based on individual value judgment represent a basis for decision-makers constructing arguments on “good or bad quality” of art works. This confirms Throsby's (1990) “revealed preference theory” explaining that an indication of individual preferences can be inferred from their choices (p. 65-66), context also explaining “how and why” certain cultural jazz artists reach the market while others do not.

“They all want attention, I always explain that I just can't write about anything all the time, so we have to make choices, and our choices are based on arguments, and on criteria” (I.7).

In terms of extrinsic motivations, respondents search financial reward, market recognition and appreciation. Financial rewards were shown to not prevail in front of “artistic quality”, but rather come as the outcome of respondent's passion in the field. In what regards gaining recognition and appreciation in the market, one respondent mentioned to have had an “aggressive” market approach which positioned him as another player in the jazz field, and has grown to a point where his opinion matters. Findings also reveal that behaviours and decisions aim to avoid disappointments in the field, as the reactions of colleagues, audiences, or the artists have a significant importance for respondents. Extrinsic motivations have also resulted to be targeted towards artists or audiences, as respondents find important to please one or the other, in return for expected utility. Respondents' gatekeeping power in the jazz field was revealed by the use of expressions such as artists “deserve chances and opportunities”, or “give” artists opportunities to perform or develop. All being considered, it can be concluded that respondent's judgment and taste reflect on the Dutch jazz market in terms of the opportunities artists have access to, and consequently what audiences consume – “if it fits the criteria, if there are enough arguments, and if I have the space, it can be worthwhile” (I.7); “It's a mix of what we think that

the audiences want, and creating a good balance” (I.6). Notwithstanding these aspects, on the whole, decisions are the outcome of a complex system of personal judgement, experience, collaborations, and industry infrastructure.

“It’s personal taste and judgment, but at the same time it comes from such a broad circle of information that is already gatekeeping” (I.3).

Interviewees’ visions and goals were mentioned to be applied or achieved through respondents’ intuition, self-confidence, and capacity to distinguish between elements of choice. All being referred to as skills gained through experience. Moreover, findings reveal that respondents attempt to measure their performance in the field. The forms of measurement revealed are: number of tickets sold, revenue earnings, number of audiences attending concerts and whether these audiences are seen to return, number of subscribers, conducting audience polls and surveys with production staff (curators and technicians), hiring external companies to evaluate project subsidies, i.e. externalities brought to the jazz field, colleagues reactions, media attention, and recognition. By making also a reference to previous arguments introduced in this section, findings confirm Peacock’s (1994) theory that the relation between cultural inputs and how their quality is reflected on the market implies some forms of measurement that could assess the relation between aims and methods of achievement. This was revealed by a description of the selection criteria used in making decisions, respondents’ objectives and the means of achievement (e.g. technical aspects of venues, respondents’ skills, etc.). Moreover, findings confirm the use of performance indicators, i.e. the evaluation of the vitality of the artistic scene and the public reaction, introduced by Peacock, (1994). However, data reveals other methods of measuring performance being used as well, which require time and capital investments, i.e. conducting research and hiring external evaluation companies. Accordingly, findings contradict Peacock’s (1994) theory that artistic producers reject the use of performance indicators.

“You get feedback, and if the feedback feeds me in a positive way, I know I’m on the right track, if not, I know what I have to do” (I.7).

Moreover, we considered interviewees’ sources of information as relevant to determine the extent to which gatekeepers formulate well-informed decisions or inflect past artistic ideologies. Accordingly, findings revealed that respondents invest time and interest in keeping

informed about the current developments in the field, i.e. music trends, upcoming artists, etc. The means of information are following and reading national and international specialised jazz media and press, attending concerts and festivals, listening to music of past and present relevance, attending conferences, showcases as well as national and international jazz fairs. The jazz fairs were mentioned as an important source of information. Such events are internationally oriented and are specifically aimed towards specialised people in the field, from artists, programmers and bookers, media, and audiences. Moreover, it was mentioned a direct exchange of information, i.e. e-mails, gatherings and collaborations, with colleagues and people from the field. Findings reveal that to some extent activities in the field are coordinated by multiple gatekeepers in order to maintain a certain logical distribution of concerts and avoid overbookings, which substantiates once more the importance of considering the “value chain ecology”. Interviewees also make new discoveries through offers forwarded by agents, content producers, record labels, and artists, conduct research, make use of their own network, and maintain a close contact with artists and audiences. As evidenced, respondents invest time, interest and resources in acquiring information. Moreover, the interest in acquiring information shows interviewees to not be imposing ideological artistic visions developed through a long-standing experience in the field. Thus it contradicts Frey’s (2003) assumption on elite representatives being characterised by conservative biases. Findings also contradict that elite representatives have a conservative artistic approach that work against innovative art forms (Frey, 2003). The latter assumption was substantiated through this chapter by the high importance interviewees allocate to innovation, originality, and their interest in maintaining updated with the latest developments in the jazz field.

