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Xiaoyao Xu

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Artists attending arts festivals

*Placing arts
festivals into
artists'
working
practice*

Supervisor: Dr. Mariangela Lavanga



ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

ERASMUS SCHOOL OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Artists attending arts festivals

Placing arts festivals into artists' working practice

A Master's thesis

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Abstract

Festivals are an emerging form of knowledge creation, especially in the current knowledge-based economy (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Grabher, 2004). The impact of festivals has been regarded from various perspectives, yet evaluation on participating stakeholders is still a neglected topic, particularly in connection with the temporality of agglomerated learning spaces, called temporary clusters. This thesis links artist practice to the temporary nature of a festival to analyze to which extent festivals benefit the participating artists. The main research question *to which extent do artists benefit from participating in festivals* is answered in two ways. The role of festivals in a temporary context is highlighted in the first sub-question *how does a festival function as a temporary cluster?* Findings confirm that festivals are not only temporary clusters but of cyclical nature. The second part focuses on *to which extent does a festival shape artists' practice?* Theory focusses on communities of practice using an adapted form of Grabher's (2004) network theory. In which of the network spheres of communality, sociality and connectivity does interaction amongst artists and between other stakeholders occur? Qualitative interviews with involved artists and producers of a case study festival provide insight into the working practice and to which extent festivals shape it. Findings show that producers and local artists are based in communality, while sociality is the most likely network for newly participating artists. Since artists describe their work as being 'in development', a festival is likely to represent a deadline or an opportunity of shaping their work into a presentable format rather than as career-oriented drivers in terms of reaching an audience, or as a tool for promoting for potential funding options.

Keywords:

arts festivals, knowledge networks, temporary clusters, creative industries, communities of practice

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1. Introduction

Festivals are an important but often overlooked aspect in knowledge creation and knowledge exchange. However, they received less attention so far. Starting out as a rather cultic form of celebration, festivals may divert in their role from religious or spiritual gatherings but the community is still an important aspect in socio-economic as well as in economic research (Quinn, 2005). The linkage to the community has been researched throughout, and festivals are held throughout all cultures to strengthen communal bounds, values and the social identity of communities (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Getz, 2010; Quinn, 2005). Moreover, festival research in context with urban renewal such as festival tourism in the UK (Gornostaeva & Campbell, 2012; Novelli, Schmitz, & Spencer, 2006) and the impact on the community have been conducted (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Gibson, Waitt, Walmsley, & Connell, 2010), next to studies on festival marketing, managerial studies or on the psychology of festivals (Getz, 2010; Quinn, 2005). As a forerunner in contemporary arts festival, the Salzburg festival in Austria, set up in 1920, gave space for the debate about elitist versus popular arts (Quinn, 2005; Waterman, 1998).

It has been early discussed that festivals are used as a place for discussions which brings people together to exchange knowledge and to enable them to learn from each other (Waterman, 1998). Also, the nature of festivals is being regarded as “ephemeral” (Waterman, 1998, p. 59), which is important in connection to knowledge creation and exchange (Quinn, 2005). Comunian (2016), amongst others, examines festivals as temporary clusters in the literature on knowledge networks. Therefore, the interaction, characteristics and benefits for attending participants of temporary clusters have been mostly addressed at trade fairs and in other in-firm context but are applicable for festivals (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Maskell, Bathelt, & Malmberg, 2006). Further, studies on festivals have been linked to the local development (Gibson et al., 2010; Jackson, Houghton, Russel, & Triandos, 2005). For instance, festivals are used as a policy mechanism to stimulate the economy of the city or the region (Quinn, 2005). There, however, results are controversial on the impact of festivals as disadvantages for the local population prevail (Quinn, 2005). However, in economic studies the individual actors are overlooked (Comunian, 2016; Crompton & McKay, 1994; Glow & Caust, 2010) or it leads to intangible results which are difficult to measure (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Langen & Garcia, 2009).

Although the urban context and geographic relevance have been applied on temporary clusters across all other fields such as trade fairs or conferences, the relation between knowledge networks and the temporality of festivals has been disregarded widely (Comunian,

2016; Comunian & Alexiou, 2015; Quinn, 2005; Waterman, 1998). While several studies have analyzed rather commercial aspects of festivals, a focus on the involved stakeholders did not find much attention yet. For example, little focus has been laid on the participating artists aside from a study about the Adelaine Fringe Festival by Glow & Caust (2010) or the role of artists in local UK festivals (Comunian, 2016; Comunian & Alexiou, 2015). A general problem of knowledge creation in network theory poses either static networks (Grabher, 2004) or networks which do not examine the actors in a cluster themselves (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008; Comunian, 2016). Moreover, scholars perceive a shift of artists' working practice into less long forms of employment and a higher mobile workforce in the creative industry.

This leads to the question of *to which extent do artists benefit from participating in a festival?* To do so, knowledge creation in temporary clusters will be examined on the case study of the Sonic Acts Festival. First, the question of *how does a festival function as a temporary cluster* will be examined. Types of knowledge creation will be introduced, theory on the knowledge transfers and the dichotomous tacit and global knowledge will be examined, alongside mapping the types of interaction within a cluster away from the two-dimensional local-global perspective (Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004). To answer the second sub-question of *to which extent does a festival shape artist's practice*, the approach of communities of practice will be used. Therefore, this study focuses on the social dynamics within a festivals while acknowledging their temporary nature (Comunian, 2016).

This study observes artists' practice on the Sonic Acts Festival through semi-structured interviews with artists, participants of workshops and performers who were attending the 2017 festival. Further, a joint interview with the producers gives insight into the structure to classify it as a temporary cluster. Established over 20 years ago in the city of Amsterdam, the case study festival provides for a significant study object. The inter-disciplinary arts and music festival offers conferences during the daytime and has music and visual arts performances during the night. These conditions, consisting of its intense form and having reach of 10600 visitors in 2017 pose a fitting case study for research (Comunian, 2016; Sonic Acts Internal Report).

The thesis is structured as follows: in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, existing theory about different types of knowledge agglomerations and dimensions of interaction within a cluster are investigated. The methods on which artists' working practice are mapped with the communities of practice, which is examined subsequently. Further, externally imposed influences on the artist's practice are explained and a conclusion drawn for the analysis. Chapter 3 provides the aims of research, introduces the case study festival and explores the means of data collection. Next to an introduction into the structures and knowledge exchanges

in a festival, the focus in Chapter 4 lies on analyzing qualitative interviews of participants who held either lectures at the conference, performed at the night-events, attended workshops or performed at an excursion. In the end, Chapter 5 gives reflection on the findings, draws implications on the theory and states room for further research after the limitations.

2. Theoretical Framework

The first part in the following chapter introduces temporary and cyclical clusters amongst other types of knowledge creation, examines the vertical and horizontal dimensions of interaction within a cluster and provides a transition into the communities of practice by introducing the concept of buzz and global pipelines. In the second sub-chapter, ways to analyze artists' working practice are depicted through social relationships within communities of practice, the aspect of reputation and values. Lastly, the phenomenon of multiple-job holdings amongst artists, one of several external labor market consequences, will be incorporated in the examination of artists' practice.

2.1 Knowledge creation in clusters

2.1.1 Types of agglomerated learning

What makes temporary clusters interesting for research is that participants gather for an intense but short-lasting period of time (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Such festivals often lead to knowledge transfer between the different participants. To understand knowledge transfer, however, the different ways to create knowledge have to be understood and this chapter will provide an overview of existing forms of knowledge creation. First of all, temporary clusters derive from permanent clusters. It has only recently been argued that special forms of permanent clusters such as trade fairs, conferences, conventions or exhibitions exist in rather temporary form (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). Frederiksen & Lorenzen (2008, p. 2) define permanent cluster as “geographical agglomerations of firms that enjoy economies (positive externalities) from being located in the same place”. The term and principle of clustering was initially applied on industrial organizations and specializations result out of it (Richardson, 2003). First mentioned by Marshall (1920), firms could benefit from each other with an increasing number of networks. This approach can be applied on the creative industries, with information or services being exchanged instead of tangible goods. Therefore, actors or participants gather in a cluster to work on similar activities which provides them with positive externalities (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004).

Temporary clusters possess many characteristics of permanent clusters, albeit in a more intense and short-lived form (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). As clusters do not exist endlessly but are depend on demand and external changes such as incoming new firms or individuals, Maskell, Bathelt, & Malmberg (2006) and Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell (2004) utilize the term ‘quasi-permanent’ when describing permanent

clusters. They argue that clusters are only affected – and thus change – in very slow ways. Therefore, clusters are permanent only to a certain extent and ‘permanent clusters’ will be considered as ‘quasi-permanent’ throughout the research (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004).

When examining clusters in urban areas, two original forms of agglomeration economies, namely localization and urbanization economies explain reasons for clustering (Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008; Trullén & Boix, 2008). In localization economies, the co-location of firms is important while the space is not relevant (Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008). Being place-independent, localization economies benefit from high specialization of an industry, the labor market or institutions (Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008). As a consequence, positive externalities or spillovers arise (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008). Urbanization economies describe the benefits which arise when firms settle in an urban area. In contrast to localization, urbanization economies are place-specific and benefit from three aspects: first, from the diversity of the surrounding industry, second, from the diversity of labor, and third, from the diversity of institutions and infrastructure. However, both economies are not mutually exclusive (Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008). One more way of knowledge exchange outside of clusters will be presented, namely the global pipelines (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Global pipelines connect different firms or organizations, and transfer not products or services but new input (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). While it involves costs and uncertainty in success when setting up, the global pipeline cannot be regarded in a plain input-output relation (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Before continuing the examination of festivals as temporary clusters, two other dimensions of knowledge creation will be mentioned. Networks emerge as a relation between two partners and are based on mutual and continuous investments. If an initial exchange is successful, such relation can grow further into a network by forming multiple relationships with other participating firms or organizations (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Also, project-based work and knowledge exchange are gaining more popularity in the creative industries, out of reasons which will be examined in Chapter 2.3 (Benhamou, 2010; Grabher, 2004; Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Similar to temporary clusters, projects are defined as short-termed, intensive working times with fellow participants. Similar to networks, projects are not site-dependent (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008). While temporary and quasi-permanent clusters are vision-oriented, both projects and networks are oriented towards solving specific goals (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008; Maskell et al., 2006).