“We look at the world, all windows all open, we are looking all around us, what are they telling us, we adapt, but we are the artists, so we publish what we believe it’s good” (I.8).

4.5 Should gatekeepers be trusted to act in the best interest of the sector?

“A gatekeeper keeps an eye on the gate, and if the gate is jazz music which comes from around us in the sky, and at the end of the gate is the land we are leaving in, then my role is to promote that as much as possible, in the best and sometimes critical way” (I.6).

In order to establish the awareness with respect to the responsibility they have towards the sector, data reveals respondents to measure differently the extent to which they consider themselves as “trustworthy” by artists and audiences. Respondents find trust to be equal to delivering what it was agreed upon, such as if a certain “deal” was made with an artist, respecting that deal is equal to being trustworthy. Being passionate about their job and proving to be “a very honest partner” over the years was also a reason – “I know all the music my artist play, I know everything because I love it and that is a piece of honesty too...and, as far I am making good money from my artists, so...” (I.1). Some respondents mentioned “to be doing the best they can” and always stay open to listen to whoever has something to say – “they can always come up to me to suggest anything, or discuss anything” (I.2). While respondents feel that artists are the ones mainly responsible for the development of their careers, they do feel they should be trusted in the sense of creating the best presenting circumstances, which includes bringing artists in front of the “right audience” and not to “an audience that will kill the music, of course it has to be presented in the right way” (I.3). As for the audiences, respondents associate trust with knowing the profiles of their audiences and presenting “what is meaningful to them”. Even though sharing the feeling of being trustworthy, one respondent mentioned that their opinions and the information they present should always be verified. Nevertheless, according to findings, respondents believe they should be trusted for the extensive experience in the field and the capacity to distinguish between what is interesting and what is not. One respondent added: “we do have a lot of great information for them, so better trust us, so you don’t miss the world” (I.7).

The above findings are relevant to this research in order to establish respondents’ understanding of their role in the sector, the reasons for which they, as gatekeepers may take certain decisions, as well as whether or not are acting in the best interest of the sector. Following this line of arguments, when asked about their understanding of “gatekeeping” as a term and their role in the industry, respondents show to have different association of the term and what their role may be. Data revealed that interviewees allocate “gatekeeping” positive and negative interpretations. Some interviewees like to be thought as gatekeepers as their association is positive. Negative association refers to a gatekeeper as someone who also close doors, whereas the respondent in question preferred to be considered as “gate opener”, as his company aims to offer a “window” for emerging artists – “gatekeepers is also a negative term, and we are very

positive in our approach to the jazz world, we are open to everyone, because of this function of creating a bridge between the artist and the consumer” (I.6).

Findings reveal that respondents’ feeling of responsibility towards the sector is mainly the outcome of being a Dutch based organisation or company. Respondents share feelings of responsibility towards the artists and the audiences – “I always have to find myself a good reason why I should put something on a stage, also for an audience. Whether that is something I think it should be heard, or deserves a chance, or is for the people or for the musicians” (I.2). Moreover, respondents also consider important to maintain a balanced overview over historical periods of jazz and inform audiences accordingly:

“We have things from the past, things in the middle, things from today, and things which are looking forward. People have to use us to know what is happening in the jazz world, what to expect, what is there tomorrow. This is our function” (I.7).

Generally, it is assumed that a best performance of services is equal to a fulfilment of responsibilities. One respondent mentioned that constantly thinking about his responsibilities towards the sector would be too of a heavy burden; however, it is a feeling present in all his activities. Therefore, performing at their best is the answer to an accomplished gatekeeping role.