2.1.2 The role of festivals in knowledge creation

Recently, literature identified the temporary nature of trade fairs, conventions and other forms of intense gatherings as temporary clusters and even argued for the need of temporary clusters in industries where permanent ones already exist (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). Scholars have long identified the temporary nature of festivals (Waterman, 1998). This chapter introduces three reasons which classify festivals as temporary clusters and even as cyclical clusters (Comunian, 2016; Maskell et al., 2006)

First, vertical and horizontal interaction take place in trade fairs as temporary clusters (Maskell et al., 2006). Horizontal interaction refers to interaction with competing firms or other companies (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). While it has been applied on trade fairs or other professional gatherings, the same structure of interaction can be applied on festivals. Horizontal interaction refers to interaction with fellow artists or other creative organizations (Comunian, 2016). Participating artists or performers can compare their work, observe the working process of fellow artists and develop new ideas to existing issues (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008; Comunian, 2016). On a vertical level, participants of a festival can either interact with their audience in terms of satisfaction, but also exchange information with producers, curators or organizers of other festivals or cultural organizations who are attending the festival (Comunian, 2016). Vertical interaction, in literature on trade fairs, indicates the exchange between suppliers and customers or other complementary firms, and enables its participants to exchange information about the latest trends, their experiences, and requirements for future products or projects (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Again, the structures of vertical and horizontal interaction in temporary clusters closely resemble that of permanent clusters, only differing in the exchanged goods. Unlike in permanent clusters, no real economic transactions but rather information exchange takes place in temporary clusters (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). As in trade fairs or conferences, relationships between artists and other creatives can be refreshed when new connections or acquaintances enter a network. Apart from maintaining and nurturing existing relationships, participants of trade fairs or festivals also get to know new partners and organizations (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). This can be explained by trans-local pipelines with which trade fair attendants import new knowledge and input from outside the cluster (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008).

Second, festivals are oriented towards a similar focus of knowledge creation alike conferences, trade fairs or other professional gatherings (Comunian, 2016). Both temporary and permanent cluster have a vision-oriented focus in their knowledge creation. In the case of

festivals, vision-oriented focus prevails as it is not directed towards solving a specific problem or goal but rather towards shaping shared habits and experiences (Maskell et al., 2006).

Third, festivals are not only temporary clusters, but also cyclical ones (Comunian, 2016; Power & Jansson, 2008). Recent research has shown that trade fairs do not exist in isolation but are part of a global circuit with other festivals (Power & Jansson, 2008). They emerge in certain rhythm, typically annually or bi-annually, and “are complexes of overlapping spaces that are timed and arranged in such a way that spaces can be reproduced, reenacted, and renewed over time” (Power & Jansson, 2008, p. 438). Those spaces do not only overlap within a trade fair, but also outside the fair in the whole cyclical calendar. This is rather true for festivals, as researchers have found out that festivals transform local and everyday spaces to a temporary setting and happen on a cyclical basis (Comunian, 2016; Waterman, 1998). Festivals share the same characteristics of a so-called ‘experience good’ such as, for example, the experience when visiting a furniture fair and trying out chairs (Power & Jansson, 2008). As festivals form their knowledge dynamics and processes in the same manner as trade fairs or temporary exhibitions, theory about clusters and networks thus can be applied to festivals (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Maskell et al., 2006).

2.1.3 Local buzz, global pipelines

The aspect of geographical co-location, which makes learning through comparison and observation possible, is an important aspect of knowledge creation in both permanent and temporary clusters (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008; Comunian, 2016). One characteristic which arises with co-location is the phenomenon of ‘buzz’. When immersed in the buzz, it gives participants the possibilities to update the flow of information, exchange gossip or update the latest news, and provides possibilities for its participants to understand the newly received information correctly (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). In other words, by aligning the habits with the ones of their surrounding partners, participants can, when experiencing buzz, benefit from positive externalities and spillovers (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016). It is important to note that buzz cannot be actively searched for or planned for, but is fluid and rather spontaneous nature. The opportunities of information exchange thus usually take place outside of planned meetings in bars, cafés or during “social events such as joint dinners” or even in elevators or other common spaces (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, p. 17; Maskell et al., 2006). Although the aspect of buzz emerges by ‘just being there’ which in turn leads to positive externalities, the emergence of buzz is dependent on the social relations between the co-clustered actors (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004). Clustered actors need to

engage actively (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). While no costs arise in experiencing the buzz as a tight net of information exchange already exists in clusters before the emergence of buzz, the benefits of participating are not always guaranteed. Good relations of actors in a cluster and a positive environment provide an attractive environment for smooth information exchange and the resulting buzz (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). On the opposite, bad relations within a cluster prevent the appearance of buzz and therefore the resulting chances of benefitting from them. Rather, it emerges as a by-product of such close proximity in case of good relations (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004).

One often posed but contested aspect is that positive externalities based on agglomeration effects increase with the level of specialization, therefore is stronger the more difficult or complex the knowledge is (Sorenson, 2003). Another way to describe the need for co-location is that the more complex a form of knowledge is, the more difficulties arise in transmitting and interpreting it in an accurate way (Fleming & Sorenson, 2001, in Glückler, 2007). Two types of knowledge can be identified, namely tacit and codified knowledge (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). Tacit knowledge on the one hand is diffuse or broad knowledge, which has been argued to be difficult to transmit over great distances (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). This kind of knowledge depends on local interaction where participating individuals share “subtle forms” of knowledge in a repeated manner (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, p. 3). The need for close proximity when dealing with tacit knowledge have been assumed to be one of the main reasons for clusters to form (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Glückler, 2007). One feature of tacit knowledge can also be described as ‘whom to know’ rather than ‘what to know’, indicating the importance of networking and showing personal presence (Grabher, 2002). Furthermore, tacit knowledge is “reinforced through trust, social familiarity, institutional coherence and sense of local belonging” (Grabher, 2004, p. 106). On the other hand, the more codified and arguably less prone to misinterpretation the knowledge is, the easier and further it can be transmitted, outside of clusters through global or trans-local pipelines (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016). Codified knowledge is assumed to be understood and transmitted over vast distances as a form of universal language.

However, recent studies have debunked this dichotomous concept of tacit knowledge used for local settings and codified knowledge for global pipelines (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004). First of all, tacit and codified knowledge have only been assumed as two independent unities in this discourse for easier explanation, but are actually interwoven and interdependent means of knowledge exchange

(Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Like tacit knowledge, codified knowledge depends on ‘soft’ factors such as local experience to understand, to decode or to apply such knowledge (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Rather, a flexible view of individual actors or institutions or organizations should be taken (Power & Jansson, 2008). Although tacit and codified knowledge are two important aspects to consider for the processes of knowledge creation, a connection between the intensity of ties and the geographical distance is hard to prove (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Grabher, 2004; Power & Jansson, 2008). Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell (2004), amongst others, conclude that both types of interaction can be transmitted locally and globally. Moreover, the tacit-ness of the knowledge should not be confused with the local, “native practice” of knowledge (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, p. 3). Local practice can only be learned and acquired if being located at the same space, while tacit knowledge can also be transferred to geographically distant places and acquired there, independent of distance (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). In the end, researchers have found out that a mixture between tacit and codified knowledge from outer pipelines of a cluster can influence the local buzz, however, this view has been contested by scholars (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Gertler, 2003). Therefore, the next chapter will present a community-based approach on mapping the knowledge creation and relationships of participants within a cluster

2.2 Artists’ working practice

2.2.1 Communities of practice

By now, different types of knowledge creation have been introduced and festivals have been identified as cyclical clusters. Previous chapters have emphasized how knowledge exchange needs to be considered with geographical ties, but have not yet focused on the social aspect in generating knowledge (Grabher, 2004). This chapter will establish three methods on which examine to which extent artist practice is shaped by arts festivals. First, the concepts of community, sociality and connectivity as an alternate method to map knowledge creation and exchange and to describe ties and relationships between members of such networks are presented (Grabher, 2004). To which extent does a festival shape artists’ practice? Where can artist interaction in festivals be placed? Is it in the realm of communality, where intense network ties exist, does the focus lie on networking and career-aspects, or has interaction shifted in a culturally neutral realm (Grabher, 2004)? In order to answer the second part of the research question, a flexible model of Grabher’s (2004) network ties is adapted (Comunian,

2016). Second, motives for participation by regarding the aspect of reputation and value of a festival will be examined (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Glow & Caust, 2010). As difficulties are expected in finding the real measurements of those two latter aspects (Glow & Caust, 2010), Chapter 2.3. will examine externally imposed factors which influence artists' practice.

Brown & Duguid (1991) emphasize the importance of communities and their relation to the environment. In particular, festivals are linking participants who gather with all kinds of different skills in a community, thus enabling the exchange of different skillsets in a short period of time (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Comunian, 2016). One concept has been utilized and described as an outcome of institutionalized 'buzz', which is the communities of practice. It was first mentioned by Wenger (1998) and used mainly in organizational relations. Despite limitations of the role of trust in regard to power-relation and structure especially in organizational context, communities of practice enables the examination of interaction between individuals in a festival context (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Roberts, 2006). The main traits of communities of practice can be described as follows. First, communities or practice provide a shared space for 'joint enterprise' where members can work on and shape it. It is defined by mutual engagement, such as face-to-face interaction and active workmanship. Second, an outcome of being situated in a community of practice leads to shared routines, habits or experience in problem-solving skills (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; J. S. Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The following table shows the adapted model of network ties on which the analysis will be based on (Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004).

Table 1. *Three network types, adapted from Grabher (2004) and Comunian (2016).*

	communality	sociality	connectivity
nature of ties	intense and long-lasting networking ties, private relations as least as strong as professional	ephemeral and intense networking ties, professional relations over private	ephemeral, weak form of network ties, professional relations, can deepen over time
goal orientation	relationship-oriented sharing experience	career-oriented sharing knowledge	task-oriented sharing information

form of trust & social practice	trust neighborhood face-to-face 'staying in'	swift trust city face-to-face 'hanging out'	peer recognition virtual club virtual 'logging on'
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Source: Comunian (2016) and Grabher (2004)

Communality refers to long-lasting network ties where participants are connected by face-to-face interaction, where personal relations are at least as strong as professional ones (Grabher, 2004). As communality can be metaphorically situated in the neighborhood, where the relation is shaped by collective experiences, history or narratives, members of such networks are inclined to stay for a longer time, giving them the possibility for re-creation (Grabher, 2004). In sociality, participants gain knowledge about local behavior and patterns and experience intense networking (Comunian, 2016). The focus of sociality lies on experiencing the 'noise', that is, rumors, gossip about new work opportunities, recommendations or the latest trends and can be compared to the local 'buzz' in a permanent cluster (Grabher, 2004). Short-term projects and networking are best possible in the city, where a variety of contacts and among fellow individuals for information exchange exists, and where showing presence is a necessity for networking (Grabher, 2004). Further, Grabher (2004) contrasts sociality as 'hanging out', whereas communality indicates 'staying in'. The third network is connectivity, where members are 'logging on'. The third ties are ephemeral and weak, where relations exist mostly to complete specific tasks. Characterized by non-personal interaction but rather virtual interaction, it is the opposite form to communality in the sense of the medium. However, in both communality and connectivity the relationships among members can evolve and deepen if working with the same set of skills. Connectivity is mainly focused on pure information exchange, while sociality focuses on knowledge exchange. These network and personal ties are in opposition of the aforementioned local-global dichotomy and will be used in the following analysis (Grabher, 2004).

2.2.2 Reputation

When examining the practice of artists, external factors also shape and give form to the artists' working practice. It has been discussed extensively in the literature that artists in the creative sector face high uncertainty (Benhamou, 2010; Caves, 2000; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). One factor for this uncertainty is an oversupply of labor (Benhamou,

2010; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Amongst other reasons for oversupply, the low entry barrier, the underestimation of risks and overestimation of success lead next to the “lure of autonomy and freedom” to difficulties in the working practice of an artist (Lingo & Tepper, 2013, p. 338). It is thus difficult to evaluate the quality of an artwork and artists can become artists without much previous education. The idea of the bohemian artist, living on the edge of poverty and being dependent of funding further drive discussions about the image of the artist (Comunian, 2010; Fendrich, 2005; Rengers & Plug, 2001). As a result of oversupply, art diplomas only function as a weak signal for quality (Benhamou, 2010). Consequently, other methods such as building up a reputation as an artist, having a broad personal network and the importance for networking are alternative signals for artists (Benhamou, 2010; Lingo & Tepper, 2013).

Moreover, Glow & Caust (2010) state that gaining recognition from its peers is one of the motivations for artists to attend arts festivals. Artists need a space to present their works and network, by being situated amongst other people from the same practice provides them with this opportunity (Glow & Caust, 2010; Morgner, 2014). Another signal for reputation to artists is a rather flexible working pattern. As Benhamou (2010) states, reputation amongst creative workers rises with an increasing amount of turn-over in occupations, as opposed to traditional occupations in the labor market. However, this flexibility of the workforce might be induced by other reasons and will be topic of discussion in Chapter 2.3. Further, on-the-job learning is another useful method to prevent this uncertain labor situation (Benhamou, 2010; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Rengers & Plug, 2001; Throsby & Zednik, 2011).

2.2.3 Of values

In previous research, festivals have been mostly concentrated on their economic or socio-economic impacts (Crompton & McKay, 1994; Getz, 2010; Gibson et al., 2010). Statistics on festival activities such as booked accommodations or the benefit of the catering industry were used to indicate the economic impact, either directly or indirectly (Glow & Caust, 2010). Research focuses on the intangible results of a festival. A specific example is the research on the Adelaine Fringe Festival in Australia in which the benefits for the participating artists were highlighted (Glow & Caust, 2010). Other research focusses on measuring the social capital of festivals, which comes with dangers of ‘economizing’ or modifying the initial meaning of social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). To measure how festivals shape artists’ practice, the reasons and motives for artists attending arts festivals need to be examined from an intrinsic approach. For our analysis, we will adapt the following themes which artists have

stated in benefitting from the Adelaine Fringe Festival: perception to the festival structure in general, the possibility to “practice their craft”, reaching an audience, and branding themselves, which will be changed to gaining reputation by attending a festival (Glow & Caust, 2010, p. 419).

2.3 Changing role of the artist

As stated before, external factors influence the development in artists’ practice. New labor market characteristics emerge with uncertainty and the higher mobility in the workforce which results in more project-based work and less of long-term employment or residencies (Throsby & Zednik, 2011). To adapt to the rising trend of short-term contracts or even unemployment, artists broaden their skills, which is described as the portfolio-career (Borgen, Amundson, & Reuter, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Rengers & Plug, 2001; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Initially formulated by Throsby (1994) as multiple-job holdings, it can be broken down into ‘arts-work’, ‘arts-related’, ‘non-arts related’ work. Theory suggests that artists are in need of multiple jobs in order to sustain themselves (Throsby, 1994; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Also, artists are willing to take on long hours in non-arts related jobs in order to subsidize own art-related or direct art-work (Throsby, 1994). Such portfolio career requires artists to gain skills outside of their artistic domain. Arts-related work encompasses all skills which are related to the creative work and will be useful for the artist to further develop the career. It includes teachings related to arts, but also managerial or promotional skills, which are especially relevant nowadays with the emergence of social media (Hracs, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Non-arts related work refers to skills outside the creative domain, such as technical skills or experience in the commercial sector (Hracs, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011).

Not without reason, such broadening of skills is also called DIY-skills, as artists can promote, manage, and distribute their work either themselves or by hiring intermediaries who again execute one particular task of the work (Hracs, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Scott, 2012). As Lingo & Tepper (2013, p. 345) state, it depicts a reversal of classical economics, “where capital hires labor”. According to researchers, artists no longer accept drawbacks such as uncertainty for the autonomy and freedom which their artistic work provides (Throsby, 1994). Instead, a portfolio career gives artists the possibility for steering and changing their career themselves and to be less dependent on external market factors (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). However, the voluntary or enjoyment-aspect of the portfolio-career has to be examined critically, as Lingo & Tepper (2013) themselves state. Although Throsby & Zednik (2011),

amongst others, state that the diverse skillset is a trend which artists set themselves and that many enjoy the new freedom which comes with it, the extent to which external policy-changes drives artists has to be considered. Also, the need to collect a broad range of skills implies that many creatives or artists are willing to work for free (Hracs, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Lastly, the theory of oversupply assumes a stable artist labor system in the creative industries, which is not the case (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). The creative industries are rather dynamic markets, where new trends are set and boundaries are broken down so rapidly that they are not yet included in the literature (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). In accordance with this, skills and opportunities or jobs emerge, and “wholly new titles, products, and markets that do not yet exist” emerge as a result (Lingo & Tepper, 2013, p. 348). To conclude, this unstable and fast-changing labor market leads to the new role of the artist which Baker & Faulkner (1991) have long before coined as the ‘hybrid-artist’, who not only bridges the gap between commercial and non-commercial works, but also breaks down the divide between elitist and popular art (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). While some shifts of artists’ occupation into other sectors have already been subject for research, such as artist engagement in political activism, health care or investigative journalism, the shift of artists into these social practices is critically discussed in the literature. Artists are neither qualified for activism-works which requires the audience as an active participant, nor policy-systems and governance are adapted to the shift of artists in social services (A. S. Brown & Tepper, 2012).

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, festivals can be of temporary and cyclical nature and focus on vision-creation rather than on goal-solving (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). The temporal structure of festivals and an extension towards cyclical clusters has been confirmed (Comunian, 2016; Power & Jansson, 2008). Aside from the geographical relevance in knowledge networks, the local-global dichotomy has been discussed and dismissed, and the communities of practice approach was used to examine in which of the three networks communality, sociality or connectivity attending artists of a festival interact. The different ties of those networks have been outlined and will be used further in the analysis (Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004). In the end, the working practice in regard to the labor market has been examined, and changes in their working practice and the accumulation of skills are an outcome of the increasing mobile workforce aside other reasons of general uncertainty (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Artists broaden their skillset by acquiring a diverse skill-set

which is an interesting aspect when examining the role which festivals have in artists' practice (Hracs, 2013; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011).

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological background on which the empirical research in the following chapter is structured on. After presenting the aims of research, alongside with the applied theory and a discussion about the chosen research method, an introduction into the case study festival is given, which is followed by the methods of data collection and data analysis. In the end, limitations towards the research methods are stated.

3.1 Aims of research

In the beginning, a mixed research methods with focus on a qualitative audience survey was conducted by the author. Aims in mind were to find out the impact related to the visitor's personal interest or work, and to find out to which extent the festival provided a platform for that. Several short qualitative interviews with participating artists were conducted to provide more information to the structure and role of the festival. However, as discussed before, the direct economic or social impacts of festivals are difficult to measure or easily to be distorted (Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011). Due to this and the reason that the audience survey did not achieve a representative response rate with a mere 100 responses, research entered a second phase of data collection and shifted towards a mixed methods research with focus on in-depth qualitative interviews.

The new aim is to find out to which extent artists benefit from participating in a festival. In order to do so, the approach by Comunian (2016) was followed. Interviews with participating artists and workshop attendants who either gave lectures or attended workshops at the case study festival were used for the new research question. The analysis will focus on the relation of the festival with their working processes, all while applying an adapted model of Grahber's (2004) three awareness spaces community, sociality and connectivity. Until now, only generic network studies have been conducted, without consisting flexible and shifting networks or the individual agent in their research aside from Comunian (2016).

To answer the general research question *to which extent do artists benefit from participating at arts festivals*, the research question will be divided in two sub-questions, which can then be subsequently answered with the proposed theory.

RQa: How does a festival function as a temporary cluster?

In order to answer the first research sub-question, the dimensions of knowledge creation and exchange in festivals are explored. Literature of knowledge creation is examined in a

temporary setting, making us consider to which extent the case study festival can also be understood as a cyclical or even permanent cluster. Additionally, an audience survey provides background information on how the festival is being perceived by its visitors.

In the second sub-question, the working practice of participating artists is examined. The question is directed towards finding out how the festival fits into the artists' practice.

RQb: To which extent does a festival shape artists' practice?

Questions which emerge in this analysis are amongst others how do artists adapt to externally imposed changes? For the second phase of data collection, four on in-depth interviews with participating artists and the producers of Sonic Acts are additionally conducted to the three existing short interviews.

3.2 The Sonic Acts Festival as a case study

The Sonic Acts Festival is held during four days in February in cultural venues, music venues or museums in Amsterdam. Several pre-events are held in the upcoming months preceding the festival, including an excursion to a performance in a water tower at Sint Jaansklooster, which will be referred to either the excursion or the water tower in the analysis of the interviews. Next to lectures in the day-program, one critical writing workshop for journalists and writers, one masterclass and two additional workshops are held during the 2017 festival program. Since 2001, each festival edition is held under a theme which aims at posing questions and discussions around the theme. The 2017 festival is the 17th edition and hosted under the theme "The Noise of Being". The Sonic Acts conference, the day-program, is held at the cultural venue de Brakke Grond in Amsterdam, while locations for the night-events comprise of the concert hall Paradiso, de School, the cultural venue Muziekgebouw aan't IJ & Bimhuis and the Stedelijk Museum, amongst others.