Chapter 5

5 Conclusions

The subject of this study is based on two main assumptions. First, cultural goods (jazz) are experience good, which implies that their quality can only be inferred through consumption. However, evaluating the quality of cultural goods requires knowledge and experience, which can only be possessed in time, through continuous consumption and experience which eventually will lead to an evolution of tastes and accumulation of cultural capital. Therefore, acquiring experience and knowledge implies investments, not only in terms of time, but also in terms of costs. Under these circumstances, consumers search for quality certifications from experts who possess the necessary knowledge and experience to make decisions in their behalf. This brings us to the second assumption of this study. The arts sector are characterised by an unequal distribution of information which also related to the experiential nature of cultural goods. Here, producers have more information over goods than consumers. This latter aspect, combined with the fact that consumers searched arts representatives for quality certification, offers incentives to producers to take advantage of their superior market positions and engage in signalling behaviours of quality. Here we made reference to principal-agent analysis and supplier-induce demand, both notions explaining that producers, i.e. the agents, reflect their influence by imposing patrician views under the assumption of having superior industry expertise over consumers, i.e. principals. Within this context the notion of gatekeeping was explained, which refers to individuals in decision-making functions that control the industry's communication channels and select the cultural goods that reach consumers. Gatekeepers' behaviour has also an influence on artists, as they have to pass a selection process in order to reach the market and consequently consumers. Accordingly, the hypothesis of this study was built on the assumption that gatekeepers have the power to shape the market, and their decision-making has a direct influence on artists' careers and audiences' consumption. We assumed that gatekeepers hold the responsibility of the sectors' functioning, and we argued that a need for certification does not justify a right to monopolistic value judgments, but asks for gatekeepers as agents capable to safeguard the welfare of principals within the industry in which they activate.

Following the focus of this study, jazz, the investigation on the aspects that influence gatekeepers' decisions-making was conducted in the Netherlands, with the most representative experts of the Dutch jazz field. Providing a framework for decision-making circumstances implied an analysis not only of individuals and their behaviour considered in isolation, but also of the structure of the industry, the system of production and institutional rules which gatekeepers may have to consider and follow, and the division of labour. The analysis provided evidence that respondents interviewed in this study are recognised as experts in the Dutch jazz industry, they undertake decisions in regard to the supply of artists to the market and to consumers, and their choices are taken as references by audiences and other industry actors. Findings revealed that Dutch jazz gatekeepers have access to market resources which relate to artists' opportunities in the industry and audience consumption, i.e. finances, venues, media platforms. Furthermore, they are in charge of controlling different channels of communication, have an influence on the market behaviour, and an impact on artists' opportunities in the field and consequently what is offered to consumers. Accordingly, we concluded that gatekeepers' decision-making in the Dutch jazz industry has an influence on the jazz market in the Netherlands. However, despite having a superior market advantage, it was not found that gatekeepers in the Dutch jazz industry engage in a supplier-induced demand or principal-agent behaviour explicitly. By analysing respondent's judgment over selection criteria used in decision-making, we arrived to the conclusion that assessing criteria even when it contains objective characteristics is subject of individuals' interpretation, and rests upon respondents' personal tastes, experience and judgments. However, respondents' subjective value judgments were not revealed as monopolistically imposed in the context of having superior market advantage, but rather were evidenced as gatekeepers' attempt to safeguard to some extent the welfare of their principals, i.e. artists and audiences. This was revealed by respondents undertaking rational decisions which combine technical criteria about venues with artists' characteristics and respondents' programming vision, all aiming to create the best circumstances for artists to perform and consequently contribute to audiences' experience. Moreover, Dutch gatekeepers do not have complete control over artists' opportunities nor audiences' consumption. The signalling behaviour here was mostly used as a strategy to attract audiences, by attempting to satisfy their tastes; however this strategy was also used as a means for audiences to discover more unknown artists, thus increase artists' opportunities of exposure and audiences

consumption. It was confirmed that gatekeepers make assumptions on consumers wants and act in their behalf by presenting artists which respondents believe consumers may be attracted to, where the selection of artists is based on respondents' tastes and expertise. However, these decisions, more than confirming the supply-induced-demand concept, are the result of a series of aspects: the for-profit and no-profit character influences the extent to which gatekeepers can take risks and give opportunities to emerging and less known artists. More than often, Dutch jazz gatekeepers in the for-profit sector present established artists who are recognised by the market and the audiences in order to assure a certain income. Nevertheless, it was always mentioned a balance in programming which provided evidence that gatekeepers in the Netherlands do not explicitly engage in actions that work against the well-being of their principals, i.e. artists and audiences. Decisions as result of individual behaviour appeared to be a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, where the distinction stands again in the non-profit or for-profit character of gatekeepers. Accordingly, while all respondents are intrinsically motivated by their passion and interest for jazz, in the for-profit sector were also revealed extrinsic incentives such as recognition and revenue earnings. However, extrinsic motivations were mainly related to the necessity of maintaining the existence of their company, rather than a personal interest.