Next to organizing bi-annually versions of the Sonic Acts Festival, the organization Sonic Acts which is based in Amsterdam commissions works, organizes workshops and collaborations with artists. Several commissions and projects produced by Sonic Acts are mentioned throughout the interviews, which will be briefly introduced in the following passage. The Vertical Cinema program is a large-scale and site-specific experimental film- and audiovisual program, was produced and commissioned by Sonic Acts and premiered in 2013. Further, Sonic Acts collaborated and guest-curated with the three-year project Kontraste festival in Austria from 2011 – 2013. The exhibition mentioned is an exhibition of five young

emerging artists at *Arti et Amicitiae* for the 2017 festival edition. Another comment of curated and commissioned works by Sonic Acts is the three-year arts and research project *Dark Ecology*, produced by Sonic Acts and Norwegian, Russian and other European partners which took place in form of three excursions each year between 2011 and 2013. Since 2016, the Sonic Acts Festival Academy, a three-day conference program is held bi-annually in rotation with the Sonic Acts Festival.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Quantitative data collection, audience survey

The quantitative online audience survey was carried out in cooperation with the producers of the Sonic Acts Festival to gain a broad understanding of the audience's feedback and perception of this year's festival. The survey was sent out via e-mail to all visitors who purchased tickets online, attendants of the workshops, newsletter recipients and the volunteers of the Sonic Acts Festival. Furthermore, it was shared on the Facebook page of Sonic Acts and distributed on other social media platforms. An incentive with chances of winning tickets for next year's Sonic Acts Academy edition was set, and the survey was designed to be completed in five to ten minutes. Additionally, access to data from internal reports about the previous and the current year's festival edition was granted, and external reports about previous editions of the Sonic Acts Festival were accessible. Although self-completion questionnaires are the easiest and fastest method to reach the respondents (Bryman, 2012), some limitations to this kind of approach exist. Drawbacks of lower response-rates and incomplete datasets needs to be taken into consideration when administering self-completion questionnaires. Likewise, no follow-up answers to certain topics can be gained (Bryman, 2012). In the end, an audience survey was decided upon to be the best method to gain a broad understanding of the visitors' characteristics and opinions. The following socio-demographic variables were inquired to gain a profile of the visitors:

- Age
- Gender
- Nationality
- City of residence in the Netherlands
- Country of residence outside the Netherlands
- Education level
- Form of employment

Furthermore, four statements about the knowledge process of the festival were designed in a 7-point Likert-Scale, with answers ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ (Bryman, 2012). The four statements are as follows:

- a. The performances and acts presented during the festival (excl. conference) were relevant to my own work.
- b. The festival (excl. conference) gave me inspiration and new knowledge that I will use in my own future research, studies or work.
- c. The topics covered during the conference were relevant to my own research, studies or work.
- d. The conference gave me inspiration and new knowledge that I will use in my own future research, studies or work.

In a similar manner, keywords associated with the Sonic Acts Festival were collected. Participants were asked to identify keywords they would associate the most with the Sonic Acts Festival to capture the perception of the festival. The following eleven keywords were chosen to depict a state of one of the four main keywords, that is, arts, music, technology and science. An ‘other’ option was included in case of non-association of the respondents to prevent distorted findings (Bryman, 2012).

- e. With what do you mostly associate Sonic Acts?
 - Audiovisual art
 - Experimental art
 - Science
 - Technology
 - Electronic music
 - Cutting-edge club culture
 - Films & documentaries
 - Innovative theory
 - Artistic research
 - New discoveries
 - The city of Amsterdam
 - Other

Due to the limiting nature of an audience research with additional requirements from funding organizations and other production parts of Sonic Acts, not all research-relevant questions were included in the survey. The length of the survey also imposed a challenge to include enough Likert-scale questions, which could have been used for statistical analysis on correlation afterwards. Surprisingly, several open-end questions of the survey resulted in answers of the visitors which will be relevant for the qualitative analysis. Subsequently, the large amount of non-incorporated questions and the low response rate lead to a mixed-method

approach with a qualitative focus, as stated in the beginning of this chapter. The complete audience survey can be found in Appendix A.

3.3.2 Qualitative data collection, interviews

The qualitative data collection is divided into two phases. In the first phase of data collection, three short semi-structured qualitative interviews with artists were held during the conference at the Sonic Acts Festival from February 25th– 27th. Two of the three interviewees gave a lecture at the conference, while the third interviewee performed a music-piece at the excursion to the water tower. All three artists were selected randomly and approached after the conference or the excursion, and all three agreed to be interviewed. Age, profession and experience in the creative sector vary greatly, leaving no room for selection bias (Bryman, 2012). While the first two interviewees were attending the Sonic Acts Festival for the first time, the third interviewee has collaborated with Sonic Acts in several works over several festival editions before. One of the first-time participating artists has been relatively new to the art scene, coming from a background in philosophy, while the other two interviewees are long practicing artists. The first two interviews of the lecturers were held during the conference at de Brakke Grond, while the third interview with the artist of the performance was held in the artist's hotel lobby prior the departure. A short interview guideline of the interviews can be found in table 2 on page 26. The total duration of the short interviews of the first batch accounts of 56 minutes.

The second phase of data collection comprises of in-depth interviews with artists who have either performed, attended or organized two unconnected workshops. Artists, workshop participants and curators were approached by Sonic Acts and asked if they would be interested in a semi-structured interview. Out of the eight approached, two artists and one workshop participant agreed for this interview. The interviewees vary with age, profession and their experience in participating at Sonic Acts and are from different fields of practice. To gain a better understanding of the structure of the festival, the head-producer and producer of Sonic Acts were interviewed in a joint interview prior to the artist interviews. All interviews were held in either Amsterdam or Rotterdam, two in official institutions such as the respective work places, one at the artist's private house and the last interview in a public place. One limitation poses that all artists interviewed are from the Netherlands and are active in either Amsterdam, Rotterdam or Den Hague. This may lead to a bias and will be discussed in the limitations in Chapter 3.5. A total of 4:59:47 (hrs:min:sec) of the four in-depth interviews was collected. The aggregated duration of both short and in-depth interviews accounts of 5:56:55 (hrs:min:sec).

The detailed interview guideline for the producers and artists of the interviews can be found in the Appendix B. The short interview guideline for all three groups of interviewees can be found in table 2 below. A table of date, length, and other interview information will be presented in the qualitative analysis on page 30. For both interviews, a semi-structured interview guideline was developed in order to incorporate space for open questions, probing or unexpected outcomes (Bryman, 2012). Last, the qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews, following Comunian (2016) and Glow & Caust's (2010) studies was decided to be the best fitting analysis method for the research.

Table 2. *Short interview guideline of producers and artists.*

	Producers	Artist short interviews	Artist long interviews
Introduction	brief structure of Sonic Acts? how did it start? how did it develop into what is today?		introduction of research educational background? fields of previous works situated? current creative field?
	explanation of previous and ongoing collaborations, commissions and projects?	first time participation? yes: first impression of festival no: describe earlier impressions, work experience how first heard of the festival? how do you understand the Sonic Acts Festival?	
		expectation when asked to perform? did the expectation match with the outcome? audience engagement, importance during the performance and in general? collaborations with other artists, importance during performance and in general?	
Main part	development of art scene in Amsterdam? development of artist collaborations, what main changes be perceived?	main reasons considered for participation?	details on participation: changes, process? description of own work practice?

			relation to Sonic Acts as a platform?
end	relationship and positioning with other festivals?	changes after participation? (if previous participation)	last comments on the festival and festival structure?
	future talk: further collaborations, projects or commissions?	last comments on the festival and festival structure?	

Source: Own elaboration

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The audience survey was sent out via e-mail one week after the final day of the festival in February and was kept active over several weeks. Regarding the range, a relative low estimate was reached with an estimated target group of 300 ticket holders with a passe-partout, 200 excursion participants, 50 volunteers and 35 workshop attendants and 2600 newsletter recipients. Thus, with the survey shared amongst the social media followers on Facebook, a large number of festival visitors have been reached but a relatively low percentage has actually completed the survey. Of course, an overlap in the sub-groups probably exists, as most possibly excursion participants might have visited the festival with either a passe-partout ticket or visitors outside the targeted group with one-time tickets, and not all newsletter recipients must have necessarily visited this festival. As a consequence of the small sample, solely simple descriptive statistics will be conducted. Although no causal relationships can be deducted in statistical tests as they would be statistically insignificant, the demographic data will be used to provide some basic understanding of the festival (Bryman, 2012).

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

For the qualitative analysis, interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewees and transcribed manually. The transcription process can be divided into different phases, stated as follows. The three short interviews from the first phase of data collection were first recorded and transcribed manually during the process of thesis writing, and adaptations of the interview guideline towards the understanding of the topic could be made. In the second phase of data collection, the in-depth interviews were transcribed manually and, together with

the short interviews, hand-coded for analysis. The coding took place in three phases. First, printed versions of the transcripts were read through several times, and only after the second systematic scanning of the transcript were general notes added (Bryman, 2012). Afterwards, transcripts were scanned through, the general notes were summarized into keywords, which represent the codes. Lastly, the attained codes were scanned for themes, overlaps and merged together in case of overlap. . For the last two steps, coding was repeated on the qualitative content analysis application NVivo to examine for possible forgotten codes and themes. A list of the codes and themes can be found in Appendix C.

3.5 Limitations

Aside from the structure of the audience survey itself, where not all necessary questions for research could be included, the amount of data gathered presents the main limitation in the research design. A large number quantitative results from the audience survey could provide more precise findings. Also, it should be kept in mind that the low response rate with 100 respondents is not valid to represent the whole audience of the festival. Another bias exists in the in-depth interviews, as all interviewees are of Dutch nationality and work and live in the Netherlands. A larger number of interviews, especially with artists from outside the Netherlands and also different stakeholders, such as the curators of a festival, would provide more insight into the structures of festivals. Moreover, qualitative interview methods can lead to biases in interpretation from the researcher and has been described as highly subjective (Bryman, 2012). A more precise triangulation method thus would be desirable with a larger and respondent group, which could lead to higher credibility of this study. In the end, a mixed-method was chosen for this analysis. It is technically feasible to merge quantitative and qualitative together, as long as both quantitative and qualitative results are not analyzed as two separated strands, but in a joint analysis (Bryman, 2012).

4. Results and Discussion

In this chapter, findings of the analysis are discussed and mapped to the theory to answer the research question *to which extent do artists benefit from participating in a festival?* First, analysis focusses on the first sub-question *how does a festival function as a temporary cluster?* Activities and the structure of the case study festival are introduced, and the characteristics and knowledge exchange of this festival can be classified with that of temporary clusters. The communities of practice approach, elaborated in the literature framework, maps the networks of participants during the festival, followed by examining the working practice of the participating artists in connection with the festival. In the end, the change in the occupation of artists is perceived, which leads to the concluding aspect of the second sub-question of *to which extent does a festival shape artists' practice?*

4.1 Festivals as cyclical clusters

The following chapter links the empirical findings with the types of knowledge exchange which happen inside a festival, where actors together for a short period of time (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). The table of details and length of the interviews can be found on the following page. First of all, a brief description of the festival will be given to understand the context of this festival. Starting out as a platform for students and young artists in audiovisuals in 1994 as a collaboration between the Royal Conservatory Den Hague and the cultural center and music venue Paradiso in Amsterdam, the Sonic Acts Festival now focuses on the intersection between art, music, science and technology. As a non-profit organization, it is supported by the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK), Creative Industries Funds NL and Paradiso (www.sonicacts.com). Growing over the years, the organization now consists of a curatorial team of four full-time employees and employs an additional team of freelancers for the duration of the festival. A total of 10600 visitors have attended the festival in 2017, including the workshops, excursions and other programs of the Sonic Acts Festival. The scale of the festival has risen as compared to the previous festival editions. The number of the previous years for the Academy edition in 2016 and the festival edition 2015 accounted for 5400 and 9200, respectively. Most of the 100 attending artists performed were international artists, and ten artists were of Dutch nationality (Sonic Acts Internal Data). However, it is to note that an overlap in artists' participation exist, e.g. artists could have given a workshop, held a lecture and performed at the night-program. The audience survey led to a total of 100 valid responses, which depicts a young audience with an average age of 32 years, ranging from 18-75 years. Before starting, the following table provides an overview about the interviewed artists,

producers and workshop participants alongside their profession or information about previous participation in this festival.