According to the findings, we confirm the hypothesis of gatekeepers having the necessary means to influence and shape the market, and sharing the responsibility of the functioning of the sector to some extent. It was reveal that Dutch jazz gatekeepers feel responsible for the well-being and the viable functioning of the sector, and assume that a best performance of their services is equal to a fulfilment of responsibilities. Nevertheless, the responsibility of a viable functioning of the Dutch jazz sector cannot be entirely placed on the shoulders of the gatekeepers. As findings revealed, gatekeepers' behaviour is influenced to a great extent by the current market situations. Jazz in Netherlands is a niche, the Dutch jazz education system was criticised for its teaching approach, and consequently Dutch jazz musicians' stylistic approach do not make the selection process an easy task. Moreover, there is a lack in performing jazz venues, audiences, and cultural media platforms. Accordingly, gatekeepers adapt their decision-making to the circumstances. Other aspects of influence on decision-making were found to be the interrelations with different industry actors and organisations, being employed by an organisation or company, and governmental regulations. In this study we measured whether respondents undertake decisions independent of the employer organisation and other institutions in the sector,

by analysing working structures and the freedom interviewees exert in collaborations. However, we encountered limitations in measuring the extent to which decisions are influenced by governmental regulations and employer's bureaucracy. Limitations were also brought by the analysis on individual behaviour as it could not be always defined clearly the extent to which Dutch jazz gatekeepers reported to act in behalf of the sector, or in behalf of their employer or their own.

This study adopted a pluralist approach to arts, i.e. "the value chain ecology", "ecological thinking", and behavioural economics, that created a unique perspective of investigation by using multiple theories to analyse the diversity of circumstance which influence decision-making. Such a perspective extended as far as considering decision-making as a matter of individual behaviour, i.e. the concept of rationality, intrinsic and extrinsic individual motivations, objectives and means of achievement; the outcome of aesthetic value judgments, i.e. how experts infer decisions on quality of artistic works; and the outcome of contexts and circumstances in which decision-makers gravitate, i.e. the market coordination of individual activities, the role of governments and institutions in shaping culture, and gatekeepers' independence of undertaking decisions. We introduced the value chain ecology and ecological thinking as means to analyse decision-making also as a complex system of multiple relations of organisational production and industry infrastructure. This approach allowed analysing gatekeepers' decision-making within the broader ecology of the performing art system and investigating how their performance reflects on the overall functioning of the sector. Even though not specifically considered in this study, findings revealed that collaborations among respondents and implicitly their organisations or companies are mutually beneficial and reflect as well on the functioning of the sector. Respondents mentioned to be occasionally sharing production costs of booking certain international artists, collaborating in creating artistic programmes, consulting and inspiring each other for artistic decisions, as well as coordinating their programming activities to create a logic distribution of concerts around the cities. Here findings confirm the importance of the interdependencies developed in the value chain ecology. Confirming that collaborations take place between different actors at different production stages, and their outcome influence the functioning of the sector, we found the value chain approach to analysing decision-making based on partnership relations an interesting topic for a future research. Such an investigation could result in a new source of insights on decision-making.

By conducting this investigation we described gatekeepers' decision-making and the Dutch jazz sector, and provided a basis of understanding the functioning of the sector. During the process, we created an illustration of the Dutch jazz infrastructure which proved to be a practical method to address the interdependencies that have an influence of the sectors' functioning. Even though not measured in this study, the infrastructure model developed has also the potential to address gaps in services and skills. Therefore, by providing a basis of the sectors' infrastructure we push to investigate further into developing strategies that may contribute to the health and vitality of the jazz and other performing arts sectors in the Netherlands. A future research into developing this model may create a framework to be used in other countries outside the Netherlands as well.

5.1 Dissemination and policy relevance

The study revealed a current, delicate situation of the jazz sector in the Netherlands. Dutch jazz experts showed concerns towards the industry's functioning and considered various measures that could be implemented for a healthier development of the sector. They suggested: a higher governmental interest in developing music educational programmes from early ages, which will help people get acquainted with music and stimulate their consumption. Such educational programmes would have the potential to contribute to developing participation in arts and culture within the Netherlands. Another aspect pointed out was the limited international presence of Dutch jazz artists. Accordingly, the government should intervene in opening up the market and making it easier for Dutch artists to tour outside of the Netherlands. Dutch jazz experts believe that the public and private sectors should collaborate in creating a flourishing jazz industry. Industry experts with international market experience could bring new insights to the current governmental strategies, and may contribute to developing new cultural and artistic strategies. This study aimed to create a dialogue in regard to the functioning of the Dutch jazz sector, and further research on similar matters is important for jazz policies agendas as they may contribute to the design of future strategies, and can help policymakers to achieve well-informed decisions.

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Appendix A

Interview guide

1. All information will be held confidential and it will serve only for the purpose of this research
 - a. Do you agree for this interview to be recorded and for the information to be use in this research?
 - b. Do you prefer to be referred to in the study as anonymous or by your name?

Thank you!

Background: education and experience

- I would like to start by assessing your background in terms of education and previous work experience
 - o Do you have any cultural or artistic training?
 - o How many years of experience do you have in the cultural sector?

The employer institution/company and the individual perspective

- What is your current function at ...?
 - o What are your role and responsibilities here?
- What can you tell me about the institution/organization/company you work for?
 - o What is the role of the institution/organization/company in the music industry in Netherlands?
 - o What are the objectives of the institution/company?
 - To what extend are these also your personal objectives?
 - o What are the objectives of the institution/company in regard to the jazz music industry in Netherlands?
 - o To what extent do you collaborate with other organisations/companies?
 - How do these collaborations work?
- How is the company organised?
 - o How many people are employed?
 - o What can you tell me about how decisions are taken in the company?

- Who decides upon what the kind of programmes you offer?
- To what extent do you work independently or in collaborations with other people?
- To what extent do you have the freedom of taking decisions independently of the other members and the institution/company?
- Are there any external factors that influence your decisions?
 - Which ones?
 - Does the employer company influence your decisions in any way?
 - To what extent do you have to comply with the objectives and requirements of the organisation/company?
- What can you tell me about the type of music projects/musicians you work with/evaluate?
 - Is there a certain typology of artists you look for?
 - Based on which aspects do you decide upon these projects?
 - Are there any pre-established criteria?
 - How is this criteria determined?
 - To what extent are the criteria based on your judgment or in collaboration with other members?
 - To what extent are decisions here based on your individual judgment or the requirements of the organisations you work with/for?
 - To what extent does your vision fits into the vision of the employer company?
 - What is your vision of jazz in terms of how artists and groups are selected?
 - To what extent is your choice of selection based on a difference between being a non-profit and for-profit company?
- What can you tell me about the jazz industry and market in the Netherlands?
 - What can you tell me about the Dutch jazz artists?
 - To what extent do you feel you have enough Dutch artists to work with?
 - What is the balance between international names and Dutch names that you work with?
 - Why?
 - To what extent do you give place/opportunities to new, emerging talents?

- Is there is also a balance between upcoming artists and more known groups?
 - Who are the most important players in the industry?
 - What is your opinion on the jazz media in NL?
 - If you consider yourself a jazz gatekeeper, what do you think your role and responsibilities are?
 - What are your personal objectives?
 - Do you act in behalf of certain groups (artists, audiences)?
 - Who are your stakeholders?
 - In the decision-making process, to what extent are your stakeholders considered?
 - Is there any kind of ranking with respect to the importance of the stakeholders?
 - Why?
 - Should these stakeholders trust you and your decisions?
 - Why?
 - Do you measure your performance in the market?
 - How?
 - Why jazz?
 - Is there anything else that you might like to add or consider important to mention?

Thank you very much for your time!

If you would like to follow up with the research please do not hesitate to contact me.

Appendix B

Code families

<p>Decision-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Collaborations• Feeling of responsibility• The market• Approaching artists• Artists' requirements• Audiences• Big names vs. less known• External influences• Extrinsic motivation• Financial factors• Independence of decision-making• Individual rationality and judgment• Intrinsic motivation• Marketing decisions• Other factors to be considered in decisions	<p>Expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power• cultural background• current role and responsibilities• Description of company non-profit/for-profit• education• experience• field recognition• field recognition from other actors• geographic coverage• other than cultural background• reason for working in the jazz industry• showing knowledge of music/technical terms• Why to be trusted• years of experience
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