Table 3. *Demographic data of interview respondents.*

Interview number	Artist name	Gender, age	Profession, role in festival	Date	Duration [min:sec]	Previous participation	Nationality
1	Maryam Monalisa Ghavari	f, 30-35	visual artist, lecturer	25.02.17	20:30	no	UK
2	Armen Avanessian	m, 44	philosopher, lecturer	26.02.17	17:59	no	Austria
3	Espen Sommer Eide	m, 45	sound art, performance at excursion	27.02.17	19:19	yes	Norway
4	Annette Wolfsberger	f, 44	Sonic Acts head producer	11.05.17	63:35	yes (producer since 2007)	Austria
4	Rick Erens	m, 27	Sonic Acts producer		(joint interview)	yes (producer)	Dutch
5	Cilia Erens	f, 71	sound art, workshop participant	11.05.17	98:48	no	Dutch
6	Katja Truijen	f, 26	digital researcher, writer, musician coordinator of writing workshop	16.05.17	57:27	yes	Dutch
7	Maarten Brijker	m, 24	music composer, musical performances	18.05.17	80:37	yes	Dutch

Source: Own elaboration.

The following analysis will mainly focus on the conference of the Sonic Acts Festival, and it will be argued that knowledge exchange is enabled through discussions, joint dinners and activities outside of the planned festival structure, similar to trade fairs and other professional gatherings (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). Therefore, the day-program, which will be referred to as the conferences in this analysis, provides space for knowledge exchange, while the night-events consisting out of pure musical acts are less of a space for knowledge creation or exchange, as one interviewee notes:

I guess there is also some kind of intuitive networking going on there [at the conference], which happens less on music festivals, because you are there setting up the same night and playing after each other and then you are gone, like this is happening in the night, you are tired and you go back to where you are sleeping or something, so there is also a different way of interacting and of making a network or something. [Maarten]

Moreover, the focus of festivals during the conferences aligns with that of temporary clusters, where lectures steer towards shared, vision-oriented knowledge creation (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). Thus, festivals provide a “rich arena for learning processes” (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, p. 17). Aside from planning towards a diverse learning community from the producer’s side, participants themselves strive for more interactive learning processes. One interviewee requested to be on a panel with a fellow researcher who focusses on new-media theory, making him discuss other strands of theory in his lecture, which he used as a reason to look at a fellow researcher’s work.

I said that would like to be on the same panel as Wendy Cheung. Because it made me to think about a few media-related topics, if I would have been on the panel with Nina Power, whose works I know very well, who uses a similar vocabulary, who works with the same theorists and theses, [it would have been different...that made me] look at media-relevant topics, to structure my theses in a media-theoretical way, and to use it as a reason to look at her [Wendy Cheung’s] works. [Armen, own translation from German]

Therefore, he deliberately avoided a panel with lecturers who use the same theory-driven strands but explained his decision as an opportunity to work from a different standpoint. This exactly is what festivals provide as a learning ground, which is characterized by learning by comparison (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004).

Examining the aspect of how participants exchange information, one interviewee states, “there is hardly any dialogue between the theorists, the talks are happening afterwards” [Armen, own translation from German]. The majority of interviewees acknowledge the networking aspect, although most describe it as a tiring process or not personally interesting for them. One interviewee states that he “got the most knowledge about attending a lectures [sic] and then having dinner with a few people” [Maarten]. Information exchange therefore has been found to correspond to the literature and to take place during joint dinners or in rather unplanned and spontaneous ways (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004). When asked for direct examples of such networking, one interviewee recalls starting a conversation after talking with a fellow artist on the same plane ride back which resulted in a collaboration. However, this is an exceptional example where the direct outcome of a conversation could be directly mapped out, as the same interviewee states “it is hard to say, because it has to be on a particular level, it's not so easy to measure. Because of course, I get in touch with people that I would normally wouldn't do, and maybe not lead to some super concrete projects with anyone” and adds “but there had been new contacts of mine that could possibly be important in the future” [Espen].

Described as a ‘forerunner festival’, the producers confirm the relevance of producers of other festivals visiting festivals in order to be updated on the latest trends. This is described as vertical interaction. Other interaction involves the audience, in terms of satisfaction, and promoters of other festivals (Comunian, 2016). Not only artists but also curators or producers of other festivals visit in order to acquire information about the happenings in the scene (Power & Jansson, 2008). Horizontal interaction connects complementary actors in festivals, which would have usually not interacted with each other (Maskell et al., 2006). The same effect could be perceived at the festival. Researchers are linked together and find out about an overlap of their research during the conferences, which the producers describe as “common denominators” [Annette]. Not only existing ties and networks and relations with artists are nurtured, but projects and collaborations continuously bring in new information, which then can be discussed and processed (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). As the head-producer of the festival states,

these opportunities [such as guest-curating at Kontraste festival and collaborations such as Dark Ecology] are fantastic, they really keep you fresh, I think. And it's a great opportunity on discovering other pockets of knowledge and people and ways of doing things. [Annette]

Another example for frequent input is the Vertical Cinema program, which premiered in 2013. Set up by Sonic Acts, this collaboration has commissioned new works for the 2017 festival edition which were shown at the opening of this year's festival. Usually, the Vertical Cinema program tours around the world and screens in diverse places. In another example of artists collaboration overlapping participation, the Dark Ecology project emerged as a collaboration between a Kirkenes-based curator and Sonic Acts. While the three-year project took place in excursions in places between Russia and Norway or Finland, parts of the program were designed to be brought back and shown to a different audience at this festival. Participants of such projects frequently attend the festival again, such as in one case a participant was mentioned, who attended an excursion for the first time several years ago and has joined for following Dark Ecology projects afterwards.

However, in all those projects, artists can develop works at one festival or residency and present it at another festival or similar events. Not only are artists re-invited every year but undoubtedly attend other festivals, which leads to the question whether festivals are cyclical clusters. One interviewee, Katía, who is working closely with festivals and writing for them, describes an overlap in topics and themes. She perceives that, especially in the Netherlands, festivals are influencing each other in the topic or theme of their program. The overlap of festival spaces, she argues, is mainly due to the close proximity of cultural institutes and organizations which are situated in the Netherlands on the one hand, and on the other hand due to the budget cuts in the cultural sector four years ago. Festivals and other cultural organizations “really have to collaborate” [Katía]. Another interviewee, Espen, has developed and presented works at this festival which he further presented at a festival in Norway. This is not only a single occurrence but several other cases have been mentioned. Artists frequently develop work at one festival through the means of either a residency, a collaboration or commission and subsequently continue to develop their work at other places of knowledge exchange. Despite the question whether festivals actively influence each other in themes and set-up or if it is only being perceived by its by-standers, this leads to the conclusion that festivals consist of overlapping spaces which are part of a bigger global circuit (Power & Jansson, 2008). Moreover, such cyclical structure also make sense in terms of knowledge creation. As Grabher (2004) states, repeated learning between actors and outside of the organization, in our case outside a festival, builds the basis for knowledge creation. Further, repeated interaction leads to the build-up of trust and closer ties, which will be further developed in the different network ties of communality, sociality and connectivity (Grabher, 2004). Therefore, the audience meets at different points and in overlapping spaces over and over again (Power & Jansson, 2008).

4.2 Knowledge exchange at festivals

Communities of practice are understood as shared spaces of participants with the same skills, where knowledge exchange through personal face-to-face interaction exists. Participants of such communities adapt their working practice based on the feedback of their peers and gain a common understanding of habits, which results in shared routines (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; J. S. Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Arts festivals, which are a form of temporary cluster and which “stimulate processes of knowledge creation and dissemination” (Maskell et al., 2006, p. 1004), provide space for the emergence of such communities of practice.

Communality can be metaphorically categorized as the neighborhood where relationships are both personal and professional and bound to long-lasting ties (Grabher, 2004). With mutual experiences, a common history or narrative can be told and members are inclined to stay for a longer time. The producers are focused on working with artists for a longer time in order to get to know them and to be able to see their development. Findings overlap with Comunian’s (2016) study on the Fuse Medway Festival. New collaborations or projects have formed based on previous experiences, and close ties amongst artists and producers already exist. Moreover, producers invite the artists for the whole duration of the festival to enable them to experience the whole program and to further to observe where works or projects can be further developed with certain artists. However, new projects with new members of the community can also be set up. One local artist describes the supportiveness of the festival curators with him and describes the feeling of their personal relationship, which develops into a personal realm:

I feel that the distance between people behind these institutes or festivals or events is way smaller with the artist, the distances becomes smaller I guess and it becomes more like a personal relation. And I think Sonic Acts and Progress Bar are good examples how they really have small artists playing there which is just like in the direct circles of the organizers. [Maarten]

Familiarity and shared experiences, such as common schools or universities describe the ties which exist within communality (Grabher, 2004). Interviewees in communality are linked to the festival either through ties of common studies or via networks through mutual friends or family (Grabher, 2004). Although the latter kind of ties did not exist, one tie from a second interviewee was related to her workspace. Her workspace, situated in the Netherlands as well, recommends lecturers or artists to the festival aside from connecting works or

collaborations to this festival and other cultural organizations. Another interviewee, Espen, states that by participating several times, he gets to know the people and artists who are working there. Furthermore, Espen values the bond which the festival sets up with its artists highly and mentions how thought-processes and ideas about works can be shaped and transformed into projects in the end.

Being invited several times you go deeper every time and you get to know people more...so it's very good to be able to come back to or develop further the collaboration. [Espen]

The artist, although not being situated in the Netherlands, describes personal bonds with the festival and how he could build up a story in his works with this festival. This reflects the characteristics of communality, as the interviewee describes the possibility to diverge from day-to-day topics or works into reflections, exchange about problematics or more detailed issues (Grabher, 2004). Further, trust is a prevailing feature in communality, which both artists and producers mention when reflecting on the relation within a festival (Grabher, 2004). However, interactions within the festival are also partly connected to sociality with focus on career, support on the works and opportunity for feedback.

Sociality is defined by ephemeral and intense ties, is more career-oriented and professional ties are stronger than personal ties (Grabher, 2004). Most artists attending this festival are situated somewhere in the realm of sociality. One interviewee, who attended for the first time, encountered several artists with whom she was connected before, in either common residencies or previous collaborations. Although she did not keep the aspects of fellow peers or did not inquire about the fellow speakers who would be attending when preparing her lecture, “it shouldn't have much been as much of a surprise” she states in the end [Maryam]. As opposed to other artists, attending this festival is very much linked to her work, and thus situated in sociality. Another interviewee describes his connections with this festival in more professional terms and his focus on the career-based aspects, as Armen states “for me this is a new audience, and I like it a lot. And I hope I will be invited again next year. So I learn something, interesting people here” [own translation from German]. Depending on artists and their motives which come with participation, ties can shift either towards more community-based focus, or on the other hand towards more goal-oriented information exchange (Comunian, 2016).

Connectivity is the third type of network and is characterized by fleeting and weak relationships, as it is based in the virtual domain (Grabher, 2004). However, in this examination,

a shift between these spheres can be perceived, as it is still possible to be situated in the communality ‘neighborhood’ but with the social practices of ‘hanging out’ (Comunian, 2016). Rather than focused on ‘how-to’ as in connectivity, sociality is focused on the ‘know-how’ or ‘know-whom’. As an example, the mixture between sociality and connectivity can be perceived in the critical writing workshop which one interviewee co-organized. The workshop prevails in professional activity but clearly includes personal communication and as face-to-face interaction is needed, which would classify the ties into the network of sociality. At the same time, the structure of a workshop is goal-oriented, which would fall into the sphere of connectivity. The finding of shifting ties correspond with Comunian’s (2016) research on flexible networks which were adapted from Grabher (2004).

However, a discrepancy between the visitors and the producers or participating artists exists. Visitors might not necessarily understand the repeated invitation of artists in order to develop more works. This discrepancy in festival perception of which the producers are aware of and would pose an interesting topic for further research in terms of network ties.

Also I really recommend to keep an eye on diversity and new acts. Don't recycle too many acts... you already had perform various times on the festival, even if you want to follow their development. [audience survey, anonymous]

Three characteristics sought attention during the analysis, which differ in regard of structure or other aspects to other festivals, and need to be considered in this research. First, interviewees note the distinct and engaging structure of the festival. As one interviewee states, he is “pretty much around in the city”, and in contact with different influences such as music and visual arts [Armen, own translation from German]. Two other interviewees note that “almost 22 hours of the day are planned” [Maryam] and “how every aspect of the festival is thought through” [Katía]. Furthermore, Katía mentions how the festival incorporates external functions of a festival and turns them into a program on its own, as on the example of the critical writing workshop, which guides journalists and writers in their coverage about the festival. The perceived structure at the same time matches with the aims of the producers “to invite [the artists] for the whole duration of the festival, and to see if certain people could do more.” [Annette]. This ‘doing more’ leads to the second aspect, namely the continuous development of projects which was mentioned earlier in connection with communality. Aside from the structure of the festival, the third aspect is the focus of the festival, which is perceived as “unique” from other festivals. Although all interviewees mention similar festivals in and outside the Netherlands such as the transmediale festival in Berlin, Arts Electronica in Linz or

Resonate Festival in Belgrade, the interviewees describe this festival is distinctive in terms of programming and set-up, and

that makes Sonic Acts really such quite a unique festival because it tries to engage with different geographical places, also of course the field trips they make and so in sort of the side-program they are actually I think really experimental with the way they do research, the collaborative research, and work together with artists and put people together. [Katía]

All interviewees stated that the of critical focus with topics addressed by the festival cannot be found elsewhere, although general overlaps of themes in the Dutch festival scene surely exist. Each festival places itself in a certain theme, however, this festival has been described as “coherent” in programming[Maarten]. The program was very much described as in “juxtaposition”, “simultaneously” or “in sync” by one interviewee [Maryam]. Aligning with the perception of the artists, most visitors in the audience survey associate the Sonic Acts Festival with experimental art (73%), audiovisual art (69%), electronic music (65%) and artistic research (53%), followed by innovative theory (41%) as the main themes. Clearly, multiple keywords were possible to select in this audience survey question. As one survey respondent states, when asked on reasons for future recommendation of the festival, the mixture between the programs is what makes it so particular:

...Because it's a very relevant festival to all of us professionals working in the contemporary music field and way more (other art fields). It's a place that[^c]s important for the European contemporary music scene, not only as a place of presentations and performances, but as a gathering place and very active participant and creator of the scene in general.... [audience survey, anonymous]

The amount of professionals is further depicted in the survey respondents, as almost all survey respondents attended the festival out of personal interest or curiosity (73%) or out of relation to own studies or work (54%). Again, for this question, multiple answers were possible. Most survey respondents have, for instance, stated that the festival is relevant for gaining inspiration, but also helpful for their own studies, work or research. A detailed table of the means and standard deviation can be found in Appendix D. Similarly, the form of employment ranges predominantly between students (n=37), freelancers (n=29) or self-employed (n=26) amongst the respondents of the audience survey and corresponds with the multiple-job holdings of the artists, which is discussed in the following sub-chapter. To conclude, when examining artists' practice and other questions in our research, the distinct role of this festival needs to be

kept in mind. Not all festivals might be interested in the follow-up development of artists or try to create such a distinct programming in a way. However, findings are consistent with existing research on knowledge creation in temporary clusters (Comunian, 2016).

4.3 Working practice

As mentioned throughout research, festivals are a platform for information exchange and learning (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Comunian, 2016; Maskell et al., 2006). The possibility for exchange and learning has been mentioned frequently in form of the term ‘opportunity’ throughout the interviews of both artists and producers. These findings conform with the literature. Artists attend festivals to present new work through commissions or to show the development of current or previous works (Comunian, 2016; Glow & Caust, 2010). Several artists have described their works as ‘in progress’, as it is rarely completely finished at a certain point of time. As one interviewee puts it, the festival is an opportunity to archive the stages of development.

This opportunity means I can make it intelligible. So that has to do with audience, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that [sic] people in the room – it just means it is intelligible at this moment in time in this particular way and it might have a life after, but for now, this is what the work is. [Maryam]

Next to making work intelligible not only to oneself as in the case of Maryam, the emphasis on the work as a continuous development was mentioned several times. As mentioned before, frequent participation gives the artist the possibility to develop work further, which establishes a form of trust (Grabher, 2004). Several artists have stated to wanting to come back. This is not only related to the process of re-inviting artists to this festival where their works can be further developed, but also a deadline to finish work was deemed as relevant for the artists.

I am very used to working against the deadline or some kind of end, so it's very important to have that possibility and to know that one can get in touch with... . [Eспен]

The work against a deadline, however, is a result of more project-based works and transformed application procedures for funding. Espen compares the shift of application for artist projects with research applications, where a framed proposal, together with “a beginning and an end” needs to be delivered. In turn, the shift towards more project-based works is a

result of coping with the uncertain labor market in the creative industries which has been discussed in Chapter 2.3 (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Furthermore, almost all artists mention a mix of aspects which come into mind when participating, examples include getting possible commissions or developing an audience. However, the main driver of festival participation can be described by the feasibility for one part, and for the other part as a regular part of their working practice. For the first group, festivals are used as a means of realizing works which are “demanding in resources and economy and that couldn’t have been done without Sonic Acts and Dark Ecology projects” [Espen]. For Espen, festivals are a main platform to show his work instead of attending for inspiration. Next to making the work intelligible, Maryam describes the reasoning to attend the festival as the “opportunity to develop something new, that’s connected to my ongoing work”, which in turn leads her to “having to push [her]self to do something that would not have happened necessarily without this moment in time”. However, for her, this means getting out of her usual work structure, leaving her environment and being immersed in something such as this festival for five days. One workshop attendant, who works with a specific form of audio-recording which requires listening to it with headphones, could gain new insights on how others work, something she usually does not do.

What I liked so much about the workshop is the freedom. I am very strict in what I record. Because I don’t want to hold my mic in the air and just press on record and then stop. It must have a reason why I record that. And here, I felt a sort of freedom of everybody. [Cilia]

For her, attending this workshop gave her the not only the possibility to observe the different working practice of other sound-recorders. Although she would not change her work practice directly, having conversations about the projects of other artists gave her the possibility to think outside her own working practice, which in turn stimulated her work process. Furthermore, she describes this workshop as an in-between to a new step in her professional life, where she will transfer her sound-recordings into another context in the form of an exhibition. As she states,

and here, I had to do a detox as well, in this workshop, because I said ‘how are we going to that if we have to [present the finished work], there is so few time and then everybody has to have their own sound composition on every laptop and then we have to have our headphones’ and then – of course not! It is not about headphones. I am only thinking in headphones. [Cilia]

In contrast, other artists incorporate their participation into their regular working practice, such as the two local and younger Dutch interviewees. The two state that they do not use this festival as the main means of showing their work, primarily as they have other platforms to show their works, some which they have developed themselves. This might be an exception, however, as both artists are situated in the Netherlands and are connected closely to this festival. One reason for this assessment might be their involvement in other, arts-related or non-arts related work, where other possibilities for presenting their work exist. Also, both interviewees work with mediums which can be disseminated online, such as music or writing, as they have stated themselves. Lastly, interviewees also combine the festival with other occupations they have. One of the interviewees, Armen, has combined a screening of his film with his lecture while at the same time inviting students from his teaching at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam. He describes it as a “win-win-win” situation, “it is good for the festival, it is good the Rijksacademie, it is good for me. If it goes well, positive things are collecting together” [own translation from German]. This again shows how festivals organize and collaborate with cultural institutions outside of their own ties and bring back new connections which in turn gives fresh input into their domain (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004).

Despite differences in the working practice of the artists, a general acknowledgement of valuing the festival exists. One interviewee mentions the support which this festival gives to the artists as he has perceived:

they go a long way for the artists that are playing there...there was a lot of energy put into to make that happen for the artists, so I think they are pretty cool and pretty good in providing a platform for the best work the artist could make. [Maarten]

Not only the venues in Amsterdam, some of which are well-known institutions, but also the history of the festival, both in length and in connection to the city are motives for value creation.

And then you could say that Sonic Acts is really like an Amsterdam-based festival, and...it really is sort of part of the...cultural fabric of the city, also when you look at the venues that are included in the program. [Katía]

The two local artists also mention precursors in forms of previous festivals in the city of Amsterdam and the role of the themes on which the festival focuses on, such as a critical engagement on technology and theory paired with actual visual art and music, which was reasoned as the precursors in the city. As one interviewee states, “sort of the tone of the festival

is very much linked to the tone of the city in a way” [Katía]. The other interviewee, Maarten, adds that “the city would lack something for me”. Although the aspect of reaching an audience plays very little to almost no role for most interviewees, the producers of the festival think of diverse venues in order to reach different audiences. As the head-producer of the festival states,

if you do something with the Stedelijk Museum, you reach a pocket of different audiences, of virtual arts interests people, for example, Muziekgebouw, it's the same, all of that. It's much more thinking from a complementary point of view. [Annette]

In that sense, audiences play indirectly a role for the artists who are attending, although it might not be their first motive when participating, as they have stated. One interviewee holds a divided view, as although audience engagement is interesting and might be helpful, but “[y]ou are attending a conference and hold a paper, and afterwards people are jumping towards you, full of good intentions and interest, and want to talk to you. But you are just maybe depleted” [Armen, own translation from German].

4.4 Blurring lines of artists’ occupation

Two conclusions can be made. First, almost all interviewees classify their work in the inter-disciplines. Second, artists and the audience have stated an overlap in occupations. While the inter-disciplinary occupations conforms with the focus of our case study, the discussion will focus on the multiple-job holdings. Most of the interviewees do not only classify themselves as solely researchers or artists but speak against this division of artist description. They further give workshops or teach at schools, universities or other institutions. Similar patterns can be applied for the audience survey. Most of the respondents have stated several occupations which are mainly situated in the creative and the educational sector. Examples include a visual artist and arts educator for children or a part-time musician who works in the IT sector (Sonic Acts, 2017). The phenomenon of the multiple job-holdings describes the broadening of artists’ skills, which could be divided into ‘arts-work’, ‘arts-related work’ and ‘non-arts work’. First mentioned by Throsby (1994) as the work-preference model, it states that artists are more likely to work overtime in non-arts related jobs in order to support their arts-work. Although none of the artists have stated themselves to work in several sectors due to external factors, one interviewee gave two possible reasons for artists to pursue several jobs. For her, it can be explained by personal preferences, whereas other “artists or researchers or curators...really want to focus on one thing in order to become really good at it” [Katía]. In

both cases she recognizes that external factors impose a lot of uncertainty, and that “precarious labor” exists amongst artists. Further, interviewees have mentioned the Dutch arts education system and the government budget cuts for the cultural sector in 2013 as reasons for the partition of jobs. For instance, Het Nieuwe Institute, the workplaces of one interviewees, Katía, emerged as a result of the budget cuts in the Dutch cultural sector. Researchers and lecturers often possess two jobs, a phenomenon which she describes as common in the creative sector.

Regarding the question to what extent a festival shapes artists’ practice, some conclusions can be made. First, scholars perceive a change in artists’ practice into more isolated states with more and more project-based work and less long-term employment (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). With the growing mobility and the growing number of the division of work, traditional working spaces of artists are starting to disappear (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). This is especially relevant for musicians or other intangible forms of art (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Moreover, artists’ practice are shifting towards research-based structures. For instance, one interviewee mentions that while applying for funding for instance, artists have to include their goals and planned results of their project [Espen]. A mixture between free and working time, but also a shift in the role of the artist can be perceived. As another interviewee states, she feels like an in-between in her role as a representative of her work space, and from her own freelance work:

I already went for a couple of years as a visitor, so it was interesting because in a way I had a maybe a double-role, because at one hand, I was there also as a representative of the Nieuwe Institute..., but at the other hand I was also working as a freelancer for Sonic Acts and the critical writing workshop.
[Katía]

Regardless the reasons which drive artists to pursue several careers, the community as a backbone for creation and learning has gained significance (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). As one researcher states, the modern working practice can be described as the “cave analogy” [Maryam]. In her perception, individuals nowadays are not situated in close presence or “in the same kind of society like a...shared, present moment” anymore but rather, “live in vast distances, across vast cultures, work in very different socio-economic conditions likely, and so we have to find ways to make our work intelligible”. This shows the role of festivals as a platform where artists can connect to their peers. Another interviewee aligns with the statements and describes her working process as an isolated process, which will be connected to the audience through either

presentation or participation only at the end. As a result of the new state of isolation, new forms of communities emerge and are being nurtured by artists (Lingo & Tepper, 2013).

5. Conclusions

The topic of our research was to find out *to which extent do artists benefit from participating at arts festivals?* In the preceding analysis, which included in-depth interviews with artists and the producers of the Sonic Acts Festival, the question was answered twofold. First, the festival was tested for the characteristics of a temporary cluster. Results show, as predicted by the literature, that festivals are part of cyclical clusters, where overlapping spaces in the festival itself and between other festivals create a sort of global circuit (Power & Jansson, 2008). Especially in the Dutch creative sector, where it is partly driven by the cultural budget cuts four years ago as well as the close proximity of the Dutch cultural landscape, cultural organizations and festivals are working closely intertwined. Festivals even succeed in their role as cyclical cluster by forming projects, collaborations and commissions outside of their cluster in other countries. Not only are relations between creatives nurtured and refreshed at festivals, but also new ties and relations are formed (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004; Maskell et al., 2006). The first sub-question of *how does a festival function as a temporary cluster?* has been answered subsequently.

Further, vertical and horizontal interaction between artists and other participants has been mapped and the new input into the community, longer-lasting projects or re-occurring projects with artists contributes to the knowledge creation of the participants (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004). The second sub-question *to which extent does a festival shape artists' practice?* was examined in relation to the network ties within a festival. Findings show that festivals provide a space for artists' occupation in forms of lectures, workshops, or formats linked to excursions. This provides an opportunity to develop their working path on their own, whilst still being immersed in the community and getting the feeling of support. For some artists, a festival provides a certain structural incentive and opportunity to frame their work into a presentable format, especially as most works are described as 'in development'. Furthermore, festivals realizes projects which would have otherwise not been economically or logistically feasible, and often implement a detailed execution for these artworks. Often, the case study festival re-invites artists to further develop their work and pushes the development in different formats. While some artists use festivals as the only means to showcase either finished work, stages of development of current works or newly created works, other artists have set up platforms or working opportunities themselves and are rather linked through the aspect of communality. However, all artists state that certain aspects of acknowledgement towards attending this festival exist, which in turn can be understood in different values. Not only do

certain venues in the city lead to a reputational value towards this festival, but also the critical focus has been acknowledged by several interviewees.

Lastly, this study was undertaken with regard to flexible network ties between the participants, which were adapted from Grabher (2004). External market forces were taken into consideration when examining artists' practice (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). However, no significant difference in working with artists were perceived by the festival producers in regard to the new emergence of the portfolio-artist. This can be explained twofold: first, multiple-job holdings have been long perceived in the creative sector (Throsby, 1994), and that festivals festival themselves also need to adapt to externally imposed factors, such as applying for funding themselves. Rather, festivals provide space for changes of the artist's role and gives room for inventing new opportunities. As a yearly event, it provides possibilities to build up new networks amongst artists (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004).

In the end, the extent to which festivals shape artists' practice can be explained in three steps in connection to the literature. First, festivals gives artists the opportunity to meet and establish contact with fellow artists from the same or different field (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004, 2004). Moreover, festivals provide space for especially local artists to develop long-lasting relations in the network of communality. On the other hand, artists who are situated in sociality benefit from goal-oriented career-decisions (Comunian, 2016; Grabher, 2004). In conclusion, when examining the structures in which knowledge creation occurs, knowledge is not only produced by solely a firm or an organization, but the individual participants form a community, which makes learning a social process (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Festivals thus provide a platform for the hybrid-role of the artists, and provide a space for the new roles which artists invent themselves.

However, the extent to which the hybrid-role or the portfolio-worker change the ways festivals work with artists needs to be considered. Festival producers mostly work with a certain type of artists anyway, such as in this case with artists focusing on the inter-disciplines. Thus, further research about festivals with different art-forms or specializations might give further information of how festivals shape artists' practice. The linkage between the artists' own platforms, the easiness of dissemination (such as music as opposed to visual or performance arts) and the external labor and funding situation in each country are the next steps in research. Moreover, the discussion about influence of clustering on specialization has been left out in this analysis. Specialization in connection on the one hand to higher chances for success of the artist (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011) or specialization as an outcome of co-location or as a result of specific demand on the other hand (Bathelt, Malmberg,

& Maskell, 2004; Frederiksen & Lorenzen, 2008) can be applied on the artists' practice. In the end, the question of an extended community of practice arises. As Brown & Duguid (1991) and Wenger (1998, as cited in Maskell et al., 2006) state, "extended communities of practice can be established and reproduced over the years and common interpretative schemes developed as technologies deepen and the frontiers move in new and unexpected directions". This provides space for further discussion about digital distribution such as the livestreaming of conferences. For one interviewee, the value of watching a livestream of a conference or music event would not provide the same value as in physical attendance.

Limitations in the case study exist in transferability, as the case study festival has been applied on a what has been described a specific festival in terms of structure and programming. Although research findings overlap with the findings on communality for the Fuse Festival, certain structures differ in terms of the open-call structure or the focus on supporting emerging artists of the Fuse Festival (Comunian, 2016). Lastly, a more in-depth focus on the existing literature and a larger number of data sets in both quantitative surveys which could be conducted amongst all participating artists connection with a larger number of in-depth interviews will provide greater credibility for this research.

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Appendix

A. Audience survey

Dear visitor,

Help us evaluate Sonic Acts Festival to improve future editions. If you attended the festival, please participate in our survey and share your thoughts. It will take approximately 5–10 minutes to complete.

By completing the survey you can win one of three passe-partouts for next year's Sonic Acts Academy (22–25 Feb 2018)!

1. Have you visited or participated in any previous events or activities organized by Sonic Acts? (Choose as many as you like)
 - No, this was the first
 - Yes, Sonic Acts Academy (2016)
 - Yes, The Geologic Imagination (2015)
 - Yes, The Dark Universe (2013)
 - Yes, Travelling Time (2012)
 - Yes, earlier editions of the festival
 - Yes, other Sonic Acts activities

2. Which events did you visit at Sonic Acts Festival 2017?
(Choose as many as you like)
 - Complete programme
 - Opening at Paradiso (Thursday)
 - Sonic Acts at De School (Thursday)
 - Conference at De Brakke Grond
 - Film programme at De Brakke Grond
 - Sonic Acts at Stedelijk Museum (Friday)
 - Progress Bar at Paradiso (Friday)
 - Sonic Acts at Bimhuis & Muziekgebouw (Saturday)
 - A Portrait of Martin Bartlett at De Brakke Grond (Sunday)
 - Excursion 'Vertical Studies' in Sint Jansklooster
 - Installation Jana Winderen at Muziekgebouw
 - Exhibition at Arti et Amicitiae

- Guided tours at exhibition
- Workshops
- Other

3. What was your main reason for visiting Sonic Acts Festival 2017?
(Choose as many as you like)

I visit the Sonic Acts Festival..

- Because of specific artists or speakers
- Because of the reputation of the festival
- Because it related to my own research or work
- Because of the theme of this year's edition (The Noise of Being)
- Because of personal interest and/or curiosity
- Because friends were attending
- Other

4. With what do you mostly associate Sonic Acts Festival?
(Choose as many as you like)

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ Audiovisual art | ○ Electronic music | ○ Artistic research |
| ○ Experimental art | ○ Cutting-edge club culture | ○ New discoveries |
| ○ Science | ○ Films & documentaries | ○ The city of Amsterdam |
| ○ Technology | ○ Innovative theory | ○ Other |

5. What were your personal highlights of Sonic Acts Festival 2017 and why? Please list three.

6. How do you rate the following aspects of Sonic Acts Festival 2017?

- Overall experience
- Visitor information before the festival
- Visitor information during the festival
- Atmosphere
- Venues
- Promotion

- Website

7. Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements about Sonic Acts Festival 2017.

Sonic Acts promotes cultural diversity with its festival programme.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

Sonic Acts offers many opportunities for the audience to get involved and learn more about the festival programme.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

The performances and acts presented during the festival (excl. conference) were relevant to my own research, studies or work.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

The festival gave me inspiration and new knowledge that I will pursue in my own future research, studies or work.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

The topics covered during the conference were relevant to my own research, studies or work. (Please answer this question only if you have participated in the conference.)

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

The conference covered topics that I will pursue in my own future research, studies or work. (Please answer this question only if you have participated in the conference.)

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 strongly agree

8. The next three questions are about the visibility of Sonic Acts

8a. How did you find out about Sonic Acts Festival 2017?

- Sonic Acts website
- Sonic Acts newsletter

- Sonic Acts social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Social media of others (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Advertisement in media
- Media e.g. radio, newspaper, blogs
- Poster or flyer in Amsterdam
- Poster or flyer outside of Amsterdam
- Targeted email to educational institution
- Other organizations e.g. other festivals, partner organizations
- Friends or colleagues
- Other

8b. Which blogs, newspapers or magazines do you read?

(Choose as many as you like)

- The Wire
- Resident Advisor
- The Creators Project / THUMP / Noisy (VICE)
- aqnb.com
- Metropolis M
- De Correspondent [Dutch]
- Gonzo (circus) [Dutch]
- DJ Broadcast [Dutch]
- Groene Amsterdammer [Dutch]
- Dutch national newspapers (such as de Volkskrant, NRC, Trouw, Parool)
- Other

8c. Besides the festival, Sonic Acts also organises other events and activities throughout the year. Which of these are you familiar with?

(Choose as many as you like)

- Progress Bar in Amsterdam
- Sonic Acts Academy
- Sonic Acts workshops or masterclasses
- Vertical Cinema
- Dark Ecology

9. The next questions ask for your general feedback.

Would you recommend Sonic Acts Festival to others? Please tell us why.

10. How do you rate the following aspects of our ticketing?

10a Ease of purchasing tickets (star ranking)

10b If unsatisfied, please explain why:

10c. The admission prices of the festival were:

- Too low
- Just right
- Too high

11. How could Sonic Acts improve future editions of the festival?

(Any feedback is welcome, but here are some aspects you may wish to think about: overall experience, festival programme, visitor information, atmosphere, venues, prices, promotion, website...)

12. Demographic Data

12a What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Vocational education
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctoral / PhD
- Other

12b. What is your current form of employment?

- Student
- Employed
- Self-employed
- Freelancer
- Trainee
- Unemployed
- Other

12c. Which sector do you work in?

(If you are working in the creative or academic sector, please give a brief description of your work.

12d. What is your age?

12e. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

13. What is your nationality?

- Dutch
- Other

14. What is your country of residence?

14a If you live in the Netherlands, please specify in which city:

- Amsterdam
- Rotterdam
- Utrecht
- Den Haag
- Other

14b If you don't live in the Netherlands, please specify which country:

Thank you for your feedback!

Any last thoughts you would like to share with us?

B. Interview guidelines

B1. Semi-structured short interview guideline of lecturers and performers

Bloc I demographic data

1. What is your educational background?
2. In which fields were your previous works situated?
3. In which creative field are you currently working?

Bloc II experience of festival

4. How did you first hear about the festival and what is your history with this festival – is it your first time performing here?

If YES (first time performing)

Can you briefly describe your first impression of this festival?

If NO (previous collaborations)

Can you briefly describe your previous experience in your collaborations in {year} at {location}? What was your main reason for participating again?

5. Can you briefly describe to me how you understand the [role of the] Sonic Acts Festival?

Let's talk about your performance on {date} at {location}.

6. What did you expect when you were asked to perform? Did you immediately have in mind what to show to your audience or did it take you a while?
7. Did the outcome of your presentation match with your expectation?
8. Did you have engagement with the audience before, during or after your performance or presentation? How important was it for you?
9. How important is the exchange about collaborations with other artists? Did you feel a strong bond or inspiration from this festival?

10. What was the main reason to participate at the Sonic Acts Festival?

reasons such as..

- to present and promote own work

- to reach out for possible collaborations with fellow artists
- to check on the status quo, meeting friends or getting inspiration
- to show presence for commissioners and possible funding options

Bloc III relation to own work

11. If you have collaborated before: Did you perceive an impact of this festival from your previous performances or presentations, and if yes, in what ways?

for example, have you seen a change after your participation in terms of:

- a. more audience engagement on social media or other platforms (social)
- b. new information or inspiration in the work you do (through talks with fellow artists, listening to other performers or just by being there (cultural)
- c. easier to start collaborations with fellow artists afterwards (cultural)
- d. higher numbers of possible funding options / new sources of income (economic)
- e. the feeling of connectedness with fellow artists and importance of own work, recognition and acknowledgement to have a platform to show own work (psychological)

Bloc IV structure festival

12. What do you think about the structure of one year academy and one year festival structure?

- should it stay like this or change? And if change, how?

Conclusion

- Do you have any additional topics or comments you would like to talk about?

Thank you for taking your time!

B.1. Semi-structured in-depth interview guideline of workshop attendants and performers

Bloc I demographic data

1. What is your educational background?

2. In which fields were your previous works situated?
3. In which creative field are you currently working?

Bloc II experience of festival

This is not your first time participating at this festival, is that correct? [All interviewees have been involved in some kind before, own research before interviews]

4. How did you first hear about the festival? And what is your history with this festival?
5. Can you briefly describe your first experiences?
6. What was your main reason for participating again?
7. Can you briefly describe to me how you understand the [role of the] Sonic Acts Festival?

[Questions for workshop attendants]

Bloc II workshop experience

- i. What did you expect when you attended the workshop?
- ii. Can you describe the learning process during the workshop? Did the expectations match with the outcome of the workshop?
- iii. How could you describe the exchange amongst the workshop attendants?

Bloc III own working practice

- iv. Could you briefly describe your own work:
 - how did it start?
 - what changes / development did you have?
 - do you have any main themes in your working pattern you can describe me?
 - how does the exchange with fellow artists or researchers look like?

[Questions for the performing artist]

Bloc II performance experience

Let's talk about your performance this year.

- i. You performed at Progress Bar in February, right? Which other performances did you have?

[in regard to the latest performance, and in general]

- ii. What did you expect when you were asked to perform? Did the outcome of your performance match with the outcome?

- iii. How important is the exchange or collaborations with other artists for you?
- iv. Do you have a main reason for participating again?
- v.

Bloc III own working practice

- v. Could you briefly describe your own work:
 - how did it start?
 - what changes / development did you have?
 - do you have any main themes in your working pattern you can describe me?
- vi. How does the exchange with fellow artists or researchers look like? Does a sense of community exist in your field?

[for both groups]

Bloc IV relation to festival

- 8. How would you describe the role of Sonic Acts amidst your working process?

Conclusion

- Do you have any additional topics or comments you would like to talk about?

Thank you for taking your time!

B.2. Semi-structured joint interview guideline of head-producer and producer

Bloc I structure of festival

- 1. Could you tell me a little bit about the structure of Sonic Acts?
 - nonprofit? does it receive funding, and if yes, from whom and how much?
 - how many work in the organization? (full-time, part-part, volunteers)
 - how many artists attended this and the past festival editions? numbers including the conferences, workshops, excursions in sub-categories?
 - how many workshops, excursions, or additional program aside from the main festival program this year?

Bloc II content of festival

- 2. Could you give a short explanation of how Sonic Acts started?

- Sonic Acts started in 1994 as a collaboration between royal conservatory in den Hague and Paradiso as no platform for audiovisuals and exchange between different disciplines existed at that time, is that correct?
3. How did it develop into the current status quo?
 - was it continuously? any certain factors which made a grow in the festival possible, e.g. teaming up with a partner-festival, partnership programs or masterclasses with educational institutions, if it exists?
 - any kind of external influence?
 4. If you look at the development of the arts scene in Amsterdam, what are the biggest changes and differences you can see?
 5. Regarding the working style of collaborating and participating artists: could you see a change in the practice over the years?
 - e.g. more short-termed or long-termed projects?
 - more collaborations or more focus on solo-projects, or no trend at all?
 - more and more artists are inter-disciplinary, any implications for the festival?

Bloc III networks

6. Can you explain to how the other collaborations, projects or commissions started?
 - such as Vertical Cinema, Dark Ecology, Progress Bar?
 - to which extent do you work together? can you state the main characteristics of those projects?
7. Do you collaborate with other festivals, in specific?
8. You are promoting the Fiber Festival on your Facebook page and the programming looks very similar to yours.
 - what is the connection to the Fiber festival? Are there overlapping members in both festivals who are in the producer's or curator's team?
9. What made you set up the Academy edition?
 - can you explain me the process in setting it up?

Bloc IV future plans

10. About the films this year, do you think you want to extend it?
 - e.g. in the direction to a film festival?

Conclusion

- Do you have any additional topics or comments you would like to talk about?

Thank you for taking your time!

C. List of codes

Theme	Code
working practice	can you explain your own working process? work structure work experience development deadline teaching inter-disciplinary
connectivity	how is the relationship with fellow artists? peers fellow artists community
role festival	how do you understand the role of the festival? Sonic Acts as a platform city-context special role festival knowledge creation knowledge exchange
festival structure	how was your experience with the festival? festival planning structure festival development format
expectations versus outcomes	what were the expectations (of performance, lecture, workshop), and did they match with the outcome? interaction new audience collaboration networking role artist
relation festival	linkage festival in connection to own work process? audience versus participant

festival experience

linkage own work

get to know Sonic Acts

outer festival

D. Quantitative results: average scores and standard deviation per statement

Statements	Mean	Std. deviation
The performances and acts presented during the festival (excl. conference) were relevant to my own research, studies or work.	5.00 (n=100)	1.56
The festival (excl. conference) gave me inspiration and new knowledge that I will use in my own future research, studies or work.	5.24 (n=100)	1.54
The topics covered during the conference were relevant to my own research, studies or work.	5.14 (n=77)	1.64
The conference gave me inspiration and new knowledge that I will use in my own future research, studies or work.	5.40 (n=72)	1.52